



## City Research Online

### City, University of London Institutional Repository

---

**Citation:** Littler, J. (2004). Celebrity and “meritocracy”. *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture*, 26, pp. 118-130.

This is the accepted version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version.

---

**Permanent repository link:** <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/6017/>

**Link to published version:**

**Copyright:** City Research Online aims to make research outputs of City, University of London available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. URLs from City Research Online may be freely distributed and linked to.

**Reuse:** Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

## Celebrity and 'meritocracy'

Jo Littler

*In our contemporary 'meritocratic' culture new possibilities of social and cultural transition are being produced alongside sharp inequalities of wealth and status. Jo Littler examines how this is both reflected in and produced by current forms of celebrity culture and considers why celebrity is a political issue.*

'You better lose yourself in the music, the moment  
You own it, you better never let it go  
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow  
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime yo' <sup>1</sup>

In the lyrics to Eminem's *Lose Yourself* fame is not simply something that anyone talented can get if they work hard enough. The moments when it might pay off to strive are few and far between: celebrity is a chance moment, a fleeting conjunction, something necessary to seize because of its rarity. You mess up the moment and you will be back in the place you came from, the place to which you do not wish to return. Fame here is not merely the inevitable outcome of the diligent buffing up of some 'raw talent'. It is not quite the low-risk Protestant celebrity work ethic offered by *Fame Academy*. Eminem's lyrics describe a society in which celebrity is more of a random, and potentially cruel, lottery than a birthright for the righteously dedicated. They figure the fragility of fame; they articulate a sense of slim pickings, a place from which there are not many chances, a world in which it becomes all the more important to recognise and to channel intense energy into taking those chances up. In part the intensity comes out of this sense that it is as easy to lose everything as it is difficult to gain it.

*Lose Yourself* zooms in upon and dramatises this moment of chance. As in the film to which these lyrics are soundtrack, *8 Mile*, (whose hero 'Rabbit' is a semi-fictionalised representation of Eminem, the celebrity who plays him) the possibilities of becoming famous are pictured amidst a deprived social backdrop about which a complex tangle of sentiments and messages are expressed. The film is a powerful indictment of the injustice of American poverty, bringing to the big screen images of the depressed urban detritus of downsized industrialisation, dramatising with eloquent rage the difficulties of those kicked to the bottom of the social pile. At the same time, its implied solution is the individualistic achievement of pulling yourself up by the bootstraps against the odds (an ethos leading some commentators to describe Eminem as 'the President's friend').<sup>2</sup> The masculinity of our hero is reconfigured enough to promote a model of caring sensitivity towards children, yet not enough to have reworked its misogyny (all adult women are both inappropriately sexual and let him down badly). The film presents its hybrid social groupings with easy familiarity, endorses an anti-essential understanding of 'race', is alive to some of racism's effects and shows itself to be aware of the issue of appropriating cultures. Yet at the same time the relationship between the white hero and black cultures remains one in which 'cool' is co-opted, through which authenticity is sought and garnered, and within which the hero not only exists but triumphs over and then implicitly leaves behind.<sup>3</sup>

If *8 Mile* and *Lose Yourself* explicitly and expressively grapple with a range of contemporary topics and issues, they also display an array of motifs characteristic of our present mode of celebrity culture, motifs which are, in turn, related to these issues around 'race', gender and inequalities of opportunity. Firstly, they invite us to get very intimate with the emotions of a celebrity. The slippery flux and continuum of Eminem's star persona is heavily dependent on the appearance of him authentically mining and exposing

the details of his life. Secondly, both film and song are highly reflexive about the business of being a celebrity, offering commentaries on some of the 'rules' of the game. And thirdly, they focus on the moment just *before* becoming famous: presenting this moment of graft, of striving, of desire, as a moment of raw 'realness', of authenticity. These three themes - 'real' pre-fame, intimacy and reflexivity - have an entrenched cultural currency beyond this specific instance. All three themes contribute to generating the desire for fame and to making it seem 'ordinary'.

### **Celebrity, media power and meritocracy**

One of the most useful ways to begin to think about the current forms celebrity culture is taking, and its relationship to wider shifts in the dynamics of social and cultural power, is to draw on Nick Couldry's work on media power and its relation to 'the ordinary'.

Couldry writes that

By 'media power', I do not mean the power (ideological or otherwise) exercised upon us by specific media texts; I mean more generally media institutions' differential symbolic power, the concentration of symbolic power in media institutions: that is, the fact that we take it for granted that the media have the power to speak 'for us all' – indeed to define the social 'reality' that we share – a power which individuals, corporations, pressure groups, professional bodies and even perhaps the state do not have.<sup>4</sup>

Couldry draws from Bourdieu, from Sennett and Cobb's theories of the hidden injuries of class, and from his own interviews with 'ordinary' people to argue that there is a constructed symbolic boundary between 'the media world' and 'the ordinary world'. If the 'media world' is marked as a symbolic space of authority, he argues, then 'the ordinary world' is a space marked by its lack of validation. It is in the gap between these

worlds that the 'hidden injuries of media power' are formed. Clearly, this leaves us with some very useful tools with which to think about the hidden injuries of celebrity as well as media power, and Couldry does point us in this direction, arguing that programmes like *Big Brother*, in which 'ordinary' people become celebrities, do not so much transcend the division between worlds as work to reinscribe it. 'To put it crudely', he writes, 'why else would the transition to celebrity (and the games played in celebrity's border zones) matter so much?' (p172). In these terms, media celebrity therefore becomes a means of symbolic validation, a way to 'really' exist, to mean something in public and private, to be rich with symbolic as well as material capital. To seek the full glare of celebrity media validation is to strive against the hidden injuries of disempowerment; to strive against the symbolic disempowerment of the 'ordinary'.

Of course we are not particularly used to thinking of not-being-a-celebrity in the potentially hyperbolic and victimised terms of 'an injury'. But Couldry's schema is extremely useful as it names a phenomenon and a scale that has different levels of intensity. Viewed in this way, it resonates with other academic and critical understandings of the relationship between celebrity, media and society. David Morley for example summarises Suzanne Moore's observation that talk shows can demonstrate 'the simple but powerful capacity of the media to offer these participants some form of recognition, however perverse, of their existence'.<sup>5</sup> The importance of such recognition is not confined to a few; as Chris Rojek writes:

To some extent, the dynamics of modern society mean that all of us are caught up in the celebrity race. It is axiomatic that only a minority acquire the public acclaim and recognition that we associate with celebrity status. It is also axiomatic that if the majority suffer from feelings of rejection and invalidation, they internalize them in ways that pose no threat to the social order.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, what Rojek calls rejection and invalidation, what Moore/Morley might term a lack of recognition and what Couldry calls 'injuries' have a lot in common. Whether at the extreme or 'normal' end of the spectrum, these strategies of cultural coping or non-coping indicate a society and a culture that has developed some extraordinarily unequal ways to validate people's sense of self and collective worth.

Whilst celebrity culture can be understood in terms of symbolic disempowerment, it can also be understood in the context of economic and social disempowerment: in terms of unequal access to material resources and social mobility. Here we need to consider the character of the political conjuncture we inhabit in terms of the Blairite *vision* of Britain as a 'meritocracy'. A 'meritocracy' is nowadays understood as 'a social system which allows people to achieve success proportionate to their talents and abilities, as opposed to one in which social class or wealth is the controlling factor'.<sup>7</sup> This is part of the wider frame of post-Fordist late capitalism in which relatively rigid class identity distinctions have to some extent fractured and multiplied.<sup>8</sup> Whilst the routes between class stratifications have become marginally more porous - generating some high profile examples - substantial class mobility remains out of reach for the majority. Divisions of wealth have become exacerbated over the last few decades in particular, to the extent that in London 43% of children are now living in poverty.<sup>9</sup>

Crucially, the Blairite vision is not of an equality of wealth (as under 'old' Labour) but rather of a state that facilitates the ability to strive for it. As with the logic of late capitalism more broadly, this implicitly rests on the proposition that it is only possible for a few people to be really 'successful'. At the same time, however, the structural drive of Blairite policies, as with other neo-liberal governments like the US, has been to increase marketised competition and to further the dismantling of the welfare state, resulting in the

attempted destruction of collective provision and the erosion of basic quality provision for the poor. This has exacerbated the inequalities of opportunity from which 'talent' (in itself a problematic enough concept) can be healthy enough, culturally equipped enough or even well fed enough to 'rise' through the cultural and social pool. In other words, even taken within its own terms, this discourse of meritocracy fails. That people do not surface at the top through 'merit' alone is flamboyantly illustrated in the US context by the nepotistic career of the current president. As the supportive structures of social welfare institutions become impoverished, people shoulder the burden and threats of social insecurity on an increasingly individualised basis, in what Ulrich Beck describes as 'the risk society'.<sup>10</sup> The lottery becomes a core motif for our times.

The increasing disparity between rich and poor, the risky lottery of social opportunity and the lack of cultural validation for many people in our society goes some good way to explaining the expansion of interest in celebrity culture and the eagerness with which opportunities to become a celebrity are taken up and consumed. These are some of the wider contexts in which Eminem's hymn to the fleeting moment of potential for fame is produced, in which it is bought by the truckload, and in which it clearly resonates with broader structures of feeling. *Lose Yourself* offers the image of immersion in the moment of opportunity for fame. Risk everything to lose your old self and your lack of validation; gamble your identity to acquire wealth, to become acknowledged, to become somebody.

### **Keeping it real: Cinderella and the celebrity work ethic**

Getting to know 'the real' or 'inner' person behind or inside the celebrity has for a long time been an integral means of generating interest in them. As Richard Dyer pointed out in *Heavenly Bodies*:

Stars are obviously a case of appearance – all we know of them is what we see and hear before us. Yet the whole media construction of stars encourages us to think in terms of ‘really’ – what is Crawford really like? Which biography, which word-of-mouth story, which moment in which film discloses her as she really was? The star phenomenon gathers these aspects of contemporary human existence together, laced up with the question of ‘really’.<sup>11</sup>

The question, the enigma of ‘really’, is partly what generates the cultural and economic turnover of our fascination with celebrities. It sells them, products about them and products tenuously connected to them. It informs the way we connect to celebrities, whether as abstract friends, as offering us glimpses of what we would like to be; of lifestyles we wish to inhabit, spaces of impossible longing, characteristics against which we measure ourselves, or mechanisms through which we bond with other people.<sup>12</sup>

However, this question, of what celebrities are ‘really’ like, can matter in a range of different ways. From psychoanalytic perspectives, asking the question of what a celebrity might ‘really’ be like might indicate needs or desires felt to be lacking from our own lives or psyches. From post-structuralist perspectives, it could indicate an unhealthily essentialist fetishisation symptomatic of Western logocentricism, rather than tracing multiple, interrelated developments, intensities or ‘realities’. In terms of cultural history, the search to find out what celebrities are ‘really’ like could be understood in the context of the rise of Romanticism, possessive individualism and capitalist modernity. In these terms the search to find out who and how celebrities ‘really’ are has acted as both oil to the wheels of the celebrity machine and as one of its integral motors. Similarly, the leaking of celebrity secrets has been a long-standing promotional tactic used in order to produce ‘authentic’ information that, as Dyer points out, is ‘often taken to give a privileged access to the real person of the star’.<sup>13</sup>



Dyer's elegant and lucid analyses of film stars such as Judy Garland, Paul Robeson and Marilyn Monroe spawned a whole generation of film studies students who wrote essays on the construction of a particular star's image and fame. In his earlier book, *Stars*, Dyer influentially wrote that 'what is interesting about them is not the characters they have constructed [...] but rather the business of constructing/performing/being (depending on the particular star involved) a "character"' (ibid). Reading this today, and thinking about this in a wider context from that of solely film stars, it is clear that it is not only academic and journalistic commentators who find the business of constructing celebrity fascinating. Celebrity reflexivity, or mulling over the business of being or becoming a star, has become a conspicuous preoccupation of stars themselves, as *Lose Yourself/8 Mile* along with a wide range of other cultural examples (such as *Big Brother*, or Craig David and Sting singing of the *Rise and Fall* of celebrity) indicate.

The markers of what makes a celebrity 'authentic' nowadays is often a combination of the presentation of emotional intimacy with the audience, alongside a degree of reflexivity about being in the position of a celebrity, together with an ability to reference the legitimate 'moment before' fame. We might consider such productions of celebrity 'normality', such messages of how they, once, inhabited the position of wanting to be a celebrity *too*, not only to explore how celebrities are 'just like us' through the way they magnify 'everyday' mannerisms or characteristics (that is, what Couldry terms elsewhere their 'extraordinary ordinariness') but rather to think about how they are presented as being like us *in wanting to be celebrities*. For the idea that 'to be ordinary' in our culture will probably entail 'wanting to be a celebrity' in part gets reproduced and naturalised from such positions.

Clearly, referencing 'the moment before' fame is in part about money, work and class.

One of the most common celebrity stories, most recently epitomised by J-Lo's *Jenny from the Block*, is the celebrity who worked his or her way up from the bottom of the social pile. The rags-to-riches tale is an age-old narrative. It is the story of Cinderella, whose basic plot elements, as Angela Carter said, 'occur everywhere from China to Northern England', wherever there is social inequality;<sup>13</sup> but with different meanings according to the time and place, whether they be amusing pastimes for the Viennese bourgeoisie or expressions of wish-fulfilment for the Irish poor. That this currency has become prominent today is not particularly surprising considering that we live in a world in which rags have become more prevalent and riches more opulent. At the same time the narrative is inflected in some very modern ways. Instead of merely luxuriating in her palatial excess, Cinderella now has to show that she can still remember that she started out in the kitchen. This knowledge or awareness structures her character; it stops her 'getting above herself', it keeps her 'real'.

Why this is such a motif in contemporary culture can be understood in relation to the neo-liberal discourse of meritocracy. Of course, just as there is plenty right in wanting people to move beyond experiences of deprivation, there is nothing wrong with not wanting to be arrogant or socially snobby, (and such sentiments have become common sense in a way they weren't even fifty years ago). But as Stuart Hall pointed out many years ago, celebrations of 'the popular' can take many different political forms.<sup>14</sup> And this is not always a populism which, in its appreciation of 'working class' people and forms, wants to create, hold up and celebrate their image in order to try and give them more opportunities and resources. J-Lo's persona in *Jenny from the Block*, for example, is not constructed around what she gives back: it's what she has extracted from the street – her 'realness', her supposed urban 'groundedness' – and has *taken away with her* that's important. It is a structure of feeling that uses its 'appreciation' for the block for entirely individualistic purposes, in order to justify enormous wealth and divest itself of any guilt,

rather than to enter into a reciprocal relationship. As such it sustains, furthers and deepens inequality rather than tackles it, and is entirely congruent with what has been called 'corporate populism'.<sup>15</sup> What more perfect image could there be for a company to use to sell, what more potent dream to buy than glamour which pretends to be democratic through-and-through?

In J-Lo's case there are of course important explanatory reasons we can bring in here in terms of gender and 'race', reasons why it is unsurprising that a Latina singer from the Bronx might be attracted to *bling*. It has long been recognised that cultures of ostentatious wealth are ways for disenfranchised people to stick two fingers up to those who held them down and back. This is clearly visible in the thick heavy gold chains of black rappers, also worn by young white working-class boys who share their material and cultural disempowerment (and who often want to borrow what is perceived as being their hyper-masculinity). It is apparent in one feminist discourse that, since the shoulder-padded working girls of the 1980s at least, has trumpeted ostentatious wealth as a signifier of female liberation. J-Lo offers a similar celebration of a materialist young feminism as the Destiny's Child anthem *Independent Women*, which celebrates 'all the honeys / that make the money'.

But acknowledging these moves as resistant does not mean that they are wholly progressive and emancipatory. As Don Slater has pointed out, there is a fine but deeply significant line between acknowledging that a consumer or a culture is 'active', and assuming that it is 'oppositional'. To trace the story of the confusion between them is to trace one of the stories of cultural studies, and in between these positions there is 'the most powerful insight of the whole tradition, that cultural studies is part of a social process of making social sense.'<sup>16</sup> Such examples offer one type of liberation (e.g. gender equality) only by annexing or connecting it to a celebratory endorsement of the profit

motive of consumer capitalism. Whereas some used to think that black struggles and gender struggles were by themselves opposed to capitalism (and they often were, as the people on the top of the pile were wholly, instead of mainly, dominated by the white, the male and the upper class) today it is clear that they are not. As Sheila Rowbotham, the campaigner for women's liberation from the 1960s, poignantly puts it: 'our hopes have been appropriated, our aspirations twisted.' Identity politics became articulated to the corporate search for profit as well as the search for co-operation:

Ironically, openings created by social movements were to present market opportunities – the slogans transmogrified into designer labels and some quick-footed 'alternative' capitalists emerged from the melee. Yet the radical dream of the sixties was to be stillborn, for we were not to move towards the cooperative egalitarian society we had imagined. Instead the sixties ushered in an order which was more competitive and less equal than the one we had protested against.<sup>17</sup>

Paul Gilroy talks of a similar process as 'filleting', a process by which corporate interests gut a progressive discourse 'for what they want and adapt it to the rhythms of their own complicity with consumerism'.<sup>18</sup>

This highlights the importance of linkages, or articulation: of how discourses can be linked, re-appropriated or co-opted for progressive or negative ends (in other words, to promote equality, co-operation and the sharing of power and resources, or to promote inequality, individualism, and the waste and uneven distribution of power and resources) and how discourses build their power through alliances. If we are looking for what Williams called 'resources of hope', or meanings that have the potential to be rearticulated to more progressive ends, one might be in the widespread ridiculing of J-Lo's sentiments of being able to 'keep it real' despite her wealth. She clearly is not the

same as she was when she was much poorer, and, to many, the inability to recognise this, and to offer little affective sense of the *difficulty* of moving out of such social circumstances, is insulting both to those who do live in conditions of material poverty and to the intelligence of her audience.<sup>19</sup>

Might another be the different types of relationship that are articulated between celebrities and their materially poorer 'roots'? Ms Dynamite, for instance, is often figured as exposing or highlighting awareness of the broader social issues that surround and have created racism and economic deprivation. Within the constraints of celebrity being always, by definition, individualistic, the Ms Dynamite example does at least offer less individualistic messages. However, this also raises important questions about whether and how celebrity can ever be used to further equalities, and if not, what the opposite or alternatives to celebrity might be. As the Ms Dynamite example shows, there are clearly many ways in which celebrities are used to promote discourses that benefit the many rather than the few. The pronouncements celebrities have made, the attitudes they embody and the identifications they make possible can all be used to instigate cultural change that engenders equality rather than exploitation. For example, from the suffragettes to the Spice Girls and beyond many different types of feminisms have been promoted through celebrities. Non-governmental organisations are perennially keen to garner celebrity support as they raise the news profile of an issue and engender affective identifications.

The most obvious contemporary model of 'democratic' celebrity is probably the celebrity of the 'leader' of the Zapatistas in Mexico, Subcommandante Marcos. Masked and anonymous, this is a celebrity who everyone and anyone can claim to be, as no-one knows who he 'really' is. It is a self-consciously dissolved model of celebrity in which Marcos is everyone, sharing the fame like that other model of celebrity where celebrity is

dissolved into the populace, *Spartacus*. Stanley Kubrick's well-known 1960 epic about slave emancipation (penned by a blacklisted screenwriter) famously featured other male slaves taking in solidarity the identity of condemned revolutionary Roman slave-turned-hero, so that one and all became a shared identity ('I am Spartacus!'). Analogously, the recent finale of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* dissolved Buffy's celebrity and power into all and any potential slayers.

Yet of course in another way these are not so much 'alternative' models of celebrity as rather its antithesis, in which the celebrity is also eradicated by being dissolved into the collectivity. However progressive it is, Ms Dynamite's story is still represented as an *individualised* achievement. Whilst there are aspects of some celebrities that can be used or articulated in less unequal ways, structurally, 'celebrity' is always by definition individualistic: it is both a magnified example of the individualisation of our society and a key mechanism through which this process of individualisation functions.<sup>20</sup> In 'Letter to a Harsh Critic' Gilles Deleuze terms 'the opposite of celebrity' as a set of liberated singularities, opening a 'self' up to the multiplicities within:

It's a strange business, speaking for yourself, in your own name, because it doesn't at all come with seeing yourself as an ego or a person or a subject. Individuals find a real name for themselves, rather, only through the harshest exercise in depersonalization, by opening themselves up to the multiplicities everywhere within them, to the intensities running through them. A name as the direct awareness of such intensive multiplicity is the opposite of the depersonalization effected by the history of philosophy: it's depersonalization through love rather than subjection. What one says comes from the depths of one's ignorance, the depths of one's own underdevelopment. One becomes a set of liberated

singularities, words, names, fingernails, things, animals, little events: quite the reverse of a celebrity.<sup>21</sup>

In these Deleuzian terms, as in Zapatismo, to be the opposite of a celebrity is to not seek individual fame, to not emphasise individuality, but to dissolve such individualism and open ourselves up to the multiplicities that constitute us. To return to Eminem's phrase with which I began, it is a way to 'lose yourself', though with a different inflection: not losing yourself to find a more 'authentic' individual self to market, to gain dominating power through, but to open it up to what is shared, to create mutual ownerships.

### **Lost and found**

In our contemporary 'meritocratic' culture, new possibilities of social and cultural transition are being produced alongside sharp inequalities of wealth and status. This is both reflected in and produced by the current predominant discourse of celebrity culture that surrounds us. In such a context, intimacy, reflexivity and dramatising the 'grounded' moment of pre-fame are key tropes through which the excitement around current celebrity culture is reproduced and maintained. All three are currently in widespread circulation, and all three are ways of making fame seem ordinary, when of course, unless we are all receiving the same material and symbolic recognition, it is no such thing. At the same time, there are a multiplicity of uses to which celebrity, like anti-celebrity, are and can be put, and in we can consider how celebrity is being used in the service of power in particular instances: whether it is being used to help shore it up or dish it out. Simultaneously, we inhabit a variety of roles as producers, consumers, creators, distributors and communicators, roles through which we combine with others to endorse, reject, remould or create what celebrity means in relation to our 'ordinary' lives.

## Notes

This is a shorter version of a longer paper that appears in the new journal *Mediactive*, Issue 2: Celebrity. Thanks to Jonathan Rutherford and Lynda Dyson. All websites accessed August 2003.

1 The full lyrics from this and other songs quoted in this article can be found at a range of online lyric sites such as <http://www.azlyrics.com/c.html>.

2 Johann Hari, 'Eminem: the president's friend', *Independent on Sunday*, 12 January 2003

3 See for example Kimberley Chabot Davies, 'White Hip-Hop: Keepin' it Real or Keepin' it Political?' in *Politics and Culture*, Issue 3, 2003

4 Nick Couldry, 'The hidden injuries of media power' in *Journal of Consumer Culture*, Vol 1 No 2 November 2001 pp155-177. See also his *The Place of Media Power: Pilgrims and Witnesses of the Media Age*, Routledge 2000.

5 David Morley, *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*, Routledge 2000 p111.

6 Chris Rojek, *Celebrity*, Reaktion Books 2001, p147.

7 Michael Young coined the word 'meritocracy' in his book, *The Rise of the Meritocracy 1870-2033*, Penguin, 1958. He later claimed Blair was woefully misusing it. See Michael Quinion's article on his website *World Wide Words* for a discussion of the changing meanings of the word 'meritocracy'. <http://www.quinion.com/words/topicalwords/tw-mer1.htm>.

8 On post-Fordism see for example David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Basil Blackwell 1989.

9 Greater London Authority, *London Divided: Income Inequality and Poverty in the Capital*, GLA 2002.

10 Ulrich Beck, *The Risk Society*, Sage 1992.



- 11 Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, Macmillan Press 1986, p2.
- 12 Richard Dyer, *Stars* New edition; British Film Institute, 1998, p61.
- 13 Angela Carter 'Introduction' to Angela Carter (ed) *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales*, Virago 1990.
- 14 Stuart Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing the Popular' in Raphael Samuel (ed.) *People's History and Socialist Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1981.
- 15 For a discussion of Anthony Barnett's use of this term and related themes see Michael Rustin, 'The New Labour ethic and the spirit of capitalism' in *Soundings*, Issue 14, Spring 2000, p116.
- 16 Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, Polity Press 1997, p171.
- 17 Sheila Rowbotham *Promise of a Dream: Remembering the Sixties*, Penguin 2000, ppxiv-xv.
- 18 Marquand Smith, 'On the State of Cultural Studies: An interview with Paul Gilroy' *Third Text* 49, Winter 1999-2000, p21.
- 19 For example Dorien Lynskey, 'How Lo can you go?' *The Big Issue*, December 2-8 2002, p29.
- 20 See Dyer, 1986, op cit, ppix-18 on celebrities, society and individualism.
- 21 Gilles Deleuze, 'Letter to a Harsh Critic' in *Negotiations 1972-1990*, Columbia University Press 1995, pp6-7.