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Pop Music: Capturing Live Performance

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Introduction

In this chapter I offer contextual and textual analyses of an appearance of Mick Jagger on Granada Television's current affairs series *World in Action*.[1] The programme in question, broadcast on 31 July 1967 – the day Jagger and his Rolling Stones band-mate Keith Richards had their drug-related criminal convictions quashed – addressed some difficult social questions. It tried to understand why Jagger and Richards, along with fellow Rolling Stone Brian Jones, had in their travails come to represent a schism in society that seemed to pit young against old, progressive against conservative, and a burgeoning pop culture against the somewhat beleaguered British Establishment. My purpose here is much the same in that I am concerned with charting processes of social and cultural change in Britain. But as the focus on the *World in Action* broadcast itself would indicate, it is the nature of the encounter between Jagger and the 'great and the good' – William Rees-Mogg, Rev. Thomas Corbishley, Dr John Robinson and Frank Soskice (Lord Stow Hill) – that lies at the heart of this enquiry.[2] The contested 'space' between these men is of central importance, then; and this spatial thematic extends to the format itself, as the television set positions the public encounter within the intimacy of the sitting room. If Jagger's audience can be understood to be twofold (and at two removes), then it is the symbolic space between his distinguished interlocutors and the passive viewer that is the subject of the discussion. This is the wider societal context which frames the speaking and seeing. How is the televised *World in Action* debate

useful as an historical document? What does it reveal about the nature of pop culture's challenge to the British class/social hierarchy?

Gimme … Historiography: Ways of Seeing

My approach to the historical work can be broadly described as constructionist in that it follows in the tradition of scholars such as R.G. Collingwood and Leon Goldstein.[3] I deal in testimony and evidence, the latter triangulating examples of the former. I call upon theory, too, in order to offer a conceptual framework within which to address the research questions.

But what does 'theory' mean in this context? And what is its organizational function? My starting point in writing this chapter was of course the document itself. The 'Mick Jagger' *World in Action* programme offers an on-the-spot Establishment response to a pop culture *cause célèbre*, and as such it is something of a trailblazer in British broadcasting history. That status alone makes it interesting. What makes the programme important, however, is the particular combination of its participants. The spatial context in which the discussion takes place serves to orientate the viewer. Indeed, these men and their proximity constitute the central meaning-bearing element around which my analysis works. I will come back to that point in a moment. In the meantime – and as a means of properly highlighting the importance of a focused approach – it is helpful to reflect on the enormous scale of social change associated with that historical moment of July 1967, the legendary Summer of Love. In this chapter, I claim that an analysis of social class is an effective way to measure aspects of that change. I should add something by way of qualification. Equally effective might be a consideration of gender (feminism), for example – or of ethnicity, or sex and sexuality, or any number of other potential alternatives. The problem is clear enough. While television broadcasts like the

World in Action programme can offer a wealth of information to the historian, they only go so far. Happily though, the answer to the conundrum lies in the restriction itself – it solves the problem of choice. The curiously formal intimacy of the participants, along with the grandeur of the surroundings, indicates the importance of spatial contexts, both physical and symbolic.

The all-male Establishment-versus-pop-star dynamic conveys nothing of, say, the female experience, but it does reveal a lot about contemporaneous (male) attitudes towards class. Public debates in which class played a part tended to be masculine affairs in those days (a situation remedied only with the deepening influence of second-wave feminism, on the one hand, and newer incarnations of the New Left on the other). And on those terms, the *World in Action* participants offer an insight into the workings of a creaking but still functioning social hierarchy. The subject of the programme's debate was freedom – its expression, its limitations – but the terms on which the participants engaged were, ironically enough, wholly bound up in the constraints of the English class system. Thus, the document provides an organizing principle for the chapter. With class as a touchstone, then, other discourses intersect in meaningful ways.

Tell Me ... : Television, Pop Culture and Communication

In order to understand the impact of pop culture during the 1960s, it is important to appreciate the role of the broadcast media in its dissemination – and in particular the growing influence of television. As the decade progressed, television consolidated its position as the primary means of entertainment for most people, providing a focal point of interest in practically every sitting room in the nation. *World in Action*, first broadcast in January 1963, was one of several additions to the schedules which

demonstrated that the medium had come of age. The series appeared in the wake of *The Pilkington Committee Report on Broadcasting* (1962). The committee's findings, along with the provision of the subsequent Television Act (1964), proved instrumental in setting a more serious tone, especially for the commercial stations. If, by 1967, current affairs series like *World in Action* were keen to cast light into the murkier corners of youth culture (see below), then their enquiries were in part a response to the youth-oriented entertainment boom that had become a staple of both channels.

Ready Steady Go (ITV 1963) and *Top of the Pops* (BBC 1964) offered a glimpse into a brave new world hitherto only dreamt of by music and fashion-obsessed teenagers. These weekly music shows complemented the new magazines and pirate radio stations to form the basis of the rock/pop-based youth subculture. Television and the other media proved indispensable to the hordes of young people who were unable to go out and find pop culture for themselves, either because they were removed geographically from the blues, beat and pop clubs of the larger cities and towns, or because they were simply too young to participate properly. Moreover, while bands like the Rolling Stones and the Beatles toured incessantly throughout the early and middle years of the 1960s, Britain's live music infrastructure at that time was that of the old variety circuit – and thus inadequate. Television played an important part in making accessible Jagger, Jones, other comparable icons such as John Lennon and Paul McCartney and more run-of-the-mill pop stars. The medium had begun to bring popular music to a wider audience, with the shows such as *Six-Five Special*, which ran from 1957 to 1958. This programme tried to replicate the ambience and atmosphere of the famous 2i's Coffee Bar, in Compton Street, Soho, where Teddy Boys and Girls gathered to listen to rock'n'roll. The newer series beamed pop stars straight into the home, their extreme

close-up camera work offering a heady proximity. The relationship between pop star and viewer depended for its intimacy on the former occupying the personal space of the latter – and it on these terms that Jagger addresses his audiences on *World in Action*.

The far-flung reaches of pop culture had become complex territories of self-expression for young people, easily transcending anything that had gone before. These new identities drew on a variety of exotic influences, ranging from '50s bohemianism to international iterations of the counterculture.[4] British television kept pace accordingly, documenting pop culture evolution with ever more sophisticated levels of coverage. But it took a US show to first catch something of the real spirit of this change. On 20 May 1965, the Rolling Stones made a remarkable appearance on *Shindig!* At one point in the show Jagger and Jones joined presenter Jack Goode in introducing blues legend Howlin' Wolf. They enthused about his influence on the band, and that of black blues and rhythm n blues performers in general. Jones then told Goode to 'Shut up!' – he wanted to hear Howlin' Wolf perform 'How Many More Years?' – and Jagger drawled sarcastically, 'Howlin' Jack Goode… Howlin' Jack Goode.' Such behaviour, tongue-in-cheek though it was, would have been unthinkable twelve months previously.

A steady but definite decline in deference to authority manifested itself as the 1960s gained pace. By 1963-4, such behaviour had become pronounced enough to be noticed.[5] Arthur Marwick offers a balanced view on developments, noting changes in behaviour in large sections of society, not just the young. Of the youth subculture itself, however, he described '"healthy scepticism" [taking] the form of greater openness, frankness and contempt for adult hypocrisy; even among the more restrained and conformist there

tended to be an admiration for the more daring'.[6] Nowhere is the power of this kind of posturing illustrated with more eloquence than by Keith Richards. Famously bullish at his drugs trial, his conduct in the dock captured the spirit of the time. 'We are not old men,' he told Mr Morris (Prosecuting) in answer to a question concerning Marianne Faithful, the infamous girl in the rug: 'We are not worried by petty morals.'[7]

The rate of cultural change had become staggering – alarming, even – as the summer stretched out across the middle months of 1967. And it was fuelled by the mercilessly sensationalized drug debate. The press busied itself in communicating the involvement of celebrities, its reportage by turns responsible and libellous. Along with all other forms of media, television ran with the story. The Rolling Stones and the Beatles would occasionally co-operate, as a matter of expediency as much as anything else: they could set the record straight or express a desire for privacy. In a television interview, for example, , McCartney admitted to taking LSD four times. But he added:

> if I had my way I wouldn't have told anyone, y'know. I'm not trying to spread the word about this, but the man from the newspaper is the man from the mass medium. I'll keep it a personal thing if he does too, y'know – if he keeps it quiet. But he wanted to spread it. So it's his responsibility to spread it, not mine.[8]

The binary of personal freedom versus public responsibility, bound up with the communicating role of the media, was an issue that Jagger would himself take up a month later in the *World in Action* broadcast. It was for him, as it was for anyone with a vested interest, the essence of the pop culture question as posed in 1967. In the light of what was to follow, McCartney's estimation of his own influence – 'I don't think my

fans will take drugs just because I did' – would seem somewhat naïve. It soon became apparent that the kind of freedom the pop stars wished to enjoy, secure in the privacy and comfort of their own homes, took on a different inflection when expressed on the streets. Television responded accordingly, with the experiences of ordinary young people now providing the raw material for sociological scrutiny. Most hard-hitting in this respect was a BAFTA-nominated *Man Alive* documentary, 'Gail is Dead' (1970), the story of a 19-year-old heroin addict whose body had been found in a derelict Chelsea house. Television traced the arc of social and cultural change as it happened. And one thing was for certain: that change was understood to be profound, irrespective of its pros and cons.

Something Happened to Me Yesterday … : Changes and New Ideas

It has become something of a commonplace to suggest that the spirit of a particular decade takes time to manifest itself properly. Its cosy familiarity notwithstanding, this idea is sound enough for application at any time and place, and certainly it is true of Britain and the 1960s. Rock writer Nik Cohn (1970) made much the same point when described pre-1962 musical output as remarkable only in its blandness, a far cry from the richness that was to follow.[9] The 1960s came to gain a recognizable identity, in broader pop culture as well as musical terms, in the October of 1962. It was during this remarkable month that Britain saw the release of the Beatles' debut single, 'Love Me Do', the cinematic premier of *Dr No*, and the first airing on television of *The Saint*. And it might be argued (in that same spirit of cataloguing) that while the era was up and running at the end 1962, it was only in the late spring of 1963, with the appearance of the Rolling Stones and their debut single, 'Come On', that the Sixties properly started 'swinging'. Yet, useful though these high-profile pop culture markers are, the contexts

within which they made their impact were set long before. The processes of history, as E.H.Carr observed, concern themselves with particular combinations of micro and macro narratives, the interplay between long and short term influences, and the dovetailing of related sequences of events.[10] This is as true of the 1960s as it is of any other era.

The Labour Government of 1945 ushered in a sweep of social change that would echo down the years, with subsequent developments building towards a culmination that was the cultural revolution of the 1960s. The founding of the National Health Service, the dismantling of Empire, changing attitudes towards sex and gender, multiple waves of immigration, and the steady erosion of the class system – all of these factors made for a healthier and fairer environment. However, the greatest beneficiaries of this longitudinal national reconstruction were too busy building the Britain of today to concern themselves overly with a history they had no hand in making. It was the self-styled 'modernists' among the Baby Boomer generation who tended to set the pop culture pace in the early and middle `60s, and their impatience with the past is understandable. Their collective memory was, after all, that of an aftermath of conflict followed by years of austerity. This seeming indifference to the past was an expression of freedom. Most in the new generation simply ignored the constraints imposed by pre-war notions of decency and excellence. These were the standards by which the class-bound national identity had hitherto been measured – and that identity was changing.

The beginnings of social mobility can be traced to a recognisable figure of the early Welfare State years, the grant-aided student. Fictionalized versions of the archetype soon found their way into the mainstream of popular culture. Characters like John

Osborne's Jimmy Porter were celebrated for their fashionable rebellion and lauded at length in the key literature and theatre surveys of the day, such as *The Angry Decade* and *Anger and After*.[11] Anti-hero of the seminal *Look Back in Anger* (1956), the Porter character would re-surface in the Woodfall Films' big screen version of the play (1958) before going on serve as a working template for a seemingly endless stream of characters across various media. The defining characteristic of all these similarly alienated young men was class displacement. Real-life anti-heroes of comparable backgrounds traded on this attribute, which became a kind of shorthand for authenticity. Along with actors such as Kenneth Haigh (the original Jimmy Porter), Tom Courtney and Albert Finney, were cutting-edge writers, filmmakers, political activists and thinkers – 'angry young men' – who set out their store in high-profile collections of essays, such as *Declaration* (1957) and *Out of Apathy* (1960). It all suggested the dynamism of a movement.

Young(ish) men were breaching the class barriers, certainly, but other groups were driving change too, and on the same terms. It was a woman – notably – who was most eloquent in her appraisal of this first 'New Left'. In her far-seeing 'A House of Theory', Iris Murdoch closed the *Conviction* (1958) collection of essays with a call for conceptualization.[12] Her demand for structural rigor anticipated the influence of divisive figures like Perry Anderson and the embrace of continental philosophy. Moreover, full employment meant that women, often working in a part-time capacity, enjoyed unprecedented spending power – and, as a consequence, a measure of autonomy. And the same can be said of 'youth', whether male or female, as Mark Abrams observed in his 1959 book, *The Teenage Consumer*. In 1958, 13 per cent of the population were single and aged between 15 and 24, a demographic that represented somewhere in the

region of £900,000,000 in spending power. These young people made up over 40 per cent of the market for records and record players. Abrams discovered an important sub-division in this youth market. 'Not far short of all teenage spending is conditioned by working class tastes and values,' he noted: '[t]he aesthetic of the teenage market is essentially a working class aesthetic and probably only entrepreneurs of working class origin will have a natural understanding of the needs of this market.'[13] From consumer to producer, working class youth were not only purchasing pop culture in their droves, they were manufacturing it and dictating the terms on which it was produced.

The 1960s saw these new identities crystalize, with uninterrupted years of affluence resulting in broader processes of what J.P. Goldthorpe described as *embourgeoisement*.[14] Relative wealth served to bolster newly acquired forms of social and cultural capital. This winning combination fostered an unprecedented sense of confidence. The model of consumer-driven mobility could be seen most strikingly in the slender figure of Twiggy. But change was also evident in men. Suddenly, or so it seemed**,** attractive male role models were to be found in abundance. Stylish figures like the Beatles, Sean Connery and Michael Caine effortlessly forged new, or 'modern', working class identities. And David Bailey's photographic *Box of Pin-ups* (1964) served to showcase the new masculinity.[15] His collection caught the spirit of the moment, and in its wake working class figures 'come good', so to speak, began to be treated with a new respect. A *Man Alive* episode, 'Top Class People', broadcast at peak time on 10 May 1967, celebrated some key figures in a rapidly developing new social order. Twiggy – again – took centre stage, but her manager/boyfriend Justin de Villeneuve shared the spotlight, as did graphic designer Alan Aldridge and screenwriter Johnny Speight.

Nowhere did the loosening of class bonds offer more potential for a challenge to convention than on the elite pop culture scene, which had by this time become inextricably linked to the smarter homes and haunts of the nation's capital. 'Swinging London', as it had been christened by *Time* magazine, consisted of an exotic mix of glamorous people whose talent, flamboyance and beauty were their defining features. That is not to deny, however, the intensely hierarchical nature of this high-achieving and competitive community. Indeed, the male contingent of its vanguard – the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, Christopher Gibbs, Michael Cooper, Stanislaus 'Stash' Kowassala de Rola, along with a roll call of others – were decadently aristocratic in their tastes, attitudes and demeanour. Banished were the social constraints bequeathed by the great Victorian middle class, though – and the same can be said for the prejudices still straightjacketing the broader sweep of 'Little England'. As Christopher Booker (1969) noted at the end of the decade, these people personified a change that amounted to something of a revolution.

Rebellion found exquisite expression through style, much of which could be found in Chelsea and Knightsbridge. It could also be seen on (and off) Savile Row, Mount Street and Jermyn Street. Tailors like Edward Sexton, Tommy Nutter, Rupert Lycett-Green and Doug Hayward were vital to the scene. Boutique owners and designers were similarly important: Michael Fish, Barry Sainsbury and Christopher Lynch at Mr Fish; Michael Rainey at Hung On You; and John Crittle, Tara Browne and Neil Winterbotham at Dandie Fashions. All of these men were style arbiters; facilitators of what would become known as the Peacock Revolution (Aquilina Ross 2011). In their sartorial choices, the peacocks and dandies of Swinging London threw down the gauntlet. They at once challenged and appropriated the privilege of luxury and style

hitherto the province of the Establishment. Individualism, like the aforementioned social mobility, was nothing new of course, a point detailed at length by Robinson *et al* (2107). But in the shape of the seductively libertarian Rolling Stones it represented a particular affront to some elements of the British Establishment. Moreover, it set in motion the remarkable events that were to play themselves out in the summer of 1967.

I Can't Get No … : The Trials and Tribulations of …

While on holiday in Marrakesh during the early spring of that year, the Rolling Stones encountered society photographer Sir Cecil Beaton. He was a fellow guest at the Mamounia Hotel. Beaton dined with Jagger, Jones, Richards and their entourage on the evening of 14 March. 'I was intent not to give the impression that I was only interested in Mick,' he recorded in his diary, '[b]ut it happened that we sat next to one another, as he drank a vodka Collins, and smoked with pointed fingers held high'.[16] The chance meeting was trivial enough in the overall scheme of things, but it is nonetheless instructive in that it offers an unsolicited opinion of Jagger from what might be termed an Establishment figure. 'His skin is chicken breast white, and of a fine quality,' the diary continued. 'He has an enormous inborn elegance'. Taken with Jagger, clearly, Beaton photographed the singer in the grounds of the hotel, capturing in those images something of a powerful and androgynous sexual quality. Jagger, for his part, was open and communicative, much more so, according to Beaton, than on the only other occasion their paths had crossed. Indeed, the singer expounded the virtues of LSD. He also talked of his legal wrangles with *The News of the World*.

The previous month, on 5 February, the tabloid newspaper had published the second of a five-part series about the drug habits of pop stars. The article in question alleged that

Jagger had taken LSD. He promptly issued a statement denying it, and threatened legal action against what he considered defamatory comments. Seven days later he was arrested, along with Keith Richards and gallery owner Robert Fraser. The police had raided Richards's house, Redlands, on a tip-off from the newspaper. Jagger was accused of being in unauthorized possession of four amphetamine tablets; Richards for permitting Redlands to be used for the purpose of smoking cannabis resin. Fraser faced the most serious charge: the possession of heroin.

From here events moved swiftly. The two Rolling Stones appeared for a court hearing at Chichester, West Sussex, on 10 May. That same day, remarkably enough, Brian Jones and Stash Klossowski de Rola were arrested for possession at Brian's Courtfield Road flat, amid a flurry of press activity and on the most dubious grounds. On 22 June, Jagger, Richards and Fraser were sent for trial at West Sussex quarter session. After electing for trial by jury, they were released on £100 bail. The trial was heard on 27 June, and two days later all three were convicted. Richards was sentenced to 12 months in prison and ordered to pay £500 costs, while Jagger received 3 months with £100 costs. They were subsequently granted bail, pending appeal, in their own recognizance of £5,000 each, plus two sureties each of £1,000.

In the midst of this chaos, on 13 and 14 June, the band repaired to Olympic Studios to record the Andrew Loog Oldham-produced 'We Love You', on which Lennon and McCartney over-dubbed backing vocals as a gesture of support. Then, on the day before Jagger and Richards' appeal, the ever-resourceful Oldham commissioned director Peter Whitehead to make a film with which to promote the 'We Love You' single. Drawing parallels between the Rolling Stones and Oscar Wilde, its trial scenes featured Jagger as

Wilde, Marianne Faithful as Lord Alfred Douglas, and Richards as a court judge – the latter resplendent in a wig made from rolled tabloid newspapers. It is as powerful a piece of pop promotional footage as any produced throughout the decade. *Top of the Pops* declined an invitation to run it, however, and as a consequence Whitehead called the programme irresponsible, not to say cowardly. The major pop acts of the day were brave by comparison. Jagger, Richards and Jones featured prominently in the international *Our World* ('All You Need is Love') broadcast, alongside the Beatles. Others were similarly demonstrative in their support. The Who, for example, placed large adverts in the *Evening News* and *Evening Standard*, announcing their decision to cover a series of Rolling Stones songs. The gesture was a sincere attempt to keep the band in the public eye should the worst happen.

Throughout July a body of public opinion was growing in support of the band, a point explored in-depth by Tony Sanchez.[17] Many were either nonplussed or angry at the convictions and the severity of the sentences. But it was *The Times*, of course, and William Rees Mogg's brave leader, 'Who Breaks a butterfly on a Wheel?', that struck at the heart of the matter. [18] 'There must remain a suspicion in this case,' wrote Rees-Mogg, 'that Mr Jagger received a more severe sentence than would have been thought proper of any purely anonymous young man.' Much of Jagger's public image had been expertly manufactured by the precocious Oldham**,** who at 19 years of age had set about promoting Jagger and the band as the anti-Beatles. The backlash that followed, however, amounted to a twin assault by the law enforcement agencies and elements of the tabloid press. Bill Wyman accurately described the nature of the Rolling Stones' position at the time: 'To bust a Beatle would be to squash the dreams of millions of

adults as well as their children. To bust a Rolling Stone was ok – most parents hated us anyway'.[19]

'It was a low level Establishment conspiracy,' reflects Stash Klossowki de Rola, whose own high-profile and close friendship with Jones and the other Rolling Stones had placed him firmly in the firing line. [20] He continues: 'Andrew Oldham's development of the band's image had triggered a conflict with the Establishment – and they were frowned upon. The Stones were an insult to the overall sense of propriety. Their success went very much against the grain.' The tragic irony of the business was the decline of Brian Jones, of course: the adverse publicity prompted his retreat into sense-numbing Mandrax use, a soft barrier against an increasingly hostile world. Jones' death, on 3 July 1969, profoundly affected De Rola: 'It is an unspeakable tragedy. Brian was killed by the attitudes of the Establishment.' Other members of the same circle, notably Marianne Faithful, only just escaped a similarly tragic fate.

Vindication for Jagger and Richards, when it finally arrived on 31 July in the form of acquittal, prompted a renewed round of worrying at questions concerning the accountability of pop stars. But the world was now a slightly different place. If Rees-Mogg's leader had chipped away at the Establishment's moral authority on the subject, then Lord Parker's criticisms of Judge Block's conduct at the trials served to raise further questions. Dwelling on the power of the pop star in his summing up at the appeal, Lord Parker described Jagger as having 'grave responsibilities' as 'an idol of a large number of young people in this country'. Yet acknowledging those responsibilities, let alone bowing to pressure to act on them, was something Jagger was

still loath to do. He was, however, amenable to discussing the subject – on a suitably high-profile media platform.

I'm All Right … : Jagger in Action

'Publicity since the case has shown up a split between the society which resents the anarchy of people like the Stones and that which favours greater individual freedom': so ran the voiceover introducing the 'Mick Jagger' *World in Action* programme. Beneath it, and presented in the form of a dramatic long take, footage depicted a helicopter landing and a figure disembarking. Then – still the same shot – the camera followed the figure on his way. Now clearly recognisable as he strode across the expansive lawns of Spain's Hall near Ongar, in Essex, the kaftan-clad Mick Jagger perfectly embodied Cecil Beaton's description. For many of the viewing public this translated into something that spoke directly of danger, rather than exotic romance. It conjured an image of druggy decadence, pernicious in its influence on the young and impressionable. But nothing was quite as it seemed, even when at first glance the rights and wrongs of a situation appeared incontestable: the legal circus surrounding the acquittals had shown that all too clearly. Questions suddenly presented themselves. Attitudes towards drug-use were drawn cleanly along generational lines, weren't they? That was the conventional wisdom, wasn't it? As if to disabuse viewers of such assumptions, *World in Action* set out its stall by citing a survey which claimed 85% of young people agreed with the soundness of Jagger's conviction.

For all its provocative myth-busting, the broadcast did place the much-vaunted 'Generation Gap' at the heart of the matter. The idea was to mark difference from the outset, as indicated by the framing of Jagger's arrival. Future Director General of the

BBC John Birt – then a young production assistant making his mark at Granada Television – said as much years later when he recalled the making of the show: 'On the day Jagger's appeal succeeded I persuaded him to meet the editor of *The Times* and other establishment luminaries in a coming together of the generations'.[21] Before he could attend Birt's summit conference, however, the 24-year-old singer had another appointment to keep.

Earlier in the day Jagger had made his way from the Court of Appeal to Battersea heliport. From here, and now accompanied by Birt and Marianne Faithful, he flew to Granada TV's West End headquarters in Golden Square where he addressed a cramped, somewhat chaotic press conference. Flanked by his lawyer and manager Allen Klein, he clarified the conditions of his acquittal and fielded questions about the increasingly serious business of pop stardom. He re-iterated the substance of what had come to be a stock response for the Stones and Beatles alike, confident now that that the day's events would add weight to its sentiment. 'One doesn't ask for responsibilities,' he told the gathering:

> Perhaps one is given responsibilities when one is pushed into the limelight in this particular sphere, rather than asking to be. I didn't ask to be […] I merely ask for my private life to be left alone… My responsibilities are far as that goes are only to do with myself. In the public sector – such as to do with my work, my records, etc – I have responsibility, but the amount of baths I take or my personal habits are of no consequence to anyone else, I don't think. I don't propagate religious views, such as some pop stars do. I don't propagate drug views, such as some pop stars do. This whole sort of thing was pushed upon me.

When, finally, Jagger settled into his seat at Spain's Hall, Rees-Mogg set things in motion without further fanfare. 'Mick, you've had a difficult day,' he said, 'and a difficult three months.' This was putting it mildly, as the editor himself acknowledged with a grin. The true extent of the frustration bred by these difficulties, especially in relation to the police, was something that Jagger and his fellow Stones had kept to themselves. But the hidden irony of the first exchanges, in which Father Corbishley talked of corruption and the need to check it, cannot have been lost on the singer. In the wake of the Redlands bust, the band had tried to bribe West End division personnel who, according to Richards' friend and 'assistant', 'Spanish' Tony Sanchez, had made it known that they were amenable to a pay-off. Bill Wyman has detailed the circumstances in which Sanchez made a £7,000 payment to a man in a pub, all to no effect on the outcome of the case.[22] Jagger's response to Corbishley, therefore – 'it's always been in need of checking' – was no doubt heartfelt. The blackly comic nature of the subtext notwithstanding, these opening remarks set the serious tone for what was to follow.

In Corbishley, Rees-Mogg and the other panellists, Jagger found a challenging but far from unsympathetic audience. *The Times* editor had, after all, taken something of a risk in passing comment on a case while an appeal was in progress. Progressive credentials of a kind were on display, too, in the softly-spoken Frank Soskice. Predecessor at the Home Office to Roy Jenkins, he could claim involvement in the abolition of the death penalty and direct responsibility for The Race Relations Act of 1965. But the level of his personal commitment to social justice was questionable, to say the least.[23] Rounding off the quartet was Dr John Robinson, a formidable intellect whose 1963 monograph, *Honest to God*, had caused stir on its publication.[24] And it was Robinson, in fact, who would stimulate the most fruitful exchanges; his comments at once kindly and probing.

The nature of the interaction between Jagger and these men points to difference, certainly, but it also indicates a surprising amount of common ground. Jagger went out of his way to demonstrate thoughtfulness – diffidence, even – and to communicate on equal intellectual terms. It was a strategy that would both ingratiate and impress. 'I haven't until very recently been into this discussion at all because I haven't really felt it's been my place,' he said; '[a]nd I don't think my knowledge is enough to start pontificating on these kinds of subjects.' This was a self-consciously refined kind of utterance from a voice similar to that of the suitor in 'Lady Jane', or to the wistful romantic in 'Ruby Tuesday'. It was a world away from that other Jagger of recent invention, the sneering mock-cockney commentator of 'Mother's Little Helper'. And, by the same token, the persona on display here was unrecognisable as the same Jagger of caricature in the popular press; that leader of the 'Great Unwashed' who, on 18 March 1965, had been fined £5 for urinating in the forecourt of an east London petrol station.

Years later, journalist Nick Kent reminisced about the disconcerting ease with which Jagger could slip between personas. He noted among other things an ability to mimic class traits.[25] It would be easy to make much of what might be described as Jagger's mixed-class background (as a means of explaining away the extraordinary chameleon-like nature of his personality as much as anything else). But to do so would be to overstate the case. Yet it is worth noting here, if only in passing, because on occasion he himself was given to comment on it: 'My Mum is very working class, my Father bourgeois, because he had a reasonably good education, so I came from somewhere in between that,' – he told one interviewer – 'Neither one nor the other'.[26] Taken on its own, this remark about the transformative nature of the education system is interesting

enough – it suggests a set of values that might have a deeper than expected root in tradition. But coupled with a similar observation, made on the programme itself, the sentiment is rather more revealing. The Jagger on display in *World in Action* was of a thorough-going middle class sensibility. He is the grown-up version of his grammar school boy former self; the cerebral ex-LSE student.

Jagger's ability to talk 'the same language', as it were, held some sway for Rees-Mogg, especially when it came to the central theme of the debate – freedom: '[…] I remember being struck by the fact that Jagger used the classic John Stuart Mill *On Liberty* argument: that you are entitled to do anything that does not affect somebody else adversely.

> He argued that that is the test of permissibility of human action. The State has no right to interfere in anything merely because it may damage the person who chooses to do it. I did not believe, as some did, that Jagger's remarks were mere sloganeering. They represented, rather, a thought-out system of beliefs. When Jagger made these remarks in 1967, the British still made paternalistic assumptions about government; the young were beginning to revolt against the limits put on liberty by Victorian tradition and wartime necessities, and, to a considerable extent, socialist paternalism.[27]

The parameters of the freedom discussion were set by Corbishley, who broached the subject via the connected issue of mass communication. This was an area where Jagger and his ilk should take responsibility, he said, as they were the 'dominant generation' in waiting. 'It's the old [who should take responsibility], I think,' Jagger countered, 'Because they're the ones in charge of the mass communication media. Politicians are

really the ones that are putting over the messages more than anyone else.' It was a reasonable enough response; a reminder that the power structure still privileged the elite. It received nods of approval from all present.

Robinson then entered the fray, picking up on the mass communication idea and taking it in a different direction. He pondered what might be the ultimate impact on society of the mass communication media, in terms of encroachment and harm, suggesting that the real consequences might stem from the speed in which it worked. Freedoms touched on those of others far more quickly than in previous eras, he reflected, and they in turn affected other people's lives with breath-taking haste. 'We are immediately and very quickly up against this question of the limits of freedom.' Here was the nub of the problem, at least as far as Robinson was concerned. The ensuing exchange chased the philosophical idea of freedom. For Jagger, this meant the libertarian vision of unfettered individual expression, aforementioned by Rees-Mogg, with the only proviso being the harm principle. Robinson, for his part, queried boundaries and sought definition. Jagger historicized with remarkable insight but was vague in his response to Robinson's assertions.

The conversation took a turn towards a more classical liberal-versus-communitarian debate with an interjection by Soskice, who maintained that the law intervened to protect people and their individual sphere of freedom. It was in response to this statement that Jagger was at his most impressive, his recent experiences no doubt utmost in his mind: 'Quite often the law works to protect a minority of interests, or to protect interests which one would think were rather empty.' Drawing on the situational ethics that were Robinson's province, he built an argument centred on relativism and

change. There were several examples: the recent US 'race riots' and the Civil Rights Movement; young people, their particular interests and sphere of experience; the disenfranchisement of various groups and communities. 'For instance,' he went on to say, 'there was a time when attempting to commit suicide was a criminal offence – which was changed. But it's not so very long ago it was changed. The law on homosexuality – it was a crime. It's been changed.' He continued along similar lines, speaking eloquently of victimless crimes. In so doing, he functioned effectively as a mouthpiece for the Permissive Society: 'Taking drugs – heroin – it's a crime against themselves, not a crime against society.' When, finally, asked – again by Soskice – where he predicted freedom would end and prohibition begin, Jagger replied, 'A real *crime* against society should be punished by society – but it should be punished in a way to suit the case. And they must really *be* crimes against society, not just fears of society which could be groundless.'

The debate concluded with Jagger's grateful acknowledgement of Rees-Mogg's intervention in 'Who breaks a butterfly on a wheel?'.[28] He declared himself happy at the overall outcome of his case, and there were nods of approval from the panel. In foregrounding the genteel aspect of his identity, the singer succeeded in positioning himself favourably. As much any other single individual, Mick Jagger represented a new breed. He was the archetypal Englishman of the Permissive Society, the personification of the new individualism. Yet, through his understanding of the English Class system, he managed to broker, if not a gentleman's agreement as such, then at least a gentleman's disagreement. As the closing credits roll, the ease with which the participants occupy their shared space offers a final impression of clubbable companionship.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered some aspects of social and cultural change in Britain, 1967, by analysing a television text closely associated with a set of era-defining events. In orchestrating an encounter between a pop star and a set of influential Establishment figures, the 'Mick Jagger' *World in Action* programme sought to understand the new ideas, new values – new freedoms. The Rolling Stones in general, and Mick Jagger in particular, were potent symbols of a threat, either real or imagined, to any status quo as it stood at that time – more so, certainly, than the women and minorities still in the relatively early stages of a journey towards equality. Jagger and his ilk were wealthy and ubiquitous, thanks in part to television, the wider media and a thriving music industry. The Rolling Stones were the idols of millions; they had inspired a devotion that almost rivalled Beatlemania in its scope, before going on to become the public face of the Permissive Society. Their drug trials, convictions and acquittals, therefore, offer a lens through which to view the bigger issues. Their exploits not only set the context for the *World in Action* programme itself, they also map on to broader discourses which deal with the same overarching theme – freedom. The chapter has illustrated this point.

On the surface, the *World in Action* programme sketched its generational conflict in bold strokes: young buck versus old order, the upstart against the Establishment – all the delicious sensation of an Andrew Oldham publicity headline. Yet, as the nuances of the screen debate indicate, the interactions between the participants were anything but simplistic. Spicing the instant concoction of Generation Gap politicking was the added ingredient of social convention. Stash Klossowski de Rola illustrated the nature of its influence when he recalled talking with his solicitor, Sir David Napley, about his association with the Rolling Stones. 'Now you, sir, *are* a gentleman,' Napley told him:

‘What on earth are you doing associating with *these* chaps?’ While the subject of class was never broached directly at Spain’s House – nothing quite so vulgar in so grand a space - it did nonetheless dictate the terms on which the subject of freedom was discussed. As this chapter has shown, Jagger acquitted himself well. His demeanour, accent, articulation, and display of taste and education were effective in offsetting the initial shock of his outlandish appearance. Years later, Rees-Mogg reflected on his ‘incisive’ argument, concluding that he had ‘got the better’ of the panel – besting Robinson in particular.[29] Jagger held his own in the debate, a point this chapter acknowledges, but it would be stretching that point to say that he vanquished his opponents. Then again, Jagger did prove himself to be a gentleman – and Rees-Mogg liked him.

The Baby Boomers were, according to Jagger, different to the previous generations. ‘One’s parents have been through two wars and a Depression, and we’ve been through none of this – it’s all in history to us,’ he told the panel. ‘We haven’t been influenced by it – only in as much are parents could influence us.’ This chapter has charted that difference, linking it to notions of freedom by narrating bottom-up processes of social mobility. It remains something of an irony, then, that Jagger should actively mobilize class convention in order to represent that freedom.

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NOTES

[1] The show is available on vol. 1 of the *World in Action* DVD set, Network (2005).

[2] William Rees-Mogg was the editor of *The Times* from 1967-81. Father Thomas Corbishley was Master at Campion Hall and later Superior at Farm Street. He had published *The Contemporary Christian* the previous year. Lord Stow Hill was previously Sir Frank Soskice, Home Secretary from 1964-5, in Harold Wilson’s Labour Government. Dr John Robinson was the Bishop of Woolwich and lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was author of the controversial *Honest to God* (1963 IN WHICH… [EXPLAIN WHY CONTROVERSIAL]). John Robinson, *Honest to God*, London: SCM Press, 1963.

[3] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946; Leon J. Goldstein, *Historical Knowing*, Austin: University of Austin, Texas, 1976.

[4] Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties*: *Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

[5] F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, ‘Class, community and Individualism in English Politics Society,’ unpublished thesis, University of Cambridge, 1994.

[6] Marwick, *The Sixties*, 74.

[7] Transcript materials from the trials are reproduced in Wyman (1990: 422-77). For Richards’ own account see Richards, K. (2010) *Life*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, pp.225-30.

[8] McCartney made these comments in an ITN interview which was broadcast on 19 June 1967.

[9] Nick Cohn, *Awopbopaloobopalopbamboom*, London: Paladin, 1970.

[10] E. H. Carr, *What is History?* Reprint, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, 45.

[11] John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*: *A Play in three Acts*, London: Faber & Faber, 1958; K. Allsop, *The Angry Decade: A Survey of the cultural Revolt of the 1950s*, London: Peter Owen, 1958; J. Russell Taylor, *Anger and After: A Guide to the new Drama*, London: Pelican/Penguin Books, 1961.

[12] Irish Murdoch, 'A house of theory' in Norman MacKenzie (ed.), *Conviction*, London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1958, reprinted in Peter J. Conradi (ed.), *Existentialists and Mystics*: *Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, London: Penguin, 1997, 171-87.

[13] Mark Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer*, London: Press Exchange, 1959, 3.

[14] J. H. Goldthorpe, *et al*., *The Affluent Worker*: *Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

[15] This collection contained containing individual portraits of the new icons – Jagger, Lennon, McCartney, Caine, Terence Stamp, Rudolf Nureyev, David Hockney, and even the Kray Twins.

[16] Vickers, *Beaton in the Sixties*, 160.

[17] Tony Sanchez, *Up and Down with the Rolling Stones*: *My Rollercoaster Ride with Keith Richards* (1979), Reprint, London: John Blake, 2010. This is detailed effectively in his endlessly entertaining book, pp. 59-79.

[18] The famous editorial was published on 1 July 1967.

[19] Bill Wyman with R. Coleman, *Stone Alone: The Story of a rock 'n' roll Band*, London: Viking, 1990, 425.

[20] Telephone interview with the author, 6 January 2019.

[21] John Birt's comments taken from his MacTaggart Lecture delivered to the Edinburgh International Television Festival in 2005.

[22] Wyman, *Stone Alone*, 408-409.

[23] A commentary on his attitude to the immigration question can be found in Fry, G.K. (2005) *The Politics of Decline: an interpretation of British politics from the 1940s to the 1970s*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 206-7.

[24] Robinson, *Honest to God*, see n.2.

[25] Nick Kent, *The Dark Stuff*: *The Best of Nick Kent*, London: Penguin Books, 1994, 128.

[26] Miles (ed.), *Mick Jagger in His Own Words*, London: Omnibus Press, 1982, 9.

[27] William Rees-Mogg, *William Rees-Mogg*: *Memoirs*, London: Harper Press, 2011, 159.

[28] William Rees-Mogg, 'Who Breaks a Butterfly on a Wheel?', *The Times*, 1 July 1967, 1.

[29] Rees-Mogg, *Memoirs*, 158.