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‘We Are All Alone Together’:
The Shift of Emo Culture from the Street to the Internet

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Declaration

I declare that:

this thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.

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Contents

DECLARATION **2**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS **3**

LIST OF FIGURES 6

ABSTRACT **7**

INTRODUCTION **9**

WHAT IS EMO? 10

EMO FORMATION: DEFINING THE 'INSIDE' AND 'OUTSIDE' OF EMO 15

SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE 19

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS 22

CHAPTER ONE **26**

LITERATURE REVIEW **26**

BIRMINGHAM CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL STUDIES (CCCS) 26

RESISTANCE THROUGH RITUALS 28

CLASS AND SUBCULTURES 29

DICK HEBDIGE 33

GENDER AND SUBCULTURE 36

CCCS CRITIQUES 40

SUBCULTURE'S ETHNOGRAPHIC TURN: RAVE 45

SUBCULTURAL CAPITAL 48

'POST-SUBCULTURES': A NEW LANGUAGE FOR SUBCULTURAL STUDIES 49

NEO-TRIBES 52

LIFESTYLES 55

MUSIC SCENES 56

WHAT NEXT? ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

CHAPTER TWO **66**

APPROACH AND METHODS: SUBCULTURAL VISIBILITY AND IDENTITY IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNET **66**

'WHERE HAVE ALL THE EMOS GONE?': EMOS AND THE INTERNET 67

ONLINE RESEARCH METHODS 74

TEXTUAL AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS 80

CHAPTER THREE **86**

THE WAVES OF EMO **86**

1980S 'FIRST WAVE' EMOS: LOCAL SCENE ORIGINS 87

1990S 'SECOND WAVE' EMO: EMO AS 'UNITED' TRANSLOCAL MUSIC SCENES 90

2000S 'THIRD WAVE': A GLOBAL VIRTUAL SCENE 96

AFI *99*

Fall Out Boy *103*

My Chemical Romance *106*

MUSIC FESTIVALS 111

SCENE KIDS THE "RECYCLED SUBCULTURE" 115

CHAPTER FOUR **119**

EMORAL PANIC **119**

'DEVIANCE', SUBCULTURES AND THE MEDIA 120

ENTER STANLEY COHEN 122

THE (POST)MODERN MORAL PANIC 128

CARLY RYAN CASE STUDY 134

CODA: EMOS AROUND THE WORLD 152

CHAPTER FIVE 158

SUB-CULTURES IN A WEB 2.0 WORLD: EMO AS 'MAGICAL RESOLUTION'. 158

SUBCULTURE 2.0 159
EMO AS 'MAGICAL RESOLUTION' 163
FRAGMENTED YOUTH CULTURES 169

CONCLUSION 173

THE INTERNET 174
THE BANDS 175
WHAT ROLE DOES THE MEDIA PLAY? 175
THE MAGICAL RESOLUTION 177
FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES 178

REFERENCES 181

List of Figures

Figure 1 AFI Decemberunderground cover.....100

Figure 2 AFI ‘Love Like Winter’ screenshot 102

Figure 3 AFI promotional shot. 103

Figure 4 Fall Out Boy promotional shot.....106

Figure 5 My Chemical Romance promotional shot.....108

Figure 6 Cohen’s sequential model of the phases of a typical disaster. 125

Figure 7 Carly Ryan’s MySpace photo.....136

Figure 8 Carly Ryan information booth set up by police.....141

Figure 9 School photo of Carly.....144

Abstract

I, like many others, can map my life to a soundtrack of music. I can tell you exactly what songs were playing when particular events occurred, from listening to Yellowcard as I drove along in summer making me feel like I was a part of something greater, to having the melodic sound of Davey Havok from AFI pumping through my computer supporting me through my honours thesis. In particular, as a young person, I could identify myself in the lyrics of so many songs produced by bands that at the time were classified as 'emo'. I would prowl the shelves at the local music store looking for something new from the section labelled 'emo' to listen to that would fulfil my life even more. I would fall asleep with my iPod firmly planted in my ears listening to music that comforted me through my later teenage years and into my early 20s. I went to every Soundwave Festival that came to Adelaide, getting there at the opening time and staying until it finished so as not to miss any of the bands that were on stage. In this thesis I will offer an overview of emo through an analysis of international news stories and online forums. In doing so, I will theoretically engage with the debate over whether the term 'subculture' is still valid, and I will argue that emo furnishes young people with a 'magical resolution' for being a teenager.

I distinguish three distinct waves of emo beginning in the 1980s, followed by the second in the 1990s and the most recent, in the 2000s. In its third wave, emos are represented in underground settings as well as in the mainstream as the sites and locations of subcultural participation expanded and shifted. Emos are distinguishable by their skinny black jeans, long black fringes and music-based t-shirts. Though there were two waves of emo before them, the third wave of young participants are notable for experiencing a way of belonging that they never had before: online community. Like other music-related cultures before it, emo offers young people emotional support through music, but notably emo has coincided with the arrival of the Internet and it is also, therefore, very much an online community. Online emo support networks offer a space in which to express one's innermost emotions that are often ridiculed or criticised in the offline world. The introduction of these online spaces meant that emo remained not simply a local phenomenon, geographically circumscribed, but that it was an international one – simultaneously a translocal and virtual scene – as can be evidenced through media reports from England, Iraq, Mexico

and the United States of America. I thus employ a textual analysis of online forums, as well as newspaper articles from the mass and niche media to give emos a voice throughout this thesis.

This thesis will theoretically locate emo within wider studies of youth musical subcultures. While I acknowledge the important criticisms and debates that surround the contemporary definition of 'subculture', drawing upon the ideas of Paul Hodkinson (2002) about the facets that make up a modern subculture, I will argue that the term remains a useful way to define youth groupings, albeit not within the strict sociological definition produced by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Thus rather than dismissing the different evolutions of (sub)cultural studies, I explore concepts including 'neo-tribes' (Maffesoli 1996; Weinzierl & Muggleton 2003; Bennett 2005; Johnson & Ambrose 2006; Hodkinson & Deicke 2007), 'scene' (Shank 1994; Straw 1991, 2004; O'Connor 2003; Shuker 2005; Hodkinson & Deicke 2007; Stahl 2009), and 'post-subcultures' (Muggleton 2000) to add depth to the changing definition of subculture. Within this revised definition, I suggest here that the emergence of emo represents a 'magical resolution' not for the problems of class but rather for those of age or stage of life, namely for being a teenager. Emo provides young people with a network of like-minded individuals who allow them the space to express their emotions overtly where it may not be acceptable to do so in other aspects of life. Being a teenager is difficult and young people are not often given sanctioned space within which to express their emotions to others without ridicule or backlash. Emo provides the space to do this.

Introduction

The White Rabbit put on his spectacles, 'Where shall I begin, please your majesty?' he asked. 'Begin at the beginning,' the King said gravely, 'and go on till you come to the end: then stop.' (Carroll 2001, p.139).

When I began this thesis I went back over my CD collection and began listening to music that I had shelved for a couple of years. I was transported straight back to summer days getting sunburnt while singing along with Gerard Way and Davey Havok as I watched them play live, in awe of how amazing they really are. For me the music was comforting and identifiable, much like the book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* reminds me of childhood. Re-reading the book while contemplating the anxiety of teenagers around the Western world who are coming of age at a time of great socio-cultural change and uncertainty made me question: like Alice, in the midst of teenage angst are young people just like her as she enters Wonderland? That is, are they searching for personal identity, group belonging, for a logic where there is none? If so, in the early twenty-first century, how might the increasingly complex and contentious scholarship on subcultures help us understand contemporary and increasingly online youth belonging? While I acknowledge the critiques of the early work on subcultures with its focus on highly visible – spectacular – largely male and working-class groupings, I will argue that there nonetheless remains explanatory value in many of the key concepts introduced by early (sub)cultural studies. In particular, through mapping what has become known as 'emo' and employing a new take on an older subcultural analytical concept, I will argue that emo culture is best understood as offering a socio-cultural 'magical resolution' (Cohen 1972) to the frequently fraught and emotionally charged transition from childhood to adulthood which marks being an adolescent. That is, unlike its use by first wave subcultural theorists to explain the temporary reconciliation of class and gender identity, in the twenty-first century we might more accurately apply the idea of 'magical resolution' to the popularity of emo culture, for I will argue that its attraction is that it valuably but temporarily offers an age-appropriate, or perhaps more accurately 'age-logical', space for adolescents to belong and feel welcomed.

Despite the visual and discursive prominence of emos within many Western, largely urban communities in the late 1980s through to the early noughties, within the

academic realm very little work has been published on emos. Rare exceptions include some prominent journal articles **(**Definis-Gojanović, Gugić & Sutlović 2009; Phillipov 2009, 2010; Peters 2010; Seganti & Smahel 2011) and book chapters (Bailey 2006; Cateforis 2013; Klosterman 2013; Steinberg, Kehler & Cornish 2010; Seftcu 2014). Most of the work which has been published on emos has been written from outside the academy. Popular non-academic works published for mass consumption include *Nothing Feels Good: Punk Rock, Teenagers, and Emo* (Greenwald 2003), *Everybody Hurts: An Essential Guide to Emo Culture* (Simon & Kelley 2007), *Living With an ... Emo Kid* (Mills & Tunis 2009), *Hey! Nietzche! Leave Them Kids Alone!* (Schuftan 2009) and novels *Emo Boy 1: Nobody Cares About Anything Anyway, So Why Don't We All Just Die?* (Edmond 2006) and *Emo Boy 2: Walk Around With Your Head Down* (Edmond 2007). These publications have covered material such as suicide (Definis-Gojanović, Gugić & Sutlović 2009; Phillipov 2009), sexuality (Peters 2010) and general emo subcultural history (Greenwald 2003; Simon & Kelley 2007). However, there is clearly still a gap in our academic knowledge of emo that needs to be addressed, and I intend to do that here with my mapping of emo. But first, I need to introduce the diverse world of emo.

What is Emo?

The term 'emo' has been traced back to 1984 in Washington, DC; however this is only an approximation of the place and date as the roots of the culture, like the emo culture itself, are rather ambiguous[1] (Greenwald 2003, p.1; Bailey 2006, p.340; Sfetcu 2014). Andy Greenwald, a senior contributing writer at *Spin Magazine*, a US music news publication, suggests that 'Emo means different things to different people. Actually, that's a massive understatement. Emo seems *solely* to mean different things to different people ... confusion is one of its hallmark traits' (2003, p.1). This 'confusion' or polysemy is certainly evident in this study where, as a signifier, emo operates as a container for multiple connotative, and hence social and ideological, meanings and discourses, though, as we shall see, patterns are evident within this. These include some consistent visual markers which include black skinny jeans, tight-fitting t-shirts (predominantly displaying band logos), dark make-up and black, red or

[1] It is difficult to pinpoint the exact start of underground subcultures. There is contention around when emo began; however, most resources agree the mid-80s was the starting point.

blonde-dyed hair. However, being emo is not just about a look; it is about being a teenager through to mid-20s who is able to be open and honest about and with their emotions and has the ability to express this through different outlets such as poetry, blogs, forums, song lyrics or diaries, which the Internet allows a specific space for (Greenwald 2003, p.288; Simon & Kelley 2007). Although overt, these emotions are not always negative, contrary to the perceptions of the media and wider public (as can be seen through the saturation of emo into the everyday with emo jokes, as I will discuss). These shared attributes, which can be prescribed as qualities of emo, allow an insight into the mentality of the cultural group; with so much of the otherwise private, feeling self on the line there is an unspoken loyalty to all that is claimed as emo, and a devotion that is believed by the participants to be unmatched within mainstream culture. The emo culture has transitioned through different waves of teenagers, as well as geographically. Across these shifts, it has been adolescents, particularly those who are in the midst of self-doubt and feeling burdened by the weight of being a teenager, who have been successively drawn to emo. Before moving on, the question that is then raised is, quite simply, why?

The evolution of the 'emo' label can be traced musically, through the transition of music from 'emotional hardcore', to 'emocore', to the now commonly known 'emo', a transition that occurred from the 1980s to the 1990s. As Greenwald notes, music is a key way in which these overt feelings expressed by emos are articulated: '"emocore," [is] a strain of hardcore punk that was notable for its obsession with feelings' (2003, p.2). Further to this musical association, in many ways emos are seen as a subset, an adaptation of goth and punk, as described by Simon Price in his 2013 article published in *The Guardian*:

> Originally a minor subdivision of American hardcore punk, emo became a worldwide phenomenon, as bands including My Chemical Romance, Panic! at the Disco and Paramore welded pained teenage angst to urgent pop-punk melodies. Older goths tend to view shopping-mall emo kids, with their smudged eyeliner and dyed hair, as merely 'baby goths'.

Much like goths and punks, who were both heavily influenced by a shared sound, emos were brought together by music and by a need for support amongst like-minded people. What emo music supplied though was something different. The artists were singing songs that young people could relate to, 'as opposed to politics, anger and

smashing stuff up' (Greenwald 2003, p.2). Unlike other music that portrayed opposition towards what was occurring in society, emo music was about goals that could be achieved or who people should be; emo artists sang about who these young people were (Greenwald 2003). That is, through music young people were finding a way to express their inner selves and connect with others like them. In many ways, while emos share an attitudinal horizon with punks (Greenwald 2003), aesthetically they are more closely related to goths with their tight black clothing, heavy eye make-up and long black hair. Thus there is clearly more to emo than just the music:

> While, yes, the term *emo* stems from the label 'emotional' music that was often attributed to mid-nineties bands like Sunny Day Real Estate and Jimmy Eat World, the word also fittingly describes the audience at large that listens to emo music. Just as punk music inspired the term *punk* to describe its audience, without the specific genre of emo we would have to call the fans who follow it Those Who Wear Too Much Eyeliner, Listen to Depressing Music About Depressing Topics Like Depression, and Are Big Balls of Insecurity Who Would Rather Jump Out a Window Than Attempt to Talk to the Opposite Sex. And, let's be honest, TWWTMELTDMADTLDAABBOIWWRJOOAWTATTTOS is a *really* crappy acronym. (Simon & Kelley 2007, pp.8–9)

There are countless fans of 'emo' music, but this does not make them emo; it is not limited or constrained by music but rather a combination of a certain lifestyle with the inclusion of taste, dedication and style. It is about choosing to express yourself in a certain way and to epitomise a world view and identity that is also embraced by others throughout the world.

Much as it is with any active and fluid cultural phenomenon, the definition of emo has changed over the period of time from the 1980s through to today. As Leslie Simon and Trevor Kelley, two writers from popular magazine *Alternative Press*, explain: 'Over time emo has been defined as a tuneful strain of punk rock with lyrical emphasis on matters of the heart, but these days it means much more than that to its many fans' (2007, p.1). Expressed simply, growing to be more than purely a musical genre, emo allows members – importantly both female and male – the space to 'feel' their emotions – hence the name. Thus it is a space that is both a physical and affective setting, seemingly affording young people the latitude to express how they are feeling openly as a central collective *raison d'etre* no matter how negative or

positive. So while emo began as a style of music and 'is still a kind of music, sure', as Simon and Kelley go on to argue,

> more than anything it's a state of mind. It's a place where people who don't fit in – but who long to fit in with *other* people who don't fit in – come to find solace, and its resident ideology is something that those within the scene take very seriously. (2007, p.1)

Like many other groups before it, emo started as an identity and community for those who felt they did not fit in with the mainstream culture, a place to go and find comfort among others who felt the same. This is not to say that everyone who simply expresses his or her emotions is a part of the emo culture; rather, as with any social or cultural phenomenon, there is a particular ideology that must be adhered to for one to be able to claim a place within the grouping.

In a psychiatric study conducted on 10-year-olds Anna Chur-Hansen and Lynda Scott found that

> The recent development of the 'Emo' subculture among adolescents and young adults was raised in relation to how people deal with distress. Perceived attributes of members of this subculture included overt demonstrations of emotions, feeling misunderstood and self-harming behaviour. It was suggested that belonging to this subculture could influence an individual's feelings and that this could also influence their acceptance of help. (2008, p.360)

Being part of the emo culture allows acceptance from peers and an understanding among them that may not otherwise be received. While often aligned with ideas surrounding depression and negativity, Simon and Kelley outline what they believe are the core emo values, the ideals required to classify oneself as emo. One of the fundamental elements of being an emo they argue is the need, at least, to be *dramatic* about your feelings. Being able to emphasise your emotions in a way that does not only display sadness, but rather, openness and honesty is 'the foundation of the entire emo system' (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.2). The second important value is 'effort(lessness)', the key to which is 'trying really hard to look like you don't really care'. Thus an emo is required to believe that there is always someone in the world who is better than them, which ties into another core value, 'insecurity', as they compare themselves to this higher standard (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.2). Already resonances of emo's logical 'fit' with adolescent thinking may be becoming evident. Group members must also demonstrate 'faith' and 'non-athleticism'; hence when they

believe in something, whether it be a band or a cause, they support it with every fibre of their being. However, when it comes to sport they will not participate for any reason as it would require not participating in more important activities for emos such as listening to music, while they also reject the mainstream cultural values associated with sport (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.3). This 'faith', as we will see in later chapters, is an important element in the use of online systems and social media in particular to convey emotions within the emo community. The final value, and a critical point for this thesis, is 'empathy': 'Feeling other people's pain is crucial to being part of the emo community' (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.3). Emos support, help and reinforce each other through their emotions; being able to empathise with each other is a fundamental part of being an emo.

The emo culture, as I will suggest in Chapter Three, exists trans-nationally; however much of the literature has focused on the experience of those in the United States (Greenwald 2003; Simon & Kelley 2007), while others have focused on emos in other countries such as Italy (Seganti & Smahel 2011). In this thesis I will acknowledge the newspaper and online media coverage of emos in numerous countries including Australia and, perhaps more surprisingly, Mexico and Iraq. There is a diversity in the emo culture of acceptance and denial; that is, there are those who will proudly state their emo allegiance and in contrast there are those who deny that they are emo even when participating in the shared value system of emo. There is a level of anger and unrest among young people even in countries such as the United States where bands will not tour some states depending on the reputation and associations of the area. Greenwald suggests that this discontent led to a shift from a 'Do it Yourself' to 'Create it Yourself' culture, meaning that young people in 'states where most touring bands don't choose to venture and where rampant [religious] fundamentalism leads directly into a more stridently inclusive sort of rebellion' (2003, p.55) began participating in a culture that differed from the norm in significant numbers. A key core value of the emo culture, young people were wanting to participate in something different, but were wanting to do so together. But in the end, emos are teenagers and those entering their 20s, who 'haven't really thought the deep thoughts yet – they're too caught up in the majesty of their own private drama and they've found a music that privileges that very same drama', who write poetry or song lyrics, and although this used to be kept private, it can now be posted on the Internet to share amongst

like-minded people (Greenwald 2003, p.55). This latter aspect of emo is central to this examination, namely, the way in which the subculture has found new life online where in many ways it offers young people a perfect mix of online angst, individuality, rebellion and belonging. To this end, there are hundreds of sites dedicated purely to emos. Some of the more high profile include: emopuddle.com, emo-corner.com, emorawr.com, emofwendz.com and numerous facebook and MySpace pages.

Emo Formation: Defining the 'Inside' and 'Outside' of Emo

The way that emo is viewed by those who participate in the subculture has also shifted over time. The fluid nature of the grouping has allowed at least three waves of young people to participate and belong within it. To get a better feel for how emo participants see themselves it is useful to follow discussions on this topic conducted in emo-identified social media. As one user of EmoPuddle[2] suggests

> There aren't many people who know the real, original meaning of emo anymore, and that thoroughly annoys most people who do. We think the meaning people have given to it now is very stupid and annoying, and it's far from what it originally meant. That is why I'm writing this article. I also want to inform people who may just not have any idea what emo really is because of contradictions made by the different definitions of the term given by people with different opinions on it. I'll start out with a little history lesson.
>
> The genre started in the 1980's and was originally called emotive hardcore punk. Yes, it was music that the followers of hardcore punk considered too emotional, but that is not what emo really means. As I've already clarified, it's short for emotive, which means 'directed toward the emotions'. The aforementioned followers of hardcore punk used "'emo"' as an insult directed toward the followers of emotive hardcore punk followers and also as an indirect reference to the genre. That's all emo really means, an insult directed only toward emotive hardcore punk (which has virtually died out of the music scene these days) and an indirect reference to that genre. Anyone using it any other way doesn't know the real meaning of the word. (17 April 2010)

[2] All quotations used from forums, blogs or personal accounts will be verbatim. As the primary data source of this thesis they will remain unchanged to maintain the character and the intent with which the users meant them, and the informal context in which they were generally offered. All sites accessed were at the time full public access. No passwords or usernames were required.

It is easy to see here the sensitivity of the subject and the agitation caused by the perceived misuse of the term 'emo'. Although it is not a new concept, the divergent definition that has been created between the 'originals' of the culture and new waves has led to discontentment. By demonstrating how users of forums are defining the term emo and thus themselves, we can later better explore the variation between media representations of young people who are labelled emo by outsiders and those who actively interact with the culture of emo.

I will outline and acknowledge the different waves of emo in Chapter Three to demonstrate the variation in musical styles as well as the spread of the culture. The divergent nature of emo culture has led to questions from participants on the emowire forum about the exact shared values of emos and the reliance on the aesthetic appearance of emos both to decide whether they are themselves emo and whether they will need to adapt aspects of their lifestyle to be able to claim a place in the grouping. For example, one user posed the question:

> I was wondering what your opinions are on what makes someone an emo? Like, whether you have to look, act, do things a certain way? What things do you consider someone has to be like to then be considered an emo? Im not entirelly sure myself tbh. Im not even really an emo myself IMO but oh well. Would appreciate some feedback on this. Kthxguyz. LOTS OF LOVELY LOVE, HAZEL c:. (emowire.com, 2 May 2012)

Although denying being an emo, the participant is actively seeking opinions on what others believe are the important aspects of being an emo. This denial of being an emo is common amongst the users of emo forums; however young people still participate in the discussion and debate surrounding the culture. Many who use the online forums and chat rooms who do classify themselves as emo have offered responses that more explicitly define emo. One blog post suggests,

> The term for the teenagers who listen emocore is emo **kids**. The society thinks about them as failures; they are not strong enough to hide their emotions, they're sensitive, shy, introverted, and often quiet. Usually, Emo **kids** like to express their feeling writing poems about their problems with depression, confusion, and anger; all because the world fails to understand them. (fallscreamo.blogspot.com.au, January 2011)

Intimate groupings in society, such as emo, can be difficult to define and the elements that make up a (sub)culture hard to determine, but in following the waves of emo and the way the genre shifted, it can be seen that emo is not fixed; it is fluid and as such

no single definitional descriptor such as 'subculture' can capture emo as a singular object. Rather any theoretical understanding of emo needs to incorporate as appropriate elements of the different theoretical terms in subcultural studies, such as scene, subculture and neo-tribe (Hebdige 1979; LeBlanc 2002; Jenks 2005; Williams 2011).

The conflicting definitions provided by participants of emo can be seen through a comparison between the two postings below, one of which is discussing the negativity that has been associated with emos, and the other forum user suggests that emos are misunderstood, a common belief among the members of the culture. Often people are judged as much by what they are not as by what they are.

> Y should we be hated? wat did we do to get hated? Is it for our style, our sexuality? We all think differently. It doesn't matter who u r, some ppl think that if ur emo/scene u must be gay or bi and u have to cutt. We have to wear emo clothes. So i ask again y are we hated? i can't figure it out. hopefully u have an idea. (emopuddle.com, 30 July 2009)

> Look people either you like to hear it or not Emo kids get beat up daily. A beacuse there misunderstanded.B some kids start rumors that arnt true such as "ya she stole like 6 things from hot topic" and then some kids beleive that and they start blameing that "Emo kid" for all there missing things or beleiveing that there liars cheators,fags ecxt. This is never true and it needs to end completely. C sometimes the issue is that kids at there school are jealous of the "atention from other kids" witch really those kids are tryig to help him/her with there (life or problems) there going through but alot of them dont make a diffrence alot of them are blocked out or ignored but once and a while those kids trying to help will get in that is if the "Emo kid" wants them to.D Alot of kids that are sceane emo or just diffrent looking and normal kids dont understand that.E So im going to do something instead of just siting down and watching TV im going to start A group for emo'z like me that need advice and help just like the kids at school that are trying to help them out excpet I know what they are going through so I can help alot more. I hope this will help out with us Emo's all across the world and not just in my area.So if you want an invite or want to help me in some way personally email me on emowire.com so I hope to hear from you. (emowire.com, 21 January 2011)

As we can see very explicitly in this posting, emos provide a support network for each other. This is an important element of the culture, as emos generally believe that a

person who is 'outside' the culture will not be able to understand those who are within it. Although there have always been young people who appear 'different' to others, not mainstream or the norm, such as goths, punks and teddy boys, emos suggest that they are the first to feel that they are alone and misunderstood and this is fundamental to their shared group identity. They supply each other with comfort, to empathise with each other, yet they are also quick to critique one other and their level of 'emo-ness'.

Even for emos themselves the definition of the culture seems particularly problematic; however, as studies conducted by Hebdige (1979) of mods, skinheads and teddy boys or LeBlanc's study of punk (2002) demonstrate, this ambiguity is itself a rich source of meaning that perfectly situates, and thus in this instance reinforces, emo as an active, identifiable culture with boundaries that are constantly policed and negotiated. Like other subcultures,[3] while looking in from the outside it may be easy to identify a unified look and sensibility; nevertheless, internally it is rife with divisions and the policing of definitions and membership boundaries. I will explore the particular way this has been manifested in emo throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapters Three and Five, but here I wish simply to introduce some of these tensions, as presented by exemplary postings in key emo sites. There is a struggle between each wave of emo, with each earlier wave believing the next is not genuine enough, and even within each wave there are issues of authenticity that lead to debates around the shared values of the grouping. Certainly the negativity that has been denotatively hardwired to emo by the media and wider public discourse is not part of the belief system that is expressed by participants. A manifestation of this negative depiction of emo was the moral panic that that was driven around the stories of Hannah Bond[4] and Carly Ryan[5], which I will discuss in Chapter Four. I will analyse Hannah and Carly's stories as examples of the way that emo is defined by the media, and also wider public news stories from Iraq and Mexico where the sexuality of young people has been linked to emo roots.

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[3] Here I do not use the term 'subculture' uncritically. I will use it as a shorthand to describe youth groupings in lieu of the definitions and critiques provided.

[4] Hannah Bond committed suicide in England, leaving behind a suicide note that included My Chemical Romance lyrics. My Chemical Romance are a band that has been connected to emos. I will discuss this case further in Chapter Three.

[5] Carly Ryan will be used as the major case study of this thesis. Carly was murdered by a man she met online. As the case unfolded many associations were made between Carly and emo.

Self-Harm and Suicide

It is impossible to ignore the very important issues of self-harm and suicide when researching emo. Outsiders often perceive that self-harm is rife within the emo culture, and thus how emos position themselves in relation to self-harm and suicide is an important aspect of understanding the culture. Given this is a study undertaken from a cultural studies perspective, there is neither the scope, nor do I have the professional expertise, to engage with these issues on a psychological or social work level. But to the degree that they impact upon attitudes to emo from the broader society, and the self-identification and shared mores of the culture internally, the discussion of these practices is essential. Notably, in terms of how self-harm becomes culturally visible in the community, online sites are often maligned in the mainstream press (and not always undeservedly) as encouraging young people to engage in destructive activities, and offering concrete advice on how to do so. But when emo culture is viewed from a more phenomenological cultural studies perspective, it can also be seen how the community can function here in a much more positive and supportive way, thus realising more fully the positive aspects of online solidarity. For example, those who have self-harmed often offer support to those who are thinking of self-harming or who have self-harmed in the past:

> Just want to drop in.
>
> While I'm sure all of you have good friends that you would rather talk to about your problems, I am always here for you with open arms, an open heart, and an open mind. You're always free to message me and after getting to know you I'd be happy to text, call, Skype, etc. whenever.
>
> I am a cutter, I have dealt with suicide, I have dealt with losing my father, abuse, and so much more. Please don't cut, there are so many great alternatives. If you hold ice to your skin, it is very effective in giving a sting but not leaving those old scars and such. There's a lot of alternatives and discussion and support at www.teenhelp.org or www.twloha.com
>
> Check them out and talk to me any time that you need help. <3[6]

[6] <3 is used in text messages or online posts to represent a love heart.

> I love you and I think you're not only beautiful inside and out, but special. I promise that you'll find something to live for and it DOES get better no matter how bad it seems. My heart is out there for all that need it and I have lots of love to give ... oh, and I love to recieve it too. (emopuddle.com, 26 June 2011)

Within the often closed-off world of young people, what other members of the emo culture can and do offer is a level of experience and understanding that is not often received in the mainstream. Support is supplied, not only by the member, but also through the suggestion of contacting a professional outside support organisation ('To Write Love On Her Arms' (twloha), an organisation that I will discuss at length later). There is also a level of intimacy supplied, even from a stranger; there is a means of contact and communication given as well as comfort and there are compliments that seem to speak straight to the reader even though they were intended for a wide audience.

The self-harm activity perhaps most commonly, though not exclusively, identified with emo is cutting,[7] meaning using an implement such as a razor purposefully to make deep cuts in the skin. Not everyone uses cutting for grieving or pain release (the bleeding and pain of cutting is seen as a release), some of the common reasons behind cutting; individuals within the emo community also suggest that cutting is used to release anger:

> for a lot of ppl ... cutting calms them down(like me) like ... when I get mad or upset ... I feel destructive and I feel like breaking something ... But obviously I can't go around breaking things ... So I have to let the anger out through pain ... it just feels better ... And I deff do cry but ... idk … I sometimes let it out through violent video games but it still just ... Idk lol. Im sure a lot of ppl feel the same way … Its just … frustrating yanno? (emopuddle.com, 26 June 2011)

[7] Cutting is a form of purposeful self-harm that 'refers to a range of behaviours, not a mental disorder or illness. At the milder end of the spectrum, these behaviours include mild to moderate self-injury as a response to emotional pain and, at the more extreme end, attempted suicide' (2013 http://www.headspace.org.au/what-works/research-information/self-harm-and-suicidal-behaviours). Although some people use self-harm or cutting as a coping mechanism (Evans, Hawton & Rodham 2005, p.574), others use it as attention-seeking behaviour or, as child and adolescent psychiatrist Professor Philip Hazell suggests, self-harm can be used to release endorphins 'which are natural morphine-like substances which give us a bit of a high or make us feel better' (Rice 2013).

The conversations about self-harming are extensive and, although they include some condemnation, overwhelmingly support and understanding are offered. While it is clearly a focus of discussion within emo sites, this is hardly a practice unique to emo. The statistics on self-harm among young people are hard to ascertain as the cases can only be recorded if they are reported to medical personnel. However, Health Direct Australia shows that 'Three-quarters of all intentional self-harm cases were aged from 15–44 years. Of these, 28% were aged 15–24 years and 47% were aged 25–44 years' (2013). While only one set of statistics, this does indicate that, while much of the public debate about self-harm focuses on young people, self-harm activity occurs across a much broader range of age brackets, and thus is hardly unique to either young people or emo, despite the dominant discursive associations.

Thus, when self-harm does arise as an issue within emo social media, we can see that the support networks that have been established in the online world between the users of the emo-orientated websites demonstrate a number of the core values that Simon and Kelley (2007) discuss in their assessment of emo above. In particular, the overt display of feelings through poetry and song lyrics is plentiful. Even when it comes to suicide, it is not all negative and condemning; some strive to portray hope and longing for survival and longevity:

> If you hav ever thought about cutting or do cut ... Just dont. It only adds physical pain to your emotional turmoil and all your left with is more pain than what your started with ... Cutting doesn help anything ... If your sad or depressed then i suggest letting out your feelings some other way ... I have cut a few times but then i discovered sometjing ... Most people have forgotten how to cry. When we were little what did yoi do when you were sad? We didnt cut ourselves ... We cried ... And i think we should cry more ... Just lock yourself in your room and cry as hard as you can and as long as possible ... It really takes energy and when you cant cry anymore youll feel better ... I personally pray the rosary when im not happy about something but im assuming most people on here arent Catholics?? Anyways ... Cutting isnt a solution ... Its just another problem. And taking your own life is too, everyones life affects at least one person in some way ... Dont let those people down ... They love you and would never dream of losing you ... Thats all i have to say ... I hope i have helped at least one person by writing this. (emopuddle.com, 19 May 2011)

Importantly here, the replies to this post suggested that the support shown did help others and did give them hope. The empathy (another of the core values suggested:

Simon & Kelley 2007, p.3) emos have for each other and are able to show each other through online resources is a vital part of the subculture. However, the way that cases of (emo-related) suicide and self-harming are portrayed in the mass media is often at odds with this insider community experience. While raw pain and emotion are being laid bare for anyone to read and take part in, solidarity and solutions are being offered to young people who have perhaps found a space to express their feelings honestly without disdain from their peers. Hence there is not only sorrow, but also affirmation, support and celebration.

Structure of the Thesis

Emos may not be held in high regard by wider society; however, the grouping has managed to carve out and maintain a position within it, particularly within the lives of many young people. For this reason, it is important that we better understand this particular cultural phenomena both from the inside and outside of the culture. To this end, in this thesis I will situate global emo within the much longer history of subcultural studies. In Chapter One I will discuss the different theoretical debates surrounding the analytical value of concepts such as subculture (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts 1976; Powell & Clarke 1975; Willis 1978; Hebdige 1979), neo-tribes (Maffesoli 1996; Bennett 1999; Jones 2009), lifestyle (Chaney 1996; Bennett 2000), post-subculture (Weinzierl & Muggleton 2003) and scene (Shank 1988, 1994; Straw 1991, 2004; O'Connor 2002; Stahl 2009; Shuker 2005; Hodkinson & Deicke 2007). In Chapter Two I will discuss the methods I used throughout this thesis including my transition from the original methodology of online interviews to the analysis of online media. This enables me to explore the research conundrum whereby, despite their visibility to outsiders, members of subcultures may often not identify as such. However, digital culture adds another layer to this picture, restoring cultural visibility, and adding voice. Therefore, in examining the thesis methods, I also explore just how important the online space is for these groups that are designed for young people. In Chapter Three I will explore the history of emo culture through its different waves and musical influences, and its geographical spread that has led to the diffusion and defusion of the culture (Hebdige 1979). In order to demonstrate the shift in media attention focused on emos as well as the negative effect that media labelling can cause, Chapter Four focuses on the moral panic that enveloped emos after a number of high-profile teenage deaths. In particular, to establish the kinds of discourses commonly

employed by the mass media to depict emo, I will analyse the media coverage of one particular case study, namely the murder of 15-year-old Carly Ryan at Horseshoe Bay, South Australia in 2007. This moral panic analysis will be used to suggest that emos, not just in Australia but in culturally similar countries of the Global North also, have been publicly framed within a very particular, and negative, discourse. I will argue that such mainstream moral panic–style attitudes towards emo have been fundamental in driving emos from the street and onto the Internet.

Finally, in Chapter Five I will return to the intertwining of the intricacies of teenage angst and the desire for acceptance and belonging, by exploring how the emo subculture affords young people an outlet to express their intense emotions without the harsh judgement that can sometimes come with being a teenager. Drawing upon the psychological idea of the seven stages of grieving, I will explore the idea that being a teenager reflects these stages. Many life-changing decisions must be made before turning twenty and a lot of pressure is placed on young people. Therefore I will suggest that teenagers are going through an experience akin to the seven stages of grieving, much like those a person would normally go through after losing a loved one (Sagula & Rice 2004). As I will discuss in Chapter One, Phil Cohen (1972) suggested that subcultures were a 'magical resolution' to the 'problem' of being working class, but I will suggest that, given the above analogy with 'grieving', being emo offers a magical resolution to the 'problem' of being a teenager. I will explore this concept in depth in relation to how the subculture has spread across the globe with its changing definitions, all the while maintaining a core focus on emotions and youthfulness. I will argue that emo is thus no longer a subculture *per se*, though it once was; rather it is now a phase, a circumscribed outlet, indeed a vehicle, for teenage angst. This has been reached through the shift of the initial subculture from the street and onto the Internet. I will also question the way that gender is represented within the emo culture, particularly in regards to girls and their historical representations and engagement with subcultural structures. Through proposing that emo is a magical solution for being a teenager, I will suggest that the emo culture has had a far-reaching impact on society that has not yet been acknowledged, and which is even denied.

I will argue that there have been three key waves of emo. The first was the underground wave which began in Washington, DC in 1984–1985 (Greenwald 2003;

Simon & Kelley 2007, p.14; Schuftan 2009, p.9; Simon 2009, p.8). The second wave was in the 1990s with a more mainstream following due to bands such as The Get Up Kids, Sunny Day Real Estate, Weezer and Dashboard Confessional (Schuftan 2009, p.9). The third and most recent wave came in the early to mid-2000s with bands such as Fall Out Boy, AFI, My Chemical Romance and The Used. It was in the third wave that emo shifted from being a subculture to being a genre of music. It is partly due to this ambiguity that I will use the term subculture in this thesis as a form of shorthand (as per Bennett's critique (1999)), but I will return to a more nuanced discussion of emo in the final chapter. The variations between the three waves of emo meant that there was a level of resentment toward each new wave, leading to discontent. Despite this discontent and internal diversity the core shared values of emo still managed to re-emerge time and time again with a new generation of young people participating in the ideology that was at the core of the original formation of emo.

Therefore, I will argue in the final chapter that what began in the first wave of emo as a pure and unadulterated love of music turned into a fashion statement, which then morphed into romanticism in the third wave, a life which held teenage angst in high esteem and allowed its members to 'grieve' their situation of being teenagers. An apparent logical outcome of cultural incumbency, like many subcultures that have been in existence for a number of years, there are sub-types of emo such as screamo and nuemo, as Greenwald suggests (2003, p.1) As a point of irony Simon and Kelley (2007, pp.20–28) suggest that these can be expanded into a number of other sub-types of emo: Trustafarian, Indie, Christian, Eighties, Frat, Goth, Machismo, Prog, Ex-Hardcore and Alt-Country emos. With the diffusion of the emo culture more comedic and ironic perspectives began to come through. Emo itself and each of these further iterations have each had their influence on wider society in their own way. Emos have been around since the 1980s and through the waves of the culture there has been an evolution of the musical genre with which emo is associated.

In early subcultural studies, predominantly those that stemmed from the CCCS, theorists such as Dick Hebdige (1979), Phil Cohen (1972), Stanley Cohen (1972), Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (1976), John Cook (2000) and David Simonelli (2013) suggested that subcultures stemmed from working-class youth as there was a disenfranchisement between young people and their position in society, and less of a

willingness to seek high paying jobs. I will suggest that, along with other subcultures which have been prominent in 'New World' countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia (Pearson 1979; White 1993; Issitt 2009, 2011; Boyer Sagert 2010; Travis & Hardy 2012), the emo culture within contemporary Western society is more accurately situated as a middle-class culture, as some disposable income is required to maintain the values and aesthetic of the grouping. Expensive brands of clothing as well as hairstyles that require regular maintenance cost a lot of money, in turn requiring a higher income than that available to those from disadvantaged backgrounds or without independent means. I will examine this perspective as a contrast to the work of the CCCS, which, as previously discussed, focused on the working-class identification of subcultural association.

Chapter One

Literature Review

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.'

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'

'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty 'which is to be master – that's all.'

(Carroll 2001, p.72)

The field of youth studies is relatively new, only beginning in the 1940s with institutions such as the Chicago School[8] and its criminological and sociological understandings of deviance that emerged in response to a period of great change in Western society. However, just as youth culture itself boomed after the Second World War, since the 1960s the field of study began to flourish; in the United Kingdom in particular, the separation of the classes was being contested as the once rigid boundaries between the classes began to break down (Hall & Jefferson 1976). The role of women in society was also being challenged by what came to be known as second-wave feminism. In order to situate my discussion of emo theoretically, I will explore the history of subcultural studies beginning with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), before considering more recent approaches such as 'post-subcultural studies', 'neo-tribe', 'lifestyle' and 'scene'. But first I need to discuss seminal works in the history of subcultural studies, notably the ground-breaking collection of CCCS working papers *Resistance Through Rituals* (Hall & Jefferson 1976), and Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979).

Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS)

One of the key institutions involved in popularising scholarly research on subcultures was the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. First established at the University of Birmingham in 1964 by Richard Hoggart, the centre was established so that there could be comprehensive studies on culture; however, due to the

[8] The Chicago School of Sociology was established at the University of Chicago in the 1920s. There was a focus on empirical research and a 'blending of firsthand inquiry with general ideas, the integration of research and theory as part of an organized program' (Blumer 1986, p.3).

youthfulness of the faculty a number of studies emerged on youth subcultures. The CCCS explored the concept of subcultures and the social worlds associated with them including music and youth fashions in the post-WWII period in the UK. The post–Second World War period in the United Kingdom brought with it many levels of youth rebellion and what we can identify in retrospect as subcultural formations. One of the key ideas to emerge from the centre was the recognition of the importance of youth within society (Hall & Jefferson 1976). The acknowledgement of subcultures as *ipso facto* of value allowed for further understanding of the elements involved in subcultural practice outside of the previously dominant scholarly focus on 'deviant youths'. As a key part of this, the CCCS also recognised the role that class played in youth practices (Powell & Clarke 1975; Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts 1976; Willis 1978; Hebdige 1979).

Thus, importantly, the CCCS studied subcultures through a particular, more positive lens that was opposed to the more negative 'deviancy' approach of the Chicago School. The CCCS approach suggested instead that young people were using subcultures as a form of (cultural or social) resistance to the (economic) barriers of their working-class location. A number of influential cultural theorists emerged from the centre at this time including Dick Hebdidge, Stanley Cohen, Angela McRobbie, Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall and Paul Willis (Turner 2003, p.62). The centre was opening doorways into subcultural and youth research that had not previously been investigated. With the introduction of Antonio Gramsci's seminal theoretical contributions examining hegemony and culture (*Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (1971); *Prison Notebooks, Volume 1, Volume 2 and Volume 3* (1992, 2010, 2010); *Pre-Prison Writings* (1994)), the way culture was seen changed dramatically. Due to the introduction of ideas of hegemony, there was seen to be a struggle between the dominant and subordinate classes in society leading to changes in the way that groups were seen and studied (Storey 2009, p.51):

> this rethinking involved brining into active relationship two previously dominant but antagonistic ways of thinking about popular culture. The first viewed popular culture as a culture imposed by the culture industries ... The second position conceptualised popular culture as a culture spontaneously emerging from below; authentic subordinate culture (that is, culturalism, and some versions of social and cultural history, especially 'history from below'). (Storey 2009, p51)

Subcultures are their own unique cultures within other cultures and they have a history and shared values. What Gramsci provided was an understanding of subcultures, as the CCCS applied his theories to suggest that subcultures do not spontaneously 'erupt' from below (underground) but that a conflict occurring within society allows subcultures to rise.

Resistance Through Rituals

One of the key foundational texts for subcultural studies is the CCCS collection *Resistance Through Rituals* (Hall & Jefferson 1976). The book was one of the first to be published that acknowledged youth culture as being part of a specific cultural occurrence with a focus on the post-war period (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts 1976, p.9). The anthology had many contributors who remain highly influential in the field of cultural studies including Chas Critcher, Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, John Clarke and Tony Jefferson. In their introduction, the editors of the book, John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson, and Brian Roberts suggested that:

> The social and political meaning of Youth Cultures is not easy to assess: though their visibility has been consistently high. 'Youth' appeared as an emergent category in post-war Britain, one of the most striking and visible manifestations of social change in the period. (1976, p.9)

As young people began to be visible in the street youth groupings also emerged as did the label 'teenager', as I will discuss later in the chapter. Significantly for this thesis, early in this seminal text the authors acknowledged music as an important aspect of youth studies and an important marker of social change. From the punks and teddy boys to mods and rockers, music is an integral part of most, if not all, subcultures, with the style of music frequently being used to define the group (Clarke *et al.* 1976; Gelder 2007). However the diversity and ambiguity of youth cultures meant that undertaking studies of them was not without complexities or conflict.

Despite the presence of other research methods in the collection, the most common approach adopted by the CCCS was textual analysis, which is reflected both in the case studies in *Resistance Through Rituals* and in subsequent CCCS work, much of which was based on the public visibility of subcultures. Thus observation, analysed via the theoretical lens of semiotics, played an important part in the formation of many of the subcultural theories produced in this and other CCCS texts, notably those

of Dick Hebdige (1979, 1988). Scholars at the CCCS drew upon the work of semioticians such as Levi-Strauss (1969) and Barthes (1973); however, further ground-breaking developments were made by theorists such as Stuart Hall (1981) who undertook a structuralist approach to semiotics to observe groupings as a means to determine how society functioned. Nonetheless, while this theoretical approach was adopted and developed by later theorists, their semiotic method remained similar. That is, rather than conduct interviews with members of the subcultures or engage in participant observation among them (approaches which became increasingly standard for later subcultural analysis), they formed their conclusions from methodologies that were grounded in data collected largely visually. This was a point of criticism of early studies of subculture, coming from both inside and outside the Birmingham School, which particularly commented upon the absence of women from the subcultural stage (McRobbie & Garber 1976; Gelder & Thornton 1997; Blackman 1998; Muggleton 2000). I will discuss these critiques in further detail later in the chapter.

Class and Subcultures

As already indicated, class has been a key determinant for many of the subcultural theorists emerging from the CCCS (e.g. Cohen 1972; Hall & Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979, 1988). It was suggested not only in *Resistance Through Rituals*, but also in later works, that the Second World War had a significant impact on how the working class was viewed within British society and as the 1960s began two significant socioeconomic changes made the emergence of subcultures possible. Clarke *et al.* acknowledged that there was a sense that the working class was disappearing. However it was during the Second World War that the changing position of the classes was more prominent, 'Firstly, there was the rediscovery of poverty and the existence of continual, great inequalities of wealth' (1976, p.25). Deindustrialisation meant the decline of traditional working-class jobs, leading to a rise in unemployment and the disenfranchisement of young men, giving young people the time and resources to participate in subcultures. Another effect of the breaking down of class structures, Clarke *et al.* suggested, was 'that power had been diffused via the all-round increase of wealth, the decline in relative inequality, the greater accountability of socially responsible management, and the separation of ownership from managerial control' (1976, p.16). The rise of the welfare state and the leisure industry brought around new technologies that meant that the craft industries were in decline in favour

of rising technological advances, which in turn meant that the clear divisions of labour that had once existed were also being broken down (Cohen 1980, p.80. Another result of this change was the

> gradual polarization in the structure of the labour force: on the one side, the highly specialized, skilled and well paid jobs associated with the new technology and high-growth sectors that employed them; on the other, the routine, dead-end low-paid and unskilled jobs associated with the labour-intensive sectors, especially the service industries (Cohen 1980, p.80).

The barriers between the classes that once seemed impenetrable were being broken down, at least in terms of the emergence of low-status white-collar positions. Due to the changing socioeconomic conditions of working-class youth in British society, spectacular subcultures began to emerge as a response. Subcultures allowed young people to reclaim cultural capital and repurpose it into what they wanted and needed at the time.

Phillipov suggests that 'the subcultural terrain of music, dress, ritual, and argot were understood as a sphere in which the political battleground between classes was symbolically played out' (2012, p.3). This was linked to the unemployment disenfranchisement that emerged in this post–World War Two period. Phil Cohen suggests that this class conflict was seen as 'a battleground, a major focus of all anxieties created by the disintegration of community structures around them' (2005, p.70). Cohen further suggests that

> the latent function of subculture is this: to express and resolve, albeit 'magically', the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture. The succession of subcultures which this parent culture generated can thus all be considered so many variations on a central theme – the contradiction, at an ideological level, between traditional working-class Puritanism and the new hedonism of consumption; at an economic level, between a future as part of the socially mobile elite or as part of the new lumpen proletariat. Mods, parkas, skinheads, crombies all represent, in their different ways, an attempt to retrieve some of the socially cohesive elements destroyed in their parent culture and to combine these with elements selected from other class fractions, symbolizing one or other options confronting it. (2005, p.71)

What Cohen is suggesting is that subcultures were picking up the conflicts of the parent culture and in turn were using this to recreate some of the aspects of the parent

culture that had been lost or destroyed. As there was a rise in the population of young immigrants in the UK, Gelder suggests, this meant that 'Their family and neighbourhood – ... their "parent culture" – pulls them one way, constraining them, returning them to the home and neighbourhood; but the result is "generational conflict"' (2007, p.88). This model meant that there was an 'us and them' pull between family and home and the 'new consumer society' which meant that young people at the time were experiencing the breakdown of community and the flexibility that was coming with it (Gelder 2007, p.88). What subcultures were offering young people was a 'magical resolution' for their working-class position in society.

It was Cohen who suggested that youths struggle with their class positions and turn to subcultures as a 'magical resolution' for their position in society. Cohen outlines four key elements that enabled this, also suggesting that the aforementioned subcultures are merely 'symbolic structures', that is that they should 'not be confused with the actual kids who are their bearers and supports' (2005, p.71). The first two elements, dress and music, are not created by or because of the subculture; rather they are *adopted by* the subculture. The final two elements, argot and ritual, are more '"infrastructural" forms ... which are more resistant to innovation but, of course, reflect changes in the more plastic forms' of dress and music (Cohen 2005, p.71). From this Cohen distinguishes three forms of analysis that can be conducted on any subculture: historical, structural and phenomenological analysis. These three levels are all required for in-depth analysis of a subculture to be completed, a concept that I will discuss further in Chapter Five. John Clarke has furthered this idea by suggesting that

> We want to fill out that idea of 'magical resolution' by considering the limits of style in the context of the relation between a hegemonic culture and a subordinated one. By 'magical resolution' we understand not only an attempt to engage the problems arising from class contradictions, but also attempt to *solve* them which, crucially, do not mount their solution on the *real* terrain where the contradictions themselves arise, and which thus fail to pose an alternative, potentially counter-hegemonic solution. (1976, p.159)

Thus this 'magical resolution' was symbolically at least providing youth with an escape not only from control but also from the contradictions that emerged from their class position, reclaiming the cohesive elements destroyed in their parent culture, and finding alternative sources or structures of value and identity. A major consequence of

this change in relationship was for youths to begin marrying young to start their own families or to join a subculture to demonstrate their resistance to their parent culture (Cohen 2005, p.70). But as also indicated in the quotation above, this was a stylistic, cultural response; one which did not fundamentally challenge the economic inequalities from which the lack of control and power arise. Thus while subcultures supplied young people with a 'magical resolution' (Cohen 1972), at a fundamental level they did not solve the societal problems that were still prevalent.

Thus it was in this social context that many of these early CCCS theorists argued that subcultures stemmed solely from the working class (Cohen 1972; Hebdige 1979), as a 'magical resolution' (Cohen 1972) to the disenfranchisement experienced by young, working-class men. There was a 'shared sense of neighbourhood and "neighbouring", its shared sense of traditions and so on that is, it is a Gemeinschaft' (Clarke *et al.* 1976, p.37). Young people, Clarke *et al.* suggested, were turning to subcultures to work against, at least within their own quotidian worlds, the hegemony of the social structure of the time. They further advocated that '[w]hat mattered, therefore, [to these young people] was *not* the passive re-making of the working class in the "affluent" image, but the *dislocations* it produced and the responses it provoked' from the working-class youth (Clarke *et al.* 1976, p.37). Therefore each subculture, they argued, was and is created in relation to a 'parent subculture', that is a 'previous' or 'earlier' subculture: '[t]hrough dress, activities, leisure pursuits and life-style, they may project a different cultural response or "solution" to the problems posed for them by their material and social class position and experience' (Clarke *et al.* 1976, p.15). However, although Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) suggested that young people entered into subcultures to escape their class grouping, they still belonged to that class; they were not actually able to escape, which is why the solutions were considered 'magical'. While some used subcultures as a form of escapism, this was only a symbolic transition. However, as Clarke *et al.* also acknowledged, in reality 'there is no subcultural solution" to working-class youth unemployment, educational disadvantage, compulsory miseducation, dead-end jobs, the routinisation and specialisation of labour, low pay and the loss of skills' (1976, p.47). The personal did not translate into wider social change, for example the mods wishing to reflect culturally their new-found white-collar or upwardly mobile aspirations. Other forms

of escapism, for example skinheads and rockers, proudly reclaimed their (working) class position rather than trying to separate away from it (Clarke *et al.* 1976, p.99).

Dick Hebdige

CCCS theorist Dick Hebdige – through two of his now iconic books: *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) and *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (1988) – heavily influenced the early study of subculture. He argued that culture was hard to define[9] within the realms of modern society, and cultural studies sat between two main arguments. As Hebdige explained,

> [i]n the early years, when it was being established in the Universities, cultural studies sat rather uncomfortably on the fence between these two conflicting definitions – culture as a standard of excellence, culture as a 'whole way of life' – unable to determine which represented the most fruitful line of enquiry. (1979, p.7)

While both definitions could be applied, it is important to understand that culture 'as a whole' tends to move away from a privileging of the cultural practices of the elite (Hebdige 1979, p.7). This is a commitment Hebdige shared with other members of the CCCS, which was not only formative in the evolution of subcultural studies, but also a key origin point for cultural studies as a discipline. Taking the 'culture as whole way of life' approach to a study of youth practices, Hebdige observed (largely male, working-class) young people within a number of high-profile subcultures of the 1970s and 1980s, mainly punk and mod culture, and established crucial subcultural theoretical ideas, such as homology (1988, pp.113–117) and bricolage (1988, pp.103–104). While the CCCS focused on the physical spaces that subcultures occupied, Hebdige suggested that 'experience, expression and signification [are] ... not a constant in subculture' (1979, p.127), as subcultures are a series of contradictory processes coming together to form the groupings. '[I]ndividual subcultures can be

[9] Even without the prefix 'sub', the word 'culture' itself is a highly contested term that has been defined in a variety of ways. Raymond Williams defined the term in 1976 as being 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (p.67). This, he continues, 'is so partly because of its intricate historical development ... [but] mainly because it has now come to be used for several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought' (pp.76–77). The term culture is often thrown around without being clearly defined. The study of subcultures stemmed from the complexity of culture itself.

more or less "conservative" or "progressive", integrated *into* the community, continuous with the values of that community, or extrapolated *from* it, defining themselves *against* the parent culture' (original emphasis) (Hebdige 1979, p.127).

Hebdige also first identified what we now see as the typical life cycle of a subculture, what may be simplistically termed a 'boom to bust' trajectory. The end of the cycle, he observed, is identifiable by two complementary processes: defusion and diffusion. Hebdige suggested that, as the music and clothing styles of these subcultures became popular, other people began to adopt these once fairly close groupings' styles (Hebdige 1979, p.95). This is 'diffusion', the process by which the visual and aural markers of a subculture diffuse into society as a style trend; they go from being seen as aberrant to being mainstream fashion. As Hebdige explained,

> The creation and diffusion of new styles is inextricably bound up with the process of production, publicity and packaging which must inevitably lead to the defusion of the subculture's subversive power – both mod and punk innovations fed back directly into high fashion and mainstream markets. (1979, p.95)

As indicated, this process of diffusion of style is often attended by a simultaneous process of the defusion of the power held by the subculture (Hebdige 1979, p.95). As new trends are created they are often demonised by the media, leading to wide exposure. Once these styles and intrinsic practices of the subcultures become fashionable, high street stores will begin to generate profit by selling subcultural styles, leading to the defusion or containment of any resistant power once held. Defusion is a crucial process in the evolution of subcultures; it is seen as 'selling out' to the hegemonic ideological line as well as how resistance becomes neutralised by being commodified. Hebdige suggested that

> In most cases, it is the subculture's stylistic innovations which first attract the media's attention. Subsequently deviant or 'anti-social' acts – vandalism, swearing, fighting, 'animal behaviour' – are 'discovered' by the police, the judiciary, the press; and these acts are used to 'explain' the subculture's original transgression of sartorial codes ... Whichever item opens the amplifying sequence, it invariably ends with the simultaneous diffusion and defusion of the subcultural style. (1979, p.93)

As Hebdige suggested, subcultures go through a life cycle: they form, commonly within an underground setting; they are 'discovered' by the media; they are advertised; their style diffuses, their power defuses and the subculture then ends its

cycle. This process will be demonstrated in Chapter Three through the evolution of emo to the defusion of the grouping and it being recycled into something new.

Hebdige argued that subcultures appropriate styles, often from the upper classes, through a process of bricolage whereby a subculture will combine objects, signifiers and consumer goods that are ordinarily seen as benign and create something new and full of meaning (Hebdige 1979). Hebdige believed that the concept of bricolage, which he borrowed from Levi-Strauss, could be used to discuss and explain the consumption of commodities by subcultures. He suggested that a subculture would appropriate an item or sensibility from another cultural grouping and claim it as their own. Hebdige offered by way of example the 'way the teddy boy's theft and transformation of the Edwardian style [was] revived in the early 1950s by Saville Row for wealthy young men about town' (Hebdige 1988, p.104). The fashions were created for the exclusive stores of London and then 'taken' by subcultures as something of their own. 'Of course the "theft" of an upper-class style which had originally made the whole teddy boy style possible had long been forgotten, and in the process the precise nature of the transformation had been irrevocably lost' (1988, p.83). However, it was not only through bricolage that this process of displaying fashion to depict the group's ideology was undertaken.

Another concept that was borrowed by the CCCS subcultural theorists from Levi-Strauss was homology. It was first used in this new context by Paul Willis (1978) in his study of hippies and 'motor bike boys', where it 'describe[d] the symbolic fit between the values and lifestyles of a group, its subjective experience and the musical forms it uses to express or reinforce its focal concerns' (Hebdige 1979, p.113). The groups were chosen as they represented and reflected a larger image of group life: 'The objects chosen were, either intrinsically or in their adapted forms, homologous with the focal concerns, activities, group structure and collective self-image of the subculture' (Hebdige 1988, p.114). The objects thus chosen were those which reflected the core ideology of the groupings; the signifiers of clothing and aesthetic elements of dress were used to denote the ideals of the subculture. For example, punks would use safety pins to hold together clothing and to pierce their bodies, which signified a toughness and sharpness, qualities the subculture sought to embody aesthetically as well as socially (Hebdige 1979, p.26). These processes of bricolage

and homology were used by the working class to 'voice' discontent, which led to young people exploring subcultures as spaces for belonging, resistance and escapism. Hebdige also problematised the idea of homology in relation to punks, suggesting the concept was too simplistic. Punk style did not simply reflect the values of the subculture; rather punk style uniquely dramatised the conditions of its social historical moment (1979, p.117). While Hebdige established such core theories, other pioneering cultural studies theorists began to fill the gaps in this body of subcultural knowledge.

Gender and Subculture

The work of theorists such as Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber (1976) was crucial in acknowledging the role of women in subcultures. The place of women and girls in subcultures, not to mention female subcultures themselves, were largely ignored by the CCCS until theorists McRobbie and Garber wrote 'Girls and Subcultures' (1976). Due to the role of 'bedroom culture', as I will discuss later in this chapter in relation to teeny boppers, girls were ignored because of subcultural studies' emphasis upon subcultural visibility in 'the street'. For a mix of social and historical reasons, working-class young women at this time had comparatively fewer freedoms than young men to 'hang out' outside the home; rather they primarily constructed and lived out their (sub)cultures within the confines of their houses and bedrooms. This public invisibility was a direct result of girls being seen as 'innocent' and hence in need of the protection of their fathers and families. To be part of a 'deviant' group was a particularly risky gambit for women whose sexual reputation was seen as an asset in need of protection in order to secure a decent marriage and hence economic future (McRobbie & Garber 1976). As McRobbie and Garber articulated in 'Girls and Subcultures':

> The evidence about how active and present girls are in the main post-war sub-cultures is difficult to interpret finally, one way or the other, on what is presently known. Certainly, the weight of the evidence we have suggests that the majority of girls organise their social life almost as an alternative to the kind of 'qualifications' and risks which direct entrance into the boy culture (sub or mainstream) involves. Though the girls know that where sex is concerned boys 'have it easy', they don't have a sense of solidarity with girls who are ranked among the boys as having 'cheapened themselves'. (1976, pp.215–216)

These ‘risks’ that females took by participating in subcultures were both sexual and social risks; females risked their ‘purity’ (McRobbie & Garber 1976, p.209). As McRobbie and Garber further stated, girls are not only ‘absent from the classic sub-cultural ethnographic studies’, but also from

> the ‘pop’ histories (like Nutall, 1970), or personal accounts (like Daniel and McGuire, eds., 1972), or journalistic surveys (like Fyvel, 1963). When they *do* appear, it is either in ways which uncritically reinforce the stereotypical image of women with which we are now so familiar – for example, Fyvel’s reference, in his study of Teddy Boys, to ‘dumb, passive teenage girls, crudely painted’ (1963): or they are fleetingly and marginally presented. (1976, p.209)

Thus early subcultural studies upheld, if only in their absence, the idea that girls were insignificant in subcultures. Theorists showed less concern about the position of females in the groupings than the males; however, McRobbie and Garber (1976) identified that the role they did play in their subcultures was crucial.

The subcultural practices of females were at the forefront in McRobbie and Garber’s work, and their studies suggested that: ‘The important question may not be the absence or presence of girls in male subcultures, but the complementary ways in which young girls interact among themselves and with each other to form a distinctive culture of their own’ (1976, p.119). Historically, the mainstream media have played an integral role in the formation of female identity, from how to be the perfect housewife to portraying an independence (which was previously unseen), and, more recently, demonstrating how to achieve a subcultural ‘look’. This was not, however, a fast transition, nor a complete one; even while taking on a subcultural role, women still had a level of intimacy within the home. This is an important concept for females as they are seen as being in need of protection and sheltering even within modern society. McRobbie and Garber clearly put on the subcultural agenda the fact that what males and females sought from subcultures were different; a direct outcome of the different elements in society that were rebelled against by each group:

> Girls negotiate a different leisure space and different personal spaces from those inhabited by boys. These in turn offer them different possibilities for ‘resistance’ ... Some of the cultural forms associated with pre-teenage girls, for example, can be viewed as responses to their perceived status as girls and to their anxieties about moving into the world of teenage sexual interaction (McRobbie & Garber 1976, p.120)

Girls were seen to be responding to their physical surroundings and status as female, whereas boys were seen to be responding to their societal positioning as working class. With gender identity at the forefront of female's experience of the public world, this representation is how women are potentially presented by the media; all too often this is reduced to a simple dichotomy – girls are portrayed as either innocent ('deserving') or sexualised ('undeserving').[10] Importantly too for this thesis, as we will see, the culturally determined image that is portrayed by the media, even now, is that girls need to be protected and this unfair double standard is what often causes them to rebel against the cultural expectations of femininity.

McRobbie and Garber particularly acknowledged that musical subcultures were crucial for females, especially as embodied in the teeny bopper subculture, as it

> can easily be accommodated, for ten to fifteen year old girls, in the home, requiring only a bedroom and a record player and permission to invite friends ... The culture also offers a chance for both private and public manifestations – the postered bedroom or the rock concert. (1976, p.220)

This was not a subculture where girls were seen as being secondary to males, but rather, females were complementary to males (McRobbie & Garber 1976, p.219). However, teeny boppers were framed as being inauthentic, primarily because their culture was perceived as being commercial in its origins: '[i]t is an almost totally packaged cultural commodity' (McRobbie 2000, p.22) manufactured for young teenage girls to participate in (McRobbie & Garber 1976, pp.219–220). One of the crucial characteristics of teeny boppers was the fact that they could be targeted by marketing. The instability of genre and the rapid diffusion and defusion meant that '[t]he attractiveness of this market with its quick turnover potential (Mark Bolan this week, David Cassidy the next) offered ailing American film and broadcasting companies a chance to boost their profits too' (McRobbie & Garber 1976, p.220). This suggests that the experience of teeny boppers is 'inauthentic' as it was seen as a form of music consumption rather than a cultural artefact. This is carried through to today's young people, reinforcing the reading of the inauthenticity of teeny bopper as

[10] I will demonstrate this in Chapter Four through the use of photographs of people labelled as emo, such as Carly Ryan.

a subculture, a form of mainstream music rather than a niche market (McRobbie & Garber 1976, pp.219–221; McRobbie 2000, p.22).

We need to turn to middle-class countercultures to see how women and girls were represented in a more positive way, and their participation explored more fully. An example of this is the hippy counterculture which was fundamental in changing how females were seen within not just subcultures, but within society in general:

> Although the range of available and acceptable images of femininity tended to confirm already-existing stereotypes, none the less the hippy underground, set against a background of widespread social protest and youthful revolt, also represented an empowering space for women. Within its confines and even on the pages of the underground press, the first murmurings of feminism were heard. (McRobbie & Garber 1976, pp.118–119)

Although the culture still conformed to many of the already established gender stereotypes prevalent within other subcultures (such as punks or goths), hippies were positioned as linked to a level of independence for women in Western society, through practices such as attending university in the 1960s and 1970s (McRobbie & Garber 1976, p.118). This said, although in the 1960s when women were beginning to gain independence from traditional gender roles with the emergence of 'second-wave' feminism and other liberation movements, females in the hippy subculture were still delegated a specific gendered role, as McRobbie and Garber suggested:

> Traditional sex roles prevailed in the hippy subculture as numerous feminist authors have described. Femininity moved imperceptibly between the 'earth-mother', the pre-Raphaelite mystic, the kind of 'goddess' serenaded by Bob Dylan and the dreamy fragility of Marianne Faithful. Media representations and especially visual images, of course, have to be read and interpreted with care. (1976, p.118)

Thus the images of females from the hippy subculture that have prevailed to this day are of women like Joni Mitchell, a famous musical figure who rebelled against the mainstream social norms of the era, albeit in the mode of 'goddess' critiqued above (McRobbie & Garber 1976, p.118). Interestingly, it is largely the females of the subculture whose images have endured: the long hair, daisy chains and peace signs. The research of McRobbie and Garber (among others) put female subcultural practice on the agenda; however, even in this body of work there was still a sense of girls and women being 'victims', such as in media reports of young women and negative behaviours. As I will discuss, the argument wavered between the extremes of the

classic 'virgin–whore'[11] dichotomy as the only two positions for women (Allen 1983; Wyman & Dionisopoulos 2000; Karam 2008), a key idea that I will further explore in Chapter Four in relation to emo.

CCCS Critiques

Although now highly contested, the work of the CCCS has been central to the development of the field of cultural studies, and in turn subcultural studies, in Britain and elsewhere. Gelder suggests that the CCCS looked at subcultures as 'a kind of *lumpenproletariat* that lived out its transgressions in a restricted cultural field, through styles, while at leisure, and so on' (2007, p.104). Subcultures as mapped by this early work were all pushed into a singular mould, one set of ideas, namely that they were produced from the working class, comprised of white males and were a form of resistance. While the centre covered a wealth of different material there were still areas that were overlooked. There are numerous critiques of the centre's work (Gelder & Thornton 1997; Muggleton 2000; Cohen 2002), including as we have seen from within it in the case of people such as McRobbie (Bennett 2000, p.20). Thus among the critiques levelled against it, as we have seen, one of the main concerns with the centre's approach was its gender bias (Hebdige 1979; Cohen 1986, 1987; Gelder & Thornton 1997; Burke & Sunley 1998; Bennett 1999, 2000; Muggleton 2000). Other scholars still, as we shall also see further below, focused on race in subcultures, which had previously been absent (Willis 1978; Jacobs 1979; Gilroy 1987).

Another of the most highly contested elements of the CCCS remains the methodology that was employed to investigate subcultures. The studies that emerged were largely semiotically based textual analyses (cf. Hebdige 1979, 1988; Hall 1981) which meant that they were not empirically grounded; hence the members' actual account of what

[11] The virgin–whore dichotomy has a long history, with '[f]eminist critiques regarding media representations of women hav[ing] noted that female sexuality is often depicted within the boundaries of two opposing categories: one encompassing characters who are moralistic, nurturing, and asexual, and the other consisting of those who are unethical, dangerous and erotic' (Wyman & Dionisopoulos 2000, p.209).

it meant to them to be a part of a subculture was missing. As Shane Blackman describes, a semiotic approach was undertaken to

> [e]xamine the order or structure underlying general meanings and in general it places less emphasis on empirical research studies (Craib, 1984:108) ... young people's experience of youth culture was not the paramount focus; priority was given to the structuralist approach to examine youth culture for a coherent system of meaning and messages related to resistance. (1998, p.211)

The CCCS focused on the structural analysis of subcultures to explore the relationship between society and the young people who participated in subcultures. This approach was favoured while the CCCS was under the leadership of Richard Hoggart, who investigated the 'structures of power, [and] the "politics" of the media' (Turner 2003, p.64). The 'textual' approach remained, though the main data set became media representation upon Stuart Hall taking over as Director from Hoggart in 1968 (Procter 2004, p.51). The focus shifted under Hall: 'the relations between media and ideology were investigated though the analysis of signifying systems in texts' (Turner 2003, p.64).

Although Hebdige's work is foundational, it has also been highly criticised for, among other issues, suggesting that subcultures are 'authentic', or at least have a 'pure' moment before selling out. As cultural sociologist Sarah Thornton suggests, Hebdige's work 'is heavily dependent on the mainstream as the yardstick against which youth's "resistance through rituals" and subversion through style is measured' (1995, p.93). However, it is Hebdige's definition of the mainstream which Thornton critiques: 'Each reference to the "mainstream" in *Subculture* [*The Meaning of Style*] points in a different direction, but if one added them up, the resultant group would be some version of the "bourgeoisie" whose function within Hebdige's history is, of course, to be shocked' (Thornton 1995, p.93). As suggested, Hebdige's work was largely informed by a semiotic 'reading' of the subculture's aesthetic (fashion, styling and musical) qualities, which he compared with the mainstream culture to suggest an authentic new subculture.

Hebdige was further critiqued on a number of critical points. Gary Clarke, an academic from the CCCS, suggests that

> It is true that most youths do not enter into the subcultures in the elite form described in the literature, but large numbers do draw on particular elements of

> subcultural style and create their own meanings and uses of them. The concept of *bricolage* does not apply simply to an exclusive few – most working-class youths (and adults) combine elements of clothing to create new meanings. If anything, what makes subcultures outstanding is *not* their obvious *bricolage* (as Hebdige argues), but the lack of any fashion confusion as a style becomes a 'uniform'. (1997, p.173)

Hebdige saw subcultures as being different from anything seen before, whereas, as McRobbie (1994, p.159) argues, subcultures are largely recycled, that is, they feed off each other, so they are rarely totally original. Clarke offers an important perspective in the above critique regarding the 'uniform' of subcultures. Specific styles are adopted by young people when they enter into a grouping, which allows them to identify as being a part of the culture. This crucial element of clothing style helps to identify societal groupings and allow for belonging. Although critiques such as these exist of Hebdige's work, innovatively he did use a textual or semiotic approach to make some very valid, not to mention influential, observations and points about youth cultural practices which continue to resonate both inside and outside of the academy today.

A further and final criticism that has been levelled at the work of the CCCS that I will touch upon here as it is important to situating groups such as emos, as well as marking a logical transition point to more recent subcultural analysis, was the idea that subcultures are exclusively made up of the young, white working class (see, for example, Clarke 1976; Corrigan 1979; Cook 2000; Cohen 2002; Bennett & Kahn-Harris 2004). This blind spot has been particularly challenged by scholars in North America and Australia, where given different histories of class relationships it has been suggested that class conflict is not an inherently crucial element of subcultural identity as was outlined in British scholarship. As argued above, a fundamental starting point of CCCS subcultural studies was the idea that, due to the poor conditions faced by working-class young people and their families, they acted out in any way they could, including associating themselves with subcultures that were a response to a specific set of social conditions.[12] But this is not to say that the CCCS

[12] This is hardly surprising given that CCCS scholars identified class location as all-encompassing:

> Class also, broadly, structures the young individual's life-chances. It determines, in terms of statistical class probabilities, the distribution of

completely ignored the middle class; merely that they did not identify them as capable of being engaged in subcultures *per se*. In early CCCS work, groupings of middle-class youths were not referred to as subcultures, rather Clarke *et al.* (1976) largely referred to them as countercultures. For example: 'Middle-class counter-culture spearheaded a dissent from their own, dominant, "parent" culture. Their disaffiliation was principally ideological and cultural' (Clarke *et al.* 1976, p.62). Where they suggested that young people from the working class joined subcultures to escape the power held by groups such as the middle class, the middle class, they argued, used countercultures to fight the institutions in society that created the rules. Thus the middle class 'directed their attack mainly against those institutions which reproduce the dominant cultural-ideological relations – the family, education, the media, marriage, the sexual division of labour' (Clarke *et al.* 1976, p.62). These countercultures emerged largely due to the fact that young people were starting to rebel against power sources such as education systems, as seen in the French 1968 University Rebellion (Roszak 1969, p.3), to assert their power. I will return to this examination of middle-class influence on youth groupings when examining other terms that have been suggested, such as scene, post-subcultural studies and lifestyle.

Writing some years after the initial work of the CCCS, McRobbie (1994) suggests that, following the punk subculture, the previous characteristics used to define subcultures, such as class and a consistent visual style and set of rituals, are no longer as critical as they once were. Rather there are more specific details, such as musical taste, aesthetic, attitude and locations, that need to be examined and added to the debate:

> Since class no longer underwrites the critical project of cultural analysis, and ideology seems too monolithic a category, too focused on passivity and conformity to be usefully alert to the more micrological level of dispute and contestation, we can scale down the field of study and abandon all claims on

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> 'achievement' and 'failure'. It establishes certain crucial orientations towards careers in education and work – it produces the notoriously 'realistic' expectations of working-class kids about future opportunities. It teaches ways of relating to and negotiating authority. (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts 1976, p.49)

> unity of totality in favour of pursuing what Laclau has called the 'dignity of the specific'. (McRobbie 1994, p.154)

Without the primary focus on class, other aspects of subcultures began to come into focus such as gender (McRobbie & Garber 1976) and also race (Willis 1978). Like that of gender, the activities of young people of colour were largely overlooked within the CCCS's analysis of subcultures. As Kenneth Thompson, a sociologist, suggests, 'for a long time, blacks (and girls) did not feature as active agents in the subcultures literature, but rather as victims and hangers-on' (1998, p.49). One exception to this is the work of Paul Willis. He identifies that there is a strange dichotomy operating within much subcultural analysis whereby 'black music' was taken on by white subcultures; however, black people themselves were not a part of the groupings (Willis 1978). Hebdige was one of the few prominent academics who specifically acknowledged this contradiction within white subcultures:

> a series of mediated responses to the presence in Britain of a sizable black community. As we have seen, the proximity of the two positions – white working class youth and Negro – invited identification and even when this identity is repressed or openly resisted, black cultural forms (e.g. music) continue to exercise a major determining influence over the development of each subcultural style. (1979, p.73)

In the UK at this time there were, and are, significant, often strongly music-linked, subcultures that were predominantly not white, such as reggae, hip hop and bhangra, but most subcultures that were studied at the height of the subcultural studies of the CCCS period largely ignored race and/or 'Other' subcultures. As Graham Murdock suggests,

> Within cultural studies writing Britain's black population has frequently been celebrated as a source of white style or empathised with as victims of racism, but until now their own cultural strategies remained mostly uncharted. Consequently, black students coming to the area often experienced its analyses of the national condition as a 'morbid celebration of England and Englishness from which blacks (were) systematically excluded' (Gilroy, 1987: 12). (1997, p.66)

Paul Gilroy focuses on the politics of race in works such as *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack* where he suggests that class and race are seen within the same sphere, where they should be seen as 'separate spheres of experience with different epistemological and ontological valencies' (1987, p.2). There was a significant period of time following World War Two when black culture was marginalised in favour of a

focus on ‘white culture’ even though black culture was an important influence on these ‘white’ cultural forms. This is not to suggest that this was exclusively a condition in Britain, quite the opposite; this was a problem around the globe. A number of Australian theorists, also and by way of example, denied the role of race in subcultures, as well as the significance of Indigenous culture (Murdock 1997, p.67). The overemphasis on class and the elision of race are important criticisms in the development of subcultural studies.

Subculture’s Ethnographic Turn: Rave

Following the criticisms of the CCCS for the reliance and focus on semiotic analysis to explore subcultures, with the emergence of the dance music and rave subcultures in the 1980s an ‘ethnographic turn’ took place. Following the initial flourish of interest in subcultural studies brought about by the groundbreaking work of the CCCS and the critiques which followed it (Hebdige 1979; McRobbie & Nava 1984; Schulman 1993; Gelder & Thornton 1997; Burke & Sunley 1998; Bennett 1999, 2000; Muggleton 2000; Cohen 2002; Bennett & Kahn-Harris 2004), came a ‘second wave’ of subcultural studies that erupted alongside the emergence of dance music culture in the UK and elsewhere (Redhead 1990, 1993, 1995, 1997; Redhead, Wynne & O’Connor 1997; Rietveld 1998; Luckman 1998; Gilbert & Pearson 1999; Malbon 1999; Pini 2001; St John 2001, 2004, 2010). The work that followed the initial subcultural studies, in no small part driven by the critiques of this earlier body of work, tended to be strongly ethnographic (Thornton 1995; Rietveld 1998; Malbon 1999; Pini 2001; St John 2001, 2010). Perhaps wary of the CCCS critiques, instead of researchers standing outside of the subculture looking in, they became a part of the subculture, or already were, and they analysed it from the first person perspective. Thus academics including Sarah Thornton (1995), Maria Pini (2001), Steve Redhead (1993, 1997), Derek Wynne (1998), Hillegonda Rietveld (1998) and Tammy Anderson (2009) used an ethnographic approach to examine rave and club cultures. Youth studies went from what was essentially an analysis of people as ‘texts’ to embodied case studies where the researchers would immerse themselves in the subcultures that they may or may not have previously been a part of, in order to understand what was occurring from an ‘insider’ perspective. ‘Participant observation’ is the key mode employed when performing an ethnographic study; however Sarah Thornton suggests these two main components, ‘participation and observation – are not necessarily complementary. In

fact, they often conflict' (1995, p.105). Being so ensconced in the culture can make it hard to observe the grouping; the researcher cannot take notes and remain inconspicuous.

Maria Pini also used an ethnographic approach to explore rave cultures. Pini suggests that, 'although I did not operate within any kind of traditional ethnographic framework, I *was* at great pains to visit as wide a variety of London-based night dance events as possible' (2001, p.89). Pini then used these experiences of observation, participation and being a 'detached onlooker ... [to source] "data" and [also] as a useful resource in many different ways' (2001, p.89). It is not purely the aesthetics and outward behaviour of a subculture that is important; rather how the members interact and come to know themselves through the groupings. There is a fine line in ethnographic research between being a participator and being an observer. As Pini describes,

> Within sociology and anthropology alike, debate about participant observation has often focused upon the correct degree of involvement the observer should achieve. She must be neither too detached (in which case, 'insiders' may become suspicious), nor too involved (in which case she may find it difficult to 'get out', or difficult to sustain the level of critical distance necessary for study. She may also 'influence' the group in such a way as to raise questions about validity, bias and generalisability). (2001, p.90)

Ethnographic studies require a careful balance between being part of the cultural grouping and being a researcher. The researcher needs to be able to be sympathetic without being too involved and distant without being too removed. It is critical in any ethnographic study to be able to keep a certain distance while also not alienating the subjects of the study.

Hodkinson also undertook ethnographic studies, preferring to use 'insider research' to counteract the arguments of the 'multifaceted and unstable nature of identities' that ethnographic studies encounter (2005, p.132). Even as a practising insider there are different roles that can be assigned, whether it be confidant, friend, parental figure or leader. Studies by the CCCS presume that there are only 'insiders' and 'outsiders'; however this is too simplistic and does not take into account those who may practice some aspects of a subculture while not fully participating (Hodkinson 2005, p.132). As Hodkinson points out, that

> all manner of divisions and ambiguities may be found beneath the massive umbrella category of 'youth culture' is long established, of course (see Valentine *et al.* 1998). More recently, however, increasing doubts have also been expressed over the existence of individual groups of young people sufficiently substantive to allow the clear designation of insiders and outsiders. Notably subcultural studies, which placed emphasis upon the gravitation of young people towards distinctive, normatively consistent cultural groupings characterised by clear boundaries of 'us' and 'them'. (Hodkinson 2005, p.133)

Despite this stated division, there is not a clear boundary between young people who participate in subcultures and those who do not; that is, there are not clear and distinctive divides between groupings. As the post-subcultural perspective, as I discuss, suggests, 'youth cultural groupings must be regarded as diverse, ephemeral and loosely bounded, something that would make the proximity or distance of social researchers variable and hard to predict' (Hodkinson 2005, p.133). With the fluidity of youth cultures, being able to immerse yourself as a researcher into the culture can be difficult but will also provide a perspective and intimate positioning that cannot be otherwise obtained.

Although an important method for cultural studies research, ethnographic studies are problematic as participant observation raises a number of issues including that

> [t]he ideas and theories generated in one setting can ... provide only a basis for understanding similar phenomena in other settings rather than enabling the prediction of behaviour in other contexts. As interpretations are seen as changing over time, replicating interpretive research on different occasions will also not yield the same results (Nandhakumar 1997, p. 210).

Discussing his own ethnographic study of the implementation of an information business system into a workplace, Joe Nandhakumar (1997) suggested that, while valuable, the results of ethnographic studies cannot be applied to all groupings as there are different contexts that will need to be considered and will alter the results. As well as this, and crucially, the presence of a researcher can alter the behaviour of the participants (Nandhakumar 1997, p. 209; Mills, Eurepos & Wiebe 2010, p.654). These criticisms, while important to acknowledge, do not detract from the usefulness of ethnographic studies. As one of the leading methodologies chosen by cultural studies researchers, ethnographic studies provides a unique and useful insight that may not otherwise be achieved.

Subcultural Capital

One new(ish) concept which has been embraced by many subcultural scholars and which emerged out of this body of ethnographic scholarship is Sarah Thornton's notion of 'subcultural capital', which is seen as a valuable tool for explaining internal hierarchies and the ascription of value within particular cultural groupings. Here she clearly draws upon Pierre Bourdieu's work on cultural capital. Bourdieu, in his 1986 publication 'The Forms of Capital' first maps out the three different levels of capital – cultural, economic and social – he sees as circulating in society. As Bourdieu explains, 'Capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its "incorporated," embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor' (1986, p.241). Bourdieu proposes that people gain cultural capital through lived experiences which can then be used to situate a person within society and their social interactions. For example, a person who visits art galleries or museums gains cultural capital which supplies them with an education and an ability to discuss exhibits with others. Rather than meet the individual requirements and needs of each person, the different types of capital enable a person to engage with society which can then be used to define and distinguish social systems. This can be usefully applied to the study of subculture as a way of describing the practices of distinction and differentiation that exist within subcultural groupings. A person can possess subcultural capital which helps to define the grouping and how they are seen; thus Thornton defined subcultural capital as something that can be

> *objectified* or *embodied*. Just as books and paintings display cultural capital in the family home, so subcultural capital is objectified in the form of fashionable haircuts and well-assembled record collections (full of well-chosen, limited edition 'white label' twelve-inches and the like). Just as cultural capital is personified as 'good' manners and urbane conversation, so subcultural capital is embodied in the form of being 'in the know'. (1995, p.11)

Thornton studied dance music cultures, in particular young people who frequently interact at dance clubs and raves, to distinguish how they participated in the grouping and the level of subcultural capital this gave them. A person's level of subcultural capital is directly related to the level of investment they have in a particular subculture. There is an internal hierarchy within each subculture that means that those who are 'in the know' possess more subcultural capital than other members who are not. But while the concept remains useful, it is not without its detractors. Sociologist

Sune Qvotrup Jensen critiques Thornton's concept for largely ignoring Bourdieu's concept of capital, also suggesting that it forgoes the inclusion of the complex relationship of 'class, gender, ethnicity and "race"' (2006, p.265). Jensen suggests that Thornton's concept of subcultural capital is important but must be adapted to include a social hierarchy that includes the elements of race and ethnicity; that is, we need to understand how participants are positioned both inside and outside of the subculture to understand their participation fully (2006, p.265).

'Post-subcultures': A New Language for Subcultural Studies

Arising out of the 'second wave' work on dance music cultures, in the 1990s and into the 2000s the ongoing debate continued into the standing of subcultural theory itself. David Muggleton takes a Weberian approach to subcultures, that is one where the 'meaning of social interaction for participants is foregrounded' (Shields 1996, pp.ix–x) rather than observation as the CCCS did. Gary Clarke (1982) criticises the CCCS for its lack of attention to social interaction, suggesting that

> The Centre's subculturalists are correct to break away from a crude conception of class as an abstract relationship to the forces of production. However, subcultures are defined in terms of the possession of particular artefacts and styles rather than as a whole 'way of life' structured by the social relations based on class, gender, race, and age. Consequently we are given little sense of what subcultures actually *do* ... Even if we accept that it is possible to read youth styles as a form of resistance, the Centre's claims that subcultures 'operate exclusively in the leisure sphere' mean that the institutional sites of hegemony (those of school, work, and home) are ignored. (1982, p.18)

While the studies of the CCCS were crucial for the field of cultural studies, there were gaps in the research due to seeing subcultures as a fashion statement or a fleeting affiliation, something that participants would "grow out of", rather than a entire way of life. Reflecting their own particular political agendas, many of the centre's theorists took on a Marxist approach to discuss the above aspects of subcultures. Muggleton suggests three important points that outline issues with a Marxist approach to cultural studies. The first is that 'the employment of a Marxist theory has led to ... problems in youth subcultural analysis that a Weberian approach is able to avoid. These are the problems of: (a) authenticity and origins; (b) mobility and change; and (c) realist ethnography' (Muggleton 2000, p.20). The authenticity of and within subcultures has

often been questioned, as will be seen through the discussion of the three waves of emo.

Importantly, when discussing the original definition of subculture Muggleton suggests that it is not as applicable as it once was, 'for the breakdown of mass society has ensured that there is no longer a coherent dominant culture against which a subculture can express its resistance' (2000, p.48). One of the most crucial points that the CCCS makes is that subcultures are formed out of working-class youth discontent; Muggleton suggests that there is no longer this discontent that young people need to fight against, but rather that subcultures have become part of the 'status quo' (2003, p.224).[13] Muggleton's valuable approach has thus led to a new stream of research referred to as post-subcultural studies in his publication *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style* (2000). Post-subcultural theorists argue that subcultures and subcultural identity are not 'fixed', rather they are fluid, fragmented and continuously in flux. Gelder suggests that 'some of the "post-subcultural" commentators have complained about the '"seriousness" of CCCS approaches to subcultures ... [post-subcultures] unhook subcultures from class, releasing them from all the traditions and rituals and theoretical baggage that accompanied this kind of identification' (2007, p.104). Membership is understood here as being voluntary rather than being determined by class position, as previous subcultural studies suggested. Post-subcultural theorists suggest that young people 'make conscious and self-conscious choices', which separates these studies from the CCCS which suggested that young people did not choose to be a part of a subculture, rather it 'happened' to them (Gelder 2007, pp.104–105).

Following on from *Inside Subculture* another influential text that emerged shortly after was the collection *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (2003). The types of cultural formations identified within the post-subcultural literature are individualised forms of expression, which are fleeting or shifting associations (Weinzierl & Muggleton 2003,

[13] This is an important point for this thesis in its exploration of emo for, while there is no longer the specified class conflict that there once was, there is still a discontent among young people. I will explore this idea further in Chapter Five.

p.6). The editors of *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, Weinzierl and Muggleton, identify two main strands within post-subcultural studies:

> The first strand attempts to jettison the whole theoretical apparatus of the CCCS and establish a new framework for the analysis of contemporary subcultural phenomena ... [The second strand] goes even further in rejecting outright any possibility of the continuing usefulness of the subculture terminus itself. (2003, pp.5–6)

What Muggleton and Weinzierl were suggesting is that a new theoretical approach is required, one that incorporates the flexibility that is intrinsic to post-subcultures as well as the 'changing sensibilities' of modern groupings. However some did not feel that this went far enough. What also started to emerge more strongly at this time was that scholars in 'New World' countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States needed to approach the study of youth cultures in different ways to the traditional CCCS theorisation, particularly as there were groups that were unique to these countries, and importantly, they had very different relationships towards class structure. Muggleton describes subcultures and their relationship to class structures as 'manifestations of self-expression, individual autonomy and cultural diversity, and ... these traits have an elective affinity with bohemian values that have increasingly come to define the experiences of sections of post-war working-class and lower-middle-class youth' (2000, p.167). Paul Hodkinson and Wolfgang Deike suggest in *Youth Cultures: Scenes, Subcultures and Tribes* that the work of post-subcultural theorists is 'criticised for continuing to focus on spectacular dress and music or activities such as skating, graffiti, clubbing or drug-taking' (2007, p.13). With the introduction of new technologies and new understandings of youth subcultures, certainly it was becoming clear that a new set of theoretical tools were needed to understand these discrete cultural groupings.

One of the authors from *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, Geoff Stahl (2003), suggests that there is a need to understand the role of the different capitals, to be able to understand the new wave of subcultural studies, as well as the subculture's position in society; 'The overarching field, of which these narrower fields are subsets, is the field of power' (Stahl 2003, p.32). Bourdieu suggests that those who have a

> strong educational capital ... [also have] inherited strong cultural capital, and so enjoy a duel title to cultural nobility, the self-assurance of legitimate membership

> and the ease given by familiarity ... are opposed ... to those who lack both educational capital and inherited cultural capital (2013, p.74).

This means that cultural capital is that which is gained through education and through the way that a person is raised. Theorists of post-subcultures suggested that subcultural activity and identification was no longer about class, as the CCCS previously suggested; rather it was about the different levels of cultural capital that one possesses.

> An emphasis on the specificities of local and regional cultures understood in a global setting, where spaces become sites fraught with competition, negotiation and accommodation occurring on multiple and intersecting places, undermines any notion of a single determinant, often cast in essentialist terms (class, ethnicity, age, gender), which might exist as the overarching structuring principle of contemporary cultural practices, references and formations. (Stahl 1999)

Stahl is suggesting that there are multiple vectors influencing subcultural identity and participation, that is, subcultures emerge in a number of complex ways based on complex factors and these need to be acknowledged as an important part of the formation of youth groupings. Post-subcultures is an influential theory that allows for further understanding of how and why these groupings formed rather than the 'expected' ways of the CCCS.

Neo-Tribes

At the same time that post-subcultural studies was being developed, French sociologist Michel Maffesoli also began writing about the fracturing of the social world into discrete cultural groupings. His ideas, once translated, were found to be useful within English-language subcultural studies. Maffesoli saw Western society as entering a time where there is a loss of the individual, and that we are rather entering a stage of niche consumer culture (Maffesoli 1996, p.64). Subcultures are seen to be disbanding and Maffesoli argues that a new phenomenon is occurring, that of neo-tribes. As Maffesoli describes:

> It is possible to state that the networks forming within our megalopolises are rediscovering a role for themselves of mutual aid, conviviality, commensality, professional support and sometimes even of the cultural rituals ... whatever name we give these groupings – kinship groups, family groups, secondary groups, peer groups – there is a process of tribalism at work that has always existed but which, according to the era, has been more or less valued. (1996, p.69)

Maffesoli argues that there are 'groupings' within society; however, with consumerism and the constant onslaught of fashion trends being produced *en masse*, it is becoming hard to distinguish individuality. Maffesoli analysed Durkheim's views on society, arguing that 'the saturation of the political form goes hand in hand with the saturation of individualism. Paying close attention to this fact, is another way of investigating the masses' (1996, p.64). Maffesoli is suggesting in particular that, as young people conform to popular fashion and culture, we are losing the individual to a 'less distinct mass' (1996, p.64).

Although Maffesoli was the first to acknowledge and write about the phenomenon of 'neo-tribes', as Paul Hodkinson suggests, the concept of 'neo-tribes' has been especially embraced by scholars in search of a new terminology for subcultures in light of their critiques that the moment which gave rise to the tightly bounded subcultures of the CCCS's day has passed, and with it the value of the concept:

> Some of those who have emphasized the apparent fluidity and instability of contemporary youth cultures have focused upon the notion of 'neo-tribalism' as a means to make sense of it. While their individual explanations differ somewhat, both Maffesoli (1996) and Bauman (1992) make use of this term to refer to the increasing propensity of loose-knit and ephemeral elective cultural groupings, characterized by partial commitment and porous boundaries. (Hodkinson 2007, p.10)

Maffesoli's ideas were also taken up by scholars of music cultures such as Andy Bennett, who argues that, with this fluidity of youth cultural groups, the term subculture can no longer be used because it has become a 'convenient "catch-all" term for any aspect of social life in which young people, style and music intersect' (Bennett 1999, p.599). In his critique of the value of the term, Bennett identifies two key ideas: the first is that it is being progressively used by sociologists with a lack of 'objectivity', meaning that it is used in contradictory ways as a term for youth subcultures that are '"coherent" or "fixed"' (Bennett 1999, p.605). Bennett further suggests that studies that use the term subculture in regards to youth suggest that they are 'subsets of society, or cultures within cultures' (1999, p.605). This requires definite lines of division between sectors of society; however, this is a difficult theory to put into practice as the lines of division are not always clear. As a turning point in subcultural studies, Bennett sees the previous research as being too 'rigidly bound' to be useful in contemporary settings, whereas neo-tribes 'assume a more fluid' nature

(Bennett 1999, p.614). Bennett also proposes that the term 'group' can no longer be used to describe youth assembly due to the fluidity and dependent nature of the situation; rather, from a postmodern perspective,

> the group is no longer a central focus for the individual but rather one of a series of foci or 'sites' within which the individual can live out a selected, temporal role or identity before relocating to an alternative site and assuming a different identity (Bennett 1999, p.605).

This explanation of 'group' suggests a definition parallel to Maffesoli's description of *tribus*.

For Maffesoli the role of the consumer was crucial in determining the shift between the individual and the collective (Bennett 1999, p.606). For Bennett 'neo-tribalism provides a much more adequate framework' of study than subculture, for with its basis in (consumer) choice in a complex landscape 'it allows for the shifting nature of youth's musical and stylistic preferences and the essential fluidity of youth cultural groups' (1999, p.614). Thus for Bennett the vision of neo-tribes as fleeting moments where connections are made within certain conditions of possibility is a much more appropriate way to conceive of young people's fleeting cultural belongings. Although Bennett subsequently revised this position to offer alternative concepts, such as scene, as the means through which to understand youth cultural groupings, his example of neo-tribal formations in electronic dance music cultures demonstrates that consumption also plays a key role and, much like Maffesoli, that the tastes of young people are fluid.

Although the theory of neo-tribes as described by Maffesoli can be beneficial in a new definition of subculture, it has been critiqued as such an approach ignores those who are part of a particular scene for their whole life (Bennett 2004, pp.120–121). Although some people do not maintain cultural affiliations for their whole lives there are many who will choose a particular grouping and keep this association, as is the case for many goths (Hodkinson 2002) or metalheads (Kahn-Harris 2007). Not understanding these youth groups on the individual level, but rather purely on the 'tribal' level as Maffesoli (1996) suggests, does not give an understanding of the motivations of individuals within a youth group, which would allow for further understanding of how the grouping is formed and consequently diffuses into society.

Blackman argues the theories of neo-tribe often assume a purely 'voluntarist' membership and show a 'reluctance to consider the way in which choice is also imposed on young people by capital, structures and institutions [which] fails to give voice to different young people's experiences of marginality' (2004, p.12). Blackman goes on to suggest that these ideas fail to take on board concepts of social engagement through the 'cultural structures of society' (2007, p.12). Individual identity is an important part of a modern understanding of youth culture. Maffesoli's definition of neo-tribes suggests that there is a 'saturation of individualism' and that 'the phenomena of fashion, standardized culture, up to and including the *unisexualization* of appearance, permit us to claim that what we are witnessing is the loss of the idea of the individual in favour of a much less distinct mass' (Maffesoli 1996, p.64). However further studies such as those conducted by Muggleton (2000; 2003), Malbon (1999), Bennett (2000), and Hesmondhalgh (2007) suggest a fluidity of identity as social aspects such as class, sexuality and ethnicity are traded for consumerist identity. This idea of fluidity informs modernised definitions of youth groupings

Lifestyles

Building upon the idea of neo-tribes, Bennett also proposed a new formation to describe the way that individual 'identities are constructed and lived out' (1999, p.607). Of 'lifestyle' Bennett suggests that

> Young people take the cultural resources provided by the popular culture industries and use the prescribed meanings attached to such resources as a template round which to construct their own forms of meaning and authenticity. Although the resulting variations in musical significance obviously retain a sense of connectedness – for example, hip hop enthusiasts possess essentially the same sensibilities of commercially communicated style, musical taste and 'street-talk' irrespective of their location on the globe – at the same time they become infused with distinctive knowledges and sensibilities which originate from the particular region in which they are lived out. (2000, p.27)

Young people are using already existing resources and turning these into something of their own. Although fashions and shared values are largely the same around the globe for any shared youth grouping, young people are forming their own definitions and meanings depending on where they are regionally and the knowledge's that they possess. These aspects are then taken and infused into a particular lifestyle. Sociologist David Chaney shares a similar position to Bennett, suggesting that

> The strongest empirical purchase of a concept of lifestyle, in earlier historical contests as well as more recently, has always been in relation to minorities who have been forced by ostracism and discrimination to insist upon certain distinctive ways of speaking, dietary and leisure habits as well as values to delineate a mutually sustaining identity ... In this respect it becomes virtually impossible to distinguish lifestyles and subcultures, particularly when fashion in dress and entertainment, etc. becomes a constitutive symbolic vocabulary (as in Hebdige's now classic account of youth subculture (1979)). (Chaney 1996, p.35)

Where there is a shared identity and commonality there a 'lifestyle' can be formed. There is an important distinction between lifestyle and subculture in that lifestyle does not presume resistance and class distinction in the way that the CCCS's definition of subculture does. Importantly Bennett suggests that, while subcultures are seen as a 'way of life', lifestyles are a 'freely chosen game' where identities are 'self-constructed' (1999, p.607). Any youth grouping will have a shared identity, but the wider scope that the concept of lifestyle provides, such as the idea that there is not a presumed resistance in the groupings, can be used to inform a new definition of youth cultures.

Music Scenes

As well as neo-tribes and lifestyle, an important and highly influential theory that can be used to scope youth groupings is scene. 'Scene' emerged out of music studies and, while the connection between 'scenes' and youth cultures is relatively new, the term 'scenes' has been around for a few decades (Shank 1988, 1994; Straw 1991, 2004; O'Connor 2002; Stahl 2009; Shuker 2005; Hodkinson & Deicke 2007). A key theorist of scene, Barry Shank wrote in *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'Roll Scene in Austin Texas* (1994) that, rather than subcultures, scenes were new (again more fluid) groupings which engaged heavily in music:

> Spectators become fans, fans become musicians, musicians are always already fans, all constructing the nonobjects of identification through their performances as subjects of enunciation – becoming and disseminating the subject-in-progress of the signifying practice of rock'n'roll music. (Shank 1994, p.131)

Individuals immerse themselves into a particular music scene and become a part of that scene, identifying with it and all that it portrays; they will use the music to create an identity. There is also an 'equally powerful struggle to affirm the value of that

practice in the complexly structured late-capitalist marketplace' (Shank 1994, p.x). There is a connection between musical practices and a sense of commercialism; where there is a musical grouping there is an economic market. As Shank further explains of the Austin rock and roll scene, the focus of his book, there was a 'shift not only in the economic organization of the city's rock'n'roll scene, but also in the musical and cultural aesthetics of that scene and, therefore, in the subjective qualities of any identities it might produce' (Shank 1994, p.x). There are important conditions that need to be met for a scene to be created: a musical style, an aesthetic presence, a geographical space and a sense of community.

Will Straw explored the world of music and journalism in the 1950s to suggest that 'Each historical moment like this is ripe with lessons about the role of writing, law and commerce in shaping those phenomena we call "scenes"' (2002, p.246). One of the most influential figures in exploring the idea of 'scenes', Straw suggests that there is a risk of scenes becoming the new buzzword, much like subculture has previously, and that it will become 'the latest concept deployed to convey the messy indeterminacy of urban life' (2002, p.249). Straw defines scenes as being 'geographically specific spaces for the articulation of multiple musical practices' (2002, p.249). Music cultures are an integral part of all communities, having been around for centuries:

> one may posit a musical scene as distinct, in significant ways, from older notions of a musical community ... [Musical community takes] the form of an ongoing exploration of one or more musical idioms said to be rooted within a geographically specific historical heritage. (Straw 1991, p.373)

The audience of musical scenes is not rigid. Rather it is fluid; fans can come and go or can move between scenes. As an example of the importance of scenes, Straw investigated the alternative music culture of the United States and Canada and the issues of localism (1991, p.378). Straw suggests that, '[i]n their reliance on small-scale infrastructures of production and dissemination, these spaces are rooted deeply within local circumstances, a feature commonly invoked in claims as to their political significance' (1991, p.378). He argues that where a music style begins will always be an important aspect of the culture. When the music is removed from this context the meaning behind it can alter slightly; however it will remain largely the same (1991, p.378). Straw continues:

> The aesthetic values which dominate local alternative terrains are for the most part those of a musical cosmopolitanism wherein the points of musical reference are likely to remain stable from one community to another ... Each local space has evolved, to varying degrees, the range of musical vernaculars emergent within others, and the global culture of alternative rock music is one in which localism has been reproduced, in relatively uniform ways, on a continental and international level. (1991, p.378)

Where a scene begins will always be crucial to the continuation of the grouping. It is where the history, and indeed in some cases the style of music, was created. When diffused from these core spaces scenes will alter, even if only slightly, but will not be able to maintain their original core values. While Straw (1991) focuses on the importance of local scenes and music practices, touching on the spread to global, Bennett and Peterson (2004) expand on this to describe three distinct types of scene: local, translocal and virtual.

The first type of scene discussed by Straw and then expanded upon by Bennett and Peterson, local scene, is important for the history and creation of any particular scene. Local scenes embody the relationship between local music and the grouping it represents. Local scenes are

> concerned with 'organic' relationships between music and the cultural history of the locale [rather] than with the ways in which emergent scenes use music appropriated via global flows and networks to construct particular narratives of the local. Besides music, such narratives of emergent local identity incorporate aspects of other local cultural forms (Williams 1965), such as local dialect, dress, and history, as well as diverse forms of local knowledge, that are often used as strategies of resistance to local circumstances. (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.7)

Music is an intrinsic part of the lives of the members of scenes as it 'becomes part of a creative process whereby members of particular local scenes construct shared narratives of everyday life' (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.7). Local scenes are fixed to a particular period of time and space and are also focused upon specific

> clusters of producers, musicians, and fans [who] realize their common musical taste, collectively distinguishing themselves from others by using music and other cultural signs often appropriated from other places and recombined and developed in ways that come to represent the local scene (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.8).

This requires a focus on a specific style of music; however, it also requires other elements to be involved including the aesthetics, drug taking and politics of the groupings (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.8). Local scenes are a vital and influential in cultural studies as culture itself is at the root of scene and will provide historical significance of the group involved.

The second type of scene that Bennett and Peterson discuss is the translocal scene: This type of scene is concerned with how a local scene diffuses and begins to interact with other scenes in different spaces.

> Often the most self-conscious local music scenes that focus on a particular kind of music are in regular contact with similar local scenes in distant places. They interact with each other through the exchange of recordings, bands, fans, and fanzines. These we call translocal scenes because, while they are local, they are also connected with groups of kindred spirits many miles away. (Bennett & Peterson 2004, pp. 8–9)

When this transition occurs the scene will change as it incorporates new places and spaces into its formation. This does not require a physical location; rather it can incorporate technologies, such as the Internet, television (importantly music video channels and shows such as *MTV*, *Rage* and *Video Hits*) as well. For example, Holly Kruse discusses translocal scenes in relation to alternative rock of the 1980s, suggesting that they negate the need for face-to-face interaction as a 'necessary requirement for scene membership' (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.9). An important aspect of translocal scenes is the ability to draw members together from different areas who would not normally interact with each other but who can understand and relate with each other on intimate levels.

> The music festival is a special sort of translocal scene. While most such scenes involve the interconnection of several local scenes, festivals draw dispersed individuals together on designated occasions. [The] participants have a chance to enact the ways of life idealized within the scene free of agents of social control. (Bennett & Peterson 2004, pp.9–10)

Festivals are an important aspect of many scenes. They not only bring together bands and fans to share an experience that is unifying while being largely unrestricted; they also advertise a certain type of music and presence that draws new people, which garners new relationships.

The final type of scene discussed, and arguably a crucial one in modern cultural studies, is virtual scenes. This is an important discussion as with the advancement of technology online communication has become a vital part of scenes, providing the opportunity for people who may never have otherwise met to communicate and find a sense of belonging. Virtual scenes also do not require a significant amount of effort as all that is required 'are interested members and the requisite computer facilities' (Lee & Peterson 2004, p.198). Virtual scenes are providing people from anywhere in the world at any time and from any background with a space to interact; '[l]ike participants in translocal scenes, participants in virtual scenes are widely separated geographically, but unlike them, virtual scene participants around the world come together in a single scene-making conversation via the Internet' (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.10). These online communities are vital for the continuation of scenes. Following the diffusion and defusion of an intimate local or translocal scene, they may not continue on 'the street'; however, online they are able to thrive and expand:

> Whereas a conventional local scene is kept in motion by a series of gigs, club nights, fairs, and similar events where fans converge, communicate, and reinforce their sense of belonging to a particular scene, the virtual scene involves direct Net-mediated person-to-person communication between fans, and the scene is therefore much more nearly in the control of fans. (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.11)

There are chatrooms and websites that are dedicated to particular scenes and fans will create pages for bands that will be constantly updated and followed by large numbers of devotees. These sites allow space for people to come together and interact with each other and share a bond they may not have previously been able to share.

Scene is a critical theory for emo as all three types of scene, local, translocal and virtual, have been significant in the evolution of the culture. Translocal scenes and an alternative music culture in particular have been crucial to emo communities (Straw 1991). Beginning as a local Washington scene and expanding via translocal interactions, emo has provided a community for young people to join and find a sense of belonging. This does however bring forward an issue whereby:

> the relationship of different or regional scenes to each other is no longer one in which specific communities emerge to enact a forward movement to which others are drawn. What has declined is the sense, important at different moments within rock music's history, that a regional or local style offers the

> direction for change deemed appropriate to a given historical moment and provides a particular trajectory of progress which others will follow. (Straw 1991, p.378)

What local scenes once provided for participants, an intimate and unique space for interaction and belonging and a projection of change, is declining. Straw is arguing here that 'local scenes' are no longer the primary motor of innovation for rock music. But scene practices and innovation are not in decline; they are just occurring elsewhere; they are becoming increasingly cosmopolitan and global (Straw 1991).

Although the work of Shank and Straw is the most prominent in the area of scene studies, David Hesmondhalgh proposes that the two views have 'pronounced discrepancies, not only how they read the politics of local music making, but also – and more importantly – in how they theorise this music-making' (2005, p.28). Shank and Straw have discrepant views on how the music is created, which leads to disparate definitions of scenes. Shank focuses on rock and roll music, drawing on a Lacanian framework of human subjectivity, whereas Straw uses a Bourdieu-based framework to study music scenes (Shank 1994; Straw 1991; Hesmondhalgh 2005). Arguably more importantly than the frameworks that are established by the two authors is their competing view of community, which Shank focuses on as being a crucial aspect of scene, whereas Straw suggests that scene *questions* the notion of community (Straw 1991, 2002, 2004; Hesmondhalgh 2007, p.42). Although these views provide a contrast it shows the difficulty in defining a scene as the music and space that informs it is rarely rigid and easy to define.

The popularity of the term 'scene' in popular music studies has grown as a result in recent years of authors such as Hesmondhalgh and Bennett placing the concept of 'scene' at the forefront of what used to be subcultural studies: 'In fact, it is common for it to be talked about among popular music academics as a term that has replaced subcultures as the key way in which musical collectivities are conceived' (Hesmondhalgh 2005, p.22). Because of its disciplinary origins, the term 'scene' is synonymous with music cultures; however, it is being more widely introduced as a term to discuss youth culture. Indeed Hesmondhalgh (2005, p.21) further suggests that the study of scenes has become synonymous with the study of youth culture more broadly. Andy Bennett and Richard Peterson (2004, p.3) similarly argue that the term

has replaced ‘subculture’ as the defining term for youth cultural groupings. They argue that, as well as subcultures presuming deviance, scenes, like neo-tribes, allow for fluidity of involvement in the grouping, which a traditional subculture does not (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.3):

> To be sure, a few at the core of the scene may live that life entirely, but in keeping with a late-modern context in which identities are increasingly fluid and interchangeable (Chaney 1996), most participants regularly put on and take off their scene identity (Bennett 2000) (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.3).

Scene allows for movement and flexibility that not all youth groups allow for. Participants are able to grow and shift with the groups that shift and change.

Although the now commonly used term to describe youth groupings, the word ‘scene’ has been critiqued for becoming ‘a victim of its own success’ (Hesmondhalgh 2005, p.30). As Hesmondhalgh further explains, ‘The term has been used for too long in too many different and imprecise ways for those involved in popular music studies to be sure that it can register the ambivalences that Straw hopes it will’ (2005, p.30). The term is difficult to define and does not encompass all the elements of subcultural existence. The two main theorists involved in defining the term’s use in popular music studies, Straw and Shank, have

> presented [scene] as a superior alternative to ‘subculture’ ... But its use has been very ambiguous, or perhaps more accurately, downright confusing. In many cases, the term seems to be used to invoke a notion of the musical (and music-associated) practices occurring within a particular geographical space. (Hesmondhalgh 2005, p.29)

Although a useful term for youth cultural studies, scene is also ambiguous, which makes it difficult to define youth groupings clearly. While Straw (2002) has defended the term scene in a subsequent paper and it remains a variously useful term to apply in the overlapping field of popular music studies, it is problematic. What scene does provide is a terminology that allows for fluidity and inclusive history for music cultures.

Youth Cultures Online

The study of youth cultures online is an important and rich field. Studies conducted by academics such as Hodkinson (2002), boyd and Ellison (2007), and Robard and Bennett (2011) are important for expanding the field of youth cultural interactions

online and what this means for subcultures, post-subcultures and neo-tribes. Robard and Bennett interviewed people about their use of online social networking systems on the Gold Coast, Australia (2011). This study was important in exploring how young people are using the Internet for relationships and networking. They suggest that due to the way that these young people are using the Internet, rather than having subcultures online the groups are more aligned with neo-tribes: 'the politics of the everyday, bound by the issues of taste and belonging which are central to the post-subcultural debate, become the key concern for the average internet user' (Robard & Bennett 2011, p.305). The way that young people establish their "walls" or "pages" will determine how they are viewed by others with judgements toward style and taste. Hodkinson suggests that the Internet is important for culture itself suggesting that 'online networks of communication can also function to enhance and intensify the boundaries that separate cultural groupings' (2003, p.285). Hodkinson goes further to suggest that

> The suggestion that selves on the Internet are decentred, multiple and fluid has clear consequences for those amalgamations of young people, music and style that have, until recently, been referred to as subcultures. Significantly perhaps, such interpretations of the Internet cohere with the more general conclusions of social theorists Maffesoli and Bauman, both of whom propose that rather than being divided into fixed, clearly bounded communities, contemporary consumer culture is characterized by complex and fluid patterns of individual movement between closely knit 'neo-tribes' (Maffesoli 1996; Bauman 1992a, 1992b). (Hodkinson 2003, pp. 286-287)

The impact that the Internet has had on cultural studies and the study of youth in particular is immense. It has changed the boundaries around youth groupings creating a fluidity of taste and belonging. These groups are difficult to define into categories of 'subculture', 'neo-tribe' or 'post-subculture', rather a flexible definition is required to encompass the movement and transition that the Internet introduces and allows for. Through their study Robards and Bennett found that 'there was a clear sense that these articulations of belonging were positioned *in-between* what they described as subcultures or rather what they conceptualized as models of belonging, thus resisting alignment with pre-existing groups of individuals'(original emphasis) (2011, p.312). It is this divide between belonging, resistance and denial that enhances cultural studies.

There are endless numbers of groupings on the Internet and more specifically on social networking sites, such as sporting groups, charity groups, friendship groups and increasingly, crafting and cooking groups who all share a common interest and most often know each other in an offline world, however, this is not a necessary characteristic as bonds can be formed through online discussions and other online communications, as will be seen in Chapter Five. The formation of identity online is a key aspect of how young people interact and form identity as Robards and Bennett further discuss

> Social networking sites require individuals to piece together what they constitute as self-identity, and it is to be expected that this reflective process will intensify the need for young people to develop a coherent sense of self (or not, by way of resistance) in order to participate in digital culture. (2011, p.313)

There are certain images that young people believe they need to adhere to to be able to belong and be part of a group. This can alter how they present themselves on their websites and walls. This ambiguity of identity also impacts how youth cultures can be defined. This is an idea that will be further explored in Chapter Five.

In this thesis I will conduct an analysis of the tribal rites and sociological practices of emo. I will place less emphasis on the visual side of emo, for, as we shall see, emo practice has largely moved online rather than being visibly practised in the street. This can be partially accounted for through emo no longer being a subculture as defined by the CCCS; indeed through the theoretical lens of cultural studies it is no longer a subculture. However, for reasons of presentational expedience, I will use the term 'subculture' to refer to emo collectivity in this thesis in Chapters Three and Four in a general way, making no theoretical claims. In Chapter Five I will return to the discussion of how youth cultures should be critically and theoretically conceptualised, at least as seen through the lens of the experience of emo. From subcultural studies, to post-subcultural studies, to neo-tribes, to lifestyles, to a more recent definition in the field, scenes, the evolution of youth cultural studies has been relatively rapid, much like the flow of the cultures themselves. The debates surrounding youth cultural studies are ongoing, with many new and existing scholars still suggesting different ways of defining the groupings. The clear line of thought from subcultural studies, to post-subcultural studies, to neo-tribes, to lifestyle, to scene demonstrates the difficulty in defining the phenomenon that occurs when different styles of music and aesthetics

are combined to form a cohesive cultural grouping. As we have seen, the concepts used to define cultural groupings are contested; while the term subculture may be effective for one grouping, scene may be best for another. It is my contention that emo is best classified in a number of different ways depending upon time and context, as a scene, or as a subculture, but I will explore this further in Chapter Five. First I will discuss the methods that informed this thesis.

Chapter Two

Approach and Methods: Subcultural Visibility and Identity in the Age of the Internet

'But I don't want to go among mad people,' Alice remarked.
'Oh, you can't help that,' said the Cat; 'we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.'
'How do you know I'm mad?' said Alice.
'You must be,' said the Cat, 'or you wouldn't have come here.'
(Carroll 1931, p.94)

As already indicated, this is a study from a cultural studies perspective, a qualitative mapping of emo, a seemingly highly visible contemporary culture. Thus the initial research approach that I planned to follow was strongly ethnographic, combining my own experience and identification as an emo with the interview and questionnaire recorded experiences of others who similarly identified. I used emo-related websites to approach interviewees through wall posts on publicly accessible sites. Once I actually started this stage of data gathering it very quickly became obvious that precisely in light of the kinds of subcultural fluidity discussed in the previous chapter, coupled with a culture of scepticism towards those wishing to speak publicly about emo, this method alone would not generate either a sufficient quantity or quality of data. Therefore, as I will outline in this chapter, I employed a mixed methods approach. Firstly, and as indicated above, I sought to engage with the participants themselves, to ensure that their voices and experiences are at the heart of the analysis. To this end, I will briefly indicate the reasons for employing such an approach, situating this project within the scholarly legacies identified in the previous chapter. But this project is very much a product of its particular historical moment, overlapping as the research did with the explosion of social media as a cultural phenomenon. Thus I employed emerging online social research modalities to locate and engage with emos where they are now to be found, namely online, though this too presented problems of access and ethics. I will discuss the various strengths and weaknesses of the methods employed here below. Therefore, the key research approach I needed to end up employing was, ironically, textual analysis, with a particular focus on discourse and the voices of emo participants themselves with the presence now of social media and the Internet serving to mitigate the critiques of

early CCCS use of this approach. This methodological journey, and the reasons necessitating it, are outlined below.

‘Where Have all the Emos Gone?’ Emos and the Internet

As we have seen, there are numerous and noted criticisms of the methodologies of (especially early) subcultural theorists which focus exclusively on textual ‘readings’ at the expense of participants’ experiences. Subsequent work identified that being able to talk to or interact with subcultural participants is important for truly understanding the goings on within the culture (see for example Redhead 1990; Gilbert & Pearson 1999; Malbon 1999; Pini 2001; St John 2004), and I share this view. Given this, direct interviews were the first methodology I employed to trace how multiple discourses of both identification and denial were circulating online and to ascertain how the mainstreaming of ‘emo’ has impacted upon the identification of the ‘original’ members. I approached websites such as emowire.com with posts asking for interviews. I created a post requesting if anyone would be interested in taking part in a research study and telling *their* story about being part of the emo community. Such ‘cold calling’, however, was not received well and I was met with comments about being a ‘poser’, although some users defended my position.[14] But when I approached these more sympathetic individuals and asked whether they wanted to be interviewed, they denied that they were emo, suggesting they used the emo-oriented website for ‘recreation’, rather than to participate as emos. Although some young people did make contact, the majority were 16 or under, too young to interview in accordance to the conditions outlined as part of the UniSA Human Research Ethics Protocols for the project.

But as part of this process, what came to be a catalysing statement about this denial emerged from one person who contacted me through anonymous private message and suggested,

> I am going to address this now. There are not many 18+ people on here.
> I, myself, am 16. I’m not very interested in interviews. I can give you information, however.

[14] I chose to state outright who I was as a researcher as I felt that transparency was important for there to be an honest relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

> The ‘Emos’ project themselves as cutters, which I’m sure you’re aware about. They think dressing a certain way, having their hair a certain way, makes them ‘Emo.’
>
> As you can see, A LOT of people complain on here. I do too, but not frequently. Actually, I haven’t in a LONG time. I don’t see myself as ‘Emo’.
>
> Emo stands for Emotional. Then depressives reached into kids and made them think … differently, persay.
>
> All ‘Emo’ is, is a new version of ‘Skater.’ Except now, they have emotional problems, sort of.

What was so striking about this correspondence, and the larger process of early data collection, was precisely the tension between visibility and denial so apparent here. A key part of the contemporary ‘fluidity’ or difficulty of tying down many contemporary youth groupings is the way in which, while ‘outsiders’ may all ‘know’ what members of a particular grouping look like, think like, or simply ‘like’, indeed they can easily identify others as members, strangely few people themselves will put their hands up and say ‘yes, I’m an emo’ (or ‘hipster’, etc.). Such subcultural disavowal is also not totally unexpected in light of the kinds of subcultural life cycles or fluidities outlined in the previous chapter. But nonetheless I felt it interesting that here we have a person who is still actively participating in the online emo website, but who suggests that they have ‘outgrown’ the subculture.

Therefore what soon became apparent and central to my approach and data collection methods was that in online communities individual subcultural life cycles can be played out, and recorded, without the need for mediation by researcher outsiders. Simon and Kelley suggest that emos embody ‘certain patterns of behavior and thought that serve to bond and unite’ (2007, p.2). Thus young people turn to emo for comfort and for a sense of belonging. On the other hand, the public associations that accompany such membership, not to mention the desire for a sense of individualistic personal autonomy, mean that the many of the young people who once might have flocked to the arms of a visible social grouping now deny that they belong. In the case of emo this means that at least some kind of group belonging is now being played out online. Thus, in spite of the denial of belonging that stymied any attempts to pursue a more straightforward interview-based research project, it was becoming apparent that a rich experiential data set, full of the voices of actual participants, was very much at hand, and so it was that I turned to the emerging body of scholarship of online

research approaches. The Internet has become an important, if not vital, aspect of the daily lives of young people in Western society. Social networking systems (SNS) or social media sites, such as facebook, twitter or MySpace, are seen as extensions of daily life with the ability to bring together and expand social groups with a level of anonymity that does not exist in face-to-face interactions (boyd and Ellison 2007).

> Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites also vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing. (boyd and Ellison 2007)

Youth cultures have therefore flourished in these sorts of sites; they provide a space in which young people feel they can freely express themselves, even if they cannot in everyday life.

Inness and Hucke (2000) were early to acknowledge the role that technology has played in the spread and creation of youth cultures. When subcultures were created in the 1950s there were long periods of time that elapsed before news of the subculture, its fashions, attitudes, beliefs and sounds, spread to other countries. With the incorporation of modern technology, they argue, youth cultures are able to spread very quickly, such as within virtual scenes which allow people from around the world to come together online to interact as a culture. But this is not the only advantage, or reason why, youth cultures may have embraced the technology:

> the wide availability of inexpensive technology, … has helped to spread the credos of different girls' subcultures. With the use of photocopiers and the Internet, anyone from a 'riot grrl' to a 'gothic girl' can spread her message far and wide. Such technologies also have made it possible for many girls to take an active role in contesting and challenging the dominant culture's notions about what it means to be a girl. (Inness & Hucke 2000, p.922)

As I discussed at some length in the previous chapter, the experiences of girls have often been missing from academic accounts of subcultural practice, in no small part as a result of the fact that their activities frequently occur in the privacy of the home. For better or worse,[15] the Internet brings this private realm into public view. Girls in youth

[15] As we will see in Chapter Three, this visibility is also a source of potential threat in terms of sexual assault and bullying, among other concerns.

cultures have not only used the Internet to help 'discover' who they are and where they belong in society, but it has also given them an independence and a voice of their own. The work that Inness and Hucke have done has laid a path for further research to be conducted in the field of online cultures. I will draw upon this in my analysis of how young people are using the Internet for a sense of belonging and strength.

More specifically in terms of the focus of this research, the Internet has opened more doors for the emo community and its constituent individuals. It has furnished members with the potential to access more music, reach other fans, and create bonds and friendships with other members of the subculture. The importance of the Internet and music to emos is hard to define; however, as Greenwald (2003, p.306) suggests, the importance of the Internet is undeniable for emo community building. This is an acknowledgement of two important factors impacting upon the emo community. Firstly, emo is a phase that teenagers can 'go through', particularly those with heightened angst and those who do not fit in with the mainstream crowd (this is an issue that I will explore more fully in Chapter Five). Secondly, it acknowledges the shift of much of the social and cultural life of contemporary young people to the Internet, a fact centrally informing my research approach.

The relationship between subcultures and the Internet is emerging as crucial in the area of youth studies but it remains relatively under-explored in youth cultures scholarship, with the exception of virtual scenes as previously discussed. Online gaming youth cultures or virtual communities (groupings that are *purely* based online) have long been discussed and identified (Rheingold 1994; Crowe & Bradford 2007); however, other youth cultures, which may have migrated from 'the street' into the 'online realm' have received little focus. However, there are a few academics who have started to acknowledge the role of the Internet in the development of youth cultures. Michelle Phillipov (2009) has explored the world of online social networking in relation to youth cultures and the role it played in the deaths of two teenagers, Jodie Gater and Stephanie Gestier, in Melbourne while Paul Hodkinson has examined the use of online journals and the 'relationship between individuals and groups on the internet' (2007, p.626). I will use studies such as these to explore how youth cultures, using emos as a case study, transition from being highly visible in the offline world to the Internet and what this means for the youth culture now.

A crucial aspect of society for young people today is the ability to download new music from all over the world,[16] all the while staying in the comfort of their own home; this has re-shaped not only the music industry but the practices of the many music-related youth groupings. It is these groupings that create virtual communities, that is, groups who come together through the Internet to create their own community. They may never meet face to face; however, they have created a sense of belonging and cohesion online. However, Hodkinson suggests that the

> Use of the term 'virtual community' reinforces a sense of separation between the Internet spaces focused on by studies and the 'real' lives of participants, when it might have been more useful to research online communication as an integral part of broader identities lived out in a range of physical and virtual spaces (2011, p.260).

Importantly, for those who may feel disempowered in everyday life, the Internet can supply a sense of power and belonging that they may not be able to experience in the offline world: 'Online, a messageboard is a rock show – you've got your moderators on stage, setting the tone. You've got the loudmouths in the front, pushing everybody around with their attitude, their righteousness, their need for attention' (Greenwald 2003, p.57). There are many who seek out the websites for comfort, to find solace in the idea that they are not alone. But even within the online world, and maybe because of the fluidity of it, there are strict rules policing belonging that must be adhered to and subcultural capital to negotiate. Within online communities that have a youth cultural focus, there are those who often post on the chatrooms, those who are seen as

[16] The web has even allowed those with access to the technology and the knowledge of how to do so to create their own music and have it listened to by anyone with access to the Internet, and passed on to others to be listened to alongside more commercial releases. Greenwald suggests that the Internet has fundamentally changed the way that music is viewed: 'Punk rock has changed the internet and the internet has fundamentally changed punk rock. What was once a subculture, dominated by regionality, is now something completely new and unexplored: a national subculture, dominated and defined by those too young to have their voices heard, but savvy enough to make their presence felt' (Greenwald 2003, p.58). Through 'long tail' distribution (Anderson 2006), the Internet has changed the way that music is both produced and distributed, in that music can now be 'leaked' through both the bands and the fans to entice others to listen to it. The landscape of music has changed, and subsequently so has the landscape of subcultures. However, the Internet has supplied a space for young people to coalesce around many focus points, not just music.

leaders, those who can suggest what is in fashion for the culture and what music should be listened to. While these communities are sought there is also a need for privacy; people will establish boundaries even within the online realm to protect themselves, whether through using a pseudonym or enabling privacy settings on social networking sites such as facebook (Hodkinson 2011 p.280). Then there are those who are seen as 'lurkers in the back, taking in all the action, not saying a word, holding their opinions close to their chest, giving nothing away but taking what they need and more' (Greenwald 2003, p.57). While it is argued that in a postmodern society there is a decline of the self, there are also ways of creating a new self. People not only use social networking systems as a 'notion of networked individualism, social networking sites enable each user to act as a social switchboard, conversing from their single personal online space with a variety of individuals and groups connected to different aspects of their past and present' (Hodkinson 2011, p.280). The sites, and the roles that are played within them, are 'at their most basic level ... invented, temporary spaces. A common interest has filled them with people, but all are free to leave whenever they like, and the people who fill them are there as whoever they want to be' (Greenwald 2003, p.57). For these reasons and more the Internet is a crucial part of the emo community: 'At this point, online communities are such a huge part of the emo existence that it's hard to remember what life was ever like without them' (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.74). Where teenagers used to talk to each other in schools, through zines and on landline phones, the Internet has now become a crucial part of subcultures. The build-up to this online community was not a rapid one, but a transition that came over time.

When the emo community began in the 1980s, the Internet was almost unheard of. However,

> [t]he Internet has recently morphed into a far more accessible place where one can find a lot of bored emo kids who feel otherwise exiled out in the suburbs – a place to hang out, if you will, for people who generally don't have a place to hang out' (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.73).

That is, a virtual 'room of their own'. This online community gives teenagers the chance to fulfil their emo needs. Emos are an example of a cultural grouping that is moving away from the need to be active in 'the street' as its primary source of subcultural engagement, as I will discuss in Chapter Four. To investigate this

transition, I sought a number of resources, such as niche magazines, newspaper articles and reports, online chatrooms, and personal and emo-site-related blogs and chatrooms. As it was seemingly impossible to talk to people who identified as emo physically face-to-face, I found their voice through what they chose to write and post for the public to see.

Due to the already acknowledged lack of focus on females in subcultures, when approaching the initial planned interviews I aimed to have an even number of male and female research participants. As the methodology changed, I assessed entries in the blogs and forums from both male and female posters to make sure that there was a balance of perspective and that both genders were heard. As already acknowledged, online communities facilitate girls' participation because they are not constrained by the home–street distinction identified by McRobbie and Garber (1976). Subcultures such as punk include females who reject the social norms of the parent culture while 'construct[ing] a number of strategies to counter and reverse such imputations of deviance' (LeBlanc 2002, p. 183). This process can also be seen in the emo subculture. The males are visually dominant within the subculture, with many of the bands having male members, and the images used in advertising and on t-shirts are generally male. However, it is the females who have taken much of the mainstream media's discursive focus. There is an emerging and new conflict here around protection and endangerment, ironically now actually within the home. For while if they are within the confines of the home they are seemingly protected, with access to the online realm there is the risk of endangerment through the outside world entering into the private realm through the Internet, as I will discuss in Chapter Four. There are abundant 'emo' activities that can be completed online from finding new music,

> post[ing] journal entries on their blogs, log[ging] into online community Web sites, look[ing] at their profiles, look[ing] at a lot of other people's profiles, maybe check[ing] out some emo-style "adult content," and then top[ping] it all off with a series of IM conversations that will use a series of abbreviations you'll need a guide to properly suss out (Simon & Kelley 2007, pp.73–74).

This is all vital interaction for these young people, and for the life of the subculture. For girls in particular, this means that there is now a highly visible subcultural realm online in which they can participate.

Moreover, sexuality and youth is often a taboo subject that is largely ignored in the public realm except in terms of panics. However the Internet has given youth a space within which they themselves can 'construct and present their sexual selves, engage in cyber sex with partners and view sexually explicit content' (Subrahmanyam & Šmahel 2011, p.53). Sexuality is an important aspect of emo ideology (as it is for most adolescents). As Kaveri Subrahmanyam, a developmental psychologist, and David Šmahel, a cyberpsychologist, suggest, the Internet has given youths an opportunity that they would not otherwise be afforded in general society. They have a space within which they can anonymously open up and be honest, if they so choose, or experience a life they may not have been able to in some communities: 'Thus, the Internet may be particularly valuable for "minorities inside a minority" such as rural gay youth, gay youth in socially conservative towns, and gay youth from ethnic minority groups' (Subrahmanyam & Šmahel 2011, p.53). But it is not purely about being able to participate in sexual situations; rather it is a more broadly accepting space where young people can find solidarity and community, which may or may not include overt experiences of emerging adolescent sexuality, but which can be uniquely offered by the Internet. Where once subcultures relied on particular physical spaces to be able to form and interact, such as certain nightclubs or concert spaces, with the introduction of the Internet this space has widened and the ability to communicate with people who share similar interests thus exists not only within local scenes, but now within global spaces, through the creation of online communities: virtual scenes. There has been a disavowal of subcultural identity, a concept that has been a point of criticism for the CCCS; however, online spaces now afford subcultures with far more opportunities for visibility, and researcher access.

Online Research Methods

Given the importance of the Internet in everyday life, online research methods cannot be overlooked. Especially for scholars of everyday culture,

> The Internet has emerged as a major data resource for social science research. Not only is it a lens through which to observe our subjects of research and how they construct their identities and communities online, but it can also be a tool for gathering and analysing social science data on a large scale. (Eynon, Fry & Schroeder 2008, p.26)

With so much social and work activity moving online, and with a concurrent blurring of the two, it is not surprising then that social scientists would soon follow for the purposes of research. The advancement of online research practices means that there is a myriad of possibilities opening up for social science research. Being able to use the Internet as a tool for research allows for 'advancing the scale of activities rendered feasible, significant changes in the kinds of research carried out and, importantly, the kinds of subject deemed "researchable"' (Fischer, Lyon & Zeitlyn 2008, p.519). With the advancement of technology, new phenomena can be explored on account of greater accessibility and availability of methods, material and participants. Online ethnography is becoming a key method in cultural studies. The Internet is a vital research source as,

> In contrast to other media, the Internet integrates personal and mass media. It has, in fact, created a new mode of human communication, enabling participants to take part in two-way mass communication. Users of the World Wide Web are no longer passive audiences of data consumers, as in media such as television and radio, but are active participants controlling the content of the information. They shape the quality of the data and respond to them. (Sade-Beck 2004, p.46)

Following the '2D' world of television and radio, the Internet allows for an almost '3D' interface where participants can interact and are encouraged to. There are few forms of online communication that cannot be responded to. It is because of this interface that studies such as this are supplied with such a rich source of data. Young people are given a platform through which to express themselves and to interact with others from around the world. There is also an anonymity provided by the Internet that allows people to communicate without having to reveal their identity. This also opens the door for cyber-bullying which also generally requires anonymity. The Internet has greatly affected emos such as Jodie Gater and Stephanie Gestier, who committed suicide after posting suicidal poems online and searching for ways to commit suicide online (Bartlett 2007). Thus this particular study, like all projects, did come with its own range of negotiations which needed to be addressed.

My participation in the emo culture online did not begin with this study; rather, prior to commencing it, I would use the forums and discussions to 'discover' new bands, find out who was touring and whether there were fashions emerging that I could take as my own. It was through this historic participation that I had to negotiate this space.

Although I had never created my own posts I did know the topics and the style of discussion that took place. It was, however, the age of the participants that was largely hidden. Most people did not discuss their age; rather they would discuss similarities, passions and influences. The predominant way of knowing the age of participants was their discussion of school. These participants were largely discussing their feelings and their need to 'escape', whereas those who did not have any discussion of age mostly discussed bands. Researching in this area required particular ethics approval, particularly considering that some participants were under 18.

Ethics is an important and crucial element of any research. Traditional offline modalities have had centuries to refine how to account for ethical dilemmas that have been raised, but with the recent emergence of the Internet and online research practices, a parallel research community framework for effective and ethical action is only just starting to emerge through applying approaches and principles from the offline world, and then engaging in a process of trial and error (Eynon, Fry & Schroeder 2008, p.23). When applying for ethics approval for this project, a number of questions were raised which reflect the broader experiences of other Internet researchers, and the kinds of concerns held about this kind of project: 'How can you prove the age of the participant?' and 'What if social risks arise?' These questions would arise with any ethics application, but in a face-to-face context there are existing protocols for addressing them. But in the new space of the Internet, researchers are often setting precedents themselves. As Eynon, Fry and Schroeder write, 'One of the challenges to developing a coherent approach to ethical dilemmas in Internet research is that as the Internet evolves as a space for social interaction and information dissemination, the methods necessary to capture and document such activities are also emergent and novel' (2008, p.23). With such an ever-changing landscape, the ethics involved have to be constantly updated, but more importantly become a site of constant negotiation at a professional level for the researcher.

With the development of online research methods and ethics the one crucial element to consider is the sensitivity to context and participants, just as in a face-to-face study. Internet research is not undertaken in a void; it is not exclusive from the offline world and cannot be thought of as being so. This said, however, while 'online research must be sensitive to the offline context in which it is taking place, [it] must also be sensitive

to different online contexts, since the Internet is many things to many people' (Eynon, Fry & Schroeder 2008, p.26). The Internet can be accessed from almost anywhere in the world and by almost anyone. This means that there must be a sensitivity shown towards the perspective of participants of online networks. Participants can be of any age and of any cultural background. For example, online communities will often have chatrooms and,

> though a chatroom space may be public, the participants may feel they are part of a trusted community and use the space to communicate intimate details of their lives. Should consideration be given to reproducing the content verbatim in research communications and to what extent should social structures be protected from being disclosed or 'invaded' by researchers? (Eynon, Fry & Schroeder 2008, p.26)

Researchers enter this world and make 'judgements' based upon what they read in these online chatrooms, just as they would in any offline situation. The Internet is such an important resource for information because it is significant for social communication, and thus with this comes responsibility towards the participants and what they reveal of themselves in these spaces. Within these online social communities, 'people who regularly interact as avatars clearly see themselves as social groups just as people do in any other social setting with regular and bounded interaction' (Eynon, Fry & Schroeder 2008, p.30).

One key point of contention in online research arises for the researcher when deciding whether or not to reveal their position; by exposing your position as researcher you may be acting ethically, but alienating the community that you are trying to understand and communicate with and then be expelled:

> There is a balance to be struck between revealing that you are a researcher and engaging in unobtrusive observation. There is also a difference here from real-world observation, since it is easy to hide completely – or lurk – in the online world. Note that in the online virtual environments there is furthermore a technical possibility that is not available in offline research: namely, to attach an identifier tag to your avatar that identifies you as a researcher and provides details of the research project – but only when others *choose* to click on this information. Clearly, it will often be good practice – beyond legal requirements – to identify yourself as a researcher in the case of ethnographic or participant observation in a virtual environment. (Eynon, Fry & Schroeder 2008, p.31)

Deciding to expose yourself as a researcher from the start can have negative consequences, as it did for this study; however, not revealing yourself can also be deceiving and misrepresentative in many ways. There is a fine division between revealing who you are as a researcher, and allowing for this open and honest relationship, while also not altering the behaviour of these online communities (Eynon, Fry & Schroeder 2008, p.30). Though this is true, again, in both the online and offline communities, whether to expose yourself as a researcher or not is an important decision, particularly in the online world where being able to remain anonymous is an important aspect of participation, particularly for young people.

To further explore the relationship that has been established between youth cultures and the Internet, as discussed previously, I initially intended to employ online interviews to hear the stories of those who use the online forums and social networking systems. However, after placing advertisements on numerous emo-dedicated websites, as seen, there was criticism of my position within the emo culture and as a researcher, but more problematically, for the project, was the denial from the participants in the online spaces about *their* participation in the culture. I advertised for interviews on different days over a period of two weeks but no-one agreed to be interviewed. In my initial post on these forums, I clearly stated the requirements for participants in this study, including the minimum age, the medium through which contact could be made, and how the privacy and safety of the participants would be ensured. Although it meant that I did not end up with interview participants I still chose to reveal who I was as this might have made the participants feel more comfortable about telling me who they are within the subcultural community. After approaching people for interviews I was able to interact with a few members on the sites and although they turned down the request for interviews they did supply vital information to me about their position in the subculture and why they did not want to be interviewed. An example of this was when I approached a male who had engaged in conversation with me via the post on the main board. He said that, although he came to the website to discuss his issues with people, he did not participate in the emo subculture and so could not discuss his position in the grouping.

Having participated in the online realm of emo since 2009 I chose to turn to the blogs, forum posts and discussions for a rich source of data. I downloaded blogs and took

screen shots of discussion, sorted them by theme and date and then extracted quotations that held similar premises. I spent hours on end reading through participants' posts to understand their position and how they identified themselves. Interestingly, while I stylistically practised the aesthetic and listened to the music, I too realised I did not identify myself as emo either; in particular, I did not feel that I expressed the emotional side of the culture. I did not write lyrics or poetry, and did not have overwhelming negative feelings or a sense of being alone. But I loved the music, and I still do. I still listen to AFI, My Chemical Romance, All Time Low, New Found Glory, Yellow Card, The Academy Is and Taking Back Sunday. This is not to suggest that these bands are necessarily emo, indeed they did not identify as such; however, they were discussed as being part of the culture and popular among forum users. This was not a differentiation that I made alone. Many forum users denied their place as emo but showed a passion for everything that it exhibited. This in itself is an interesting aspect of emo: even though the culture was still being practised there was a strong denial of emo identity, maybe suggesting that a transition was occurring.

Therefore my online research data collection focused upon social media sites, and subsequent textual and discourse analysis of this data. I analyse material drawn from a variety of emo websites, to identify how emos view themselves rather than how others view them; to give them their own voice against that of the media. I used a number of websites for the purpose of this project. I initially used two websites, www.emowire.com and www.emopuddle.com, to ask participants of the sites whether they wanted to tell their stories of being part of the emo community. Following the lack of volunteers, I rethought the methodology for the thesis and I used a textual analysis of the forums on the above websites as well as www.emo-corner.com, www.luv-emo.com and www.soemo.co.uk to analyse the trends and movements of the subculture. I chose these sites as, at the time, they did not require log on details to access the forums, making them publically visible, accessible, and valuable sites for emos. The topics covered on the forums were also broad and the number and range of participants allowed for an in-depth view of the grouping to be explored without needing to ask any direct questions. I downloaded the forum contents and sorted them into topics and then chose the common threads that existed between each. I use these throughout this thesis.

As expansive as the online realm is and online research is becoming, there are limitations to it (Eynon, Fry & Schroeder 2008, p.32). The opportunities are great, especially as researchers are able to observe participants interacting with each other unobtrusively. Data can also be collected directly from participants. There are, however, as with any methodology, limitations and restrictions. If doing observation, you cannot ask questions of your participants and you can only take what they are saying at face value. If conducting interviews online you cannot see the interviewee's faces so you can only analyse the text, not inflections of tone or facial expressions, as you would in face-to-face interviews. But again, this can be balanced by the potentialities of the online environment. For example, an advantage of online communication and communities is that participants may reveal information online that they may be hesitant to reveal in an offline setting (Rosen 2007, p.31; James & Busher 2009, p.22; Salmons 2010, p.9). By using text posted to the chosen website as part of everyday discourse, this mitigates the pitfalls of online interviewing – phenomenologically, people are presenting themselves as they wish to be seen and interact within the group. The anonymity of the Internet means that there is a chance for people to 'perform' and be who they want to be, presenting themselves in a certain way or only revealing certain information. This is a rich source of data that gives a unique insight into online practices and interactions.

Textual and Discourse Analysis

This plethora of online material available around emo, as well as offline sources, thus also gives rise to the need to return to textual and discursive research modalities. I use textual analysis and online research methods throughout this thesis to analyse online forums, blogs, poems, song lyrics, photographs and news articles (both online and hardcopy) to understand how particular topics and issues are represented and discussed. My approach to my analysis is heavily indebted to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough in particular. I drew on this work in analysing data sets including newspapers, magazines, news reports, blogs, forums, websites and publically accessible chatrooms.

The term 'discourse' is often misrepresented and misused. As Sara Mills explains, 'The term "discourse" has become common currency in a variety of disciplines ... so much so that it is frequently left undefined, as if its usage were simply common

knowledge' (1997, p.1). Michel Foucault produced *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) to challenge ideas about discourses, their formation and application. Foucault argues that it is not possible, nor indeed desirable, to come up with a single definition of discourse:

> Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word 'discourse', I believe that I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements. (1972, p.80)

As Foucault describes, discourse is not easily containable, but can be any statement or group of statements that form or reflect power relationships within society. He identifies four elements of discourse: institutions, functions of address, power relations and themes (Foucault 1972, pp.23–32). Institutions are structures or mechanisms of social order that can either be formal, for example The church (encompassing all religions), the family (representing all types of family units including friendships) and the government (meaning all government-run organisations such as schools and medical resources) or it can be social structures such as gender, social clubs or social networks. These three examples of institutions are ones that impact every person's life, for example the church will determine certain laws and debates within society which will affect anyone no matter their religion (e.g. same-sex marriage laws). The institutions are important in everyday discourse as they are key determinants of how members of society interact with one another and make decisions.

Textual analysis is a broad methodology,

> a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. It is a methodology – a data-gathering process – for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are (McKee 2003, p.1)

whereas discourse analysis is a more specific analytical method, 'an approach to the analysis of language that looks at patterns of language across texts as well as the social and cultural contexts in which the texts occur' (Paltridge 2006, p.1). Both textual analysis and discourse analysis are essential to each other, for as Norman Fairclough explains: 'no real understanding of the social effects of discourse is possible without looking closely at what happens when people talk or write. So, text analysis is an essential part of discourse analysis, but discourse analysis is not merely the linguistic

analysis of texts' (2003, p.3). For the purpose of this thesis, and for much of cultural studies, anything that can be 'read' is a text. With this understanding, I will undertake a textual analysis of a range of different sources – drawn from both on- and offline – in order to understand how emo is seen and understood by its participants as well as wider society. It provides a powerful tool for examining emo in the wake of its transition from the street onto the Internet. Criticism of earlier approaches to subcultural analysis based principally on semiotic readings notwithstanding, textual analysis is important to this study as it allows for a deeper understanding of how the Internet, through platforms such as blogs, forums and chatrooms, can be used to begin a discourse on particular issues, raising the awareness and popularity of such topics. But here I will not analyse just words and text *per se*. The use of photographs in relation to the illustration of subcultures is crucial as they are deeply aesthetic groupings.

I have chosen newspapers as the core text for the analysis in Chapter Four as they are a widely accessed, readily available and cheap source of communication as well as being locations of socially dominant communication frames. I have employed textual analysis to find the common themes between the articles and the terminology used in them. Marshall McLuhan, a philosopher of communication theory (and Quentin Fiore, a graphic designer), suggests that 'Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication' (1967, p.8). Being able to read news will give rise to different meanings than listening to it. Importantly with the introduction of new technologies and people turning to the Internet for their news, 'minority groups can no longer be contained – ignored. Too many people know too much about each other. Our new environment compels commitment and participation. We have become irrevocably involved with, and responsible for, each other' (McLuhan 2008, p.24). Although McLuhan's work supplies a background with which to begin analysing media sources, due to the degree to which each person can customise their news sources, such as receiving news reports only through facebook, there is still an ability to be ignorant of what is happening in the world. As well as major news outlets, the mass media, social media, niche and micro media, are reporting news stories as I will discuss in Chapter Four. I will analyse all of these using textual analysis.

Ferdinand de Saussure (2002) analysed signs and images in terms of how we understand them and how they are used, suggesting the defining features of signifier and signified to explore the meaning behind texts. The analysis of signs, the signifiers and signifieds of words, images and so forth, allows us to analyse and posit the possible reasons and interpretations behind why particular choices have been made in particular discursive contexts, or at least extrapolate the likely rationale given the effects of the choices. Incorporating these ideas as well as Stuart Hall's ideas regarding the analysis of photographic evidence, I analysed the use of pictures in articles as well as the use of bands' photographs to suggest how and why there was a level of denial in the third wave of emo. In particular, semiotic analysis can be used to establish the importance of photographs within news reporting (Hall 1981).

Following Hall (1981), I will argue here that through the editorial choice of the photographs within news reports, readers are given a framework through which to judge the character of the victim. Thus in order to analyse this, Stuart Hall argues that connotations are amongst the most important analytical tools available when it comes to determining the relevance of photographs (Hall 1981, p.176). 'Conative codes are the configurations of meaning which permit a sign to signify, in addition to its denotative reference, other additional implied meanings' (Hall 1981, p.176). These meanings are created through our already existing social knowledge, created through our associations. We also recognise these images from what they are not (Hall 1981, p.177). We use our own ideas created through already established dominant ideologies and discourses to analyse the photographs being used. In terms of photographs, Hall explains, 'At the expressive level, the photo signifies within the lexicon of expressive features distributed throughout the culture of which the reader is a member' (1981, p.177).

Hall also pays particular attention to expressive function and codes in his chapter 'The Determinations of News Photographs' in regards to 'our competence to resolve a set of gestural, non-linguistic features (signifiers) into a specific expressive configuration (signified) – an accomplishment which is cultural, not technical' (1981, p.177). Members of particular cultural groups are able to recognise these codes as a part of their social knowledge. Hall discusses the difference between recognising these codes within a physical setting and a photograph, suggesting what we are receiving

'therefore represents a truncated version of this cultural code' (Hall 1981, p.177). Newspapers use photographs to support the story represented in the article. The picture will represent only a part of a whole that the reader is open to interpret; in a photograph we are only getting a single snapshot of an expression. For the purpose of this thesis, it is not that we are concerned with what the person is 'really' thinking/doing; what is relevant is how they are being positioned by the mass media source. The pictures are an important step in the production of moral panic, and I will use them in this thesis to establish how individuals were positioned by the media to invite a negative discourse about emos.

As we will see in this study, photos, in particular facebook photos, have also been central to the construction of moral panic discourses in regards to those identified as participants in the emo subculture. The contemporary public accessibility of online photos of key individuals when a news story breaks means that the media are now able to access 'private' photos quickly and without individual or family consent. An important part of this accessibility is that the photos are personal photos, not 'official' photos (school, family or professionally taken photographs for example), or ones chosen specifically by the family. This may change the way that the story is presented as the media are framing the way the victim is seen, not the family. Both Stanley Cohen and Jock Young acknowledge the role that visual imagery plays in reinforcing the deviance of the 'folk devil' in moral panic discourse. The images that are used to accompany headlining mass media stories are vital in creating sensationalism. There are labellers, such as the mass media, as Cohen (2002) suggests who create images for the rest of society to evoke stereotypically when a particular identifier or 'label' is used. I will use Cohen's ideas in Chapter Four. An example of such labelling that Cohen uses, which Young also draws upon, is that of drug users:

> The labellers – and the ones I have concentrated on are the mass media – have a ready-made stock of images to draw upon. Once the initial identification has taken place, the labels are further elaborated: the drug addict, for example, may be fitted into the mythology of the dope fiend and seen to be dirty, degenerate, lazy and untrustworthy. The primary label, in other words, evokes secondary images, some of which are purely descriptive, some of which contain explicit moral judgements and some of which contain prescriptions about how to handle the behaviour. (Cohen 2002, p.57)

Therefore, drawing on the work of Cohen, Young and Hall, I take as an important determinant that images are important in the media, and even more so in creating a denotative visualisation whenever a name or label is used. These ideas all interweave and link together to invite a moral panic surrounding emo. The images are used to justify the way that the 'deviants' are viewed as being such: 'the devil has to be given a particular shape to know what virtues are being asserted' (Cohen 2002, p.57). In the case of 'deviant' subcultures the social norm is affirmed through being broken; the transgressor is then labelled and an image brought forward to be associated with them. Once the image is placed within a news report, either in a newspaper, online or through a television story, it can be associated with the label 'deviant'. Images are thus very important in creating sensationalism and moral panic, inviting the audience to interpret the texts in particular ways. To this end, in Chapter Four I will use textual analysis and utilise a semiotic evaluation of photographic evidence in order to establish how a major newspaper established a moral panic around a subculture.

Therefore, to inform the analysis to come, in this thesis I employ mixed methods data collection and analytical frame to explore the online emo community. Although I initially pursued more conventional interviews, emos are no longer particularly visible on the street, and those who may appear to be 'emo' do not actively seek to identify as such to strangers. I thus identified textual and semiotic analysis, in particular of data collected from largely online sites, as particularly appropriate for analysing the prolific textual outputs from the community itself, and also connected with it: poems, song lyrics, photographs, blogs, chatrooms and forums for example. In this way, I could access the admittedly only English-speaking voices of emos from around the world, and English-language media coverage offered further insight into the experience of those deemed 'emo' in a number of other linguistic and cultural contexts.

Chapter Three

The Waves of Emo

Emo has a rich, and surprisingly long, history. Throughout this history, music has been central to emo style and group identity. Indeed identifying emo as having transitioned through three different waves in terms of its transnational scene incarnation across the Global West is a key point of this thesis and for this chapter. The first wave began in the 1980s to the early 1990s, this was the early parent wave; the second wave was in the mid-1990s; and the third was in the 2000s nearing its end by 2010 with the participants moving to the Internet to engage in the ideology of emo. This is in addition to the more recent ways in which emo culture has been manifested and/or discursively evoked in other parts of the world. Where the first and second waves of the emo subculture did not have a dedicated clothing style, the third wave became synonymous with the fashion for skinny jeans (predominantly black, however bright colours were also worn as long as they were tight), and band merchandise (t-shirts and wrist bands). 'Acknowledging the power that emo fashion has over the scene is one thing, but wrapping your head around emo fashion is quite another' (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.41). There were changes across each wave of the subculture, with the third wave incorporating high-end labels such as Cheap Monday. Although some authors have acknowledged a second wave of emo, this is predominantly focused on the music, not acknowledging the fashion changes or attitudes that accompanied this. Therefore in this chapter I will explore some of the influential and well-known bands that evolved out of each of these waves and consider the impact that these bands had on emo music and culture. I will argued that, through an examination of the changing style of music of the bands that I discuss below, wider trends in the subculture itself can be seen. As the musical style changed from hardcore to indie to punk rock to mainstream, so did the young people who were drawn to the grouping. As the bands in the third wave of emo denied their emo identity, so did the young people who admired and followed them.

To contextualise this discussion – what music is 'emo' and thus what is not – we first need to return to definitions. One of the issues that arises when discussing emo culture generally, and its music specifically, is the difficulty in defining exactly what it is.

Some of this uncertainty is inevitable with a 'new' music and fashion genre. The music can incorporate screaming, punk, rock and indie among others. This fluidity in the genre of music has led to definitions such as that supplied by website www.soemo.co.uk, an English website established so that emos could find one another, which suggested in 2011 that

> Emo music has been around for years but only in the last decade has it really made a dent in the popular music culture. In the last ten or so years, Emo music has branched out from its post-hardcore roots into the wide variety of genres it has to offer today. Most of today's 'emo kids' don't know emo's roots lie in hardcore music. Read on and learn ...
>
> Emo music is best characterized by its heartfelt take on life and how to live it. It mostly consists of bands that sing, or scream, about relationships, breakups and other emotional and personal events in every young adult's life. This vocal styling is usually backed by aggressive rock guitars and heavy drum beats, reminiscent of its post-hardcore background. Emo as a music genre has broadened over the years and now is loosely defined as rock music with emotion-based lyrics and effect. (29 April 2011)

This passage describes the important shift in emo music from the hardcore beginnings in the first wave, to the punk rock sound of the second and finally in the third wave the important shift into the mainstream culture. It also foregrounds the emotions implicit in the music, lyrics and videos which link key acts to wider emo cultural practices. These key aspects of emo have transitioned and altered from the beginning of emo in the 1980s to now, to produce different waves, each changed from the one before into its own style producing its own sense of meaning.

1980s 'First Wave' Emos: Local Scene Origins

The first wave of emos began in 1984 and began to diffuse in the early 1990s when the dark clothing styles and the music of the subculture's pioneering bands – Rites of Spring, Dag Nasty, Embrace, Fire Party, Gray Matter and Policy of 3 – rallied popularity. The emo genre initially broke away from hardcore, a genre which had a more masculine and aggressive aesthetic: 'What separated Emo from punk and hardcore rock was the obvious move away from angry songs of rebellion and disdain for authority to more sensitive performance' (Definis-Gojanović, Gugić & Sutlović 2009, p.173). Like many other music subcultures, emo began as a small intimate crowd – a local scene located in Washington, DC – that were listening to the same style of music and had a similar attitude towards it. Emos evolved from punk, and

arguably goth, finding their roots in a combination of melodic, hardcore and screamo music, which can be seen through the aesthetic appearance of emos as well as through the definition of the music genre which carries elements of the aforementioned genres. Bands who were addressing 'politics in relatable ways' were labelled emo. In the subculture's beginnings in the 1980s, music was crucial to the launch of what became a phenomenon spanning over three decades (Greenwald 2003, p.15).

The term emo came to be commonplace among fans as the first bands in the scene gained popularity around 1985 (Greenwald 2003, p.14). It has been suggested that the term was shortened from emotional hardcore to emo over the period from the 1980s to the 1990s (Greenwald 2003, pp.8–9; Mills & Tunis 2009, p.7). It was not a large group of people that began the subculture; rather it was about being able to be 'alone, together':

> What happened in D.C. in the mid-eighties – the shift from anger to action, from extroverted rage to internal turmoil, from an individualized mass of individuals – was in many ways a test case for the transformation of the national punk scene over the next two decades. The imagery, the power of the music, the way people responded to it, and the way the bands burned out instead of fading away – all have their origins in those few performances of Rites of Spring. The roots of emo were laid, however unintentionally, by fifty or so people in the nation's capital. And, in some ways, it was never as good and surely never as pure again. (Greenwald 2003, p.15)

One of the most important bands for the emo movement, arguably *the* most important band, is Rites of Spring. Managing editor of Alternative Press Leslie Simon suggests that the band was

> arguably the first emo band ever, Rites of Spring was far more sentimental than most of its D.C. peers. In fact, it's still incredibly impressive that singer Guy Picciotto would perform songs like 'Theme (If I Started Crying)' at punk clubs in D.C. without someone giving him a wedgie. (2009, p.8)

Rites of Spring was one of the first bands categorised as being emo as they made a shift away from the dominance of the hardcore genre at the time to a more emotionally driven sound. The band broke up after only fourteen shows, of which only two were played outside of Washington, DC (Greenwald 2003, p.15). Reinforcing Rites of Spring's foundational role, Simon and Kelley describe what they believe are the two landmark moments of the 1980s for emos:

> Summer 1985: Many local punk bands in Washington, D.C. decide to turn their

> backs on punk rock's loud-and-fast rules and begin writing melodic rock songs about crying. One band, Rites of Spring, writes a song called 'Theme (If I Started Crying)' and becomes universally agreed upon as the first real emo band because of it.
>
> June 16 1986: The landmark emo record *The Queen Is Dead* is released by Manchester band the Smiths. Their singer, Morrissey, announces that he's taken a vow of celibacy. He appends this day, like many others, without having sex. (2007, p.14)

The two events discussed in the above quotation were key to the evolution of the emo subculture. Also implicit is the important connection between goth and emo, as emo's 'emotionally' frequently used tropes and styles were also recognisable within the goth scene. The first event described by Simon and Kelley was what has been argued as the beginning of the subculture itself. However Rites of Spring did not necessarily embrace the label 'emo'; rather they performed shows to fans that, as one interviewee of Greenwald's suggests, gave them the space to embrace who they were. As Jenny Toomey, who was interviewed by Greenwald, suggested,

> To be eighteen and surrounded by all those stupid eighteen-year-old things – keg parties and the like – and then all of a sudden to be presented with a charismatic group of thinking people offering not only cooler things to be doing but also numbers. So at a Rites show you could actually be in the majority because you didn't drink, weren't an idiot, and cared about emotions. It was great, like flipping a coin, reversing the norms. When you went to a show you felt like you could be who you liked to be. (Greenwald 2003, p.14)

There were subcultures that came before emo that did provide a space for youths to break the social norm, and what was expected of them, such as punk; however, the emotional side of these subcultures was not always at the forefront as it was for emos. People who attended emo gigs came from a great age range with an even spread of gender. As Greenwald suggests of the first wave emos, there were not any of the 'violently pierced, mohawked, leathered, pleathered and glassy eyed punks of yesteryear' (2003, p.ix). This was a new generation that was emerging out of a well-established subculture of punk. The second wave emos heralded bands such as The Promise Ring who 'didn't wear Ben Sherman suits, drop E or hand out in Camden Town – and they certainly didn't sip Cristal and gangbang either' (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.ix). This was a generation who did not rely on being spectacular and showy; rather they 'had beards and decorated their shoulder bags with tiny pins' (Simon &

Kelley 2007, p.x). But it was the third wave, which focused on fashion and a cohesive aesthetic appearance, that spawned a diffusion of style into the street.

1990s 'Second Wave' Emo: Emo as 'United' Translocal Music Scenes

What was initiated as a musical movement emerging out of Washington, DC came and left in quite a rapid manner; however, 'the ideals it espoused, like hardcore before it, spread quickly across the country, infecting and altering the nation's disconnected network of regional scenes' (Greenwald 2003, p.17). What emerged in the 1990s was notably in no small part caused by the diffusion of the underground music scene of the 1980s. With the second wave of the emo subculture, the instability of the emo genre was demonstrated in the variability of the sound. As Craig Schuftan (2009) suggests, emo has such a wide classification that it can encompass many different genres of music within the one genre. As Schuftan further suggests, 'What do My Chemical Romance, Weezer, Sunny Day Real Estate and Dashboard Confessional have in common? Almost nothing. But their fans all want the same thing – feelings' (2009, p.80). All of the bands that are classified as emo emphasise feelings in their songs: deep, raw feelings that youths feel that they can relate to.

Between the two waves there was a definitive shift between being a local scene and becoming a translocal scene. It was no longer contained in the local geography of Washington, DC; rather it had spread across the United States of America and was beginning to reach further. Notably, this was not just the case for emo bands, but punk, grunge and alternative rock bands were also joining mainstream music culture. When Nirvana was signed to a mainstream label and found success, other major record labels were scrambling to capitalise on the popularity of local underground scenes around the US and elsewhere (Greenwald 2003, p.33). Bands were capitalising on the popularity of pop-punk music by adding an emo sound, a 'heaviness' that was associated with the genre (soemo.co.uk, 29 April 2011). The second wave introduced a different sound, one that leaned toward the indie scene, that is, it was less 'heavy' than the first wave of emo, and it was during this period that the major record labels began signing the bands for deals.

> Somewhere along the way the major record industries took notice. It's around this time that emo started collecting multiple definitions adding gaping contradictions and much confusion. The press of course got a hold of the emo

> term and bastardised it. Emo developed into a space of tension between independent authenticity and corporate mass media.
>
> Like many other aspects of youth culture though, the music and its associated practices and themes were appropriated for profit and turned into a product for mass consumption. Before long, catchy emo bands such as **Dashboard Confessional**, **Jimmy Eat World** and **Weezer** entered the mainstream and were on regular rotation on MTV and national radio stations. (soemo.co.uk, 29 April 2011)

This definition of emo music shows the ebbs and flows of the genre as it moved from the 1980s and into the 1990s, from the hardcore, punk rock sound to a more indie and pop-punk style of music. As each wave of the emo subculture progressed the sound changed and evolved as the grouping expanded and more young people began practising the ideology of the subculture.

Before this period, little was known about emos outside of the United States of America but it was in the 1990s that many of the now popularly suggested stereotypes began to emerge 'that have lasted to this day: boy-driven, glasses-wearing, overly sensitive, overly brainy, chiming-guitar-driven college music' (Greenwald 2003, p.35). These stereotypes have endured through two waves of emo; however, although it is seen as a male-based subculture, the females play an important role in the grouping. They attend the live performances, maintain the fashion and style of the subculture and adhere to its core practices (listening to the bands, writing poetry and song lyrics, etc.). Emo had begun the transition from the underground to above ground and was undertaking some major changes, as Greenwald further explains, as the second wave of emo emerged to an above-ground setting that incorporated a new style of music: 'The emo that came out of the mid-nineties wasn't the better-yourself primer of the '80s D.C. scene; it fell somewhere between the soaringly righteous abstract of Sunny Day and the earthbound, cold-water splash of Jawbreaker' (2003, p.34). It was no longer about wanting to better yourself; it was now more about participating in a grouping that was both righteous and grounded. Acknowledging a musically influenced first and second wave of the emo subculture, Brian Bailey (2006) describes the different types of emos that existed. The second wave of emo are often labelled 'emo kids' due to not being 'pure' and as a nod to the juvenile nature of the new wave; they were not part of the original formation and were not adhering to

the intimacy of the subculture, rather consuming music through mainstream outlets instead of the intimate underground settings as it was intended. The first wave of emos found these 'emo kids' to be '"sell-outs" and "wannabees"' (Bailey 2006, p.340). These 'emo kids' were not seen as being true emos. They were not part of the underground scene that was established in Washington, DC; they were part of the new cycle that was being established, a more mainstream version.

As the second wave of emos emerged, fans of punk throughout the 1990s beyond the limits of Washington, DC had a new outlet to turn to to give voice to their emotions; 'an exit strategy from the immolating, furious monotony of hardcore' (Greenwald 2003, p.17). At this point of increased maturation as both a music genre and emerging cultural identity, the emo subculture was notably portraying classic elements of Romanticism. As radio presenter Craig Schuftan has suggested, Romanticism was an integral part of the emo subculture. After collecting samples of music and comparing them to poems from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century, Schuftan suggests that

> Self-expression, the rejection of institutions, individualism, questing spirituality, the desire to escape society, the strong identification with criminals and madmen, the divinity of sin, the tragic view of nature, ideal love, dying young, solitude, melancholy, medievalism and an unhealthy obsession with death. These were the ideas that connected the songs in my list to one another. But they're also, I learned, the ideals and characteristics of romanticism, the artistic and philosophical movement that dominated much of the nineteenth century. (2009, p.3)

There is an emotional turmoil involved in being an emo, maybe due to the negative connotations or conflicting nature that is so often associated with the grouping. Schuftan continues on to describe the difficulties this poses for understanding and defining the emo subculture. Emo, Schuftan suggests,

> is the most unashamedly romantic sub-culture in rock today. It represents the outer extreme of romanticism, its purest and most dangerous strain, the romanticism of Goethe's young Werther, of Frankenstein, of Byron and Nietzsche – a philosophy which rejects the idea of the greater good, which says that what is good is simply what's good for me. One of the extraordinary things about emo is the panic it's created in the media and society at large. It's been a long time since youth culture was this frightening to grown-ups. (2009, pp.4–5)

Emos were one of the first youth movements in a long time that was quite so existentially mysterious to adults, and particularly the youths' parents. Other subcultures had been more 'in your face' or directly oppositional; emos were moody, esoteric, quiet – and hence arguably much more worrying. The impact of this was portrayed in some media outlets, with some articles staring to connect emo youths with depression, suicide and anti-social behaviour, furthering the panic in adults that their child may be a part of the grouping, as I will further acknowledge in Chapter Four.

As a romantic subculture, emo, by all accounts, portrays the idea of a perfect love story, significantly through the lyrics of bands prominent during this second wave. Although each person is alone and lonely, there is someone for everyone, but in this case it may be a group of people rather than an individual. There is endless poetry available in songs and in the writings of the members on forums. The music that is presented by bands is considered to be a crucial part of this emotional and romantic process. As Greenwald suggests:

> Despite critical opinion to the contrary, mid-nineties emo wasn't a soundtrack to failure, it was a romantic film score to a million true-life tales about the *potential* of failure. It held back even while it gave everything away. (Original emphasis) (2003, p.35)

For the majority of participants, like other subcultures before and since, emo was and is not about being negative, rather it is about a supportive and seemingly understanding environment where there seems little support, which therefore offers hope where there is little hope (or seems so at least, and this issue of teenage angst and emo is one we will return to in Chapter Five).

One of the most crucial elements of emo at this time was the age of the members of the bands that were emerging. As one spectator of the emergence, Jessica Hopper, 'a punk lifer' (Greenwald 2003, p.35) interviewed by Greenwald, suggests, the band members in the mid-nineties were generally older than teenagers. However when emo bands began to emerge in this second wave they were younger; they were the age of their fans. This meant that the fans could relate to what was being sung and could immerse themselves *into* the song; they could believe it was written about them and about their experiences.

The Promise Ring were also an important band for the emo subculture. At one of the first gigs the band held they went to one of the same venues played by Rites of Spring; however, only three people turned up (Leahey 2012). But they eventually

> found their audience, especially in D.C., where a new style of music – 'emo' – began developing with bands that mimicked The Promise Ring's style. Mixing hard-charging music with introspective lyrics and clever hooks, the band paved the way for an entire generation of wounded, tenderhearted punk rockers. Dashboard Confessional and Jimmy Eat World may have gotten all the glory, but The Promise Ring got there first. (Leahey 2012)

The band was crucial to the emo movement as they represented all that was emo through their song lyrics. They were sensitive with 'hardcore's thick, blocky repeating riffs and [which were then transformed when they] slowed them down, smoothed them out' (Greenwald 2003, p.35). Greenwald named his book after one of the band's title tracks from their 1997 album *Nothing Feels Good*. The changing style of just this one band is representative of the fluidity of the emo genre of music.

> The quasi-local quartet (some lived in town, some in Milwaukee) was the first wave of emo. At that time 'emo' was definable – loud-quiet dynamics, expressionist wailing and adolescent angst, not swoopy haircuts ... They were just hammering one chord, over and over. And singing, 'Duh doo doo doo!' The Promise Ring had gone bubblegum. At that moment, in that bowling alley, you could feel the sea change in indie rock … By the third Promise Ring album, 1999's *Very Emergency*, it sounded like Weezer. One number was called 'Happiness Is All the Rage.' Handclaps and smiles were in. This snowballed into Fall Out Boy, the Get Up Kids and umpteen other giddy suburban mall rockers with inane names. The Promise Ring was one of the most influential acts of the 1990s. (DiCrescenzo 2012)

The Promise Ring changed the sound of emo once more. They altered what had been understood as the subculture's clear-cut boundaries and opened the way for the next wave to come through.

Dashboard Confessional were an important band in the second wave of the emo subculture as they drew a young devoted audience who felt that they could see themselves in the lyrics and were able to sing along. They associated themselves with the members of the band, particularly the lead singer, Chris Carrabba. Throngs of youths would flock to the concerts to watch the band and Carrabba with what Eric

Grubbs, previously a writer for *Punk Planet*, currently for the *Dallas Observer*, called 'scary devotion' (2008, p.262). The band had

> [f]ans [that] didn't just sing along in concert; they were entranced by Carrabba and the music. Audience members stared in awe and sang passionately along to every single word. This younger audience [rather than the original generation of emos] had never seen someone as emotionally raw as Carrabba. Plus Carrabba was an attractive and diminutive guy; a stark contrast from the tall, faux-messianic figure of Scott Stapp of rock giants Creed or the faux-machismo of Fred Durst of nü-metal act Limp Bizkit. (Grubbs 2008, pp.262–263)

Bands who were labelled emo were being paired up for concerts, which was giving young people exposure to more bands that they could relate to such as when the 1990s emo-labelled band The Get Up Kids were asked to open for Dashboard Confessional when they toured the United States in the Summer of 2004, playing second on a bill of four (Grubbs 2008, p.263). 'Like longtime Superchunk[17] fans seeing Superchunk open for the Get Up Kids, longtime Get Up Kids fans felt slapped in the face seeing the Get Up Kids open for Dashboard Confessional' (Grubbs 2008, p.263). As more and more pop-punk bands emerged, devoted fans of each supported their favourite so devoutly that there was conflict whenever the position of the band went from headliner to support act. Each generation of emo felt betrayed by the next for not being genuine enough, for not showing the same level of commitment or the same level of passion as they did. For the first wave of emos this second wave exemplified commodification and selling out as it incorporated a more indie, pop-punk sound. Chris Carrabba would wear 'skate company baseball cap[s]' (Greenwald 2003, p.191) and the band played concerts sponsored by Honda (Grubbs 2008, p.263).

Dashboard Confessional was not the only influential second wave band from the emo subculture. Many bands have continued through the different waves of emo, such as Sunny Day Real Estate who formed in 1992 and disbanded in 1995, reformed in 1997–2001 and again in 2009–2013. Grubbs describes the band's sound as

> punk-charged songs with quiet and beautiful passages, and there was more to the songs than anything else out there. With oblique lyrics, poignant melodies,

[17] Beginning in 1989, Superchunk 'has run the gamut of milestone albums: early punk rock stompers, polished mid-career masterpieces, and lush, adventurous curveballs' (*MergeRecords* 2010).

> shifting tempos, and high-reaching vocals, Sunny Day Real Estate was never considered anything more than a sad indie rock band. That description didn't change until *after* they broke up for the first time. (2008, p.71)

The style of music and the way that it matured and adapted with the band allowed them to remain within the ideology of emo. As the third wave of emo rolled around bands such as Sunny Day Real Estate influenced a new generation of music.

2000s 'Third Wave': A Global Virtual Scene

It was in the mid-2000s that bands such as The All American Rejects, Taking Back Sunday and Coheed and Cambria (Simon & Kelley 2007, pp.172–173) sang out melodic pop-punk tunes which were embraced by the new waves of emos; this more melodic era marks the third wave of emo. A number of iconic emo albums emerged at this time, and 'emo' by now was an established musical genre, at least for marketing purposes. My Chemical Romance released *The Black Parade* (2006); The Used released *The Used* (2002), *In Love and Death* (2004) and *Lies for the Liars* (2007); Fall Out Boy had *Take This to Your Grave* (2003), *From Under the Cork Tree* (2005) and *Infinity on High* (2007); Panic at the Disco had the macabre *A Fever You Can't Sweat Out* (2005) and *Pretty Odd* (2008) and AFI transformed from a hardcore band with the release of *Sing the Sorrow* (2003) and *Love Like Winter* (2006). The main notable difference between this new wave and previous incarnations was the denial that spread among the bands who were being labelled as emo. Whereas some bands from the 1980s–1990s embraced the term, thus establishing it as a discrete marketing (if not musicological) genre, in this final phase there were very few bands that wanted to be associated with emo that had emerged from the shadows of underground nightclubs and pubs and into the full-fledged daylight of 'the street'. The sound and aesthetics of emo had spread from a local scene in Washington, DC to become transnationally located in other Western countries, including Australia, and then further still to other countries, and in the third wave it was to become also increasingly virtual, further enabling this expansion, but also diffusion. Emo music had become so diversified that seemingly almost any band could become classified as emo:

> the sheer diversity of the music demonstrates just how unstable emo is as a concept. Sunny Day Real Estate's *Diary* sounds nothing like Weezer's *Pinkerton*, but both are emo landmarks. This diversity is the very reason why many insist that the term is useless. In the beginning emo referred to a very specific handful of Washington DC hardcore bands, beginning with Rites of

> Spring, who traded political rage for emotional angst and were thus labelled 'emo-core'. Now it seems any band whose singer is pale and pretty looking (or not) and sings about his feelings, accompanied by loud guitars (or not) is emo. Emo can sound like mall-punk, synthpop, goth, glam, country, classic rock, or Morrissey fronting a hardcore band. (Schuftan 2009, p.9)

Through the 2000s it was no longer the bands who were noting their emo status; rather, it was the fans who were labelling – or claiming – the groups. Due to the subcultural shift into the online realm and its greater contemporaneity with the research period, I will be focusing on this wave in my analysis.

In keeping with this even further above-ground and entrenched status, the third wave of emo was arguably the most publicised wave in terms of public exposure, and the backlash was particularly marked in its hostility. Jokes were created, such as 'I wish my lawn were emo so it would cut itself', t-shirts showing cartoon pictures of emos with the tagline 'go have a cry emo kid' were sold, and all the while emo-linked bands, as defined by fans and popular media outlets, were playing on mainstream pop radio stations. Perhaps in large part because of this backlash, one of the most notable features of the third wave of emos was that, while young people were applying the label emo, the majority of those who were participating in the cultural practices denied this affiliation. Although these bands were often commercially identified as emo and upheld an emo aesthetic, there was great denial of any involvement in emo.

With the moral panics that enveloped emo during this more public third wave (see Chapter Four), newspapers began to publish how-to guides advising on 'how to spot an emo'. These were being used by young people as guides for how to dress and act to be a part of the culture. Along with the newspapers publishing detailed descriptions of what emos looked like (see for example the articles on Jodie Gater and Stephanie Gestier or Carly Ryan), comedic and ironic emo publication began to emerge that also described emo in detail, such as *Living with an Emo Kid* (Mills & Tunis 2009), which is a comical guide for parents on how to tell if their child is an emo. In it, Charlie Mills, a freelance journalist, along with Paul Tunis, a comic poet, list 10 'rules' for being an emo:

> **Rule 1**
>
> Don't call yourself Emo Kid. Leave that to everyone else.
>
> **Rule 2**

Dress the part. Looking like an extra from *High School Musical* just isn't you.

Rule 3

Fall in love with someone inappropriate. It's hardly a story if you just get together, like each other, get married and live happily ever after, is it?

Rule 4

Keep a diary (you've got a high chance of turning it into a best-selling book. Misery memoirs really sell. You could call it *No One Understands Me and I Want to Die*).

Rule 5

If your doctor suggests that you wear looser fitting jeans, ignore this dubious advice. The jeans might be to blame for your unpleasant itch, but isn't suffering for love what it's all about?

Rule 6

Turn the volume up a notch higher. If more people listened to music as good as yours, the world might be a better place. They just need to get past the headache stage first.

Rule 7

Take time every day to prepare your most unamused face in anticipation for the day you might be trapped in an elevator with Will Farrell, Jon Stewart and Jack Black.

Laughing is NOT emo.

Rule 8

You have a reputation for being sensitive so use it to your advantage … bursting into tears on a packed city bus will probably score you a seat.

Rule 9

If no one understands your poetry, take it as evidence you are a very special human being.

Rule 10

Start using a follicle-stimulating shampoo now. When hair is such a significant factor in your lifestyle, you can't afford to risk thinning in later life. (Mills & Tunis 2009, pp.12–13)

These rules were a humorous take on whether or not your teenager was an emo, showing that it no longer held the power that it once had. The bands, however, remained the biggest influence on third wave emos. The aesthetics of the band members and the lyrics that pumped through MP3 players, televisions, computers and stereos lead the way for a new generation to embrace their inner emotions and unleash them unadulterated.

AFI

Davey Havok, lead singer of AFI, was one of the musicians most strongly categorised as emo within this wave, due to his aesthetic appearance and because Havok wrote most of the band's songs. When hit song 'Miss Murder' rocked the airwaves in 2006, the film clip that accompanied it was dark and emotional, much like emo itself. In the clip Havok has a long black fringe with a lip piercing and black clothing, which are characteristic signifiers of emo. As well as the clothing and piercings he is wearing make-up, a trait which is common among male emos:

> As for makeup emo's tend to accentuate their eyes with black, red, etc eyeliner and eye shadow ... The emo look commonly includes being as pale as your natural skin tone will allow, with the use of a whitening foundation of a super light powder. However, this certainly isn't such a key feature as it is with the goth look (soemo.co.uk 2013).

The lyrics of 'Miss Murder' provide a crucial insight into why the band can be associated with third wave emo. The opening lyrics of the song go:

> This is what I brought you
> This you can keep
> This is what I brought
> You may forget me
> I promise to depart
> Just promise one thing
> Kiss my eyes
> And lay me to sleep.

Like the singer himself, the lyrics are representative of emo in that they are highly emotive and dark. There is a level of angst shown in the video clip where the singer seems unsure about what to do in regards to the gathering group and the woman who appears in the clip. However, when faced with a large group he shows confidence, which is representative of emo. Within a group there is confidence and support where individually there can be angst and a sense of being unsure. In the clip all the members wear tight black clothing, with another member of the band sporting a long blonde fringe. Having a long fringe homologically represents a curtain that can be hid behind, a small symbol of safety and security.



Figure 1 ***Decemberunderground*****, AFI, Polydor Associated Labels, release date May 2006, <http://www.last.fm/music/AFI/Decemberunderground>.**

The chorus of the song, which was played on mainstream radio stations, was symbolic and dark, representative precisely of the poetry and romanticism suggested by Schuftan (2009):

> Hey Miss Murder, can I,
> Hey Miss Murder, can I,
> Make beauty stay if I,
> Take my life, Whoa oh oh.

Within the online emo community the meaning of the video is highly contested; however, the most common suggestion is that the woman and black rabbits featured in the clip, which echo the front cover of the album, represent death. The bridge is the first time in the song where screaming is introduced, an important element of emo music. The bridge suggests that unattainable goals are being presented and hope is lost, which many youths can identify with:

> What's the hook, the twist within this verbose mystery?
> I would gladly bet my life upon it
> That the ghost you love, your ray of light will fizzle out
> Without hope, hope.
> We're the empty set just floating through wrapped in skin,
> Ever searching for what we were promised
> Reaching for that golden ring we'd never let go ...
> Who would ever let us put our filthy hands upon it?

All lyrics can be subjective, but for young people these lyrics can clearly be seen as characteristic of the struggles typically associated with youth: not being given what they were promised, not being able to achieve certain goals, losing love or loved ones or not being good enough.

Another song AFI released the same year also metonymically represents the emo-ness of the band: 'Love Like Winter' (Figure 2). Like the previous film clip, this one is dark, with the band members shown to be 'suffering' due to the snow surrounding them, a connotation of which is being cold and miserable, as well as the unsmiling faces and darkness that surrounds them. Again, Havok visually fulfils an image of male emo identity; he is shown in both clips having a long side fringe and black hair as well as a lip piercing and tight black clothing. The common belief is that the song is about love, and the reincarnation of it from a past life into this one:

> It's in the blood
> It's in the blood
> I met my love before I was born
> He wanted love, I taste of blood
> He bit my lip and drank my war from years before
>
> She exhales vanilla lace
> I barely dreamt her yesterday
> Read the lines in the mirror through the lipstick trace
> 'Por siempre,' she said,
> 'It seems you're somewhere far away'
> To his face.

As is common among the emo online community, the lyrics have been the focus of deep and loving analysis on the Internet. As already indicated, there is some consensus that the song is about love being from before the antagonist was born, but that is now lost, which is why the song has such a 'cold' setting. The woman mentioned is pure, 'vanilla lace' and says 'forever'. The song is about love and hope, however is open to interpretation like most emo music which is read by the fans to meet their needs at the time. In the clip the band members all die one by one, with Havok being the last to die at the hand of a woman who drags him down into icy water.



Figure 2 'Love Like Winter', online video, 23 July 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsrEXwozK-Y>.

Later music videos produced by the band, such as 'Beautiful Thieves' (Figure 3), in which Havok is almost unrecognisable with a swept back quiff and no make-up or facial piercings, aside from in his ear, are very different to previously released albums. The clip is bright and set in a largely white mansion. The woman featured in the clip too is very different from the two previous music clips, wearing a short white dress with red lipstick. She is fully lit and her face is seen throughout the whole clip, unlike the other two in which the woman's face is only shown near the climax of the song. Although at the end of the song all of the guests at the party are found dead as the drink was poisoned, the song and clip still have a very different feel to the previously released albums. Havok himself suggests: 'This video that we are doing shows people actually being forced to be responsible for their actions. We implement that retribution, if you will' ('AFI – Beautiful Thieves Making of' 2010). Although Havok does not further explain or define the meaning of the video, at the time the third wave of emo were embroiled in a moral panic which required them to take responsibility for their actions. However due to the frequent denial of emo identity it was hard to target any particular individual; rather the whole culture was targeted. Together, these three videos are particularly representative of the arc of the third wave of emo. With 'Miss Murder' and 'Love Like Winter' being darker videos with classic emo elements, such as screaming as well as singing being used, the videos are thus particularly representative of the height of emo. 'Beautiful Thieves' meanwhile reflects the period

after the defusion of the third wave of emo.



Figure 3 AFI, making of 'Beautiful Thieves', DGC/Interscope Records, 2010.

Fall Out Boy

A commercially (and visually) more mainstream band to have been labelled as a part of emo during the third wave is Fall Out Boy. In 2003 *Take This to Your Grave* was released as the band's first album followed by *From Under the Cork Tree* two years later. The heavy guitar and the catchy pop-punk anthems made the albums an emo's delight. Pete Wentz, the bassist and lead lyricist, wrote the song, '7 Minutes in Heaven (Atavan Halen)' after he attempted suicide through a drug overdose; Wentz 'took an excessive amount of the prescription anti-depression drug Ativan' (a different spelling to the song title). Speaking to MTV News, the bassist said:

> I got in my car. I remember I was listening to Jeff Buckley doing Leonard Cohen's 'Hallelujah' and sat there and took a bunch of Ativan in a Best Buy Parking lot. I called up my manager because I was, at that point, completely out of my head with Ativan. And I was talking to him and I was slurring my words, so he called my mom and my mom called me and she came and got me and we went to the hospital. ('Pete Wentz: 'I tired to kill myself''2008)

This personal history of the song is important as some young people relate to these feelings, as can be seen on the numerous Pinterest[18] posts that have been created of Fall Out Boy Lyrics. The lyrics of the song are presented from Wentz's point of view:

> I'm sleeping my way out of this one

[18] A popular site to post photos of your hobbies or interests and to share ideas that can be seen publicly.

With anyone who will lie down
I'll be stuck fixated on one star
When the world is crashing down
I keep telling myself
I keep telling myself
I'm not the desperate type
But you've got me looking in through blinds
I'm sitting out dances on the wall
Trying to forget everything that isn't you
I'm not going home alone
Cause I don't do too well on my own
The only thing worse than not knowing
Is you thinking that I don't know
I'm having another episode
I just need a stronger dose.

Many young people can relate to this song and they often quote it, putting themselves in the lyrics and believing that the song is about them and their life. In a review of the 2005 album, online music journalist Johnny Loftus notes that, musically and visually,

> Fall Out Boy's 2003 LP stacked sarcasm, wronged romance, and hardcore-derived passion on the head of a punk-pop pin. Take This to Your Grave was urgent at every turn, and though it fit the conventions of its genre, it was bolder and more memorable than the average release on Kung Fu or Drive-Thru.[19] The kids responded – Fall Out Boy were fast favorites of the online social networks (MySpace), and an endless tour schedule solidified their rep. With 2005's From Under the Cork Tree, the band fully delivers on their first full-length's promise. Sure, it nods a little more to the standard dynamics and production tweaks of pop-punk and emo in the mid-2000s – Cork Tree was produced by Neal Avron, who's worked with A New Found Glory. But in many more ways it's the same album as Grave, a youth-intense blast of pop culture reference, pop-punk hyperactivity, and the feeling that we'll never understand life until Patrick Stump or Pete Wentz tells us about it. (2005)

For the third wave of emos, it was as though the band was listening to *their* problems and *their* struggles and was writing for them; the band were supporting them when they needed it the most.

Fall Out Boy made an immense impact in countries around the globe, but one member

[19] American record labels that emerged in the 1990s.

in particular was making waves in the emo community. Pete Wentz was the only member of the band to embody an emo aesthetic in his personal style, and he was arguably the most well-known member. According to Simon and Kelley,

> Wentz is the emo scene's only true mogul. While this is usually a role associated with hip-hop artists (like Wentz's idol, Shawn Carter), his ability to be involved in pretty much every corner of the mainstream emo scene and still have enough time to post esoteric poems on Fall Out Boy's Web site is admirable. In the past two years, Wentz has developed his own online social network, run a clothing line, launched a record label, penned two books, acted on *One Tree Hill*, coached the Miami Heat to their first-ever NBA championship, and adopted a Nambian baby after a half dozen humanitarian aid missions in sub-Saharan Africa. (2007, pp.160–161)

One of the most important elements of this quotation is the reference to 'mainstream emo'. While AFI would have been played on the more niche radio stations with 'Miss Murder' only reaching 44 on the US music charts, Fall Out Boy were played on mainstream commercial stations, with 'Dance Dance' hitting number 9 on the US charts and another song, 'This Ain't a Scene It's an Arms Race', hitting number 2 (Offical Charts Company 2012). Although the band was more mainstream, Wentz had a similar aesthetic as Havok. Both had long black fringes with tight black clothing, tattoos and facial piercings. It could be suggested that this is in itself one of the reasons that people suggested the bands were emo. If they had not looked like this, would they still have been taken in as a part of the emo genre? Although the songs portray overt emotion and are easy to connect with, if the most popular and well-known members of the bands had a different appearance, would fans have been so quick to dub them emo bands? Although this is conjecture, it is important in acknowledging the fluidity of the music connected to emo and the bands defined therein. Although there is a certain sound, it is one that could also be categorised as alternative, heavy metal or pop punk if separated from the emo category.



Figure 4 Fall Out Boy, <http://www.falloutboyrock.com/>, retrieved 25 June 2012.

My Chemical Romance

Another band that was dubbed emo and which soon after was shrouded with controversy was My Chemical Romance. Led by Gerard Way, the band was formed in 2001, releasing the albums *I Brought You My Bullets, You Brought Me Your Love* (2002) and *Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge* (2004) before the controversial *The Black Parade* in 2006. The 'emo' categorisation was not suggested by the band, or indeed even welcomed. In 2007 Brett Sowerby interviewed Gerard Way for *The Maine Campus*, a university student newspaper, and asked the singer a question about the identification:

> TMC: I understand you don't really like the term emo to describe your music. Is there anything you'd like to say about that?
>
> GW: Basically, it's never been accurate to describe us. Emo bands were being booked while we were touring with Christian metal bands because no one would book us on tours. I think emo is F–ing garbage, it's bulls–. I think there's bands that unfortunately we get lumped in with that are considered emo and by default that starts to make us emo. All I can say is anyone actually listening to the records, put the records next to each other and listen to them and there's actually no similarities. I think emo's a pile of s–. (Sowerby 2007)

Way acknowledges here the instability of the music genre (among other things). Although at the time of the album's release it suggested all things emo: the darkness of the music clips, the aesthetic of the band members (Figure 5) and the content of the songs, the denial was resonant. As Craig Schuftan suggests,

> The relationship between My Chemical Romance and emo is complex, to say the

least. The simplest way to put it would be to say that the band's fans are emo, but that the band itself is not. Gerard Way has repeatedly insisted that this is the case' (2009, pp.5–6).

The flagship song off the record, 'Welcome to the Black Parade', contains the lyrics:

On and on we carry through the fears
Disappointed faces of your peers
Take a look at me
'Cause I could not care at all

Do or die, you'll never make me
Because the world will never take my heart
Though you try, you'll never break me
We want it all, we wanna play this part

Won't explain or say I'm sorry
I'm unashamed, I'm gonna show my scar
Give a cheer for all the broken
Listen here, because it's only

I'm just a man, I'm not a hero
Just a boy who wanna sing his song
Just a man, I'm not a hero
I don't care!

We'll carry on, we'll carry on
And though you're dead and gone, believe me
Your memory will carry on, you'll carry on
And though you're broken and defeated
You're weary widow marches on.

The album itself, and in particular this song, depicts the story of a cancer patient, and demonstrates the ultimate death of the man represented by a marching band in the film clip. 'Death, Way insists, arrives in the form of our most reassured childhood memory. For the patient, this was the day his father took him into town to see a parade' (Schuftan 2009, p.49). However, again it is easy to see how youths could see connotations in the song that could apply to them; it may not be death and dying, but a different kind of tragedy. Or maybe hope. There is a passage in the song where the dying man's father tells him,

He said 'son when you grow up
Would you be the saviour of the broken

The beaten and the damned?'

He said, 'Will you defeat them
Your demons and all the non-believers
The plans that they have made?
Because one day, I'll leave you
A phantom to lead you in the summer
To join the Black Parade'.

This depiction of a story of hope, not one of sorrow is, Schuftan (2009) suggests, a main reason why the band is not actually emo. However, to suggest that there is no hope in emos is to deny a crucial part of the ideology that makes up emo. My Chemical Romance were embraced by young people all over the world as an emo band, although the label was denied by the band itself.

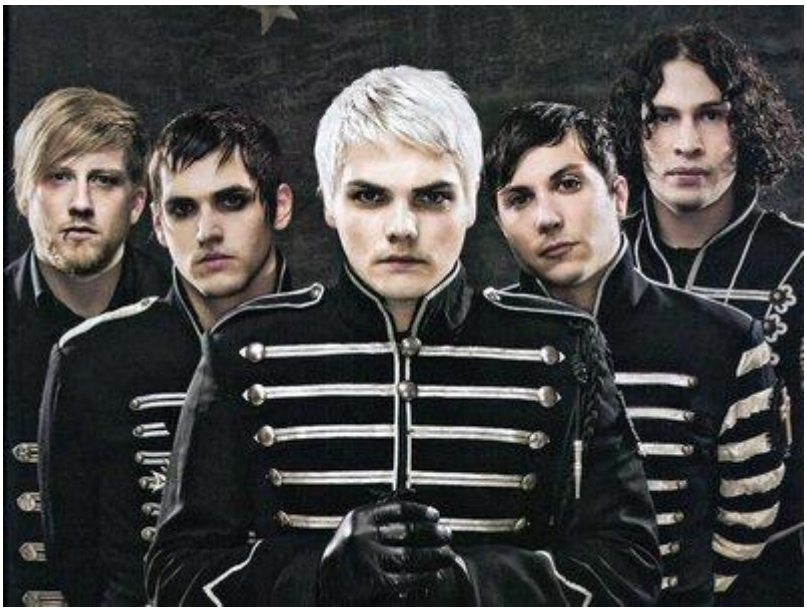


Figure 5 My Chemical Romance, MySpace, 2014, <https://myspace.com/mychemicalromance/photos>.

Where AFI hinted towards murder and suicide in their music and albums, My Chemical Romance portrayed a story of survival, of hope and of happiness in *The Black Parade*. The album's flagship song 'Welcome to the Black Parade' embodies this hope. Strength can be found between the words that are sung out in the nostalgic, vintage-style film clip. Though a man is facing death, he gets to live out his last moments as a member of the black parade led by the band through the streets to a new place. Although death is discussed as the main topic of the song, the idea of life and not giving up is at the core of the album. The title of the album in itself represents a number of things for the band and its members.

> It's an alter-ego for his band, an image of death, a hope for salvation, and a way to describe his fans. It's also a dream society in reverse – a place where the broken, the beaten and the damned can be alone together. It's a parallel universe where sorrow is sublime and the good guys wear black (Schuftan 2009, p.53).

The album does not contain the negativity of some other emo-associated albums. Lines such as 'Because the world will never take your heart' depict hope, not sorrow; it is defiant. The genre of music is so hard to define that to define a band that belongs to it is also near impossible.

> So it's impossible to work out whether My Chemical Romance is emo or not based on the sound of their music. Nor is it possible to peg them on the basis of their lineage. My Chemical Romance does occupy one of the outer branches of the emo family tree – they were supported early on by Geoff Rickley from Thursday, they've recorded a cover of David Bowie and Queen's 'Under Pressure' with the Used, and they've been touring and writing with James DeWees of the Get Up Kids. But by that logic both The Mars Volta and The Foo Fighters would also be emo – and nobody would argue that they are. (Schuftan 2009, p.9)

Despite all this, My Chemical Romance were immersed in scandal when a moral panic erupted in England after a young fan committed suicide. British tabloid *The Sun*, in particular, evoked a classic moral panic discourse when it stated that Hannah Bond had participated in 'a secret double life ... as a member of self-harming "emo" cult' (Clench 2008). The media began to report on factors in society that could be blamed for Bond's suicide. As Tom Rawstorne explained of Bond's parents,

> In the unending bleakness of the weeks that have followed [Hannah's death], the couple have fought to make sense of what happened. Why on earth did their daughter, a popular, intelligent and attractive girl, do such a thing? They could find only one clue: Hannah was what is known as an 'emo'. (2008)

This is further suggestive of the fear that was spreading in parents and adults regarding emo during this more visible third wave, while also serving to reinforce these very fears.

Journalist Andrew Levy adopted a particular focus on emo lyrics and the suicide of Hannah Bond. 'Two weeks before her death, [Hannah Bond] started following U.S. band My Chemical Romance. One of their songs contains the lyrics: "Although you're dead and gone, believe me your memory will live on"' (2008). He went on to discuss the protest that followed held by fans of the band who believed that they were

being wrongly and harshly judged by the reporting in the (UK tabloid) *Daily Mail* (2008). Clench also discussed Bond's connection to the emo-labelled band: 'she was obsessed with US emo band My Chemical Romance whose 2006 No 1 album The Black Parade features a tragic storyline about a man dying of cancer' (2008). This backlash against My Chemical Romance led them to release a public statement, published on *MTV Newsroom*:

> My Chemical Romance are and always have been vocally anti-violence and anti-suicide. As a band, we have always made it one of our missions through our actions to provide comfort, support, and solace to our fans. The message and theme of our album The Black Parade is hope and courage. Our lyrics are about finding the strength to keep living through pain and hard times.
>
> The last song on our album states: '*I am not afraid to keep on living*' – a sentiment that embodies the band's position on hardships we all face as human beings. If you or anyone that you know have feelings of depression or suicide, we urge you to find your way and your voice to deal with these feelings positively. (*MTV Newsroom* 2008)

The focus on My Chemical Romance reflected concerns about young people listening to their album. In additional response and to further distance themselves from accusations, on their website, My Chemical Romance have posted rules and regulations for people who want to post anything on their page including: 'No self-harm posts – If you are feeling like you may harm yourself please contact someone who can help' (*My Chemical Romance* 2012). Numbers are then given for suicide hotline www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org and The Trevor Project.[20] My Chemical Romance have vehemently denied any association with emo, demonstrating the third wave's resistance to the 'emo' label, despite similarities in aesthetic appearance and musical style.

For the third wave of emo the transition that the bands went through mimicked that of the youths who were going through the processes of emo as well. Dick Hebdige theorised the life cycles of subcultures as a process of diffusion and defusion, as discussed in Chapter Two. This shift in subcultures has long been recognised in

[20] 'The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth' ('The Trevor Project' 2010).

academia, as acknowledged by Joanna Ruth David, who discussed the shift of punk from being a tight group of individuals to being diffused into society, making them a memory of the past, a life to be relived only in stories told to younger generations. According to one member of the punk subculture,

> It has already grown to an unmanageable size, and changed completely enough so as to become unrecognizable, to render 'punk' meaningless. These shifts then, must be conceptualized to account for new faces in the scene – the growth and instability – and the fragmentation that comes out of drawing lines. Thus as scene members get older, and begin to recognize that these new scene kids are much younger than they are, they begin to describe shifts in the scene in generational terms – they may still have their place, but the scene may not be 'theirs' anymore. (Davis 2006, p.67)

While this concept can be applied to many subcultures who have passed through history, for example teddy boys, goths and punks, as well as emos, they are still seen as outsiders by mainstream society. Although emos have been through the process of diffusion and defusion, some could suggest more than once, they are still seen as the 'Other', meaning that they have not yet transitioned into being only a memory, a story to pass on.

Music Festivals

Given the centrality of music to emo it would be remiss not to acknowledge the importance of music festivals, which are an integral part of the emo culture and one that all of the above bands have been a part of. Globally there are a number of music festivals that incorporate 'emo' bands, including Riot Fest, Uproar, Soundwave, the Rockstar Taste of Chaos Tour, The Vans Warped Tour and the Big Day Out. In this section I will focus on the Australian-based music festivals to show the impact of emo in this country, as well as how this has played a role in the diffusion and defusion of emo. Simon and Kelley discuss music festivals thus:

> One thing that will bring emo fans out of their hometown music scene and into the music scene of another is the summer music festival. Many emo fans are prone to drive great lengths, spend great amounts of their parents' money, and, hopefully apply great amounts of sunblock all to see a shitload of their favorite bands play on the same bill (2007, p.180).

There are festivals held around the world that are associated with emo. In Australia

Soundwave[21] is considered to be an alternative/emo festival, with not only emo bands attending, but also heavy metal bands and stalls dedicated to emo ideals, such as merchandise and support service stalls, as discussed below. Online news source news.com.au article, 'Soundwave Festival brings wave of black' (2010) acknowledges the connotations of emo culture with the reference to 'wave of black'. However, the article discusses the genres of punk and metal, but not emo, although Sunny Day Real Estate, one of the first emo-classified band of the 1990s was listed to perform.

But the Soundwave festival not only features emo bands; it also supports the services created for issues connected to emo. To Write Love On Her Arms (TWLOHA) was created in 2006 when a friend of the founding members self-harmed. The non-profit organisation was created to combat self-harm and suicide and regularly has booths at music festivals so that they can talk to people about their messages and offer support where it is needed. The story below depicts the reason behind the foundation's name; it was named for what the first person to be treated by them went through.

> She has known such great pain; haunted dreams as a child, the near-constant presence of evil ever since. She has felt the touch of awful naked men, battled depression and addiction, and attempted suicide. Her arms remember razor blades, fifty scars that speak of self-inflicted wounds. Six hours after I meet her, she is feeling trapped, two groups of 'friends' offering opposite ideas. Everyone is asleep. The sun is rising. She drinks long from a bottle of liquor, takes a razor blade from the table and locks herself in the bathroom. She cuts herself, using the blade to write 'FUCK UP' large across her left forearm. ('It Started with a Story' 2012).

There is poetry in the story, another connotation of emo. The foundation started by selling t-shirts[22] to raise funds to help pay for the treatment required. Bands that have

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[21] Soundwave is an all-ages event that was established in 2004 in Perth. By 2007 Brisbane and Sydney were added to the toured cities and in 2008 Melbourne and Adelaide were the last cities added. It attracts between 20,000 and 30,000 visitors each year. 'Soundwave is an annual music festival held in major cities around Australia ... It features a number of international and Australian music acts, from various genres including rock, metal and punk acts. In the past the festival has been headlined by Good Charlotte, Deftones, The Offspring, Nine Inch Nails and Faith No More. Including co-headliners +44, Incubus, Alice in Chains, Bloodhound Gang, Lamb of God, Jane's Addiction and Jimmy Eat World' (www.festivalaustralia.com.au 2013).

[22] T-shirts are available for purchase at www.twloha.com

been associated with emo at one time or another, in particular Anberlin and Switchfoot, began wearing the apparel to show their support for the cause (news.com.au 2012). The organisation also acknowledges the role that emo has played in the self-harm/suicide story:

> Over the six years, we've responded to 170,000 messages from people in 100 different countries. We've had the opportunity to bring this conversation, and a message of hope and help, to concerts, universities, festivals and churches. We've learned that these are not American issues, not white issues or 'emo' issues. These are issues of humanity, problems of pain that affect millions of people around the world. (news.com.au 2012)

Their message is written as a form of motivation and of hope:

> You were created to love and be loved. You were meant to live life in relationship with other people, to know and be known. You need to know that your story is important and that you're part of a bigger story. You need to know that your life matters.
>
> We live in a difficult world, a broken world. My friend Byron is very smart – he says that life is hard for most people most of the time. We believe that everyone can relate to pain, that all of us live with questions, and all of us get stuck in moments.
>
> You need to know that you're not alone in the places you feel stuck.
>
> We all wake to the human condition. We wake to mystery and beauty but also to tragedy and loss. Millions of people live with problems of pain. Millions of homes are filled with questions – moments and seasons and cycles that come as thieves and aim to stay. We know that pain is very real. It is our privilege to suggest that hope is real, and that help is real.
>
> You need to know that rescue is possible, that freedom is possible, that God is still in the business of redemption. We're seeing it happen. We're seeing lives change as people get the help they need. People sitting across from a counselor for the first time. People stepping into treatment. In desperate moments, people calling a suicide hotline. We know that the first step to recovery is the hardest to take. We want to say here that it's worth it, that your life is worth fighting for, that it's possible to change. (news.com.au 2012)

The story leaves a ray of hope that life can get better and that you are never alone; much like the story My Chemical Romance is portraying in their album. This is important for members of emo, as feeling isolated is one of the key issues that many of

the youths face. TWLOHA also holds seminars in schools, and online, regarding how to be safe in the online realm. Soundwave support the organisation by regularly posting messages on their facebook page as well as having the foundation's banners on their webpage. TWLOHA is not the only organisation that targets a youth audience with their message. The Soundwave Festival is an important music festival for the emo audience as it not only has emo bands but also supports foundations that support emo.

A musical festival that made a particularly strong impact on the international emo community is Rockstar™ Taste of Chaos, a punk-based festival that travelled around North America and then continued on to stages around the world. In 2007, The Used, Rise Against, Aiden, Drop Dead, Gorgeous, The Bled, Gallows and Carpathian joined together to rock stages around the Australian leg of the tour. The MySpace page for the event suggests the debate that was surrounding emo at the time of the festival: 'Rockstar Taste Of Chaos is tearing around Oz, giving punters a hearty gulp of hardcore and punk rockin' mayhem ... find out just where the bands stand on 21st century punk and the contentious issue of emo!' ('Rockstar Taste of Chaos MySpace Page' 2007). Although many of the bands who performed at the festival deny an association with emo, it was held in Australia at the peak of emo's popularity and has not been back since, although it continues to tour America annually.

Concerts are crucial destinations for emos, affirming the centrality of music to emo identification. As at any other music event, there is a certain etiquette and behaviour that is expected at emo shows which homologically 'fits' with the larger aesthetic and social world of the community. The fans are generally very respectful towards each other and also tend to focus respectfully on watching their favourite bands perform. The venue that gigs are held in is very important for the right atmosphere, one of anticipation and dedication to the band. The merchandise tables that stock anything from t-shirts to stickers and CDs are an element that Simon and Kelley say is a key component for any gig: 'Once the night's final band is through performing, there's one last destination: the merch table. Emo kids are consumers, and much of their appreciation is shown in overt behavior like wearing one of the seventeen T-shirt designs that a band has for sale' (2007, p.11). Merchandise and fashion are an important part of emo. What you wear is a crucial element of how you will be identified by your peers. Although skinny black jeans are a concert staple, another

important item of clothing is bands' t-shirts. Every gig you enter will have a 'merch' desk that is a must-stop destination. Wearing your favourite band's t-shirt is not enough to represent the culture that encompasses being an emo.

> Fashion is not something that emo fans take lightly. Nailing the perfect emo look is all about the details. From top to toes, no item – or accessory – is too small to agonize over. After all, there's a huge difference between merely looking the part and truly understanding the ins and outs of emo culture' (Simon & Kelley 2007, p.41).

Having the requisite style and therefore having subcultural capital is what is required to be seen as 'truly' belonging to emo. Even within the realms of band t-shirts there are rules as to what can and cannot be worn. The particular band's shirt that you wear will also reflect a lot about your personality so it is vital to choose carefully before stepping out in your chosen outfit.

Scene Kids: The 'Recycled Subculture'

Following the emergence of emo into the mainstream, the diffusion and defusion process, new groups emerged that were an example of the cyclical nature of subcultures and the way that they can be 'recycled' into something that is 'new'. Around the late 2000s scene kids emerged online as a new subculture that echoed the ideology of the emo but also introduced new elements and were almost solely active on the Internet. While the aesthetic may be visible in the streets of cities around the Global West, with bright hair and clothing being key markers, the main source of contact that scene kids have with each other is again through social networking sites and other online pages that are dedicated primarily to the grouping. Emos themselves arguably come from a mix of punk and goth, and scene kids come from emos. Scene kids are similar in appearance and music taste to emos; however, they do not include as much black in their aesthetic as emos do. While the hairstyles remain the same, the colours vary to blonde, purple, blue or red. According to a study conducted by Urista, Dong and Day,

> These teens primarily use MySpace to become more popular online compared to traditional avenues like joining school clubs in the real word. According to one participant, '[Scene Kids are] a subculture of people who take pictures from overhead that mostly look like Emo people and punkrockers. Some of the people also take half-naked pictures.' The same participant further noted, 'they probably don't have a lot of friends so they think that when they're online they can be a different person just to seem cooler than they really are. They are just

> in the Scene Kid Group to get more friends and add as many people as possible.' When this subculture of teens was brought up in another focus group, one participant noted that she was familiar with the social group and stated, 'they always carry a camera around and boast about how many friends, comments and pictures they have to others'. (2009, p.224)

Scene kids are a largely online subculture, relying on these interactions for socialisation. On soemo.co.uk emos have discussed their opinions on what they think is occurring within the grouping:

> Recently I've noticed in a lot of people opinions on the web and in person that these two different subcultures have some what merged in to one larger more diverse subculture ...
>
> Now I know there's always been huge differences between the two subcultures (emo and scene) both musically and style wise
>
> But now it seems to have become more of a fine line and a huge grey/cross over area in the middle ...
>
> Has anyone else noticed this and what are your opinions on the matter ? (soemo.co.uk, 21 May 2013)

There are vital differences between scene kids and emos; however, like emo scene kids are also hard to define.

> **Scene kids** are on the surface basically just emo kids, but they certainly don't like being called emo! The main difference between emos and scene kids is that scene kids tend to care more about appearance than the actual emotions behind the culture of emo. It appears that scene kids are less depressed. They want to draw attention to themselves and their lifestyle and are often more outgoing and social. Their attitude can be described as a mix of the sullen teenage lethargy that comes with the emo-scene, and the anger and saucy-ness that comes with the hardcore-scene. Some people find them pretentious and don't like that they think they're superior to others ...
>
> Scene kids' music tastes are typically very flexible. They enjoy anything from soft acoustic songs to fast, brutal blastbeats/breakdowns to some pop/electro-pop. Popular bands/artists with scene kids include Blood on the Dance Floor, A Day To Remember, The Devil Wears Prada, Dot Dot Curve, VersaEmerge, Bring Me The Horizon, Brokencyde, Pierce The Veil; and more recently, 'dubstep' has become popular amongst the scene crowd. (soemo.co.uk, 18 July 2012)

This detailed description demonstrates the key differences between emo and scene kids, namely the use of colour, hairstyles and importantly, that attitude and demeanour. Another description suggests

> Well, scene kids tend to use more color and stuff. They tease their hair and then die it like ... pink or blue or purple, when most emos tend to stick with black. And if you want to get into sterotypes, emos (if they even cut at all) cut their wrists and scene kids (if they even cut at all) cut their legs. I guess it's a lot less noticable that way. (emopuddle, 31 December 2009)

There are key differences in the style of music and the aesthetic of the youths involved and members of each subculture can be quite critical of each other: 'I see Scene kids as a more colorful version of an emo (: .. I think they are more bitchy too :) I'm probably wrong, but that's what I think' (soemo.co.uk, 18 July 2012). Just as the different waves of emo were critical of the next wave, emos are critical of scene kids. Yet another description suggests,

> scene are obsessed with themselves
> then when you call them pretty
> they go 'nnooo I'm ugly'
> … then why have you got 350 pictures of yourself on bebo???
> they're happy emos ... they are full of fail
> and dress the style because they think it looks good.
> is it right for me to wear a Nazi outfit cause I think it looks good?????
> scene can go and die for all I care. (emopuddle, 5 January 2010)

New youth formations are today being maintained by the Internet; this form of communication allows people throughout the world (with access to the technology) entrance to a community that was once far more exclusive and far harder to access. Scene kids are important in the evolution of subcultures. Emo, which began as a small, intimate underground grouping has expanded to be embraced around the world; however, the way that the term emo is used is not always within the original ideology of the subculture.

As seen through the different waves of emo and the transition from underground to mainstream, the three waves have each had their own influence on youths, with each new wave being resented by the one that came before for not being 'genuine'. As previously suggested, the denial of emo was not exclusive to My Chemical Romance:

> 'Emo', Gerard Way says, 'is a pile of shit'. He's not the only one who feels that way. Not only is the sentiment echoed by thousands of punks, Goths, and

> indie-rock fans, it's a conviction shared by most of the bands people think of as emo – members of Panic at the Disco, Fall Out Boys, The Get Up Kids, Saves the Dat, Weezer, and Jimmy Eat World have all, at one time or another, declared that they want nothing to do with it. It seems to be one of those genres that's only useful to music journalists and record store owners, along with other much maligned terms such as trip-hop, new rave and electroclash. Unlike these, however, emo has proved surprisingly durable – the history of the genre is long, and its fans are passionate about it. Whatever else it might be, emo – like punk – is important enough for people to keep arguing about it. (Schuftan 2009, p.8)

For a grouping that is held in such low regard it has maintained a key place in popular, especially youth music, discourse. It has maintained the core ideologies of the subculture throughout the past three decades with the aesthetic and music making comebacks periodically. There is something enticing about emo, something that is drawing youths in whilst simultaneously being embarrassing to be associated with. It is for this reason that I will suggest in Chapter Five that emo is a 'magical resolution' for being a teenager. But first, I need to explore the sources and impacts of negative depictions of emo, especially in regard to how the emo youth identity has been subject to multiple moral panics.

Chapter Four

Emoral Panic

'Let the jury consider their verdict,' the King said, for about the twentieth time that day.
'No, no!' said the Queen. 'Sentence first – verdict afterwards.'
'Stuff and nonsense!' said Alice loudly. 'The idea of having the sentence first!'
(Carroll 2001, p.141)

Deviancy and 'moral panic' were integral theories explored in early subcultural studies. In relation to subcultures, people who are marked by key subcultural signifiers are still subject to moral panic. As we have already started to see, in the early twenty-first century emo culture has been subject to moral panic with links commonly made in the media between suicides or self-harm and the participants of the subculture. Such coverage will be the focus of this chapter. Through an assessment of moral panic (Cohen 2002) within the mass media (McRobbie & Thornton 1995), I will analyse how such 'outsider' media portray issues of subcultural moral panic. Such an analysis is important in understanding the life cycle of emo as it is one important possible reason why people have come to deny an emo identity, though putatively having all the markers of belonging (the aesthetic appearance and attitude for example). Therefore, I will explore the impact of this on the idea of 'subculture' itself through the different levels of media (mass, micro, niche), particularly niche media as it is most likely to arise from within the emo community itself (McRobbie & Thornton 1995).

'Moral panic' is a well-researched theory explored by theorists such as Stanley Cohen (2002), Jock Young (1971) and Angela McRobbie (1994) among others. Historically, a moral panic arises when 'A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media' (Cohen 2002, p.1). Or, as Kenneth Thompson, drawing upon the groundbreaking work of Stanley Cohen, writes: 'The mass media, it is alleged, construct "psuedo-events" according to the dictates of an unwritten moral agenda which constitute newsworthiness'; these events are then made to be 'moral panics' (1998, p.75). Although some argue the model is

now outdated and discrete moral panic events as conceived by Cohen no longer exist (McRobbie & Thornton 1995; Thompson 1998), we will see here that media outlets still use emotionally and ideologically loaded concepts, through the use of language or photographs, to invite a level of 'panic' about issues that are, in most cases, more benign. With the introduction of digital technologies and, with it, a faster, easier means of spreading news, I will argue here that a new kind of particularly gendered moral panic has arisen; one which employs the old-fashioned discourse of the 'Damsel in Distress'. One of the key ways this manifests around emos is how high-profile cases concerning female safety and images of the body are covered in more depth and for a longer time than that of the male members.[23] I will argue here that the label 'emo' is applied to certain events, rather than to an actual subculture, to raise fear of the 'Other' in society; the term 'emo' thus now has a life of its own outside of the subculture. Emo is largely being used as a scapegoating term for the Internet as society requires an physical presence to "blame" for issues, rather than a largely uncontrollable entity like the online world.

'Deviance', Subcultures and the Media

The term 'moral panic', although often credited to Jock Young or Stanley Cohen, was actually first used in 1830 in *The Quarterly Christian Spectator*: 'Do they not speak as men do on other subjects, when they express activity? And is it not the natural language of these expressions, that the mind is as far as possible from stagnation, or torpor, or "moral panic?"' (Maltby 1830, p.348). This was then followed in 1832 in *The Journal of Health*, which suggested:

> Magendie, a French physician of note, on his visit to Sunderland, where the Cholera was, by the last accounts, still raging, praises the English government for not surrounding the town with a cordon of troops, which as "*a physical preventive would have been ineffectual, and would have produced a moral panic far more fatal than the disease now is*"' ('Safeguards against the Cholera' p.180).

[23] Silvia Canetto has previously discussed the gender of suicide, focusing on the idea that females are being 'overrepresented among those who report suicidal ideation' (1998, p.1). However, according to Suicide Prevention Australia, the suicide rates for men are much higher than those of women: 'Suicide is the leading cause of death for young Australians, claiming the lives at least 281 15–24 year olds in 2008. Although suicide is a tragedy at any age, youth suicide generates extreme levels of distress and loss in Australian communities' (2012).

However, and importantly for the study of youth cultures, over a century later British sociologist Jock Young introduced the theory of moral panic in his landmark book *The Drugtakers: The Social Meaning of Drug Use* (1971). In relation to drug use, Young suggested,

> The methylated-spirit drinkers ... although numerically quite a large population, are largely outside the universe of discourse of the mass media; they exist in limbo outside the awareness of the vast majority. The media then – in a sense – can create social problems; they can present them dramatically and overwhelmingly, and, what is most important, they can do it suddenly. (Young 1971, p.182)

Although they were not widely known about or discussed in general conversation, the media alerted the public to the issue of methylated spirit drinkers; constructing it as a problem for general society, albeit one previously of no widespread concern. Young also discussed the issue of deviance;[24] however, when Young discussed it he referred to the media (as distinct from the sociological studies which focus on 'crime, mental illness, suicide, alcohol abuse and sexual deviance, usually minus the study of homosexuality': (Franzese 2009, p.28)) and its use of the term and its bias when using it to label people, as can be seen in the following quotation:

> We live in a world which is extremely socially segregated: direct experience of individuals with behaviour different from our own conventions and values is rare. It is in just such a world that we come to rely on the mass media for a sizeable proportion of our information as to the goings on of outsiders to our small discrete social worlds. Criticism of the mass media has centred round the notion that journalists are biased, misinformed or just plain deceitful ... The mass media carries a mythology of the average man and the deviant – within which Mr Average is seen to prosper and be content in his universe of hard work and industrious consumption and the deviant is portrayed as being beset by forces which lead to ineluctable misfortune. (Young 1973, pp.326–327)

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[24] The Chicago School was a sociological department at the University of Chicago in the United States, which opened in 1892 (Gelder 2005, p.27). 'The "Chicago School" was especially important to subcultural studies, with sociologists turning their attention to marginal social groups and "deviant" social behaviour. They were empirical rather than theoretical in their approach' (Gelder 2005, p.27). Edwin Sutherland, originally a student of the Chicago School and later a professor at the University of Indiana, suggested that 'deviance is a way of life passed from generation to generation. First advanced in 1924, his theory of differential association attempted to make systematic the thesis that crime and deviation are culturally transmitted in social groups' (Downes & Rock 2007, p.61).

Young further suggested that 'the media can fan up very quickly and effectively public indignation concerning a particular deviant group. It is possible for them to engineer rapidly what one might call "a moral panic" about a certain type of deviancy' (1971, p.182). Yet, while Young introduced the theory, it was the work of Stanley Cohen that brought moral panic to the forefront of subcultural debate.

Enter Stanley Cohen

Stanley Cohen published his sociologically informed book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* from his PhD written from 1967 to 1969 (2002, p.1). Stanley Cohen suggests that a 'deviant' must first be identified for a moral panic to begin: 'The deviant is assigned to a role or social type, shared perspectives develop through which he and his behaviour are visualized and explained, motives are imputed, causal patterns are searched for and the behaviour thought to be of the same order' (2002, p.57). Cohen suggests that rather than a 'deviant', non-hegemonic figure being present, an individual must be established who can be said to embody the 'roles which should be avoided' (2002, p.35), as 'visible reminders of what we should not be' (2002, p.2). As Cohen suggests,

> More moral panics will be generated and other, as yet nameless, folk devils will be created. This is not because such developments have an inexorable inner logic, but because our society as presently structured will continue to generate problems for some of its members – like working class adolescents – and then condemn whatever solution these groups find. (2002, p.172)

Historically, once the figure of the deviant has been established, an incident must then occur which the media will report to spread the moral panic. Cohen systemically outlines a chronological process of 'stages' in what is known as a disaster framework. He uses this as a model for the stages of moral panic. Whereas Young provided a simple explanation of how a moral panic can arise, Cohen enters into more detail of *exactly* how moral panic is created within Western society. Thus an important concept introduced by Cohen was the sequential model used to develop the stages of 'rescue and recovery' that follow disasters.

Cohen follows the framework created by disaster researchers, which suggests that there are seven stages which must be moved through after a disaster occurs. Simply put, Cohen outlines them as: 1) a warning, followed by 2) a threat, 3) the impact of

the threat, 4) an inventory of the damage, then 5) a 'rescue' is performed which then leads to 6) remedy and 7) recovery (See Figure 6) (Cohen 2002, pp.12–13). In the particular case study Cohen examined, where there was previously little inherent competition or aggression between mods and rockers, the news media created competition between the two groupings which led to public spectacles such as that from 1965 to 1966 when a number of newspapers reported a conflict between the two groups that often solidified in physical acts of violence. Cohen's case study was based upon the artificial subcultural antagonism driven by the media towards the 'mods and rockers'.

> The phenomenon took its subsequent shape in terms of these episodes: the regular series of disturbances which took place at English seaside resorts between 1964–1966. The public image of these folk devils was invariably tied up to a number of highly visual scenarios associated with their appearances: youth chasing across the beach, brandishing deckchairs over their heads, running along the pavements, riding on scooters or bikes down the streets, sleeping on the beaches and so on. (Cohen 2002, p.13)

What was so important about these events was the media exposure that was occurring. This reporting led to a large number of spectators accumulating on a beach to observe the violence between the two groups, which would not have occurred without news coverage of the conflict (Cohen 2002, p.101). Crowds would gather to watch the subcultures and this collective behaviour caused the conflict to become, using Cohen's own terms, exaggerated and distorted by the media to a point where a moral panic developed. It is not only the media who play a part in the formation of a moral panic; rather it is all participants, including those who observe, and those who are involved in the rescue, who 'in the impact are helping each other' (Cohen 2002, p.12). These types of incidents lead to youths who were outside of the subcultures also getting into trouble, as Cohen states, through 'guilt by association; all teenagers going down to the resorts were attributed with the guilt, and hence putative deviation, as those who actually caused damage or injury' (2002, p.41). In this way, and drawing upon this as a case study, groups that may have previously been 'invisible' to the general public became marginalised and berated by society. Journalists were '[w]riting when the Mods and Rockers phenomenon was passing its peak, a journalist recalls that a few days after the initial event at Clacton, the Assistant Editor of the *Daily Mirror* admitted in conversation that the affair had been "a little over reported"' (Cohen 2011, p.26). It was this over-reporting that Cohen was so fascinated by. The

mods and rockers had ‘a condensed version of this sequence (*Warning* to cover phases 1 and 2; then *Impact*; then *Inventory*; and *Reaction* to cover phases 5, 6 and 7) provide a useful analogue’ (Cohen 2002, p.13).

1. *Warning*: during which arises, mistakenly or not, some apprehensions based on conditions out of which danger may arise. The warning must be coded to be understood and impressive enough to overcome resistance to the belief that current tranquillity can be upset.
2. *Threat*: during which people are exposed to communication from others, or to signs from the approaching disaster itself indicating specific imminent danger. This phase begins with the perception of some change, but as with the first phase, may be absent or truncated in the case of sudden disaster.
3. *Impact*: during which the disaster strikes and the immediate unorganized response to the death, injury or destruction takes place.
4. *Inventory*: during which those exposed to the disaster begin to form a preliminary picture of what has happened and of their own condition.
5. *Rescue*: during which the activities are geared to immediate help for the survivors. As well as people in the impact area helping each other, the suprasystem begins to send aid.
6. *Remedy*: during which more deliberate and formal activities are undertaken towards relieving the affected. The suprasystem takes over the functions the emergency system cannot perform.
7. *Recovery*: during which, for an extended period, the community either recovers its former equilibrium or achieves a stable adaptation to the changes which the disaster may have brought about.

Figure 6 A sequential model of the phases of a typical disaster as described by Cohen (2011, pp.16–17).

Although now highly critiqued, Cohen's theory of moral panic was fundamental in establishing how the media played a role in mobilising moral panic. Cohen's theory was groundbreaking when it was first written and has led the way for many theorists (for example, Thompson 1998; Goode & Ben-Yehuda 2006; Herdt 2009) to produce their own versions of the theory, as I will discuss later in this chapter. The mods and rockers case study was one of the first that extensively discussed how the media played an overt role in creating panic. Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2006) and Thompson (1998) created their own set of steps about how a moral panic occurs that mirrored Cohen's steps and Herdt used the theory to explore sexual politics, as Cohen himself did (2011). Although now heavily contested more than three decades after Cohen first published his work, the concept of moral panic can still be applied today, as can be seen through cases such as the outbreak of swine flu (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 2006, p.ix; Gilman 2010); violent video games (Ferguson 2008); and movies (Springhall 1998). Rather than being irrelevant today, I would argue it needs to be expanded upon,

particularly to account for the arrival of digital media and communications technologies.

A number of critiques of Cohen's theories of moral panic have been offered (Boëthius 1995; McRobbie & Thornton 1995; Miller & Kitzinger 1998; Cornwell & Linders 2010; De Young 2004; Jewkes 2004; Critcher 2008). Some of the critiques of Cohen's work target his insistence that it must proceed in a step-by-step, logical order (De Young 2004, p.4); his idea that the reaction of the majority of people to an imminent threat, such as a natural disaster, is to panic when this is not necessarily the case (Johnson 1987; Cornwell & Linders 2010); that the terminology is too unclear (Jewkes 2004; Hall 2012); and that it simplifies concepts through the naming of objects and emotions which means that the importance and relevance of them is removed and contracted down to a name (Jewkes 2004). Like the CCCS the sole focus of his studies were working-class (mostly male and white) youths, suggesting that this was where subcultures emerged, and some simply suggest that the model needs updating (McRobbie & Thorton 1995). Steve Hall suggests that Cohen's definition has its flaws in that it is too vague to describe the multiple crises that are represented today. Moral panic theory is

> too vague to capture the way today's multiple crises are represented ... Such weak concepts are the result of the failure to rectify the initial elementary error made by Cohen (1972) of labelling the Mods and Rockers as 'non-conformists' even though they were conforming to the master-signifiers of edgy coolness. (2012, p.135)

McRobbie and Thornton also critiqued Cohen for how he perceived the initial relationship between the media and subcultures, suggesting that the media does not merely 'respond' to subcultures; rather it is an essential component of their formation. 'Disapproving mass media coverage legitimises and authenticates youth cultures to the degree that it is hard to imagine a British youth "movement" without it' (1995, p.565). Crucially, the media itself has changed greatly since Cohen published his initial work; it is now very difficult for moral panic to be mobilised and it is more readily controlled (McRobbie & Thorton 1995, p.564). There are more means for answering a moral panic; just as the Internet has allowed youths a voice to express themselves, it has also given them a space to answer back to critics and critiques of their character.

Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda furthered the theory of moral panic in 1994 in the book *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*. Writing in this more recent context, they explain a moral panic as a period when

> the behavior of some of the members of a society is thought to be so problematic to others, the evil they do, or are thought to do, is felt to be so wounding to the substance and fabric of the body social, that serious steps must be taken to control the behavior, punish the perpetrators, and repair the damage. (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 2006, p.50)

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2006, p. 50) refer to this behaviour, and the fear caused by it, as operating like a 'fever'; it is a heightened emotion and fear which leads to concern and anxiousness. Goode and Ben-Yehuda draw upon the work of Cohen, which they then refine to create their own series of steps. The first step is *concern*. For this step 'there must be a heightened level of *concern* over the behavior of a certain group or category and the consequences that that behavior presumably causes for one or more sectors of society' (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 2006, p.51, original emphasis). For this to be a true period of 'concern' there must be measurable and concrete reaction, such as through opinion polls or media coverage. The second step is *hostility*. Following a period of concern 'there must be an increased level of *hostility* toward the group or category regarded as engaging in the behavior in question. Members of this category are collectively designated as the enemy, or an enemy, of respectable society' (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 2006, p.52). The next step, *consensus*, requires that

> there must be substantial or widespread *agreement* or *consensus* – that is, at least a certain minimal measure of consensus in the society as a whole or in designated segments of the society – that the threat is real, serious, and caused by the wrongdoing group members and their behavior' (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 2006, p.52).

The final two steps, *disproportionality* and *volatility*, suggest that

> [t]he degree of public concern over the behavior itself, the problem it poses, or the condition it creates is far greater than is true for comparable, even more damaging actions. In short, the term moral panic conveys the implication that public concern is in excess of what is appropriate if concern were directly proportional to objective harm. (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 2006, p.53)

All moral panics, they argue, are 'by their very nature ... *volatile*; they erupt fairly suddenly (although they may lie dormant or latent for long periods of time, and may reappear from time to time) and, nearly as suddenly, subside' (Goode & Ben-Yehuda

2006, p.55). Goode and Ben-Yehuda suggest that some moral panics can cause permanent societal change; however, others will just disappear without implication. 'In that respect, it is similar to fashion, the fad, and the craze; the moral panic is, therefore, as we saw, a form of collective behavior' (2006, p.55). The work of Goode and Ben-Yehuda can be used to analyse contemporary moral panics; however, there are certain stages within their theory that are contentious. The volatile stage of moral panics, the idea that a moral panic will erupt quickly and subside quickly, is not necessarily true. Although a case of moral panic may erupt quickly, it can last for months if not longer, as it did during the case study that I will discuss later in this chapter. With the way that technology is being utilised to collect photographs for publication, it is easy to see how a moral panic can erupt quickly and be volatile but once subsided still cause social change.

The (Post)Modern Moral Panic

One key contribution which helps to demonstrate the perhaps ironic relevance of Stanley Cohen's work is offered in 'Rethinking "Moral Panic" for Multi-Mediated Social Worlds' (1995), by Angela McRobbie and Sarah Thornton. The journal article was published almost twenty years after the work of Cohen and Young and, in it, McRobbie and Thornton call for a rethinking of the moral panic theory. They comment that 'moral panic' theory is now, effectively, a victim of its own success: 'a term regularly used by journalists to describe a process which politicians, commercial promoters and media habitually attempt to incite ... It has become a routine means of making youth-orientated cultural products more alluring' (1995, p.559). For McRobbie and Thornton, moral panic has become a genre of reporting rather than something which has any real social effects. Rather than something that is undesirable to youth cultural groupings, McRobbie and Thornton (1995, p.565) suggest that the media is used as a way to advertise or guarantee 'free' publicity for certain groups or organisations, including youth (sub)cultures.

There are many roles that need to be filled for a moral panic to occur, including those who are targeted by the moral panic, and often demonised, and those who then counteract the panic. The most crucial role in a moral panic is the victim of the panic. Where there is a demonisation of certain societal groups, McRobbie and Thornton suggest that there will be a counteraction to this. McRobbie and Thornton refer to

these counteraction groups as 'pressure groups': 'One of the main aims of pressure groups is timely intervention in relevant moral panics – to be able to respond instantly' (McRobbie & Thornton 1995, p.566). In the case of moral panic surrounding emos in particular, these 'pressure groups' are often bands who have been labelled as being a part of the subculture. By interviewing or quoting these groups, the media are 'seen to be doing their duty by providing "balance" in their reporting. At the same time, they show how "folk devils" can and do "fight back"' (McRobbie & Thornton 1995, p.566). This complex idea leads McRobbie and Thornton to 'query the usefulness of the term "moral panic" – a metaphor which depicts a complex society as a single person who experiences sudden fear about its virtue' (1995, p.567). Where older models of moral panic theory connected the media and social control, McRobbie and Thornton suggest that

> nowadays most political strategies *are* media strategies. The contest to determine news agendas is the first and last battle of the political campaign. Moreover, the kinds of social issues and political debates which were once included on the agendas of moral panic theorists as sites of social anxiety and even crisis, could now be redefined as part of an endless debate about who 'we' are and what 'our' national culture is. These are profoundly 'home affairs'. The daily intensity and drama of their appearance and the many voices now heard in the background but in the foreground, punctuating and producing reality, point more to the reality of dealing with social difference than to the unity of current affairs. (1995, pp.571–572)

Rather than moral panic being a media response it is now also a media tool. One of the most important points that is made by the two theorists is that the different types of media should be analysed to understand how the moral panics are at work and how they are being implemented into society.

McRobbie and Thornton recognise three different types of media in 'Rethinking "Moral Panic"' and Thornton in *Club Cultures* – mass, micro and niche – each of which require different kinds of attention when examining the contemporary media environment (1995, p.568; Thornton 1995), an imperative which has only become all the stronger given the exponential growth of online media and digital communication. Mass media is considered to be mainstream television, magazines or newspapers (in both their physical and online forms). Niche media includes music magazines, twitter and facebook, and micro media is street press, newsletters, zines, and tabloid papers

including gay and lesbian press and subcultural press (McRobbie and Thornton 1995, p.568). Niche and micro media are becoming more popular and trusted than the mass media for many demographics. Although these other sources of media allow for a voice for a section of society that may otherwise be largely ignored by the mainstream media, the exposure is by definition hardly the same as that of the mainstream. However among a youthful demographic in particular, niche and micro media are becoming the most popular sources for engaging in news and current affair programs, together with such cable network shows as *The Daily Show With John Stewart* and the *Colbert Report* (Amarasingam 2011; Hartsell 2011).

It has been suggested that moral panic theory is now outdated; however, in a fast-changing world, moral panic is a widely used media tool that is often targeted towards minority groups in society, for example, drug users, political groups or football fans (Cohen 1972; Goode & Ben-Yehuda 2006). McRobbie and Thornton explore moral panic through the different levels of media in modern society and the validity of the term moral panic itself. They suggest that the relationship between the media and agents of social control, and moral guardians, have undergone complex changes to a point where the

> two groups seem to be asking ever more vocal and 'effective' intervention: pressure groups have, among other things, strongly contested the vocality of the traditional moral guardians; and commercial interests have planted the seeds, and courted discourses, of moral panic in seeking to gain the favourable attention of youthful consumers. (McRobbie & Thornton 1995, p.567)

However, I argue that moral panic is still a valid theory in some cases, maybe now more than ever, as I will suggest below with a modern example, with the way that technology is evolving and youth are being exposed to niche and micro media more than ever before. This exposure, which includes sources such as facebook, twitter and MySpace, means that youths are being given a wider education about what is occurring in 'underground' society and in subcultures as well as what is happening in the news. In the section that follows, I will use the work of theorist Kenneth Thompson to investigate how a moral panic impacts upon both a youth group and the wider society around it, and whether, following the steps first identified by Cohen, we can recognise a moral panic as occurring and resulting in social change. While there are limits to what can be generalised from any single case study, the way in which

emo is demonised here, coupled with the clear presence of interwoven anxieties around young people's social media use, clearly resonates with and has parallels in similar panics which have arisen around the Anglosphere. This can be seen particularly in anxieties about the way social media allows the 'outside' world to permeate the 'private' and otherwise considered 'safe' space of young people's bedrooms.

Kenneth Thompson, drawing on Cohen's framework, summarised a five-stage model for charting the life cycle of a moral panic. Thompson's five stages of moral panic are:

1. Something or someone is defined as a threat to values or interests.
2. This threat is depicted in an easily recognisable form by the media.
3. There is a rapid build-up of public concern.
4. There is a response from authorities or opinion makers.
5. The panic recedes or results in social changes (1998, p.8).

These steps are important in establishing and maintaining, then dispersing, a moral panic, for, as he argues, moral panics do appear in particular stages. Furthermore, Thompson suggests that

> the use of the two words 'moral panic' is the suggestion that the threat is to something held sacred by or fundamental to the society. The reason for calling it a *moral* panic is precisely to indicate that the perceived threat is not to something mundane ... but a threat to the social order itself or an idealized (ideological) conception of some part of it. The threat and its perpetrators are regarded as evil 'folk devils' (S. Cohen 1972), and excite strong feelings of righteousness. (1998, p.8)

Following on from this level of threat and creation of a folk devil, Thompson suggests, two factors are crucial for any moral panic to occur: 'concern' and 'hostility' (1998, p.9). These two factors are particularly resonant where youths are concerned. It is easy, indeed natural, to be concerned as a parent for your child, and thus it is easy to become hostile towards an 'enemy', whether it be a clearly visible source or a more hidden entity, as I will suggest later in the chapter. Originally introduced by Goode and Ben-Yehuda and furthered by Thompson, there was a suggestion that certain key ideas can be accentuated 'such as *volatility* and *disproportionality*' (1998, p.9). Volatility, as already suggested, refers to the fact that moral panics can appear seemingly out of nowhere and can disappear just as suddenly, though the impact can

last for years after the panic. '"Disproportionality" refers to an implicit assumption on the part of some who use the term "moral panic" that the threat or danger is more substantial than is warranted by a realistic appraisal' (Thompson 1998, p.9). Disproportionality is a common trait among moral panics; it is a warranted approach, for if disproportion was not pursued the issue would most likely not cause moral panic. This means that most moral panics occur abruptly and can therefore pass just as quickly even if the threat itself, or the problem, lingers. I will use this framework to undertake a case study of the murder of South Australian teenager Carly Ryan to understand how a moral panic was formed in the mass media, and how this reflected back onto emo. This case study will focus on articles published in mass media outlets, the local News Corporation titles *The Advertiser*[25] and *The Sunday Mail*,[26] both Adelaide-based newspapers, publications which logically generated the most significant coverage of the event.

Importantly for an examination of emo, Thompson also discusses youth and moral panic, suggesting that 'No age group is more associated with risk in the public imagination than that of "youth"' (1998, p.43). There are a number of reasons that Thompson suggests that this age group is the most at risk but notably he observes that a source of concern is 'the transitional age status of this age group, occupying a position between childhood and adulthood', which refines young people's 'marginality and ambiguity', exacerbating the risks associated with youth (Thompson 1998, p.43). Youths are vulnerable and this vulnerability makes them an easily accessible group for moral panics. In 1904 Stanley Hall published a book entitled *Adolescence*, suggesting

> that individual maturation recapitulated the development of the species and that the transition from childhood to maturity corresponded to the leap from barbarism to civilization. Hence, the future of civilization hinged on what

[25] The Adelaide *Advertiser* was first published in 1858 by Reverend John Henry Barrow and is released Monday to Saturday. It has been in a tabloid format since 1997. The predominant readership for the publication is 50+, full-time white-collar working males ('The Advertiser Demographic Breakdown' 2012).

[26] The *Sunday Mail* was founded in 1912 by Clarence Moody and released weekly. It has a predominantly female, 50+, full-time, white-collar worker readership ('Sunday Mail Demographic Breakdown' 2012).

> happened during the crucial intermediate stage of adolescence. The condition of youth provided a yardstick against which the progress or decay of society could be measured. This idea of youth as a 'barometer' and agent of progress quickly took hold. (Thompson 1998, p.44)

What Hall and Thompson are suggesting in their own ways is that youth are the cornerstone of Western society. When a level of panic spreads about youth; it spreads through all sectors of society.

Therefore, moral panics involving young people, including those associated with subcultures, are worthy of examination not just for what they reveal about the particular incidents directly concerned, but for the larger social, cultural, political and economic anxieties they may be manifestations of. I will suggest here that much of the moral panic around emo culture and identity is tied up in a wider concern about larger changes in society, in particular the exponential growth of social networking by young people enabled by the explosion of digital technology in the 2000s. The use of the Internet and social networking systems is largely misunderstood by many, especially some parents and other (mostly older) non-users. It is an unknown quantity for them; an empty signifier open to mis-readings, open to the scapegoating that is the identification of a 'folk devil'. Increasingly, this fear of the unknown is being reported in the news, with parents being urged to 'watch their children', apply Internet filters and monitor their children's online activities. When emo began to rise in popularity another fear took hold. A group of dark, brooding teenagers became clearly visible in the street and with this aesthetic also came a reputation of self-harm, suicide and dark thoughts. This was a fear that could be seen as legitimate and one that was clearly visible. That the rise of the two – social networking and emo – overlapped historically is significant for the way in which emo culture has been reported in the mainstream (if not micro and niche) media. I will explore this link between social media anxiety and the construction of emo as 'folk devil' using Thompson's stages to investigate the nationally high-profile account of an Australian teenager whose murder became embroiled in a case of moral panic.

Carly Ryan Case Study

In 2007, tragically, the body of 15-year-old Carly Ryan was found floating in the water at Port Elliot, South Australia; a seaside community around an hour's drive south of the state capital of Adelaide. Carly was targeted on social networking sites by a man who posed as her perfect boyfriend,

> His name was Brandon Kane, a 18yr old musician from Melbourne. Brandon was in fact fictitious. An internet construct, the cyberspace alter ego of Gary Francis Newman, a 50yr old predator and paedophile. Carly fell in love with the Brandon construct during 18 months of online contact and phone calls. ('Carly's Story' 2014)

Carly was murdered by Gary Newman at a beach where she was later found. The case generated years of media coverage[27] through which the stages of Thompson's moral panic can be seen as being played out. The first step is the initial definition of a threat to social values (1998, p.8) and although this is a crucial step, this is the shortest stage of the moral panic. When the articles about Ryan's murder were initially published in *The Advertiser*, certain details were released about the teenager that made much of her connection to the emo subculture. For example, on Wednesday 21 February 2007, the day after her body was found, but before Ryan was publically identified as the victim, the article entitled 'Mystery of Woman Washed on to Beach', was published, describing Ryan as 'wearing a black top and black pants ... She had a distinctive 5cm wide bright red streak running down the centre of her long, black hair and had many visible body piercings. She was also wearing black and red leather wristband' (Vaughan 2007a, p.9). These features, suggested as distinctive, are elements that, as we saw in the Introduction and Chapter Three, are denotatively associated with the emo subculture. This article, and Carly's death itself, coincided with the height of the third wave of the emo subculture when features such as the dark hair and body piercings that were associated with the subculture were being discussed in the news as something for parents to be aware of and watch out for in their teenagers and children. In an article published in *The Sunday Mail* on 25 February 2007, the link with emo became clear when the discussion turned to Carly and her connection to The Underground, a nightclub she frequented, which is described in the article as a 'Christian-backed music venue' but is a venue often associated with emo music

[27] See Appendix 1 for a full listing of newspaper articles from South Australia.

(Kyriacou 2007, p.9). Pastor Andrew Waiblinger was asked his opinion on what he thought that emos were. He suggested, 'Emo kids are defined as quiet, introverted, sensitive and even broken hearted. This is fairly consistent with young teenage experience regardless of which music culture they prescribe to' (Kyriacou 2007, p.9). This gave the youths a more sympathetic angle, offering a more positive perspective on the subculture than previous articles. There were values that were seen as being under threat as the story was being released; the security of teenagers was threatened, the security of home was threatened, and the purity and innocence of young people was also under threat. As I will discuss in Chapter Five, teenagers are at a stage in their lives where it is often thought that they are meant to be happy and innocent, yet this idea was marred by the media stories of the crime that had occurred.

The first news stories that were published in the newspapers[28], and the first and second phase of moral panic that was established, focused on the sexual experimentation, such as bisexuality and the use of the Internet and the 'danger' involved in such cases, particularly for females, through the vulnerability that the Internet exposes young users to. The newspapers used Carly Ryan's social networking pages to show her character, even though this was not an accurate portrayal as discussed in later articles as the moral panic subsided ('The real Carly Ryan', Fewster 2010, p.8). The media were able to use the information they had gathered to advertise Carly in a darker and negative light. The first and second stages of a moral panic are difficult to separate, as providing evidence that something is presented as a threat without showing how it was represented would not be acknowledging how the threat was conveyed. This focus resonates with the ideas presented in earlier literature which suggests the subcultural associations for females can be fraught with negative connotations, particularly in relation to the sexual anxieties about females in subcultures. The second stage, whereby 'the threat is depicted in an easily recognizable form', is further evidenced through the written word and photographic evidence. On 23 February 2007, an article was published with the headline 'Poetry, Music Tributes for a Beautiful Friend' (Vaughan 2007b). While the main photograph used is of Horseshoe Bay where Ryan's body was discovered, a small photo of Ryan is also positioned in the middle of the article. The photo is from

[28] See Appendix 1

her MySpace page and shows her with dark hair, a lip piercing, dark nail polish and dark make up and wearing an Atreyu tshirt (see Figure 7). Atreyu is an American metalcore band, but one that is claimed as emo in many circles. This then made the 'threat' easily recognisable; emo is dark with negative connotations, which is suggested by the initial images chosen of Ryan and the images that surrounded these pictures, both of which I will discuss. An important new variable in the way moral panics play out in the media, especially the mainstream media, is that with the introduction of Web 2.0 the media have immediate access to social networking sites to be able to 'research' cases (i.e. get photos) of missing, murdered or celebrated persons. When Carly Ryan was identified as the 'body on the beach', the media were able to access the Internet immediately to find information about and pictures of the teenager; images not provided nor thus vetted by her family or friends, as was the case previously. As the websites are publically accessible (depending upon an individual's own security settings), the information available on them can be used by the media in their articles, which can lead to conclusions being drawn about the character of the person involved in the news report before the family can be approached.



Figure 7 Carly Ryan's MySpace photo published in *The Advertiser*, 23 February 2007, p.5

As well as the 'emo' MySpace photo of Ryan, other articles included on the 23 February double-page spread of *The Advertiser* both alluded and outwardly connected Ryan to the emo subculture. The first article, 'Website's Grim Images' (2007), focuses on Ryan's own MySpace website. The short article, with no listed author,

goes further to describe Ryan's interests: '*The Advertiser* alerted police to the site on Wednesday hours before friends started posting messages of sorrow. On it Carly describes herself as a girl who likes drugs, smoking, music, sex and piercings' (2007). The final article included on the page entitled 'Pain and Darkness in "Emo" Dwellers' World', written by music writer Danielle O'Donohue, directly names emo and touches on the fluidity of it as a musical genre:

> The lines between musical genres are always blurred but in the metal and punk worlds an abundance of black clothing and lots of songs about pain and darkness make it even harder to distinguish styles. Friends of Carly Ryan have said the teenager was associated with Adelaide's emo scene (O'Donohue 2007, p.5).

This page of *The Advertiser* is important for the way it overtly recognises Ryan's link to the emo scene as evidenced by her MySpace profile.

Also on the same day, the front page of *The Advertiser* heralded the headline: 'Net Hunt for Murder Clues', with a large picture of Carly accompanying the article. The article opens with a description of Ryan's Internet habits, cementing the popular link between her social networking tendencies and her murder:

> A web of secret internet message boards could be crucial to solving the suspected murder of teenager Carly Ryan ... Many of those links provide an insight to Adelaide's bizarre teenage "goth" and "emo" world, some sites showing graphic images involving bondage, suicide and drug use (Littlely, Salter & Wheatley 2007, p.1).

Although the link to emo is named, it is also made through associations with suicide, an act readily associated with emo (as discussed in the Introduction). The article continues on page 4 with a whole-page spread, with the top of the page containing a detailed timeline of the crime scene, as well as pictures from Carly's website and the investigation (Littlely *et al.* 2007). Underneath the leading banner, 'Bizarre Website', information is given about Carly's online habits and a 'folk devil' really starts taking form:

> A website designed by Carly paints a disturbing picture of a world of drugs and sex. The MySpace site contains images of a girl injecting herself, a woman with a crucifix rammed down her throat and a woman with her lips stitched together. Carly lists her interests as drugs, smoking, music and sex. She describes herself as bisexual' (2007, p.4).

This passage was repeated in numerous articles to emphasise the image of Carly being part of something 'darker', something perceived as negative. Again, there are

elements here that are associated with being emo: bisexuality, music (similarly to many subcultures) and 'dark' images. One of Carly's friends is quoted in the article saying that Carly '"didn't fit into any stereotype group". "She was very friendly to her friends, she was very loving to them," the teenager said. "She absolutely loved her music – it was a big thing for her. A big escape"' (Littlely *et al.* 2007, p.4). Ryan's friend added a new perspective to the media coverage, suggesting a more innocent and fun-loving friend.

The link between Ryan's social networking use and her murder is once again made on 24 February in the article 'Witnesses Tell of Carly's Final Hours': 'The SA Police electronic crime unit has also been called upon by detectives who are investigating any links to Carly's MySpace website and her murder' (Littlely, Owen & Wheatley 2007, p.15). Importantly, on the same page there are two other articles that again link Ryan to the emo subculture. The first, 'Tribute Gig for Selfless Friend' (Zed 2007, p.15) describes a concert that was being held by Carly's friends in her memory:

> Jesse Linke, 18, of Magill said he had known Carly for nearly two years and wanted to do something to help friends remember her. He said a gig featuring some of Carly's favourite bands would be a fitting tribute. 'Nobody is going to be able to paint a proper picture of Carly' he said. 'It's an impossible picture to paint. There aren't enough colours to paint her. 'There was more to Carly than what everyone's been saying. She could be in a bad mood but if one of her friends got upset, she'd forget about her problems and help her friends. She was a really selfless person'. (Zed 2007, p.15)

This again adds a perspective to the media coverage, as the depiction of Carly in previous articles contrasted with how her friends suggest she was 'in real life'. The second article on the page, 'Gothic Images Appealed to an Artistic Soul' (2007), also has friends defending Ryan's personality outside the mainstream, popular media depiction. Despite the overall content of the article defending Carly's use of the social networking site, the article repeats information from previously published articles cementing negative ideas towards the subculture and, again, having the threat 'depicted in an easily recognizable form by the media' (Thompson 1998, p.8). 'Friends yesterday defended Carly Ryan's MySpace website as artistic and said its dark images were misinterpreted' ('Gothic images appealed to artistic soul' 2007, p.15). These images were discussed the day before, as discussed above, and were

shown in the 'Website's Grim Images' article (23 February 2007) but are now contested by Carly's friend:

> Friend Jesse Link said he was concerned people would misinterpret the images. 'People are talking about all the stuff on her website but she was more interested in the artistic aspect of it than any other aspect', he said. 'She was a really great artist'. (2007, p.15)

Carly's friends discussing her character were a chance for the 'folk devil' to 'fight back' against the depiction that had already been established in the newspaper articles.

Similarly to the previous day, and bringing the 'folk devil' picture together, there was also an accompanying page with a series of images that linked Ryan to social networking, and to a previous infamous case of moral panic. There was also another timeline of the day Carly was murdered. One of the prominent images on this page is of Marilyn Manson, which links Ryan to another infamous case of moral panic, the Columbine Massacre.[29] By using the image of Manson next to the image of Carly, Thompson's step number three immediately takes effect: 'there is a rapid build up of public concern' (Thompson 2007, p.8). Fear was built up because of the links that were made between Carly's use of MySpace, her emo image and Marilyn Manson, with the article suggesting she '"idolised" the musician, and now "the unknown men" she was seen on the beach with' (Littlely *et al.* 2007, pp.14–15). There were many unknowns in the Carly case that any parent could be concerned about. However,

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[29] The Columbine Massacre was an important and highly visible example of how moral panic affects society and how a folk devil is created:

> In the 1980s and 1990s, America witnessed a new and disturbing phenomenon: school rampage shootings executed by disturbed and alienated present or former male students who had decided to settle grudges against peers, teachers, or administrators with bullets and sometimes bombs. Such shootings seemed to culminate with the Columbine High School massacre on April 20, 1999, which had a toll of 15 dead and 23 wounded. (Larkin 2009, p.1309)

Two teenagers entered their school and used both guns and bombs to attack their teachers, classmates and school. The media used the massacre as a platform for creating moral panic on a number of issues. The first moral panic that emerged surrounded gothic rock singer Marilyn Manson. The two males were said to have listened to the gothic rock singer's band, which uses aggressive lyrics. Many believed that it was the singer's influence that caused the youths to turn to violence to solve their issues with the school.

although the link to social networking had been well established, the images and adjectives linked with emo were much more apparent, reinforcing the latter's metonymic role as a signifier of panic.

On 27 February in the article 'Plea for Help in Carly Case', it is reported that the police have set up information booths with pictures of the teenager (Vaughan 2007, p.3) (see Figure 8). These pictures all depict her as an emo, with a dark fringe swept across her forehead, dark make-up, dark clothing and facial piercings. The article accompanying the photo of one of the booths also has a description that one witness, a nearby resident, gave: 'matching Carly's description ... "I can't be sure that it was her, but I did see a gothic-looking girl with a red streak in her hair at the restaurant," the woman said' (Vaughan 2007c, p.3). The following day more explicit links were made between Carly, MySpace and metal identity, which can be closely linked with part of the emo community. 'Carly and Mum in MySpace Contact' describes the online relationship between Carly and her mother: 'Murder victim Carly Ryan's mother has a MySpace website on which she had exchanged messages with her 15-year-old daughter, it has been revealed' (Salter 2007, p.13). This debunks the common idea that parents are unaware of what their children are doing online, but somehow manages to paint involvement in her world in a sinister light. Sonya Ryan's online profile thus also comes under examination: 'Under the username Vampxxx, Sonya Ryan's MySpace profile lists her as a 32-year-old post-graduate operations manager, a proud parent. Her MySpace network lists 169 'online friends', including sites linked to 'extreme metal' music groups including Cradle of Filth, Killswitch Engage, DevilDriver and Hatebreed' (Salter 2007, p.13). The article continues on to suggest that:

> The site contains messages exchanged by Sonya and her daughter, including from December 2 last year, when Carly wrote: "Hey wanka, love you xx." The police are already investigating Carly's own MySpace site. She met hundreds of people online, including many from the emo and gothic subcultures (Salter 2007, p.13).

The article is again accompanied by pictures of Carly with dark hair, dark clothing, facial piercings and make-up.



Figure 8 Carly Ryan information booth set up by police. Published in *The Advertiser*, 27 February 2007, p.3

On 3 March, the article 'Who Knows the Truth about Carly?' again highlighted where Carly liked to hang out, what her interests were and who she spent her time with. The article begins with a dot point list of Carly Ryan's life including her age, where she was from, her school, that her father passed away when she was young, and that she likes to 'socialise with other people from the emo subculture at The Underground in Waymouth St and at the Torrens Parade Ground. [She liked] music, dancing and drawing [and was] well-known in internet chat circles' (Salter 2007, p.26). The article goes on to interview a past boyfriend of Ryan's and then went on to suggest that 'about six months ago, Carly had developed friendships with a separate circle and the two groups did not know one another. She was known to hang out with other 'emos' in Rundle Mall, at The Underground on Waymouth St and at the Torrens Parade Ground' (Salter 2007, p.27). This again is a repetition of previous articles, and is building up media concern which can influence the public opinion on any topical matter. Not even one month after Carly's death, thirteen articles, approximately 13 per cent of the articles about the case, had displayed photographs of the teenager from her MySpace profile, which also suggested that her website 'featured disturbing images of drugs, suicide, torture and sex' (Salter 2007, p.27). Thus it can be clearly seen that a moral panic was in progress which following the tragic murder of a young woman, and directly identified the emo subculture as somehow to blame through the use of numerous photographs of Carly, as well as pejorative descriptions of where she would spend her time, what her interests were and what music she listened to. Parents were encouraged to look at this information and identify whether their teenagers shared these traits. The *links* to social networking were also well established, however not yet

in terms of any serious *risks* from using social networking. There was no mention in the articles of any danger in using social networking, only that Ryan had been a regular user of the systems. On 4 March 2007 the suspects in Carly Ryan's murder were arrested and charged in Victoria (Salter 2007, p.1).

In 2008 only five articles were printed about Ryan's case: four were only short articles that described the delay in the case; however, one was accompanied by a large photo of Carly that was described as one of the last ones taken of her. It was an almost full-length picture of the teen with dark hair, make-up, a chequered belt, black jeans, a black singlet top, cuffs on her wrists and a black bead necklace. She is not smiling, looking almost scornful with notable facial piercings. When the picture was first published with an article on 18 March 2007 it was labelled 'Emo Girl: One of the last pictures taken of Carly' (Hunt 2007). Pictures like this one, which were so large compared to other pictures printed in the newspaper and so overtly labelled with a subcultural tag, invited moral panic. With so few articles published in 2008 the idea of the moral panic lay dormant, which gave space for a new view of the narrative to arise in 2009.

Two years after the initial flurry of articles the case went to trial, leading to another selection of articles about the teenager and her life; however this time around they had a slightly different theme. This was the most significant point of shift in the way the story was reported. Carly went from being portrayed in a negative light to being a 'Damsel in Distress'. Although the media still focused on Carly's subcultural identity, her innocence was also portrayed, focusing on the teenager as the victim of the crime rather than the way the first articles portrayed her, with much darker connotations. The first article was published in *The Australian*, a national newspaper which meant wider coverage than that of *The Advertiser* or *The Sunday Mail*, though it too is owned by Rupert Murdoch's organisation News Limited. The headline and accompanying picture already give readers an idea of what type of person the media now wanted Carly to be seen as. 'Teen Killed after Meeting Father, Son on Goth Website' (2009, p.3) gives the idea of subcultural roots but Carly's emo identity is now being cast in a slightly more 'innocent' light, while the evils of the web start to mix with emo to create a larger folk devil. The opening paragraph of the article expands upon this relationship: 'A father and son accused of killing an Adelaide teenager met her

through a Gothic networking website by posing as a fictitious "emo" character which she then fell in love with, a jury has been told' (Lower & Akerman 2009, p.3). The article goes further to describe Carly's link to the emo subculture explicitly: 'Prosecutor Tim Preston told the jury in his opening address Ryan had become involved in the emo youth sub-culture – whose members wear distinctive clothing, listen to heavy metal or punk music, wear heavy eye make-up and body piercings – about 12 months before she died' (Lower & Akerman 2009, p.3). This passage does a number of things: it supplies a warning for parents to look out for these features in their children, offers a 'how to' guide for teenagers and gives licence to a nationwide build-up of public concern. What had initially largely been a state-contained moral panic was becoming a nationwide concern. The article goes further to name other websites which may be of concern: 'He said she developed an internet dialogue with a person called "Brandon Kane", ostensibly a goth or emo-looking man, after Brandon saw a picture of her on the vampirefreaks.com website and said she was "hot"' (Lower & Akerman 2009, p.3). Once this connection has been established, the article goes into explicit detail about how Carly was targeted and treated by Gary Newman, the aforementioned 'father' subsequently found guilty of her murder, which would scare any person with a sister, cousin or niece, let alone a parent with a child Carly's age.

Importantly too for a twenty-first-century moral panic analysis, by the time articles about the trial were appearing in *The Advertiser* in 2009, the photographs of Carly Ryan were drastically different to the ones previously being used. A long haired, smiling happy brunette, with neutral make-up – a 'normal' teenager – was on the cover of the 20 October edition of the newspaper with the headline: 'Court Told, How Internet Phantom Trapped Carly Ryan, Lured to Death by Cyber "Lover"' (Fewster 2009, p.1) (Figure 9). The image that had been painted of her in the previous two years was all but wiped out, with only one mention of the previous subcultural depiction, namely that 'They said a father and son took turns posing as a 20-year-old "emo" named Brandon to seduce Miss Ryan and, when she rebuffed them, used the alias to lure her to her death' (Fewster 2009, p.1). When the article is continued on page six and seven of the same paper, it is accompanied by a picture that was used on the police information booth, showing Carly with dark make-up, a t-shirt with a skull on it and a dark fringe, all emo traits. But the two other images used depict a very different picture. One is a school photo of Carly (the same as the one used on the front page of

the paper) and the other is of Carly as a child dressed as a flower girl for a friend's wedding. These two images would have been released by the family. This is a point of change where the media have been given access to private photographs, not whatever they could access from the Internet. Although it may be suggested that none of the images that were published of Carly could ever singularly represent all of her, neither the ones chosen by the media nor the ones that were supplied by her family, rather these pictures constructed particular images of Carly. The article continues to locate Carly in the emo subculture: 'Her distinctive "emo culture" clothing was in disarray' (Fewster 2009, p.6), the continual use of quotation marks around the word 'emo' also suggests a distancing from this hardwiring of her identity to the subculture, and also potentially to a broader disenfranchisement of the validity of the subculture in the wider community.



Figure 9 School photo of Carly used regularly in *The Advertiser*[30]

As the articles continue through the next days and then weeks and the brutality and truth behind the crimes and the perpetrators are revealed, more 'innocent' pictures of Carly are shown in the papers, for example a much happier teenager playing on playground equipment and repeats of the school photo (see Figure 9). On 27 October 2009 Carly's mother retrospectively commented on the changes in her daughter, suggesting she 'watched her daughter transform from an innocent, smiling little girl to

[30] 'Carly case is closer to trial' (February 22, 2008); 'Lured to death by cyber 'lover'' (Fewster October 20, 2009); 'Carly's body found during a daily stroll' (Fewster October 22, 2009); 'Carly's mum in email abuse' (Fewster October 29, 2009)

a withdrawn, brooding teenager who posted "dark art" on her personal website' (Fewster 2009, p.9). Sonya Ryan went on to describe what she saw when she looked at Carly's MySpace page: 'There were images I was taken aback by ... some dark art, really risqué, dark and sexual images ... With the photo of Carly, I couldn't see her face ... she had taken a three-part image of her chest, waist and a bra' (Fewster 2009, p.9). Though this article does not mention Carly's link to the emo subculture, it does mention her turning to the Internet to find comfort after having overdosed on alcohol and ending up in the ICU (Fewster 2009, p.9). In the coverage that followed, for the rest of 2009 and into early 2010, the articles all contained details of the case, how the accused father wanted to blame the son and how he was told of the plan to murder Carly in the car trip from Adelaide to Victoria. Importantly, all of the articles were accompanied by the more innocent school photo of Carly. With charges laid, graphic details of the crime laid bare, and a verdict made, society now had a 'real' folk devil to blame.

Stage four of the moral panic, 'a response from authorities or opinion makers' (Thompson 1998, p.8), came on 30 January 2010. South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon put forward a Bill proposing that 'online predators' that lie about their age on the Internet be jailed following the murder of Ryan (Fewster 2010, p.1). The Bill proposed that 'offenders who lie about their age to children via the intent would face a three year jail term. Those trying to "make it easier to meet minor physically" risk five-year terms, while those intending to commit a further offence face eight years in jail' (Fewster 2010, p.10). The law does propose to protect the people using the Internet, stating that '[t]he law would allow accused persons to defend themselves if they "reasonably believed" the person with whom they communicated was over 18. Police sting operations would be exempt from the law' (Fewster 2010, p.10). After all, as much as 'predators' can lie about who they are, those being talked to could be lying as well. Senator Xenophon suggests that the Carly Ryan case would not have occurred 20 years ago

> because there was no internet 'to hide predators'. He said the case showed how 'predators weasel themselves' into the lives of children through the internet: 'The problem with the current laws is that police must prove the communication was for a sexual purpose,' Mr Xenophon said. 'Police have one hand tied behind their backs when dealing with these cyber-manipulators. 'This

> will put everyone on notice that misrepresenting their age to a minor is not acceptable'. (Fewster 2010, p.10)

Thus at the top of this article, and on the opposing page, we see the first indication of a clear warning about the dangers of Internet use: 'Carly Ryan's grieving mother has vowed to lead a campaign against online predators; I won't let Carly's death be in vain' (Fewster 2010, pp.10–11). The 'response' from opinion makers was evidence of the discursive veracity of the concept of the dangers of the Internet. Still echoing stage four of Thompson's framework, Sonya Ryan suggested that 'urgent action, such as compulsory seminars for Year 8 students, was needed to educate children about internet dangers' (Fewster 2010). With the expansive use of computers in modern society many computers are appearing in children's bedrooms, meaning that that McRobbie and Garber's concept of bedroom culture can be carried through to today with youths needing access to 'room and space within (rather than outside) the home' (1976, p.213, original emphasis removed). There is a privacy in the bedroom that youths can retreat to and yet they can reach out to the wider world; however, this does expose youth to stranger danger.

Sonya Ryan supported federal laws that were proposed by Senator Xenophon 'that would make lying to children on the internet a crime' (Fewster 2010, p.11). The article continues on to warn parents of the dangers of the Internet and what they should be wary of, even (ironically given earlier disparaging coverage of the use of MySpace as a communication tool between Carly and her mother) suggesting that they should be '"more actively involved and checking their children's websites, looking at the mediums they are using, checking their profiles and who they are speaking to." Teachers and governments, she said, had to work together to warn children about online predators' (Fewster 2010, p.11). Thus now one way that was suggested to parents to keep their children safe online is to become their 'friend' on their social networking pages (Watson & Fewster 2010, p.15). The reason for this is because '"You're privy to the information they're sharing online, the way they're interacting with others," he said. "The challenge will be not overreacting to some of those minor things that kids get up to, but just keeping a good overview on what's actually occurring"' (Watson & Fewster 2010, p.15). This was a period of time when the risks of Internet use, and of social media use by minors in particular, were still

very new. Since this time there have been many cases that have warned parents to raise their children's awareness of Internet safety, for, as Sonya Ryan suggests,

> 'Kids put whatever they like on their MySpace and Facebook pages – their schools, their telephone numbers, their movements – just completely unaware that anybody can look at that information,' she said. 'The internet is getting bigger and bigger, and this problem is only going to get worse – something needs to be actively done and people need to start taking this seriously. 'I think there should be compulsory school seminars on internet awareness and safety for Year 8 students'. (Fewster 2010, p.11)

The article also demonstrates the fifth stage of moral panic: 'The panic recedes or results in social changes' (Thompson 1998, p.8).

One of the concrete social changes to arise out of the Carly Ryan case was the Carly Ryan Foundation. This was first discussed publically in the 30 January 2010 article:

> Ms Ryan said she would create a foundation, in her daughter's name, to further internet awareness and child safety. She called on the public to contact her with suggestions and initiatives. 'There has been enough suffering over the past three years,' she said. 'Not just for me but for Carly's family, her friends, the lady who found her on the beach, the police and the prosecutors. 'Now, the best thing I can do is get out there and try to help others prevent this happening in the future. 'I just try to always think "What would Carly want me to do?" and I know, in my heart of hearts, that is getting this message out ...' (Fewster 2010, p.11)

This is the first time that an email information link is provided. This was the emergence of a social change, namely social awareness and acknowledgement of online dangers. That 'stage five' social change had clearly occurred was again represented on 18 May when a Sydney TAFE[31] student was murdered by a person she met on the Internet. *The Advertiser* compared Nona Belomesoff to Carly Ryan: 'Prosecutors will allege Christopher James Dannevig, 20, from Leumeah, came into contact with Ms Belomesoff through Facebook and offered her a career rescuing animals' (Watson & Fewster 2010, p.15). The rest of the article discusses the campaign begun by Sonya Ryan, and her hopes for greater Internet safety and awareness for children:

[31] College of Technical and Further Education.

> Ms Ryan's mother Sonya said she was distraught and horrified to hear of Nona's disappearance, whose death mirrors [the] 2007 murder of Carly. She yesterday emailed Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Premier Mike Rann and SA Independent Senator Nick Xenophon demanding they take immediate steps to protect the nation's children before another life is lost (Watson & Fewster 2010, p.15).

This was one of the first real signs that it was now the Internet that was the danger, the 'folk devil', and no longer the emo subculture. Sonya Ryan sums up this panic:

> 'How many kids have to die before somebody in power, someone who can help, realises this is the way predators now operate?' she said. 'No longer can anyone say Carly's murder was a one-off or a fluke – it's now tragically clear she was but the first victim of a new type of murder' (Watson & Fewster 2010, p.15).

It may be suggested here that Sonya Ryan was attempting to redirect the media coverage away from the negativity that was surrounding her daughter's image, the initial insinuations about her character, to the dangers of the Internet and what young people may be putting themselves at risk of when using online social networking systems.

A year after Gary Newman was prosecuted for and found guilty of murdering Carly Ryan, a new campaign was launched advertising cyber safety. The Carly Ryan Foundation is 'dedicated to spreading the word about internet safety' to children and youths around the world (Fewster 2010, p.58). Sonya Ryan took the Foundation to the public, launching it on a talk show:

> From that faltering start, the foundation took on a life of its own. In the months since the verdict, Ms Ryan has forged alliances with concert promoters, clothing stores and media groups to push her message. In June, Prime Minister Julia Gillard wrote to Ms Ryan, commending her efforts. Ms Ryan was invited to dozens of schools – both here and interstate – to speak directly to children. Last month she found herself fighting tears when she visited Carly's former school, Parkside Primary, to meet the students. 'They were so quiet after I finished speaking – just sitting there, staring at me,' she says. 'Kids are so quick to "friend" people on Facebook because they think numbers mean popularity, but then they hear what happened to Carly and just freeze'. (Fewster 2010, pp.58–59)

Sonya Ryan spread her message hoping that the introduction of legislation would assist in the fight against this sort of case repeating itself. She stated that

> Her best hope [for legislation] was a private member's bill moved by Senator Xenophon. His Criminal Code Amendment (Misrepresentation of Age to a

> Minor) Bill was drafted in the wake of Newman's murder conviction ... Unfortunately, it failed to gain traction in Canberra – despite promises of Labor support (Fewster 2010, p.59).

Although the Bill was, and still is, being held back, it is still being discussed which means that social change is being created, which is a critical stage in Thompson's theory. On 15 May 2013 a Bill was once again brought to South Australia's State Parliament this time by Independent MLC John Darley making it an 'offence for an adult to lie about their age or identity to a child online and then meet with that child. That offence would attract a maximum penalty of five years in jail' (Novak 2013).

A social networking website was flagged by the Carly Ryan Foundation as a site to be wary of when it was found that teens were using it to discuss their sexual experiences and in turn use this information to bully other teens. This is the first mention of online bullying being an issue, suggesting that the social change was taking effect, and not only regarding online predators. Published in an article in *The Sunday Mail* on online bullying on 23 February 2011, the website Formspring 'allows users to ask anonymous questions, which have given rise to bullying and cyber-stalking concerns. Sonya Ryan, mother of murdered teenager Carly Ryan, said the website had the potential to have deadly consequences' (Watkins 2011, p.11). The website has been connected to the suicide of one student from New York after she was bullied in 2010 on her Formspring profile (Watkins 2011, p.11). The article also offers tips on how to stay secure on the Internet that were supplied by the Carly Ryan Foundation:

> Don't share profile passwords.
> Make your profile private.
> Consider who will see the photos you post.
> Don't respond to nasty or suggestive messages.
> Block individuals who make you feel uncomfortable online.
> Never put personal details such as phone numbers, addresses, school names or locations on your profile. People online are strangers, too.
> Only add 'friends' who you know personally. Your profile is not a popularity contest.
> Make sure people you add are who they say. Predators can steal the identities of others.
> Don't participate in cyber-bullying. Talk to someone you trust about personal problems instead of talking about them online.
> Regularly check your profile privacy settings, as they can be reset without notification.

> Never agree to meet anyone face to face alone. If an online friend requests a meeting, tell your parents or a friend. (Watkins 2011, p.11)

The hope was that parents would read these tips, and share them with their children as a force for social change. However, an article printed only two days later suggested that the messages being sent out by people like Sonya Ryan and Nick Xenophon were not being heard: 'Teens ignore online risk' suggests that 'one in five South Australian teenagers has met a stranger they befriended on Facebook in person, an alarming study shows' (Hood 2011, p.11). The study also showed that 50 per cent of users have personal details including phone numbers or email addresses on their MySpace or facebook pages, although the study was probably conducted before the work of Sonya and Xenophon was made public (Hood 2011, p.11). This article is on the same page as an article about the Carly Ryan Foundation being a part of the popular annual music event the Soundwave Festival:

> The foundation operated booths at the festival, and its T-shirts were worn on stage by top bands Pennywise, from the US, and Bring Me The Horizon from the UK. Foundation director Sonya Ryan has been put in touch with Oprah Winfrey and invited to join this year's Warped Tour – America's premier music and extreme sports festival (Fewster 2011, p.11).

Both the Soundwave Festival and the Warped Tour are music festivals that tour alternative, punk or rock bands. The Soundwave Festival was chosen in Australia as the target audience for the festival is the same as the campaign: young, alternative, tech-savvy youth. Online predators were never only an issue in Australia, as Sonya Ryan points out:

> 'This is truly a global issue, it's been happening in America for a while now and Australia is sadly catching up,' she said. Ms Ryan said the booths [at the festival] filled a second role during Soundwave. 'Kids were using our booths as "safe houses" – arranging to meet there if they got lost or separated,' she said. 'It shows kids are looking toward us as a way of being safe.' Ms Ryan travelled with the bands and shared her daughter's story. 'These big, burly rock 'n' roll stars were just absolutely shocked,' she said. (Fewster 2011, p.11)

Invigorated by its new identity – 'Internet predators' – which emerged, ironically, in the final two stages of the initial 'emo' panic following Carly Ryan's death, a new equilibrium or normalisation was reached.

In 2012 Sonya Ryan was nominated for Australian of the Year, and in 2013 was a national finalist for her campaign for cyber safety (NADC 2013). In January 2013, a

smartphone application was launched that cemented stage five of Thompson's theory. The free mobile app was designed in South Australia by the Carly Ryan Foundation and 'will allow users to quickly snap a picture of a would-be predator which is then automatically sent to designated emergency contacts. The picture will show the victim's exact location via built-in GPS feature and an image of the predator' (Stokes 2013, p.10). Xenophon was calling for funding from the government to ensure that the app would be free to all Australians (Stokes 2013, p.10). No longer simply a source of threat, technology ironically is seen as coming to the rescue as social change embraces the ubiquitous technology of the moment, seeing a value for it beyond panic. Though clearly 'social change', the presence of such an app still marks 'stranger danger' as an issue, albeit one more about the age-old threat of real, embodied people, rather than simply the 'shock of the new'.

The time frame of the moral panic that surrounded Carly Ryan challenges the traditional framework that has been established by theorists such as Cohen or Thompson who suggest that a panic will disappear as quickly as it appeared. The moral panic that began as an emo moral panic in 2007 with Thompson's stages one, two and three, shifted with stages four and five being completed with a complementary moral panic, with emo and the Internet being intrinsically connected, and the dangers of the former conflated with those of online 'predators'. These waves of panic were supported by the shift in focus of the photographs used. The photos that were used in the original articles (as seen in Figure 7) depicted Carly with an emo persona; the later articles focused more on the school photo of Carly (Figure 9). Carly was clearly depicted in two very different lights, subtlety inviting the audience to make judgements about who they believed her to be. When the details of the case became clear and the horrors that Carly went through were released to the public, the moral panic was strategically modified from a focus on emo to online dangers.

Through this case study analysis I have demonstrated how a moral panic cycled through Thompson's five stages. Many of the cases that arose in the media in regards to emo focused on cases of female endangerment, or 'Damsels in Distress'. Carly Ryan's murder was a local case that consumed a significant amount of media attention; in this way it will tragically have local parallels elsewhere in the world where emo exists. Carly Ryan's murder was a highly exposed case of emo moral

panic for South Australia as it extended over a seven-year period. Laws are still being debated and societal changes still being enacted because of the case. What was crucial about the case was the way that it was represented; when the case began Carly was represented with 'negative' connotations but as the case progressed Carly was increasingly represented as a victim rather than as a transgressor (and, increasingly, as an 'innocent' victim, rather than someone whose own behaviour put her at risk). This was represented in the way that the stories were posed with their headlines as well as the changing photographs. When the Carly Ryan Foundation was established it represented another stage in protecting youths and the innocence that needed to be kept safe. The foundation still has booths at the Soundwave Festival each year and Sonya Ryan does regular school appearances to discuss online safety. But while the moral panic that surrounded Carly Ryan's death followed the stages set out by Thompson in his theory of moral panic, it shifted, creating a deliberate and important change in the way that the issue was represented in the news. Significantly, while emo here became an easy target, it was online social networking and the Internet in general that eventually became the real concern. However, as it is hard to give social media 'predators' a 'face' and while it continues to be a highly misunderstood system of communication by many, other means were chosen to purvey the 'truth'.

Coda: Emos Around the World

The discussion so far has centred on emos from around the Anglosphere: the United States, United Kingdom and Australia especially. However, emo has spread far beyond these boundaries and it would be remiss to not acknowledge a couple of high-profile instances of media coverage of emo from non-English-language countries. Evidence that emo identification, and with it the demonisation of the subculture, is spreading even include news stories from countries such as Iraq, where there have been murders of numerous teens who were identified as being 'emo'. On 21 March 2012, *BBC News* reported: 'For several weeks, Iraq has been gripped by a most gruesome rumour' (Ruhayem 2012, p.1). The rumour was referring to the murder of youths who had been identified as emo by religious extremists. However, and importantly, the definition of emo that was being used in Iraq varied greatly from that of Western countries. As Rami Ruhayem describes,

> The victims are referred to as 'emos', a term originally used in the West to describe youths who listen to a melodic style of rock music, and dress in

> alternative clothing. But in Iraq, it has come to mean any man with long hair or a slightly feminine appearance. Emos have also been described alternatively as Satanists, vampires, gays, masons, or all of the above. (2012, p.1)

It was the effeminate nature of the males that caused them to be labelled emo, including the long hair, make-up and overt displays of emotion. At a similar time, another article written for *The Guardian* newspaper in Britain further describes a band in Iraq who had members murdered because of their association with emo (Long 2012). Not only were people being murdered, but anything that was associated with emo was being destroyed:

> Iraq's brutal interior ministry issued two statements in February [2012]. The first announced official approval to 'eliminate' the 'Satanists'. The second, on 29 February, proclaimed a 'campaign' to start with a crackdown on stores selling emo fashion. The loaded language suggests, at a minimum, that the ministry incited violence. It's highly possible that some police, in a force riddled with militia members, participated in the murders. (Long 2012)

Where Ruhayem suggests that the term emo was being used to target effeminate men in Iraq, Long suggests that it was not only men being targeted but also women, with adolescents being the main targets. The definition of what is considered to be 'emo' in Iraq seems thus to be conflicting, a general catch-all term at this point for behaviour considered too Western or otherwise undesirable

> It's not quite true to say, as some press reports have suggested, that 'emo' is just a synonym for 'gay' in Iraq. Rather, immorality, western influence, decadence and blasphemy have come together in a loosely defined, poorly aligned complex of associations: and emo fashion and 'sexual perversion' are part of the mix. Nobody cares much about disentangling the concepts, least of all the killers. All that matters is that all those things are bad. (Long 2012)

These events in Iraq caused great tension and fear among many young urban communities. The singer of local band Hassan went into hiding after two members of the band were murdered; youths who listened to emo music tried to avoid any form of public identification and members of Baghdad's LGBT [32] community also hid (Ruhayem 2012; Long 2012). The definition of emo here was so loose that anyone could become a potential target: 'youth deviance, though, is a leitmotif of many panics. Kids don't just symbolise social change; they are it, embodying the unmanageable future' (Long 2012). There was a wave of youth who were defying the

[32] Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

boundaries that had been laid around them and they were therefore labelled as being part of the emo movement.

Mexico has also reported stories of violence against youths who were labelled 'emo'. This is even known as the anti-emo campaign, with websites such as Movimiento Anti Emosexual and YouTube videos being created to promulgate homophobic emo hate. Emos held demonstrations to attempt to stop the violent attacks after there was an 'emo-beating rampage in Queretaro' (Madrigal 2008). The event occurred when

> The trio of long-haired teenagers grasped the plaza wall to shield their bodies as hundreds of youths kicked and punched them while filming the beating on cell phone cameras. "Kill the emos," shouted the assailants, who had organized over the Internet to launch the attack in Mexico's central city of Queretaro (Grillo 2008).

Subcultures are not new to Mexico and, as *Underwire* reporter Alexis Madrigal suggests, there has long been an ongoing battle between different subcultural groups.

> Music-based subcultures have permeated Mexico's major cities for decades, fueled by constant migration from rural cities. But only in the past year have emos begun to make their presence felt in the streets. In response, many of the established so-called *tribus urbanas* like punks and metalheads are responding with violence. The emo-punk battles are reminiscent of earlier subculture fights among various factions, like the Hell's Angels fighting hippies at the Altamont Music Festival or the Mods taking on the Rockers. (2008)

Interestingly in this circumstance, it is other youth subcultures attacking emos, compared to Iraq where insurgents created the violence. However, much like Iraq, emo is here identified with homosexuality (Madrigal 2008). From a Western perspective Brian Peters suggests that this link between male emos and homosexuality is only a contemporary link:

> [E]moboy and gay boy have become synonymous, and thus emo and homosexuality have become intertwined. Nonetheless, there remain plenty of young men within emo subculture who are emo boys and straight. Emo and queer are not meant to be tantamount, even though contemporary youth do interchange these terms, but emo boys do, regardless of their desires, cross, bend, and mesh gender norms and create an outlet or option for boys who identify with punk, alternative, or edgy-independent rock music. (2010a, p.94)

This aspect of emo has been carried through popular media discourse as can be seen in the reporting of the violence in Mexico. The gender aspects of emo are an important part of the ideology of emo. The males who are participating can have their

hair long, and wear make-up and tight clothing without judgement from their peers; however, in Mexico and Iraq this aesthetic appearance, or connotations of it, was used as a launching pad for hate crimes.

> Gustavo Arellano, the author of Ask a Mexican and an editor at OC Weekly, said that the sexual ambiguities cultivated by emo fashion helped set the group up for targeting by more macho groups. It is the feminine practices of the males, one which is generally accepted in the Western world, but when taken into different cultures with different traditions and religions becomes less accepted, that are being used as the reason behind the attacks, 'What do you do when you are confronted with a question mark about sexuality in Mexico?' Arellano said. 'You beat it up.' (Madrigal 2008)

There are teenagers who are engaged in emo that are heterosexual, gay and bisexual; however, the negative portrayal of this is perpetuating negative stereotypes that the media in Mexico and Iraq pick up and report on.

However it is important to note that hate crimes and everyday harassment on the basis of (presumed) sexuality or looking different are hardly unique to 'Other' countries. As *Times Entertainment* reporter Ioan Grillo suggests,

> [t]he emo subculture probably existed in your high school before the term even bloomed, the latest movement on a continuum represented by goths in the '80s and alternative rockers in the '90s. In yearbooks, they're the kids who wear exaggerated haircuts and immerse themselves in moody music. In short: the kids jocks have been beating up for decades' (2008).

This suggests it is a recent uprising against a grouping that has been around for an extended period of time. Much like Madrigal, Grillo also suggests that the violence has occurred because of the sexuality of the teenagers.

> The emos make a soft target for the aggressors. The vast majority are teenagers, often just 15 or 16 years old. Most are from comfortable middle-class backgrounds with little experience of the street battles in Mexico's hardened barrios. And by its nature, the emo scene attracts followers who prefer intellectual indulgence to fistfights. In the lead-up to the mob attacks, there was increasingly aggressive talk against emos in online forums and TV music shows. Blogs raved about 'killing emos' and showed cartoon drawings of decapitated long-haired heads. Internet writers called on anti-emos to 'take back' public spaces such as the Plaza de Armas in Queretaro, where the black-clothed teenagers sit around. (Grillo 2008)

Emos have long been an easy target because of their aesthetic style and perceived

ideologies. Calls to violence against emos can spread easily through the media, including importantly through social media networks. In the case of Mexico and the 'emo bashing problem', news reports and online videos led to some commentators egging the violence on, suggesting 'If you are so depressed then kill yourselves' and city officials calling for 'tolerance, comparing the prejudice to a Nazi persecution of minorities' (Grillo 2008).

The use of emo within the contexts of Iraq and Mexico suggests an important phenomenon was occurring. As Michelle Phillipov explains, 'the absence of a clear subcultural identity and resultant lack of alternative discourses emerging to challenge news representations gave the media greater opportunities to define the emo movement and culture in largely arbitrary ways' (2009, p.62). With such contestation of emo being available through the media definitions, where the term emo was self-applied within the boundaries of the ideology, the media was able to provide several definitions of what they believed emo was, how they dressed and the music that they listened to. The term emo has become a convenient label that is used by the media to define youth who may be identified as homosexual or simply 'different'. This situates itself within the Thornton and McRobbie model of moral panic whereby moral panics are now a 'goal' (1995, p.559) for the media rather than, as Cohen described, occurrences that happened 'every now and then' (Cohen 1972, p.9). The media were instituting a moral panic rather than it occurring organically. The definitions that were provided above by the media in Iraq and Mexico suggest a different manifestation of emo from what the Western world has previously defined, with the term emo being applied to certain connotations of the grouping rather than as a true representation of emo. That is, young men who were perceived as, or were, portraying any feminine qualities or were gay were labelled emo. In the Western world, there have been changes in the use of emo as well. Where it once *did* represent emo, it is now used negatively to include diverse groups, practices and individuals who would not otherwise identify with the 'emo' label. Emo is a term that was, interestingly, diffused into mainstream society as 'acceptable' but not accepted, yet it is still used to define youths who do not fit into the social norm.

The construction of youth identities is done 'across and by differences, and ... the social construction of youth, itself is a category which historically varies, is also bound

up with the media representations made available' (Walton 2006, p.61). The media represent youth in a variety of ways depending on its needs and purposes at the time. This can change how young people are perceived, as seen in the examples of the moral panic that surrounded emo youths and the negative connotations that encircled them. This media categorisation of youths in this instance and in similar incidents elsewhere, which denotatively associates emo with negative connotations, can be argued to have been part of what motivated mass denial among youths as to their position within the subculture. By creating a negative image around the subculture, the media were able to suggest certain connotations to the public that would be fed onto young people, regardless of whether they were participating in emo or not, if they performed what was perceived as a negative act. Rather than youths being able to 'choose' to be a part of emo, they were categorised as such, as can be seen in the media examples given in regards to Iraq and Mexico. These examples of media labelling and attention were important in the evolution of emo as they were contributing factors in the diffusion and defusion of emo. 'Emo' has come to be seen largely as a media category applied to youth to substantiate claims of moral panics and rebellion, rather than a 'genuine' self-selecting identification of these young people to the subculture. The advertising and attention that was produced through the news stories meant that the negative connotations of emo were spread, meaning that it was both advertised and demonised.

Chapter Five

Sub-cultures in a Web 2.0 World: Emo as 'Magical Resolution'

So far I have explored the history of emo, its music as well as how it has been represented in recent media reports. Having looked at these key ideas, I will now return more systemically to the concept of subculture and its ongoing value as an analytical descriptor of youth culture, using emo as a contemporary case study. Although there are elements of the emo grouping that could arguably be categorised as belonging to other analytical categories such as 'scene', and despite the numerous critiques that have been made of the current value of subculture as an analytical term – for example the exclusive focus on working-class groups (Clarke *et al.* 1976, p.37) and the focus on resistance to the parent culture (Cohen 2005, p.70), there is still space for analysis of groupings of young people. We need to include and adapt a number of concepts to define youth groupings rather than relying on a single category. As we have seen so far through the analysis of emos, there are shared beliefs and fashion markers that are integral to the group, suggesting that we need to employ different concepts at different stages of the development of a discrete youth culture, in addition to the analytical categories of neo-tribe, scene, post-subculture or lifestyle.

In this chapter I will do three things. Firstly I will discuss subculture's shift to the Internet and through this I will contextualise the key theoretical concepts introduced in Chapter One in relation to their applicability for understanding emo. In dialogue with, and arising out of, these terms, I will discuss subculture through Hodkinson's more inclusive contemporary definition of subculture. I will then finally turn to look at how emo has supported a generation of young people through one of the greatest periods of change they have experienced, being a teenager. Therefore, I will then offer a new emphasis upon an old concept within subcultural analysis: 'the magical resolution'. I will draw upon this concept using the seven stages of grief matrix to frame the discussion in this chapter to allow us to understand better the impact of the Internet and the return to visibility of subcultural identification online, and how it shows young people are still actively participating in subcultures.

(Sub)Culture 2.0

As I acknowledged in the literature review, there are valid reasons why the Birmingham Centre's work led by theorists such as Dick Hebdige (1979, 1988), Stuart Hall (1971, 1973, 1977, 1978, 1980) and Angela McRobbie, Jenny Garber and Sarah Thornton (1976, 1994, 1995) was critiqued as too limiting given its almost exclusive focus on working-class youth groupings (Clarke *et al.* 1976, p.62; McRobbie 1994; Bennett & Kahn-Harris 2004, p.7), as well as its focus on spectacular male-based subcultures to the exclusion of female cultural practices (Hebdige 1979; Cohen 1972, 1988; Gelder & Thornton 1997; Burke & Sunley 1998; Bennett 1999, 2000; Muggleton 2000). These studies were different to those conducted in other countries such as Australia or the United States of America and, while these may not be as widely known, they are just as vital to understanding why the theory of subculture can be applied within a modern context.

As we also saw in Chapter One, following on the from the critiques of the CCCS definition of subculture, Michel Maffesoli pioneered the work in the field of neo-tribes, which was furthered by theorists like Bennett (2005), Jones (2009), Weinzierl and Muggleton (2003), Edwards (2001), and Hodkinson and Deicke (2007). Neo-tribe theory came at a time when questions of individualism were being asked and mass consumerism was rife. Neo-tribe theory was important in the evolution of cultural studies as it did not just describe subcultural groupings but could be used to describe any social gathering that occurred in everyday society. As Shields describes in the foreword to Maffesoli's text by way of example, a regular gathering of bus commuters who may acknowledge each other as they board their transport, or a football club or office workers may be usefully understood as a 'neo-tribe' (1996, p.ix). 'Neo-tribes' does not exclusively describe youth or music or fashion-driven groupings; rather the term encompasses any gathering in society that regularly meets and interacts. Although cultural groupings do call for a level of similarity between members there is still an autonomous nature between each person that allows for individuality to be shown and shared. However, one aspect of neo-tribes that is relevant to a modern definition of subculture is the commercialism and the commodification of subcultures. Although the argument posited by Maffesoli regarding the loss of the individual can be argued in today's society, it is Bennett's idea of fluidity or 'a multi-faceted and distinctly fluid form of expression' (2005,

p.110) that can be seen in the waves of emo as discussed in Chapter Three. The commodification of the emo culture and the consumer culture that has arguably driven the third wave led to clothing being made with slogans such as the aforementioned 'Go have a cry emo kid' emblazoned on the front. Young people were able to move in and out of the emo culture by dressing in a particular way and attending a few concerts, even though they were not necessarily viewed as 'true' emos. The newest wave of emo, the third wave, was a consumer wave that incorporated mainstream music and allowed young people to be a part of the grouping no matter whether they fit within the confines of the ideology or differed from it in some ways.

Scene theory is also important in modern definitions of subculture. Scene is used by theorists such as Irwin (1977), Shank (1988), Straw (1991), Bennett and Peterson (2004) and Baulch (2007) but has been in circulation since the 1970s, with the end of the 1960s being seen to be the end of the chain of deviance-creating subcultures. Rather, it was argued that after this period 'subcultures might be less the result of conflict and delinquency and more a matter of choice and "lifestyle"' (Gelder 2007, p.44). Will Straw suggests that scenes are created around bonds and history:

> The important processes ... are those through which particular social differences (most notably those of gender and race) are articulated within the building of audiences around particular coalitions of musical form. These processes are not inevitably positive or disruptive of existing social divisions nor are they shaped to any significant extent by solitary wilful acts of realignment ... Typically, the character of particular audiences is determined by the interlocking operations of the various institutions and sites within which musics are disseminated: the schoolyard, the urban dance club, the radio format. These sites, themselves shaped by their place within the contemporary metropolis and aligned with populations along the lines of class and taste, provide the conditions of possibility of alliances between musical styles and affective links between dispersed geographical places. (1997, p.504)

The places and spaces within which audiences interact are a crucial part of what creates a scene. A sense of cohesion and loyalty is reached when there is a place though which participants can relate to musical history. When a geographical space can be related to a particular style of music there will be an audience who are connected to it. Although this is a fundamental idea, it is also a limitation of scene, which is a useful term in regards to its music-related subcultural understandings.

Scene is still a useful term that can be used in conjunction with subculture, as we saw in Chapter Three. There is an emo music scene that is an important element of the emo culture but it is the combination of the space, music, style and movement of these themes that makes the subculture so rich, and it is not exclusive to emo. Emo is not limited to one space; rather it has moved from the underground to popular culture, to the online realm, and 'scene' is useful as it accommodates this kind of geographic complexity via the concepts of 'translocal' and 'virtual' scenes.

The valid critiques of its class, gender and national specificity, not to mention wider social shifts globally since the mid-twentieth century, means that the descriptor 'subculture' clearly cannot be used in the same way that it was by the CCCS. Rather I would argue in addition to its more everyday, vernacular usage, a modernised and adapted analytical version of the concept needs to be employed that draws upon these critiques, the experiences of groups outside the UK, as well as other useful concepts (including 'scene' and 'neo-tribe') to make the theory useable in the twenty-first century. Bennett and Peterson in particular make a strong argument against using subculture as a label for youth groupings at all as it

> presumes that all of a participant's actions are governed by group standards, such as dress codes and behavioural patterns, while the scene perspective does not make this presumption. A few at the core of the scene may live that life entirely, but, in keeping with a late-modern context in which identities are increasingly fluid and interchangeable (Chaney 1996), most participants regularly put on and take off the scene identity (Bennett 2000). (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.3)

Although Bennett and Peterson make a strong case, I will suggest here that the term subculture is still useful if these other concepts are used to add greater fluidity and inclusiveness, while still being exclusive (hence subcultural capital), although not within the definition provided by the CCCS that held class structures as crucial. The ongoing use of the term subculture is useful for defining youth cultures but only if it is provided with supporting elements of scene, neo-tribe and lifestyle.

Sociologist Paul Hodkinson suggests in his book *Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture* (2002) that if a grouping meets certain criteria the label subculture can still be successfully applied. Hodkinson reworks the term subculture from the theories created by the CCCS and the Chicago School 'with a more flexible approach to contemporary

identities and recognition of the roles of media and commerce in the construction of popular cultural groupings' (2002, p.29). Using this theory to explore the goth culture, Hodkinson suggests that for a subculture to exist now it needs to adhere to particular conditions such as *consistent distinctiveness*:

> While accepting the inevitability of a degree of internal difference and change over time, then, the first indicator of subcultural substance comprises the existence of a set of shared tastes and values which is distinctive from those of other groups and reasonably consistent, from one participant to the next, one place to the next and one year to the next. (Hodkinson 2002, p.30)

I would argue that Hodkinson's theory of subculture can be applied to today's contemporary youth groupings such as emos who share a distinctive and shared aesthetic and set of values that, although altered slightly since the 1980s, have remained largely consistent. His second element, *identity*, refers to the importance of having a 'consistent distinctiveness from a distance, a clear and sustained subjective sense of group identity' (Hodkinson 2002, p.31). Although emos do not all identify "as" emo, however, shared aesthetic and musical tastes, and most clearly their attraction to emo social media and shared concerns as articulated there, gave the group a sense of cohesion and participants a sense of belonging. The final quality Hodkinson suggests is *autonomy*: '[t]he final indicator of subculture, then, is that the grouping concerned, while inevitably connected to the society and politico-economic system of which it is a part, retains a *relatively* high level of autonomy' (2002, p.32). The Internet generally, and social media in particular, for emos are the vehicle *par excellence* for enabling precisely this kind of discrete and self-directed communal identity. Hodkinson's work is important for being able to reclaim the term 'subculture' as relevant in today's society. While some characteristics of this revised subculture are compatible with the original concept, what Hodkinson has introduced is a contemporary and less socio-economically specific context for understanding subculture via his study of goth.

The above framework can be applied to emo in that there also needs to be a sense of *commitment* from members of subcultures in that they are practising participants whose involvement will 'last years rather than months', a trait which has been clearly demonstrated through the examination of the waves of emo, with the movement even going from the street to the online realm to ensure the survival of the subculture (Hodkinson 2002, p.31). Members of the emo culture have a consistent distinctiveness

and even though emos are spread across the globe there is a like-mindedness among them in terms of musical taste and aesthetic. There is a strong commitment; although some may deny their position in the subculture, others have simply moved from the street onto the Internet to practice the subculture. Many still listen to the music, and wear the clothes and the make-up. And finally there is autonomy: there are concerts and festivals that are emo-orientated, and there are clothing labels, books and comics that mark out and claim unique identity and space.

One of the distinctive elements of youth groupings that is consistently captured through the use of the term subculture is the sense of community that is offered. Thus the terms 'community' and 'subculture' are sometimes used interchangeably. However, as Thornton explains, 'communities'

> tends to suggest a more permanent population, often aligned to a neighbourhood, of which the family is the key constituent part. Kinship would seem to be one of the main building blocks of community. By contrast, those groups identified as 'subcultures' have tended to be studied apart from their families and in states of relative transience. (1997a, p.2)

Thornton also suggests that young people create their youth subcultures to counteract their parent's culture, that that they have set up in the home as well as in their history (1997a, p.2). But no longer spatially bound, community is becoming ever more important for subcultures as they move into the online realm. The idea of community in an online interface is crucial as it allows for those who are participating to feel welcomed and like they belong; as Ken Gelder explains, 'in many contemporary subcultures, participants might never see or meet each other' (2007, p.140). Within a space where there are millions of webpages that cover countless topics many people will turn to the Internet for comfort or for pleasure. A sense of belonging can be found on the Internet that some cannot find in their everyday lives. The sense of community that stems from participating in these online forums or communities can bring a sense of wholeness or security to people where they might previously have felt alone.

Emo as 'Magical Resolution'

One of the most crucial points for this thesis and for this chapter is to acknowledge that the term 'teenager' is still only a relatively new expression. To use the expression 'youth' or 'teenager' describes the 'transition which young people must make between

childhood and becoming legitimate, adult citizens. This approach of defining the transition between child and adulthood is useful in drawing attention to several aspects of social change which have complicated this transition' (Wilson & Wyn 2006, p.32). Understanding the relative newness of the particular stages of progression from child to adult provides an important framework through which to understand the initial emergence of subcultural studies. With 'adolescence' arguably being extended well into one's early 20s these days as more and more young people in the West attend university, deferring traditional markers of adulthood such as 'settling down' in marriage and childrearing, it also frames the analysis I have undertaken in this thesis. Therefore how young people are perceived has been a point of contestation for many theorists, from a multitude of disciplines, for a number of years with studies conducted around the world. Young people have systematically caused controversy through each generation, though this has differed in severity and reaction. Young people have appeared in 'public discourse as a metaphor for trouble well before the post-war era. A century ago, for example, a wave of panic about "pushes" of larrikins swept the public presses' (Carrington 2006, p.25). Young people have always been considered an 'issue to be solved', something that needs to be controlled or monitored.

Being a teenager is a difficult process for anyone. There are life-changing decisions that have to be made, life lessons to be learned and changes that each person goes through no matter where, how or when they live. Individuals will go through this process in different ways and will find coping mechanisms through different means. This is why subcultures remain so crucial: young people need a framework to make sense of the shift into adulthood. This does not deny the cyclical nature of subcultures, which can be reiterated through Hebdige's ideas of diffusion and defusion: emo stemmed from goth and punk; neo-hippies and granola children have come from hippies and modern day hipsters have come from the 1940s hepcats. To focus on subcultures as completely self-contained and original, unique, seemingly arriving out of nowhere, without influence, is to deny the reality of how virtually all cultural innovation occurs. Emo, like other youth groupings, continues to operate as a subculture within Hodkinson's framework; however I think it is also important to look at the social role specifically youth-oriented subcultures play as a key part of understanding what gives them ongoing resonance. In particular, we need to consider

how generational movements show the need for this support network to be available to youths as they make the transition into adulthood.

Adolescents in Western society are constantly in a state of decision making. They are trying to decide who they are, what they want to do with their lives and how to get to where they want to be. Being a teenager can be related to being in a state of grieving; grief for a lost childhood, an innocence that cannot be regained. There is also grief for the future, as 16 year olds are asked to determine what career to choose, and which tertiary institution to attend, if at all. Relationships are forged as teenagers that will determine future paths. That is not to suggest that it is a negative process; to the contrary, for some this process is positive and 'the best years of their lives'. For others, the process is difficult and leads to the search for others who may feel even a small amount of the pain that they feel. There is a search for identity, for a place to belong, and this search can last well into the rest of a person's life. Forums are used to seek advice about school, relationships, fashion and dress and how to deal with everyday situations. An example of this can be seen through a post on *emowire* in 2013 when there was a discussion about bullying,

> People do make mistakes, but have any of them even came to me and apologized for what they did? No. What they did is in the past and I should move on from that, but no matter what I do, I can't forget about all the pain they caused me. If I forgive them, then I would be making a huge mistake. (June 20, 2013).

By turning to the forums and discussing the issues with others who interact with the websites, the young people are able to seek advice from others who may be in the same situations or have experienced the situations. Important life decisions are also discussed such as whether or not they should have sex,

> Ok, so I'm the type that totally intended to wait until I got married to have sex, but all of the sudden this guy I know asked me if I wanted to have sex with him... not pressure or anything, he just sort of asked..... and I'm very tempted, but I don't want to make a big mistake either..... I'm so confuzled now..... what say you? (emo-core 8 February 2011).

There is extensive advice given to the forum users that would guide them through these difficult decisions and times of their lives. Having such an audience to turn to allows the young people to gain advice without having to leave their bedrooms. There are many discussions like the one above that also encompass sexuality, pregnancy and general relationship advice.

Some young people will turn to subcultures, whether it be a sporting subculture, including skaters, or a subculture that procures teenage emotion, such as goths, punks or emos. Subcultures, of any sort, give youths a place to say they belong, a group of friends who welcome their interests and make them feel that they are a part of something important. What emos provide that other subcultures may not be able to is an emotional openness where teenagers are able to express their angst either through the blog posts, forums, poetry or writing song lyrics. Emos are able to express open and raw emotions, for which other teenagers are often chastised, as they are expected to be happy and carefree.

The path through adolescence is fraught with anxiety and stressful situations. Although there is also a process of joy, the grieving process is required so that teens can mature. Grief is not limited to death. The process of adolescence is separation from childhood and movement toward becoming an adult. Adolescence is thus fraught with 'grieving'; it is a natural response to the breaking of attachments through the loss of a person, thing, activity, status, romantic relationship, or anything significant. Grief has the power to disrupt and disorganise the whole of one's life. It is preoccupying and depleting. Generally, grief is a process, not a state. Bereaved people move through various stages of grief that allow them to reorganise life in positive ways (Parrott 2000, p.172). Although not grieving over a death, the symptoms of grief can be applied to the process of adolescence. As psychologist and scholar Les Parrott describes, 'Clinically the signs and symptoms of grief have been noted for decades: somatic distress, preoccupation with the image of deceased, guilt, regret, fear, hostile reactions resulting from unresolved anger, and loss of conduct patterns previously influenced by the deceased' (2000, pp.172–173). In place of a person who has died, the teen's childhood is being grieved. The patterns of behaviour that were inherent in their childhood are being relived, some even hanging onto these activities and reliving them throughout their adolescence.

This sense of grief is clearly visible online within emo subculture. It is evident in the social media posts created by members, such as one post that was written by one female member, 'They call me crazy for being myself … they call her normal for being someone shes not' (emowire, 2 February 2012). Emos are often mocked and

shamed for being who they are. Being overtly emotional means that emos are able to vent their emotions openly without as much harsh judgement as other young people may receive from their peers. Another post from emocore is one of many asking for advice about self-harm or suicide,

> Lately, i have noticed a few of my friends have been thinking about cutting or commiting suicide...
>
> Some of them i can, i can be there for them in person, but some of them are in other countries, and i cant stop them at all...
>
> and if they knew how much i actually care about them, they would stop
>
> so what should i do. (13 March 2013)

Being able to use the forums for advice about serious issues and to gather advice on how to deal with such life hurdles gives teens a way through their issues with support and reassurance. Teenagers are already often struggling with issues of identity; being an emo gives them an outlet for this struggle. Although they are judged for their involvement in the subculture, through it young people are able to interact within the group with like-minded youths both on and offline. This gives young people an extensive number of people that they can interact with. Other subcultures give youths a place to belong, a place to portray elements of their identity among like-minded peers; however, emos allow youths the space to express feeling and emotions that are often chastised and mocked by the majority of the public, as can be seen through the numerous jokes that have been created around the subculture, such as 'I wish my lawn were emo so it would cut itself'. The emo culture provides a solution for young people who were feeling trapped by what they were experiencing and not able to find a space to express their emotions. One forum user asked the other users about suicide and due to the nature of the topic the question was blocked by one of the sites editors, however, from the responses there can be seen a debate amongst them, but there is always support;

> What a stupid idea. Creating a suicide pact on an online forum. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. It's also extremely selfish. You think people will be better off without you? No, they won't be. You'll be putting the people you love through hell because you couldn't deal with life. Life is shit sometimes. You make the best of what your given or you try and achieve something better for yourself.

> Don't you dare try and rope in some other vulnerable person to kill themselves with you. Just because you don't want to die alone. If you really wanted to die so badly it wouldn't matter if you were alone or not.
> Get help. Talk to people. Talk to a doctor. (emo-core, 08 July 2013).

Seeking advice and support online gives young people a larger support network to work through issues in their everyday lives. As described in Chapter One, Phil Cohen suggested that subcultures were a 'magical resolution' for the working class (1972). I take this in a new direction and argue that being an emo offers a 'magical resolution' for being a teenager.

With the advent of the Internet, and Web 2.0 functionalities and practices in particular, the mass media are no longer the sole gatekeepers to communication and media representation, especially for young people. J. Patrick Williams published a paper in 2006 on the relationship between subcultures and the Internet, 'highlight[ing] how the internet functions as a new social space for subcultural identification and change' (2006, p.175). Through his study of straightedge subcultural participants Williams suggests that there are predominantly two types of people who interact with subcultural spaces online. There are those who will solely participate in the online subculture, and there are those who use the online realm to 'supplement' their offline participation in the subculture (Williams 2006, p.175). The Internet is an important and useful tool for subcultures as it allows them to diffuse around the world through the release of a music video or webpage. In an interesting turn of resistance the participants in the straightedge subculture that Williams studied argued that the subculture had diffused around the world due to the Internet. They suggested that, although straightedge had diffused, it had not defused, as 'these so called drug free kids who identify as straightedge and who rely on the Internet as their sole subcultural resource and means of subcultural interaction' refused to believe their power had been lost (Williams 2006, p.176). A crucial element of the online interaction that Williams discusses is the power of it to spread around the world.

> This diffusion has taken many forms. Individual straightedgers have posted information about the subculture, such as song lyrics and band biographies on personal and official band web sites. They have started internet listservs and developed FAQs. They have traded straightedge music via peer-to-peer networks, and they have started interactive forums that thousands of people have joined. As a result of this subcultural diffusion, individuals have

> discovered straightedge in a dislocated form, fractured from its musical roots. Many of these people learn about straightedge music online and decide to claim a personal straightedge identity. Many of them subsequently join face-to-face straightedge scenes and develop a social straightedge identity, but many others do not. (Williams 2006, p.176)

It is worth quoting this passage at length to demonstrate the similarities between the evolution of emo and straightedge, that is, the progression of the groupings to online sites where young people turn for comfort and belonging. It is this sense of belonging that lends itself to emo being a magical resolution for the problem of being a teenager. The diffusion of emo around the world allowed the styles to reach a myriad of audiences that may not have otherwise been able to have access to such 'how to' guides. The Internet allowed young people to communicate with each other, even after emo had diffused, which meant that the support network was able to continue.

Fragmented Youth Cultures

While the Internet provides a sense of belonging it is also causing a different phenomenon in youth cultures. Andrew Keen has suggested in his book *The Cult of the Amateur* (2007) that the Internet is causing a fragmentation of culture as society relies more and more on the online system for interaction and socialisation. While an important part of modern society, the Internet is also having a negative effect in that people can live their lives through a screen (Turkle 1995; Walter 2013; Guest 2014; Vogt 2014) rather than participate in face-to-face interactions. Holidays are lived through a camera, taking photos rather than truly seeing what is around you; homework largely relies on the use of the Internet for research and finding what is 'up to date'. To prove you did it there needs to be a photo (Vogt 2014); we participate in activities with our friends but without photographic proof, such as Snapchat, Instagram[33] or a camera photo, the story cannot be proven or believed. It is now becoming more about being able to provide evidence of what you have done rather than being able to recall what the experience itself was like. As Nancy Colier explains in a *Psychology Today* article,

> The most frequent complaint that I hear in my psychotherapy practice these days is that people feel estranged from their own lives, unable to enter their experience – as if they are ghosts, floating outside the experience of life itself.

[33] Phone apps created for photo sharing purposes.

> Their life is happening and time is passing, but they are not exactly the ones living it, at least not directly. Our cultural disease is one of absence, as if our own presence has gone missing from life ... Rather than experiencing our life as it is happening, our mind narrates it to us through an internal voiceover, packaging our life for some future presentation. If the mind does its job, we end up well-informed about what is happening to us, but never allowed to experience it for ourselves.
>
> Technology is now a powerful extension of the human mind. Technology captures life but simultaneously keeps us out of it. Technology keeps life safe, but in the process denies us access to it. (2012)

While the Internet is praised for bringing people closer together, it is also alienating people from each other as the need for face-to-face interaction becomes minimised. Even when we do encounter face-to-face situations people will frequently be on their phones rather than being with the people around them. While the Internet can offer support and a place to interact with others who share the same interests, it is also causing a fragmentation of culture.

Society relies on the Internet, and for good reason. It can have positive effects in many sectors of society such as the media with more people being able to communicate from 'the front line' about what is happening, including citizen media. However, the drawback of this is that society is being exposed to a 'never-ending stream of unfiltered user-generated content, things are indeed often not what they seem' (Keen 2007, p.64). This unfaltering openness requires us to question our use of online systems. As Keen continues, 'Who is to point out the lies on the blogosphere that attempt to rewrite our history and spread rumor as fact? When we are all authors, and some of us are writing fiction, whom can we trust?' (2007, p.65). With youth cultures turning to the Internet for belonging what does this mean? This fragmentation of culture on the Internet can also be applied to youth cultures. Youth cultures are very visual, with the aesthetic being a crucial part of belonging. When these groups move off the street and onto the Internet there is a loss of the intimacy and sense of cohesion that there once was. Youth cultures such as emo which rely on the Internet used to be a single, cohesive, value-sharing grouping; however now, as discussed above, they have broken off into different factions such as indie emos, hipster emos, as well as emos in different countries having different representations. This

fragmentation of youth cultures has led to the difficulties in being able to define them as either subcultures, scenes, tribes or post-subcultures.

My work in the online world of emos showed clear divides between age groups and the discussions that were taking place. Different communities were forming around shared interests and beliefs as can be seen through discussions on *emo-core* and *emowire*. While the older emos, those from the first and second waves or over the age of 25, consider emo to be a place of belonging, those who are younger consider emo as a style of music, a genre. Youth participation in the emo culture from concerts and music festivals I attended gave a different impression to what was represented online. The largest and most active participation online is by younger people, those aged 12-17. The more visible participation on the street indeed distorted the age demographic and reinforced the idea of scenes, that is, a musically dedicated group who found belonging in a genre. The older people who are participating in emo online, those from the first and second wave or over the age of 25, would be classified as being part a scene; however, the emotional side of emo, the lyric and poetry writing, and being able to engage in all sorts of emotions, is dominated by the younger generation. Emo as a genre solidifies the group and is where the older people are. What the Internet has provided for emos is a portal to a sense of belonging and acceptance; however, it has also fragmented the group causing it to split off into smaller sections that can identify differently.

Emo provides a strong contemporary case study in youth culture as it has been through multiple processes of diffusion and defusion and has been recycled, but not into something new, rather, into new waves. This transition has allowed fresh waves of young people to embrace the ideologies of emo and, in turn, to turn these into their own, personal magical resolution to being a teenager. What emos are providing for young people all over the world is a space and place to connect emotionally, reconnect and express themselves where they are not judged by their peers. Although those outside of the emo culture, such as the mass media or the peers of the young people, may express negative opinions, they also support young people to gather and voice their emotions. With the diffusion of emo around the world and the spread of violence and negative media attention, so too the negative connotations associated with being emo have travelled. This in some way now means that the label has

become more of a media category as much as a self-selecting subcultural category, leading to the denial among many of those who are otherwise practising the ideologies of the emo culture. With the popularity of the Internet, where an outlet is being supplied for young people who want to express themselves through song lyrics, clothing styles, poetry, body modifications or online forums, it was inevitable that subcultures would turn to the source as a means to communicate with people around the world who feel the same. Although emo could now be considered a musical genre following the diffusion and defusion of the first wave subculture, emos are an inclusive, although seemingly exclusive, culture that allows young people to be welcomed and allows a space for young people to be open and honest about their feelings without prejudice.

Conclusion

One of the most influential youth cultures of today is emo. Although having diffused and defused, the platform that the subculture provides for today's teenagers to be able to express themselves is an important aspect of the group. The fashion of the subculture can also be seen being echoed through society, with skinny black jeans and band merchandise becoming popular attire.

The Internet has emerged as a key site in changing the experience of life, and young people have embraced this experience with full force, with little or no pre-existing guides available advising them on how to grow up in the Internet age. Young people are able to interact with each other through chatrooms, forums, blogs, social networking sites, online dating sites and numerous other formats. There is an anonymity provided by the Internet that cannot be achieved through other means. This facelessness means that some people who may not be able to express themselves to their peers around them are given a platform through which they can do this online. There are support networks provided online through like-mindedness that may not be achieved otherwise in everyday life. As we have seen, that this solidarity is experienced and enabled through invisibility is particularly significant when thinking through what subculture is in the twenty-first century, especially given the emphasis on highly visible, 'spectacular subcultures' in first-wave subcultural studies. In modern society there is a heavy reliance on online resources which makes the transition of subcultures from the street and onto the Internet an important step, one which parallels their involvement offline. The online world is dominated by a younger – under-age – audience, sharing their emotions and works for others to share in turn; those who are in search of a 'magical resolution'. The older audience who are engaging with the music and fashion are more often found in offline spaces, concert and festival venues, music stores, and so on. An advantage to transitioning to online is that subcultures that would normally 'disappear' are given a space through which the core values of the groupings can still be practised with other still active participants.

The CCCS definition of a subculture is no longer applicable, due to both its gender and racial absences, and working-class specificity. However a new definition from Hodkinson (2002) can be applied to today's culture to describe the groupings that are

appearing in society with shared beliefs and values. This definition allows flexibility of movement across spaces and musical styles, as well as encompassing consumerist-driven culture, and allows for individuality in a group setting. Through a discussion of the three waves of emo I have shown that the grouping defused and diffused into a grouping that no longer had the physical intimacy and sense of belonging that it once did. This is not to discount the still important support that identifying with the group supplies youths, it has in fact, as I have proposed, evolved online, furnishing a socio-cultural space in which to explore and 'magically resolve' the complex emotions of being a teenager. What the young participants in the 1980s had begun spread across three decades to the 2000s where young people were given a space in which they could express their inner thoughts among other like-minded people, no matter how negative or dark. Where it was previously seen as taboo for a teenager to express such negativity, it is now largely accepted among online emo communities. To explore the evolution of emo I have reviewed the different theories behind youth cultures to determine a way to present them. Through the influence of the music, media and Internet a new way of deploying the idea of subculture emerged, one that integrated concepts from scene, lifestyle and neo-tribe to include, rather than ignore stylistic motivations.

The Internet

One of the most important aspects of modern subcultures is the incorporation of the Internet. It allows anyone anywhere with access to the online world a doorway into a world that they may not have known about otherwise. There is an anonymity that is provided in the online realm that is not afforded in the street. You can say what you want when you want and leave it all under a guise. 'On the internet, the constant blur of opinions, attitudes, feelings and identities never ceases, never bogs down in the mail or in print. It simply exists, and when it doesn't, something new had long since taken its place' (Greenwald 2003, p.284). The Internet is fleeting; it is not set in stone, though nothing is ever truly deleted, but it can be participated in and then walked away from, which can be seen through a number of posts in forums that are now listed under "deleted member". It is this ambiguity and flexibility that makes participation in online cultures worthwhile. Particularly for young people the emo-dedicated websites provide a platform where they are encouraged to use a pseudonym for protection, an important concession particularly following cases such as that of Carly

Ryan, and also an inclusive environment where young people from around the world can gather together to discuss music, personal issues and introduce their writings to the world. Online spaces allow for the longevity of subcultures. When the groupings have diffused and defused from the street they can turn to the Internet to continue to practise the ideology and core ideals of the subculture.

The Bands

Like any other subculture the bands and the music emo produced are an integral part of emo culture. As shown through the different waves of emo, a diversity of musical styles have been incorporated and embraced by young people who participate in the emo ideology. It is at this stage that emo can be seen as a scene; the older generation of emos were entrenched in the music, bringing people together and allowing them a space to interact with others who shared their passion for the musical style. The aesthetic appearance of the third wave bands meant they were labelled emo while they vehemently denied such associations. This denial could be due to the various connotations that were not activities they wanted to be engaged in, such as self-harm and suicide. Although there were only a minority of cases of self-harm, such as Hannah Bond, whether they were independent of the emo grouping or not they were labelled as such. Although it is hard to define a particular style of music that is associated with the emo culture, there are common elements amongst some of the music that draws it together. It is emotive, in that it is revealing and honest of inner emotions, it incorporates screaming, a deep-throated noise that adds a different harmony, and it is relatable; the audience can see themselves and their life experiences in the lyrics. Bands such as AFI, Fall Out Boy and My Chemical Romance all shared similar aesthetic appearances but had differing sounds, with AFI incorporating rock and Fall Out Boy having a pop-punk sound. No matter whether bands situate themselves within the grouping or not, the fans do and this allows them to experience a sense of belonging.

What Role does the Media Play?

With the availability and accessibility of a variety of different technologies, society is now flooded by media reports from professional journalists as well as citizen media which means that the professional media does not hold the power it once did in terms of ‘getting the news to the people’. It is impossible to travel anywhere in the Western

world without being inundated with images or stories composed by the media. As Paul Walton explains,

> the media have powerful and often negative cultural effects ... it is via the generation of mass images of youth, the provision of real and fictional role models for youth, and in the endless celebration and labelling of youth, that there occurs exactly at this point in contemporary culture the translation of fantasy into reality (2006, p.61).

The media can create an image of young people and portray that image to the rest of society to a point where that image is believed whether it is true or not.

The media created an image of emos in newspapers which was predominantly negative: 'The media, in producing a constant flow of its commercialised imaginary fictions and in its stereotypical news coverage, socially constructs a moral and narrative set of offerings upon which young people attempt to build their identities and measure their achievements and personal worth' (Walton 2006, p.61). As I previously suggested, although the subculture has existed since the 1980s, the 'new generation' of emos can learn how to be emo from reading media stories, whether positive or negative, because they are being flooded with them; they are impossible to escape. Young people thrive on contradictions, both in style and in their lives. As Walton further explains, they can be 'deviant and expressive, rebellious yet conformist and creative yet consumerist' (2006, p.62). This summary can be used to describe most youth, particularly emos. They are creative, which can be seen through their choice of hairstyles and body modifications, yet they are consumerist in their need to consume new music, new clothing, new media and so on. They are rebellious and deviant, not conforming to the social norm, yet they are expressive and creative in their appearance and in their personas, writing music lyrics and poetry as well as other creative outputs. News stories demonstrate these contradictions:

> News and documentary discourses normally construct the ugly troubled side of youth culture, while in complete contradiction and contrast the MTV shows and advertisements (Coke, Doc martens, etc) all seem to paint youthful hedonism as a playful, classless, harmless, normal fun loving moment of life (Walton 2006, p.62).

For emos this could be seen very clearly through the mainstream media's news story portrayals, as I have discussed using cases such as Carly Ryan, Stephanie Gestier, Jodie Gater, Hannah Bond and the cases in Iraq and Mexico. There were positive

stories written in music magazines, in the social media and reported on certain TV shows. The dichotomy between these different formats was evidence of the different ways in which emo culture was reported. They are pulled between what they should be and what they should not be which is a result of the period of time in which they were created.

> Subcultures are predominantly formed in periods of time when youth unemployment is high and they are caught between the ideology of spectacular consumption promoted by the mass media and the traditional ideology of capitalism and the meritocratic work ethic. This is the magic of subculture. It is formed in the interaction between these different pulls. The subcultural response can be seen as an identity-seeking reaction between the polar opposite of postwar consumption where: 'he can't be a man 'cause he don't smoke the same cigarettes as me'. While these subcultural responses take differing forms of dress, drugs, drinks, style and music, each is an attempt to create some symbolic meaning for self. (Walton 2006, p.62)

Subcultures are formed in a time of societal conflict for youth as a response to their surroundings, whether it be political, financial or another social disruption. They will form as a result of dichotomy: 'I am what I am because it is what they are not'. Being an emo is providing a place for today's youth to take refuge *in* online media, rather than trying to escape from it, to find their creativity and be able to express it with a form of anonymity that they cannot receive in their everyday lives. Those who are participating in the subculture in the street are able to express their identity; however, there are limitations on what they are able to do without being critiqued by other members of society.

The Magical Resolution

Through the use of the Internet to practice subcultural identity, emo spread across the globe, opening discussion of the ideology and the openness and honesty the grouping allowed. Since the term teenager has been in use there has been a perception that they should be happy and content; however, I have suggested here that teenagers go through the seven stages of grieving as any person who has lost a loved one or experienced a severe loss would attest to. Emo offers a magical resolution to the grief involved in being a teenager. It gives young people a launch pad to express their inner emotions to their peers no matter the theme. Through the use of song lyrics, poetry, drawings, blogs and forum postings young people are able to express themselves

artistically and emotionally without the judgement that exposing themselves in this way may have. As seen through the examples of Iraq and Mexico the term emo is applied to young people who are not part of the subculture but are labelled or have qualities of what is believed to be emo, that is, effeminate males or homosexuality. Through negative experiences such as the murder and targeted harm of these young people denial began to spread about any association with the group. As it grew and became more popular and lost its intimacy, emo began to diffuse and defuse into mainstream fashion.

Future Research Possibilities

The emo culture opens the door for various research studies. There are many facets of emo culture that have not been explored in this thesis that could enhance the field. With any research project there is further research that could take place to enhance the field. In this thesis I have looked at music, the waves of emo, a single case study of moral panic and how the Internet has utilised by young people. Further research could investigate the history of the aesthetic, including different styles of clothing between generations and even sub-groups of each generation, hair styles, make up use and what this represents in more detail and what it represents as well as the different sub-types of emo. As discussed, aesthetic is an important part of any youth culture and being able to understand the reasons behind it enhances the understanding behind the grouping. Conducting interviews with people who have transitioned through emo would also give a different perspective.

Emo has provided an important platform and space for today's young people. Even for those who did not participate in the grouping, the impact can still be felt. There is more of an acceptance of piercings and tattoos, traits of music-loving emos, the clothing styles that share traits with modern subcultures such as scene kids or gothic lolita or visual kei, groupings based in Japan where young people wear uniforms during the week and practice their individual styles on the weekends. What emo gave young people through three waves was a place to belong and be heard where they may not have been without the grouping. With the introduction of the Internet the group grew and spread across the globe to different variations in different countries. The bands had mass followings, even though they denied any association with the emo. What I have explored and suggested in this thesis is that emo was and is

important to those who find belonging in participation and a ‘magical resolution’ within its community. Emo allows for escapism and a sense of connectedness that may not be otherwise supplied. What began as an underground subculture in the 1980s emerged above ground, which allowed countless young people to embrace a style of clothing and music that allowed them to be themselves. Like Alice finding her confidence in the Red Queen’s courtroom, so have young people been given a space to find their confidence and a sense of belonging.

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Appendix One:

Australian Media Coverage of Carly Ryan Case

Key 1: Edition types	
SE	State edition
ME	Metro edition
SUBED	Subscriber edition

Key 2: Article themes	Topic
Pre-trial	PE
Music	M
Social networking	SN
Trial	T
Technology	TECH

Author	**Edition**	**Topic**	**Title**	**Date**	**Page**	**Publication**
Joanna Vaughan	SE		Mystery of woman washed on to beach	21 February 2007	9	The Advertiser
Chris Salter, Tom Zed, Ben Way	SE	PT	Parents' heartbreak over dead teen	22 February 2007	1	The Advertiser
Christ Salter, Tom Zed, Ben Way	SE	PT	Parents' anguish over teen's death	22 February 2007	4 (cont, from 1)	The Advertiser
Bryan Littlely, Chris Salter, Kim Wheatley	SE	PT	Net hunt for murder clues	23 February 2007	1	The Advertiser
Joanna Vaughan	SE		Poetry, music tributes for a beautiful friend	23 February 2007	5	The Advertiser
Joanna Vaughan	SE	PT	Internet hunt for Carly murder clues	23 February 2007	4	The Advertiser

Danielle O'Donohue	SE	PT	Pain and darkness in 'emo' dwellers world	23 February 2007	5	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED	SE	PT	Website's grim images	23 February 2007	5	The Advertiser
Bryan Littlely, Michael Owen, Kim Wheatley	ME	PT	Carly Ryan's final hours	24 February 2007	1	The Advertiser
Brian Littlely, Michael Owen, Kim Wheatley	SE	PT	Carly Ryan's final hours	24 February 2007	1	The Advertiser
Bryan Littlely, Michael Owen and Kim Wheatley	SE	PT	Witnesses tell of Carly's final hours	24 February 2007	15	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED	SE	PT	Gothic images appealed to artistic soul	24 February 2007	15	The Advertiser
Tom Zed	SE	M	Tribute gig for selfless friend	24 February 2007	15	The Advertiser
Kate Kyriacou			Plea to trace Carly last days	25 February 2007	9	Sunday Mail
NO AUTHOR LISTED			Carly Ryan murder police set up booths	26 February 2007		The Advertiser
Joanna Vaughan	SE	PT	Plea for help in Carly case	27 February 2007	3	The Advertiser
Chris Salter	SE	SN	Carly and mum in MySpace contact	28 February 2007	13	The Advertiser

Chris Salter	SE	PT	Murder hunt, trail of clues includes mystery men, subculture and websites Who knows the truth about Carly?	3 March 2007	26–27	The Advertiser
Nigel Hunt, Kate Kyriacou			Teen murder breakthrough Carly arrests swoop nets man, 48, youth, 17, in Melbourne	4 March 2007	1	Sunday Mail
NO AUTHOR LISTED			Baring our lives online (Editorial)	4 March 2007	39	Sunday Mail
Kim Wheatley, Chris Salter	SE	PT	How police tracked Carly suspects	5 March 2007	1	The Advertiser
Kim Wheatley, Chris Salter	SE	PT	Carly suspects tracked down	5 March 2007	4 (cont from 1)	The Advertiser
Kim Wheatley, Chris Salter	SE	PT	A coke and window seat, accused teen killer flies in	6 March 2007	7	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED	SE	PT	Witness evidence key to Carly murder case	7 March 2007	6	The Advertiser
Sam Riches, Ben Way	SE	PT	Farewell to my love, my world, my precious baby girl	10 March 2007	15	The Advertiser
Nigel Hunt	SE		So giving – just a lovely, lovely girl: Protect your kids at any cost, pleads grieving Mum	18 March 2007	4–5	The Sunday Mail
Sam Riches			Three months later, detectives seek clues	1 June 2007	5	The Advertiser
San Riches			Detectives seek cloths clues in Carly's death	1 June 2007	5	The Advertiser

Sean Fewster			Carly case extends to US	8 June 2007	32	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED			Computers examined	3 August 2007	13	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Pallaras returns to courtroom	4 August 2007	39	The Advertiser
Andrew Dowdell			Carly case teen in court	30 November 2007	38	The Advertiser
John Masanauska, Carly Crawford			Imposter who took on life of a killer	22 December 2007	4	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED			COURTS Carly case is closer to trial	22 February 2008	8	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED			Teen in court Ryan case	2 May 2008	21	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			600 days Carly Ryan murder accused yet to enter pleas delays stump trial	16 October 2008	5	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED			Murder teen ‘should be tried as adult’	28 October 2008	12	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			After 660 days, judge loses his patience	18 December 2008	25	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Murder case in court at last	31 January 2009	31	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Murder accused face court together	10 February 2009	15	The Advertiser
Gavin Lower and Pia Akerman		PT	Teen killed after meet father, son on goth website	20 October 2009	3	The Australian
Sean Fewster	SUBE	PT	How internet phantom trapped	20 October	1	The Advertiser

			Carly Ryan: Lured to death by cyber 'lover'	2009		
Sean Fewster	SUBE	PT	Carly Ryan's love was nothing more than an online phony who would ultimately lead her to death	20 October 2009	6–7	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	PT	Court hears Carly was bashed, then drowned	21 October 2009	15	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	PT	Carly's body found during a daily stroll	22 October 2009	15	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	PT	The day Victor stood still	23 October 2009	4	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	PT	He wanted her email, Carly's friend testifies	24 October 2009	4	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	PT	I watched her turn to 'dark art' on the web	27 October 2009	9	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	PT	Suspect's power over Carly	28 October 2009	4	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	ME	PT	Carly's mum in email abuse	29 October 2009	23	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED	SE	PT	Carly seen with men witnesses	10 November 2009	4	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED	SE	PT	Ryan beaten, court told	12 November 2009	16	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Carly found just after death	13 November 2009	31	The Advertiser

Ken McGregor and Jordanna Schriever	SE	PT	Father wanted to 'blame his son'	23 November 2009	21	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED			Paid had multiple accounts	26 November 2009	6	The Advertiser
Jordanna Schriever	SE	PT	Son told about kill plan in car	28 November 2009	23	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	ME	PT	My father admitted he had done the job	8 December 2009	5	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	PT	Son 'warned off' by accused killer	9 December 2009	19	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	ME	PT	'Conspiracy' to blame dad in Carly case	10 December 2009	17	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	I was like a step dad to Carly	5 January 2009	9	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	I'm no sicko, just wary of the net, says accused dad	6 January 2010	18–19	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Carly accused planned to expose net	7 January 2010	24	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Guilty pleas to protect son	8 January 2010	28	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED	SE	T	Alleged killer's 'lust for teen'	12 January 2010	4	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED	SE	T	Carly claims now denied	13 January 2010	3	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Accused son keeps silent	14 January 2010	27	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Central issue not sex	15 January 2010	10	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Father 'used son's	16 January	16	The

			ID to lure teenager'	2010		Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Three years after her death, can Carly Ryan finally rest in peace?	21 January 2010	5	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SUBED	T	Killer hides behind his son	22 January 2010	1	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SUBED	T	Carly's killer hides identity behind his son	22 January 2010	4 (cont from 1)	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	ME	T	A loving girl who fell prey to online predator	23 January 2010	1	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	ME	T	The real Carly Ryan	23 January 2010	8–11	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Pallaras stays silent on Ryan murder trial	27 January 2010	17	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	TECH	Senator calls for web patrol	30 January 2010	10	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	TECH	Carly Ryan's grieving mother has vowed to lead a campaign against online predators; I won't let Carly's death be in vain	30 January 2010	11	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Carly's mum is online and helping	5 February 2010	16	The Advertiser
Jordana Scriever			Court to consider naming Carly killer	27 February 2010	24	The Advertiser
Miles Kemp			Police fears on new law	6 March 2010	15	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Carly's killer found guilty of murder – and now he confesses; 'He lied, lied and lied, and now he wants mercy? What a	20 March 2010	5	The Advertiser

			monster.’			
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Bid to shield son of Carly’s killer	27 March 2010	27	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE		Sex, murder on his mind	1 April 2010	14–15	The Advertiser
Nick Leys	SE		Killer’s ex-wife speaks about her abuse; Married to a monster	2 April 2010	7	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Carly killer’s bid to clear name	13 April 2010	20	The Advertiser
Callie Watson, Sean Fewster	SE	TECH	Protect your kids – be their friends	18 May 2010	15	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED			Online dangers still all too real	5 July 2010	20	The Advertiser
Miles Kemp			Facebook child threat	2 August 2010	11	The Advertiser
Miles Kemp			Cyber police hit firewall	2 August 2010	11	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Carly inspires safer net for kids	13 August 2010	32	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Carly’s killer allowed to appeal	18 August 2010	15	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED	N/A		Crusade for Carly Concert Flyer	5–11 August 2010	17	Rip It Up
Jordanna Schriever	SE	T	Carly’s killer launches appeal	23 September 2010	6	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	I can’t allow Carly’s death to be in vain	13 November 2010	58–59	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Carly Ryan murder appeal; Confession a mistake says lawyer	17 December 2010	29	The Advertiser
Sarah Martin			How Sonya helps stop net perverts	4 February 2011	26	The Advertiser

Emily Watkins			Sexually explicit chat prompts warning from safety crusader; Bullies target teens on site	13 February 2011	11	Sunday Mail
Sean Fewster	SE		Carly's legacy goes global	15 March 2011	11	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	'Peace for Carly' after appeal lost	30 April 2011	34	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE	T	Carly killer's son charged	2 September 2011	1 (continued page 8)	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	SE		My son's no sex fiend, pleads mum	16 September 2011	26	The Advertiser
NO AUTHOR LISTED		T	Carly killer's son accused of stalking	29 October 2011	5	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster	ME	T	Carly killer's son faces stalking trial	13 January 2012	25	The Advertiser
Miles Kemp			Senate defeats Carly's law	23 August 2012	29	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Internet safety campaigner nominated for top national honour says ... I do it only to save kids	2 November 2012	11	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Carly's Law will catch liars	21 January 2013	7	The Advertiser
Sean Fewster			Ryan in need of help with message	21 January 2013	7	The Advertiser
Katrina Stokes		TECH	App to snap stalkers	22 January 2013	10	The Advertiser