

SOMEDAY: “WOULDN’T IT BE NICE”

by

JESSICA SAWREY

(Under the Direction of NATHANIEL KOHN)

ABSTRACT

What are love, happiness, and youth? Can a song help answer these questions? This thesis explores the connection between the consumption of popular music and the process of performing my self(s), my realities, my desires. Using the work of Roland Barthes, Simon Frith, Richard Schechner, Hélène Cixous and others, this autoethnographic textual performance explores how popular music, with its embodied hegemonic meta-narratives and mechanisms of social control, becomes somehow necessary, even desirable, to the process of performing my everyday life. Through the reflexive writing process in which I interact with my journals, songs, boy friends, theorists, supermarkets, music, mirrors, the mysteries of travel, and my various writerly selves, I strive to deconstruct the elusive affectations of youth, love and happiness as gifted to me in the Beach Boys’ “Wouldn’t It Be Nice.”

INDEX WORDS: Autoethnography, Performance, Popular Music, Beach Boys

SOMEDAY: “WOULDN’T IT BE NICE”

by

JESSICA SAWREY

B.A., The Ohio State University, 2001

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2004

© 2004

Jessica Sawrey

All Rights Reserved

SOMEDAY: "WOULDN'T IT BE NICE"

by

JESSICA SAWREY

Major Professor: Nathaniel Kohn

Committee: Elizabeth Lester Roushanzamir
Dwight Brooks

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2004

DEDICATION

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of my parents. I owe you everything. Thank you. I love you. Hope you like it.

And for Jason, two songs:

There are places I remember
All my life though some have changed
Some forever, not for better
Some have gone and some remain

All these places have their moments
With lovers and friends I still can recall
Some are dead and some are living
In my life I've loved them all

But of all these friends and lovers
There is no one compares with you
And these memories lose their meaning
When I think of love as something new

Though I know I'll never lose affection
For people and things that went before
I know I'll often stop and think about them
In my life I love you more

Though I remember I'll never lose affection
For people and things that went before
I know I'll often stop and think about them
In my life I'll love you more

In my life I'll love you more
"In My Life" (Lennon/McCartney) on *Rubber Soul*

and...

I believe when I fall in love with you
it will be forever
I believe when I fall in love this time
it will be forever
From Stevie Wonder's "I Believe" on the soundtrack to *High Fidelity*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are *gifted* to Dr. Kohn for his help, time, comments, conversation, and patience. Enjoy the cupcakes!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS	12
3 12 STORIES	27
4 REFLECTIONS/CONSTRUCTIONS.....	64
REFERENCES	67
APPENDIX.....	72

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My friends have always told me that I think too much. I can't seem to help it. I've always read into things, tried to make them more than they appeared. I am always sure that there is *something* beyond the words/images/actions. And, indeed, there always is.

When I arrived at the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication in August of 2002, I was determined to stop thinking and start doing. I was going to become practical, going to become qualified to do some sort of job and enter the working world upon graduation. But soon it became apparent that I'd never be able to write in the inverted pyramid style or construct one-sentence paragraphs. I need explanations.

Barthes wrote literature is the question minus the answer. Then where are the answers if not in literature? Maybe just this once, Barthes was wrong. Maybe the answers really are in the mass media. And maybe the answers the media gives us lead to more questions. So, maybe Barthes is always right.

But a lack of answers never stopped me from asking questions. I often find myself wondering why I think the way I do. Why do I want certain things? How did I come to frame certain desires, such as happiness, love, and youth, in certain ways? Where did I get the images on which I model my daydreams?

To paraphrase Nick Hornby from his novel, *High Fidelity*, which came first, the music or me? Do I listen to pop music because I'm me? Or is me a byproduct of pop music?¹ Certainly, it is not simply one or the other. Popular music, and everything that that sloppy term encompasses, has played a central role in my development, how I construct my world and myself. My outlook is not solely based on the countless songs that I have listened to, but as Simon Frith (1996) wrote, I am only where the music has taken me.

You've got to keep in mind love is here today and it's gone tomorrow...²

In October, less than two months after my arrival in Athens, Jason came to visit. Really, he came to break up with me, to tell me he was not in love with me anymore. I felt like I was sinking. There were times when I considered dropping out, but the one thing I've always been good at was school. And since I was no longer Jason's girlfriend, since I was no longer someone who was loved, I had to cling to something, some identity. Being a student seemed to be the obvious choice.

Toward the midpoint of fall semester 2002, I needed to come up with a topic for my final project for the Proseminar in Mass Communication. I was at a loss; nothing seemed to matter anymore. I did not care about anything. I was just going through the motions, going to class and sleeping as much as I could manage. There was always music playing in an effort to take myself

¹ From Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity* published in 1996. Original text: "What came first, the music or the misery? People worry about kids playing with guns, or watching violent videos, that some sort of culture of violence will take them over. Nobody worries about kids listening to thousands, literally thousands of songs about heartbreak, rejection, pain, misery and loss. Did I listen to pop music because I was miserable? Or was I miserable because I listened to pop music?"

² A line from "Here Today" on *Pet Sounds*.

away to somewhere else. So, I decided to write about the music I was listening to,³ choosing the Beach Boys and how their music applied to the myth of sunny, youthful, prosperous California.⁴

After fighting it for months, and through several projects on the Beach Boys, I finally gave in: this thesis had become about me, it had become me. Suddenly it felt right. This was personal. At Dr. Kohn's suggestion I narrowed the focus to one song. I chose "Wouldn't It Be Nice." The meaning of this song was personal. Not textual. I wanted to explore how this song made me want to be happy, hope for love and feel eternally youthful. This project is about a struggle to understand what I desire and who I desire to be, how Tony Asher turned Brian Wilson's⁵ (and my) sentiment into a beautiful song that continued the long and winding narrative of love, happiness, and youthful longing, which kept me hoping for *someday*.

³ The Beach Boys were not the only group I was listening to. There were lots of others (Ryan Adams, Fleetwood Mac, Weezer, The Clash, the Smiths....), most of which aren't nearly as sunny as the Beach Boys and I wanted a project that was sunny.

⁴ This thesis started a year and a half ago as a textual analysis of Beach Boys music and how their songs influenced the perception of California. I wanted to look at the popular culture of the era and talk about socio-economics, political actions and the space of California, as constructed in the songs. And then I read *Cambodia: A Book for People Who Find Television Too Slow*. And then I wanted to add a subtext that played with the text, talked to it, but functioned on its own. And then I became obsessed with doing an autoethnography. I wanted to do everything. Suddenly, my thesis was going in eight different directions, being assembled with various methodologies in mind and guided by several epistemological and ontological assumptions. At some point I had to choose. And then, even after I chose, *my* project continued to evolve without my permission, morphing into an exercise in writing my self using the popular culture that has dominated my life.

⁵ Beach Boy Brian Wilson wrote, arranged and produced the music for "Wouldn't It Be Nice." Tony Asher wrote the lyrics. See below for more information.

*I've got the music in me.*⁶

I've done some thinking about why I ended up writing about the Beach Boys and "Wouldn't It Be Nice" in particular. I have always been a Beach Boys fan, not fanatical but I enjoy the music. Growing up, I listened to the oldies station and it seemed perfectly normal to know all the words to songs that were released 25-30 years ago.⁷

There was always something so hopeful and fun about the oldies (at least those on the radio-generally folk, protest and psychedelic music hadn't made it into the oldies format in West Virginia at that time). I assume the programmers wanted the baby boomers to think fondly of the past and connect those feelings to the radio station. So they chose songs that had made them smile, were the soundtracks for their high school slow dances, slumber parties, or driving down the road on sunny days.⁸ And I feel the same way that boomers feel about those oldies.⁹

⁶ Sung by Heart on their 1978 release, *Magazine*, although the Kiki Dee version is probably more famous. Partial lyrics: "Ain't got no trouble in my life. No foolish dream to make me cry...I've got the music in me... I got words in my head so I sing them. Don't let life get me down. I can't hold onto the blues so I play them...I've got the music in me..."

⁷ Living in West Virginia, there is not much choice as far as radio stations (and, well, everything else) goes. My parents don't like country and they stopped having an interest in contemporary music around 1975. So, at least while I was trapped in the car with them, that left the oldies.

⁸ It really freaks me out that the music released when I was a kid, when jelly bracelets, skirts with three tiers of pink, purple and blue ruffles, and neon socks ruled, is now making its way to the oldies stations. It seems like time is speeding up. And I suppose that just like the early Beatles get more airplay than Jefferson Airplane, "Walking on Sunshine" (one of my all-time least favorite 80s songs) by whoever (does it really matter?) will get way more airplay than "What I Am" by Edie Brickell. It's a selective memory process.

⁹ At times I really wished I had grown up then. The early sixties always *seemed* like the very last time when kids were young. And then innocence seemed to die. But those songs, the ones the programmers chose to represent the decades (1950s and '60s back when I was a frequent oldies listener), made me wish I had been doing the mashed potato at school dance or sitting on the living room floor, six inches from the

Long after their original recordings, these songs have also gotten tangled up in my childhood. They have become part of how I remember being young. My youth was spent listening to the songs of my parents' youth.¹⁰ Just as oldies radio programmers probably choose their songs to remind the aging of the magic of youth, I also seemed to turn to the music of my childhood, to help understand the now and make me smile. And Beach Boys music is so sunny, so full of carefree happiness. That was exactly how I wanted to feel last autumn (and winter and spring and summer). I wanted to escape what I was living. I wanted to hope for *someday* and "Wouldn't It Be Nice" seemed like the perfect ticket there.

Maybe if we think and wish and hope and pray it might come true.¹¹

I don't remember the first time I heard "Wouldn't It Be Nice" but I'm sure it was on the car stereo. Even though my parents have a fairly extensive record collection, music came from the radio.¹² While most of *Pet Sounds* never gets airplay, "Wouldn't It Be Nice" is radio friendly. It satisfies the helpfulness and fun quotient that programmers want to play and listeners want to

TV screen watching the Beatles perform on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. The images just seemed magical. Like anything was possible. And really, isn't that how I want to feel?

¹⁰ I'm sure there is plenty of research on this 'empty' nostalgia, this longing for a past that I never lived. Yet these songs were part of my life, and were the soundtrack to my experiences as well as my parents.' I have tons of memories of being in the car listening to the radio or my best friend, Stace, and I competing at SongBurst to decide who knew the most lyrics to obscure bubblegum pop songs. So, it's not really empty. It's just been removed from the original context.

¹¹ A line from my favorite Beach Boys' song, "Wouldn't It Be Nice."

¹² When we moved into my parents' current house, mom and dad left the turntable and their record collections in the basement, which was kids' territory. Sometimes my friends and I would play *Beach Boy's Party!* or *Summer Days (and Summer Nights!)*, but I don't even know if they own *Pet Sounds*. I certainly would hope so. I didn't hear the album in its entirety until fall of 2002, once I had already become interested in this project.

hear. Though I don't hear it as often as the earlier sun-fun stuff, "Wouldn't It Be Nice" is a nice bridge to the more thoughtful side of the Beach Boys (Brian Wilson).

I'm not sure there was a particular infatuation with this song when I was younger. I always liked it, but never really thought about it. Like most things, I just absorbed it into the depths of my mind and stored it for later.

I bought my first Beach Boys CDs in high school. They were greatest hits packages. I mostly listened to Volume One, which included the surfing/hot-rodding anthems. "Wouldn't It Be Nice" was on Volume Two. In college, I often studied listening to Volume 2. The melodies were beautiful, flowing from one song to the next so there were no perceptible breaks to distract me and fewer songs that I felt compelled to sing along with.

While "Wouldn't It Be Nice" has not always been at the forefront of my mind, its ideal image (the desire for *someday*, to be happy and in love) has always been in there. And when I arrived at the University of Georgia, I had it, or at least was hanging on to it. My relationship was unraveling and all I wanted was the happily ever after that I was desperately clinging to. But I heard the doubts in my mind, felt him pulling away, knowing that *someday* was slipping further from my grasp. And then it did end. And I was heart-broken and miserable. All I wanted was sunshine and goodnight kisses. "Wouldn't It Be Nice" is part of the realization of what I desire to be and that I wanted what the voice from the stereo wanted.

If everybody had an ocean...¹³

There is little academic work on the Beach Boys outside musicology, which focuses on the technical aspects of the music, the sound, the notes and chords, and the study of "music genius" as it is often applied to Brian Wilson. However, as David Leaf (1993) explains, there is

¹³ Opening line to the Beach Boys hit, "Surfin' U.S.A."

no denying the impact the Beach Boys have had on the music industry and American popular culture:

In the 1960s, the Beach Boys created a body of work so commercially and artistically valuable that their records would simultaneously solidify rock's importance in the marketplace, confirm its validity as an art form, and challenge and overturn the conventions that governed the music business. And most remarkably almost all of that music was written, arranged, and produced by a just-out-of-his-teens Brian Wilson (p.8).

Despite the lack of academic writing on the Beach Boys, there is an abundance of biographical sources. These books (Granata, 2003; Leaf, 1978; White, 1994) trace the history of the Beach Boys, their personal lives, their public personas, the recordings and successes, as well as money, drug and relationship issues the band faced. *Add Some Music to Your Day*, edited by Cunningham and Bleiel (2000), is a compilation of essays, articles and reviews previously published in the Beach Boys fanzine of the same name. Most Beach Boys literature has been written by fans and there is no attempt to hide their love of Brian Wilson's music.

The Beach Boys¹⁴ began by playing local high school pep rallies and assemblies in Hawthorne, California, a suburb of Los Angeles, and ended up becoming one of the most successful and influential vocal groups in American music history. They produced music that

¹⁴ The principle members of the Beach Boys are brothers Brian, Carl and Dennis Wilson, their cousin Mike Love and school friend, Al Jardine. In the early days, David Marks sat in for Jardine, when his family moved to Michigan. In 1962, Jardine returned and Marks quit. Following Brian's breakdown and decision not to tour with the group, studio guitarist Glen Campbell filled in for him on the road. Within months he stepped down and Bruce Johnston of the Beach Boys sound-alike group Bruce and Terry became Brian's permanent replacement. Both Carl and Dennis Wilson have passed away. Dennis, the only Beach Boy that actually surfed and truly lived the beach life they celebrated in their music, drowned in 1985. Carl lost his battle with lung cancer in 1998. In 1999, Brian began a solo tour, while Mike Love toured with the "official" Beach Boys and Al Jardine played shows with the Beach Boys Family.

made legions of teenagers wish they lived in California. Generations later, many people still think of California in terms of the sun, surf, and hotrods of their early songs. In 1961 they recorded the demo for “Surfin’,” which became a local hit. In 1962 they released *Surfin’ Safari*, which went Top 20 and helped launch the surf music/culture craze. Suddenly, the Beach Boys and their California sound were the hottest things on the Billboard Charts.

Between 1962 and 1966, prior to the release of *Pet Sounds*, the Beach Boys capitalized on their sun and fun image charting 18 singles in the Billboard Top 40, all celebrating the youthful, leisurely California lifestyle.¹⁵ These hits, including the number ones, “I Get Around” and “Help Me, Rhonda,” were written, produced, sung, played, and arranged by Brian Wilson. Over these years his skills as an arranger and producer increased dramatically as he scrutinized the work of Phil Spector and his “Wall of Sound”¹⁶ concept.

In 1965, the Beatles¹⁷ released *Rubber Soul*, which challenged Brian to explore musically, try new instrumental combinations, and produce a solid album of good material.¹⁸ In the winter of 1966, while the rest of the band was on tour, Brian and studio musicians recorded

¹⁵ This number does not include such well-known Beach Boys staples as “409,” “Surfin’,” and “Wendy,” which stalled at #76, #75, and #44 respectively. Chart information comes from allmusic.com.

¹⁶ Brian was simply amazed by Spector’s technique of layering vocals and instrumentation to create a rich, multidimensional effect. The Ronettes’ “Be My Baby,” produced using the “Wall of Sound,” is Brian’s favorite song of all time (Granata, 2003). “Good Vibrations,” Brian’s “pocket symphony” and the Beach Boys third number one single, released in 1966 after *Pet Sounds*, is considered the pinnacle of this technique.

¹⁷ The Beach Boys were in constant competition with (and admiration of) the Beatles. As soon as the Beatles came to America, Brian felt challenged. In response to the more introspective *Rubber Soul*, Brian bared his soul in *Pet Sounds*, which is said to have inspired the Beatles concept album, *St. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

¹⁸ Brian is often quoted as saying that he set out to record the best album ever made (Granata, 2003; Leaf, 1978; White, 1994).

Pet Sounds.¹⁹ Despite placing five singles in the Top 40, with “Sloop John B.” reaching the #3 spot, the album was not considered a commercial success in America. Fans recoiled from the introspective ballads, wanting more fun/sun tunes. However, it received critical praise, and today it is hailed as one of the most influential pop albums ever produced.²⁰

Timothy White (1994) writes,

Pet Sounds was to be an analysis of romance, centering on the theme of a young man growing into manhood, falling in love and longing for an ideal relationship and forsaking the worth of the flawed ones, all the while on a forlorn, almost picaresque quest for the reasons behind his emotional restlessness (p. 254).

Fueled by thoughts and emotions, Tony Asher’s²¹ lyrics and Brian Wilson’s music on *Pet Sounds* were more introspective, more personal than those the Beach Boys had previously released. They speak of youth and innocence, love gained and love lost with ease and

¹⁹ Brian increasingly used studio musicians to record the instrumental portion. His arrangements had become so complicated, involving dozens of instruments (and makeshift instruments) that they were beyond the musical ability of the other Beach Boys. When the group returned from the tour, they recorded the vocal tracks.

²⁰ “So is *Pet Sounds*’ greatness based on its reputation as a concept album, or on the exceptional cohesiveness of the melody, lyrics, performance, and production? The beauty of *Pet Sounds* is that each listener can correctly draw his or her own conclusion-which is how it ought to be” (Granata, 2003, p.89).

²¹ Brian, in a crunch from the studio to get out new product, called Tony Asher, who he had never previously worked with, to help him find the words to go with his music. As jingle and copy writer for Carson/Roberts advertising agency, Asher had experience taking the clients wishes and ideas and turning them into artful copy. Wilson chose Asher to be the principle lyrical collaborator on *Pet Sounds* because he wanted a fresh voice. When Brian asked Asher to be his lyricist for *Pet Sounds*, he told him, “We’re not going to do typical Beach Boys songs, so forget anything that comes to your mind when you think of one” (Granata, 2003, p.77).

intelligence. “Brian Wilson and Tony Asher constructed songs that made every man’s emotions accessible” (Granata, 2003, p. 87).

*I wish that every kiss was neverending.*²²

“Wouldn’t It Be Nice” is the first track on the Beach Boys revolutionary 1966 album, *Pet Sounds*.²³ It was issued as the A-side of a single with “God Only Knows.” Due to the B-side’s praise as “the best pop song ever written,”²⁴ “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” receives little more than cursory attention in most literature.

The flow of *Pet Sounds* follows the emotional course of a boy falling in love and then being disillusioned by that love. As the opening track, “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” captures the optimism and innocence, the “crushlike captivation”²⁵ of the early stages of love. Its “quirky effervescence announces the cheerful tone of the song while setting the stage for the album’s complexity....” (Granata, 2003, p. 145).

The lyrics, penned almost entirely by Tony Asher,²⁶ express the romanticism of young love and the happiness it brings. The vocals go back and forth, from declarative to speculative tones, conveying the unknown possibilities of *someday*, the hope and the longing that come with

²² A line from “Wouldn’t It Be Nice.”

²³ *Pet Sounds* is considered to be the first concept album, which helped shift the recording industry’s emphasis from singles to LPs. *Pet Sounds* is also often cited for its high quality production.

²⁴ Paul McCartney has often said that “God Only Knows” is the best pop song ever written and it brings him to tears (This story appears in the liner notes of the reissued version of *Pet Sounds*, as well as the Biography Channel’s biography of Brian Wilson). McCartney includes *Pet Sounds* one of his favorite records as well as an inspiration for *St. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*. “I love the album so much. I’ve bought my kids each a copy of it for their education in life- I figure no one is educated musically ‘till they’ve heard that album” (Granata, 2003, p.196).

²⁵ From White, 1994, p. 255.

²⁶ The lyrics to “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” are mostly Asher’s work, with the only background “Good night, my baby, Sleep tight, my baby” supplied by Mike Love (Granata, 2003).

new love. Dennis Wilson sings his part through cupped hands, hushed, like he's whispering advice to the young couple (Granata, 2003; White, 1994). The song manages to balance the sweet pop lyrics that Beach Boys fans were accustomed to while exploring different sounds and instrumentation (accordions, a string section) to create a rich, layered effect.

When I listen to "Wouldn't It Be Nice," there seems to be optimism in my heart that makes me feel like anything is possible.²⁷ Why did I choose this one song to be the focus of my thesis? It's an ideal, my ideal. I really wish life was like a Beach Boys song. My favorite Beach Boys song is "Wouldn't It Be Nice" and this thesis is a journey to figure out why. Why do I love it? What effect has this relationship with this song had on me? Has it been internalized and made part of who I am, who I desire to be?

²⁷ Which is exactly how I want to feel.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

Performing Everyday Life

According to Richard Schechner (2002), there are eight kinds of performance.²⁸ The overarching type of performance occurs in everyday life. I wake up in the morning, eat breakfast, brush my teeth and head out the door. For most people, that is also how they start the day. It's a routine. It's a script. "Everyday life...involves years of training, of learning appropriate bits of behavior, of finding out how to adjust and perform one's life in relation to social and personal circumstances" (Schechner, 2002, p. 22-23). Each action, conversation, or experience has been performed before and through watching, reading, or listening to these previous performances people model their own actions, conversations, and experiences.²⁹

As Shakespeare understood all the world to be a stage, in his influential book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman understood life to be series of theatrical performances. People communicate and comprehend one another according to the roles they enact. Robert Ezra Park (1950) wrote,

²⁸ On page 25, Schechner lists the eight kinds of situations (often overlapping) in which performances occur: in everyday life, in the arts, in sports and entertainment, in business, in technology, in sex, in ritual, and in play.

²⁹ This is not to say that everyone's experiences will be the same. Certainly they will be individual, shaped by context. Gergen (1994) wrote, "One cannot make one's way in society without a conception of what one 'ought' to do. Yet, to have a conception of what one ought to do also entails understanding that it is possible to act otherwise- that is, to act in contradiction" (p. 9). Simply because there are rules and roles does not mean that they have to be followed.

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather in recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously playing a role... It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves...In a sense, and in so far as this mask represents the conception we have formed of ourselves-the role we are striving to live up to-this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be. In the end the conception of our role becomes second nature and an integral part of our personality (p. 249-250).

I'm playing me: a daughter, a sister, a girlfriend, a student, etc. All of these roles (or selves) come with malleable scripts provided by convention or the social codes of daily life which become incorporated into who I am, how I think of myself, and who I desire to be. "[T]his self is a *product* of a scene ... and is not a *cause* of it."³⁰

Kenneth Gergen (1994) theorized, "Cultural interests are virtually absorbed by the nature of individual minds" (p. 3). The roles, while local and historical, are mediated by cultural models which supply standards from which people form values and ideals. Susan E. Cross and Jonathan S. Gore (2002, p. 539) outline this hegemonic process in four steps:

1. Cultural models of the person derive first from the sociohistorical ideals and values of a society.
2. These sociohistorical ideals and values shape social customs, practices, and institutions, including linguistic [and] employment practices...
3. These practices and institutions provide the settings and situations in which individuals act and behave.
4. These experiences in everyday settings sculpt a self and shape individual psychological tendencies.

³⁰ Goffman, 1959, p. 252.

Today, the mass media (constructing, reflecting and refracting cultural norms, values and ideas) *performs* an increasingly large *part* as an ideological tool in the construction of self and the *roles* we choose to *play*. “Who ‘I am’ is no longer a given, if it ever was. As the number of available ‘new selves’ increases weekly, the media emphasizes that no self need be permanent” (Schechner, 2002, p. 177). Neil Gabler (1998) describes consumption, particularly of media and popular culture artifacts, as a “form of personality creation” (p. 204) that can be “imaginative rather than expressive” (p. 206). Through thousands and thousands of hours of contact with mass media texts, people find a genre which suits who they see themselves as or who they aspire to be. People live their lives, playing their roles, with the aid of these mediated models.

“You can’t have lived your life in a musical void; it’s impossible.”-REM’s Mike Mills³¹

Music is inescapable. Mediated sounds fill the space of everyday life, being heard on commercials, movies, television shows, cell phones, MP3 players, computers, stereos, radios, Discmans, Walkmans, street corners, in restaurants, elevators, shopping centers and office buildings, at political events and concerts. Songs, associated with everything from Sunkist soda to childhood memories and first love, have become endless signifiers. This constant exposure to music combines with personal references to be reformulated within the context of my lived experience, creating new meaning, new ideas, new realities, new desires.

Music is the soundtrack to life. It adds texture and definition to daily events. Each time I hear a song, even the intro or chorus, it references something else, which then references something else, which references something else.... All this prior knowledge affects what a song means to me, how I comprehend this new experience, and by extension, how the song produces a part of me and how I understand the world. DeNora (2000) uses the term “musical framing,” the

³¹ Quoted on p. 33 of *I Wanna Be Me: Rock Music and the Politics of Identity* by Gracyk.

process of applying music, particular images, personal feelings or connections, to non-musical things, to articulate this process. She concludes that “music does not simply act upon individuals, like a stimulus. Rather, music’s ‘effects’ come from the ways in which individuals orient to it, how they interpret it and how they place it within their personal music maps, within the semiotic web of music and extra-musical association” (p. 61). By expanding the reach of a song, it is no longer just music, simple entertainment; it becomes entangled in the meaning of other aspects of life.

In a conference paper on new metal and identity, Lloyd (2002) theorizes that the assault of images and signs has reversed the relationship between culture and the media. The media no longer depicts culture; it creates it, and through this mediated vision the portrayal of reality becomes reality.³² With unlimited choices at our disposal to create who we are, the fragmented self of postmodernity is defined by consumption. As Rob Gordon puts it, “What really matters is what you like, not what you’re like. Books, records, TV. These things matter.”³³ Consuming mass media creates us and our reality. Lawrence Grossberg (1990) calls pop music the spoon full of sugar that helps the ideology go down. Pop music’s pleasure conceals its influence.

Pop music helps us define and articulate intangible terms and formulate how to act and what to say and feel (Frith, 1988). It implies a set of expectations and creates a way of thinking. “[I]f we pay critical attention to this aspect of contemporary experience, then our study of popular music has much to contribute to a more general understanding of the ways our

³² Lloyd uses Baudrillard’s concepts of simulacra and simulation to explain that the image creates its own ‘truth.’ The image moves from being a reflection of reality to obscuring reality to denying reality to creating its own reality. This hijacking of reality forces us into hyperreality, where the simulated image has become so real in our minds that it has replaced reality.

³³ Rob Gordon, played by John Cusack, is the screen version of the main character, Rob Fleming, in Hornby’s *High Fidelity*.

subjectivities are formed and shaped in modern societies” (Hesmondhalgh & Negus, 2002, p. 89).

Methods

I have voices whispering in my ears, from between my ears, telling me what to write, but they never say how to write it. They leave me with quotations and that’s all. I sift through them and find that all I have ever wanted to say has been said before. And they, of course, said that too.³⁴

Just the other day Hélène Cixous was telling me,

I write to go further.

*This further-than-myself in myself can only be a mixture of others and myself...We are full of voices...So, If I manage to give passage to the further-than-myself, I will end up knowing a bit more about it.*³⁵

³⁴ “Our own subjective singularities are in truth composed, on the one hand, of many other near or distant humans, we are carriers of previous generations, we are, without knowing it, heirs, caretakers, witnesses of known or unknown ancestors; on the other hand we are full of others originating from the books we have read. We think we speak English, or French, of today. But our English or French language of today is of yesterday and elsewhere. The miracle is that language has not been cut from its archaic roots-even if we do not remember, our language remembers, and what we say began to be said three thousand years ago. Inversely, language has incorporated in our own times, before even we know, the most recent elements, linguistic and semantic particles blown by the present winds” (Cixous, 1994, xx). Jean Baudrillard (1997) succinctly writes, “Things can only come from elsewhere. At the heart of the subject, the subject no longer exists. Things can only come from others” (p. 4).

³⁵ From an interview in *Rootprints*, p. 57. It seems like there is always more, more below the surface and even more layers below that. Even if I dig until I come out on the other side there is no way of knowing the complete story. It is simply a story of a more-than-myself self, ahead of the self that started this process.

And then I think, jeez, that's it in a nutshell. That's what I'm doing. That's why I'm doing it. And that's why it's important. I really could just stop here. But I choose not to. I choose to go further.

In his paper "The Lessons James Joyce Teaches Us," Norman Denzin argues for a new type of writing, a language that moves us between personal experience and the cultural texts that shape and in turn write that experience (p. 18). "Language and speech do not mirror experience, they create it and in the process of creation constantly transform and defer that which is being described. The meaning of the subject's statements is always in motion" (p.3). Later Denzin suggests, "Truth is political, and verisimilitude is textual" (p. 8). All events, experiences are mediated by culture; there is no flat reality. It has to be molded and shaped by storytelling. The truth is within the narrative, not outside of the narrative.³⁶ "There no longer is any such things as fiction or nonfiction, there is only narrative" (Richardson, 2000, p. 926).

Laurel Richardson had some good advice for me as I progressed down the path of writing as "a way of 'knowing'—a method of discovery and analysis."³⁷ "Remember," she said, "Writing as a method of inquiry provides a research practice through which we can investigate how we construct the world, ourselves and others, and how standard objectifying practices of social science unnecessarily limit us and social science."³⁸

³⁶ "The truth of narrative is not akin to correspondence with prior meanings assumed to be located in some sort of prenarrative experience. One narrative interpretation of events can be judged against another, but there is no standard by which to measure any narrative against the meaning of events themselves, because the meaning of prenarrative experience is constituted in its narrative expression" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 745).

³⁷ In Richardson, 2000, p.923

³⁸ In Richardson, 2000, p. 924. Finnegan (1997, p. 62) agrees that self as story "extends the idea of 'culture' and 'media' beyond the organizational structures of, say, the culture industries, broadcasting or the published media, into the everyday modes in which we express and construct our lives in personal

Autoethnography “fractures the boundaries that normally separate social science from literature; the accessibility and readability of the text repositions the reader as a co-participant in dialogue and thus rejects the orthodox view of the reader as a passive receiver of knowledge” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 744).³⁹ “Autoethnographies are highly personalized, revealing texts in which authors tell stories about their own lived experiences, relating the personal to the cultural”(Richardson, 2000, p930). “Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth ethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p.739). These autoethnographic stories, representing a self as one of many selves, through deconstruction, construct another self. Even as more is understood, the subject becomes more complex, fragmented.

While there is certainly a truth in the personal narrative, “[w]ithout the theory, the personal details lack their context. Without the fragments of embodied detail, the theoretical arguments lack rich dimension. They work together synergistically to produce new thinking”

terms.” Bruner (1997, p.106) adds, “Eventually the culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of life narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, to segment and purpose-build the very ‘element’ of life.” Basically, “narrative imitates [creates] life, life imitates [creates] narrative” (Bruner, 1997, p. 105).

³⁹ “Poststructural writers such as Barthes, Derrida, and Foucault effectively obliterated the modernist conception of the author, altering how we understand the connection among author, text, and readers...” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 735). The idea that readers were passively imbibing the authority of the text and its writer, has been overturned. Plus, writing in this manner, as Denzin notes in the very next footnote, allows the emotional, the personal, to stand at the same level as the theoretical (but really, isn’t autoethnography theory?). This is empowering.

(Gannon, 2003, p. 280). In addition to these qualifications, Richardson (2000) offers five criteria for writing the personal into the cultural (or the cultural into the personal): substantive contribution (to understanding social life), aesthetic merit (creativity and complexity matter), reflexivity (self-awareness of subjectivity, standards, how/why I came to write this autoethnography, and the epistemology it is grounded in), impact (on me), expression of reality (verisimilitude).⁴⁰ By following these guidelines, autoethnography, “move[s] from emphasizing the ‘bio as life history, to beginning a re-examination of our sense of what ‘auto’ or self means, to questioning the whole problematic of language as ‘graphie’” (Buss quoted in Gannon, 2003, p259).

Discussing paradigms, a conversation with Susanne Gannon and Laurel Richardson

Laurel Richardson (2000, p. 929) wrote, “Language constructs the individual’s subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific. What something means to individuals is dependent on the discourses available to them...Poststructuralism links language, subjectivity, social organization, and power. The centerpiece is language. Language does not “reflect” social reality, but produces meaning, creates social reality.” “A poststructural autoethnography would try to unravel the discursive formations that constitute the subject as this or that (and not-this and not-that) in relation with others in social apparatuses that are particular to this culture, this place, this time” (Gannon, 2003, p.279). “Poststructuralism thus points to the continual cocreation of Self and social science: Each is known through the other. Knowing the self and knowing about the subject are intertwined, partial, historical, local knowledges.

⁴⁰ “The experimental text privileges emotion and emotionality, arguing that a main goal is to evoke emotional responses for the reader, thereby producing verisimilitude and a shared experience (Denzin, 1997, p. 209).

Postructuralism, then, permits-nay, invites-no, incites-us to reflect upon our method and explore new ways of knowing” (Richardson, 2000, 929).

“Specifically, poststructuralism suggests two important things to qualitative writers: First, it directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times; and second, it frees us from trying to write a single text in which we say everything at once to everyone” (Richardson, 2000, p929). Gannon (2003) writes, “This conceptualization of autoethnography as poststructural practice stresses that individuals –even the writer writing and deconstructing her-self- are never outside discourse, that discourse is never static, that discourses are as much constituted and constitutive of the others with whom we interact in social space as of ourselves, and that subjectivities are fluid and contingent” (p. 261).

Autoethnography also owes much to postmodern notions of truth and knowledge. “[A] postmodernist position does allow us to know “something” without claiming to know everything. [...] The core⁴¹ of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the ‘right’ or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge. Postmodernism suspects all truth claims of masking⁴² and serving particular interests in local, cultural, and political struggles” (Richardson, 2000, p. 928). Like poststructuralism, “[p]ostmodernism claims that writing is always partial, local, and situational, and that our Self is always present, no matter how much we try to suppress it- but only partially present, for in our writing we repress parts of ourselves, too” (Richardson, 2000, p. 930).

⁴¹ It makes me rather uneasy to say that there is a core to postmodernism since everything I have read about the subject/genre/paradigm/etc. goes on and on about fragmentation (particularly Gergen’s (1994) analysis of the postmodern psychological condition). It seems paradoxical that postmodernism can have a core.

⁴² Cixous (1997) writes, “The mask is the soul rising to the face” (p.28). The mask has its own truth.

The show must go on...

It is with these quotations in mind that I construct my story, this one story as part of mystery (to borrow Gregory Ulmer's term). Ulmer (1989) writes,

...a mystery assumes that one's thinking begins not from the generalized classifications of subject formation, but from the specific experiences historically situated, and that one always thinks by means of and through these specifics, even if that thinking is directed against the institutions of one's own formation" (p. viii).

Ulmer (1989) says the mystery's purpose "is to help the composer articulate the ground of invention" (p.211). While I am constructing this thesis, it in turns constructs part of my self. As I am scrutinizing pop music and pop culture as the "ground[s] of invention," this new knowledge creates more self interactions. My self is eternally in motion, composed of experiences. These experiences dictate the life I live, through memory and thought, idea and action, yet, ideas and actions, memories and thoughts will dictate my experiences.⁴³ This cycle informs who I am and how I live my life, the choices I make everyday. Life has to be (re)interpreted, (re)told. There is no pure, separate life. This is the story of a mediated life.

Through autoethnographic exploration, I am trying to understand how and why I have used (and continue to use) pop music (and popular culture) to construct personal definitions to three terms: youth, love and happiness⁴⁴ and, in turn, how these concepts have become the ideas with which I compose who I desire to be, the slightly more coherent self I strive to become.

⁴³ Trihn Mihn-ha (1991) wrote, "Memories within come out of the material that precedes and defines a person. When she creates, they are the subsoil of her work. Thus, autobiography, both as singularity and as collectivity is a way of making history and rewriting culture" (p. 192).

⁴⁴ This thesis, looking at how "Wouldn't it be Nice" has contributed to my understanding of youth, love and happiness, is in no way trying to imply that this one song is completely responsible for how I live my life and how I understand these concepts. I am only looking at the role "Wouldn't it be Nice" has played

In examining the aesthetics of popular music, then I want to reverse the usual academic and critical argument: the issue is not how a particular piece of music or performance reflects the people, but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience—a musical experience, an aesthetic experience—that we can only make sense of by *taking on* both a subjective and collective identity (Frith, 1996, p.109).

This new approach, a more personal-cultural study of music, removes the emphasis from ethnic, gender, and subculture labeling and tries to dig deeper and look at how popular music instructs the performance of self, rather than simply reflecting self.

Like listening to music, the writing process is also (re)creative. Each word leads to another word, linking it to pools of thoughts. Discovering these ideas, these more-than-myself ropes, pulls me in the direction of understanding as well as opening all sorts of new images that have yet to be understood. Armed with these new bits and pieces of my self, I can compose a new section of myself as related to both thoughts and experiences that have risen from the (popular) culture surrounding me and the me(s) within me, all those past selves. Cixous (1997) writes:

The person we have been is now an ‘I was’, the character from our past. She follows us, but at a distance...Left today is the one who will have followed us till here. And who passes with me into the present. We cherish this one, the one who has traversed the decades where others fell: she cannot be, we believe, but the strongest and best of ourselves...Maybe she’s the one who in the end will have been us, we think furtively, is it

in this process. Needless to write, there are thousands of songs that deal with these topics and have contributed to my understanding of them.

she we will have be? But maybe things will be altogether to the contrary. She will succumb, and all we will feel for her is distant wonder? (p. 138).⁴⁵

I cannot help wondering which parts of this me will meet the next me, which parts of the past are in this me? I write in fragments, a dialogue among the selves. They argue, they agree, they piece together what could be said to be me.⁴⁶ This is a messy overlapping pastiche of all paths, all choices, melding into a *relative* understanding, going forward and back, tugging me. There are thoughts, stories, lives, in many places, many times. They are fractured, but still connected, hanging on by the narrative thread that is me in the text, *this* text.

Over the holiday break I read all twelve volumes of my personal journals dating back to 1990. The first batch, fourth grade to seventh/eighth grade, was painful to read. I kept thinking: I'm so inarticulate. I know I must have had coherent and important thoughts. They just never made it to paper. Then I read several from high school. Everything on the page was so different from how I remember it (both better and worse).⁴⁷ These entries were at times very painful and

⁴⁵ "The postmodern writer also seeks the sublime, but it's a new sublime- a nostalgic sublime...The new scribe seeks a sense of respect and awe for the lost writer who experiences what is being written about..." (Denzin, 1997, p. 215).

⁴⁶ "I write...where things start to signify. To selfsignify...There is sending, dispatching, there is jostling together and reverberating it echoes through our memory, through our body, through foreign memories with which we communication through subconsciouses. What is of interests to all human beings is what we call the affects, what we are preoccupied with: the pre- of the occupation, or the post- of the occupation" (Cixous, 1997, p. 68).

⁴⁷ My memories and the journal entries do not always match. Can 6 years (give or take) change the past (in my mind)? I am not sure which is more correct or if either is. I do know that like my photo albums, my journals are very subjective. Pictures are always of happy times. Journal entries are predominantly my outlet. They allow me to work out all those feelings that I cannot express to others. Generally, those are not so happy. Really, if you read my journals, you would cry. However, the content of this thesis has been profoundly affected by the overwhelmingly happy state of my life now.

disorienting.⁴⁸ Reliving the past fourteen years of my life in a few weeks was overwhelming. So many experiences, memories, friends, loves, they were all with me at the same time. I had too many things to write about, too much to think about.⁴⁹

When I got back to Athens in early January, I did a series of listening exercises, during which I played “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” numerous times and wrote whatever came to mind, trying to keep the topics of youth, love and happiness in the back of my head. The following stories are a mix of those notes, song lyrics, journal entries, personal communications, and anything else that happened to find its way to my thoughts as I was typing. The first story just flowed. I had no idea what I was going to write about. It just happened. The rest of them followed in much the same way. I just sat down in front of the computer screen, either at the student learning center or at home (but always with music playing) and started writing, thinking: YOUTH. LOVE. HAPPINESS.

The twelve stories and epilogue were written over a two-week period in January 2004. All are without sense of finality. They are “messy texts” (Marcus, 1994). As Marcus points out, these autoethnographic stories of self are characterized by “an openendedness, an incompleteness, and an uncertainty about how to draw a text/analysis to a close” (p. 567). These stories draw extensively on quotations from songs, movies, television shows, and the many

⁴⁸ After reading some of the entries from the hard times, after breakups and such, I find myself in tears, feeling horrible about myself, feeling the same insecurities and self-loathing and helplessness that I had written about. (I guess I became slightly more articulate.) I started to picture myself now, as that girl in the past, I couldn’t separate them when I was reading. She was me. I was she. Then and now.

⁴⁹ I hate living in the past. Yet, I often get sucked in, wishing I was there again, wishing I could relive all those moments, or sit in the corner and watch them play on the TV screen. It’s entirely frustrating. Things change. Ultimately, I am much happier now than I ever have been, but there are always things I wish could be they way they used to be. Always wanting what I can’t have.

books I read for this project (and other projects and for entertainment). “The method of this work [is] literary montage. I have nothing to say, only to show.”⁵⁰ This montage is “created from a juxtaposition of quotations so that the theory springs out of it without having to be inserted as interpretation” (Adorno in Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 73). Just as this thesis has been created with a juxtaposition of quotations from numerous sources, my story, my self is also a messy juxtaposition. Each of my stories can be read on its own, without the footnotes. However, the supplements, are not such. They are their own story, equally as important as the ‘main’ text.⁵¹ There is no line between narrative and theory.

Denzin claims, “we move forward by moving inward...[W]e are our own subjects, and how our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others is and has always been our topic” (p. 18). “The origin of the material can only be myself. I is not I, of course, because it is I with the others, coming from other, putting me in the other’s place, giving me the other’s eyes. Which means there is something in common” (Cixous, 1997, p.87). While I use this autoethnographic text to create meaning for myself, moving my self inward and forward, Trinh Minh-ha (1991) knows that “autobiography, both singularity and as collectivity is [also] a way of making history and of rewriting culture” (p. 192).

People have always told stories, always told self-stories to try to connect the fragments of self to society, to understand how they fit into culture and how culture fits into them. “We dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative” (Hardy, 1977, p.12).

⁵⁰ From *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (p. 73) by Susan Buck-Morss.

⁵¹ “The embracketing of analytical or theoretical writing within a narrative has the unusual effect of privileging the latter over the former, in a reversal of the usual academic preference of analysis” (Gannon, 2003, p. 265). Neither text is privileged; they inform each other.

People share plot-lines and can recognize their lives in the lives of others. The narrative creates life.⁵²

“When a story ends badly
must tell it differently
we are the authors of our stories
‘happily’ & ‘unhappily’, we are the
ones who say it.
What makes us suffer is when the
story goes mad.
Must heal it (tell it differently)
must find its other narrative (change
*points of view)*⁵³

⁵² Maybe this text will make you think about what has helped construct you. Maybe it will help you understand the power of the everyday, the popular culture that surrounds you (and me). Maybe it will just make you wonder why I have so much free time.

⁵³ Cixous, 1997, p77. All indentations and italics are hers.

CHAPTER 3

12 STORIES

ONE

I pressed my nose against the car window as we drove across the sun-burnt earth of Castilla-La Mancha. Right there, right there in the distance, were the windmills, “las molinas.” *These were Don Quixote’s windmills, right from the book...Wow, stories are real.*⁵⁴

I am sitting here, in my apartment⁵⁵ with its red walls randomly dotted with framed vintage valentines, (re)writing the stories; I am writing about myself writing about myself.

“Jessica Sawrey, I presume,”⁵⁶ said the author(itative) Jessica,⁵⁷ typing along methodically, glancing up to see if I answer her.

⁵⁴ Written 7/24/00 in Toledo, Spain after our return trip from Seville. Five of us rented a Ford Focus and drove south for the weekend. I didn’t really care about seeing the alcazar or the cathedral where Cristobol Colon is supposedly buried. Even if he did ‘discover’ America, I only wanted to see the windmills. I did not give this a tremendous amount of thought at the time, but it clearly stood out that this was the setting of one of the greatest stories of all time, right there, right here. And I was now there, in the story. Or the story was real... At one of the larger windmills a couple was having there wedding pictures taken. Was it simply tilting at windmills to hope that someday I would be photographed in a similar story?

⁵⁵ Certainly my apartment would be an interesting text. It would be exciting to have a cultural archeologist examine it for ‘meaning.’ What do all the photographs signify? And the use of color?

⁵⁶ Although I always thought it was “Dr. Watson, I presume” (maybe Sherlock said it too), my statement mirrors Henry Morgan Stanley’s statement, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume.” Schechner (2002) points out that once the story is retold, it always has embellishments or strategically (or otherwise) misplaced information. He (and I) question whether this was Mr. Stanley’s actually first utterance to the missing explorer or if it just seemed like a clever one-liner that would make him appear dashing in print. Is there a real *story*?... So, is this really Jessica Sawrey, here in the text? Am I even her when I’m typing? Can all

“I prefer Jess, thank you.”

“Jess, why is it you are so drawn to ‘Wouldn’t It Be Nice’?”

“Because it fits me...The song sounds so happy but there is longing below the surface.

Or I suppose it comes off as just the opposite: *longing on the outside but driven by optimism, that the happy ending is just on the other side of youth.*⁵⁸ Who wouldn’t want to believe in happily ever after? I want to be in **that** story.”

This attempt at separation,⁵⁹ to discover the connection of a pop song to my expectations of life,⁶⁰ to understand why this character acts the way she does, thinks the way she does, feels the way she does, will only cover me enough to keep me warm, but my toes will inevitably stick out from beneath the blanket. Something will always be left in the cold.⁶¹

aspects of me ever appear on paper? (NO!). Cixous (1997) wrote, “All biographies like all autobiographies like all narratives tell one story in place of another” (p.178).

⁵⁷ I think of myself as ‘Jess,’ which is what my friends and (most of) my family call me. Jess is friendly and casual. Jessie is what my grandparents call me. Jessica is the name on the class roster. Jessica Sawrey is all of them. Well, maybe Jessica Jeanette Sawrey is all of me. But I hardly ever consider Jeanette.

⁵⁸ From a journal entry on January 10, 2004.

⁵⁹ Am I breaking the 4th wall? Am I following that lovely technique of Brechtian acting, *verfremdungseffekt* (alienation/estrangement effect), in which the actor (me) enters into a dialectical relationship with the character (me)?

⁶⁰ In a listening exercise done on November 1, 2003, I summed it up: *happiness=love, love=marriage, marriage=happiness*. And *youth is always* burdened with the *longing for someday*. But that’s not all there is to me. Really. I like football and french fries. I work out four times a week. And I want to travel all over the world. These all operate (seemingly) independently of nexus among youth, love, and happiness.

⁶¹ Derrida uses the term “aporia” to signify the holes in the narrative. Through these holes “leak various pasts and alternates into the present order of things” (Schechner, 2002, p.127). There is no way that I would be able to convey the entire web of my life, all the signifiers and significances of every moment of my life. I’m not even sure that there is an essence you (or I) could boil it down to. Even the relevance

TWO

Disc 4, Weezer's *Pinkerton*, is playing on the car stereo system. I checked the rear-view mirror⁶² as I switched to the left lane of I-75 N and, again, I saw her face. It was like looking at an old photograph of myself. She seemed familiar but distant.

I sang along. *Why bother? It's gonna hurt me, it's gonna kill when you desert me. This has happened to me twice before, it won't happen to me anymore.*⁶³ I don't want to feel like that ever again.

"Didn't someone once say that pain is good because it let's us know we're not dead?" She said, "You know, *my pain blanket made my love real.*"⁶⁴

of a particular pop song ("Wouldn't It Be Nice") cannot be totally described. "Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is" (Geertz, 1973, p. 29). The effect is just too...too...well, everything.

⁶² "In 1949, Jacques Lacan published "The Mirror Stage," his influential psychoanalytic study proposing that when very young children begin to recognize themselves in the mirror, they actually see themselves as "another"...Lacan suggested that the formation of the self (or "I") was largely a function of the subject's alienation from one's own self" (Schechner, 2002, p. 10). To be able to see who I am, I have to see the other me(s), who I once was but also to try to extract that me from this me. I try to do this a lot. I am always holding conversations with myself, particularly when I drive long distances. I also find mirrors fascinating. When I look at myself, it's less in the present moment and more like looking at an old photograph. These different selves start to communicate, trying to find out what the hell is going on, how they all fit together.

⁶³ "Why Bother" on *Pinkerton* by Weezer. Weezer has made a career reading my mind and writing songs based on my life. Tia DeNora (2000) understood this process slightly differently as she explains, "In turning to different musics and meaningful particles [please see the proverb noted below] that 'reflect' and register self-identity, that provide a template, individuals are also choosing music that produces self images that are tenable, that seem doable, habitable" (p. 73).

⁶⁴ From 3/14/03 (in-flight to Japan). I had way too much free time on my hands, which lead to too much thinking and confounding phrases like 'pain blanket.' But, in some way, I had to feel that way. There is a Spanish Proverb, which I clipped from the 1/27/00 issue of the *Lantern*, Ohio State's student

I try to stay optimistic.⁶⁵ Wasn't it only a matter of time until we would be *saying goodnight and staying together?*⁶⁶ A matter of time.⁶⁷

THREE

I sat on my couch, clutching a throw pillow, legs curled underneath me, sobbing. Scenes from *The Wonder Years*⁶⁸ appeared blurred and distorted through the tears. The lights of the carnival rides in the distance twinkled, cheering the night air. Earlier, they had been young and happy, a couple of kids driving bumper cars and enjoying cotton candy on the boardwalk, "Wouldn't It Be Nice" playing on the public address system... Stopping at a photo booth...Kevin's absorbed in the pictures of them, together, smiling at each other, making goofy faces...

newspaper, that has stuck with me: "Where there is love, there is pain." Loosing the pain, *felt like a betrayal of my love* (12/10/00). It's as if the pain validates the love.

⁶⁵ My favorite quote from the *Lantern's* masthead, which ran on Thursday, June 3, 1999, is a line from *The Long Kiss Goodnight*: "May the best of the past be the worst of your future."

⁶⁶ From "Wouldn't It Be Nice."

⁶⁷ *Wouldn't it be nice if we were older? Then we wouldn't have to wait so long...*

⁶⁸ *The Wonder Years* is my all-time favorite TV show. I absolutely love it, and it does have this strange power to make me cry. It's some combination of the music and the narration. While it is grounded in the events of the late 1960s and early 1970s, there is a timelessness to Kevin Arnold's *personal* experiences. I was born in 1980, yet I watch those episodes as if I had lived them (and really, didn't I? Didn't we all?). The show's music, because it was the music of my parents' generation, became the music of my childhood too. The same texts my parents used to define their world(s) are available to me. Likewise, Kevin's reality was scored by pop songs. There was one for every coming-of-age moment, every important scene. I felt as though my life should have background music, it should be composed around a great record (CD) collection with each pivotal moment matching a song. Just as "music is a key resource for the production of autobiography and the narrative thread of self" (De Nora, 2000, p. 158), shows like *The Wonder Years*, with their musical lives and poetic narration, set unrealistic goals. I look back and wish my childhood had been so wonderful, scored with The Supremes and the Beach Boys.

***NARRATOR**⁶⁹: Gloating that I now had proof...⁷⁰*

[Close shot of KEVIN looking at TERI off-screen.]

***NARRATOR**: ...that this night was real.*

Wouldn't it have been nice if we could've met later, closer to understanding who we are and what we need, having experienced more of life, accomplished goals...

***NARRATOR**: OK, I should ask her to wait for me now. Just until I get out of junior high school. Then we can get married.*

[Shot of past TERI of KEVIN as she pulls away and trots off behind him. KEVIN turns and looks after her trotting away.]

***NARRATOR**: I knew at that moment, that life was not fair. Sure...*

[Close shot of KEVIN looking after her off-screen. He sighs. The camera moves in very slowly.]

***NARRATOR**: I'd write to her, and maybe she'd write me - then what? Could we really wait for each other for the next ten or twelve years? It was hopeless.⁷¹*

⁶⁹ The narrator is Kevin Arnold as an adult, remembering and (re)imagining his childhood.

⁷⁰ All dialog/narration and stage/camera directions are from <http://home.tonline.de/home/reynders/wy/episod24.htm>; both are single-spaced and italicized, stage directions appear in brackets.

⁷¹ Sad. I'm sad typing it, and (re)reading it. Haven't we all met someone *perfect* in that time, that moment, but we know that for all our longing, *someday will never come*. The saddest line in the series comes in the final episode ("Independence Day"): ***NARRATOR**: Once upon a time there was a girl I knew, who lived across the street. Brown hair, brown eyes. When she smiled, I smiled. When she cried, I cried. Every single thing that ever happened to me that mattered, in some way had to do with her. That day Winnie and I promised each other that no matter what, that we'd always be together. It was a promise full of passion and truth and wisdom. It was the kind of promise that can only come from the hearts of the very young. The kind of promise that can only come from the hearts of the very young.... does that optimism die with age or is it the experience that kills it?*

*But, maybe space is what we need.*⁷² *I remember him sitting on the couch, me kneeling between his legs, looking up at him through tears. Something was mentioned about maybe it just wasn't our time. Maybe someday*⁷³.

We had things we needed to do. We had things we needed to figure out about our selves. Really *he* had things *he* needed to figure out. *He* needed the time. *He* needed the space.

He had just been listening to the wrong music.⁷⁴ Enough of this gloomy singer-songwriter crap, reading the wrong books,⁷⁵ making the wrong cultural references.⁷⁶ In the world according to Jason, love was something to be lost; it was something you once had that haunts you, something that you aren't good enough for, not something to be hoped for. It's a lost hope. He

⁷² Journal entry from 10-02-02.

⁷³ Journal entry from 10-11-02.

⁷⁴ “[M]usic possesses the power of producing an effect on the character of the soul.” Aristotle, *The Politics*. Of course, I have to keep in mind that there is always a choice of what media we use, which identity we want to construct, and the cultural circumstances into which we are born. He chose to listen to Elliot Smith, which helps form this gloomy outlook on life. Then he chose to listen to Bright Eyes to reinforce it. Maybe he was gloomy to start with. Which came first, the chicken or the egg? If only it were that simple.

⁷⁵ From a letter Jason wrote, postmarked June 30, 2003: *Relationships are such a scary endeavor and if you really want to know what I'm scared of you should read The World According to Garp by Irving because everyone pays a heavy price for their mistakes.*

⁷⁶ From Jason's 'explanation of our break-up' letter, postmarked October 22, 2002: *You mention...that you do not believe that love can die. I don't understand that one...It just seems that it is a very naïve thing to say. (Naïve, maybe, but that's how I feel. It doesn't die, it changes.) There are thousands of songs where love just doesn't work out. Bruce Springsteen, Counting Crows, Ryan Adams, Johnny Cash, The Clash, Leonard Cohen....*

just needs time to find new cultural influences.⁷⁷ Then he'll see *love lasts*,⁷⁸ that love is something to hope for, that it does bring happiness. I'll just buy him a Turtles CD, a copy of *Say Anything* and the Beach Boys' greatest hits and everything will work itself out. *Someday we'll be together*.⁷⁹

Wouldn't it have been nice if we could've met later, closer to understanding who we are and what we need, having experienced more of life, accomplished goals...⁸⁰

*But right now I cannot see what I would like to do with the rest of my life. I don't know how to say this, Jess, other than to say that I just do not see us together.*⁸¹

FOUR

I am 23 years old. I was born on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving in 1980. In the grand scheme of things, the history of the universe, and the time-space continuum, this was not that

⁷⁷ De Nora (2000) and Frith (1987, 1996) tell us that we shouldn't be asking how the music (or popular culture) represents 'the people' but how it constructs them. Jason just needed to find new construction models.

⁷⁸ This is the slogan in one of my favorite ads, an advertisement for Oneida silverware. It's a picture of a well-worn (well-loved) teddy bear, missing an arm and an eye, and to the left, it simply reads, "love lasts." I have decoupled several copies of it to a bookcase and another one to a trunk.

⁷⁹ "Someday We'll Be Together" appears on numerous Diana Ross and The Supremes greatest hits packages. It's in my CD collection on *20th Century Master-The Millennium Collection: The Best of Diana Ross and The Supremes [Original Recording Remastered]*. I kept thinking, yes, maybe someday we will be together. That's all I could hope for. Certainly this is the *kind of promise that can only come from the hearts of the very young*. And, indeed, this song does appear several times in *The Wonder Years* with reference to Winnie and Kevin.

⁸⁰ Sometimes there is no advantage to youth.

⁸¹ From the letter post-marked on October 22, 2002.

long ago. Yet, when I think back to those Friday nights at the Beverly Hills Middle School “sock-hops,”⁸² spent nervously waiting for some skinny six-grade boy to ask me to slow dance like a mummy to “Everything I Do (I do it for you)” by Bryan Adams,⁸³ I wonder how I could ever have been that girl. She seems so far away.

Every once in awhile (read: several times a week), I wonder, what am I going to do when I have to grow up? I will graduate in May and will move in with Jason. This is all I know. This, I am excited about.⁸⁴

And then, alternatively, every once in awhile (read: several times a week), I wonder, do I really have to grow up?⁸⁵ Most of my friends from high school and college have ‘real’ jobs,

⁸² I can’t explain why they insisted on calling the school dances sock-hops. I assume it’s because it made the aging teacher population, who likely came of age in the 1950s, nostalgic for simpler times. I doubt most 10-13 year olds thought about this. I, on the other hand, had seen *American Graffiti* and *Grease* more than several times and was disappointed that the cinematic magic was missing from my experiences.... At the first one I went to, probably sometime in September 1991, another sixth grader, Julia Jackson, who was also new and naïve, actually wore a poodle skirt. Sadly, that night determined the rest of her social life.

⁸³ At the time, my sixth-grade year, 1991-1992, this song was HUGE. Bryan Adams indoctrinated millions of adolescent girls with unrealistic expectations of love simply by singing a crappy pop song. He doomed every boy to fail miserably if everything he did was not for me. Gabler (1998) writes, “Where we once measured the movies [or songs or books...] by life, we now measured life by how well is satisfied the narrative expectations created by the movies [or songs or books]” (p. 233). See also *Say Anything* and Lloyd Dobler, Chicago songs, and, of course, “Wouldn’t It Be Nice.”

⁸⁴ This all goes back to saying goodnight and staying together, the longing for domesticity. When I listen to “Wouldn’t It Be Nice,” I always see this happiness as just out of grasp, too far away (in the future, just passed youth). *So maybe if we think and wish and hope and pray it might come true. Then there wouldn’t be a single thing we couldn’t do...We could be married, and then we’d be happy...* Tony Asher, right there, spells it out for me. If I will it to happen, then maybe it will. I’ll grow up and we’ll be together. Anything’s possible if we’re together.

some stuck in offices in excess of 50 hours a week. They wear panty hose to work and get excited about business-casual Fridays. And many of them have taken (or will soon take) the trip down the aisle.

They are building homes, remodeling houses, purchasing condos, and buying insanely expensive pedigree Weiner dogs. Next step: kids.⁸⁶

This freaks me out. I want to move in with Jason. I want to marry Jason. I want to live happily-ever-after with Jason. But I am not ready for the all the seemingly expected next steps. I don't want a 9-5 job. I don't want dogs that cost as much as major appliances. And I certainly don't want to think about children.

⁸⁵ Yet even if I 'grow up,' I'm never going to reach the future, where the happiness lives. Tomorrow will suddenly become today. It's a horizon that slips past my grasp; I will never get there. So, why bother growing up?

⁸⁶ All of my friends' lives seem to be on parallel courses, predetermined by the normative, culturally logical order of progression to (and through) adult life. They graduated college, (some) got jobs with the company they had interned with as undergrads. They moved in with boyfriends and then married them. Now they are filling their living spaces with new couches from Functional Furnishings and buying car seats for their dogs. It's as if they are checking off items on their life to-do lists. Richard Schechner (2002) in *Performance Theory: An introduction* says, "Everyday life...involves years of training, of learning appropriate bits of behavior, of finding out how to adjust and perform one's life in relation to social and personal circumstances. The long infancy and childhood specific to the human species is an extended training and rehearsal period for the successful performance of adult life" (pp. 22-23). This to-do list that they all seem to keep in their Dooney & Burke handbags was issued from infancy and embellished through the years of watching reality and the story of life, as seen on TV and coming to a theatre near you, from listening to pop music and flipping through magazines. There are no actions, no performances in life that have not seen other performances. While my (and their behavior) might not be an exact copy of the plot from the 1991 remake of *Father of the Bride*, it certainly is a recombination of many of those images.

I am torn between desperately desiring to get married and feeling too young to get married, worried that once I actually say ‘I do’ that I will suddenly be an adult, catapulted into responsibility.

FIVE

In order to try to come to some sort of mangled sense of what youth is, I went to see the latest big-screen incarnation of *Peter Pan*. Sadly, I still have no idea what youth really is.⁸⁷ But I wrote this on my hand: *Peter ends up alone.*⁸⁸ *He wants to always be a boy and have fun.*⁸⁹ *But Wendy thinks he’s deficient*⁹⁰ *...Always keep the window open*⁹¹ *...No one can deny their emotions. Everyone must grow up.*⁹² What was J.M. Barrie trying to tell me? Is youth

⁸⁷ I thought about writing this ‘story’ in the same manner I wrote the ones on love and happiness, but it didn’t seem to fit the same formula. Is youth an age? Or is it a state of mind, as many commercials aimed at Baby Boomers seem to suggest? Youth doesn’t have the simplicity of happiness. Like love, youth is bittersweet. It is both the freedom from responsibility and the inability to fully enjoy that freedom.

⁸⁸ Oh, god, that’s my biggest fear. Sometimes *I’m afraid I’ll end up like Ally Mc Beal* (from July 30, 2000). If growing up is what it takes to avoid such a fate, then sign me up.

⁸⁹ I want to always be a girl and have fun. Is there something wrong with that? Am I missing something?

⁹⁰ Wendy believes Peter is deficient because he can’t feel emotions, particularly love. That’s what’s missing. But do the young really not long for love? I cannot believe that.

⁹¹ The children’s parents wait for their return home with the bedroom window open presumably so that Wendy and her brothers know that they are always welcome, that they can always come home. Yet aren’t we told that you can never go home? I prefer to think of it as a window to the past, not reliving but not forgetting. The memories of childhood are always available. So, if these memories are always available, we never truly get old.

⁹² From a journal entry on August 26, 1998 about the last time I saw my best friend from high school, Stace, before leaving for college: *I can hear myself saying “it’s not fair,” and I’ll always remember her reply, “time to grow up.”* That night was horrible. Though I’d always been excited about leaving for college, I wanted things to stay the same. I wanted us to magically stay best friends forever, but also go off and find adventures and experiences in the outside world. I’ve always wanted it both ways.

something I am doomed to never understand? Is it like the preciousness of life that only dreamers and poets fully comprehend?⁹³

Both *Peter Pan* and “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” address that idea that in order to really love, to have mature emotions, I have to grow up, to lose my youth. Wendy realizes there is so much more than playing pirate and telling stories. *Someday* there will be love. The lovers in “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” can’t wait for their future, willing it to happen as soon as possible. They enjoy the moments together, dreaming together, but their dreams are always of *someday*.⁹⁴ While they are extremely happy now, there is no doubt *someday* will be better.

Even though I cannot wait to move in with Jason and pursue domestic bliss and happily ever after, I still find it hard to consider myself an adult. I don’t want to be my mom, with her stressed-out job, no time to enjoy life, and no friends to meet for dinner or drinks. Yet she does have dad, and they are happy. But adults also have mortgages and insurance payments and deadlines. I seem to want all the advantages of being an adult yet none of the disadvantages. I doubt that’s going to work. I think if I take one, I automatically get the other, or no one would commute to work or fill out the 1040A tax forms.

Generally, I think of youth as a time without major responsibility and that being an adult is the opposite. Youth is restraint and adulthood is freedom (really both are both, just different

⁹³ *Our Town*. One of my favorite books (plays) of all time. Since reading it in ninth grade, I have tried to appreciate everyday, to be a poet or a dreamer, but it’s easier said than done. There’s always such a rush to get to *someday*, that it’s hard to see today. Maybe no one appreciates anything until it’s gone. That’s the maxim anyway. So, maybe I won’t understand youth until I’m an adult?

⁹⁴ When I listen to “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” I am often overcome with optimism (which isn’t shocking since I am generally an optimistic person). However, there are several moments when I feel the familiar “what ifs?” “What if we had met 10 years later, would we have made it to someday?” “What if we our love doesn’t last forever?” And the answer is always to pretend it will, *maybe if we wish and hope and pray it might come true. And then there wouldn’t be a single thing we couldn’t do....*

types of limitations and allowances). When I was a kid the options for the future were endless, but really, it's the same as an adult, I just feel trapped by those damn responsibilities. Being an adult gives me the power to act on those choices, to go where I want when I want with whomever I choose.⁹⁵

Being a kid means spending my summer at the pool eating corn dogs and popsicles. Being an adult means spending my summer at the office wishing I could eat corn dogs and popsicles. (But again, these are choices).

I thought I was a Peter Pan, never wanting to grow up, but as I was watching the movie, I found myself switching sides, becoming a Wendy. The biggest bonus of getting older is actually figuring out what I want and what makes me happy and who makes me happy and actually being able to be with him, not having to constantly be wishing we had met 5 or 10 years later, wishing we could fast forward until we were ready to settle (down, not give up hope of something more). When I was young,⁹⁶ what I wanted was constantly changing. One day I wanted my life to evolve like *When Harry Met Sally*, the next day I hoped for *The Princess Bride* storyline. Now I know that I want someone to love me just as I am, like Darcy loves Bridget.⁹⁷ And of course I want bits of all those past models.⁹⁸ I want to be able to *say good night and stay together*. And

⁹⁵ We are all choicefull. Everything is a choice, even when it appears not to be (See *From Death Camp to Existentialism: A Psychiatrist's Path to a New Therapy* by Viktor Frankl). Adults just have more consequences weighing on their choices than children do and children have less available choices. So, which one is better?

⁹⁶ Please! I'm only 23 now. Like it was so long ago that I made sure my parents dropped me off 100 yards from school.

⁹⁷ From *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

⁹⁸ Certainly the best parts of each fantasy have been combined into the ultimate fantasy, which will never be fulfilled, yet I don't think I'd want it to be. What would I have to hope for in the future? It's not as

because I am in total control (well, as much as any person can be) of my life, I can. I don't have to wait for my mom to pick me and my friends up from the mall. I don't have to worry that the world (or my middle school) will discover who my crush is. Everything is bigger, extended now. When you're young, your world is so small, so fragile. Now, if something isn't working I can fix it or junk it. Youth is not being scarred, but living in fear that I will be.⁹⁹ But after that, I take pride in those scars. They are me.

So, I'm not sure if I defined youth, but really, isn't it just a state of mind anyway?

SIX

Sitting cross-legged on the dirty, blue carpet, she looks in the mirror. Her hair is darker than it was before, and her eyes are tired. As she searches her reflection she sees it, there, in the corner of her fading brown eyes: it's me. We chat, a practice run for future conversations of the real, but this is the one that matters. I say to her, "I am lonely; I miss him so much." She feels my pain; she has been alone too, waiting by the phone, lying in bed, staring at the ceiling, crying into her pillow, listening to Fleetwood Mac.¹⁰⁰

though I suddenly will have all the answers and will be overcome with fulfillment. There is no date, no matter what the federal government says, that we become adults. It's all a process.

⁹⁹ "[W]e do not have a gift for the present. Because from childhood we begin to fear loss, to see nothing but loss, out of fear" (Cixous, 1997, p35). Sadly, there is no time in life to simply be. I am always looking to some other time. Even while watching a movie that I am really enjoying, I want it to be over, so I can find out how it will end. I constantly want to make it to the end, so I know I actually do make it to someday, to see how I turned out.

¹⁰⁰ Ah, Fleetwood Mac, the group of choice for classic rock enthusiasts suffering from unrequited love. During my break-up with my first love, Brett, it was certainly in heavy rotation. I always imagined that I was Lindsey Buckingham and that Brett was Stevie Nicks; I would scream at 'him' that I'd *never break the chain*. Certainly, I would love him forever. But he could *go his own way* because *loving him wasn't the right thing to do*. It only took me 15 months and 872 listenings of "The Dance" to realize this. Again, after the breakup with Jason, Fleetwood Mac seemed to be the obvious choice: 3/14/03 *I need to stop*

“I met someone.”

Silence on the other side of the mirror.

“I met someone, really. And *someday* we’re going to live happily ever after.”

Amused bewilderment is reflected in her smirk. “*Someday, huh?*” the girl chides. “Let me guess. You’re going to be able to *say goodnight and stay together.*”¹⁰¹

I turn away. I can’t take this cynical banter. Is there something wrong with being happy and in love? Or is it that the happiness seems to derive itself from this love? Why can’t I simply be happy on my own? Is it somehow lesser happiness, because it isn’t purely from my mind, my own doing?¹⁰²

listening to Fleetwood Mac. It is unproductive. I become Lindsey Buckingham and his pain becomes my pain and my pain wraps around me, submerging me and covering my eyes. All I can see is the past.

¹⁰¹ Somehow this section of a verse (*You know it’s gonna make it that much better, when we can say goodnight and stay together, oh, wouldn’t it be nice...*) from “Wouldn’t it Be Nice” has come to symbolize committed love to me. Maybe this is because Brett would never spend the whole night (and he certainly was not a representation of committed love). Or maybe it’s because the idea of saying goodnight and staying together seems mundanely special and slightly grown-up, yet not too much. Either way, this concept, this longing to share domesticity, finds its way into my journal on numerous occasions:

1/15/00 *The weekends are toughest for me. I know she gets to wake up with him, and I wake up alone, wishing he were next to me.*

2/13/03 *I miss the cozy warm feeling of body heat, of rolling over in the morning, still sleepy and seeing your face on the pillow...My bed is warm. The flannel sheets are too comfortable. But you are not here. I still sleep on my side of the bed. And when I go to sleep or when I wake up, I see the empty pillow. And there is an immediate sense of loss...*

9/21/03 *I’m so tied to the idea of us as a happily married couple, sleeping together every night and waking up together every morning. I want to wash clothes and dishes together. I want to mix our CD collections together.”*

¹⁰² Everyday, through the numerous media outlets available for my consumption, I ingest countless meta-narratives. “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” exemplifies one strand: the idea that to be happy I need to be loved (by a man) and that love is the highest form of happiness. On the flip side, I have self-help gurus like Dr.

And what's wrong with wanting to *say goodnight and stay together? All I want is to have the kind of love they write songs about.*¹⁰³ Will I ever get to *someday?*

She calls me back, defiantly proclaiming, “You know, I was in love once, too.”

From behind her, I hear another voice, this one quiet and shy, “Me, too.”

Their stories sounded familiar: found love, lost love. *That's the oldest story in the world: losing the key to paradise.*¹⁰⁴

“*Mutual vulnerability is bullshit!*”¹⁰⁵ The girl with the long honey hair screams.¹⁰⁶

Phil, Oprah, and *Cosmo* (et. al) telling me that I need to be able to find happiness within myself (all the while guiding me as to how to act, dress and talk to win the man of my dreams). So, I guess it comes down to how you view the self. If I see it as unified and insular then it would make perfect sense to seek happiness on the inside. However, I believe in the social construction of the self (or the sociological theory of symbolic interaction), which suggests there is no self without an ‘other,’ and the formation of self is based on interactions with other people (or things). So, I’ve gotta have some way, someone, to help me define (create) this happiness.

¹⁰³ This is directly from the December 28, 1999 entry in my personal journal.

¹⁰⁴ From The Plimsoles’ “Oldest Story in the World” on the *Valley Girl* soundtrack, which I listened to this morning (1-16-04) as I was getting ready for class.

¹⁰⁵ From a journal entry on 1-10-01. It actually refers to Jason, but in this story it will refer to Brett. Somehow all this is related. Cixous (1997) writes, “In the face of love we disarm ourselves, and indeed we keep our vulnerability. It does not disappear but it is offered to the other. With the person we love, we have a relationship of absolute vulnerability...because we think they will do no harm to us at the same time that we think and have the experience that they are the only person who can do all the harm in the world to us....But also, and this is the childlike and magical side of love, we think that the person who can kill us is the person who, because he or she loves us, will not kill us. And at the same time we (do not) believe it. In love we know we are at the greatest risk, *at the same time*” (p. 35).

¹⁰⁶ This is me circa 2000. Unfortunately, other than overwhelming depression and my long hair, I can’t think of anything that would be a defining characteristic from this period of my life. I did eat a lot of Cap’N Crunch Crunch Berries cereal, but that’s for a different, feminist interpretation of this story.

The other girl, sliding a claddagh ring¹⁰⁷ up and down the chain around her neck, seemed to be looking for a way to disagree. “No, it’s not the mutual vulnerability that is bullshit, it’s the one-sided vulnerability that is bullshit.” Still nervously fidgeting with the necklace, and staring at the ground, she continued, “*You know, forever, we both said it. I guess when you’re young and in the newness of love, forever is perfect*¹⁰⁸ and attainable. But then somehow, things change, and you love him more than he loves you. You need him and he doesn’t need you.” Trailing off, tears constricting her throat, she says, “As he told me, in a letter,¹⁰⁹ quoting from the Beatles’ song “For No One,” *it was a love that should have lasted years*. How do I deal with that? There was simply no reason?”

I looked down at my claddagh ring, sitting loosely on my left ring finger. You know what that means; I’m promised to someone. Someone gave me that ring with love, loyalty and friendship.¹¹⁰ It’s weightless and slightly worn; I hardly know it’s there, no light reflecting from the cut and clarity. It moves around on my finger. On cold days, as my fingers seem to dissolve

¹⁰⁷ The claddagh, two hands holding a heart wearing a crown, is an Irish symbol for love, loyalty and friendship. Parents give them to their children. Friends and lovers give them to each other. It is a promise.

¹⁰⁸ From 3-21-03.

¹⁰⁹ Post-marked October 22, 2002.

¹¹⁰ Oddly, this ring that means everything to me, which is suppose to symbolize my love and commitment to Jason (and his love and commitment to me), was a present for my 22nd birthday. At the Dublin (OH) Irish Festival that August, I told him that’s what I wanted for my birthday. Unfortunately, we broke up in the three months between these two dates. And because I wanted it, he went out and bought one for me, not even considering, what he was *saying* about our relationship. How could he give me this ring, a ring of promises, which at that moment, on the evening of November 26, became a signifier for empty promises and all my unfulfilled dreams? He didn’t love me anymore. I hated the ring, but I wanted to believe that it symbolized the future. And then he told me it did; he hoped that I would find love, loyalty, and friendship with someone else someday! Ouch.

into child-size hands, I worry that it will simply fall off without my even being aware that it is gone.¹¹¹

SEVEN

I've never been super-focused. I cannot study or write in a library: the silence, intermittently broken by rustling paper, chairs scooting across the floor or someone's cell phone ringing (not to mention the usually uncomfortable furniture and out-of-date color combinations) drive me nuts.¹¹² I have to have some distraction that can occupy the part of my brain not occupied by studying, yet be consistent enough to be ignored and entertaining enough to break the monotony of studying. Thank god for pop music.

I still have Napster and some of the songs I downloaded when it was still legal.¹¹³ During the 2000-2001 school year, I was downloading like crazy. I found tons of songs I loved but was not willing to actually spend money to acquire. I listen to all these songs when I am working on my computer and relive the memories attached to them.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ I live in fear that it will someday slip off unknown until it's too late.

¹¹² This bothers me because it is *supposed* to be quiet in the library. It is *supposed* to be silent. And for the most part, it is. So, when anyone or anything makes a noise, it is all the more distracting.

¹¹³ In fact, I am using Napster right now. I am listening to Poison's "Nothin' but a Good Time." Very highbrow and intellectual.

¹¹⁴ Everything has a memory. Everything is part of what came before and will come after. That's part of the magic of music (or books or TV or movies). There is the temporal experience, never without context, that is inevitably connected to some moment in that past, which will undoubtedly be referenced in the future. Whenever I read something for class, it always makes me think of something I read for another class or in *Vanity Fair* or *In Style*, possibly a scene from a movie, my favorite TV show, but there is always a song. There is song for everything, to describe everything, to create every moment, to help me understand every moment. Because all these songs come from some form of lived experiences.

...The ceiling is really white with a dirty smoke streak extending across it from the vent to the opposite wall. I lay there, listening to “Teenage Dirtbag”¹¹⁵ because if I just stare at that line, then I will know what to do. Should I tell him? What will he say? He should say it first, right? But he has, and I never replied. Maybe he won’t say it again until I do....

...The music throbbed at Liberty’s. It was packed with under-aged college students and club kids rolling on e. I stood on the dance floor, trying to move to the rhythm of “Better Off Alone,”¹¹⁶ trying to believe I really was better off alone. Was Alice DeeJay right? Somehow I knew she was, but I needed another beer before I could be certain...

...Dancing around in my flannel pjs, barefoot and jumping on the bed, I felt light. I am “*stronger than yesterday! Now it’s nothing but my way! My loneliness ain’t killing me no more!*”¹¹⁷ You’re not tying me down anymore! I am free of you and I will be fine, even great, without you!...

¹¹⁵I downloaded “Teenage Dirtbag” by Wheatus during Michigan Week 2000. Jason and I spent the entire weekend together. It was freezing, the coldest November on record. And all I could think of, from the moment we left Kegs and Eggs to after OSU lost the game, was whether or not I should tell Jason I loved him.

¹¹⁶ Downloaded during the fall of 2000, but it reminds of the previous winter and spring quarters, when I was really depressed but would force myself to go out and at least pretend to have a good time. After all, if I was simulating having a good time, didn’t I have to at least experience a little of that good time?

¹¹⁷ This is line from Britney Spear’s “Stronger,” which I downloaded during winter quarter 2001, most likely January. I finally was over Brett. He couldn’t hurt me anymore. And boy was I happy about it. Aren’t I supposed to get excited like this? Pretty sure it worked for Angela Chase in *My So-called Life*.

...The chicken casserole was almost done as we sat down to compete at *Jeopardy*. I love Tuesday evenings. They are so domestic. I cook dinner and then Jason and I watch TV together from *That 70s Show*, just after dinner, until *2gether*¹¹⁸ finishes at 10:30. And then it's bedtime...

...1", line 1, page 1 of my Word document, there was nothing there. I could not make myself write a fifteen-page paper *en espanol* on the social, political, and economic consequences of "Peronismo." So, I asked myself, "What would *Evita* do?" And it worked. If Eva and Peron could "take the country,"¹¹⁹ I could write a paper...

There is always a soundtrack.¹²⁰ For me, there are songs that create my lived experience and then there are those songs that represent my lived experience. But, of course, all songs are both and all songs have the power to help me understand my life.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ To capitalize on the boy band fad of 2000 and satirize it the same time, MTV developed the short-lived series *2gether* as a spoof on the uberpopular but formulaic boy bands, N'Sync, Backstreet Boys, 98°, etc. The five characters even put out an album and had charting hits on TRL. One of their singles was "The Hardest Part of Breaking Up," about the misadventure of a guy trying his hardest to breakup with his girlfriend and retrieve all of his stuff from her, which I downloaded in October 2000.

¹¹⁹ Now, every time I need to write a paper and need a little motivational help, I turn to "A New Argentina" sung by Madonna and Antonio Banderas.

¹²⁰ Yes, there is always music, even if that music is silence or ambient and synthesized. Just ask anyone in attendance at a John Cage concert. He would insist that the coughing and paper rustling at the library is music.

¹²¹ By creating a web of identification, music, through its lyrics, tempo or melody, can help set the scene, in movies, on TV, or in 'real' life and relate it to personal experience, allowing the audience to more readily understand what's going on. Chuck Klosterman, in his book, *Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs: A low culture manifesto*, pontificates on the success of *The Real World* and the comparative failure of *Big Brother*, theorizing that music is the key variable. Understandably, as an MTV product, TRW is completely scored with pop songs, and apparently *Big Brother* is not (although I have never seen it). Klosterman argues that the concept of *Big Brother*, strangers sharing a house and not being allowed to leave, is so foreign to (most) people that they need music to understand what the contestants are going through, how they are feeling, what the mood of the room is. Without this, the audience loses interest

So, as I woke up this morning, brushed my teeth, boiled water for my french toast oatmeal, and selected the first CD of the day: the soundtrack for *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*, I sang "Livin' on a Prayer" with as much intensity as had when I was in third grade and got ready to face the day.

EIGHT

Next month is Valentine's Day. I will be in Georgia, working to finish the "partial requirements" for my graduate degree. Jason will be 632 miles north in Ohio. So, I've been trying to figure out what to send him in his care package. I like doing something a little creative, a little less ordinary. So far I've made him a Valentines shoebox, like those I made in elementary school, with glitter and glue, markers and stickers, doilies and construction paper. I'm going to send it soon, so that I can send him lots of cards over the next couple weeks to put in it. But somehow Hallmark just doesn't have the right words to describe my love.¹²² *What is love? I really don't know. It's abstract or concrete, but hardly both at the same time. Love is always connected to specific people or ideas. I know what it feels like; I have experienced it. Yet, I can only express it using other people's words.*¹²³ *If there's no music that hasn't heard other music, are there words that haven't heard other words? Can a concept such as love be*

because the show does not make sense. However, *The Real World*, uses music at every opportunity, and it is very successful.

¹²² This I know. I worked at Hallmark for about three years. And every year the Valentines Day products are the same: just slightly altered versions of the Everyday line of cards. I read every single one this year, as I spent a week putting them in the four-foot sections, and not a single one was just right. Yet, all of them were just cliché and impersonal enough to work for anyone.

¹²³Simon Frith (1988, p.123) argues "pop love songs do not 'reflect' emotions... but give people the romantic terms in which to articulate and so experience their emotions." According to De Nora (2000, p.74), people use music to "fill out and fill in" who they are with respect to self and subjectivity.

*expressed with any sort of originality or only through a bricolage - much like the “Elephant Love Medley” in Moulin Rouge?*¹²⁴

Dear Jason,

*I’ve been living so long with only these pictures of you.*¹²⁵ *I imagine me and you, I do. I think about you day and night,*¹²⁶ *wishing you weren’t so far away; so far away, I just can’t see*¹²⁷ *you. Wouldn’t it be nice if we could wake up in the morning when the day is new, and after having spent the day together, hold each other close the whole night through? ...You know it’s gonna make it that much better, when we can say goodnight and stay together.*¹²⁸ *But, however far away, I will always love you.*¹²⁹

*As long as there are stars above you, you’ll never need to doubt it, I’ll make you so sure about it.*¹³⁰ *Because you’re all I need to get by,*¹³¹ *you’re the best friend that I ever had,*¹³² *and every little thing you do is magic, everything you do just turns me on.*¹³³ *I believe that in your eyes I am complete. I see the doorway to a thousand churches, the resolution to all the fruitless*

¹²⁴ This whole section (except the parts not italicized) is from a journal entry in November 3, 2003. All love is the same and all love is different. We (I) use clichés (pop love songs) as a guide for our (my) personal love.

¹²⁵ Lyrics from “Pictures of You” by The Cure on *Disintegration* (1989).

¹²⁶ From The Turtles “Happy Together” originally on *Happy Together* (1967). However, it’s in my CD collection on *Billboard Hits 1967* and *The Wonder Years Soundtrack*.

¹²⁷ Lyrics from “So Far Away” by Dire Straits on *Brothers in Arms* (1985).

¹²⁸ Lyrics from “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” on The Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds* (1966).

¹²⁹ Lyrics from “Love Song” by The Cure on *Disintegration* (1989).

¹³⁰ Lyrics from “God Only Knows” on The Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds* (1966).

¹³¹ Lyrics from “You’re All I Need To Get By” sung by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell on *Every Great Motown Hit of Marvin Gaye* (2000).

¹³² Lyrics from Queen’s “You’re My Best Friend” on the 1975 release *A Night at the Opera (Hollywood)*.

¹³³ Lyrics from “Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic” on *Ghost in the Machine* (1981) by The Police.

searches.¹³⁴ *Oh, my love...I feel the dreams. Everything is clear in my heart. I feel life. Oh, I feel love. Everything is clear in our world.*¹³⁵

*I hope you don't mind...that I put down in words how wonderful life is while you're in the world.*¹³⁶

*Goodnight my baby. Sleep tight my baby.*¹³⁷

Much love,

Jess

NINE

What is love?¹³⁸

Right now, through the lense of “Wouldn't It Be Nice,”¹³⁹ in the light of declarations and promises,¹⁴⁰ love is happiness.

¹³⁴ Lyrics from “In Your Eyes” by Peter Gabriel on *So* (1985). Most notable as the love theme to *Say Anything*, a movie that certainly frames how a certain generation of girls grew up thinking about love.

¹³⁵ Lyrics from “Oh My Love” by John Lennon on *Imagine* (1971).

¹³⁶ Lyrics from “Your Song” (written by Bernie Taupin, music by Elton John), which appears on *Elton John* (1970). Ewan McGregor performs a version of it in *Moulin Rouge*.

¹³⁷ Lyrics from “Wouldn't It Be Nice” on The Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* (1966).

¹³⁸ Really, how can anyone answer such a question? Is there an answer? There are so many levels of love. I love college football and *The Philadelphia Story*. I love my friends and family. I love(d) Brett. I love Jason. They are all forms of love. Doesn't chocolate set off the same sort of biochemical reaction as feeling love or happiness? So, is chocolate love? Certainly chocolatiers would have me think so. In looking at how I define love, right now, sitting here at computer terminal 3E003, I am thinking of it in terms of the happiness (and horrible pain) brought about by being with (or not being with) someone, particularly Jason and Brett. It is being emotionally linked (for better or worse) to that person's actions and words. And, finally, how is what I know of love, through experience, altered by my expectations (thank you *Love Story*, Peter Cetera, The Smiths, “Don't Speak,” *Say Anything*, *The Malady of Death*, “Wouldn't It Be Nice,” *Bridget Jones's Diary* (the book and the movie), *When Harry Met Sally*, ad infinitum....).

What is love exactly?¹⁴¹

Love is Eskimo kisses. Love is hideously ugly chocolate covered strawberries painstakingly made just for me.¹⁴² Love is grocery shopping together.¹⁴³ *Love means never having to say you're sorry.*¹⁴⁴ Love is sleeping holding each other. Love is racing to get home

¹³⁹ When I listen to “Wouldn’t It Be Nice,” I cannot separate love and happiness. The ultimate happiness is love. Love makes me happy more than anything. Both are dependent on being us together (if not in only proximity, but by commitment also).

¹⁴⁰ Basically, Jason has said that he will ask me to marry him. Although he does joke about waiting until I’m 39, he was actually thinking maybe we would get married this summer(!).

¹⁴¹ While I have tried for years to understand what constitutes love, “I cannot hope to seize the concept of it except ‘by the tail’: by flashes, formulas, surprises of expression...” (Barthes, 1979, p.59). It may only be known through the fragments that construct it.

¹⁴² I was dating Jason on my 20th birthday. I’d never had a boyfriend on my birthday and didn’t know what to expect. I told him I’d like him to make me dinner (since I always made us dinner). From a journal entry on 12/4/00: *But the best present was the chocolate covered strawberries... When he brought them over they were a mess, sticking to the container. He was embarrassed and admitted he didn’t know if he’d used enough chocolate since there was a whole bar left....He’d melted chocolate bars...How sweet is that that he went to all that trouble? I can just picture him in the kitchen with chocolate all over his fingers, trying so hard to dip the strawberries perfectly, and then getting pissed off when they smeared on the aluminum foil.* He went to all that trouble for me.

¹⁴³ Jason works at Kroger, so he’s not as fond of grocery shopping as I am. (Truth is, not many people are). But he gave me a Kroger Plus card with his employee discount on it. When he gave it to me, I felt like we were really a couple. Most girls feel this way about jewelry, and yes, jewelry is great, but my Kroger Plus card was about more than impressing me. Grocery shopping is such a domestic consumer activity. Bringing back pasta and rice to put in his pantry seemed like I was moving in. This was a big commitment, even if he didn’t mean it like that. I kept thinking, wow, he gave me his employee discount card, only the people you live with are supposed to have one of those.

¹⁴⁴ Not really. Whoever came up with that phrase is just plain mistaken. I’m talking to you, Mr. Screenwriter for *Love Story*, Erich Segal, author of the original line “Love means not ever having to say you’re sorry.” What crap! How can anyone really believe this if we are also to believe that we only hurt the ones we love? Then shouldn’t we apologize to them just as much, if not more than some guy off the

to see him. Love is that warm feeling in the pit of my stomach. Love is calling to see if he (I) would like me (him) to pick up dinner on my (his) way home from work. Love is getting caught up in memories. Love is looking forward to the future.¹⁴⁵ Love is being appreciated just the way I am.¹⁴⁶ Love is anxiously awaiting his arrival at my door. Love is giving me his socks to keep my feet warm.¹⁴⁷ Love is my claddagh ring. Love is being honest with each other. Love is a melody.¹⁴⁸ Love is walking along the beach, talking and crying. Love is being able to forgive. Love is making sacrifices.¹⁴⁹ Love is playing Popular Culture Trivial Pursuit instead of going

street? Whether the person I love should know that I wouldn't do anything to hurt him, that doesn't stop it from hurting him.

¹⁴⁵ *You know it seems the more we talk about it, it makes it worse to live without it....But let's talk about it* ("Wouldn't It Be Nice"). Sometimes the future seems so far away, but it's comforting to talk about because it feels like a commitment: If we talk about the future, then we both agree that we want to be together in the future. It's like planning for a vacation: getting excited about which hotel we'll stay in and which restaurants we want to try, then feeling like the date is so far away. So, you decided to live vicariously through imagination. And if both people share this vacation idea, you can work toward it.

¹⁴⁶ From *Bridget Jones's Diary*. In both the movie and the book, the dashing Mr. Darcy, played by Colin Firth who played the dashing Mr. Darcy in the BBC version of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and on whom Helen Fielding based the character, tells Bridget he likes her *just as she is*.... Isn't that what we all want? Isn't that love?

¹⁴⁷ From a journal entry on August 8, 1999: *I was freezing. When Brett couldn't find a blanket, he covered me with the shirts he had been wearing. My feet were still cold, but I was content the way I was. When I curled my feet and laid them on his thigh, he felt how cold they were and actually offered to give me his socks. As Blink-182 would say, it's all about the small things.*

¹⁴⁸ As I write, I am listening to *Pet Sounds*, track one, "Wouldn't It Be Nice," and my heart is actually racing with excitement. I'm smiling at the computer screen. Love is anticipation of tomorrow and the next day, hoping that one of them will be that *someday* I've been waiting for.

¹⁴⁹ I definitely think you have to be willing to sacrifice. Only a lucky handful is able to fall in love with someone who likes all the same things and wants all the same things in life (hmm, sounds kind of boring to me). But it has to be something that I can live without that doesn't fundamentally alter my happiness. For example, I want to live in New York City for a year. Jason HATES big cities. So, we won't be

out. Love is smiling for no other reason than all the delicious thoughts in my head. Love is waking up together and spending the morning together. Love is abhorring the possibility of sleeping alone again. Love is not knowing what I'd be without him.¹⁵⁰ Love is longing for the day when we can finally *say goodnight and stay together*.¹⁵¹ Love is wanting to understand what the other person is feeling. Love is comfortable silence. Love is being able to laugh at each other. Love is being vulnerable. Love is hoping to spend the rest of our lives together. Love is being willing to wait for *someday*. Love is forever.

Right now,¹⁵² it's hard not overlook the pain that love has caused me. But I do remember with great detail what love did to me.

What is love?¹⁵³

moving there. However, if Jason were a devout Pentecostal and believed that dancing and music and alcohol and the movies were tools of the devil, well, then I would have to say goodbye.

¹⁵⁰ Paraphrased from "God Only Knows" on *Pet Sounds* (1966) by The Beach Boys.

¹⁵¹ From "Wouldn't It Be Nice."

¹⁵² Right now it's January 22, 2004. I am listening to Chris Isaak's *Forever Blue*, an entire album of songs inspired by heartbreak. I do feel that familiar pull in my chest, in that spot where tears begin, yet, I am too happy in my life to actually start crying. Right now it's just over three months from graduation and moving in with Jason. Finally, this long chain of love and heartbreak will finally be snapped (I'm crossing my fingers). I love someone. I am loved. And this time we really think it will be forever. Listening to "Wouldn't It Be Nice" makes me long for that time when we are constantly together, married, happy, but it also shows me how far away I once was, how far away it still could be. This longing is personal. It has been with me as long as I can remember because love, on some level, has always been unrequited. Forever the optimist, forever hoping for the best (basically just stubborn and not willing to give up), I will wait out the pain of love until it circles back to the happiness of love.

¹⁵³ Certainly some of the things that make love and happiness synonymous also make love and pain synonymous.

Love is taking more sleeping pills than necessary.¹⁵⁴ Love is working out seven times a week and eating nothing but Cap’N Crunch and spaghetti with tomato sauce (NO CHEESE) just to look good at a party he (or his friends) will be attending.¹⁵⁵ Love is uncertainty. Love is breaking into tears in the middle of a class because it would have been the nine-month anniversary of our first kiss. Love is being unable to taste food, even when I am dreaming of french fries, and knowing that eating them won’t really make me feel any better.¹⁵⁶ Love is feeling like *someday* will never come. Love is spending all my free time alone because I feel that my presence will instantaneously suck all the fun out of anyone I come in contact with.¹⁵⁷ Love is feeling worthless, hating myself. Love is sleeping with the phone in one hand. Love is waking

¹⁵⁴ I went over to Brett’s house a few days after Christmas to give him his presents. I was really excited to see him, thinking we were going to get back together. Unfortunately, his new girlfriend (well, they’d been dating for a month or so, but he hadn’t really gotten around to telling me) was curled up on the couch in his room. This is a girl that I repeatedly asked him if he was dating, whom I saw him kissing once, but he always denied it. She supposedly had a boyfriend/fiancé of seven years (what 20-year-old actually has dated someone for seven years?). But there she was on *our* couch. I went home and took about five sleeping pills. I couldn’t get to sleep fast enough.

¹⁵⁵ Looking back at the period after Brett dumped me, I think, man, I had some serious(ly) (unhealthy) self-control. I’d never be able to eat so little today. I’d never want to. But then, I had an obsession with convincing him, by any means necessary, that he had made a mistake, he really did love me, and that he should want me back. So, I jeopardized my health, stopped eating, and began exercising more than Olympic athletes. Boy, feminists would have a field day with this.

¹⁵⁶ This has happened several times. And you might think that this is great for someone who is constantly watching what she eats. Well, sure. But I also LOVE to eat. I LOVE food. Normally, when I get upset, I grab something decadent, some Ben & Jerry’s Phish Food or movie theatre butter popcorn, and it calms me down. But when I’m dealing with a much greater emotional trauma, my taste buds simply shut down. And to get no satisfaction from brownie batter is just sad. So, not only am I alone and miserable, I can’t even enjoy the pleasure of a Coca Cola.

¹⁵⁷ *Losing love is like a window in your heart. Everyone sees you’re blown apart...* Paul Simon-
“Graceland” on *Graceland*.

and wishing I were still asleep, wishing I never had to wake up ever again. Love is thinking *maybe if we think and wish and hope and pray it might come true*,¹⁵⁸ but feeling completely out of control. Love is wishing I could hit the rewind or fast-forward buttons on my life. Love is not being able to see that he doesn't love me back.¹⁵⁹ Love is constantly worrying that it will all end, that this love (pain) will be taken away from me and I'll be left with nothingness. Love is dreaming that somebody loves me.¹⁶⁰

TEN

The reflection of my eyelashes in the lenses of my sunglasses was distracting me. I needed to talk through some things, mull them around in my head.

¹⁵⁸ Lyrics from "Wouldn't It Be Nice." Growing up, I never had a boyfriend. I always had crushes. Most of them were nothing; just thinking the popular boy was cute, never really believing anything would come from it. They were like fairytales of the mind. I knew they would never come true and I wasn't concerned with that. Then I got to high school and all that changed. I had several crushes (never at the same time; whether or not I am actually dating someone, or dating them in my mind, I am *blindly* loyal. It was inconceivable to like Matt when Scott was whom I really wanted). I would spend enormous amounts of time trying to figure out what my crush was thinking, what his actions signified, if he liked me too, and how he might fall in love with me someday. I was always hoping and wishing. Yet, unlike "Wouldn't It Be Nice," it was only *me* hoping and wishing. Each one ended in rejection.

¹⁵⁹ Barthes in a selection from *A Lover's Discourse* comments, "Even as he obsessively asks himself why he is not loved, the amorous subject lives in the belief that the loved object does love him but does not tell him" (p. 431, *A Barthes Reader*). As Barthes explains, because we believe ourselves "simultaneously loved and abandoned," the pain is worse (p.432).

¹⁶⁰ *Last night I dreamt that somebody loved me. No hope, no harm, just another false alarm....*From "Last Night I Dreamt Somebody Loved Me" by the Smiths on *Strangeways Here We Come*. Barthes: "I never stop believing that I am loved. I hallucinate what I desire." Freud: "We must take into account the fact that the hallucinatory psychosis of desire not only...brings concealed or repressed desires to consciousness but, further, represents them in all good faith as realized" (both on p. 432 of *A Barthes Reader*). I became attached to that image of us together. I couldn't separate the past from the present. We were together. I would see him at parties having fun with someone else and it stung. Why isn't he next to me? We are together. I love him. So, that means he loves me.

“*When I was young, I never needed anyone.*”¹⁶¹ So, why does it seem like I’ll never be happy without him?”

“You spent the last twenty-four hours with him. What more do you want?”¹⁶²

“I want him to feel like I feel,”¹⁶³ I replied.

Sinking my feet into the packed sand, I *close my eyes*. He’s *somehow closer now*.¹⁶⁴ Remembering the *happy times together we’ve been spending*. I wish that every kiss was *neverending*.¹⁶⁵ Will you remember forever? Do you wish for the same things I do?¹⁶⁶

I looked at her. I only saw myself in her sunglasses. I couldn’t help asking, “Don’t you want to know somebody loves you?” Not wanting to be in love was incomprehensible to me.¹⁶⁷

“*You know it seems the more we talk about it, it only makes it worse to live without it,*”¹⁶⁸ she countered.

“*But let’s talk about it.*”¹⁶⁹ Please. It makes me feel better, thinking about it, hoping that someday he’ll realize that he wants to be with me.” Then I can make plans for us, and live

¹⁶¹ From Eric Carmen’s *All By Myself*, which is in my collection on *Billboard Top Hits 1976*. Also features prominently in the film version of *Bridget Jones’s Diary*.

¹⁶² Dialog from *Shag, the Movie*.

¹⁶³ Reply to the above dialog.

¹⁶⁴ Lyrics from the Beach Boys’ “Good Vibrations.”

¹⁶⁵ Lyrics from the Beach Boys’ “Wouldn’t It Be Nice.”

¹⁶⁶ Yes, these are the thoughts that preoccupy me. I am constantly worrying that such and such event meant more to me than it did to him and consequentially, he’ll forget it ever happened. Which is the same thing as if it never happened.

¹⁶⁷ Even during the worst days, those days when I wish I could hibernate until spring, I keep that feeling close. I don’t let that love slip away. I clench in my hands, holding on to whatever part I can until I am blinded by it and can no longer see reality. In my reality there was no break up. *Maybe someday he’ll see*. No relationship ends.

¹⁶⁸ Lyrics from the Beach Boys’ “Wouldn’t It Be Nice.”

through my dreams. Tomorrow we'll meet on the beach. We'll be running towards each other...Everything will work itself out. If it doesn't, I have a Plan B.

"Fine, we'll talk. But having high hopes just means it's easier to be let down."

True. I would arrive at his apartment with wildly implausible hopes. Usually, I would go home in tears, playing "Don't Speak"¹⁷⁰ on the never-ending drive back to Georgia. In the pages of my journals, I would break. Sometimes I would admit that my optimism was slipping. Sometimes I would wonder if he would even cry if I died. Would he regret it then? What would it take for him to realize? Was I the one who needed to realize?

He was coming toward me. Now was the time to talk, to go for a walk. If we walked off toward the horizon, would we get anywhere?

It actually turned out to be just like my dream (minus the running to each other on the beach). That walk on the beach changed everything. We talked to each other. Really talked. Really connected...I was shocked. Jason seemed to want to be with someone, to find someone to love him.¹⁷¹ I knew he meant me and I was happy again.

ELEVEN

What is happiness?¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Lyrics from the Beach Boys' "Wouldn't It Be Nice."

¹⁷⁰ I used to think that I was Gwen Stefani. Or maybe she was me. All of her songs were my songs. But really, we had just gone through the same thing: a break up. And anyone who has been on the receiving end knows this same tune: *You and me. We used to be together, everyday together. Always. I really feel like I'm losing my best friend. I can't believe this could be the end. It looks as though you're letting go. And if it's real I don't want to know...* (From "Don't Speak" on *Tragic Kingdom*).

¹⁷¹ From my journal entry on July 4, 2003.

¹⁷² Obviously, the answers are going to be very personal and highly subjective. Really, can't just about anything make a person happy? It's all in the positioning. And some things that make me happy today, will someday make me sad. (Although I hope not.)

Love is happiness. Listening to “Wouldn’t It Be,” I am so happy. I have love. I know we will make it to *someday*.

But what is happiness exactly?

Happiness is¹⁷³ being in love. Happiness is sunny days, the warm, mellow feeling of the sky just before dusk. Happiness is watching videos at home with a bowl of buttery popcorn and a cherry Coke. Happiness is noticing him noticing me. Happiness is receiving homemade chocolate covered strawberries for my birthday. Happiness is finding non-postage-paid mail in my mailbox. Happiness is spending the morning together. Happiness is being satisfied with window-shopping. Happiness is wearing his clothes. Happiness is the feeling I get when he tells me he “loves the hell out of me.” Happiness is knowing he is my best friend. Happiness is spending snowy days snuggled on the couch. Happiness is looking in the mirror and feeling beautiful. Happiness is playing house. Happiness is after 9PM when I can talk to Jason for as long as I want. Happiness is dinner out with my friends. Happiness is comfortable silence. Happiness is not worrying about the bills. Happiness is sleeping in together (or alone). Happiness is looking down the stairway and seeing him at the bottom, smiling at me. Happiness is the colorful packaging of frozen foods. Happiness is feeling like I can have everything I want. Happiness is knowing Jason wants to spend the rest of his life with me. Happiness is driving on a sunny day listening to the *Dirty Dancing* soundtrack. Happiness is talking about future plans. Happiness is the melody from “Wouldn’t It Be Nice.”¹⁷⁴ Happiness is controlling my own destiny. Happiness is brushing our teeth together, looking at our reflection in the bathroom

¹⁷³ In middle school my choir class performed “Happiness Is.” from *You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown!* Every time I try to think of what happiness is, it is to the tune of this song. Unfortunately, all I remember is the melody and “happiness is...”

¹⁷⁴ It gives me the feeling of momentum, that it is propelling me towards this wonderful *someday*, that the possibilities are endless, and that love lasts.

mirror. Happiness is hugs.¹⁷⁵ Happiness is being free from the past. Happiness is spending the day together and *holding each other close the whole night through*.¹⁷⁶ Happiness is finally reaching Columbus after driving for nine hours. Happiness is the smell of the ocean. Happiness is a pair of cute shoes that don't give me blisters. Happiness is realizing the person who I can't live without can't live without me. Happiness is receiving text messages. Happiness is looking at old photographs and being proud of all my experiences.¹⁷⁷ Happiness is getting back together.

Happiness will be moving in together. Happiness will be mixing our CD collections. Happiness will be sitting down to dinner together. Happiness will be celebrating the decision to spend the rest of our lives together. Happiness will be living the rest of our lives together.

TWELVE

When I was at Harrod's nearly a week ago,¹⁷⁸ I bought Elizabeth and Matt's¹⁷⁹ wedding cards. Two of them. I am completely enchanted by wedding cards, and generally all aspects of

¹⁷⁵ I am a big fan of hugs. Hugs from my dad. Hugs from my friends, Hugs from Jason. Hugs from Brett were good too. It as if what's on the outside does not matter, only what's between the two people hugging.

¹⁷⁶ From "Wouldn't It Be Nice."

¹⁷⁷ Obviously I am a person who is dedicated to recording, as best as possible, the events of my life. I have lots of pictures. Like all my journals, the pictures are generally from 'important' events: vacations, dances, and parties, not the everyday experiences. Unlike my journals, the pictures are mostly of good times. There are no pictures of break ups; it's selective memory.

¹⁷⁸ This section is from a journal entry on August 28, 2001, when I was studying theatre and contemporary culture in London.

¹⁷⁹ Elizabeth and Matt got married the week after they graduated from Xavier University. They started dating in the fall of our junior year (the same year they got engaged). I thought they were crazy. They were too young to get married, and Matt was leaving for officer's training school too soon (he is now in Iraq). But on some level, I was *slightly* jealous that they were getting married and that Jason and I were not. I felt like maybe he didn't love me as much as Matt loved Elizabeth. And while I was happy for them, it did hurt, knowing that I was so far away from that happiness.

weddings. They can be so intricate or pleasantly simple and still be absolutely beautiful. And the cards here are simply breathtaking. They are way more up-market than Hallmark, aimed at a younger and more affluent audience. Loads of creativity. And as I was picking cards for Elizabeth, I realized that I was hoping that someday my friends will take such care in selecting cards for me. I wanted someone to buy me a marvelous £6 wedding card from Harrod's.

Yes, I'll say it: I want to get married. I'm not entirely sure why that is. I realize that you (and I) don't need a certificate to prove our enduring love.¹⁸⁰ And I don't believe in God. More specifically, I don't believe that God has any bearing on the success of our relationship. It is solely between us. So, I don't need a church. I don't want one.

Last night Jason and I started talking about getting married, again. He is having a little trouble with the idea of a wedding. Actually, he seems fine with the celebration but not the

¹⁸⁰ Actually, my older (half) brother, Jolyon, has been living with his girlfriend, Kari, since I was in seventh grade. So, they've been together, living in the same household for over a decade now, probably close to 12 years, and they have no plans to get married. They are definitely dedicated to being with one another, but see no reason to make it binding by law. A couple years ago, on their tenth anniversary they considered having a civil ceremony up in the Sawtooth Mountains, but they didn't. They are perfectly happy (to my knowledge) without being married. So, in theory, I agree with this idea. Why would I need a piece of paper to confirm that Jason loves me? Am I so insecure that I need to have him legally obligated to me? I know he wants to be with me forever. He's said so; I've said so. And Jason, like Jo and Kari, sees no point in getting married. But it's still nagging at me. Do these people who get married love each other more? Are they more committed? Or just co-dependent? And, if they are, is there anything really wrong with that? I just want him to ask. I just want him to look me in the eyes and say, "Jess, I love you more than anyone in the world and I want to spend the rest of my life with you...." And he pretty much has, just not formally. Really, I just want to plan the wedding.

convention. I believe he actually called marriage a “cult” and said that it was all about being a “joiner.”¹⁸¹

“It’s like, I like punk rock, but I wouldn’t go out and get a Mohawk; it would compromise the whole principle....”¹⁸²

Hmmm.....so anti-bourgeois. Sometimes he drives me nuts.

“Jason, this is just about celebrating that we are in love and have decided to sleep together in the same bed for the rest of our lives.”

“We don’t need to get married to do that.”

“You’re just arguing for the sake of arguing...”

“Why are you so obsessed with weddings lately?”

1) Right now I am sure of Jason’s love for me. However, it was not like that in the past. And it certainly was not so with Brett. I never knew; I was always looking for a sign, some way to be sure of his feelings. I guess that means I think marriage is some form of security.¹⁸³

2) I want this happiness that I am feeling now to never end. I have never been so happy; I just want it to last forever.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Isn’t it always about identity and difference? Not wanting to be married just makes you a joiner of a different group.

¹⁸² I think Jason had a point, but he lost it when he started talking about Mohawks. Getting married doesn’t compromise love; it just codifies it in a manner he doesn’t see as necessary.

¹⁸³ In light of the divorce rate, this statement makes me look rather silly. I feel like I should not equate marriage and security, but I keep thinking that he would not marry me unless he really does want to be with me forever. There is a certain amount of comfort in knowing that somebody loves me enough to want to spend the rest of his life with me.

¹⁸⁴ *We could be married, and then we’d be happy...* from “Wouldn’t It Be Nice.” While I do think that Adorno’s concept of music as “social cement” is more than a little outdated (*On Popular Music* was written before the advent of youth culture and counter culture) and the distinction between high and

3) Marriage seems like it's part of the natural progression of love.¹⁸⁵

4) I love weddings.¹⁸⁶ I like thinking about what dress I will wear, what time of day the ceremony will be, what music will be playing, what food will be served.

“So, do I have to buy you a ring first?”¹⁸⁷

low/mass culture has dissolved into unimportance, I believe he is correct in asserting that “music listened to with a general inattention, which is only interrupted by sudden flashes of recognition...is transformed... into a language which serves as a receptacle for [the listener's] institutional wants...” (Adorno, 1998, p.206). Slowly these images and sounds add up, to the point that I am not even aware that it is happening, and constitute my mind-set, informing my desires, expectations, and experiences.

¹⁸⁵ I suppose this is what Gramsci would call hegemony. Even from grade school, girls and boys tease each other on the playground with “First comes love, then comes marriage, then come the baby in the baby carriage...” There are countless media images testifying that love, if it is true love (holy metanarrative Batman!), will end in marriage. Most of the time, we aren't even aware that these systems are at work and have power over us.

¹⁸⁶ Weddings are a fantasy, (re)enacting countless images from perfect love songs (“Going to the Chapel”) and movies (*My Best Friend's Wedding*). Of course, I should want a three-tiered wedding cake with little people on top (nevermind that I actually want to serve cupcakes and brownies) and tents strung with twinkle lights. I grew up thinking these iconic images were normal (and I assume others did too). These fantasies have become reality, as weddings get bigger, pricier and more elaborate, with planners and coordinators *producing* the event. It is an industry designed to make your dream (my dream) real. Brides, competing with fairytales, feel let down when they can't be Cinderella or Cameron Diaz. These expectations invert the reality/fantasy relationship. Suddenly, weddings look like the one in *Father of the Bride* or *The Godfather*. These have become reality. It seems natural to want one. Both Baudrillard and Umberto Eco noted that we (speaking particularly of Americans) imagine the real thing and the only way to actually attain it is to fabricate it. The pictures in my mind can only be satisfied by (re)creating the fake image that I have seen on screen, scenes from a marriage that never took place, could never be found in court records.

¹⁸⁷ After agreeing that we did want to have some sort of ceremony, I told Jason he still had to ask me. He wanted me to ask him because it would be *so ironic*. I put my foot down on that. I may not want a traditional white wedding in a church, but I was not going to give up on being proposed to. As Rob Gordon in *High Fidelity* said, “I thought the asking was the important part.” And it is.

“Oh, I don’t know. It’s so much money,” I said. “But I definitely want a wedding ring.”

“Wait, there are two rings?!... Weddings are stupid.”

EPILOGUE

It’s sunny outside. And it’s sunny inside my apartment. I always put my bed as close to the window as possible. I love to be wrapped in blankets, layered in flannel, sleepy-eyed and lazy, in my bed. There is no greater pleasure than waking up naturally, from sunlight slipping through the blinds, and simply delighting in the softness of the sheets against my toes or the weighty cocoon of my down comforter as I roll on my side to see Jason’s face, eyelashes touching his cheek. But normally, he is awake before I am, and already in the living room watching *Sports Center*.

I like this time of day, before the day actually starts, before there are things to do and places to go. He’ll drink green tea; I’ll have skim milk with my Kroger-brand cinnamon and spice oatmeal.

I used to dream of these mornings. I used to think,

*Wouldn't it be nice if we could wake up
In the morning when the day is new
And after having spent the day together
Hold each other close the whole night through.*¹⁸⁸

Suddenly these dreams from a song seem a little bit more like reality.¹⁸⁹

After watching *Dr. Phil* and the 11am re-run of *Sports Center* and taking a shower, I ask, “So, what do you want for lunch?”

¹⁸⁸ One section of “Wouldn’t It Be Nice.” It has a Sunday morning feel to it. We’d read the paper together and lounge on the couch in our pajamas. Later we might take in a matinee or run some errands, nothing particularly spectacular, just nice: nice to be able to spend it with each other.

¹⁸⁹ Or is it that reality seems a little bit more like dreams?

“Whatever.” This is always his answer. This is also always my answer. I’m not sure how we manage to feed our selves. Eighteen minutes later and three rounds of “You decide”; “No, you decide. I decided last time,” we head to KFC to pick up some popcorn chicken and potato wedges for lunch. Before he settles on a CD, I pop in the *Charlie’s Angels: Full Throttle* soundtrack and play track twelve:

*This will be
An everlasting love
This will be
The one I've waited for
This will be
The first time anyone has loved me, oh...oh...oh...*

*I'm so glad
He found in time
And I'm so glad that
He rectified my mind
This will be
An everlasting love for me, whoa, ho*

*Loving you
Is some kind of wonderful
Because you've shown me
Just how much you care
You've given me the thrill of a lifetime
And made me believe you've got more thrills to spare, oh*

*This will be
And everlasting love, oh, yes, it will now*

*You've brought a lot of sunshine into my life
You've filled me with happiness I never knew
You gave me more joy than I ever dreamed of
And no one, no one can take the place of you*

*This will be, yes, siree, eternally
Huggin' and squeezin' and kissin' and pleasin' together forever through
rain or whatever
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, you and me
So long as I'm livin' true love I'll be givin', to you I'll be servin'
cause you're so deservin'*

Hey, you're so deservin'
You're so deservin', yeah, yeah, yeah
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh
The love, the love, the love, the love, the love, the love, love, love,
love, love
The love, the love, the love, the love, the love, the love, love, love
*From now on, from now on, from now on, from now on*¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Lyrics from Natalie Cole's "This Will Be (an everlasting love)" found at www.STLyrics.com

CHAPTER 4

REFLECTIONS/CONSTRUCTIONS

All my bags are packed. I'm ready to go.¹⁹¹ I'm homeward bound. Home where my thought's escaping, home where my music's playing, home where my lovelife's waiting silently form me.¹⁹²

Today is February 16, 2004. I just spent Valentine's Day without Jason. Right now all I can think about is this 'conclusion'¹⁹³ and that it's the only thing that separates me from the drive to Columbus. I get to go home. But then I have to come back. Finally in May, I will get to move home and be with Jason. But then there is always something else I'll have to do, something more to wish for.

"Are we there yet?"

"No."

"When will get there?"

"Hopefully soon." We've been waiting so long.

¹⁹¹ From "Leaving on a Jet Plane" by John Denver. When I am sitting on the couch, just watching television or doing something equally mindless, my eyes drift around the room, trying to figure out what to box next. Do I really need all these soup bowls? It will be warm soon; I can take some sweaters home with me. I haven't watched these movies in ages. I mentally measure the space in my Jetta's trunk, trying to figure out if I can fit the blue bookcase in it. Every little bit I can take now means I don't have to take it later. And the more stuff I have at Jason's apartment, the more it is my apartment too.

¹⁹² From "Homeward Bound" by Paul Simon.

¹⁹³ Trihn Min-ha (1991) writes, "The closure here, however, is a way of letting the work go rather than sealing it off" (pp.15-16). As I write the last sentences of this thesis, I put it to rest. But I can always revisit it. There is no finality to it. It will never feel done. I can move on, but it is always with me.

Driving northbound along Interstate 75, it feels like we (I) will never get there. Each trip is a series of check points. Atlanta. Chattanooga. Knoxville. Jellico (for my Spicy Chicken Sandwich-no mayo-from Wendy's). Lexington. Cincinnati. Columbus. The horizon line is too far away and always out of reach. So, I keep going, crossing off towns on my driving to-do list, trying to reach my goal. Trying to get to Jason, to love, to happiness; hoping we can stay this way and be happy and in love even when we are no longer young.

But when I get to Columbus, even once my furniture, shoes, waffle iron and CDs are put in their proper places, I will always want more. I will always be on the road to *someday*. Like tomorrow, it will never come.¹⁹⁴

Yet, I am happy, knowing I can come close, trying to reach it. The beauty of *someday* is that it is constantly in motion, malleable to every time, place, and situation. I am always *wishin' and hopin' and thinkin' and prayin', planin' and dreamin'*¹⁹⁵ of *someday*. It's something to work for and it's always changing according to what I desire. I model it after thousands of images, songs and movies, books and experiences.

Right now, "Wouldn't It Be Nice" features prominently in my story. Its notions of youth, love, and happiness inform me, guiding my desires. Much of these ideas will last, bleeding into other areas of my life, generating other concepts and new desires. My *someday* is being at home with Jason, saying goodnight and staying together, but soon I will have that and my *someday* will become something different. Maybe then *someday* will be marriage or buying a house, baking perfect cupcakes or maybe even getting a job.

¹⁹⁴ In some way, I can get there, I can attain the goal. But once it is attained. It is no longer *someday*. *Someday* morphs into the next ideal, the next desire. (Just like tomorrow. Tomorrow is Tuesday, and I will get to Tuesday, but when it is Tuesday, it is no longer tomorrow).

¹⁹⁵ From "Wishin' and Hopin'" by Dusty Springfield.

*My story's infinite*¹⁹⁶

This project, while neatly formatted and ready to be sent to university print and copy services for binding, is not done. Nor, will it ever be. This thesis truly never ends. It simply trails off,¹⁹⁷ reaching toward the future, eternity, *someday*. Once it reaches its end, another story emerges. Trihn Minh-ha (1991, p. 15) elaborates this idea for me:

[It] is not a work whose step precedes other steps in a trajectory that leads to the final work. It is not a work awaiting a better, more perfect stage of realization. Inevitably, a work is always a form of tangible closure. But closures need not close off; they can be doors opening onto other closures and functioning as ongoing passages to an elsewhere (-within-here).

It is never finished because I am also an unfinished work, being constructed and constructing myself every moment of every day with every thought and every action. While this stage of my life may be coming to a closure, it is also reaching toward another stage. “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” is only one of innumerable influences, only part of the story, my story.

¹⁹⁶ From “Birdhouse in Your Soul” by They Might Be Giants. I’m sure someone once said that all good stories have a beginning, middle, and an end. But is there ever really an end, or is the end just where someone decided it was a convenient cut-off point in the story? It can never be complete; all cannot be told or shown. There must always be more. Just like *someday*, the end of the story never arrives.

¹⁹⁷ Somewhat like MacArthur’s old soldiers never dying. They just fade away.

REFERENCES

- Appignanesi, R. & Garrett, C. (1995). *Introducing Postmodernism*. New York, NY: Totem Books; Lanham, Md.: Distributed to the trade in the U.S. by National Book Network.
- Asher, T., Love, M., & Wilson, B. (1966). Wouldn't it be nice. [Recorded by the Beach Boys]. On *Pet Sounds*. Los Angeles: Capitol Records.
- Barthes, R. (1968). *Elements of Semiology* (A. Lavers & C. Smith, Trans.). New York: Noonday Press.
- Barthes, R. (1977). The grain of the voice. In S. Frith, & A. Goodwin (Eds.)(1990), *On Record: Rock, pop and the written word* (pp.293-300). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Barthes, R. (1979). *Lover's Discourse, Fragments*. New York: Noonday Press.
- Barthes, R. (1992). *A Barthes Reader*. S. Sontag (Ed.). New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barrett, M. (1999). *Imagination in Theory*. New York: New York University Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation* (S. F. Glaser, Trans.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1997). *Fragments: Cool Memories Iii, 1990-1995*. (E. Agar, Trans.). London: Verso Books.
- Baudrillard, J. (1998). *The Consumer Society: myths and structures* (C. Turner, Trans.). London: Sage Publications.
- Bennett, A. (2000). *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, identity and place*. New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc.
- Booth, M. W. (1981). Jingle: Pepsi-Cola hits the spot. In S. Frith & A. Goodwin (Eds.)(1990), *On Record: Rock, pop and the written word* (pp. 320-325). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Bowen, D. S. (1997). Lookin' for Margaritaville: Place and imagination in Jimmy Buffett's Songs. *Journal of Cultural Geography*. 16.2: 99-108.

- Bruner, J. (1997). Reading A: 'Life as narrative.' In H. Mackay (Ed.), *Consumption and Everyday Life* (pp. 105-111). London: Sage Publications.
- Buck-Morss, S. (1991). *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Buxton, D. (1983). Rock Music, the star system and the rise of consumerism. In S. Frith, & A. Goodwin (Eds.) (1990). *On Record: Rock, pop and the written word* (pp. 427-440). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Caine, A. (2001). The A.I.P. Beach movies-Cult Films Depicting Subcultural Activities. *Scope: An Online Journal of Film Studies*.
<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/film/journal/articles/aip-beach-movies.htm>.
 (2002, Nov. 15).
- Carney, G. O. (Ed.). (1994). *Sounds of People and Places: A Geography of American Folk and Popular Music* (3rd ed.). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Carney, G. O. (1999). Cowabunga! Surfer Rock and the Five Themes of Geography. *Popular Music and Society*. 23.4: 3-29.
- Cavicchi, D. (1998). *Tramps Like Us: Music and meaning among Springsteen Fans*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1994). *The Hélène Cixous Reader*. S. Sellers (Ed.) London: Routledge.
- Cixous, H. & Calle-Gruber, M. (1997). *Rootprints: memory and life writing*. (E. Prenowitz, Trans.). New York: Routledge.
- Connell, J. & Gibson, C. (2003). *Sound tracks: Popular music, identity and place*. New York: Routledge.
- Copland, A. (1952). *Music and Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cross, S. & Gore, J. S. (2002). Cultural Models of the Self. In M. Leary & J. Tangrey (Eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity* (pp. 536-566). New York: Guilford Press.
- Cunningham, D., & Bleiel, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Add some music to your day: Analyzing and enjoying the music of the Beach Boys*. Cranberry Township, PA: Tiny Ripple Books.
- Davies, B. (1999). The Discourse of Love. *Melbourne Studies in Education*. 40(2): 41-57.
- DeNora, T. (2000). *Music in everyday life*. Cambridge: University Press.

- Denzin, N. K. (1994). Evaluating qualitative research in the poststructural moment: The Lessons James Joyce Teaches Us. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 7 (4), 295-308.
- Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Ellis, C & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as Subject. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Finnegan, R. (1997). 'Storying the self': Personal narratives and identity. In H. Mackay (Ed.), *Consumption and Everyday Life* (pp. 65-104). London: Sage Publications.
- Flaherty, M., Denzin, N., Manning, P., & Snow, D. (2002). Review Symposium: Crisis in representation. *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, 31(4), 478-507.
- Ford, L. R. (1971). Geographic Factors in the Origin, Evolution and Diffusion of Rock and Roll. *The Journal of Geography* 70: 455-64.
- Frith, S. & Goodwin, A. (Eds.). (1990). *On Record: Rock, pop, and the written word*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Frith, S. (1987). Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music. In R. Leppert & S. McClary (Eds.), *Music and Society: The Politics of Consumption, Performance and Reception* (pp. 133-149). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frith, S. (1988). *Music for pleasure: Essays in the sociology of pop*. New York: Routledge.
- Frith, S. (1996). *Music and identity*. In S. Hall & P. du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp.108-127). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Gabler, N. (1998). *Life: The Movie*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Gannon, S. (2003). *Flesh and the text: Poststructural theory and writing research*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. James Cook University, Australia.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gergen, K. (1994). *Realities and Relationships: Soundings in social construction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Gracyk, T. (2001). *I wanna be me: Rock music and the politics of identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Granata, C. L. (2003). *Wouldn't it be nice: Brian Wilson and the making of the Beach Boys' Pet Sounds*. Chicago: A Cappella Books.
- Grossberg, L. (1990). Is there rock after punk? In S. Frith, & A. Goodwin (Eds.), *On Record: Rock, pop and the written word* (pp. 111-123). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Grossberg, L. (1992). *We Gotta Get Out of this Place: Popular conservatism and postmodern culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Hardy, B. (1977). Narrative as a primary act of mind. In M. Meek, A. Warlow & G. Barton (Eds.) *The Cool Web* (pp. 12-23). London: Bodley Head.
- Hebdige, D. (1988). Post-script 4: Learning to live on the road to nowhere. In *Hiding in the Light: On images and things*, (pp. 233-244). New York: Comedia.
- Hesmondhalgh, D., & Negus, K. (2002). *Popular music studies*. London: Arnold.
- Hornby, N. (1996). *High Fidelity*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Jago, B. J. (2002). Chronicling an academic depression. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31, 729-757.
- Klosterman, C. (2003). *Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs*. New York: Schribner.
- Leaf, D. (1978). *The Beach Boys and the California myth*. New York: Putnam Publishing Group.
- Leaf, D. (1993). *The Beach Boys Good Vibrations: Thirty years of the Beach Boys*. (Liner notes for the boxed set issued in 1993 by Capitol Records).
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). (Ed). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Lloyd, D. (2000, June). *Mercury Models: Distortion of Language and Identity in New Heavy Metal*. Paper presented at the International Seminar "Popular Music Today: Objects, Practices, Approaches," Sofia, Bulgaria.
- Mackay, H. (Ed.). (1997). *Consumption and Everyday Life*. London: Sage Publications.
- May, K. G. (2002). *Golden State, Golden Youth: The California image in popular culture 1955-1966*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- McQuail, D. (2000). *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Miller, D. (1997). Consumption and Its Consequences. In H. Mackay (Ed.), *Consumption and Everyday Life* (pp. 13-50). London: Sage Publications.
- Minh-ha, T. (1991). *When the moon waxes red*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Morris, G. (1993). Beyond the Beach: Social and Formal Aspects of AIP's Beach Party Movies. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*. 2(1): 2-11.
- Park, R. E. (1950). *Race and Culture*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Reed-Danahay, D. E. (Ed.). (1997). *Auto/ethnography: rewriting the self and the social*. New York: Berg.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Rutsky, R. L. (1999). Surfing the other (surf films from 1950s, 1960s and how teenagers responded). *Film Quarterly*. 52: 12-23.
- Schechner, R. (2002). *Performance Studies: An introduction*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Schlenker, B. R. (2002). Self Presentation. In M. Leary & J. Tangrey (Eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity* (pp. 492-518). New York: Guilford Press.
- Storey, J. (1998). *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (2nd ed.). Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Tedlock, B. (2000). Ethnography and ethnographic representation. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 455-486). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Ulmer, Gregory. (1989). *Teletheory: grammatology in the age of video*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Vickers, M. H. (2002). Researchers as storytellers: writing on the edge-and without a safety net. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8, 608-621.
- White, T. (1994). *The nearest faraway place: Brian Wilson, the Beach Boys, and the California myth*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

APPENDIX

“WOULDN'T IT BE NICE”

(Brian Wilson/Tony Asher)

Wouldn't it be nice if we were older
Then we wouldn't have to wait so long
And wouldn't it be nice to live together
In the kind of world where we belong

You know its gonna make it that much better
When we can say goodnight and stay together

Wouldn't it be nice if we could wake up
In the morning when the day is new
And after having spent the day together
Hold each other close the whole night through

Happy times together we've been spending
I wish that every kiss was neverending
Wouldn't it be nice

Maybe if we think and wish and hope and pray it might come true
Baby then there wouldn't be a single thing we couldn't do
We could be married
And then we'd be happy

Wouldn't it be nice

You know it seems the more we talk about it
It only makes it worse to live without it
But lets talk about it
Wouldn't it be nice

Good night my baby
Sleep tight my baby