

On Going Out and the Experience of Students

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses student life in the UK, drawing its conclusions from work carried out at the University of Sheffield, where I attempted, via ethnographic and archival research, to understand what it meant to be a student outside of the official university apparatus of learning and teaching. Rather than construct ‘the student experience’ from the intersection of the student with the institution, I considered a wider and deeper concept of ‘student experience’ centred on the day-to-day lived experience of student life.

The contemporary context of student life is detailed in another publication.¹ Briefly, this identifies student mobility (whether an undergraduate stays at home with parents or lives with other students in student accommodation) as the key factor in determining student experience. It also emphasises the centrality of friendship to the student experience of higher education (HE) in the UK and explores the ways by which friendship was performed between two sites: (a) accommodation (parent’s

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home/university/private residence); and (b) the night-time economy. It introduces the term 'family' as a metaphor for those friends at the centre of a student's social network, shaped by residence and repeated journeys into the night-time economy. It then suggests that such journeys, with their exchanges of social and economic capital in the night-time economy, are obligatory for students wishing to engage with student culture and think of themselves as 'typical students'. It also found that since 'going out' and engaging in the night-time economy is so widespread, the identity of being a 'typical' student is something that many students can relate to, and temporarily inhabit, no matter their specific circumstances.

In this chapter I describe the development of this situation over three stages, from a pre- and post-war higher education institution (HEI)-centred culture, through a 1960–1990 heterogeneous period, to the contemporary homogenous period of student culture. The changes between each period occur as a consequence of HE expansion, societal changes and the general neoliberalisation of society. In brief, the first period can be characterised as a local elite culture that lasted until the establishment of a youth-orientated culture in the 1960s. I suggest that the third period, dating from the 1990s, saw the institutions of the University² reform themselves around student desire as a response to the marketisation of HE. In terms of evolution, the period saw student culture develop in a heterogeneous, hybrid manner from the first to the second stage, and in a homogeneous, instrumental manner from the second to the third. In terms of culture and tradition, my thesis holds that student life at the University was polyphonic in the first and second stages, and monophonic in the third, which saw its aesthetic forms become consolidated into one: going out.

BACKGROUND

In sociological terms, this chapter attempts to describe the development of the student habitus in Sheffield. Reference to sociology is important because research into UK undergraduate students largely stems from sociology and derives a theoretical orientation from Pierre Bourdieu, who has provided the conceptual means to describe student culture. Bourdieu's approach has previously been used to refer to a 'master/mainstreamed' culture defined by residence and location and focused on socialising.³ In 2005, when I began my research investigating the

‘mainstream’ student culture at the University of Sheffield (2011)⁴, the literature on what the ‘mainstream’ habitus was, or who traditional students were, was as scarce as it had been in the late 1990s.⁵

My ethnographic work focused on non-international undergraduate students aged between 17 and 20 at the time of their first year of study, living away from parents or family in full-time education at the University of Sheffield, a member of the elite Russell Group.⁶ My data emphasised the importance of masculine behaviours in the construction of the ‘typical student’. These behaviours were engaged in by both men and women (often critically), and my discussion of them is not a valorisation but an evocation of the performances and idealisations of being a ‘typical’ student, as seen by students, many of whom only engaged in such behaviours occasionally, and often only in their first year of study.

I performed ethnography between October 2005 and July 2010, in a variety of situations and locations in Sheffield.⁷ I was attempting to describe ‘studentland’, the temporal and spatial territory of the mobile student experience.⁸ Both Chatterton and Holdsworth identify the ‘residential tradition’ of HE in England and Wales as the framework for developing the physical spaces that support the habitus of student life.⁹ Chatterton, whose work on the ‘exclusive geographies’ of University of Bristol undergraduate students informed his later thinking on the night-time economy, suggests that student venues and houses weave ‘distinctive time-space patterns through certain areas of the city’, patterns that are embedded and subsumed in the night-time economy and the student housing market.¹⁰ Experiencing the infrastructure that supports this often means following a particular spatial and temporal trajectory from, on a typical night out, home to pub to students’ union (SU) to night-club to fast-food outlet to home.

This chapter discusses the historical development of studentland in Sheffield, which sees not only the physical development of the student night-time economy but also the rising importance of going out as the obligatory signifier of student identity. This conclusion was reached via research in the University of Sheffield Archives, in particular the personal memories solicited by Helen Mathers for her histories of the University and SU, as well as archived files from the SU, the Rag office, the office of the vice-chancellor (VC) and the registrar’s office.¹¹ Interviews were conducted with Peter and Alison Slater, who provided memories of Tapton Hall of Residence in the early 1970s, which were supported and expanded by their extensive papers. Longstanding members of University

of Sheffield staff were also interviewed, in particular the porters, some of whom had worked with students in the University's residences from the early 1980s. The student press, in its fortnightly documentation of student life from the late 1940s to the present day, provided a key resource. Indeed, the three periods I outlined above are easily identified by reading the papers, issue by issue, and seeing the rise of youth culture in the late 1950s, its establishment in the 1960s, its political consequences in the 1970s, its turn towards the night-time economy in the 1980s and the 'going out' culture that has dominated from the 1990s on.

If one thing is clear from the press, it is that student culture developed at pace from the 1960s on. While the concerns of the late 1940s and 1950s are consistent, those of the early 1970s are not those of the mid- or late 1970s and are utterly out of place by the 1980s. This is explained by the accelerating influence of youth consumer capitalism, which heightens Cowley and Waller's suggestion that 'traditions age rapidly in the student world' as a result of the 'telescoping of social processes' brought on by mobility and the annual action of matriculation and graduation.¹² This sense of temporality effects behavioural norms which are transmitted from 1 year to the next: 'control through indoctrination'.¹³ Thus the temporal structure of the student group is both dynamic (in that its composition changes by a significant proportion with matriculation and graduation at the beginning and end of every academic year) and conservative in its hierarchical organisation, with years preceding years.

For first-year students, the past, or the oral past at least, never extended beyond contact with older students. This made those who had the authority to appeal to 'tradition' powerful, as there were no voices to counter them. When second years presented hall of residence culture to incoming first years, they were always mindful to emphasise the duty not to follow but to uphold tradition. Therefore, leadership, hierarchy and structures that bridge the inherent dynamism of telescoping are essential in encouraging not just tradition but cultural continuity. Student culture is dependent on structures to bridge the rapid passing of the years, such as the Junior Common Room (JCR) or SU, and is thus easily influenced by individuals in hierarchies. Consequently, traditions change easily: rivalries between halls swap over as the decades pass by.

In Tapton, the JCR did not know where many of their traditions came from; while the Hall Ball and occasional formal dinners were inherited from the inception of the hall (and involved staff and the

Senior Common Room (SCR)), soft traditions such as the ‘Grinder Run’ had a less certain provenance. This occurred in formal meals when the JCR President would shout ‘Grinder Run!’ and the JCR and anyone who wished to accompany them would run off to the local pub (the Grindstone), down a drink and each ‘steal’ a trophy to return with (which, 1 year, memorably included a Jack Russell). It was timeless to the students, and this only cemented their sense of belonging. According to the JCR President, the ‘Grinder Run’ only went as far back as ‘2001 or 2002 when the President introduced it. But only I know that.’

If structures that bridge the years are lost or diminished, which, as a consequence of expansion, they were, then the importance of extra-student sources of authority are emphasised in transmitting culture and even ‘traditional behaviour’. The media can be interpreted as an example of this, as are the institutions of the University, especially in the third phase of my model, when they become self-interested actors in an internal market formed around satisfying the desires, and thus accessing the capital, of students. In Sheffield, for example, the SU is no longer shaped by students but has become a body run by permanent staff (‘Commercial Services’) that seeks to shape student culture by acting ‘in its best interests’.

Before the advent of these new hierarchies and structures, student culture developed in a Lamarckian fashion, ‘whereby the positive attributes engendered by adaptation to new environments [were] reproduced and multiplied voluntarily’.¹⁴ Year after year, students would move up residential, SU and activity/society hierarchies and voluntarily reproduce, or indeed change, the culture of the year before. The involvement of paid professionals changed the temporal nature of these cultures and increased their efficiency in terms of attracting and directing capital. This is the mechanism by which expansion can best be understood as encouraging the monophonic third stage. As the student body expanded in the monetised 1990s, it was seen as a large market with perceived desires, which were met by centralised hierarchies that developed outside of student temporality. Thus ‘going out’ expanded to dominate the landscape. This movement is demonstrated in detail in the sections below.

In terms of pleasure, politics and resistance, the difference between the first transition of student culture (from the HEI-centred to the heterogeneous in the 1960s) and the second (from the heterogeneous to the homogenous in the 1990s) is worth discussing. The first transition is an analogue of Fiske’s ‘productive pleasures’ in that the search for bodily

pleasure led to the resistant pleasures of the counter-culture.¹⁵ This is clearly demonstrated by the student press, which began the 1960s reveling in beatniks and beer, and the 1970s in rent strikes and sit-ins. The second transition, however, is a typical Gramscian hegemonic incorporation of these very same bodily pleasures via a manipulation of student tradition. The brilliance of this incorporation of pleasure lies in its maintenance of the first transition's representational strategies for its entitlement in the face of restriction.¹⁶ Claiming pleasure was seen as an act of self-determination, of choosing life, of making memories, a carnivalesque celebration of the potential of the body, both social and physical. Some, including Winlow and Hall, argue that this was politically misguided even in the 1960s. I only emphasise that by the 1990s its political dimension had long been subsumed to capital.¹⁷

However, focusing on the similarities and differences when comparing the 1960s and 1990s obscures an older connection between students, pleasure and the carnivalesque. In the first elite HEI period, elements of the student calendar were organised according to the structure of the carnivalesque, as described by Bakhtin: reversals, hierarchical protests and utopian familiarity.¹⁸ Within the yearly student calendar, carnivalesque behaviour was licensed by both the University and the citizens of Sheffield, and largely occurred during the annual 'Rag' celebrations, but also at Graduation and during other festivals. In some way, it was this annual licence to engage in pleasure that was interpreted as a perennial entitlement to pleasure in the transition to the second period, and, in turn, was configured into a complete 'service culture of pleasure' by the transition to the third. The story of the carnivalesque as it passes through these three stages is, to some extent, that of student culture in Sheffield, for it results in the consolidation of 'going out' that now dominates the contemporary university.

As a narrative of consolidation, the story can be told in many different ways with reference to many different subjects: singing, chanting, fancy dress and clothing, drinking, dancing, pranking, speaking and sexual intercourse, even through politics and sports. All are traditional student activities at Sheffield, and all are documented extensively in the student histories and archives. Their consolidation into going out was never an inevitable conclusion, although it has occurred in the wider context of youth culture and the growth of the night-time economy, and is thus part of a much broader social development. Nevertheless, the following three sections are an attempt to understand student culture at Sheffield

in terms of this narrative, an interpretation composed of many historical dialogues taking place now and taking place then.

‘WE BE SHEFFIELD HOKEY POKEY!’

The HEI-centred culture is marked by the small size of its social network. Between 1926 and 1940, there were 830–887 students a year, and the University ‘was so small that the office staff of Western Bank could greet each student by name’, while the SU President knew 85% of the students.¹⁹ The 1935/1936 SU diary printed the home address of the VC and important faculty members, should a student urgently need to get in touch. Such a small network facilitated a hierarchy of subjects, where engineering and medical students ‘formed a sort of student aristocracy’ along with the rugby club, all of which exhibited a high level of participation in the ‘unofficial’ student culture of drinking, dancing, pranking, theatre and the cinema.²⁰

There are many stories from this period surrounding convocations and degree ceremonies of dunking in fountains, shouting, singing and playing ‘The animals went in two by two’ as academic staff processed. This annual ritual behaviour disappeared after the graduation ceremony moved to City Hall in 1947.²¹ The University grew in size during the 1950s, and, although a bar opened in the SU in 1949, many students still gathered in local pubs. Drinking is certainly a traditional student activity, where mobility has helped mitigate what Measham and Brain have termed the ‘traditional norms and values which might have served to limit excessive consumption’ long before these ‘traditional norms’ vanished elsewhere.²² Despite this, student drinking was limited to licensed public houses and, largely, to men. While the UK student culture may have ‘ritualized drinking to excess’, it was certainly limited to ‘upper-class young men’.²³ Disorder was the exception, witnessed by the extensive, involved and very infrequent coverage it receives in the student press.

Dancing, certainly in pre-1960s Sheffield, was not always associated with alcohol, doubtless because excessive consumption would not make a male student an attractive partner for a woman. Alcohol was only infrequently allowed at University dances, which were timetabled in agreement with faculty until just before the second world war. Women, always in the minority at the University until the latter part of the twentieth century, speak of having their dance cards ‘full’, as they would be booked

for dances in Firth Hall and at Saturday night informal ‘hops’ in Mappin Hall. In Sheffield student culture, it became culturally unacceptable to hold a popular dance without alcohol in the mid- to late 1960s, a development that paralleled the rise of pop music, and dancing on one’s own or in a group, rather than by holding someone else.²⁴ Indeed, it is worth bearing in mind that dancing did not become an activity a student could engage in on their own until youth culture heightened distinctions of taste in the late 1950s/1960s as a consequence of the stratifications developed in dialogue with the music industry. The ‘slow dance’, which encouraged sexually orientated touching, retained a place in student discos until the 1990s.

Fascinatingly, there are many mentions of the Varsity ‘yell’ in connection with dances and University events. This was doubtless connected to sports, but was also led by the SU President at dances.²⁵ It was still being given in the early 1960s, when dances would end with the singing of the University song and, finally, the yell. I found it recorded in the SU diary for 1935/1936 as:

VARSITY YELL!

Ikamelayo!—————Gee!

Ikamelayo!—————Gee!

Ikamelayo!—————Gee!

Ah—————

Disce Doce; Disce Doce!

Ushta Ushta Oy!

We be Sheffield Hokey Pokey!

Hip Hip Hip Hooray!

Sheffield, Sheffield,

S-h-e-f-f-i-e-l-d-,

SHEFFIELD!!!

This yell has a purely integrative function, doubtless because the student body was small enough to imagine itself as the *totality* of the student experience, S-h-e-f-f-i-e-l-d itself. Despite the connection to sport and

masculinity (this is the *Varsity* yell), I found no reference to the yell in the 1970s and 1980s.

Performances that integrated the institution with the city of Sheffield characterised the first stage of elite HEI student culture. While there has never been regular fraternisation among locals and students, the University and, by association, students had a close relationship with the city, one which grew out of the significant support, financially and publically, that the local population had contributed towards its foundation. As early as 1921, the University attempted to introduce what it termed the 'University Week', to 'establish and promote a University Public Spirit' and to 'promote University Publicity' among the citizens of Sheffield making 'THE WEEK a leading event of the city life'.²⁶ This venture would soon become a failure, however, and it was the student's Rag, which began a year earlier in 1920, that would be enthusiastically taken up by the local population. This would see the city develop a carnivalesque relationship with students, granting them a festival licence to misbehave, prank and indulge in public pleasure in return for providing citizens with spectacle, entertainment and a donation to local charity.

Such a Rag model was adopted across university towns throughout the 1920s, with all developing their own local traditions.²⁷ It is redolent of not only an elite HEI-orientated student life but also an elite-orientated civic life. Student Rags were criticised by socialists as unfair, with students 'being allowed to have liberty to do things that ordinary people would be told they were hooligans if they did'.²⁸ As a 1930s Sheffield student remembered,

We got on & off the trams collecting & almost had the freedom of the city. The fellows always seemed to head for Swizz (or Snigg) Hill. There was a Brewery at the bottom where free beer was dished out. They enjoyed the day! For the girls free Bovril at the Tec. in Leopold St.

As a public event, the Sheffield Rag was an official celebration that underlined an ideal social order. Its carnivalesque elements were ordained by both the University and the city, the VC inspecting the Parade and the Lord Mayor ceremoniously buying the first copy of *Twikker*, the Sheffield 'Rag Mag', which contained advertising from local businesses. A regional celebration, with collections taking place as far afield as Doncaster and Derby, Rag Day itself was a grand affair:

6–8 am	Early morning collections through the city
10 am	Great Rag Procession from Western Bank into city
11.15 am	Tour of districts by decorated lorries
2.30 pm	Boat race on Don
3 pm	Students through city, Balloon race, Fireworks etc.
10 pm	Grand Torch-lit Procession from Western Bank to Barker's Pool ²⁹

The year before this Rag Day, 1948, in *Twikker*, the Lord Mayor wrote a letter addressed to the people of Sheffield:

It is now within our tradition that the University students of Sheffield shall make an annual effort, by means of their Rag day, for the aid of some great human service. May their altruism continue to receive the support of our citizens.

The references to breaking the law, sex, drinking and offending magistrates in *Twikker* were rarely censored by the University and were only banned one year, 1949. Evident in surviving letters and many of the solicited memories of the Sheffield Rag, going back to the 1920s and 1930s and appearing throughout, are references to 'letting rip' and 'letting go'. The disposition of the Rag may have been free, but it was also performative in that the students *worked* for their donations by making fools of themselves, or others in the process.³⁰ It is clear this annual carnivalesque performance had as much to do with the students' own view of themselves as the city's view of the University. As Kugelmass comments, 'the license is as much a chance to misbehave as it is to display oneself or one's vision of the world, to occupy public attention ... the most precious of human goods'.³¹ Students had yet to frighten authority with their potential power, as they would in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, one student remembers letting off 'a bag of flour backed up by a firework ... stuffed up the scaffolding pipe' at a mounted policeman, with 'good humoured' consequences.

Although there was some participation from non-students, especially as Mischief Night often fell in Rag Week, the SU and, specifically, the Rag Committee usually took responsibility and liability for all events across the town.³² Because Rag occurred three to five weeks into the autumn term, there was also a sense of initiation for first-year students. The range and depth of pranks veered from organised stunts to opportunistic acts of vandalism. For 1 year, 1958, across late October and early November, the following stunts are recorded in the Archives:

- Ten taxis were ordered for the warden at Crewe Hall.³³
- Four signs were removed from streets and roads.
- A bench was placed on top of a bus shelter.
- 475 plants were destroyed in the beds behind the Medicine Faculty.
- Garden and cellar gates were removed on Ecclesall Road.
- A student climbed up the bus 'Information Board'.
- Sections of two university halls of residence were whitewashed.
- A tower on the main university building was painted by Manchester Rag.
- The Queen Victoria monument in Endcliffe Park was painted green.
- The boats around the lake in Crookes Valley Park were found moored on the central island, apart from one left in the university quadrangle.
- In London, Sheffield students placed red dye in the fountain at Piccadilly Circus and a fake ticking bomb in the toilets of Selfridges.
- On the road to Baslow, a group of dental students staged a murder.

This last incident was taken seriously, provoked a police hunt and made the front page of the local paper, the *Sheffield Star*. Once the hoax was revealed, a condemnation of sorts was printed, but the article finished by commenting on two Guy Fawkes found swinging from the flagpoles of the newspaper's offices: 'If the Rag Committee would like them back they can have them—provided they pay a ransom into their own fund.' This tolerant, almost affectionate, remark is revealing of the extent and depth of the licence, even in 1958, when the London events indicate that a national student consciousness was growing. A belief in the validity of the Rag performance remained. Indeed, it is informative that the majority of the archived letters of complaint about student behaviour are concerned with 'beer drinking races'—essentially timed, individual pub crawls with limited entrants.

With hindsight, it is easy to see the approaching culture change. On 5 May 1957 the students organised a 'mourning party' following the last 194 tram from Crookes past the University to the terminus, singing the National Anthem and a song entitled 'Death to the internal combustion engine'. The next year a drug reference appeared in *Twicker*, and in October 1959 more than 2,000 students took part in the Sheffield Rag. There were balls at Cutler's Hall, in Rotherham, in Barnsley and in Doncaster; a Jazz Carnival at City Hall; and a Midnight Film Matinee. At this last event, seats were broken

and even torn out, the proscenium damaged, things thrown at the screen and the whole place littered with filth of every description—flour, peas, potatoes, toilet rolls, beer bottles and so on.

This letter, in the University archives, explained that the cinema was ‘accustomed to the usual sort of Rag merrymaking’ but had not encountered anything like this before, and had to call in the police. On 26 September 1960, for the first time, the student newspaper, *Darts*, published a special ‘Welcome to Sheffield!’ edition for the new arrivals. The first freshers of the 1960s had much to look forward to, especially the Beatnik Ball that was held on 6 October, as part of the first ever Intro Week, held before the Rag celebrations. The splendid objectifications of youth culture had arrived in Sheffield, and with them the dissolute pleasures of smashing them up. When, on 26 October 1961, the Rag convened a ‘Dawn Patrol’ to collect donations wearing pyjamas, its organisers had no idea what they had started.

WHEREVER THE BEAT IS HEARD

The 1960s began in grey flannelled trousers, sports jackets, shirts and ties, all wrapped up with an ‘essential’ university scarf.³⁴ By the end of the decade (after two women were ejected from a physics lecture for wearing trousers in 1965), jeans, Afghan coats, flowery shirts, beads and long hair were ‘normal’. Shirts and ties were ‘weird’ but not forgotten, on the margins where they remained, past the end of the next decade, hiding behind the leather, studs and hair gel, through the 1980s and on into the 1990s, where they were reborn in a mediated irony that owed everything and nothing to what had gone before. In terms of cultural evolution, I suggest this movement, from the 1960s to the 1990s, was representative of a period of heterogeneity that student culture experienced in its transition from a traditional, HEI-orientated culture to a youth-orientated culture. It was not a displacement but rather an ‘annual development’ that grew with every influx of students and the influences borne from the full width of student mobility. The following extract from *Darts* is an excellent demonstration of what I mean by a heterogeneous student culture. It describes the attractions of the ‘beat scene’ yet does so with an elite sensibility, in that it considers youth behaviour in an attempt to address what is ‘good for society’:

At the clubs where the latest groups appear, there is an atmosphere of complete enjoyment. The groups and the audience are free from the stigma of being called immature—they are immature and they enjoy it. Wherever the beat is heard there is a sense of community, a rapport between the groups and the audience, between the stage and floor, which there is not at more traditional concerts. Some observers regard this as unhealthy, they talk in terms of the mass hysteria which greeted Hitler, suggesting that enthusiasm is bad per se. This is yet another example of the intellectual stating basic fact and giving it a significance it does not have. Mass hysteria has been the cause of revolutions in Russia and in France, it has made a football club famous and given madmen power. It is foolish to moralise about something which is so much an inherent characteristic of humanity. It is far better that the Beatles, say, should be the centre of such enthusiasm than that no such enthusiasm should exist. As long as Sir Alex Douglas Hume never becomes the object of mass hysteria there is nothing to worry about.³⁵

Of course, ironically, politics *would* become the focus of student ‘hysteria’ over the next two decades, as the group consciousness demonstrated by this piece became aware of its entitlements and collective power. This political awakening placed inordinate importance on the individual’s rights; it stressed the self and made the personal political. Desire had been unleashed, and would be marshalled by the progressive liberalisation of the night-time economy. The Rag was a casualty of this as the behaviours it licensed annually in the name of charity were taken over by the weekend rhythms preferred by commerce. The article that the above extract was taken from, for example, was written with the help of two brothers who ran nightclubs in Sheffield, Peter and Geoff Stringfellow. The elder would go on to ‘make his name’ in the fleshy pleasures of the night-time economy.

Everything made possible by the student Rag, from going wild in costume to public drunkenness, would gradually be taken over by business, often businesses run by students or with student involvement (the SU being the classic example). To paraphrase the extract, the beat slowly spread throughout the week, until, by the 1990s, it was heard every night. This economy grew up with students, the ideal consumers of its product owing to the structural peculiarities of mobility which *provided* the freedom from censure that was legally *conferred* by the change in students’ legal status. This change was first recommended in 1967; by the

early 1970s, halls of residence in Sheffield were run without restricting a student's right to have consensual sex or partake in pleasure. The papers of Peter and Alison Slater clearly depict a hybrid culture, a hierarchical hall, with a warden, JCR, SCR and various staff, an active press, many committees and 'characters'. While the hall bar was certainly used, alcohol was not consumed outside of it and was, indeed, still difficult to get hold of. Not always sold at the 'nightclubs' in town, drink was restricted to public houses. The hall was very much thought of as a self-contained home, a society in miniature, to be managed as such. Corporate life, although not named as such, was still evident.

As a concept, 'leisure' was situated outside the hall, largely at the SU, and 'doing culture' was viewed as 'being part of a wider culture' rather than a 'personal experience'. LPs, for example, were regularly feted in *Tapton News* alongside extensive reviews which contextualise them as cultural documents. There is little discussion of how the album made the listener *feel* or *move* their body, as later witnessed in the student music press. In the 1960s and 1970s the self remained tethered to cultural forms and social institutions, although it is obvious that the axis of participation was levelling from the hierarchical orientation of the traditional HEI-centred culture (where students knew their place in a pecking order of subjects) to a personal, horizontal engagement with society.

In the second, heterogeneous phase of student culture, this orientation was falling. The self was not yet atomised at the centre of experience, although youth culture was proselytising its new position. The very personal poetry that pervades *Tapton News* is a good example of its ascendancy. Now these poems read like documents from an alien civilisation: I could not imagine a contemporary student openly publishing verse depicting their feelings to their neighbours. Indeed, when one contemporary Tapton resident drunkenly wrote a blog post on 'feelings', it was swiftly deleted, but not before a friend of his copied and pasted it all over Facebook in an attempt at cut-and-paste ridicule.

Other elements of contemporary student life are, of course, recognisable in the youth-centred culture evident from the 1960s on. While the papers of Peter and Alison Slater demonstrate the heterogeneity of Sheffield students, student culture was a culture engrossed in claiming its entitlement to pleasure. On 17 October 1970, *Darts* began to show a topless student 'dolly bird' every week, an unusual decision when juxtaposed with the political causes that filled up the remainder of its pages. By 1973, drugs were part of the Intro Week information; the 'uptight war generation'

had been replaced by ‘a cooler more hedonistic one’.³⁶ Deference to staff decreased, and the University willingly accommodated students and the ‘student viewpoint’ in fear of aggravating the SU.³⁷ Drinking ‘was a daily event for many’, and cannabis and LSD were ‘easily attainable’ if so desired.³⁸ However, there were still many aspects of the pre-1960s HEI-centred culture present. Hall staff, for example, discussed the relative lack of problems they had, cleaners remembered ‘putting a little bleach in the cannabis pot on the windowsill every week’ and porters had fond memories of running a monthly ‘pub crawl’ to show students different areas of Sheffield. Most importantly, the SU had not yet built its nightclubs.

One could write a thesis on the many narratives that describe the transition from this world to the contemporary university, but none are as succinct or as demonstrative as the changing fortunes of the Rag, which also chart the relationship between students and the city of Sheffield. Essentially, as the 1960s passed into the 1970s and 1980s, the Rag declined in importance, and its column inches shrank in the student press, dwarfed by the rising importance of Intro Week. In 1967, *Darts* displayed the attractions of both, covering Rag over a double-page spread (‘Nobody wears ordinary clothes so go mad for once and have a laugh’), followed by a double-page review of the Freshers’ Ball entitled ‘Psychodelia hits Union’ which proclaimed: ‘If as Marshall McLuhan says, “the medium is the message” groups like Arthur Brown and Zoot Money represent a new level of communication with their audiovisual acts’.³⁹ The size of the Rag Parade essentially shrank, year after year, as its profile diminished in the multicoloured light of a national and international youth culture that was hallucinatory in its appeal and scope.

By 1969, *Darts’* coverage of the Rag Parade was much smaller, and by 1975 it was only covered once.⁴⁰ The local *Sheffield Telegraph* reported ‘stunningly unforgettable’ floats in 1981, and by 1984 there were complaints about the lack of interest shown in it by *Darts*, which provoked the headline ‘Poor Old Rag’.⁴¹ Hall porters reported a complete lack of enthusiasm: ‘It became just people sitting on a lorry, in the late 80s ... 90s, don’t know why it changed. Society has changed.’ Indeed, Mathers quotes Paul Blomfield, who joined the SU as a member of staff in 1978, suggesting that the Rag petered out as a result of the change in the age of majority, which made the Rag culture of ‘being a bit naughty’ seem immature.⁴² While such an interpretation may be valid, it neglects the impact of expansion and forgets that the Rag is a performance, and as a performance it needs an audience.

Effectively, the city of Sheffield withdrew from this role and, as the student body grew and expanded through the 1960s, and into the 1970s and 1980s, it ceased to believe in the validity of the Rag performance, withdrawing the students' carnivalesque licence. To some extent, this was because of the pranks (or, as they were termed, 'stunts'), which were already extreme by the end of the 1950s. This can be understood in terms of escalation, of each year attempting to outdo the last, yet must also be interpreted in line with a growing youth culture, and the beginnings of a national 'student culture', encouraged by participation in the Rag. Thus, as HE expanded and youth culture began to gain its own voice, stunts began to occur in other cities, especially London.

It is clear from the 1960s letters of complaint kept by the offices of the Registrar and the VC that the carnivalesque behaviour of students was wearing thin with the public of Sheffield. In 1965 the Rag was referred to as 'nothing but an excuse for vandalism' by 'so-called educated students'. Another letter complained that 'these students seem to think that once they became part of the "Rag", they receive a licence to annoy and harm ordinary people, all in the name of charity'.⁴³ By the 1980s, one participant in the Rag commented: 'we met with opposition and hostility then and I shudder to think what would happen now. You'd all be given ASBOs probably.' For a time, in the heterogeneous 1960s and 1970s, both public licence and sufficient levels of student enthusiasm remained, resulting in some truly spectacular and cunning stunts that spoke not just to Sheffield but to the growing national student consciousness. This escalation is reminiscent of what Turner terms 'liminoid phenomena':

Competition emerges in the later liminoid domain; individuals and schools compete for the recognition of a 'public' and are regarded as ludic offerings placed for sale on a free market—at least in nascent capitalistic and democratic-liberal societies. Liminoid phenomena, unlike liminal, do not so much invert as subvert quotidian and prestigious structures and symbols.⁴⁴

In October 1967, for example, Sheffield students painted a giant zebra crossing on the M1, the day before it was due to be opened by Barbara Castle. That same year they daubed 'HMS Twikker' in whitewash on the bows of the QEII, and the following year Concorde received similar treatment, before it had even been unveiled. The remnants of a national

licence can be detected in the letter written to the Chancellor, from H.T. Fream, Secretary of British Aircraft Corporation Limited, Filton Division: 'While we may privately join in applauding the spirit of adventure which prompted this incident, we consider, for reasons we have given, that the plan was misguided.'⁴⁵

Over the next decade the public stopped applauding such stunts, which corresponded to, and informed, declining student interest, which was intimately related to the expanding student body. The literature on pranks holds that the size of the folk group is related to the size of the prank, with more elaborate pranks occurring in a smaller communities, where, conversely, more could get involved in the production and dissemination of such activities.⁴⁶ In 1980 the M1 stunt was repeated, before being staged again in 1982 on Chapel Walk, like a fading echo. At the same time the cultural emphasis on the self and personal experience, first discussed in relation to the Sheffield beat scene, was accelerating. This eventually displaced the need for a public performance.

When, in October 1966, the VC, Hugh Robson, wrote that the Rag took the form of a carnival 'to offer some entertainment, a distraction to relieve the pain of extracting money',⁴⁷ he was partly mistaken, for, even at that point, the collecting tins were absent from the Pyjama Jump. This evolved out of the dawn raids, officially beginning in 1965, as an event to which students were encouraged to wear their nightclothes to the nightclub. Cross-dressing was evident from as early as 1967.⁴⁸ The Pyjama Jump would come to dominate the Rag, so that by the 1970s it was 'compulsory' and featured in many of the accounts solicited for the centenary history, many of which discuss casual sex and drinking. While the traditional Rag's fortunes declined, the Pyjama Jump's soared. Indeed, it was presented in the student press as an event in itself, unconnected to the Rag, and increasingly mediated by photo spreads.⁴⁹ In 1990, at the nadir of the Rag, the *Sheffield Telegraph* declared the Pyjama Jump the largest ticket-only annual event in the world.⁵⁰ A Channel 4 documentary was made, written and presented by Jon Ronson.⁵¹

The Pyjama Jump, of course, had sprung from the performative carnivalesque student tradition of 'letting oneself go', but it depended on, and was in some part organised by, the night-time economy. Essentially, students would buy a ticket that would permit entry to all participating nightclubs. The money from ticket sales went towards Rag fundraising, while the nightclubs would recoup their lost door fees from alcohol sales: everyone won, apart from the city of Sheffield, which was removed from

the equation. The Pyjama Jump was effectively a private, ticketed festival held in the auspices of the night-time economy. The audience was no longer the public, donating to charity in return for student performance, but just the students, indulging in the pleasures of the carnivalesque, revelling in their *entitlement* (not licence) to ‘let rip’.

By the mid-1990s the Pyjama Jump grew to be so popular it became a victim of its own success, judged unsustainable in the eyes of the missing part of its equation: the city of Sheffield. This was not helped by the press, which began to print photographs and stories of the inevitable disorder. By 1996, young people were coming to attend from all over the country, ticket sales had reached 20,000 and the Supertram was stopped for safety reasons. In 1997 the constabulary refused to police the event unless the SU paid for it. There was an outcry in the student press as the SU refused, and ‘single ticket’ campaigners ran in elections seeking to bring it back. The last Rag Parade took place in 1997, and was not held again owing to lack of interest from both students and the city. The Rag Committee survived as a ‘A hardcore of about ten dedicated drinkers’ until 2006/2007, when it was ‘rebranded’ by the SU with the involvement of faith groups and without its carnivalesque emphasis.⁵² The Rag thus lives a contemporary afterlife, which sees students ‘get involved to improve their CVs’ and participate in ‘a niche market of challenge events that meets student demand’.⁵³

THE SUBJECT–OBJECT LOOP IS BIRTHED

The film that Jon Ronson made of the Pyjama Jump is a valuable and important document in the history of student culture at the University of Sheffield. It captures the end of its heterogeneous period, as the SU was transforming into a nightclub provider and the night-time economy was solidifying the performance of going out. The featured students reference a system of fees that would soon be out of date (‘all those taxpayers, right, who pay our grants, this is what we do with your grant money’), as well as discussing their behaviour in terms of a charitable licence (‘Well it’s for charity ... you’re actually paying for the night’).⁵⁴ Yet the film also features all of the performances of carnivalesque ‘going out’ that I observed in my fieldwork. While there is no chanting, there is the singing of lewd marching songs, banter-like roaring and messiness everywhere, fancy dress and dancing in nightclubs. Above all, the students speak of the Pyjama Jump as a stage, or a ‘night’, the ‘best night

of the year in Sheffield' that serves to cement friends together, 'It was Pyjama Jump that brought it out of everybody ... it can bring out the best in people who are normally very shy'. When the interviewer asks the students if they are not concerned about being filmed, one ironically comments: 'Love it, absolutely love it, we want to be able to share our inner feelings.'

As with the article on the beat scene, this film defines a transitional stage of student culture. Suitably, for what will be a hypermediated, internet age, it is a film and not a written text, and although it documents a remnant of the heterogeneous middle period, it demonstrates the homogeneity of the coming years, where the night-time economy will establish itself as the only recognised means of exchanging social capital. A student in the film comments: 'You come back in September, term starts in September, and all everyone talks about in September is Pyjama Jump.' When this annual festival was lost, its importance was soaked up by the intensification of the weekly nightclub calendar, initiated by the SU in the early 1990s and in place, both structurally and socially, by the year 2000.⁵⁵

While the Pyjama Jump demonstrates a number of student pleasures coming together in one activity, it does not trace the development of these activities and their gradual slurring into the monophonic, neoliberal pleasure performance that is 'going out'. The stage management of this slurring began in the early 1980s, and it is celebrated as a matter of survival in the SU's official history, when SU officers fought cuts by becoming more commercial.⁵⁶ The Octagon indicated the scope of the SU's ambitions. Built in 1983 and co-owned with the University, the multi-purpose venue is 'daunting in its size and potential'.⁵⁷ In 1987 the SU bought the Fox & Duck pub as an investment, and in the early 1990s it held a 'Strategic Review', which decided to fight falling grants and rising debt by becoming 'more luxurious than ever before ... to ensure students spent their money there and not elsewhere'.⁵⁸ Debt, not thrift, would become the cornerstone of its approach to 'giving student's what they want'. That is not to say that cheap alcohol was not available, of course. In 1990 the SU ran its first brand-sponsored event, an 'Irish Night' where Guinness was sold for 70p a pint. This was held near, but not quite on, St. Patrick's Day, which would be developed over the 1990s by the night-time economy into an important night in the drinking calendar.

By 1991/1992 the SU employed over 300 staff and was treating its students as customers. In 1992 it appointed a marketing manager,

a key event in the development of the 1990s monophonic student culture, which was overseen by permanent staff in the SU dedicated to 'Commercial Services' and the re-conceptualisation of 'Ents' as a profit-generating business. This allowed the SU to plan and even control its future operations, effectively acting as a structural bridge from heterogeneity to homogeneity. A major refurbishment and expansion was subsequently undertaken in the mid-1990s, as the numbers of students attending Sheffield rose by 50% in the first half of the decade.

These changes were also a reaction to the development of the larger Sheffield night-time economy, which also saw student-orientated establishments such as The Cavendish opening on West Street, an area which had been redeveloped, along with Devonshire Street, as a scripted pleasure zone. In the 1990s, nightclubs began running free buses from the halls to the clubs, and back again. Seeing itself in competition with these establishments, the SU invested heavily. In 1994 the profile of club nights began to rise in the student press, with the size and quality of the advertisements increasing, while pictures of students drinking began to dominate the feature articles. By 2000 the SU was running six club nights a week and had transformed its non-drinking provision into 'Give It A Go' events.

To accompany this intensification, fancy dress began to appear regularly in relation to the weekly round of clubs, untethered from annual events such as Halloween, Christmas or Rag. This is at first evident in the photographs concerned with the SU's LGBT night, Climax, and then on other nights, such as Pop Tarts, first advertised as a '70s night'.⁵⁹ On 5 May 2000, issue 30 of the *Steel Press* carried a 'School Disco' listing, complete with instructions on what to do ('Get down the Oxfam shop and get kitted out in a nice grey outfit'). By issue 35 on 10 November, students going out in school uniform were present in a feature on chat-up lines.⁶⁰ As national pub chains began to target the student market, and I began my fieldwork, the SU intensified its night-time provision further, commenting in its 2006 Annual Report that 'We are increasingly dependent on our entertainments programme to drive footfall.'⁶¹

Those elements of student culture that could not be monetised have fallen from prominence. Drugs certainly play a much smaller role in the SU than they did in the past, where they feature in many memories of the 1970s and even 1980s.⁶² The biggest absence, however, is politics. SU general meetings ended in 1991/1992, while the SU's annual

general meeting (AGM) was eventually abandoned in 2006/2007 owing, essentially, to a lack of interest.⁶³ Party politics were dropped from University elections and candidates won on the basis of having a 'clever slogan'.⁶⁴ The official history of the SU comments that it became 'increasingly difficult to get students with limited time to attend demonstrations', while neglecting to question the efforts the SU took to get those very same students onto its own dance floors.⁶⁵ This certainly illustrates the movement of 'symbolic significance' from the 'world of work, politics and community to the world of leisure'.⁶⁶

Of course, demonstrations still occurred and were still reported in the press. Some were poorly attended while others used the tactics of occupation to achieve disproportionate impact, such as the 2009 protest against the University's involvement in Palestine, which inspired a backlash: 'the student-as-consumer theory in action: they had paid for the lecture, and they were not going to let anyone rob them of it'.⁶⁷ A student wrote into *Darts* complaining that the 'consumerist outlooks, engendered by the advent of tuition fees, render us ideologically incapable of dealing with bigger issues'.⁶⁸ Even when a consumer issue presented itself, however, such as university food prices, there were isolated complaints but no communal action.

Contemporary students possess little social capital or civic engagement, which relies on hierarchies to maintain the tradition of participation.⁶⁹ Residential hierarchies such as hall JCRs have been dismantled by the University and SU. A commentator in the student press even suggested that students should not protest at all, 'because we're students' and protesting would be 'entirely predictable'.⁷⁰ Of the protests that did occur, all were undertaken by a 'scene' comprising the 'usual faces'.⁷¹ When I attended SU hustings in 2008, I counted approximately 200 students in the audience. The football match in the SU bar certainly had a much bigger, more involved crowd. One of the candidates for President introduced himself by saying, 'I'm not talking about my policies', while a candidate for Financial Officer commented, 'I'm not just doing this for my CV, honestly.' When I voted I received a 50p 'thanks for voting' voucher off beer in the bar.

The student of the homogenous period is a creation of historical processes, a habitus formed from the interface of the traditional, carnivalesque Rag persona and the night-time economy. Unlike the second heterogeneous phase of student culture, this homogenous, monophonic culture was *birthed* by institutions. It is youth culture grown up, HEIs

equating student desire for pleasure with their ‘business need’. The traditional element, the carnivalesque thread, justifies the transformations the SU has made: *if we don’t do it, then someone else will*. That’s the message of the SU’s official history: by giving students ‘what they want’ they are saving them from exploitation in the free market. Indeed, of all the sections of the University, the SU was the first to reform itself around student desire, a trend that has reshaped the whole University, from academic departments through libraries (especially the Information Commons (IC)) to the construction of the residential student villages. The third stage of student culture is thus characterised by parities between institutions and desire.

This is a functional transformation in that it does not ask what students need but provides for what students want by appealing to their desires. In the official history of the SU, the ex-General Manager, Paul Blomfield, attempts to sidestep this issue by downplaying the SU’s role in creating the contemporary culture: ‘as the number of students grew, so a distinctive student culture disappeared and their interests became indistinguishable from those of other young people’.⁷² To comment that this was an inevitable result of expansion is to propose that the ‘logic of the market’ is undeniable and incontrovertible. In 2010, Blomfield left the SU and was elected Labour MP for Sheffield Central.

Aside from the friction resulting from studentification, there has been very little opposition or resistance to this evolution. I suggest that this is because students created and assented to it. Because of the traditional, carnivalesque freedoms of mobility discussed and the cultural impact of youth culture, the evolution from a heterogeneous to a homogenous culture felt organic and honest, a natural ‘revelation’ of youthful desire. Lad culture banter is very close to the spirit of the Rag, defined as ‘something a group of you might do, usually discomfiting someone else, or a group of others. It would be somewhat at their expense, but not vindictively so’.⁷³ This is the traditional thread that runs through student culture in Sheffield, which explains the disappearance of the Rag by finding its spirit performed everywhere:

Last year, on Rag Day ... Evil-hearted students, with Babylonian abandon, danced naked in the streets, there were chariots, fantastically adorned, women in mad garb, and the men madder than ever. Wild laughter rang through the streets, wine flowed like water, and the pagan revelry was carried on into the night.⁷⁴

No longer annual, but weekly, this is the messy style propagated by the night-time economy, a connection which silences criticism, masking it with tradition as ‘a constructed canon, projected into the past in order to legitimize the present’.⁷⁵ Everyone knows ‘what goes on’ at university; parents and society accept the carnivalesque: ‘enjoy your student days, have fun, you’re only young once!’ Mobile students breed mobile students, mistaking the heterogeneous pleasures of their own past for the homogeneous prison of their children’s present.

One of the portering staff recounted a story from Sorby that illustrates this. Using a digital camera, he documented pictures of the damage (‘the sheer vandalism’) that students had created over one term. When parents arrived to help their children move home, he displayed these pictures, hoping to gather support in disciplining their offspring. Instead, the parents asked him whether they could keep specific photos of their own child’s damage as souvenirs. This act of sympathy casts parents as tourists taking pictures of their imaginary youth. It recognises students as the other, but also suggests that the other can be understood, just as the Calvinist missionary assumes that the unconverted native has a soul.⁷⁶ Following De Zengotita, this is reminiscent of a general relativist attitude to youth: we’ve been there, we recognise ourselves and we know you’re only performing.⁷⁷

In 1966, *Darts* solicited the views of Professor Bernard Crick on the Sheffield students he taught.⁷⁸ In a long essay he commented, ‘You are all in the grip of a cult of youth’, expressing his belief that students do not understand ‘the long view’: that there will be time, later in life, to both do and experience. He insisted that older people are just as culturally relevant as younger people. It is these card-carrying members of the 1960s cult of youth who now take souvenirs of their own carnivalesque projections home with them. Many do not realise that the heterogeneous culture they once knew has disappeared.

The night-time economy thus justifies itself (literally in the SU’s official history) through the carnivalesque Rag tradition. Giddens suggests that ‘justified tradition is tradition in sham clothing and receives its identity only from the reflexivity of the modern’.⁷⁹ However, there is no reflexivity in student engagement with the night-time economy: it is now compulsory, ‘life itself’. When the rules of university are unlearned, they are done so reflexively, but this amounts to consideration of *how* a student engages with the night-time economy, not whether they engage with it at all. Giddens seems to believe that modernity is capable of

exalting choice over habit, and yet this subsumption of social relations to capital has, to paraphrase, created ‘choice in sham clothing that receives its identity only from the reflexivity of money’. There is no choice, there is only monophony, the beat of the black market. Student culture has been subsumed.

This is a classic hegemonic incorporation of pleasure, with going out at its heart. In the *Darts* commentary of the same Pyjama Jump that was filmed by Channel 4, a student writes that it was ‘a perfect opportunity to claim back that rebellious student territory’ from ‘our thrusting capitalist society’.⁸⁰ This comment demonstrates a belief that I have rarely, if ever, recorded in my fieldwork. It is a remnant of the carnivalesque relationship of students to the city of Sheffield, and exalts the Pyjama Jump as a festival subverting the wider culture. It claims that sexual freedoms, nudity and excess are evasive pleasure in Fiske’s sense in that they lead to rebellious, productive pleasure.⁸¹ This interpretation is largely absent from contemporary students.

The 1960s had introduced the self and the importance of *personal* experience. This is at the core of the shift from an elite HEI culture to youth culture. To return to my favourite quotation from *Darts*,

The groups and the audience are free from the stigma of being called immature—they are immature and they enjoy it. Wherever the beat is heard there is a sense of community, a rapport between the groups and the audience, between the stage and floor, which there is not at more traditional concerts.⁸²

Going out takes this movement further, removing the rapport ‘between stage and floor’; it closes the gap between subject and object so that the performer becomes the audience. The axis of participation in society has fallen from the hierarchy of the HEI-centred student culture to the self-enveloped world, where the consumer’s desire for experience *is* the product. This is the kernel, the essential core of the homogenous student culture that dominated from the 1990s on, and the principle upon which the SU reorganised itself as, primarily, a nightclub complex. It is both a definition of what going out means and a concrete example of the subsumption of social relations to capital. Making friends is making places is going out, where the consumer is friendship group, performer and audience. One needs only to glance at the listing page of the student press to see countless references to this subsumption. To take the example of one in the *Steel Press*,

Funky 70s disco fever all on a fabulous lighted floor that you have to fight to get on to ... Dig out your flares and get on that stage baby ... Still the best night in Sheffield ... nice big stages to make a fool of yourself on.⁸³

The Pyjama Jump may have been a solipsistic festival, one that, in its exclusion of the city of Sheffield, prefigured this subject-object loop, yet it still held a mirror to the students of Sheffield as a group. As an annual event it possessed a ritual function not matched by the necessity of Intro Week or the routine of 'Christmas Day at the Union'. With the removal of the Pyjama Jump, contemporary student culture became, as a consequence, a homogenous blur of nights mediated by alcohol, week after week. In this, going out performs a sleight of hand in terms of group identity. Essentially, it creates the illusion of a mass festival, where participants are engaged en masse, when they are in fact competing in small groups. This is the subjunctive potential of the night, the nightclub as dreamscape, with its strobes, anthems and smoke hypnotising a large group into believing in its own existence. It is the perfect complement to the persistent individuation of HE, and it explains youth culture's emphasis on going out. There is a sense of hope in the subjunctive buzz of the dance floor, a unity through pleasure, that is achieved, and indeed delivered, by the state of messy intoxication. Thus drunkenness once again becomes a shorthand for 'student', as it was back in the days of the Rag, before the evasive pleasures of the joint gained a brief handhold in the heterogeneous 1970s, which increasingly look like halcyon days.

The history of student culture at Sheffield teaches us that the larger the group, the smaller the stage. This means that the wider community only exists in the imagination of students performing on the dance floor. It doesn't exist elsewhere. A theme that emerged from the interviews I held with the portering staff was the change in 'the attitude' of students in hall from the 1990s on:

When I came here I was respected for the help I gave, now there is none. It's changed in last ten years. Society has changed. I was once looked on as a fatherly figure—the University would always hire older, more mature men. That respect has gone now. You know they think 'Who are you to tell me that?' We've allowed society to get like that. It's how we live. We always had some problems. But I always got on with students. They still ask you for favours and you help them out but then they walk past me the next day and say nothing. I used to go on pub crawls with them and take them for walks in the Peak District. Kids seem shyer of me 'cos I'm a lot older than them. Is it because I'm older? I had a better relationship with

them in the past... It changed in the late 90s. One lad spent six or seven years in Uni, six of them in Sorby. He came up and stayed at my house not that long ago. Came to my wedding. It was a laugh and a joke before, not with this lot. It's got worse [When?] In the last ten to fifteen years. [Why do you think that's so?] I don't know why. Society has changed.

When I interviewed contemporary students concerning damage and disorder, there was no mention of the porters, or anyone who would have dealt with their consequences. This is an example of the community shrunk to the size of the family, to the group subsumed in the business of drinking and playing together. Nothing else matters because nothing else can match the intensity of friendships forged by performing to the beat of the drum.

NOTES

1. Matthew Cheeseman, 'Staying In and Going Out (or how to win at being a student)' in Richard Waller, Nicola Ingram and Michael R. M. Ward (eds), *Higher Education and Social Inequalities: University Admissions, Experiences and Outcomes* (London: BSA and Routledge, 2017).
2. I use 'University', with a majuscule 'U' to refer to the University of Sheffield and 'university', with a minuscule 'u', to refer to universities in general.
3. C.I. Lusk, *The Social Construction of the Mature Student Experience* (PhD Dissertation, University of St Andrews, 2008), 109.
4. Cheeseman, M. *The Pleasures of Being a Student at the University of Sheffield* (PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2011).
5. H. Silver and P. Silver, *Students: Changing Roles, Changing Lives* (Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1997).
6. R. Naidoo and I. Jamieson, 'Empowering Participants or Corroding Learning? Towards a Research Agenda on the Impact of Student Consumerism in Higher Education,' *Journal of Education Policy* 20, no. 3 (2005), 267–281.
7. See Cheeseman, 'Staying In and Going Out' for more details.
8. P. Chatterton and R. Hollands, *Urban Nightscapes: Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces and Corporate Power* (London: Routledge, 2003).
9. See P. Chatterton, 'University Students and City Centres—the Formation of Exclusive Geographies: The Case of Bristol, UK', *Geoforum* 30, no. 2 (1999); C. Holdsworth, 'Don't You Think You're Missing out, Living at Home? Student Experiences and Residential Transitions', *The Sociological*

- Review* 54, no. 3 (2006); and C. Holdsworth, “‘Going Away to Uni’: Mobility, Modernity, and Independence of English Higher Education Students’, *Environment and Planning A* 41, no. 8 (2009).
10. Chatterton, ‘University Students and City Centres’, 129.
 11. See Helen Mathers, *Steel City Scholars: The Centenary History of the University of Sheffield* (London: James & James, 2005) and Helen Mathers, *Standing up for Students: One Hundred Years of the University of Sheffield Union of Students* (Sheffield: University of Sheffield Union of Students, 2007).
 12. W. H. Cowley and Willard Waller, ‘A Study of Student Life: The Appraisal of Student Traditions as a Field of Research’, *The Journal of Higher Education* 6, no. 3 (1935), 133.
 13. Cowley and Waller, ‘A Study of Student Life, 136.
 14. B. Stross, ‘The Hybrid Metaphor: From Biology to Culture’, *Journal of American Folklore* 112, no. 445 (1999), 264–265.
 15. J. Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).
 16. See, for example, S. Winlow and S. Hall, *Violent Night: Urban Leisure and Contemporary Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2006) and I. Szmigin, C. Griffin, W. Mistral, A. Bengry-Howell, L. Weale and C. Hackley, ‘Re-Framing “Binge Drinking” as Calculated Hedonism: Empirical Evidence from the UK’, *International Journal of Drug Policy* 19, no. 5 (2008).
 17. Winlow and Hall, *Violent Night*.
 18. M.M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968).
 19. Mathers, *Steel City Scholars*, 126.
 20. T.E. Gumpent, *Recollected in Tranquillity: Reminiscences of a Sheffield Physician* (Dronfield, Sheffield: Walker & Cawson, 1978), 49.
 21. Mathers, *Steel City Scholars*.
 22. On the issue of student mobility, see B. McEwan, ‘Student Culture and Binge Drinking: An Investigation of the Relationship between Student Culture and Binge Drinking Behaviour within the University of Waikato Halls of Residence Student Population’ (PhD Thesis, University of Waikato, 2009). F. Measham and K. Brain, “‘Binge’ Drinking, British Alcohol Policy and the New Culture of Intoxication’, *Crime Media Culture* 1, no. 3 (2005), 275.
 23. Griffin, C., Bengry-Howell, A., Hackley, C., Mistral, W. and Szmigin, I. “‘Every Time I Do It I Absolutely Annihilate Myself’: Loss of (Self-) Consciousness and Loss of Memory in Young People’s Drinking Narratives’, *Sociology*, 43 (2009): 457–476.
 24. Popular dances were designed to appeal to all, while dances such as jazz, salsa or ballroom appealed to enthusiasts.

25. See, for example, *Darts*, no. 35, 17 October 1947, 2.
26. From the Archives, US/SUN/3/149 (17/01/1921).
27. '[F]or many years after the First World War a rag was held on "Poppy Day", the Saturday nearest to Armistice Day, to collect money for Earl Haig's Fund.' F. A. Reeve, *Varsity Rags and Hoaxes* (Cambridge: Oleander Press, 1977), 43–44.
28. R.H. Saltzman, 'Folklore as Politics in Great Britain: Working-Class Critiques of Upper-Class Strike Breakers in the 1926 General Strike', *Anthropological Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (1994), 106.
29. *Rag News*, 29 October 1949.
30. See, for example, *Darts*, no. 37, 14 November 1947, letters page.
31. J. Kugelmass, 'Wishes Come True: Designing the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade' in *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*, ed. J. Santino (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 197.
32. Mischief Night was an annual pranking festival in South Yorkshire, typically celebrated on 4 November.
33. The Registrar's notes read: 'The last order (taken by Mr. Marshall at depot) was ordered by a WOMAN who was obviously with other women + seemed to be putting her hand over mouthpiece at intervals.'
34. Mathers, *Steel City Scholars*, 234.
35. Anonymous, 'Darts presents the Sheffield beat scene', *Darts*, no. 231, 28 November 1963, 5.
36. D. Pountain and D. Robins, *Cool Rules: Anatomy of an Attitude* (London: Reaktion, 2000), 76.
37. Mathers, *Standing up for Students*.
38. Mathers, *Steel City Scholars*, 256.
39. *Darts*, no. 289, 17 October 1967, 4–7.
40. *Darts*, no. 393, 30 October 1975, 8–9.
41. Mathers, *Steel City Scholars*, 304. See also *Darts*, no. 521, 1 November 1984, 7.
42. Quoted in Mathers, *Steel City Scholars*, 304.
43. Both quotations taken from US/REG/3/U/3—RAG—"Registrars file".
44. V.W. Turner, 'Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual Drama as Public Liminality', *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 6, no. 4 (1979), 489.
45. Dated 22 October 1968 and kept in the University of Sheffield Archives.
46. M. Moffatt, *Coming of Age in New Jersey: College and American Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989). S. Siporin, 'Halloween Pranks' and M. Taft, 'Adult Halloween Celebrations on the Canadian Prieires' in *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*, ed. J. Santino (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1994).
47. Letter to Roger Lenon, US/REG/3/U/3—RAG—"Registrars file".
48. *Darts*, no. 289, 17 October 1967, 1.

49. *Darts*, no. 377, 3 October 1974, 17. See also *Darts*, no. 407, 27 October 1976, 6–7 and *Darts*, no. 520, 18 October 1984.
50. Mathers, *Steel City Scholars*.
51. R. Schofield, *Pyjama Jump*. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114209/>.
52. Quotation from an interview with Rag committee members, 2006.
53. Kate Horton, 'Your Notes and News', in *Your University* (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 2007), 18–19.
54. The voiceover later ridicules the film's participants for not knowing which charity they are drinking for.
55. Mathers, *Standing up for Students*.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., 64.
58. Ibid., 86.
59. See, for example, *Steel Press*, no. 27, 25 February 2000.
60. The night-time economy developed the concept of a school disco 'for adults' in London in late 1999. For a discussion, see J. Stuart, 'Bobby Sanchez: Back to Skool', *The Independent*, 25 June 2002.
61. University of Sheffield Union of Students, 2006, 101.
62. Mathers, *Standing up for Students*.
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