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Young People and Mass Mediated Sports Events: Consumption, Impact and Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

The sports media has proven itself to be of phenomenal appeal to the global audience, yet relatively little is known about the nature of this appeal, particularly to young people.

Young people within the public domain are perceived to be both vulnerable and gullible to the powerful effects of media messages. Widely expressed concern focuses upon their inability to be discerning readers of media sporting texts, and their susceptibility to imitate the amoral behaviour of their favourite sport stars. This together with health issues about young people as 'couch potatoes' makes it all the more surprising that media research in the current interpretative paradigm, has failed to adequately address young people and sport.

This investigation uses a sequential multi-method analysis that acknowledges and encompasses the complexity of the audience experience, together with a hermeneutic approach that explores differing levels of the communication process. Readings of sporting texts during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 provided the contextual mediated sport setting in which to explore the nature of audience consumption, impact and interpretative meanings. These included the European Football Championship (Euro'96), the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships and the Atlanta Olympic Games, together with case studies on Paul Gascoigne and Tim Henman.

The case study group of 14 /15 year olds completed daily diaries during the six weeks of media coverage. This was followed by both group and individual interviews. Qualitative and quantitative data extracted from these indicated consumption patterns, the nature of the reception contexts and pleasures gained from the audience

experience. Patterns of sporting activity and modes of imitation during the sports events were also identified.

Young peoples' opinions and recall suggested ways in which certain values, ideas and sporting moments became embedded in their consciousness. By moving between levels of analysis, reflecting upon the formal reading of the texts and the ways in which young people engaged with them, the framework provided evidence that audience thoughts reflected active and critical readings around national unity, gendered and ethnic identity, and constructions of sporting heroes.

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CONTENTS	pages
Abstract.....	i-i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of contents.....	iv-ix
Table of figures.....	x-xii
CHAPTER 1 Introduction	
1.1 Media Consumption, Sport and Young People: the focus of the study.....	1-3
1.2 A Professional Concern.....	3-7
1.3 Background: The Initial Research.....	7-9
1.4 Critical Reflections; and future directions towards a more interpretative analysis.....	9-15
CHAPTER 2 Literature Review	
2.1 Changing Perspectives on the Audience Experience.....	16
2.1.1 The interpretative paradigm.....	16-20
2.1.2 Conceptualising the audience.....	20-27
2.1.3 Supporting the hermeneutic framework for media analysis...	27-36
2.2 The Sports Spectacle.....	36
2.2.1 The Media-sport agenda.....	36-42
2.2.2 Reading the sporting texts.....	42-54
2.2.3 Consumption, interpretation and the media sports audience...	54-59
2.3 Young People, Sport and the Media ; Leisure and Lifestyle choices	59
2.3.1 Media consumption, interpretation and young people as audience	

.....	59-69
2.3.2 Sport and a healthy lifestyle- the media a marginalised partner.....	69-75
2.4 The Research Questions.....	75-77

CHAPTER 3 Methodology: A Multi-method Analysis

3.1 Justification for a Multi-Method Approach.....	77-81
3.2 My Role as Researcher: Female, Insider and Outsider.....	82-87
3.3 The Longitudinal Survey 1991-1995 -2000.....	87-88
3.4 Content and Textual Analysis of selected Sports Events and Sports Stars	89-96
3.5 The Sample Group.....	96-98
3.6 Adolescent Diaries.....	98-101
3.7 In-depth Group Interviews.....	101-104
3.8 In-depth Individual Interviews.....	104-106
3.9 Summary.....	106

CHAPTER 4 The Summer of Sport 1996:

A content and textual review of media coverage

4.1 Super-Mediated Sports Events - issues of power, ideology and the sporting discourse.....	107-109
4.2 'Unification and Reification' - Euro '96 and re-occurring media themes of national identity	109-112
4.2.1 The narrativisation of football stars as national heroes and villains.....	112-120
4.2.2 A patriotic and xenophobic discourse.....	120-124
4.2.3 Unification; football, collective identity and the state of the nation.....	124-129

4.3	'Fragmentation' - the social divisions and distinctions in media representations of Wimbledon 1996	
4.3.1	The socio-historic context of Wimbledon discourse.....	129-132
4.3.2	A comparative content analysis of <i>The Sun</i> and <i>The Telegraph</i> ..	132-133
4.3.3	What happened to Wimbledon '96?.....	133-134
4.3.4	House style: ways of addressing the reader.....	134-135
4.3.5	News value of Wimbledon.....	135-142
4.3.6	Women on the tennis agenda.....	142-146
4.3.7	Distinctions of Class.....	146-147
4.3.8	Making an issue of racial difference.....	147-148
4.3.9	The construction and representation of sport stars.....	149-152
4.3.10	The emergence of 'Our Tim'.....	152-155
4.3.11	Conclusions- fading into mediocrity.....	155-156
4.4.	'Legitimation and Dissimulation'- patriarchy and the spectacle of women at the Atlanta Olympics	
4.4.1	The media spectacle - global unity or division?.....	156-159
4.4.2	The spectacle of women and the Olympics - performers, media portrayal and the female audience experience.....	159-164
4.4.3	'Beach babes, gymnastic dollies and images of female athleticism' - female sport stars for the male gaze or as transforming role models for women?.....	164-178
4.5	Summary.....	178-179

CHAPTER 5 Construction and Interpretation of Sport Stars

5.1 Young People Interpreting Gazza - 'There are two Paul Gascoignes'

5.1.1	Constructing the image and audience identification.....	180-183
5.1.2	The heroic and patriotic tears of a clown - a defining moment in image making.....	183-186
5.1.3	The changing faces of Gazzamania.....	186-189
5.1.4	'There are Two Paul Gascoignes', or more - a site for semiotic struggle.....	189-196
5.2	The Construction of Henman and Notions of 'Englishness'. The emergence of 'Our Tim'.	
5.2.1	Tim Who?.....	196-198
5.2.2	"A Star rising out of the Ordinary". The background and personalisation of Tim Henman.....	198-202
5.2.3	Tennis is coming Home. 'Our Tim'and identification with the nation.....	203-205
5.2.4	" Britain's Number One. Everybody's favourite'. Henmania - constructing the sporting role model, commodity and celebrity.....	205-210
5.3	Summary.....	210
 CHAPTER 6 Adolescent Consumption, Impact and Interpretation of Super-Mediated Sports Events: A Case Study Of the Summer of Sport 1996		
6.1	The Findings: Euro '96, Wimbledon '96 and the Atlanta Olympics.....	211-212
6.2	Viewing, reading and sports consumption.....	212
6.2.1	Consumption patterns.....	213

6.2.2	Television viewing figures.....	213-217
6.2.3	Favourite television programmes.....	217-219
6.2.4	Matches, events and sports star preferences.....	219-222
6.2.5	Other associated products.....	222-223
6.2.6	Magazines and newspapers.....	223-226
6.3	Reception: Appropriation and Ritual Participation.....	227-241
6.4	Reception: Pleasures, Meanings and Interpretative Practices....	241-255
6.5	The Media and Active Sports Participation.....	255-264
6.6	Summary.....	264

CHAPTER 7 Contextualising Young People's Response to Super-Mediated Sports Events

7.1	Revisiting Effects of the Media - ideologies, discourse and meanings.....	265-266
7.2	Unification, Collective Identity and Nationalism 'What a feeling'	267-274
7.3	Fragmentation, Gender Power Relations and the Sports Media Audience 'Girls don't understand it really do they?'	274-284
7.4	Critical Reflections on the Sporting Hero and the Functions of Sports Stars as Role Models..... 'All geniuses have got something wrong with them'	284-297
7.5	Summary.....	297

CHAPTER 8 Conclusions

8.1	Exploring the Hermeneutic-a justifiable framework for analysis.	298-302
8.2	Reading the Sporting Texts. young people, consumption, impact and interpretation.....	302-309

8.3	Revisiting the Professional Concern - Media, sport and Physical education.....	310-313
8.4	Seeking the Media Sports Audience: Future directions.....	314-315
8.5	A Final Summary: Celebration and contradiction in the readings of the 'Summer of Sport 1996'	316-319
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	320-333
	APPENDICES.....	334
	Appendix A: Letters to school, parents and pupils.....	334-335
	Appendix B: Longitudinal Survey and the Consumption Patterns of Young People 1990- 2000 . Questionnaire outline.....	336-341
	Appendix C: Diary Outline.....	342-351
	Appendix D: Diary Data Analysis.....	352-357
	Appendix E: Group Interview Schedule.....	358-362
	Appendix F: Individual Interview Schedules.....	363-365
	Appendix G: Content Analysis Data.....	366-378
	Appendix H: Group Interview Transcripts.....	379-388
	Appendix I: Individual Interview Transcripts.....	389-397
	Appendix J: Journal Articles	398-414

LIST OF FIGURES		pages
Figure 1	Modes and strategies for ideological constructions.....	32
Figure 2	The Tripartite Framework.....	33
Figure 3	A Taxonomy of Sports Viewing Pleasures.....	58
Figure 4	The Hermeneutical Framework: Levels of Analysis and Research Design.....	78
Figure 5	The Personal Media Experience of the Researcher as a female adolescent.....	84
Figure 6	A diagrammatic version of levels of signification.....	91
Figure 7	Mediated Sport and the Audience Experience.....	99
Figure 8	Wimbledon 1996: A comparison of use of news space in <i>the Telegraph</i> and <i>the Sun</i>	136
Figure 9	Wimbledon 1996: A comparison of the sports page coverage in relation to other news space in <i>the Telegraph</i> and <i>the Sun</i>	137
Figure 10	A comparison of Wimbledon news space in the sports pages.....	138
Figure 11	Headline coverage of Wimbledon beyond the sports pages of <i>the Sun</i>	139
Figure 12	Headline coverage of Wimbledon beyond the sports pages of <i>the Telegraph</i>	139
Figure 13	Wimbledon 1996 : <i>The Sun's</i> coverage of women players.....	143
Figure 14	Wimbledon 1996: <i>The Telegraph's</i> coverage of women players	144

Figure 15	Wimbledon 1996: A comparison of female players in the headlines of <i>the Telegraph</i> and <i>the Sun</i>	145
Figure 16	Wimbledon 1996: A comparison of male sport stars in the headlines of <i>the Telegraph</i> and <i>the Sun</i>	154
Figure 17	Atlanta Olympics 1996: Female sports photographic images and male and female representation in <i>the Independent</i>	166
Figure 18	Euro '96 Media Images and representations of 'Gazza' . . . there are two Paul Gascoigne's (<i>Telegraph</i> , 17/6/96, p. 1).....	191
Figure 19	Television Viewing Figures.....	215
Figure 20	Favourite Television Programmes during the events.....	218
Figure 21	Most Frequently Viewed matches, events and favourite sport stars.....	220
Figure 22	Newspaper and magazine purchases.....	224
Figure 23	Audience Composition during The Televised Sports Events	230
Figure 24	Other Key Activities during Televised Sports Viewing.....	239-240
Figure 25	Pleasures and Meanings: A taxonomy of Sports Viewing and young people's experience.....	243
Figure 26	Feelings most often experienced during sports viewing.....	244
Figure 27	Final thoughts on the Events.....	249
Figure 28	Dislikes about Media sports viewing.....	250
Figure 29	Sport stars admired characteristics in the words of young people..	252
Figure 30	Reading Tim Henman.....	254

Figure 31	A comparison of Television viewing and active sports participation during the sports events.....	259
Figure 32	Active sports participation during the events.....	260
Figure 33	Gender Distinctions in the Sports Viewing experience of young people.....	276
Figure 34	Characteristics of the Sporting Hero as articulated by young people.....	287
Figure 35	Young People's Perceptions of Sport Stars as Role Models.....	292
Figure 36	Summarising the Audience Experience during the 'Summer of Sport 1996'.....	305

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Media consumption, sport and young people - the focus of the study

As the media become embedded within everyday lifestyles, reality is increasingly defined by and through media representations. The role the media comes to play in determining identity, meaning and style is ever more prominent, yet remains elusive to its recipients.

Young people within the public domain are perceived to be both vulnerable and gullible to the powerful effects of media messages. Dominant cultural ideologies signified in media narratives may not be so readily accepted by young people, born into a media dominated society, for they are media literate, articulate and judgmental about media representations, genres and stars.

The growing inactivity of young people has been of increasing concern in the last decade. The consumer culture has generated a growing range of sedentary leisure activities available to adolescents. British governmental and educational agencies have focused on the role of school sport as an agency promoting sport and physical activity. However, sport is only one of a number of commercial leisure choices on offer. The role of the media in providing young people with meanings and associations about sport is under researched. Yet it could be a determining factor in the well-documented 'drop out rate' from compulsory school based sport that becomes increasingly gender differentiated through adolescence.

It is impossible to distinguish media 'effects' from other aspects of everyday life, as individuals' experiences are so varied and diverse. This investigation argues for a multi-method analysis that acknowledges and encompasses the complexity of

media experience, together with a hermeneutic approach which explores differing levels of the communication process. The researcher analysis, of ideological readings from the sporting texts during the 'Summer of Sport 1996', covering the European Football Championship (Euro '96), the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships and the Atlanta Olympic Games, provides the contextual mediated sport setting, in which to explore the nature of the consumption, impact and interpretative meanings of a case study group of young people during this period.

Readings of the sporting texts during the 'Summer of Sport '96' reveal ways in which ideological modes of unification worked towards a sense of collective national identity, patriotism and xenophobia for the home nation during the football championship. This questions the extent to which the audience was drawn into such readings, or felt excluded and marginalised from the event, and the consequent 'feel good factor'. The high media profile given to the English footballers on and off-field exploits, raised issues about the extent to which young people are judgmental in the ways that they select their role models and favourites.

It is argued that Wimbledon, one of the English 'crown jewel' mediated sports events, offered fragmented modes of representation around class, gender and racial constructions of the participating sport stars. Despite the emergence of Tim Henman, a player constructed as displaying characteristics of the English 'traditional' sporting hero, the early departure of a number of highly newsworthy characters, such as Andre Agassi, left questions about the extent to which the event would feature prominently in the sporting choices and memories of the audience.

The Atlanta Olympics provided opportunities to consider both the nature of media representations of sports women, and the American television broadcasting attempt to supposedly re-design the event to draw in a previously neglected female audience in order to maximise viewing ratings. The selection and framing of photographic imagery suggests that the representation of sportswomen still operates through a

patriarchal and hegemonic (persuasive and naturalising) framework, which seeks to question the legitimacy of women in the sporting terrain. Modes of dissimulation deflect attention away from successful and powerful female sporting images towards representations of the sporting heroine as either 'babe or doll'. The extents to which gender differentiated sporting representations are reflected in either choices and modes of reception, and or the pleasures and meanings that girls and boys make of the mediated sports experience, become another focus for discussion.

It is clear that the sports media, especially the press, seeks to maximise the appeal of sport stars as celebrities, in order to draw in the audience to the sporting spectacle. Paul Gascoigne, the English footballer, a constant media feature since 1990 and Tim Henman, the emerging English tennis player of 1996 provide two sport star case studies, highlighting the changing and contrasting faces of Englishness, sporting heroism, celebrity and stardom. The ways in which young people identify with such highly profiled stars as these, and make judgements about both Gascoigne's and Henman's sporting lifestyles and behaviour is examined, together with their criteria for selection of alternative stars as their personal favourites.

Finally, associations between the pleasures and meanings that young people make of the mediated sports experience during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996, and their own sporting behaviour, are reflected upon in order to discuss possible connections between media leisure choices and experiences and an active lifestyle.

1.2 A Professional Concern

This research idea germinated during the late 1980s, when as a secondary school Physical Education teacher, I became increasingly aware of young peoples' immersion in media products. Changing room, playground and morning registration talk focused my attention on the knowledge and involvement of pupils in the total

media experience. They were clearly TV literate and familiar with a variety of genres and characters ranging from teen drama to sport.

School ski trips abroad and weeks away camping suggested that they struggled to live without television for the duration. The morning after another 'exciting' episode of "Home and Away" the form room would be a buzz of discussion and debate about their favourite characters. Those that had not made the same programme selection, myself included, were simply outsiders as individual viewers used the peer group forum to negotiate and re-interpret the previous nights' texts. They were talking a different language, discussing individuals I'd never heard of, and agonising over storylines I knew nothing about.

After one very detailed discussion on the latest episode of "Neighbours" whilst I was driving the minibus on the way home from a netball match, and amidst growing concern that the traffic would prevent them from reaching home in time for that evening's programme, the team asked what I thought would happen to Kylie.

"Who's Kylie?" I asked in all innocence.
"Get real, Miss!" they chanted.

So the seeds were sown. I decided to get real. I rushed home to watch "Home and Away" and "Neighbours". I eagerly retrieved "J17" magazine from the lost property bin and confiscated copies of "Viz" from groups of giggling schoolboys at the back of classes I covered for absent teachers.

As a teacher working daily with young people I perceived it as important to be familiar with adolescent interests and motivations. I became curious to know the ways in which their developing identity and consciousness about sport, might be attributed to their involvement in media.

It became clear to me that the hours that seemed to be spent consuming media products could be important in developing adolescent peer group attitudes, behaviour and learning about many aspects of their lifestyle. If meanings derived from media consumption inform young peoples' activities, then connections can be suggested between the sporting media image, and its influence on their interest and participation in aspects of sport and leisure.

Despite a lack of sustained research, sporting images which are presented through newspapers, magazines and television can have an impact on adolescent values. The effects of Olga Korbut on girls' gymnastics as a result of coverage during the 1972 Olympics, the adoption of a crying 'Gazza' as the nation's hero during the 1990 World Cup, and his subsequent demise as a result of adverse reporting, and the complete sell out in sports shops of Henman's tennis outfits, during his unanticipated success at Wimbledon 1996, all indicate that the media do have an impact.

More significantly, the values and ideologies portrayed about the sporting image via their media interests seemed likely to have far greater power and influence than those which I was trying to foster through the school PE curriculum. I questioned how salient the on and off-field behaviour of sports stars, such as Cantona, Lineker and Gascoigne might be to the sporting behaviour and attitudes of the young people I was working with. Similarly, I questioned that if "Eastenders" was a more popular television choice amongst adolescent girls than programmes from the sporting genre, what meaning might characters like Bianca and Tiffany hold for young girls. Might they become significant sporting role models for young girls if they were shown each episode going off to play netball or tennis for the Albert Square team, rather than chatting up the 'fellas' outside the Queen Vic?

During the late 1970s and 80s I had become increasingly concerned about the gender constraints in, and differences towards participation and involvement in school sport that became markedly accentuated at adolescence. Constant adaptations and

innovations to the PE curriculum in my school to motivate and encourage adolescent girls and to accommodate the evidence of a "culture of femininity" had not been totally successful. Physiological gender differences, the changing role of the family and the structure of the Physical Education curriculum did not appear to fully explain why previously enthusiastic, skilful and sporty young girls switched off from sport and became obsessed with beauty, fashion and young men. ¹

During the late 1980s, the Conservative Government began to express concern about the role of sport in schools. As a witness for the British Council of PE at the "Sport in Schools" House of Commons Education, Science and Arts Select Committee meeting (1991, p.92), I put forward concerns about the changing lifestyle and attitudes of young people. I indicated the wide availability and popularity of media products as leisure activities and suggested that in many cases these placed significant demands on the time and interests of young people. For some young people these were likely to be more influential and central to their lifestyles than extra-curricular school sport.

This research will also inform the on-going debate promoted by the Department of National Heritage and John Major (1995) and reiterated by the Labour Government's Department of Culture, Sport and Media, about the importance and value of sport to the beliefs and morals held by young people. This somewhat naive, idealist and traditionalist approach, emphasising team games, suggests a lack of perception about the contemporary, cultural preferences of young people. For despite proposals to increase sporting opportunities in extra-curricular provision at school level and to raise standards of excellence, adolescent sporting values, behaviour, and incentives to participate are driven by socio-cultural pressures that extend beyond school level.

Previous claims focusing on the 'decline' in school sport have failed to acknowledge that many young people simply do not identify with, or wish to participate in sport,

¹ Scraton, S. (1986) in her work on femininity, girls and Physical Education did help to explain these by identifying key sociological issues in this field.

when given a whole range of commercial leisure provision to choose from. The rival attractions exerted by media consumption on young people's developing style, identity and consciousness, and the relation of these attractions to a healthy, sporting lifestyle should be a key focus for government attention .

Yet the power and influence of the media as a sports socialising agency for young people has yet to be fully understood. Whilst this investigation does not claim to be searching for media effects, by exploring young people's engagement with, and response to media sports texts a clearer picture of the role media sport plays in young people's lives may be attained.

1.3 Background: The Initial Research

From such professional concerns, my M.A. dissertation investigation (1991) set out to focus on, and develop themes around media interests and sport amongst adolescents. It was evident that little empirical material was available about the media consumption patterns of young people at macro-societal level, although common sense suggested that it plays a central role.

There was a lack of current information about both the range and depth of young people's media consumption, and how they select and perceive their media experiences. The specific lack of in-depth research on mediated sports consumption, suggested that further work was required on the extent to which the media might act as a sport socialising agency.

This initial research offered an empirically based account of the role of the media in adolescent lifestyle, indicating that media interests were central rather than peripheral to their lives. It confirmed Willis' (1990) argument that young people associate powerfully with media experiences and that they are knowledgeable and informed about media products and images, but not necessarily manipulated by them.

I started to explore which and why certain products are more important than others. It became evident that media consumption in many cases exceeded time spent in school and was frequently more popular and time-consuming than active sports participation. It was most unlikely that any adolescents were not affected in some way by media products. The majority had significant exposure to, and expressed preferences across, a range of genres from television, video and the print media.

Although there were clear patterns and trends emerging with evident adolescent favourites - Australian soaps, *Just 17* and *Viz* magazines, and stars such as David Jason, Gary Lineker and Paul Gascoigne - there were also distinct gender differences in both viewing preferences and pleasures gained from media consumption, especially in identification with the sporting genre.

The research also began to explore associations between the sporting image, and the stereotypical gender sex roles portrayed in adolescent media interests. Content analysis of popular media products identified a lack of female sports coverage, an over-representation of passive females suggesting a 'femininity and sport' conflict, and a lack of female sports stars as role models.

The sports media offered different experiences and learning opportunities for boys and girls. More boys buy sports magazines and videos and watch sports programmes than girls. All their favourite sports receive coverage, they have opportunities to watch these at the highest level, and they have high profile sportsmen to model their performances on (Lines, 1991, p. 125).

Many adolescents appeared unaware of the extent to which the media influenced their sporting behaviour, perceptions and attitudes. Many watched and read about sport simply for fun and excitement. During this research, few acknowledged its

motivational effects in terms of participation, or its function as an incitement to aggressive behaviour in their play.

This project clearly identified the need for further research into the long term effects of media imagery and ideology on adolescent sporting behaviour, and provides a background for developing more comprehensive understanding about how the media relate to the everyday lifestyle and attitudes, beliefs and meanings young people hold.

1.4 Critical Reflection - future directions towards a more interpretative analysis

Following critical reflection on the initial research, and in the light of current key media texts (cf. Morley, 1992; Ang, 1991; Moores, 1993; Nightingale, 1996; Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998) identifying research trends towards audience focused interpretative analysis, four future directions are identified below. This research will provide a more extensive and theoretical appreciation of adolescent consumption, impact and interpretation, with particular reference to the sporting genre. It supports the need for more audience based work in media sport analysis, which has tended to converge around textual analysis (Whannel, 1998a).

Firstly, there is a lack of evidence to determine to what extent adolescent gender and ethnic differences persist in consumption patterns, preferences and meanings across a range of leisure activities available. The place of media sport within these patterns is also uncertain. The lack of continuity in determining the social significance of certain media products, events and images indicates the need for a longitudinal framework to explore wider patterns of consumption amongst young people over periods of time. For media impact suggest a 'here and now' phenomenon, where some media images remain vivid and impressionable to individuals over long periods of time. Geoff Hurst's goal in the 1966 World Cup Final, Torvill and Dean's 1988 Olympic ice skating routine 'Bolero', and Chris Evert's Wimbledon farewell are still intense and memorable representations for me. For others, there will be instances that I have long

since forgotten, or never experienced. The impact of media images is open to audience interpretation and their personal significance, and there are endless cycles of interpretations, with for example, new heroes replacing old in the process.

The empirical data gathered (Lines, 1991) on 240 young people from 4 different areas in the South East of England provides a basis for a quantitative analysis of the range and type of media consumption within a longitudinal framework. The design methodology was such that it can easily be replicated with similar groups of young people. This has provided on-going work replicated in 1991, 1995 and intended in 2001, which will identify commonalities and differences in adolescent media interests over an intended ten year time span. Although this is not intended to be a key element of this study, it provides the context within which the case study group was selected and developed. This framework can also identify the relative importance of the sporting genre within the complete range of media consumption.

Secondly, it was also apparent that patterns of consumption were only one level of analysis, and that a research design focusing on detailed analysis of the sporting text, together with a more audience-based qualitative research could produce a more all-embracing account of audience reception and interpretation. For consumption alone does not explore how the audience receives and appropriates media messages.

Concluding reflections, in an article reporting the initial research, advocated future directions for subsequent study in the field;

This article has not aspired to any detailed or definitive readings of specific forms and texts of media culture. We are aware of comprehensive analytical frameworks recommended by theorists of culture such as Thompson (1991), and of the need for integrated work covering the social and historical conditions of cultural production, formal and discursive analysis of appropriate texts, and the interpretation of interpretations (this being a recognition of the complexity of the hermeneutic). Any cultural method such as this could certainly deliver the most penetrating of depth method alongside an overarching synthesis of understanding. (Tomlinson & Lines, 1996,p.72)

This investigation will adopt Thompson's (1990) suggested tripartite framework (production, construction and reception and appropriation of media messages) for analysis of the ideological interpretative nature of mass mediated symbolic forms. Whilst young people's interpretations provide the main focus of attention, this will be developed alongside the formal analysis of the constructions of the text, and within an appreciation of the socio-historic context. As Thompson (1990, p.306) highlights it is important in the reception and interpretation process to analyse the specific circumstances and socially differentiated conditions within which media messages are received.

Researcher interpretation alone of the content and structure of the media texts, fails to acknowledge the power of the audience in the decoding process. For example, my interpretations of the sporting image do not provide a synthesis of how the adolescent female viewer 'reads' elements of hegemonic patriarchal ideology, or bias towards male sport within the texts.

A number of cultural studies analyses (cf. McRobbie, 1976; Hobson, 1980; Morley, 1980; Radway, 1984; Ang, 1985; Hermes, 1995; and Gillespie, 1996) have, through ethnographic fieldwork, identified audiences' responses to media products. A number of these have focused on meaning, consumption and lifestyle amongst female sub-groups, yet much less work has been completed on masculine preferences and tastes in consumption. The role played by boys' adventure and sports comics in the formation of gender identity has been addressed by Dawson (1984), and Tomlinson (1995). Yet it is surprising, in view of the increasing growth of media sports products, and the perceived social significance of sport to boys, that there has been so little sustained research on young people as audiences of media sport.

The main focus for this investigation will move away from more general media consumption of the previous work, and scrutinise adolescent identification with the sporting genre. The 'Summer of Sport' during 1996, so called because of the intense programming of Euro 96, Wimbledon and the Olympics during a six week period, has been selected as the main period of media sports consumption for this investigation. For it is suggested, that if the sporting genre holds meaning for young people, then such scheduling will be significant. With these three events placed high on the sporting agenda, and perceived by the media as of national sporting importance, it will provide an ideal series of case studies to investigate the impact on young people.

Viewer research figures suggest that large scale media sports events such as Wimbledon, the Olympics and international football competitions are widely watched and read about by large audiences across all social divisions of age, race, class and gender. For example, The I.O.C. (1992) analysis figures show that 9/10 people in the UK tuned for the Barcelona Olympics. Audience levels produced by the U.E.F.A. Champion's League (1995/6) indicates that the final stages in the UK attracted 7, 349, 000 viewers, even though the nations' representatives had been eliminated by this stage. World Cup audience figures for the USA '94 competition have been estimated at 35 billion, and for France '98 a further three billion (Fifa).

Work by Whannel (1990) on sports programming, Real (1989 and 1996) on the Olympics, and Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell (1993) on the 1988 European Football Championship and Wimbledon 1991/2, identify the representation of ideologies and themes through media coverage of such sports events. The ways in which young people receive, decode and interpret ideologies and rituals such as national identity, national traits, the Olympic ideal, gender, and race through the consumption of mediated sport have yet to be investigated in any sustained way.

Similarly, little is known about why and in what ways young people select and reject participation in the ritual of events, like the Olympics. Is it simply that such experiences are seen as a pleasurable and entertaining leisure activity or do young people actively tune in to be informed and enlightened? Some adolescents might also resent the intensive amount of sports coverage on such occasions that disrupts their normal viewing patterns. Real (1989, p.51) suggests;

Mythic rituals celebrate unifying, emotional, symbolic objectifications of collective experience. In modern media these can be as large as a national celebration such as the FA Cup Final, or the Super Bowl or an international celebration such as the Olympics or the World Cup.

Such media events provide case studies to explore ritual interplay between media texts and the sporting culture. It is the intention to determine to what extent these experiences enter into the daily lives and consciousness of young people.

The knowledge of young peoples' viewing practices and behaviour during such events is also unclear. Consideration will be given to the contexts within which they watch, the social contacts they receive and within which they share the messages, and the attention they pay to the act of reception. For these social conditions might clearly affect the meaning each individual makes of the same message.

Understanding in what ways this exposure either encourages them to consume related media products, to actively participate themselves, or to adopt sports stars as heroes or heroines, will enhance knowledge about the total experience of media sport.

For the role of the media in creating and sustaining sporting heroes for young people has only recently appeared on the research agenda.

Whannel (1992, p.124) suggests that the sporting media offers sports stars as personalities. He acknowledges that the 'ideal' sports star is typically male, young and successful. Of particular interest in the field is the work of Harris (1994), who has focused on an interpretative analysis of American youth's hero choices and

characteristics. The nature of this qualitative work begins to identify the ideals, values and meanings that young people use in interpreting the images that they receive.

My initial research in 1991 revealed a vast number of favourite television and sports stars amongst young people, and there was evidence that many sports stars are seen as television celebrities, and that adolescents selectively choose them as their favourites. The volatility and fickleness of young people in following individual celebrities were also apparent (Tomlinson and Lines, 1995).

Currently, the concept of role models for young people has resurfaced as an issue for public debate and concern. A headline in *The Times* (16/1/99, p. 18) 'Are role models the answer for feckless youth?' suggested the part role models might play in the behavioural and attitudes of their young fans. The main contention was over the nature of who are seen to be worthy role models. The influence of media celebrities and sport stars was confirmed for when asked for their heroes, a group of boys interviewed suggested heavy weight boxer, Mike Tyson, footballer Paul Ince, tennis player Greg Rusedski, Will Smith the American rap singer and the American screen action hero, Wesley Snipes as amongst their favourites. Girls it was claimed 'tended to idolise the Spice Girls'.

However, the significance and adoption of certain sports stars as role models has yet to be fully examined. As Harris (1994) suggests, part of the problem with previous research questions has been that they have been static, considering heroes at a specific point in time rather than by carrying out investigation over a period of time, during a series of events or through a life history. Using this kind of case study analysis, respondents could then be asked to recount their knowledge and interpretation over a particular time span. This would develop understanding of the long term impact and meanings of media stars, and the interpretation young people make of the constructed images they receive.

This research will explore how young people identify with, and the ways in which they choose to model themselves on, their favourite media stars, together with the extent to which they make a critical analysis and interpretation of sports stars' lives, personalities and sporting ability. Case studies on selected sports stars from the 'Summer of Sport' will consider how young people read and view the narratives and representations of media icons. For as *Inside Sport* (1998, p.15. January edition) suggests;

Sport stars are fashion items, in favour when they win, out when they lose. They have skills worthy of admiration, but they are basically entertainers and their primary task is to enthrall.

My professional concern has produced an on-going interest and direction towards a research design that will offer a longitudinal survey of adolescent consumption, together with a series of case studies of the consumption, impact and interpretation of the 1996 'Summer of Sport', focusing on a sample group of twenty-five 15 year olds. This will provide a more complete account than has previously been offered of young peoples' engagement with, and responses to the sporting texts.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Changing Perspectives on the Audience experience - the Interpretative Paradigm. From behavioural effects theory to the tripartite hermeneutical approach

2.1.1 The Interpretative paradigm - prioritising the audience.

Changing perspectives on the media experience, and current key literature foregrounding the audience within the interpretative paradigm provides the initial focal point for this section. Conceptualising the audience and identifying its nature, together with determining the empirical and epistemological evidence are key methodological questions required of research in this field.

The second key area of literature focuses on the media-sport relationship, and discusses the growing textual analysis of an expanding array of sporting texts. It identifies how sporting discourse is open to multiple and contradictory readings around social divisions, sporting ideals and social and moral values. In comparison, the ways in which the media sport audience determine their own meanings and pleasures from media sport engagement has been less scrutinised.

The third literature focus provides increasing evidence of the centrality of media in everyday youth culture. The core debate lies between young people as passive, vulnerable consumers, or active and creative users of the texts. Widely expressed concern about the relationship young people develop with active sport and media as leisure choices, has failed to result in any sustained investigation.

Theorising the media has led to different perspectives on the communication system and varying, sometimes contested, ways of analysing the structures, meanings and power issues within the complex nature of the process. The multi-disciplinary

features of the subject area have drawn in researchers encompassing standpoints from sociology, psychology, cultural studies and linguistics. The three stages of the communication process, production, (sender), the text (message) and consumption (audience), have also provided differing points of foci and attention. The rapidly expanding media technologies, the growing globalisation of media products, and the continuing diversity of the media audience ensure that media researchers are constantly rethinking the nature of the media experience, and the significance of its role in the social construction of meaning, style and identity.

In essence, these are shifts in perspective about appropriate theoretical frameworks and accompanying research methodologies and techniques. The central questions within each, revolve around debates of ideological processes, the cultural power and functions of the media and the nature of the audience experience.

One approach, drawing on psychological and sociological theory, has focused more specifically on the transmission of messages and its 'effects' on the audience.

McQuail (1987) identifies three stages in the behavioural or 'effects' phase. Firstly, common sense assumptions about the all powerful media to indiscriminately shape opinion and behaviour; secondly, attempts to scientifically measure behavioural and attitudinal change that began to dispute the sole effect of the media and move questions towards the significance of the social and cultural contexts and relationships in which media messages were received; and thirdly, an attempt to incorporate differing levels of effects alongside issues of power within social contexts.

Hall (1982); Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998, p.10); McLeod, Kovivicki & Zhongdang Pan (1991, p.238) provide three key criticisms of the behavioural paradigm - a neglect of the nature of different social groups' interaction with the media; a failure to analyse the texts and identify the complexity of meaning that could be drawn from them, and thirdly, the over emphasis on the function of media in terms of influence.

In the public domain, often initiated by the media themselves, there is still a legacy of concern about the vulnerable audience. There was, and still is, some validity in suggesting that the media can and does have an influence on the audience, but clearly the early indication that the media message was either fixed and all powerful, failed to acknowledge that the relationship between message and receiver is far more complex than that.

In questioning the role and function of the media, the 'effects' idea is constantly revisited. However, the depth and scope of what is meant by these have rightly broadened. The ways in which the media functions are now explored in a variety of different ways, which acknowledge that it works under varying conditions, with differing groups of individuals, through different modes of reception and attention, and across a range of texts.

A second approach, draws more heavily from linguistic theory and the study of semiotics (the science of signs). Researchers in this field are especially concerned with the production and exchange of meaning, focusing on the texts of communication. This saw a positive shift from the functional approach of behavioural effects, towards a more theoretical understanding of the decoding process, and the ways in which signification within the texts could produce and circulate meanings and discourse, through its interaction with the receivers (now referred to as 'audience' or 'readers'). The work of Fiske (1990), Berger (1991), Hall (1997) and Bignell (1997) have developed the original work of Saussure, Barthes and Levi-Strauss on linguistic theory in their own work. These texts indicate how semiology and structuralism¹, through a more critical approach to the construction of meaning in communication processes, have significantly influenced trends in media analysis. Both McQuail

¹ Strinati (1995, p. 88) provides a useful introduction to the empirical application of semiology and structuralism, whilst critiquing the validity of its approach.

(1987) and Bignell (1997) support semiology as an invaluable approach in establishing the cultural meaning of media content;

it certainly offers a way of describing content . . . it has an especial application in certain kinds of evaluative research, especially that which is directed at uncovering the latent ideology and 'bias' of media content. (McQuail, 1987, p.187)

Bignell (1997), enforces the strength of semiotics in identifying how meanings of signs in texts are constrained by codes and ideological structures. He also shows how the approaches to semiotics have progressed from fixed meanings, to a growing acceptance that meanings in texts are polysemic, or have multiple meanings.

Hall (1997)¹ explains how the semiotic focus on linguistic structures has shifted towards a more discursive approach. This he argues differs from a semiotic focus on how language produces meaning, to a form of analysis that considers the effects of representation;

Discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic or practice; a cluster of ideas, images and practices which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular subject or site of social activity. (Hall, 1997, p. 6)

This approach incorporates concepts of power and knowledge production and offers a wider qualitative breadth to analysis of content.

Yet neither semiology, nor discourse analysis as research tools, can provide all the answers to explain the audience experience. For whilst semiology continues to be a widely used approach in both media and cultural studies, the virtual ignorance of audience response to the researcher readings drew attention to its weakness in providing a complete understanding of the communication process. For it is unclear in semiotic work how the audience themselves come to understand and interpret cultural forms. The academic researcher clearly brings understanding of semiotic procedures

¹ Hall (1997) develops a comprehensive, theoretical and illustrative account of the approaches to representation through visual images, language and discourse.

that are very different from the cultural codes that the 'everyday' reader brings to the text.

In recognition that the effect's paradigm ignored both textual meanings and differing ways of decoding, whilst the structuralist approach virtually ignored actual audience readings, the need to conceptualise the audience experience was acknowledged.

Since the 1980s the audience or 'receiving' end of the communication process has come under scrutiny, reflecting on the nature of the media experience for individuals, asking questions about ways in which they use media in everyday life, the reception context and the meanings and pleasures they derive from consuming the texts they select. This suggests a third approach, the interpretative paradigm, drawing on audience ethnography and reception and cultural studies, that has begun to focus on what the audience do with the media.

This brief overview of the differing theoretical and research perspectives on the audience experience sets the contextual paradigm for this investigation. Further discussion on the relative merits of research tools used within each paradigm, takes place within the justification for the multi-method approach in chapter 3.

2.1.2 Conceptualising the Audience

Since the emergence of the mass media, the concept of the receiver has changed in nature, from perspectives on a large homogeneous mass to the idea of diverse groups of individuals, drawn to products and genres for a wide variety of purposes and interests. In an academic context, the notion of the audience as 'victims' has shifted to the audience as active users.

As media complexity grows, conceptualising the audience, and determining the empirical information required to understand the nature of the audience experience becomes more challenging. Conceptualising audiences through measurements of

ratings and viewing figures is too objective and simplistic, and ignores ways in which messages in a mediatised culture are received and appropriated.

As Ang (1991, p.12) argues, contemporary research should be looking at the 'social world of actual audiences'. The growth in domestic media contexts, and the use of private spaces as media locations, makes analysis of the audience experience increasingly problematic for the researcher. The difficulty is further accentuated by the proliferation of media products, and an environment impregnated with media images and signs.

Abercrombie & Longhurst (1998, p.105-6) refer to the idea of the audience within a 'mediascape', where there is a blurring of boundaries between local and global images, reality and fantasy, fact and fiction. They suggest that the mediascape is omnipresent with the audience surrounded and immersed, to the extent that it is taken for granted and part of everyday life. Harris (1996) too, expresses the idea of a 'society of signs', where the sea of communication in social life embeds into individual consciousness. Merkel, Lines & McDonald (1998, p. xii) pursue the ways in which production and consumption are not only no longer distinct processes, but complex and contested;

The ways in which individuals' taste, style and identity are embedded in media consumption patterns must be explored within specific reception contexts. Social class grouping is not the sole determinate - gender, race, disability and specific stages of the life cycle indicate distinctions and preferences, both within privatised settings of family consumption and beyond,...such contexts whilst identifying cultural constraints and contested spaces for consumer practices can also be sites for expressing individual and group diversity, opposition and empowerment.

This indicates a difficulty in determining the boundary of 'the audience' - where to find them and who they are, for as Nightingale (1996, p.148) suggests, the character of the audience is 'shifty'.

Similarly, the role of the audience and its changing terms of reference, intimate how the concept has shifted and adapted according to the nature of the question being asked of it. The term 'audience' simply suggests someone sitting, watching or listening, yet Real's (1996, p.43) terms indicate greater complexity than this; from receiver (in the hypodermic model), reader (which gives a mental rather than physical active one), audience (which suggests a collective group), consumer (which adds a commercial focus), decoder (which seems to add a notion of mystique to the process) to his own term, 'co - author'. This original term offers consideration for an active and joint partnership between the producer and the recipient. This suggests the blurring between distinct stages of the communication process. It also supports the notion of the active reader in work by Hebdige (1979), Fiske and Hartley (1987) and Willis (1990), and begins to open up the idea of a creative, interpretative role for the decoder, with increasing research importance attached to the audience.

This significance has been reflected in the current growth of publications theorising the receiver end of the media communication process, (cf. Morley, 1992; Moores, 1993; Ang, 1991; McQuail, 1997; Nightingale, 1996; Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998). Such texts confirm the diverse nature of the audience, focusing both on varying and specific social groupings, through to generic media audiences. All support the emergence of an audience focused paradigm, countenancing interpretative research strategies. Moores (1993, p. 5) suggests;

It is an approach which takes seriously the interpretations of the media constructed by consumers in their everyday routines. At the same time it is not afraid to interrogate and situate their spoken accounts.

The notion of the dominant audience, as opposed to the dominant text, indicates a clear shift of thought, demanding differing questions and answers from textual analysis. Far from simply considering the use of media in everyday life this opened up directions about the nature of personal locations and reception contexts, and the

ways in which meanings derived from media consumption are embedded in the larger social structures.

The significance of a consumer culture, and reflection on the idea of the 'mediascape' suggested by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) suggests a mediated culture which provides a spectacle of images, styles and products for gaze by the audience which can be bought and sold. They argue that the interpretative paradigm is one of spectacle and performance. Patterns of consumption, reasons for preferences and ways in which images and products are used in the construction of identity and meaning have become of central concern in searching for the nature of the audience experience. Nightingale (1996, p.150) argues in a similar way that 'performance always exceeds consumption and use'. Willis (1990) pursues the point identifying that interpretation, symbolic action and creativity are all components of consumption. As individuals consume media products they are engaged in 'grounded aesthetics';

This is the creative element in the process where meanings are attributed to symbols and practices and where symbols and practices are selected, re-selected, highlighted and recomposed to resonate further appropriated and particularised meanings. (Willis, 1990, p. 21)

This moves a considerable way from the notion of the passive recipient of media messages towards an active audience, responding to images and linguistic signs in varying ways.

It becomes problematic to think of the audience simply as a mass of people, and more pertinent to reflect on the socio-cultural diversity of each individual. For the nature of their background can affect the type and range of choice in media products, together with the ways in which they use and make sense of the texts that they choose.

In considering the audience as consumers and users, the nature of the pleasures and meanings gained from the reception and appropriation of the texts, should be an importance focus of analysis;

What audiences are doing therefore, is drawing from the endless stream that passes them by, a set of diverse elements out of which they can construct imaginative worlds that suit them. (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998, p.107)

It is unclear how social influences and groupings can and do influence choice, for particular fans of a specific genre, or media star, can cross a variety of social divides. A key element of audience focus is the ways in which such choices, tastes and preferences are significant in the construction of individual identity. Individuals can increasingly switch from 'high' cultural products to those that are perceived as 'more trivial', suggesting a diversity of taste, and ability to use media products in a variety of ways.

Contemporary key questions within the interpretative paradigm have focused on specific genres and targeted audiences, to explore ways in which individuals identify with and make meaning from the texts they select. These include, Radway (1987) on women and the reading of romance novels; Ang (1985) on Dallas and the place of soap opera; Gillespie (1995) on ethnicity, youth and media products; and Hermes (1995) on women and magazines. These confirm the significance of exploring audience interpretations of media texts, and the difficulty of academic attention focused solely on 'preferred' meanings of the texts.

Not all readers are equally able to make sense of the texts, and some aspects of research have focused on the cultural competencies of sections of the audience, arising from concerns about ways in which they might be drawn into dominant ideology, or interpellated. Soap operas and women's magazines are seen as examples of media products that can work on 'vulnerable' women in this way. The research above reflects a predominance of work in the field dedicated to feminine taste, yet less apparent concern for the gendered choices of male media consumption, such as sport.

Morley's (1992) work identified a new and key approach to audience investigations, and offered a framework for a comprehensive account of the audience experience. The qualitative and ethnographic work he advocated embraced a range of issues within the audience experience; from reception settings, diversity of preferences, competencies in reading the texts, consumption patterns to meanings and pleasures. This highlighted the importance of the differentiated nature of the experience for varying social groupings, identifying power relations within the micro setting through to ethnic and gender preferences and perceptions of marginalisation. Morley offers a range of aspects of the total audience experience and has been influential in current ways of looking at the interpretative stage of media communication.

Criticism directed towards the audience focused approach has identified several areas of concern (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998, p.30). Firstly, that an over emphasis on the active audiences' ability to create meaning may encourage a lack of consideration for the 'preferred meanings' in texts. This indicates that textual analysis should be integrated within an audience centred approach. Secondly, as audience activity does not necessarily equate with resistance, it is necessary to identify what the audience actually does to reflect this. Ang (1996) supports the significance of research that offers critical engagement with the ways in which media consumption and resistance impinge on the identity and lifestyle of individuals in their everyday struggle over meaning. Both she and Moores (1994) suggest that such evidence can only be determined through research within the audience reception context, and inclusive of interpretative work foregrounding the audience.

Thirdly, it is suggested that the focus on audience creativity and activity diverts serious attention away from possible concern about the 'artistic, moral, poverty' aspects of the produced texts. This raises questions about whether there should still be cause for social concern about the nature and quality of media provision. Such issues do still feature in the public domain, and whilst there is no suggestion here to revisit'

behavioural effects', a breadth of interpretative work may illustrate that engagement with popular culture provides opportunities for the audience to be discerning and critical of the social and moral issues played out within the texts.

What becomes clear is that just as the texts alone could not provide a comprehensive explanation of the media process, so conceptualising the audience experience requires more than simply speaking with the audience;

My perspective is that texts acquire meaning only in the interaction between readers and texts and that analysis of the text on its own is never enough to reconstruct these meanings. (Hermes, 1995, p.10)

Barker (1989, p. 261) in his work on comics suggests that ideology acts as a dialogue in the interaction between text and audience. For he suggests that to understand ideology as dialogical, researchers must listen to audiences, and explore what the texts are saying;

The media are only capable of exerting power over audience to the extent that there is a 'contract' between texts and audiences.

This dialogue (or discourse) relates to aspects of the audience's social life, and what consequently holds meaning for them. The ways in which audiences form modes of identification with, and determine distinctions between reality and representations, can be revealed in the sense making narratives that they use to describe their own experiences.

Whilst acknowledging diversity, the subtle ways in which ideology works in mediated culture, cannot be excluded from discussions conceptualising the audience. Underlying all three issues for critique, is the concern about ways in which power and ideology can be incorporated, and explored within the current centrality of the audience experience. Morley's (1992) work suggests that power is still a focus, but is explored beyond the text, and within domestic viewing environments. Audience

interpretations and activity should not be seen in isolation from the ways in which ideology operates at the production and textual stages of the communication process.

There are further empirical considerations to be made. The difficulty of establishing long term impact and consistency of media audience trends is clear. The range and ever changing nature of images, products and technology ensures the 'here and now, gone tomorrow' feel about media research. Current students reading about Dallas (Ang, 1985) might not easily be able to identify with a particular text last shown over a decade ago.

There is justification for empirical research into audience patterns of consumption that begins to explore trends and explain patterns in selection and choice. For the long-term popularity of particular favourites, and reason for that choice, together with the long term analysis of specific groups, has been more difficult to pinpoint in current media research.

Secondly, many of the audience research projects have focused on fans of particular genres or social groupings. There is as much to be learnt about reasons why individuals choose to ignore certain products, or how they have blurred boundaries of social division by the selection of gender 'inappropriate' genres, such as boys and soap opera or women and sport. Similarly, distinctions and compatibility in tastes and preferences may not be as dissimilar as common sense or targeted groups suggest.

A review of the literature in this section indicates a need for a wider perspective on the genres and groupings than that which has currently come under scrutiny, together with a framework that can provide for analysis of all stages of the communication process.

2.1.3 Supporting the hermeneutical framework for media analysis

The work on effects, semiotics and audiences has all contributed in some way to a

greater understanding of the significance of the media experience. However, the divergent and insular paths that they have tended to take have provided neither a coherent, nor holistic framework for media analysis. Yet, in some ways the concepts and techniques used are not as incompatible as they might at times appear.

This investigation proposes a more integrative approach in recognition that the audience experience cannot be isolated from either the texts, or the social context in which the dialogue between the two takes place. A critical appraisal of the distinctions in the differing research trends shows how some of the boundaries between them have been blurred. It identifies the difficulty in determining any one specific analytical approach owing to the diversity of the media structures and meanings, and the variety of questions that can be asked of it. However, I will argue for the merits of a broad theoretical framework that can offer a more holistic approach to the audience experience, and that can accommodate cross traditions and multi-methods within it.

Thompson (1990) offers a hermeneutical framework, which he believes can be used to analyse the ways in which symbolic constructions in a mediatised culture facilitate power relations. This also provides for a broad methodological structure encompassing a variety of methods, which in isolation might appear to give only a limited and partial account. However, sited within Thompson's framework, I believe that they can be seen to work collaboratively, whilst answering varying questions, within differing levels of analysis.

This needs two points of clarification. The term hermeneutics is derived from a Greek word meaning 'explaining or making clear', and was originally used for interpreting sacred texts. It is used as a means of giving meaning to cultural products through the focusing on levels of understanding beyond the product itself, to the context of the production, and the ways in which individuals make sense of it. Hermeneutics is seen to be the science of interpretation, and provides for the

consideration of both the content, and the form of what is being interpreted.¹

As Thompson (1990, p.278) suggests;

Hermeneutics can offer both a philosophical reflection on being and understanding, and a methodological reflection on the nature and tasks of interpretation in social enquiry.

Wilson (1993, p. 4) more specifically applies the concept to media interpretation;

Television hermeneutics attempts to describe the creative effort to understand, . . . hermeneutics attempts to describe the reader's active response to the experience of uncertainties of meaning found in the text which he or she is viewing. Invariably, but in ways which are empirically complex, this response will be to construct sense-making narratives.

In this sense audience 'talk' about the texts they consume reflects ways in which they make sense of media imagery and messages. This provides one way towards understanding interpretative processes.

Secondly, Thompson (1990) pin points the increasing significance of the media in cultural and symbolic constructions, and the need to consequently re-think the notions of ideology, meaning and power within this. He argues for evidence that the interpretation of meaning in texts given by researchers is that held by subjects or audience. This supports concerns offered in the earlier critique of semiotics where texts as signification, are perceived to have meanings on their own. Thompson argues that as these texts enter new and different contexts, the external references are as important as the internal aspects of the signs within a text. Interaction between audience and text thus becomes a necessary requisite in a hermeneutic approach.

Thompson (1990) argues that the ways in which symbolic forms are produced and received are grounded in a specific socio-historic context - that individuals whom both produce and receive the messages, evaluate, value and contest them. Analysis and evaluation of the context in which production takes place provides a further level of analysis in the tripartite approach.

¹ Outhwaite and Bottomore (1994, p.256-259) provide a comprehensive definition and overview of hermeneutics as methodology, philosophy and critique

Hall's (1973, 1980) encoding - decoding model¹ was a key theoretical development and comparable with Thompson in the way it encompassed production, text and audience reception within an integrated framework. This showed a significant move away from the linear, sender - message - receiver model, and provided a theoretical basis for a number of key media texts; (cf. Morley, 1980; Whannel, 1992; Van Zoonen, 1994 and Real, 1996). Yet the focus upon the theoretical positioning of the audience was more significant than actual audience readings. With an increasing focus on interpretative strategies, the need to elaborate the decoding stage of the framework was obvious. Whilst Morley's (1980) *Nationwide* investigation was an attempt to apply this model to his own audience based research, he himself acknowledged that the model needed to reflect the contextual situation as well as consideration to the ways in which preferred meanings were determined.²

Clearly Morley's work opened up the possibilities that ideological meanings were not fixed, that there are a variety of meanings (the polysemic nature of messages). A key argument against the nature of aspects of the active audience research is the readily dismissed issue of ideological power within the text (Corner, 1991). Within a hermeneutic framework, ideology and interpretative work can be readily embraced. Wilson (1993, p. 56) explains further;

For in hermeneutics 'a subject position' becomes a complex of aesthetically influenced but nevertheless social roles and interest-related horizons of understanding, through which some aspect of the text is conceived and judged.

Thompson offers a comprehensive and critical social theory of ideology, culture and mass communication, together with a methodological framework for the practical application of media analysis. He clearly rejects the notion of the media simply as a

¹ Hall(1980) expands more fully on the structure of the encoding-decoding model and the ways in which decoding may take place from varying audience positions; dominant, negotiated or oppositional (p.136-138).

² Morley's (1980) audience interpretations of the *Nationwide* programme considered what the audience brought with them to the texts, together with the ways in which the programme addressed them. Corner (1991) and Moores (1993) both commend it as a 'watershed in critical media theory' by its emphasis on empirical audience investigation. For a number of critiques on the work see Morley (1981), Hartley (1987) and Moores (1993).

mechanism for social control and reproduction of the social order. He also moves away from the Marxist focus on class relations, to a broader view of domination which encompasses gender, ethnic, nation and state relations. He adopts a critical viewpoint of ideology;

To study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination. (Thompson, 1990, p. 56)

As O'Sullivan, Hartley and Saunders et al. (1994, p. 143) suggest, ideology as a central feature of the study of media must be seen to be an active practice, rather than simply 'a set of values' or a 'system of beliefs', or neutral conceptions of ideology (Thompson, 1990).

Thompson is critical of positions which over-emphasise the extent to which individuals are drawn in to the dominant ideology, and reproduce the status quo. He prefers to acknowledge the growing demand for a framework that allows for varying interpretations;

We should leave open the possibility that the reception on media messages is an active, inherently critical and socially differentiated process. (1990, p. 218)

This supports Barker's (1989) notion of the dialogue between audience and text, and Morley's (1992) stance acknowledging messages as having more than a singular interpretation. It moves away from the Althusserian idea of the all powerful media manipulation control by the dominant group, where ideology operates to interpellate or 'hails' individuals in as subjects towards a Gramscian notion of 'hegemonic power' which offers a greater opportunity for resistance and instability as the dominant ideology struggles to win consent (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998). This suggests a persuasive rather than a co-ercive message, and supports the idea of varying interpretations and an 'active' audience (Fiske, 1990). As Bignell (1997) suggests, ideologies work to 'naturalise' strategies that sustain particular sets of relations.

Thompson (1990) identifies five possible modes, and appropriate strategies through which ideology can operate, as shown in Figure 1. The ways in which modes and strategies used in symbolic constructions, intersect with power relations and determine how ideological meanings are produced and operate within everyday life can be applied to the analysis of media discourse.¹

Figure 1: Modes and Strategies for Ideological Constructions
(adapted from Thompson, 1990, p. 67)

MODE	STRATEGY
Legitimation - the producer of symbolic form constructs a chain of reasoning, justifying a set of relations, and persuades audience they are worthy of support	a. rationalisation
	b. universalisation institutional arrangement which serves the interests of some individuals is represented as serving everyone, and they are regarded as open in principle to anyone
	c. narrativisation claims are embedded in stories which recount the past, and treat the present as part of a timeless and cherished tradition to create a sense of belonging which works to overcome sense of division
Dissimulation - relations of domination are maintained as being hidden or as represented in such a way as to deflect attention away from them	a. displacement when a term used to refer to one thing is applied or used for another e.g. the tradition of respect for a hero by presenting them selves as legitimate heir to that person. Often lingering in past notions/values
	b. euphemisation actions or social relations are re-described using a positive account e.g.. violence in suppressing disorder is described as "Restoration of order"
	c. trope figurative use of language- synecdoche, metonymy and metaphor
Unification - a form of unity which embraces individuals in a collective identity irrespective of difference	a. standardisation a shared, acceptable basis of exchange- language construction of symbols of unity- flag, anthems, emblems etc.
	Fragmentation - relations of domination sustained by fragmenting individuals or constructions here emphasis difference, distinctions and divisions between individuals and groups
Reification - representing a transitory historical state of affairs as if it were natural and outside of time	a. naturalisation state of affairs which is of a socio-historic construction and made to appear natural e.g. roles of women /men
	b. eternalisation some features, customs, traditions seem eternal and embedded in social life, and the origin appears lost

Within media discourse the producers can position certain individuals and groups in certain ways, through selected representations (a system of organising abstract ideas, concepts and feelings into concrete forms, O'Sullivan Hartley, Saunders et al., 1994).

¹ Blain, Boyle & O'Donnell (1993,p. 2-4) offer an explanation of the ways in which they apply Thompson's (1990) ideological modes to media sport analysis.

Hall (1997) strongly argues that one aspect of representation is to construct meaning through codes of 'difference'. For example, readers come to understand masculinity by its difference from femininity, or being English by references to 'foreigners' as others.

Thompson's hermeneutical framework as shown in figure 2, identifies three principal stages for the analysis of mass communication, within which certain aspects of the phenomena can be explained by different forms of analysis. This provides for a sound holistic approach, each level of analysis offering clarity and explanation for the others. As Thompson (1990, p. 21) suggests;

The value of this idea is that it enables us to develop a methodological framework which is oriented towards the interpretation (or re-interpretation) of meaningful phenomena, but in which different types of analysis can play legitimate and mutually supportive roles.

This supports the idea that certain aspects of the phenomena might best be explained by certain forms of analysis which whilst limited in themselves, can be appropriately used within a more comprehensive framework. This tripartite approach acknowledges the complexity of the media communication process, and its centrality in the production of symbolic forms. It also places the concept of ideology firmly within the

Figure 2: The Tripartite Framework

<p>1. Production of Mass Mediated Symbolic Forms</p> <p>incorporating a socio- historic analysis of conditions of production, circulation and reception of symbolic forms which do not exist in a vacuum but within a particular social context.</p>
<p>2. Construction of Media Messages</p> <p>the formal or discursive analysis identifying features of the symbolic forms which represent, signify, and provide a way of talking about something.</p>
<p>3. Reception and Appropriation</p> <p>the interpretation of an object domain which is already understood and interpreted by the subjects and which acknowledges the range of possible meanings</p>

hermeneutic framework, looking at ways in which meaning, power and knowledge intersects across all three levels of analysis. It allows the researcher to move freely between the levels of analysis to provide a synthesis of understanding.

The incorporation of a level of socio-historic analysis of conditions of production overcomes some of the difficulty with structuralist and semiotic work, which Strinati (1995, p. 121) suggests ;

neglects the formal processes of production . . .
it is impossible to understand the formal structures of language or myth
outside of their social and historical contexts.

Morley (1992, p. 159) too, supports the broadening of media frameworks in audience analysis to focus on social contexts, encompassing domestic viewing environments as well as wider social settings. For meanings can be contested and altered as they are circulated within any given social and historical context.

Secondly, whilst the construction of meaning within the texts is an essential level of understanding the audience experience it cannot readily stand alone. For there is difficulty in justifying that the researcher interpretations are objective, empirical and the only ones. As there has increasingly been support (Hall, 1980; Bignell, 1997) for the polysemic nature of texts (multi-meanings), so the significance of correlating such readings with those of the audience becomes imperative. Such an approach too, offers a framework, where positive features of both content analysis and semiotics can work in a supportive way within the formal, discursive message level, whilst not isolating this aspect from the production and reception stages of communication process

The third level of analysis sites the audience as of key importance in the interpretative process. The developing argument strongly indicates a need to frame research which does not place the audience outside of the texts, but which allows for the researcher to move readily between audience and text. This fits too, with the 1990's audience focus

approach, which concentrates its attention on the interpretation and reception of symbolic constructions in everyday life.

Nightingale (1996, p.ix.) too, offers support for the hermeneutic approach. She argues that audience research work (cf. Radway, 1984; Walkerdine, 1986; Hodge and Tripp, 1986; Ang, 1985 and Buckingham, 1987), was very important for audience based research because it ;

pioneered multi-genre media research as hermeneutic method, affected a didactic mode of address to its own audience and readers and tried to speak beyond that constituency to a readership unfamiliar with the language and the means to interpret its own significance.

Wilson (1993), in his use of hermeneutics and phenomenology, explores how viewers and programmes interact, and the ways in which the audience can identify with the programmes, yet similarly distance themselves from it, as they each individually construct sense making narratives of their experience.

Real (1996)¹ demonstrates a hermeneutical approach to his case study methods of cultural exegesis. Cultural exegesis, he suggests goes beyond the specificity of ethnographic practices, and examines these within the larger context, intent and meaning (Real, 1996, p. 22). He argues for his approach in exploring media culture as

'phenomenological' employing 'thick description' and 'grounded theory' - an ethnography of practices and exegesis of texts'. (1996, p. xviii)

He identifies three levels of analysis which correspond with Thompson's (1990) advocacy for exploring symbolic constructions within social contexts as a means of revealing power relations and inequalities. Firstly, he selects a particular cultural experience, and sites this within the socio-historic context. He argues that usually the cultural experience is perceived to be problematic, and that this is where

¹ Real (1996) offers a wide ranging set of case studies across a variety of genres and adopts a diversity of analytical tools. Exegesis, he suggests is 'a careful, expanded analysis of exactly what was intended by the texts creator.' (p. 22-23) This correlates with the hermeneutic approach.

hegemony and ideology are seen to function. Secondly, he identifies the need to explore multiple meanings within specific texts, and thirdly, he promotes ethnographic method as a means to establish interpretative practices.

The depth, variety and extensive nature of media products in the late 20th century contemporary 'media scape' makes it apparent that meaning and understanding cannot readily be gained through singular and isolated frameworks of analysis. This investigation argues that the multi-layered experiences embedded in everyday life requires a hermeneutic approach, combining a range of methods and approaches which can begin to unravel the elusive meanings and practices of specific media experiences, within the broader social context.

2. 2. The Sports Spectacle

2.2.1 The Media Sport Agenda

The growing inter-relationship of sport and the media continues to diminish the line between sporting reality and sports spectacle. For many, as much, if not more of their knowledge and understanding about the world of sport comes from the media sporting agenda rather than their active participation and spectating. The purity of sport is lost, as increasingly mediatisation is evident at all levels of sporting performance (from imitation of sport stars style and behaviour on primary school playing fields to current sport stars citing past mediated heroes as their incentive to seeking personal glory in the same event). The media sets the agenda for what the receivers come to know about the sporting spectacle, and promotes the nature of the sporting discourse in our culture.

The preceding overview of key issues in media research offers a critique for determining ways in which the media sport relationship has been explored

through production, textual and audience analysis. The evidence of application of a holistic framework, using Thompson's (1990) tripartite approach is limited. A number of studies have focused on one of the three domains, and increasingly, some studies have attempted to link two out of the three levels. According to Kinkema & Harris (1998), the Davis (1997) analysis of *Sports Illustrated* is the only research to have attempted all three, linking interviews with both producers and consumers, to the ideological textual messages of hegemonic masculinity. The hermeneutic approach can arguably offer a more comprehensive understanding of how each stage of the media sport process might influence the others.

General media texts have infrequently addressed sport as a genre. The news, documentaries, soap opera on television, women's magazines and children's comics in the print media have received greater individual attention. The transparency and realism of the sporting genre may have contributed to this lack of concern, although Whannel's (1998, p. 221) comment about the 'low status of sport as a cultural form' appears to be more indicative of the reason.

There are some examples of general media texts incorporating material on media sports analysis - 'Football is a game of signs' (Berger, 1991) 'Mediated sport and the Deep Fan' (Real, 1996) and 'Contemporary Football and the diffused Audience' (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998) suggesting the growing awareness of sporting discourse in the 'mediascape'.

The early development of sport sociology mirrored priority attached to 'real' sport as opposed to mediatisation of the genre. The early function of the media's role was perceived to be simply reporting facts and reality, and therefore issues such as persuasion, violence, pornography, common in other genre analysis, were not initially seen to be concerns in sporting media texts.

As a number of sociology of sport texts included chapters on the sport media

relationship, the socio-historical context, the growing commercial link and the ways in which the media has considerably influenced the development of some modern sports such as football, whilst marginalising others such as squash, was in evidence (cf. Barnett, 1990; Hargreaves, 1986; Hargreaves, 1994; Cashmore, 1996; Coakley, 1998; Polley, 1998 and Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel, 1999).

Over the last decade, there has been an increasing focus on media and sport as an area of investigation. There are a handful of comprehensive texts which deal solely with media sport. Wenner (1988) claims to be the first text specifically to address media, sport and society. Whannel's (1992) specific focus on television and British sports media offers a key conceptual understanding, encompassing all three aspects of media communication, production, construction of the texts and the audience experience.

Creedon (1994) offers a focused text challenging gender values in media sport - covering a range of issues from historical overviews and definitions of stereotypical images, the female archetype in popular film through to women as television spectators in global games. As gender distinctions appear even more firmly embedded in media representations than in sporting reality, this challenges a number of commonly held assumptions, and positions women at the forefront of the research agenda.

Wenner's (1998) '*MediaSport*' text offering up-to-date literature in the field, includes sections addressing all three levels of analysis. Its title is a term used throughout this work, and is explained as 'the cultural fusing of sport with communication' (p. xiii), thus supporting earlier arguments of the ways in which sporting reality and its mediated version has been blurred.

The media has promoted the sporting spectacle, with a mass of signs worthy of investigation. The growing cultural significance of the sports media has raised

questions about what the relationship does mean for sport. Investigation into production practices can begin to identify ways in which sport is altered as it is mediated. For the commercial climate demands maximum profits and sports productions that will draw in mass audiences. In this way, sport has become a spectacle, transformed in its symbiotic relationship with the media (Whannel, 1986). Texts identifying the sporting spectacle and media production practices (cf. Gruneau, 1989; Whannel, 1992; Wenner, 1989 and Wenner, 1998) and super mediated events such as the Olympics (cf. Tomlinson and Whannel, 1984 ; Real, 1989 ; Larson and Pak , 1993; and Real, 1996); The Super Bowl (Real, 1989 and 1996) and the football spectacle (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998), have considered the ways in which the structures of media organisations, the technical developments and the economic and political situations have worked to present events which can and do, draw huge national and global audiences.

Media accounts of these global events have the power through ideological modes and strategies (Thompson, 1990), to provide signs about global and national understanding and conflict, heroic models for imitation, and to sustain historical myths (Real, 1989). Despite literature on the economic and technological aspects of media sports production, there has been far less attempt to link the production and the consumption aspects of the process. This continues to mistakenly reinforce the separateness of the two levels, yet in reality they are not so distinctly split.

The roles of sports journalists and commentators, too are a focus of analysis identifying the ways in which the time and space devoted to hard news and basic match reporting has been eroded by sports gossip and chatter. Much of this provides expressions of ideological meanings and values at the heart of the sporting discourse.

Rowe (1992) discusses the role of sports journalists in setting the agenda of the sports pages. The ways in which sports journalists are marginalised in the profession because of the perceived 'non serious, intellectual' domain of their reporting, mirrors

notions of sport having low cultural status within the academic domain. Although this may be the case for male sports reporters, females in the field are virtually invisible, and where they do manage to break into a traditionally patriarchal terrain the seriousness of their work is even further under question (Creedon, 1994). Much of the sporting discourse is promoted by men (media professionals) for other men (readers).

The significance of sport as a newsworthy issue, capable of increasing readership sales has been reflected in the growing space devoted to sports supplements, and in 1998, of a specialist weekend sports newspaper '*Sports First*'. With the growth in the consumer market of a range of divergent and emerging sports and physical forms of leisure activity a continually expanding range of magazines also lends itself to analysis in terms of production practices, although the focus in this field has tended to be more on magazine content.

The ways in which media professionals set sporting agendas, prioritising certain sports, events and participants suggest that news values, amplification, agenda setting and professional ideologies are themes worthy of analysis, for they identify ways in which the media have the power to select and determine what the public receive and reflect upon from the sporting world. In other words, the media does not just report on sport, but selects and prioritises certain aspects of knowledge and meaning related to it.

By far the most extensive amount of literature in the media sport field rests in the area of analysing the 'text'. The media-sport relationship raises questions about the nature of the text, and the ways in which meanings and values about sport and sports participants are constructed. Media texts can provide representations and ideologies about varying sports and different social groups and cultures' participation in sport. The ways in which content, semiological and discourse analyses have been widely used to 'read' the sporting texts will be discussed more fully in the following section.

Within sporting narratives, the role and function of sports stars provides considerable scope for analysis. Sports stars increasingly are developed as highly consumable products and are visible across a range of media texts, beyond the sports pages. Case study analysis has tended to focus more on stars from genres other than sport, despite their increasing celebrity profile. Dyer's (1979) 'Stars' study on Marilyn Monroe, and others in the series on John Wayne and Robert Redford, provide ideal groundwork for developing longitudinal case studies of sport stars. Gledhill's (1991) work offers a comprehensive overview of cultural and theoretical issues in the study of stars, which similarly could be applied to the social and cultural analysis of the meaning of sport stars. Despite increasing bibliographies and popular texts on sport stars, media analysis of them has not been apparent.

A further level of analysis of media sport seeks to identify the interpretative stage and the nature of the audience experience. This is by far the most neglected area of research, and as Wenner suggests (1989, p.241) ;'A broad picture of the sports audience remains to be painted.'

We can speculate on a number of reasons for this - the difficulty of accessing the audience and structuring ethnographic work, the initial 'non- serious' approach to media sport, suggesting the lack of perceived concerns about the predominantly male audience experience, and the dominant paradigm focus on textual analysis. However, as mediated sport increasingly becomes a focal leisure activity across a range of diverse social groupings, concurrently with the move towards a more audience centred media studies approach, it seems inevitable that a clearer understanding of the audience experience will be sought. For it has already been stated that production and textual analysis alone, do not offer the holistic account needed for explaining the role of the media in the construction of meaning about sport, and its participants.

The way forward for the media sports agenda is therefore a holistic approach, linking all three levels of analysis. This can provide for a more accurate explanation of the ways in which influences of media sport discourse affect the power relations, knowledge and understanding of its users, in everyday life.

2.2.2 Reading the Sporting texts

Media sport as a genre for analysis has developed significantly later than news or soap opera, and has more often been the focus of sports sociologists, rather than media analysts. The growth in ways of exploring how sport is signified within the media includes a variety of content analyses across newspapers, magazines and television, especially with a focus on the British tabloid press and has identified issues of concern about the representation of different social groups, together with the nature and style of the content.

Secondly, there has been a growing cultural studies focus on the semiological and ideological approach to studying sports media content. The Olympic Games and soccer across a range of themes, are the most widely investigated media sporting activities. Emerging modern sports, such as wind surfing (Wheaton, 1998 and Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998) and snow boarding, and the subsequent media impacts on sub-cultural groups' lifestyle, consumption and identity are a developing field for research.

The nature of the sporting discourse across sporting texts, firstly, provides evidence of ideology, myth and paradigmatic codes of difference, used as a means of constructing meaning around values of sport and identification with its participants. Blain and O'Donnell (1998, p. 41), argue that the semiological relationship between sport and culture in the UK is particularly related to myths, ideologies and discourses obsessed with issues of 'national self'. In earlier work embracing two levels of analysis on discourses in the European press surrounding state, political culture and the production practices of media institutions, Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell (1993)

apply Thompson's (1990) work to their research on the construction of national dimensions of sport in the media. They consider the symbolic operation of mediated sport and the ways in which Thompson's operational modes of ideology - legitimation, dissimulation, unification, fragmentation and reification - are in evidence in the sporting discourse of the print media. They use discourse as:

a sense of talking about or constructing, televisually or photographically versions of reality that are ideological.
(Blain, Boyle, & O'Donnell, 1993, pp.3-4)

The British media output, they suggest, is remarkably consistent and 'ideologically conservative' in its support for a number of existing social relations. A review of the literature indicates that the sporting discourse is open to contradictory ideals and multiple readings.

Rowe (1992, p.97) indicates his analysis of the split nature of sporting discourse;

. . . the universalism of the Olympian ideal of sport as transcending the routine struggles of everyday life and as unifying its participants in the disinterested celebration of disciplined physical prowess. On the other hand, is posited the intrinsically competitive nature of sport and its amenability to use as a basis for the assertion of hierarchical divisions of class, nation, region, race and gender . . .

Whannel (1992) too, identifies contradictions in sporting representations. These he suggests, contrast uncertainty with predictability, amateurism with professionalism, sportsmanship with victory, nationalism with individualism, tradition with modernity and patriarchy with femininity.

The sporting discourse also provides evidence of representing groups in sport, whether participants or spectators, by structuring narratives using paradigmatic codes of difference. Ideological constructions of male versus female, nation versus nation, Englishness versus foreign, black versus white are reinforced in media representations. Signifiers identify characteristics that reinforce the notion of difference. Males in sport are constructed with metaphors of bravery, strength,

courage and toughness. Females, by contrast are reduced to opposing characteristics, their sexuality, vulnerability and femininity amplified.

The ideological mode of fragmentation can also be read through media constructions of 'the nation'. Unification draws individuals of the nation together in a collective identity, whilst reinforcing the notion of 'others' by distinctiveness of signifiers. The ways in which the sporting discourse focuses on codes of difference between nations, and provides a vehicle for the legitimization of nationalism, patriotism and xenophobia are prominent themes in an expanding field of research, (cf. Hargreaves, 1986; Rowe, 1992; Blain, Boyle, and O'Donnell, 1993; Whannel, 1998).

Signs of the nation, such as flags, anthems, emblems are visual images clearly in evidence in sporting competitions, especially between nations. Such symbols act to unite groups of individuals under common symbols. Sport is synonymous with the 'nation' as the international team represents 'the people' in competition, and the people are drawn into the collective national identity;

It is then, through the interpellation of sports fans as citizen-supporters that they are at least temporarily transformed into fans of the nation itself. (Rowe, 1992, p.136)

National belonging-ness is inscribed into the discursive practices which seek to mobilise national identities as part of the way in which our attention is engaged with a narrative hermeneutic. (Whannel, 1998, p. 23)

Aspects of national character and identity are signified as different from other nations. This is reflected in the ways that the media constructs notions of 'Englishness' and stereotypes foreigners as 'others'. The key signifiers of 'difference' are stressed, in order for the reader to understand meanings of being English or British. The British tabloid press is frequently aggressive in its terms of reference towards foreigners and especially so towards Germany;

The most exaggerated discourses of Germanness are reserved for the British tabloids. They concentrate on notions of violence, aggression, greed and arrogance, pleasure in inflicting pain. (Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell, 1993, p.146)

British and English identity are closely linked with war achievements. Consequently, military and sporting metaphors are frequently related in sporting narratives.

Alongside this, sports journalism represents sport as a 'heroic' activity (Rowe, 1992). The sporting genre operates a number of specific codes and the nature of the discourse evolves from a specific historical situation - the perpetuated myths of England as the home of modern sport, and the role of sport in the nation's history provides the background for the development of eternalisation modes in the sporting narratives. In Thompson's (1990) terms these appear as permanent, unchanging and naturalised values of sport.

Historically, the legacy of athleticism in the public schools (Mangan, 1981 and Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel, 1999) affirms that sport is essentially a playing field for men, with stories of muscular endeavour, manly courage and bravery, masculine power and dominance. Narrativisation, according to Thompson (1990), is embedded in stories that recount cherished traditions of the past, and acts to legitimise ideological constructions of sport. Ideological strategies work to confirm the patriarchal order as the dominant and preferred reading of the sporting texts. If the discourse is structured around brave and heroic men, we can question where and how this positions women.

A clear code of difference operates around sport and gender constructions. What this attempts to legitimise according to Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell (1993, p. 10);

is a gendered account of behaviour in which it is seen as unnatural for women to want to compete in the same way as men.

Growing research, analysing media sport and gender constructions (cf. Birrell and Cole, 1994; Messner, 1988; Creedon, 1994; and Hargreaves, 1994) confirms that women in sport are marginalised, sexualised and trivialised. When successful sportswomen are in evidence in the media they are made to appear vulnerable, and their femininity questioned.

A body of literature (cf. Duncan, 1990; Duncan, Messner, and Williams, 1990; Daddario, 1994; Weidman, 1997 and Davis, 1997) shows how sports magazines, televisual and print imagery and television commentary can serve hegemonic patriarchal interests in sporting discourse;

Objectification, commodification and voyeurism were identified as formal media structures that contribute to sexism and stereotyping in the media . . . (Kinkema and Harris, 1998, p. 38-39)

Chaudhary (Guardian, 9/12/98, p.7) on the home news page, confirms that a recent three month survey of two national newspapers and BBC1 and Independent Television, identified that only 0.5% of sports stories in the *Sun*, and 10.9% in the *Times*, featured women. ITV sports programmes, averaging 70 minutes in length made no mention of women's sport, whilst BBC1, averaging 81 minutes devoted 17 minutes per programme to female sport, 42 minutes to men and 22 minutes to mixed events. The article challenges the historical heritage of male domination in sports media. However, in spite of obvious evidence of female under-representation in media coverage, there is little research to establish either institutional intent for such bias, or the extent to which the audience is aware of the omission. Institutional research is required to determine the nature of the patriarchal agendas, and the rationale for media sports coverage.

The under-representation of women in mediated sport works to question the legitimacy of their place and worth in contemporary professional sport and to affirm the myth that women have neither the interest nor the aptitude to compete at the same sporting level as men. It also reinforces the hegemonic notion of men as the dominant group across a variety of sporting terrains.

Whilst similar values are entrenched in sporting activities, in reality increasing numbers of women are participating at all levels, across a wide range of sports and across traditionally male dominated terrains, of for example, boxing, pole vaulting

and rugby. The ideological mode of dissimulation works here to deflect attention away from women's success, by focusing on issues of vulnerability and sexuality. The 1997 women's boxing media debate in Britain, through amplified issues of pre-menstrual and injury-prone woman, has deflected attention away from the serious issues of equity and physical damage to both sexes.

This confirms that when women are perceived to be contesting patriarchal sporting space, relations of domination are maintained through modes of fragmentation and dissimulation. Differences from male sporting performance are affirmed, feminine appropriate sports and sexual imagery predominate as distinct from strong, powerful male sporting imagery. Images of vulnerability, masculinisation of female athletes and dependence on male 'others', such as coaches, partners and fathers seeks to confirm the dangers to women if they do seek to challenge the status quo. Female tennis players (Martina Hingis, Anna Kournikova and the Williams sisters), it is suggested by the media, have both glamour and looks but sporting success has been at a cost, 'they are without regular boyfriends' (Daily Mail, 24/5/98, p. 67). This serves as a warning to those females who might wish to emulate them. Such comments confirm ways in which patriarchal control of the media and the sporting world, seeks to rationalise the role of women across their terrain.

The ways in which women readers position themselves in relation to these preferred meanings are under researched. For women are not perceived to be the target readership of the sporting texts;

Sports writing as a popular form must engage with a large, predominantly working class and male readership. (Rowe, 1992, p. 109)

If this is so, sportswomen are often represented by sexualised imagery 'as male sport', rather than for the benefit of female sport.

Secondly, the ideological eternalisation of the social and moral values of sport, such

as working together, 'playing the game,' fair play, and amateurism, which derived strongly from beliefs in public school athleticism, are confirmed in sports reporting to be embedded in social life. Discourse questions the loss, and identifies that traditional social values are at stake - often the narratives decry the decline of traditional values over commercial values of modern sport. Rowe (1992) supports this with his identification that sporting discourse develops around controversy and debate, promoting philosophical debate about social issues in sport such as politics, drugs, corruption and violence. This develops in Berger's (1991, p.106) semiological reading of a game of football where he suggests that football as a game of signs;

socialises and enculturates us. It teaches us to get along in society, what roles to play, what rules to follow, what life is all about, and so on . . . Here we are looking at the game as a signifier of values, attitudes and beliefs and attempting to ascertain what these signifieds are and what effects they may have upon people (admittedly a speculative activity).

Clearly, there are issues of difference between drama of the sporting spectacle, and the reality and unpredictability of live action. It is here that the role of the media can amplify incidents or issues, such as on-off field violence. As mediated sport is perceived to offer a socialising role, then aspects of sport that contradict social and moral harmony and are amplified by the media, might reiterate behavioural concerns about the audience, in line with the 'effects' paradigm.

The construction of sport stars as heroes and villains provides contradictory readings across the sporting texts. Narrativisation recalls old heroes as part of the idealised past of sporting legend. The media amplify the public scrutiny of sports stars in an attempt to personalise them, and create narratives that will draw in the consumers. Sports stars are promoted as embodying a number of social characteristics. According to Rowe (1992, p.153);

It is through the mass media that sport stars function as celebrity advertisements for masculinity.

This suggests conflicting ideals for female sport stars. Creedon's (1998, p. 95) appraisal of the marketing of female sport stars suggests 'little girls and sweethearts sell . . . ' This reinforces the notion of female stars being constructed as distinctly different from men.

Increasingly, we see sports stars as images of fashion, style and celebrity ;

...the aims and results of star making are part and parcel of the brand-imaging of the cultural products, and companies with which stars are creatively associated. (Wernick, 1991, p.107)

Sport stars, today, have transcended the sports pages, their images constructed and projected through a vast array of media products. As their celebrity status grows, for some, the audience come to know as much, if not more, about their personal lives as their sporting endeavours.

The sporting hero has traditionally been perceived of as epitomising social ideals and masculine virtues, and as embodying values which learnt on the playing fields will readily transfer into everyday life. This has typically generated cultural expectations, despite the fact that not all boys like sport, that every English schoolboy would want, and should, have their own sporting hero to emulate. For as Salisbury and Jackson (1996, p. 209) suggest;

Both on the television and the football terrace, sport offers boys' images, models and fantasies of what it is to be a 'proper' man today.

However, growing media intrusion, revealing aspects of personal lifestyle, often unrelated to their sporting role, signifies the contemporary sports star as 'a flawed hero'- the male sports celebrity exemplifying contemporary 'laddishness', drunken exploits, wife and girlfriend beatings and gay relationships, all of which tarnish the image of the modern day sports hero. In contrast, female sport stars are marginalised, trivialised and objectified to the extent that feminine sports heroines are both invisible and questionable as role models for young girls.

The extent to which sport stars today are perceived to be heroes is questionable, for it could be argued that their mediatisation has led to the demise of the 'hero' in the traditional sense. The term 'hero' appears to be used in a number of ways. Vande Berg (1998, p.134) suggests that although the term hero originates from the Greek word meaning person distinguished for courage, fortitude or deeds, its meaning does vary between cultures and through time.

Terms like celebrity, conqueror, exemplar, great man, heart throb, man of the hour, idol, star, superstars are used as synonyms for 'hero'. Far fewer synonyms are offered for the term 'heroine'- celebrity, goddess, ideal and woman of the hour (The Collins Thesaurus). This correlates with Klapp's (1962) findings of only one feminine type for every three masculine hero type. The use of 'goddess' and 'ideal' as synonyms for heroine are pertinent in the analysis of media representations, for female sport stars are often compared to the feminine ideal, and those that receive amplified coverage are those constructed as (sex) goddesses. By comparison, male definitions carry a wider range of meanings and the notion of exemplars and conquerors is a common media representation of male sport stars.

According to Vande Berg (1998), Klapp (1952) suggests that there are three types of social role models in US society - heroes, villains and fools. Interwoven within media representations of sporting personalities are constructions of class, gender, race and ethnicity.

In sporting texts, events are constructed to provide a spectacle and to entertain. Sport stars are represented as characters within the sporting narratives to add drama and excitement to the spectacle. As Holt, Mangan and Lanfranchi (1996, p.5) suggest;

. . . a sport without a hero is like Hamlet without the Prince . . .

Indeed, it is difficult to identify any high profile media sports which do not have

prominent media stars. The extent to which media professionals construct sport stars as heroes can be determined by textual analysis, although save for Whannel (1992, 1998) on Gascoigne, there has been a dearth of analytical case studies on individual English sport stars.

Sport stars are real in the sense that they perform live under sporting conditions of uncertainty and unpredictability. Over this it appears that the media has little control, yet, the nature of what the reader gets to see, hear and read about is determined and amplified by camera angles, replays, gossip columns, photographic images and other such professional practices that ensure that the sport star image develops through selected constructions of reality.

Unlike other television, pop and rock stars, sport stars are seen to reflect the traditional social and moral values held about sport, as well as functioning to provide ideological constructions of cultural values and beliefs and representations of a number of social roles;

Sports heroes embody, articulate and interrogate abstract ideals and cultural values; they highlight social problems and they proffer hopeful solutions.
(Vande Berg, 1998, p.152)

Such representations reflect a tension between lingering historical traditions and legacies of sport and sporting heroes, and the contemporary modern, commercial world of sport and the media. Gledhill (1991, p.xiii) suggests that stars are a signifying element in media texts;

a social sign, carrying cultural meanings and ideological values, which express the intimacies of individual personality, inviting desire and identification; an emblem of national celebrity, founded on the body, fashion and personal style; a product of capitalism and the ideology of individualism yet a site of contest by marginalised groups; a figure consumed for his or her personal life, who competes for allegiance with statesmen and politicians.

Aspects of this conflict with a historical legacy of British sporting heroes that continues to be reflected in sporting narratives. For 19th century Public Schools

initiated the ideological legacy of character development, and the making of 'the man' through participation on the playing fields;

It was the rise of the gentleman amateur and the cult of fair play that turned sport into a form of moral education and set up the batsman as a kind of idealised Englishman, striding to the wicket in his whites, wearing the colours of his county or country, to do battle as knights of a new kind of chivalry. (Holt, Mangan and Lanfranchi, 1996, pp.49/50)

Here the construction of the sport star 'as hero' embodies traditional moral and spiritual values of fair play and the ethics of the gentleman amateur. The construction of the sporting villain assumes contradictions of such ideals, together with the consequences of such moral decline.

Yet according to Holt, Mangan and Lanfranchi (1996, p.6) and supporting Gledhill's (1991)signification of stars;

..the contemporary sports hero is the hero of the consumer culture; a conscious, hedonistic consumer par excellence, exploring with equal fervour the world of brand name products and testing the subtle differences in food, clothes, perfume and women.

These two contrasting notions of the sporting hero, provide a context in which to begin to analyse contradictions within the sporting discourse.

Connell (1992, p.78) suggests that narratives set out to tell a moral tale and expose unworthy acts to enforce the point. This applies to sporting narratives for the lingering legacy of sport as promoting moral and social values of fair play, courage and bravery are contrasted with tales of drugs, rule breaking and win at all costs within the field of play. Sport stars function as privileged members of society yet;

There is more than a hint in all such stories and asides that the personalities are unworthy of the privilege they enjoy. (1992, p.78)

Sporting narratives, similarly, tell a moral tale like fairy stories, contrasting distinctions between the sport star as heroic and villainous characters within the plot.

As a hero, the sport star discourse provides positive images of sporting physical prowess with references to style, skill, excellence in performance and entertainment value. Television programmes such as BBC Sports Personality of the Year, the National Portrait Gallery sporting hero's gallery and the Queens Honours awards to sport stars all suggest that their sporting prowess is socially valued.

Sport stars function to represent heroic images of men and masculinity. Whannel (1992, p. 124) suggests that;

The ideal star is young, male and successful. The maleness of the concept becomes clearer when the qualities evoked and offered for admiration are analysed. There is a stress on a set of qualities traditionally associated with masculinity - toughness, aggression, commitment, power, competitiveness, courage and ability to stand up to pressure. . .

Characteristics such as strong, brave, tough, powerful are evident in the discourse around profiled sport stars. These reflect courage, integrity, competitiveness and success which have traditionally been perceived to develop through sporting endeavours. The sporting hero is seen to embody, and affirm cultural values.

Sports heroes are acknowledged as a source of national pride and function to represent national stereotypes, qualities and distinctions. As privileged representatives of the nation, they provide the reader with a sense of unity and collective identity. This appears to give sport stars a special responsibility to uphold the social and cultural values (Whannel, 1998). Consequently sports stars appear to hold a greater responsibility than other media stars who are not perceived to represent the nation in the same way.

Whilst much of this affirms the sporting hero as essentially male, the representational nature of sports women, confirms the invisibility of female sports heroines. Those heroines who do receive high profile in contemporary media coverage fit the criteria of sex goddesses, framed for the male gaze (Duncan, 1990; Klein, 1988), famed for taking off their kit, rather than what they achieve wearing it. Athlete Denise Lewis,

and tennis players, Anna Kournikova and Mary Pierce are several sportswomen who in the late 1990s feature across a range of media products for their beauty and sexuality, despite having achieved relatively limited, long-term success in their respective sports. Gender differentiated criteria it seems, operates to determine the sporting hero (ine). Yet, there has been no media sport research that has focused specifically on case studies of individual female sport stars.

Of British contemporary sport stars in the last decade, Paul Gascoigne is probably the most highly profiled of all. Can there be anyone in this country that does not know his name, and at least have something to say about him? As such he provides a wealth of media material for analysis and an ideal selection for case study focus. Surprisingly little has been written about him across media or sociology texts, although Whannel (1992) includes a section entitled 'Gazza- tears of a clown', and has more recently added to the profile (Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel, 1999). With the number of sport star images across a range of media products, and the popular perceptions of their function as role models, it is difficult to ascertain why there has been so little focused research on the media construction of British sport stars.

Growing textual analyses of media sport have identified themes of gender, class, race and nation, interwoven with ideological modes of legitimation, dissimulation, unification, fragmentation and reification. Further specific literature references, pertinent to the separate case studies of the Summer of Sport events and the sport stars, will be integrated into the text within chapters 4 and 5.

2.2.3 Consumption, interpretation and the media sports audience

The sports media has proven itself to be of phenomenal appeal to the global audience. Readership figures of daily national papers rise during significant sports competitions and television viewing figures continue to exceed records as more and more are drawn into the sporting spectacle. It is therefore surprising that there have not been more sustained attempts to consider the nature of that experience for

different groups of individuals.

Audience research figures suggest that world-wide more men than women watch televised sport. Cooper-Chen (1994) and Whannel (1992) identify that despite the frequency of female complaints about the amount of televised sport in the Radio and T.V. Times, the audience is more heterogeneous than is sometimes suggested. Additionally, viewing figures alone fail to identify the context and nature of the reception. For viewing and readership figures simply objectify an experience, which offers far more complex meanings than that, as the opening section of this chapter indicated.

There is limited evidence of audience experiences of mediated sport, although those discussed in this section explore effects research, uses and gratifications, ideological models and audience gender relations. The way in which identity, consciousness and a sense of personal association with sport and the nation are constructed through readings of the sporting texts remains to be determined. Despite the lack of ethnographic fieldwork investigations there is a number of issues that are beginning to be addressed.

Firstly, motives for involvement in televised sport (Wenner and Gantz, 1989, 1998; Bryant, Rockwell and Owens, 1994) ; secondly, reception practices and the social context of consumption (Rothenbuhler, 1988 & 1995); thirdly, the ideological positioning of readers (Davis, 1997) and the ways in which readers acknowledge the significance of amplified incidents and social groups; and fourthly, power relations within the domestic viewing environment (Wenner, Gantz, Carrino and Knorr, 1995). Wenner and Gantz (1998) in a series of studies associated with sports viewing have attempted to identify the nature of motivations, behaviours and affective involvement

We have come to understand that the seemingly simple notion of what it means to be a sports fan is remarkably complex. Fans of different sports are fans of different sorts. (Wenner & Gantz, 1998, p.234)

Firstly, in their studies five relatively stable motives for televised sports viewing were evident - fanship dimension (excitement of competition, desire to identify with a winner); learning dimension (acquiring information about teams and players); release dimension (get psyched up, let off steam) companionship dimension (viewing with others, time spent together) and a filler dimension (to pass time). This reflects a continuum from deep fan through to 'incidental' involvement. (Wenner & Gantz, 1998, p. 237)

Secondly, they identified that different sporting events, such as The Super Bowl, have different rituals and levels of significance from weekly televised sporting programmes and their attention concentrated on the 'cultural baseline' of daily sports viewing. Behavioural aspects of viewing such as aspects of involvement with the action (shouting, cheering), levels of concentration (and other activities taking place at the same time), and the composition of the accompanying social group around the screens, were studied to identify gendered dimensions of the viewing experience.

Real (1996, p. 60) suggests that ritual participation in media culture reveals ways in which modes of reception are accompanied by active rituals of behaviour. Relating this to sports viewing he believes that ;

These mass mediated sports give the deep fan crucial expressive, liminal, cathartic ideational mechanisms and experiences. They represent, celebrate and interpret contemporary social life, warts and all.

This confirms the importance that Morley (1992) placed on viewing contexts and power relations within them, as well as aspects of power and knowledge within the texts.

In line with current audience based analysis, the significance of identifying pleasures and meanings gained from the media sporting experience is being recognised.

Whannel (1992) calls for a taxonomy of sports pleasures to identify the ways in which the audience is motivated in its choice of media sports consumption and

derives affective benefits from its involvement in the genre. For watching media sport is likely to offer varying affective experiences that the audience articulates outside of the ideological positioning.

It is equally important to see why the non-fan is alienated from the experience and how contrasting interests might affect family domestic situations. Whannel (1998, p. 226) argues for a move towards looking at the media sports audience from a wider dimension than Hall's (1980) encoding-decoding model;

With sport to a greater extent than in news and current affairs, feeling, emotion and the affective dimension are an important part of the experience. The pleasures of viewing are complex and multi faceted and cannot be totally understood from within a decoding model.

Figure 3, shows a range of possible pleasures to be gained from sports viewing. Such pleasures, however, might vary between different media products, and the audience is less likely to use the academic conceptual terms of the researcher. It is important to devise taxonomies that identify pleasures and meanings in the words of the audience themselves. Current audience research suggests that individuals sometimes have difficulty in articulating their own motives and feelings about the nature of the experience. The pleasures listed in Figure 3 will provide the framework for fieldwork with the audience in this investigation.

Whannel (1998, p. 229) reiterates the point six years on, that work has not developed in this field;

a taxonomy of pleasures of viewing sport is clearly needed. Such a taxonomy can start by listing the forms of pleasure that can be identified in textual analysis, but such a list must be subject to reformulation in the light of audience response.

Similarly, pleasures gained from sports viewing may easily be eroded by frustration, aggression and other negative reactions if the results of the experience do not match with expectations and anticipated outcomes.

Figure 3: A Taxonomy of sports viewing pleasures

(adapted from Mulvey, 1975; Dyer, 1978; Whannel, 1992 and Wenner and Ganzt, 1989)

Energy	physical movement; crowd noise; speed; athleticism; thrills & spills of body in action
Abundance	crowd size; star performers; the spectacle
Intensity	uncertainty; emotional involvement; everything at stake; frustration at failure; unpredictability; excitement; drama; arousal
Transparency	realness; quality of sport; immediacy; actuality rather than rehearsed
Community/ Identification	spectator involvement; local, regional, national identity; nationalism; patriotism; urge to participate; desire to copy; pride/feel good factor
Voyeurism/ Body Gazing	sexuality; eroticism; narcissism; aestheticism; star watching masculine images; spectacularisation of women male and female gaze at bodies on display

Little account has been taken of the ways in which such pleasures and frustrations are articulated in everyday life through associated aspects of consumption, clothing of sport stars and teams, purchase of goods by chief sponsors of sports events, affiliation to specific sports and clubs, and the incentive to actively participate following sports viewing.

The extent to which the audience make sense of, and adhere to, the preferred meanings of the texts, around social issues of nationalism, gender, race and class remains elusive. The ways in which pleasures and meanings are interwoven is a future direction for audience research within the sporting genre. These can be cross-analysed with the ideological readings, for as Whannel (1998) indicates there is a clear need to bridge the gap between the extensive textual analysis in the area and the current audience focused paradigm. For whilst the former continues to grow efforts to seek the media sports audience are minimal.

Secondly, gender distinctions are continually reiterated in discussions about the sports media. Yet often these are simply common sense assumptions, with little evidence to validate these differences. Wenner & Gantz (1998) identify the nature of the

perpetuated myths with reference to 'the armchair quarterback and his football widow'.

Consideration of the ways in which sports viewing crosses the gender divide may provide opportunities to inform media policy about the scheduling and selection of sports productions, which can equally apply to both men and women, rather than the suggested male target group. Different age ranges might also be explored in this way, for the appeal and meanings of mediated sport are likely to be different between young people and the elderly for example. Yet, there is little attempt to identify the nature of the media sport audience across gender, race, class or life cycle divisions.

Whilst audience research 'is beset with problems of method, theory and epistemology' (Whannel, 1998, p. 229), it should not prevent attempts to access audience groups even if on a small scale and through varying techniques. For the recognition is of a growing need to know more about media sport consumption, impact and interpretation amongst different sports products and events.

2.3 Young People, Sport and the Media; Leisure and lifestyle choices

2.3.1 Media consumption, interpretation and young people as audience.

Young people as a cultural group are assumed to have certain attitudes, values and behavioural patterns that make them distinct from other groups across the life cycle. It must be acknowledged that they are not a single sub-culture but intersected by social relations of gender, class and race. Industrial society has also accentuated the difficulties in determining the period of youth, as education has extended and job opportunities have diminished, so the period of time that young people are dependent on others has increased.

There are two major components to consider when considering the relationship young people have with the media. Firstly, the ways in which the media construct representations of young people today, and secondly, what young people actually do

with the media. In reality the two are not distinct, for as I have already argued that production and consumption processes are closely inter-related. Media depictions of young people suggest who and what they should become, and thus may influence their choices and selection of consumer goods, which in turn acts in the construction of identity.

Underlying these issues is a core debate over the extent to which young people are 'passive dupes' or media literate. Much of the early laboratory based behavioural work with children and media texts failed to establish clear causal effects. As Willis (1990) argues 'effects' are not simply the result of the media message but are much more broadly entwined with the whole relationship that the viewer develops with the text in everyday life. Alongside his work, that of Palmer (1986); Buckingham, 1993) and Gillespie (1996) has through ethnographic and interpretative work begun to identify that young people as far less gullible and passive, than is suggested.

For Buckingham (1993a/b)¹, McRobbie (1994)² and MacBeth (1996, p.37) all indicate that public figures, the popular press and many individuals readily assume that television is accountable for many contemporary social evils. Much of this concern is based on assumptions rather than grounded empirical evidence. Academic research too, has focused heavily on issues of moral concern.

Youth are consistently perceived as a cultural group raising issues of social concern with their use (or misuse) of leisure time, or over attitudes and behaviour towards traditional values. Cohen (1972, p.9) in his work on 'Mods and Rockers' defined the phase 'moral panics';

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media, the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right thinking people . . .

¹ Buckingham (1993 a and b) provides additional discussion of the ways in which moral effects agendas have developed and the nature of accompanying 'effects' research.

² McRobbie (1994, p. 199) argues that moral panic is concerned with attempts to discipline the young through terrifying their parents. She suggests that moral panics in the post modern age of media are sophisticated ways of representing social and political issues to the public.

While sex, drugs and rock n' roll became 'moral panics' about the youth of the 60s and '70s, media today, continue to amplify social issues concerning young people. These include delinquency, violence, under age sex, truancy, drugs, lack of an active lifestyle, and choice of role models. When a particularly interesting story arises, the media amplifies the issue, and can in effect create a moral panic focusing on ways in which the condition can be cured. In some cases, the media show itself to be instrumental in drawing public attention to the moral dilemma and acting on behalf of the people to force a resolution from those with the power to do so.

The media itself are also a focus of panic - as new and different forms of media emerge, (e.g. comics, videos, pop and rock lyrics) often designed to target the young, so concern is raised about the effects these might have;

In some respect, teenagers may be the most susceptible population to television's hidden themes and messages because their identities and attitudes are evolving and more malleable. (Strasbourg, 1995, p. 12)

The term 'passive' in reference to audience reaction to media appears to be widely used, yet is rarely fully explained. Although accompanying terms such as 'television zombies', 'glued to the box' and the 'plug -in drug', provide some clues to the sense in which it is used.

Concerns about the habit forming nature of media, modes of imitation of aggression, violence and sexual behaviour (Macbeth, 1996) and effects on academic studies and physical activity comprise the key focus. Barker (1984) addresses the the video nasties panic of the time, and Buckingham's (1987) work with young people refers to Mary Whitehouse's attack on delinquent behaviour in the soap opera, *Eastenders*. The *Education Guardian* (18/5/99, p. 10) recently ran a double page spread on television and violence, depicting young peoples' interpretations of this with reality. This serves to remind us that media effects are still on the public agenda.

The limitations of research into media and its behavioural effects have previously been discussed, and the difficulty in determining the actual impact of a specific product on an individual, from a whole range of other influences in everyday life already acknowledged. However, MacBeth (1996) argues that cultural studies' dismissal of the behavioural paradigm should not necessarily preclude the continuation of 'effects' research. Her text includes a range of studies both in laboratory and natural reception settings focusing on violence, aggression, creativity and school achievement.

Much of this affirms the arguments that in the contemporary 'media scape' direct causal links and laboratory based investigations with young people are unlikely to provide depth analysis and comprehensive explanation of young peoples' experience. For they ignore the social processes involved in the production and circulation of meaning, and fail to identify the ways in which young people use and make sense of the media experience.

What is clear is that the media is significant in most adolescent lifestyles, and that young people today do live in the 'mediascape' described by Abercrombie & Longhurst (1998). From adolescent magazines, personal stereos, own bedside televisions to a whole range of family media products, young people have considerable access to private and public consumption.

Surprisingly, in view of the strong relationship young people appear to have with the media, limited extensive work has been completed in the field. The Young People Media Survey (1999), a national survey conducted with over 1300 children is the first of its kind for over forty years. We can question why a major survey has taken so long considering the nature of media expansion in everyday life, and the assumptions made about its significance. The difficulty in conceptualising the audience and determining the empirical knowledge required of it partially explain this.

The results indicate a number of trends pertinent to this investigation - a developing bedroom culture with young people having media access in personal and private spaces, a daily average of five hours media usage with television predominating, and class and gender differentiated access to P.C., Internet and bedroom televisions.

Livingstone & Bovill (1999) the project leaders, whilst confirming the dependence of young people on television for excitement, overcoming boredom, relaxation and social interaction, lend weight to the active reader debate. For they suggest that young people are not generally addicted to mindless entertainment and indiscriminate usage.

The availability of individual and personal choice, and selection of a diversity of media products suggests that young people are increasingly able to make their own decisions about who and what they want to watch and read about, often away from family influence. This may be more in line with similarities across their peer group than their family group.

Young people and the role of socialising agencies, such as the family, peers and schools have generally received the focus of attention about the ways in which young people are socialised into particular activities. Miles, Cliff and Burr (1998) acknowledge that there is limited research which can adequately articulate the meanings that young people give to the media products they consume. There are few concrete, sustained studies that consider young peoples' relationship with the media, yet the daily interaction with media in contemporary Britain suggests that this exceeds the time spent in other types of social interaction. Common sense suggests that trends, fashions and consumer purchases amongst children and young people can be, and are initiated by the media.

The consumer role in defining identity and consciousness is key in discussing what young people do with the media. In the 1970s, writers such as McRobbie, Willis and

Hebdige from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies¹, initiated on-going and significant research into young people, subcultural styles and the role of the media. They indicated how the media provides a range of signs that can influence consciousness and a sense of identity amongst different cultural groups.

Real (1989, p.17) supports the significance of media exposure to the developing identity of individuals in society;

Consciousness refers to the internal cognitive and emotional awareness inherent in each person. It is consciousness that is most directly affected by media exposure. . .

McRobbie (1994, p.192) suggests that,

. . . there is no clear sociological divide between 'lived experience' and 'texts' and representational forms . . . The sounds and images addressed almost exclusively to young people represent identity formation material, the success of which lies in the ability to reach into adolescent subconscious.

Tomlinson (1990, p.13) suggests,

Our personal identity is created out of elements made by others and marketed aggressively and seductively.

Such arguments strongly support a move away from the notion of quantitative effects on the audience, to the realisation of ways in which the individual's expression, identity and consciousness are qualitatively affected. This confirms the importance of exploring young peoples' media interests, and the consequent impact these might have on their interests and lifestyle;

Young people do use symbolic resources from magazines to resonate leisure interests along the line of particular grounded aesthetics. (Willis, 1990, p. 56)

The nature of the mediated content of young peoples' magazines, especially girls' favourites, have provided a focal point of research attention. The work of McRobbie

¹ For examples see Hall and Jefferson(1976), *Resistance through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post war Britain*. London, Hutchinson; McRobbie and Nava (1984) *Gender and Generation*. Basingstoke, MacMillan; Hebdige (1979) *Subculture: the meaning of style*. London, Methuen.

(1992) is particularly significant for this investigation for my earlier research indicated the popularity of magazines, especially *Just 17* as a leisure activity amongst young girls. Her decoding of magazines such as *Jackie*, and more recently *Just 17*, links semiological analysis with the ideology of femininity. Her readings of codes of beauty, romance and fashion suggest that there are preferred readings of these texts for young girls.

Yet textual analyses alone cannot indicate the ways in which young girls do allow themselves to be drawn into the dominant readings, nor the ways in which consciously or unconsciously they might derive their sense of style, identity and lifestyle from the media texts. We can also question the implications for codes such as sport, which is not in evidence in McRobbie's readings of girls' magazines. This suggestion that sport, by its omission, is not perceived to be an important part of girls' lifestyle, could be reflected in their rejection of sport as an appropriate leisure activity. Such ideological readings it is argued here must be pursued alongside young girls' own readings, yet to date limited work has been published in this field.

At a time when young people are particularly developing their own sense of self and their place in the social world, it can be seen that the media's role in constructing meaning could be significant. Much of it seems to happen at the level of the unconscious, for young people when asked, suggest they want to be 'their own person', and not be like or copy what they see on television or in magazines (Lines, 1991, 1993). The recent research by Miles, Cliff & Burr (1998, p. 88) on young people's purchasing decisions suggests that advertising was perceived to be the least important influence, with young people believing they were making their own decisions, which questions the subconscious impact of the media;

The fact that young people feel such a sense of agency through their consumption habits may imply that the ideological influence of the media, which actively encourages consumers to be themselves is more powerful than they imagine.

This has particular difficulty for audience research with young people if the consumer is unaware of, or unable to articulate the actual experience and relationship that they have with the products they consume. It reaffirms the difficulty of 'finding the audience'. This seems to be especially so with young people as audience, for although there has been a growth in ethnographic audience work young people are still relatively ignored.

However, the work of Willis (1990), Buckingham (1987, 1993, 1997), Palmer (1987) and Gillespie (1995) provided the basis for discussion in the remainder of this section for they all further the 'active' audience debate. Each of these research based texts are significant developments in the field, for they offer qualitative accounts of young people's media experiences. Whilst all adopt an ethnographic and in-depth interview methodological approach, they indicate the diversity of young people's media interests and the differing ways in which young people use and make sense of media messages.

Willis' (1990) work critiques the notion of young people as passive and manipulated puppets of the media. Qualitative data encompassing young peoples' comments and a number of separate studies on youth and fashion, music, art policies, second-hand clothes, commercials, magazine culture and sport suggest that they are active and creative in the ways they use, and construct new meanings from the products they consume. For although the media portrays a range of images, signifying how and what young people should become, the young people interpret meaning in a variety of ways and he argues, they are the 'most sophisticated readers of images of any social group' (p.30). Buckingham (1993b) is justifiably critical that creativity of the reader is celebrated, whilst influence exerted by the dominant culture is virtually ignored.

Whilst issues concerning the power of the text should not be forgotten, a positive feature of Willis' work lies in his argument for the socially situated study of young people's interaction with the media.

The nature of media genres and the popularity of specific programmes and celebrities

amongst young people is then of significance, not just because of the possible effects on them but because of how they can promote understanding about the nature and range of young people's taste and choices. Clearer identification of patterns and themes can reflect the extent of sub-cultural divisions beyond age, and the ways in which there are distinctions between gender, race and class in the interpretations and forms of empowerment that operate as young people use the media texts they choose.

Offering notions of the audience as 'lively,' Palmer (1986) suggests that the term 'passive' is misleading. The 8 -12 year olds in her multi-method study proved themselves to be active in the ways that they engaged in structuring meaning from making choices and selections, to taking television stories into everyday life. These she referred to as processes of definition, adaptation, interaction, review and selection. Such processes provide ways of understanding children's response to the texts they receive.

She supports the social significance of television because for these children, 'talk about television is part of daily routine' (p.134). Although the children in her study are younger than in this investigation, the indications of active processes that they are engaged in provides a useful tool for comparison with the adolescent sports audience. In her concentration on audience activity, she moves away from notions of textual power, and fails to adequately explore domestic contexts of power between children, siblings and parents, both of which are significant components of the audience experience.

Gillespie's (1995) ethnographic study working with young Asian people in Southall, developed from her recognition as a teacher that her pupils had high levels of television and video consumption. Her work goes beyond television texts, to provide a clear picture of the significance of television narratives in the lives of young people;

In order to understand the effectivity of TV we need to study not only the images and narratives but what the consumer makes or does with them.(p.13)

Through an analysis of young people's talk about their media experiences, revolving around televised news, soap operas and television advertising, she identifies ways in which television narratives are used to shape their identities and negotiate their culture. Discussion of family viewing patterns, representations of India, moral issues and specific viewing rituals around news and soap programmes offer an holistic account of the audience experience.

The ways in which these young people enjoy a sense of shared activity through the daily viewing of soaps, and discuss moral and cultural issues around kinship, love and marriage and community indicate the significance of 'television talk' as a focus for investigation. For this socially sited speech offers indication of the ways in which young people move between reality and media representations. Soap opera, news and advertisements follow other similar trends in audience reception studies. However, her immersion in the cultural and domestic setting offers a sounder 'ethnographic' claim than researchers using only interview analysis.

Buckingham (1987, 1993 a, 1993b) makes a key contribution to contemporary qualitative research with young audiences. He advocates the 'specific and highly situated nature' of young people's interaction with specific texts, and this is evidenced across his publications. His interpretative work with 60 young viewers of *Eastenders*, aged 7 - 18 years old, reflected the hermeneutic idea through ways in which he allowed viewers to test their ideas against the programme texts. He identified how they were active in retelling past events; how they could switch from intense involvement to critical, ironic and satirical distance; and how issues of representation, construction, morality and plausibility were inter-related. His readings of *Eastenders* suggest that it directly invites the viewer to make moral and ideological judgement, and that young people frequently offered judgements about rights and wrongs of

individual behaviour, rather than relating it to wider social and ideological concerns. A common criticism of the programme by the young readers, was that it did not adequately represent the diversity and detail of youth culture as they knew it. This shows that young people are able to read the ambiguities between reality and media representations.

This text provides evidence of ways in which young people's interpretations of media texts can be more fully understood. Whilst the age category was quite wide, the comparisons they generated added to the ways in which maturity of thought and textual understanding develops. The selection of *Eastenders* as the text for analysis reflected the 'moral panic' surrounding it at the time, and its popularity amongst London based young people. Although Gillespie (1995) includes work on *Neighbours*, it is surprising considering the 'cult of Australian soaps' amongst young people, that more on-going interpretative work has not been sustained.

Despite the acknowledged significance of the media in the lifestyles of young people, little concrete research has been produced to provide long term patterns of consumption preferences. Buckingham (1993a) provides an indication of the ways in which interpretative work on specific genres popular with young people is beginning to develop.

It seems the current wave of ethnographic work with young people has in some instances placed less emphasis on the text, yet Thompson (1990), Hermes (1995) and Real (1996) provide a sound argument that meaning only occurs when texts and audience intersect. A further relevant issue to emerge is that the sporting genre across television, magazines and newspapers is conspicuous by its absence in the work reviewed in this section.

2.3.2 Sport and a healthy Lifestyle - the media a marginalised partner?

Academics, educationalists and public figures all emphasise the significance of sport

as a culturally valued activity. For young people it is deemed to offer a range of social, moral and physical benefits;

I am convinced that participation in sport, particularly organised team games, teaches some of the most basic lessons of civilised behaviour. Team games are exercises in structured co-operation. (Duke of Edinburgh, 1994, p. 7)

Sport is a binding force between generations and across borders. But by a miraculous paradox, it is at the same time one of the defining characteristics of nationhood and national pride. . . Competitive sport teaches valuable lessons which last for life. . . (Major, 1995, p. 2)

There is an almost unanimous agreement that it is desirable that young people should learn to play a wide range of roles in and through sport ... (Talbot, 1994, p. 27)

Such claims for the benefits of sport raise a number of issues relevant for this investigation.

Firstly, whilst there should inevitably be importance attached to roles such as participants, coaches and choreographers that young people in sport should have the opportunity to play, the role of the spectator should also be considered. All seem to ignore the audience role, yet we have already acknowledged the global appeal of mediated sport and the ways in which sporting reality and media representations are difficult to disentangle. Young people as active and critical sports audiences are an important concept to foster in the current mediascape in which they live and play.

Whannel (1995) identifies the mismatch between the sporting rhetoric of public figures such as John Major, and the media sports representations amplifying commercialism, cheating, drug taking and the inadequacies of top sports performers. He emphasises, too, how Evans (1994, *Guardian*, 1/3) argues that sport can just as readily produce bullies and thugs, as it can good citizens and saints.

Widely expressed public concern has focused on young people's inability to be discerning readers of sporting texts, and their susceptibility to imitate the amoral behaviour of their favourite sport stars. My own professional concern too, recognised

a gap in reality between my objectives as a teacher of Physical Education, and the media interests of the young people I was teaching.

Talbot (1994) considers national strategies for young people and sport, and identifies key partnerships with governing bodies, sports development and LEA providers. She talks about a 'shared sports pedagogy' where everyone working with young people in sport has a shared ethical framework. In view of the mismatch between sporting ideology and media representation it could be argued that the media should be considered as a partner within that framework. ¹

The concern about the healthy lifestyle of young people in Britain has continually come under scrutiny in recent years as increasingly home based inactive leisure, transport to and from school, and the 'so called' decline in extra curricular school sport has eroded the time spent engaging in forms of physical activity, (cf. House of Commons, 1990 ; Cale & Almond, 1992; Mason, 1995; Department of National Heritage, 1995 and Roberts, 1996). This together with health issues about young people as 'couch potatoes', makes it all the more surprising that media research in the current interpretative paradigm, has failed to adequately address young people and sport. However, it simply supports Evans' (1986) indication of the distinct lack of qualitative sociological work scrutinising the social and cultural influences on pupils' P.E. and sporting experiences in school.

The role of the media in the more inactive lifestyle of some young people is clear in terms of the amount of time spent engaging in media related leisure (Lines, 1991).

The previous section identified some key work on young people and the media.

However, the significance of the sporting genre to young people seems to have received little, if any, consideration. Considering the cultural connections between

¹ I presented a more extensive argument for this in a key note presentation at the 1997 British Association of Advisors and Lecturers in P.E. conference. A paper from this is included in appendix J and currently awaiting publication in the British Journal of Physical Education.

masculinity, boys and sport, McRobbie's (1991) justifiable argument that the majority of the sub-cultural work has focused on male values and concerns, makes it remarkable that interpretative work in this field has been ignored.

Acknowledging this omission, the initial research work of Lines (1991, 1993) and Tomlinson and Lines (1995) on media interests and sport, discussed in the introductory chapter, began to address some of the ways in which media sport plays a part in the everyday life of young people.

Harris' (1994) work on athletes, hero choices and American young people, does provide a valuable account of admirable sport star characteristics, and offers a way for linking textual analysis with interpretative accounts from young people themselves. Sport star characteristics were classified around young people's comments on personal competence, extra-ordinary expertise, endurance of hardships, social supportiveness, personality and celebrity shallowness. These criteria provide an important development in identifying the social, moral and physical skills that young people most admire, and reflect a general preference for positive exemplars.

Whannel (1995) in an interim report on morality, sport stars and young people focuses on textual analyses of sport images in print media popular with young people. The absence of sporting images across girl's magazines and the consumption of sports magazines by boys, afford boys according to Whannel, a kind of 'cultural capital.' Gender distinctions are further prevalent in that whilst girls' magazines marginalise sport, sports magazines seek to exclude females, except in decorative or supportive roles (Whannel, 1995). Buckingham (1987) and Gillespie (1995) promote the importance of 'media talk' as a social activity. This raises issues as to how girls can contribute to media sports talk, if it is rarely featured in media products they consume.

Whilst Whannel (1995, p.134) does not indicate the nature of his fieldwork with young people, he does raise some issues that this work will seek to address with regard to their readings of the sporting texts;

In a social context where sport is strongly associated with corruption it may be that the response of the young is neither to seek to identify or emulate, but rather become cynical.

In this sense, we have moved from opening notions of valued sporting ideologies and vulnerable youth, to corruption and weaknesses in sport, and the cynical readings by young people. The ways in which they correlate sporting reality with media representations can surely be of value to educationalists, sports coaches and audience analysts alike.

Media coverage amplifies the belief that the impact of sport stars as role models for young people is significant, and that their poor behaviour is a national concern.

Whannel (1995, p. 127) comments;

Youth are vulnerable to influence, whilst sport and the media can supposedly convey good or bad influences concern over youth condense broad fears over the concept of a culture in decline. The desire for a good clean sporting hero is a symptom of the desire for magical resolutions.

In actuality, much of the research into sporting role models for young people has focused on the socialisation effects of the family, coaches, peers and school. Lines (1991) offered a model for the role of the media as a sports socialising agency, yet acknowledged the difficulty in providing empirical data for possible positive and negative effects of media sport consumption. Similarly, the nature of young people's identification with sports stars they admire is uncertain.

A number of issues seem to be relevant for discussion in view of the literature discussed so far. A hermeneutical media analysis would suggest that, in order to provide for a complete understanding of the sporting genre and the ways that young people use it, consideration needs to be given, firstly, to the production process of

media sports, including the priorities, production practices and the positioning of young people by media professionals. Secondly, to the readings of the sporting texts and the ways in which ideologies and myths offer preferred readings and might seek to draw in young people to the texts.

For if sporting images are strongly linked with masculinity and the sporting norm as male, and feminine distinctions signified by fashion, beauty, passivity and the ideal body, then stereotypical characteristics are legitimised through media representations and open to dominant readings by young people. Concerns with the gender-differentiated nature of sporting texts also rests with the role of the female athlete and ways in which they are portrayed as acceptable role models. Such distinctions might then operate to exclude young girls from consuming the media sports genre, or seek to marginalise them if they do decide to cross the gender divide. Carrington and Leaman (1986, p. 218) indicate the implications that there are for girls' attitudes towards a sporting and active lifestyle as a result of media portrayal ;

Such imagery not only prompts the withdrawal of many girls and women from participation in sports but presents a number of dilemmas to those who retain commitment.

Finally, there is a need to provide evidence of the ways in which young people do actively choose to participate in media sports events, and the meanings that they make of the messages they receive. For it seems from current audience research that the pleasures, meanings and uses of young people may be distinctly different from those intended by the producers, and those decoded by the researcher. The ways in which young people use media talk to reflect opinion, views and ideas about national unity, gendered and ethnic identity, and constructions of sporting heroes must be a focus for investigation.

The application of Thompson's (1990) methodological framework it is argued will provide a clearer and holistic picture of the nature of the sports media experience and the ways in which young people use it in their daily life styles, to influence their own

personal identity and consciousness, and more specifically their attitudes to a sporting lifestyle.

2.4 The Research Questions

A review of media sports literature reveals that arguably, media sport research has yet to meet the challenge of the interpretative paradigm, for the audience is relatively invisible, positioned by, but not questioned about the formal and discursive analysis of a range of texts that dominates the current research.

Young people, as audience, were and continue to be viewed as a central concern in the public domain as vulnerable and inadequate in their ability to be discerning readers of media texts. Concern in the sporting genre rests with young people's susceptibility to imitate on and off-field violence, and their identification with drug taking, wife beating, alcoholic sport stars. Despite work across other genres such as cartoons, soap opera and magazines, the literature fails to adequately address young people and sport in the interpretative paradigm.

This provided the rationale for the following aims, objectives and research questions.

Aim

To analyse the consumption and interpretation of mediated sporting texts in the everyday lives of young people through a multi-method analysis.

Objectives

1. To analyse sports media content from newspapers and television during 1996. This content and textual analysis will be restricted to the European Football Championships, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics.
2. To develop media case studies on sports stars who are identified by

intensive representation in the content analysis during objective 2.

3. To investigate the consumption, impact and interpretation of these events and sports stars with a group of young people.

Research questions

Mediated Sports Events/Sports Stars: Analysis of Media Texts

1. What is the amount, nature and distinctiveness of content in newspapers and on television during the European Championship, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics?
2. What themes and issues are apparent from the media content and textual analysis?
3. What high profile sports stars can be identified and in what ways are they constructed by the media as heroes, heroines, celebrities and role models?

Consumption of mass mediated sports events: Audience based analysis and interpretation of the texts

4. In what ways were young people consumers of mass-mediated sports events (specifically Euro 96, Wimbledon and The Olympics) during the Summer of 1996?
What other media products (if any) were more significant and why?
5. What characteristics of mediated sports appealed or did not appeal to young people?
6. How did young people read, watch and interpret the media texts of these events?
7. What impact did media-sports viewing have on active sports participation during 'The Summer of Sport'?
- 8 To what extent were certain sports stars adopted as role models for imitation, admiration and idolatry and/or critically appraised and rejected?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

A Multi-Method Analysis

3.1 Justification for a multi-method approach

Section 2.1 offers a critical appraisal of research paradigms prevalent in communication research methodology, and supports Thompson's (1990) hermeneutical approach as a broad methodological structure within which different techniques can be placed. It is the intention of this research to use a tripartite framework for analysis, considering the inter-relationship between the construction, consumption and interpretation of media products within the socio-historic context. Whilst the production process has not been studied empirically in any primary sense, the main orientation in this investigation will be towards young people's reading of symbolic forms of mediated sport. Figure 4 offers an overview of the design as applied to the empirical focus of this study.

In order to provide for these differing levels of analysis, and in view of the range of research objectives, it became apparent that there was a sound argument for an integrated multi-method research strategy. This allowed for a combination of both quantitative (content analysis) and qualitative (production and construction of meaning) data in media text analysis. Similarly, in identifying patterns of consumption (by longitudinal, large scale questionnaire surveys and media diaries) and audience / reader interpretation (with in-depth individual and group interviews), both qualitative and quantitative brought together different kinds of evidence to add empirical data, depth and richness to the investigation.

FIGURE 4: THE HERMENEUTIC FRAMEWORK: Levels of Analysis and the Research Design

**LEVELS
OF MEDIA
ANALYSIS**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

MULTI METHODS

1	CONSUMPTION OF MEDIA PRODUCTS	METHODOLOGY
	<p>i. To what extent are there trends evident in patterns of consumption amongst young people ?</p> <p>ii. How are gender/ethnic differences reflected in patterns of consumption?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>iii. In what ways were young people consumers of the mass mediated sports events of the Summer of '96- European Championship/ Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics?</p> <p>iv. What other media products (if any) were more significant, and why?</p>	<p>Questionnaire Survey (Quantitative)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Personal Media Diaries (Quantitative/Qualitative)</p>
2	PRODUCTION/CONSTRUCTION OF MEDIA TEXTS & MEANING : The mediated texts and researcher interpretations	
	<p>v. What is the amount/nature/distinctiveness of media content during Euro 96/Wimbledon/The Olympics?</p> <p>vi. What themes, ideologies, issues can be detected from analysis- national identity, nationalism, gender, race, Olympic ideal, morality?</p> <p>vii. What sport stars can be identified by intense media hype and in what ways are they represented by the media as heroes/celebrities and role models?</p>	<p>Content (Quantitative) and Textual analysis (Qualitative)</p>
3	INTERPRETATION AND MEANING : The audience/reader interpretation	
	<p>viii. What characteristics of mediated sport appealed/did not appeal to young people?</p> <p>ix. How did they read, watch and make sense of the mediated texts ?</p> <p>x. To what extent were sports stars adopted as role models or critically appraised and rejected?</p> <p>xi. To what extent is there an endless cycle of interpretations?</p>	<p>In -depth group and Individual Interviews (Qualitative)</p>

Firstly, the argument here is that no single method could offer such a variety of data required within the tripartite analysis, nor would it fully allow the researcher to move between these levels of analysis in order to fully illustrate the inter-relationship between construction, consumption and interpretation.

Quantitative data, in isolation, could not satisfy the interpretative requisites necessary to make sense of the audience experience. However such data, in this case, collated from the longitudinal survey, was the most appropriate method to capture the range and depth of media consumption across time and numbers. It also provided the contextual framework, identifying long term trends and popular media interests as reference points from which comparisons can be drawn with the specific, more in-depth case studies. In this way the typicality of themes determined from the case-study group during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 could be identified and set within a broader context of media consumption amongst young people.

The leading focus within this investigation, on interpretative analysis of young people and mediated sport, necessitated the use of case studies, with focus groups and targeted media sports events. This could provide an in-depth analysis, allowing a narrowing and focusing from the wider issues portrayed through the longitudinal study. It was believed that if these case studies stood alone it would prove difficult to confirm both their validity and reliability. Thus the quantitative data could be used to confirm (or question) themes raised within the qualitative analysis. Gillespie (1995, p.52) supports this view suggesting that;

the quantitative survey combined with more qualitative research strategies can provide dimensions of typicality for case study material and will thereby enhance or verify the total ethnographic picture.

Secondly, the diverse and intricate nature of media communication confirms the difficulty in using either positivistic or interpretative methods in singular, isolated fashion. Radway (1987), Morley and Silverstone (1991) and Hermes (1993) have all utilised multi-methods to enhance their interpretative media investigations. Real

(1996, p.xv.) argues that he,

uses multiple case studies because the size and complexity of media culture prevent one from extracting a single test tube sample of our culture and measuring with the intent of generating to the totality with scientific certitude.

Fiske (1987) who advocated mixed method research and genres, with the use of semiotics for the study of texts and ethnography for study of audiences gives further strong support for such a rationale and reinforces the previous argument for combining methods. Morley (1992) argues against any one method as the 'ideal choice'.

Clarke and Causer (1991, p.172) suggest that if at all practicable within the resource constraints the use of different methods does have distinct advantages. The reliability of data can be enhanced by moving between levels of analysis for cross checking and corroboration. For example, the possible ambiguity in questionnaire response or the researcher interpretation of the construction of meaning, can be affirmed and supported by the media diaries and interviews, which more appropriately capture the reality of the lived experiences of the young people. Hornig-Priest (1996, p.12) suggests;

When multiple approaches - qualitative and quantitative, inductive and deductive lead to similar results, we have more faith in these results. (This is sometimes called triangulation of results).

This is developed by Real (1996, p.267) who suggests that triangulation in media analysis can begin from several starting points rather than only one;

triangulation through many methods working together from different vantage points enables us to generate a fully rounded appreciation and critique of our experiences with media culture.

The claim for multi-methods here does not use triangulation in the sense of utilising independent methods for the same findings. Rather, in this investigation, each technique selected was necessary and appropriate to answer the range of research

questions specified at the outset and each stage was sequential rather than corroborative. In this way each stage was designed to inform the next, with themes and patterns emerging from the data collection - from the macro (overall consumption patterns) to narrowing and focusing on the micro (case studies of specific genre, special events, certain social groups and selected stars).

It is suggested that the multi-method approach selected for this investigation will encompass Van Zoonen's (1994, p. 146) proposals for a sound theoretical framework in media analysis;

For the researcher the task is to find the balance between faithfully reconstructing the meanings, definitions and interpretations of individual participants and producing a grounded theory, an analytical and encompassing picture of the whole collective process of making meaning.

Although the in-depth interviews and the daily diaries provide the qualitative data for the interpretative analysis, it is acknowledged that advantages could also have been gained from the use of participant observation, viewing the events with groups of young people during this time. However, my own professional role and work with young people in the school setting prior to this investigation does provide an ethnographic dimension to the study.

The difficulty of gaining access into domestic viewing settings, and the unnatural presence of a researcher that detracts from the everyday experience was seen to counteract what I hoped to achieve. I wanted to report young people's experiences in their own words, and I believed that the identified methods would obtain this.

The rationale and structure of the design had developed from a comprehensive and professional understanding of the young people I had already observed and worked with, in the school setting, for over eighteen years. My own research into media interests and young people had already been developing since 1990. From this work within the field, I had a strong sense that the multi-methods selected would provide me with the appropriate and relevant data.

3. 2 My Role as Researcher: Female, Insider and Outsider

I am self-reflexive in the knowledge that my own experiences as an avid sport participant, a media consumer and a P.E. teacher have informed the research questions, and the nature of the methods selected. I bring a woman's perspective to the study which acknowledges that much of media and sport related research, as identified in the literature review, has been conducted by men and about men's sport.

This identifies the marginalisation of women in media, and more especially in the sporting media. It appears to me that the sporting genre is not perceived to be significant in the lives and media interests of women. Notable exceptions of investigations into mediated sport and women have been of content and textual analysis of women's sports coverage in the print media. These have confirmed the lack of coverage given to female sports events, and the lack of female role models, identified the trivialisation and sexualisation of female athletes and explored gender stereotyping in both television and print media coverage of sport. However there is no sustained work that has revealed female audience or reader perceptions of mediated sport events and products.

Where female researchers have produced media investigations they have tended to look at women's issues from a feminist perspective and focused on perceived problems with gender specific genres and products such as women's magazines; Winship (1987) *Hermes* (1995); women and soap operas, (Hobson, 1980); adolescent girls and their magazines, such as *Jackie* and *Just 17*. (McRobbie, 1991 and 1994). There is little work that has looked at men or young boys and their use of soap opera and magazines, supporting notions of gender distinctions in media usage.

In general this supports Van Zoonen (1991) in *Hermes* (1995, p.150) statement that;

Most of the work on media consumption and gender has concentrated on women and still does so thereby unwittingly reflecting the general bias in society that women are the problematic sex.

In the same way, anecdotal comments are made about lack of female interest in mediated sport and the high number of complaints about excessive sports coverage from females, yet there is little research to either refute or substantiate these claims. Such comments often reflect stereotypical assumptions, or simply intimate that females are at fault for not liking mediated sport, rather than considering that some of the types and kinds of sports that receive high coverage may simply not be of much interest to some women.

My initial research concern had developed from similar reflections on 'the problems' of girls, women and sporting imagery represented in the media and the first survey (1991) specifically focused on gender differences. However for this investigation, I chose not to focus specifically on female adolescents. Everyday experience of the media takes place within domestic settings, often with mixed gender viewing. Contestations of power and control within this context and how each sex perceived the experiences and meanings of the other, suggested to me that it might be more appropriate to look across the gender divide.

As little work has been done on either male or female perceptions, usage and pleasures of mediated sport, especially with regard to young people, a mixed sex group was selected. For differences and similarities in interpretative meanings may cross gender divides, and offer alternative perceptions on the mediated sports experience.

However, coming to the research as a female, it is important to acknowledge the socio-cultural experiences with regard to media consumption that I bring to the investigation. The lived experiences for me clearly led me into this research area for I find it difficult to explain what sense I made of the combination of my own media and active sports participation as an adolescent. Similarly now, I experience

frustration at the lack of quality viewing time, and press coverage offered to female team sports.

Figure 5, offers a reflexive appraisal of my own media sport experiences, for Harris (1994, p. 50) identifies a key concern with hermeneutic approaches;

Human analysts are inextricably part of the very phenomena they are trying to analyse.

Figure 5: The personal media experience of the researcher as a female adolescent

As a young girl keen on active sports participation, I rarely spent much time on watching TV, I didn't have a tv set in my bedroom and videos were not yet on the market.

My love of sport did encourage me to watch sport on television and my Dad, as an avid armchair sport fan, was clearly influential. Football (I didn't play it) and tennis were our particular favourites. I especially remember Mum sitting upstairs alone during Match of The Day and Wimbledon fortnight, becoming increasingly frustrated at our noisy cheers and shouts. She could not understand my involvement in this genre and scolded my Dad for encouraging me.

I had a few female sporting heroines-Mary Rand, Billie-Jean King, Evonne Goolagong and Chris Evert. . . and many male footballers. I remember once, at primary school being asked to write a story about the person I admired most. As it was the year after Mary Rand's Olympic success and I'd kept a scrapbook of cuttings from the event (I was in the school athletics team) I chose her. My primary teacher read it out to the class and I got the feeling that he was a bit surprised at my selection, although I wasn't sure why at the time. He asked the group how many had heard of her and I seem to recall that few had. I certainly was the only girl to pick a sport star, and definitely the only one to pick a female. I don't think I ever realised that I did not know any netball or volleyball players, yet alongside tennis, these were my favourite sports to play. I just somehow accepted that these sports weren't on television but I never questioned why.

My Dad bought me the football magazine *Shoot* and Chelsea football club programmes, whilst Mum bought me the most popular adolescent girls' magazine at the time, *Jackie*. I'm not sure what sense I made of the differing ideologies within them but I don't remember any of my female friends reading the football magazines, yet we often talked about the problem pages in *Jackie* during break times. I remember wishing I could buy a netball magazine to find out more about the game and with only an annual trip to Wembley to watch the netball international, that was never televised, it was difficult to have anyone to admire or copy when I played. My PE teacher was really the only female adult netballer that we consistently saw play. Yet, following the staging, at our own instigation, of an inter-form football match (which was quite a revolutionary affair for a girls' high school in the late 1960's) I recall running out onto the pitch, never having been taught how to play, except for a kick around in the garden with Dad, but determined to be like Peter Osgood (my Chelsea hero). The fact I was a 5' 2" centre forward did not deter me-I had watched enough *'Match of the Days'* and thought I knew what to do. . . my hat trick that day I'm sure had nothing to do with my skill level but simply that I'd watched more of the game on television than most of the other girls on the pitch . . .

In many ways this somewhat personal reflection, together with my professional role as a teacher of PE, inspired me to select young people as my sample group to work

with. However as I moved into university teaching just prior to the commencement of this investigation, I argue here that my role as both insider/outsider gave me a special and invaluable position as researcher.

As a teacher of PE and form teacher, the role of insider allowed me a more comprehensive understanding of both the research setting and the research subjects. It offered three key elements necessary for the nature of the methods selected; access, familiarity, trust and respect.

Firstly, access to gatekeepers (colleagues in the schools), and secondly access to groups of young people whom I already knew fairly well in the school environment. Additionally, I had worked with young people of secondary age daily over an 18 year period teaching in comprehensive schools. This afforded access to much changing room and classroom gossip, as well as opportunities to watch social interaction within the peer groups. I acquired inside information about what young people were "into" - their interests, styles and attitudes. During this time I developed sound relationships with the young people, and they often spent time talking to me in an informal way, during extra-curricular time and whilst we were away on school activity holidays. This facilitated continual opportunities for participant observation of youth culture.

My knowledge of the situation and familiarity with the school culture allowed me to anticipate the way young people might behave and respond. I was aware of their likely reception to completing questionnaires, answering questions and the kinds of interaction that might occur within group and individual interviews. I felt that my teaching experience offered me knowledge about the nature of the questions, and the kinds of language both written and oral, that they would positively respond to.

Thirdly, my working relationship with young people in school had always been based on mutual trust and respect. They knew I was interested in them by the amount of time I spent with them. During this time I often discussed their interests and feelings across a range of issues. I saw that the research process was an

extension of this, explaining to the young people that this was now a formalised way of putting their ideas and interests into print. I also knew that media interests were a central feature in their lifestyles and that they enjoyed talking about them.

Several months after completion of the second survey I left the school I was working in. However, former colleagues within the school expressed an interest in acting as gatekeepers, by organising and liaising with groups for me to meet, handing out material and generally checking with pupils during the diary completion stages.

This provided me with a changing role as researcher, for I was now an outsider in view of my teacher role. In this way I believe I overcame the dilemma of 'role conflict' identified by Fleming (1995, p. 142). Professional issues, authority status, host and guest issues were in many ways superseded by my new 'outsider' role.

Yet I had taught, or was certainly known by, all of the case study group. The mutual trust and respect I had as their former teacher was invaluable in encouraging the pupils to help with the project. The times scheduled to visit the school provided an ideal opportunity to meet up with the pupils, and many greeted me back as a friend. Others not involved would turn up for a chat, and sometimes it became quite difficult to remind them that we had specific issues to discuss. The fact that I was no longer their teacher I hope helped in their ability to relax during recordings, and to feel no concern that I was being judgmental of what they had to say.

This special insider/outsider role I feel supported the interviewing environment and facilitated the informality and willingness of each person to contribute. The most detrimental aspect of now being the outsider as researcher was simply that during those very weeks of Euro 96 and Wimbledon, I would have gleaned a real feel of their emotions and group chatter, if I had still been part of the changing room and playground talk.

However, I did manage to join another group of young people from the same school just after the events for several days on an outdoor activity trip, and I took that opportunity to watch some of the Wimbledon Men's Final with them, and to pilot some of the questions that I anticipated using in the group interviews. Some of this material has been acknowledged and incorporated within the text.

3.3 The Longitudinal Survey 1991-1995-2001 (appendix B : Questionnaire outline)

The longitudinal survey is on-going research work, which although not reported on specifically within this investigation has provided the context with which comparisons could be made from the case studies to issues within the wider scene. In this way, case studies can explain the here and now, current popularity of genres, stars and events but the longitudinal survey can identify whether these fit into long term trends, or simply reflect the transient nature of media products. The longitudinal survey, has not followed the same group of people, but focused on specific data over time rather than respondents, but with sample populations of the same age.

The 1991 survey has been reported elsewhere (cf. Lines, 1991; Lines, 1993, Tomlinson and Lines 1996). It provided a systematised way of collating a huge range of data with a large number of young people. It was a technique that could easily be replicated and was successful in its first completion, suggesting that the questionnaire design was both appropriate and of interest to the age of the sample group selected.

The second survey was conducted in 1995, as part of a Chelsea School Research Centre project (CSRC). It was conducted in 3 out of the 4 same schools and a further similar one. A research consultant with my assistance, reproduced questionnaires with only several amendments (to cater for several new media products that were

perceived to be relevant). With the help of a CSRC technician the information gathered from both samples were used to form a longitudinal data bank.

The survey analysis provided contextual data for the following specific purposes:

- i. to identify any long term effects or sustained interests of young people.
- ii. to consider whether identified gender differences in media consumption and sport in 1991 are still in evidence among 14-15 year olds over the ten year period.
- iii. to identify whether ethnic origin affects media interests and sport, and the ways in which gender and ethnic background might further establish differences or identify commonalties amongst young people.
- iv. to identify any new trends and fashions in media interests and sport amongst young people.

This has so far been conducted with a total of 480 different young people over a 5 year period, drawn from two different samples as described below:

1. Two hundred and forty 14/15 year old adolescents from the first sample group in 1991, drawn from 4 schools across the SE of England (MA dissertation)
2. Two hundred and forty adolescents from the second sample group in 1995, drawn from 3 out of the 4 schools in the SE of England, aged 14/15 (CSRC 1995) and one complementary type of school.

It is the intention to replicate the study again in 2001 with a further 240 young people from the same schools as the 1995 study.

A brief overview of this survey to set the context for the adolescent case study group during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 is given in the introductory section of this investigation and the questionnaire used can be found in Appendix B. A more comprehensive discussion of the longitudinal survey will be reported elsewhere at a later date.

3.4 Content and textual analysis of selected sports events and stars

The construction and formal discourse analysis of media texts formed one level of the hermeneutical analysis. This stage of the research identified the specific context and contents of the media coverage during Euro 96, Wimbledon 1996 and the Atlanta Olympics, with particular reference to print and TV productions. It was intended that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative data from the content and textual analysis would offer a rich descriptive account of the ideological themes and issues apparent within the sporting texts.

It was perceived that this would provide the background to both the choices and interpretative meanings young people made of media products available at this time. For although it does not offer readers' and viewers' interpretations, it does enhance contextual understanding of the audience experience.

Content analysis (to identify the manifest content, types and amount of coverage and themes and issues apparent), and qualitative analysis (looking at the ideological content of the message) were applied to identify the following features;

- i. the place of the three selected sporting events on the professional agenda and their news value in relation to other items.
- ii. the polysemic nature of the narratives and discourse created by the media texts.
- iii. the range and style of sports reporting to which young people were exposed.
- iv. the themes and issues which young people might address in their interpretation of the events.
- v. the material for case studies of specific sports stars - identifying which sport stars were high on the agenda and the narratives and construction of such images.

Firstly, when analysing the newsprint or television content, claims for its purpose must be clear. Content analysis alone, identifies the manifest content and allows a count of key units. It can help draw comparisons of proportions of space used for

topics both within papers and between them. Gerbner (1969)¹ proposed four aspects of focus that can continue to provide a coding framework for content analysis; attention (the presence, frequency of certain topics or themes in the message system), emphasis (priorities of importance and relevance indicated by size, allocation, intensity, stress on headlines); tendency (evaluation and judgements of qualities); structure (the evidence of relationships between components that suggest a certain logic, e.g. love and marriage, sport and courage).

More significantly it can identify themes for discussion around socio-cultural aspects of representation. As Fiske (1990, p.144) suggests,

While content analysis concerns itself with the denotative order of communication, it can, and does, reveal patterns and frequencies within this order that connote values and attitudes.

For example, the over representation of certain sports, certain events and men over woman implies a higher priority, status and value attached to them by those selecting the sporting agenda. The patterns, frequencies of certain themes can be identified in this way, and it does provide statistical evidence for broad generalisations about the nature of content across a range of texts.

However, a number of critiques, (cf. Fiske and Hartley, 1978; Hall, 1990; Van Zoonen, 1994 and Strinati, 1995), identify the restrictions of such a method for analysis. These arguments include its focus on breadth as opposed to depth, the difficulty in determining relevant categories for counting, it offers an abnormal way of looking at media output, takes categories out of context, fails to identify the ways in which the audience decodes the messages, and does not identify whether the events that occur most frequently, are in fact the most important.

¹ Fiske and Hartley (1978) offer a summary of Gerbner's study incorporating all four of these dimensions in his work on violence. Most of the early analysts focus more specifically on dimensions of existence (how much of what content and how frequently) and priorities (what is important).

Despite restrictions, content analysis continues to be used for media research, sports media products and as a means of reading media sporting texts (Weidman, 1997) because it provides a basis for identifying re-occurring themes, as well as highlighting priorities of representation and news value. It can determine the context of broader patterns and issues from which more in-depth case studies of particular textual and audience research can be developed.

Data from content analysis can therefore provide empirical evidence and stimulate discussion about the priorities and values connotated in sporting representations, whilst semiological analysis attempts to explore the construction of meaning from the reading of signs within the texts. Figure 6, adapted from Berger (1991), O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, et al. (1994) and Bignell (1997), attempts to clarify the key terminology referred to in the textual analysis within this investigation.

Figure 6: A diagrammatic version of levels of signification

	SIGNIFIER	SIGNIFIED	SIGN
1st level order of signification descriptive denotes or perceived through senses labels things denotation	physical existence of sound/image/object	mental concept or idea	inseparable total association of the two
2nd level order of signification connotation	Signifier adds the cultural experiences, values and discourse of a culture		each sign has a range range of meanings and particular associations No fixed meaning
myth	a chain of concepts by which members of a culture understand certain topics - functions to make culture seem natural		
3rd level order of signification Ideology	ways in which myths and connotations work together to make sense		

The semiological reading of texts present a number of issues regarding its validity. It is argued that it can be too theoretical, too speculative, too narrow in its textual focus, and whilst it positions the audience, it does not consider their response (Fiske, 1990, 2nd edition). A key weakness of textual analysis is that it provides the researchers' interpretations, taking little or no account of the different ways in which individuals might interpret the same text. Additionally, the depth in focus often of one particular text, cannot empirically confirm that this is valid across a greater depth of material.

Wenner (1998, p. 10), identifies that a number of textual analyses of media sport texts, considering issues of nationalism, violence and gender have "focused more on thick description, often in companion with ideologically-based semiosis".

Qualitative content or discourse analysis offers an emphasis on the social nature of language, and its power to position individual subjects (cf. Buckingham, 1993a; Hornig-Priest, 1996; Hall, 1997 and Whannel, 1998a).

Harris (1994, p.73) suggests that whilst drawing on literary theory, this method interprets discourse in a much less structured linguistic manner than semiotics. It is a significant analytical feature for this investigation, as it provides a means of identifying groups of statements and ideological themes that represent topics or objects across a range of the sporting texts.

Although content and textual analysis are often used in isolation and rarely to be found in the same research investigation (Van Zoonen, 1994), it is argued here that they can be used collectively to provide support for each other. Fiske (1990) suggests the two techniques need not be so directly oppositional for,

the more empirical work of the process school is often needed to fill dangerous gaps left by semiotics (p.23)

For content analysis can provide empirical and quantitative evidence of the types, priorities and relationships evident across a breadth of content to support the in-depth textual analysis of signs, codes, myths and ideologies, within specific texts and imagery.

However, even when both methods are explored in media analysis, it is argued in the framework of this investigation that the role of the audience or reader in the decoding process must also be acknowledged, thus providing a further level of analysis, and requiring different techniques of data collection.

Media texts for analysis

Four daily newspapers were used from the 6 week period of analysis June 8th until July 2nd and July 20th until August 5th 1996. This was during what the media themselves had billed the 'Summer Of Sport'. *The Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Sun* were selected to provide a cross section economically, politically and socially. According to Willings Press Guide (1997) and Social Trends (1998);

The Telegraph- was the most widely read of the quality press during 1996, with a readership of 1,084,440 in class categories ABC. 7% of male and 5% of female newspaper readers read the Telegraph on a daily basis. Both the editor and the sports editors were male.

The Independent - was the least read of the quality press with only 2% male and 1% female of the total readership of newspapers, and a 265, 037 readership in groups ABC during July-Dec 1996. Its target readership was referred to as ABC adults aged 20-45 and its independent political positioning recorded. Both its editor and sports editor were male.

The Daily Mail- was the third most widely read of the tabloid papers with an ABC readership of 2, 090, 503, 11% of all male readers and 12% of all female readers. Both its editor and sports editor were male. Its perception as a paper for readers from Middle England has developed recently and it projects its growing popularity as a

midpoint read between the tabloid and quality press.

The Sun - was the most popular of the daily newspapers with a readership of over 10 million, 25% of all males and 19% of all females who read a daily paper choose *The Sun* during 1996/1997. Only 3,980,808 of its readers were in social groupings ABC.

It was predicted that *The Sun* (from longitudinal trends in the survey data 1991-1995) would be the most widely read paper across the sample group and could provide a specific case study of the kinds and types of sports coverage young people did read at this time. The other papers were analysed to identify comparability in sporting agendas. The content analysis focused on key concepts; news values of the sporting events - extent of coverage in comparison to other news and other sports events; house style of the papers with regard to language, relationship with the reader, sports chatter as opposed to match/event reporting; sports stars high on the agenda, headlines used to construct identified sports stars Gascoigne and Henman; emergence of any significant female sports stars; and key themes and issues that were amplified through headlines or beyond the sports pages.

Newspaper reporting, especially *the Sun* as it was the most popular paper amongst the young people, provided the key focus of the analysis, as it was felt that this would provide a concentrated and explicit account of the key issues being reported on in the events. However, it was acknowledged that television viewing would be a central experience for the young people and should be included in the analysis of the texts. In view of the cultural 'mediascape' discussed in the previous section, and issues of intertextuality, it was inevitable that young people would be interpreting the media sport events from across a range of different media products and from media talk within a range of social groups. It was believed that even if these young people had not read some of the sporting texts selected for analysis, the nature of the sporting discourse would be nonetheless appropriate to set the context for the interpretative stage of analysis.

A range of televised programmes from the events, together with several accompanying programmes about Paul Gascoigne and Tim Henman also formed part of the content and textual analysis. In view of the vast number of scheduled hours, some priority had to be made, and the main focus of the television coverage therefore centred on issues that received high priority in the press coverage. The main events that the young people identified as most popular in their diaries were also scrutinised, such as the Opening ceremonies of Euro '96 and the Atlanta Olympics, the England football matches during Euro '96, Tim Henman's matches and the Wimbledon singles finals, and the edited highlights of the Atlanta Olympics.

The textual analysis focused on identifying the polysemic nature of media texts and provided arguments for differentiated researcher and audience interpretations. It discusses a number of textual analyses of Euro 96 (Whannel, 1998; Blain and O'Donnell, 1998; and Carrington, 1998) and The Atlanta Olympics (Brennan, 1997 and Weidman, 1997). It identifies the ways in which ideological strategies and modes of construction were apparent in the sporting texts. It contrasts the young people's interpretations of these events with such academic discourses and questions if such in-depth signification of media messages is outside the "normal" viewer interpretation of meaning and pleasure.

The textual analysis also identifies signs and symbols used to construct sports star images in the specific case studies on Paul Gascoigne and Tim Henman. The researcher deconstruction and interpretation of these characteristics then provide the context within which to discuss young people's knowledge, interpretations and selection of sports stars as favourites or "heroes."

Paul Gascoigne was selected on the ground of continued high media profile since 1990, his significant popularity in the first survey of young people, the polysemic nature of his image as both hero and villain, and his ability to dominate print media headlines and articles during Euro '96.

Tim Henman emerged during Wimbledon 1996 as a potential case study, as he was significantly unknown during the longitudinal survey, and was not mentioned prior to the 'Summer of Sport' as a favourite among young people. The construction of his 'star' image suggests that the media perceived he had certain 'hero' characteristics which they used in his increased media coverage from this time.

It had been hoped to select a female sport star as a case study during this time. However, the lack of any significant female coverage made this difficult to determine. Euro '96 was clearly male specific, apart from females as cheerleaders and as Page 3 girls. At Wimbledon there was no British female interest in terms of competitors, and Monica Seles and Mary Pierce, who usually receive quite high coverage, were knocked out in the early rounds. The Atlanta Olympics, with its injuries to British athletes, Sally Gunnell and Kelly Holmes, did not provide any significant and sustained coverage of females, despite the success of bronze medallist athlete, Denise Lewis. With this in mind gender issues were identified which focused on female sports star coverage in general during Wimbledon and The Atlanta Olympics, rather than a case study on a specific character.

3.5 The Sample Groups

It was decided that the school where I had previously been working had provided a fair cross section of young people across varying social and ethnic backgrounds and that the case study group, if selected from this school, would provide me with a typical group of young people. My contacts in the school through former colleagues would also give me relatively easy access to groups of young people.

It was anticipated that there might be difficulty in motivating individual young people to complete the diaries and be available for the range of research methods

employed. It was hoped that a group that knew me would respond more positively to my request, and that the teacher involved with the group would be willing to act as the gatekeeper.

The group selected was of 14 year olds approaching the start of their GCSE courses. A former colleague and the Head Of Media Studies Department offered to act as my gatekeeper. He approached a new group of students several months before the start of its GCSE Media Studies course began. As this was a new subject at KS4 we were ensuring that they had not already completed work in the area. However both the teacher and I felt that there were incentives that could encourage the satisfactory completion of the diaries - high motivation at the start of the course, a suggestion that it would help their understanding later on, that they wanted to impress their new member of staff, that I offered to deliver some of my results in their media sessions in year 11, and that a number of them liked the idea that their interests and words would be recorded and published.

With regard to the ethics involved with working with young people, letters were sent to both the Headteacher of the school, and the parents. The pupils were firstly consulted by the teacher concerned, and then I met with them for a meeting prior to Euro '96. During this meeting I explained that whilst I was very keen for each of them to take part in this project, I realised the time commitment involved was far from negligible, and that they obviously were under no obligation to complete the diaries or attend the interviews. If any of them refused to co-operate or failed to complete the diaries they were not penalised in any way, and their class teacher was not informed. In fact, it was anticipated that a high number might not be completed and additional numbers were issued to cope with a possible poor return of diaries. The the highest number of returns was from the group where the gatekeeper was most active in talking, reminding and collecting the diaries from the group. This reinforced the importance of a supportive and interested gatekeeper, especially as I was not in a position to remain in personal contact with the young people during the

'Summer of Sport'.

A very positive response was also given to the group and individual interviews, some of which were conducted during lunch times and after school. Again because of my time restrictions, especially with accessing groups of pupils who might all be available at the same time, a number of staff in school kindly allowed me access to some pupils during their lesson time. This was invaluable and again a result of my former insider status. The interviews were so popular, that several of the young people who had not completed any of the diaries, and who were consequently not selected for the interview stage, turned up for the group interviews anyway, apologised, and asked if they could be included. As a result I ran an additional interview session for this group.

I received a similar response to the selection of the individuals for interview. There was considerable interest and disappointment in reasons for selection. Only one of the respondents selected was not present on the day of the interviews and when telephoned it appeared that she had injured her back and was off sick. Her mother however invited me to call in at their home to interview her in their lounge. This was very successful and again provided evidence of the interest and commitment shown by all those concerned in the research process.

3.6 Adolescent Diaries (appendix C : Diary outline)

A comprehensive set of daily diaries was designed to be completed by each individual throughout the three selected events. Diaries were selected as a result of successful completion by young people, of both physical activity and healthy eating diaries during curriculum work that I had done previously, with teaching groups in the school environment. These had proved to be both revealing and detailed in completion, often providing an intimate account of lifestyle behaviour. It was hoped that similar trends would reveal themselves in the completion of daily media diaries, exhibiting individual identification with events and stars and allow the recall of

significant moments recorded in the young peoples' own language. As Nightingale (1996, p. 95) suggests;

it is possible to concentrate on the performance of the audience as memories, reflections, conversations, impersonations, improvisations, even interior decoration or personality can become expressions of audience.

Wilson (1993, p. 6) also supports the importance of determining both the sense of the text together with the audience reaction to it. For, as he suggests, both are "inextricably and mutually related." It was felt that the nature of the diaries would allow for both immediate reaction and feelings to be recorded in the young people's own words. This could then be correlated with the content and textual analysis of TV and print media to determine the extent to which young people reflected upon common themes detected from such analysis.

The diaries were seen to be the precursor, providing the groundwork for determining themes and patterns, acquiring such information in an immediate way rather than reflections, post event. It was also perceived that they could provide the structure of the discourse for follow-up, in-depth, interpretative work with similar groups of young people.

Figure 7 : Mediated Sport and the Audience Experience

i. Consumption patterns -patterns and trends in receiving and reading the sporting texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * range and depth of related products consumed * significance in relation to other genres * comparison with active sports participation
ii. Appropriation and Ritual Participation - ways of watching and interaction with the texts in everyday life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * levels of attention * social interaction with others * social participation - active / passive * recreating the live atmosphere
iii. Reception pleasure, meaning and interpretative practices - conceptualising the discourse young people create with the texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * knowledge provider * motivator * modelling * social identity * taxonomy of pleasure and meaning * sports star / hero characteristics

More specifically, the diaries alone were designed to provide evidence related to three key areas of the media sport experience; consumption patterns; reception, appropriation and ritual participation; and pleasure, meaning and interpretative practices. These are more fully expanded in Figure 7.

The diaries were structured in a way that was considered to be easy and fairly quick to complete for the young people. They were designed to be visually attractive with cartoon type characters, of similar format across the three events to develop familiarity with what was expected, and to contain only minimal reading. Large font was used with adequately spaced lines for writing, and where possible there were boxes to tick rather than write. A number of blank sheets was also included where pupils could add anything that they wished, with regard to cutting and pasting in media articles, favourite photographs or writing their own comments. Several did include a large amount of material and the diaries resembled scrapbooks of the event, which was a very positive response from 15 year olds. This was particularly the case during Euro '96, suggesting the significance of the event for some of the group.

As shown in Appendix C the design of the diary formats provided both open ended and pre-coded questions. The latter were developed as a result of frequency of particular responses received for certain questions in the questionnaire (from the longitudinal survey) e.g. thoughts whilst watching the event.

Generally a substantial number of the diaries were well completed across the selected sample group of 25. Where possible the young people were selected on the criteria that they had completed and returned diaries from all three of the events. However, inevitably this was not always achieved, as a number of the group, particularly during the Olympics, was away on holiday. From first viewing it was clear that those who had returned the diaries did represent a range of interests across media products, and they had not just completed them because they were interested in media sport. In fact, at the initial meeting it had been stressed to the sample group that I was

as interested in both those who did and did not watch the events, and that they should not alter their normal viewing/ reading habits in anyway as a result of being asked to complete the diaries.

The results collated from the diaries provided, firstly, a substantial amount of data around the themes for discussion. Secondly, they allowed me to identify particular focus groups for interview and specific young people with varying profiles for the individual interviews; and thirdly, they provided the themes and issues that structured the interview schedules. With the individual interviews taking place a year after the event they were also intended to be used as prompts to remind the young people of specific discourses they had identified at the time. Appendix D contains selected data collated from the diaries.

3.7 In-depth Group Interviews (appendix E : Group Interview schedule)

In order to gain further in-depth qualitative information and to allow the young people to recount experiences in their own words, group interviews were the next stage selected in the sequential analysis.

Interviewing provides an opportunity for combining practical, analytical and interpretative approaches to media. (Jensen and Jankowski, 1991, p.223)

There are differing approaches to interviews, from open ended to closely structured schedules. As shown in appendix E, qualitative, open ended questions using a semi-structured approach provided the framework for the interview schedules. Topics were selected for discussion from a range of themes that had been identified from the diaries and from within the textual analysis. Focus groups were determined on the following criteria;

Group 1: Highest mediated sports viewing.

Group 2: Low mediated sports viewing/ higher TV viewing.

Group 3: Asian Ethnic group.

Group 4: Average viewing across TV and sport.

Group 5: Those that did not complete the diaries they were given but turned up to be interviewed anyway.

It was decided that individual interviews with each member of the whole group, whilst beneficial, would in view of the range of other research methods employed, not be practicable in the time available. From my previous experience of small group interviews (as a follow up to the second survey 1995 and as a pilot to this investigation) it was clear that there were several advantages to group interviews. Group interviews and the use of focus groups, also feature as a frequently used strategy in key audience research projects, (cf. Morley, 1980; Radway, 1987; Buckingham, 1987; Morley, 1986).

Firstly, the researcher having offered the prompt question, can often then allow the discussion and conversation to flow freely without being too intrusive. Secondly, the group interaction sometimes allows other issues and questions to surface, which might not have occurred in an individual situation. Thirdly, the negotiation and re-interpretation that the young people make between them of particular events or feelings can provide a much more realistic and lived situation than where the sole dialogue is between the interviewer and an individual interviewee. In this way it can be imagined to resemble the kinds of form room and playground discussions that might have taken place the morning after watching the event on television. Fourthly, by electing focus groups, where individuals appear to have like interests, the same issues and themes can be discussed together thus saving interview time and not replicating questions and data. Additionally, with focus groups it is made apparent that they do have similar ideas and interests, thus none of the young people should feel intimidated in expressing their feelings.

However, it must be acknowledged that group interviews can be difficult to conduct, certain individuals might dominate the conversation, they might all talk at the same

time making transcribing very difficult and there might be someone who is reluctant to express certain feelings in front of the group. Buckingham (1993a) expresses concern about the lack of consideration given by researchers to interpersonal dynamics and Wimmer and Dominick (1997) suggest that some researchers claim that focus groups are a poor research technique because of the potential influence that some group members could assume.

I would argue that much of this depends on the interviewer taking control of the situation, prompting individuals where necessary and reassuring them at the beginning that there will be enough time to let each person have their say. Additionally, the researcher, especially with younger interviewees, should not appear condescending towards them.

From my point of view as an insider, I felt that I knew the groups well enough to be able to maintain control of the group situation, and to anticipate who might try to dominate, and who might need persuading to contribute. I also felt that the individuals in the group knew each other well enough (as they were in the same teaching class and a number were also friends), to feel at ease with each other in this situation.

The composition of the interview groups was determined from the diary data analysis and my gatekeeper took responsibility for informing the groups of both the time and venue for the interviews. A room in the Media Studies suite was made available for me and this proved to be fairly secluded, with few interruptions, save for the ringing of the school bell and the chatter from adjacent classrooms at lesson changeover times. As the young people knew the composition of the groups beforehand there was not any surprise as to who they were going to be interviewed with and a number turned up together, suggesting that some were from within friendship groups.

I explained to the group that I was intending to tape the interviews, so that I could join in the conversation with them in a normal way rather than have to worry about taking field notes. I stressed that these were not really interviews, but rather a series of conversations about interesting things that they had mentioned in their diaries. Each of them was encouraged to introduce themselves as I switched on the tape. I then played back the introduction to them so that they could decide whether they were speaking loud enough to be heard or were sitting close enough to the tape recorder. It also alleviated some of their concerns about the tape being on and whether they were going to sound OK on it.

The group interviews were conducted approximately four months after the completion of the diaries, for several reasons. Firstly, time was needed to analyse the diaries and provide evidence for focus groups. Secondly, a time span might identify whether the 'lived experiences' of the diaries were still recalled in such a detailed and vivid way. Thirdly, the availability of the pupils was determined by teacher willingness to release pupils from lessons, and the final weeks of the Autumn term provided this support.

The interviews were transcribed in full, selected transcripts are included in appendix H, and key material has been extracted and incorporated into the following chapters.

3.8 In-depth Individual Interviews (appendix F: Individual Interview schedules)

Four young people were selected for individual interview to enhance the qualitative data from the group interviews. These were selected from the way in which they completed the daily diaries, and because they each came from either different focus groups, or were not interviewed at all.

Individual 1: Female, Asian origin, high media sports viewing, detailed completion of diaries particularly Euro '96.

Individual 2: Female, White, high television viewing, low media sports viewing, did not complete Olympic diary.

Individual 3: Male, Jewish, high sports viewing, not particularly significant other TV viewing, keen active sports participant.

Individual 4: Male, Asian origin, high TV viewing/ magazine reading, low media sports viewing except for The Olympics.

Morley (1992, p. 97), argues in his audience research work that ;

The choice to work with groups rather than individuals... was made on the grounds that much individually based research is flawed by a focus on individuals as social atoms divorced from their social context.

However, I would argue that there are clear merits for the inclusion of both group and follow up individual interviews. The latter offer the opportunity for more personal discussion, less intimidation from others in the group and as a follow up to issues raised in the group discussions.

Their individual diaries formed the basis of the semi-structured format of the interview schedules. The themes again followed those used for the group interviews, but now had a much more personal focus and related to specific comments and accounts from their diary.

As the individual interviews were conducted a year after the Euro '96 event, it was felt that the diaries would prove useful prompts as it was anticipated that the young people might not remember some of the points I was trying to raise. In fact, they could recall a significant amount of information about the 'Summer of Sport'. The intimate knowledge that I had about them during this time, as a result of the diaries, however, proved to be invaluable. They seemed pleased to think that I knew

who their personal favourites were at the time and were very communicative. I had to try to curtail some of the answers to questions, as I was concerned that we were going to overrun the school day- which we did. The remaining interview was then conducted after school, but the boy concerned was very willing to stay and made no attempt to rush his answers, supporting the notion that they were both supportive of this research and actually found it an interesting topic themselves.

The interviews were taped and transcribed in full. Appendix I contains a selected example. The intention was to incorporate the actual words of the young people themselves as much as possible in the discussion of audience interpretations, formulating them around central topic areas identified by the research questions, and in light of the ideological themes revealed by the textual analysis.

3.9 Summary

The sequential multi-method design of this investigation acknowledges and encompasses the complexity of the interaction between audience and text. By moving between levels of analysis, reflecting upon the formal, discursive readings and the ways in which young people engage with them, the hermeneutic framework will provide depth understanding of meanings and practices during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996.

CHAPTER FOUR

'THE SUMMER OF SPORT' 1996

A content and textual review of media coverage

4.1 Super-mediated sports events - issues of power, ideology and sporting discourse

Designed, packaged and narrated as the 'Summer of Sport' by both the broadsheet and tabloid press, the months of June, July and August 1996 were duly saturated with super-mediated sports events, which held national and international appeal.

The European Championship (Euro '96), the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships and the Atlanta Olympics were anticipated to hold the nation in their grip, and the global media business rolled into action providing the hype and attention guaranteed to draw in the widest variety of consumers to its market. Media professionals have the power to select, reject or ignore certain items of news as they seek to cover their sports pages and scheduled hours of coverage. The ways in which sporting agendas are set reflect values and priorities held about what is deemed as newsworthy, what is believed will appeal to target groups and more significantly, in the current commercial climate, what will sell the most newspapers or draw in the greatest television audiences.

Intense scheduling during the six weeks of these events re-affirmed the notion of the sporting spectacle as a mythical and ritualised form of entertainment, functioning to provide a sense of belonging, through association with the nation's teams and individual players. Viewing figures, publication sales and the rise in consumption of other associated products during such events suggest that large, yet diverse groups, can be absorbed into the mediated sporting phenomena, especially when it is accompanied by national success in the competition. Conversely, the mediated 'Summer of Sport' received critical acclaim for its intensity of coverage, which

disrupted 'normal' daily viewing patterns and caused family rifts and tension;

Relate, the marriage guidance counsellors, believe the corporation's £30 million coverage of the Olympics, following marathon broadcasting of Euro '96 could cause family splits. Recent research showed that one in six women planned their holidays for June this year to avoid Euro '96 ... the corporation has promised an extra weekly episode of *Eastenders* to try to appease non-sports fans. (*Daily Mail*, 18/7/96, front page and page 2)

This infers it is more specifically women who have a problem with mediated sports viewing, and that those who dislike sport, prefer soap opera (traditionally recognised as a feminine appropriate genre) instead. Perceptions suggest that;

Sport constitutes an important element of male talk. In a similar way women discuss the latest episode of *Neighbours*, *Eastenders* ... (O'Conner and Boyle, 1993, p.108)

The comparative male figures choosing to take holidays during Euro '96 was not raised as an issue, positioning men as sports fans in contrast to women. This acts to perpetuate the stereotypical view of gender differentiated attitudes to specific genres, such as sport and soap opera. In reality, the audience is not so distinctly split, although I suggest that social pressures may make it more difficult for 'real' men to admit that they do not enjoy watching football than for women to confess that they do.

Newspapers and television are only some of a range of media products that supply a multiple array of imagery and meanings around particular happenings or events. This section explores some of the discourses apparent across a number of different newspapers, televised sports programmes and videos and sports magazines. Different discursive themes have been selected across the three events, to provide discussion around ideological modes and strategies apparent in the symbolic constructions of the mediated events.

Whilst only addressing some of the range of media products available during these events, this section provides the first level of analysis to determine the audience

interaction with the texts. It identifies both the context and a range of themes, issues and meanings within which the consumption, reception and appropriation of Euro '96, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics took place for young people in the case study group.

4. 2 'Unification and Reification' - Euro '96 and re-occurring Media Themes of National Identity

Euro '96, the opening event in the 'Summer of Sport' exceeded all expectations as a mega-sports event. According to *Total Sport* magazine (1996, August, p.6), 'it was the most photographed sports event ever held in these isles'. The Gazza-instigated 'dentist chair affair', (newspaper accounts of the behaviour of Paul Gascoigne and other England players, during a pre-Euro '96 trip to Hong Kong, where they were reportedly observed lying in a dentist's chair while a bartender poured tequila down their throats from the bottle), sparked off early media condemnation of contemporary sports stars, and relayed concerns about the social and moral effects of them as role models for young people. A spectacular goal and several inspiring games later the same individuals were acclaimed as national heroes and 'lionhearts'.

This, coupled with the relative success of the home nation, perpetrated an intensely patriotic and xenophobic discourse. The role of sport in reflecting the state of the nation provided an illusory effect, that all of England was experiencing a feel good factor, because 'football was coming home'. Unification, through strategies of standardisation, and legitimation through narrativisation, worked together to construct symbols of collective identity and national character through narratives of cherished traditions, heroes and ideals. The sporting discourse positioned the audience as national citizens, embracing all in a sense of belonging to the 'imagined community'.

Football frenzy ensued, as the most popular sport in the world was hosted by the founder nation of the modern version of the game. The 'Summer of Sport' was thus

invested with an aura of patriotism and nationalism. As the Three Lions song reminded us, 'Football was indeed coming home' with media designed narratives constructed to draw in both fans and non-fans alike. The lyrics by Skinner and Baddiel provided a link with the 1966 World Cup win, and empathised with England as the home of football.¹

For football is not only a game, but a mega-globalised and mediatised business. The traditional male working class domain has opened up new boundaries to access the highest possible consumer market. Footballers have transcended rock and film stars as celebrities, blurring boundaries between show business and 'sports biz'; the local and the national composition of teams has been subsumed by the influx of overseas players (Magee, 1998), with fans supporting players at club level across both race and nation; and the symbiotic relationship with the media producing a huge financial pot, guaranteed to draw in phenomenal global audiences (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998).

With economic and financial gains at stake, winning and losing is indeed a serious affair. The media narratives work to convince their audience that the nation's players hold the hopes and dreams of a country on their performance and that sporting success reflects the global status of the nation. This is indicated by comments preceding the Euro '96 England versus Germany match;

Only a game? Get Real! This was a match that win or lose marked the return of English football to a respected status in the eyes of the rest of the world. (*Sun*, 27/6/96, p. 53)

According to Easton, and Mackie, (1996), Euro '96 involved 16 nations, 31 matches, 8 venues, 1.3 million tickets and 250,000 overseas visitors. One hundred and ninety countries had television coverage, providing a cumulative global audience of 6.7 billion, with 445 million watching the final. It is claimed that Britain's annual gross domestic product grew 0.1 % because of tourism and increased consumption

¹ Carrington, B. (1998, pp. 111-113) provides lyrics from the song, and a critical appraisal of the discourse surrounding it.

during the event. Over £40 million was spent on purchasing official merchandise, and there were eleven official sponsors. The range of products and goods available, were widely promoted and designed to appeal to a wide market of consumers. Food, pop music industries and sports clothing companies amongst others, exploited the opportunities with a range of goods marketing the event. *Total Sport* magazine (1996, July, pp.32-35) listed four pages of commemorative souvenirs from 75p Euro '96 pint of lager postcards, to £199.95 limited edition solid gold and silver pocket watches.

The F.A.'s strategic targeting of women as 'women fans', together with the inclusion of Euro '96 football in campaigns by Lycra /Du Pont and other agencies, resulted in advertisements in women's magazines, such as *Marie Claire* and *Cosmopolitan* using blatant sexual signifiers;

How can I lie back and think of England when Venables hasn't finalised the squad?
I fancy the Italians. Because in Ravenelli and Zola you have a proven strike force working in front of a fluid 4-4-2 formation.
Wouldn't you like to feel Eric's hard tackle? (Miller and Valentine, 1998, p. 97)

Such marketing provided a focal point across press, television and radio and intertextual discussions were designed to attract more female consumers to the events. These narratives work to draw in multiple identities to the 'collective' yet as Harris (1999) argues, in many ways women were disempowered and marginalised from these events by only being encouraged 'to lie back and think of England', rather than being portrayed as active and knowledgeable members of the audience.

Domino's Pizzas reported an 88% increase in home deliveries during the England versus Germany game, and supermarket lager sales jumped 55% in the second week of June (Easton, and Mackie, 1996). Such aspects of consumption suggest the importance of the mediated event and identify some of the collective rituals it evoked in the everyday lifestyles of the television audience. We can thus envisage the

contextual setting, with households around the country emblazoned in red, white and blue, as families wearing national football kit, were waving the England flag, with a pizza in one hand and the obligatory can of lager in the other.

A quantitative and qualitative content analysis across *The Telegraph*, *Independent*, *Mail* and *Sun* during Euro '96 confirmed the high media coverage it received.

Appendix G includes selected data from this analysis. Across all papers at least 5% of all news coverage was space devoted to Euro '96, and it was the chief focus of the sports pages. In *The Sun*, during the three weeks of the event approximately 17% of all news coverage was about the event, and a total of forty of its pages outside of the sports pages also covered Euro '96 issues. *The Telegraph* 30%, and *The Mail* with 39% of sports coverage dedicated to the football, could not compete with the 60% offered in *The Sun*. The quantity of the press coverage, together with the hours of live and recorded televised matches across both ITV and BBC, confirmed the news values of the event, placing it high on both the national news and sporting agendas.

Coverage outside the sports pages identified several key issues that held wider news values. These focused attention on the social and cultural ideals held about English football in contemporary society; the way in which mediated football discourse acts as a vehicle to promote national identity, collectivity and patriotism; stereotyping of English opponents; jingoism, war-like metaphors and overt xenophobia in media signification, and the narrativisation of footballers as national heroes and villains. A textual analysis of the ways in which discourse developed throughout the football coverage is presented in the following sections.¹

4.2.1 The narrativisation of football stars as heroes and villains

Euro '96 discourse, pertaining to the social roles and functions of sport stars for the

¹ Blain and O'Donnell (1998) in an analysis of varying European newspapers focus on the national dimension of reporting during Euro '96. They confirm a number of similar readings in this section. In the English tabloid press particularly 'a major feature of the signification was a bizarre ideological cocktail of jingoism, xenophobia and wartime nostalgia -and sometimes especially in the *Daily Star* complicated by sexism. . . (p. 44)

nation, provided evidence about the ways in which stardom is constructed, manipulated and sensationalised in order to provide for the ultimate narratives which can draw the audience attention to the sporting spectacle. The narrativisation of the football stars worked to confirm their cultural significance and value, and acted as a focal point of unity for the reader.

In the days before the start of Euro '96 the media gave attention to the social and moral concerns about the behaviour of some members of the England squad. Criticism directed at their drinking escapades, deemed unbecoming of sportsmen, representing the nation. The significance of such behaviour to young people, was echoed in the following discussion in *The Times* concerning Gascoigne's part in the incidents;

As a footballer, we may never know just how great you could have become, but as a sporting hero and a role model for our youth I have to admit you are in a class of your own. (Philip, 1996, 21st June, p.46)

Such comments were provoked by the poor behaviour of Gascoigne and fellow England players in Hong Kong, the reported damage to Cathay Pacific Flight CX251, on which the England team returned prior to the event, and the three England players seen in an Essex night-club in the early of the morning after the England/Switzerland draw. Photographs of these scenes were front page news and published throughout the British press.

The majority of media commentaries promoted the notion of the footballers as irresponsible traitors, unworthy of representing the nation. Sports journalists, Members of Parliament, sports doctors and past players were all provided with media space to voice public concern. Headlines such as "England Aces back on the booze. Night clubbing until 2.20 am" (*Sun*, 11/6/96, front page), and "Alcohol versus Abstinence may be the decisive encounter of Euro '96" (*Telegraph*, 11/6/96, p. 6), were elaborated by other equally condemning comments;

We've been betrayed by Venables' fallen idols. . . at a time when the nation is desperate to throw itself behind its football team,. . . finds itself repelled by conduct unbecoming in a group of athletes. The real fact is we should like a side who did not instantly evoke images of the China Jump Club and the premier night spot in Ilford. You see, football's coming home and the nation would dearly love to take a pride in its footballers. If only they could take a pride in themselves. (Collins, *Mail on Sunday*, 1996, 16/6, p. 99)

Other countries demand heroism and a defence of national pride from their players...In the US, as in many nations, sporting excellence is an expression and celebration of moral character. The culture of Post-Modern Laddery is no match for moral seriousness. Think of Gazza and then think of Jordan. It's a joke, right? Jordan is from another planet, Gazza is human, all too human. (Appleyard, *The Independent* , 1996, 11/6, p. 13)

England players need to rediscover the old English virtues of discipline, modesty and common sense. (Tory MP, David Evans, *Independent*, 8/6/96, p.6)

The stupid FA can dismiss it as harmless fun for healthy young men but that's not how the fans see it. Professional sportsmen given the chance of a lifetime to play in a tournament like Euro'96 should be tucked up in bed early with a glass of milk not downing beers at a night-club. (*Sun*, 11/6/96, p. 6)

According to Whannel (1998, p. 24), Keating writing in *The Guardian* (30/5/98) was a lone voice in questioning reasons why sports stars have a moral responsibility that is not deemed a requisite in other celebrities. Clearly the traditional moral and social values surrounding sport persist, and the belief that such values learnt on the playing field are readily transferred into everyday life is still a commonly held assumption.

Stories in the media of the 'fallen heroes' contrasted sharply with the Opening Ceremony of Euro'96, where the medieval pageant eternalised past role models and the traditional history of, firstly football, and secondly, legendary sports stars. The medieval heroic exploits of St George were followed by a reminder from the ITV commentator that there were English heroes, even before the development of football. Wembley, too was referred to as the 'venue of legends', and the ceremony proceeded from St George, with the arrival of eleven 'of this country's greatest ambassadors' - a mixture of past English footballers, including Sir Stanley Matthews and Sir Bobby Charlton, signifying the importance and status placed on them,

alongside medieval heroic knights. As Paxman (1998, p. 81)¹ suggests,

Englishness is very deep. It's a spirit, the spirit of St. George. The idea of St. George is a fight against evil ... As Shakespeare's Henry V said 'God for Harry, England and St. George'... It is the most economic, patriotic quodivium possible - God, homeland and a sense of moral purpose.

Narrativisation of Euro '96 provides symbols of English unity equating mythical stories and moral tales of the past, with the prevailing soccer event and competitors. These values were eternalised and naturalised to draw in readers to the collective national identity.

Paul Gascoigne, as always, received a high profile throughout the tournament, and was often the focal point of headlines, even though he was not necessarily the 'player of the match'. More specific case study material on the construction of 'Gazza', as he is popularly known is developed in section 5.i., and a content analysis of headlines devoted to him is shown in appendix G.

From disgraced stars, narratives developed to build up the players in the public eyes. The media assumed responsibility for the developing success story of the England team;

If by our chiding, we have helped focus the minds of Gazza and co. on the task in hand, have reminded them of their patriotic duty, have stoked up their fires of motivation, then we, too, are delighted to have been of service.
(*Daily Mail*, 17/6/96 p.61)

According to an article in the *Daily Mail* in the preceding days, one of the successful outcomes of the widespread display of photographic images showing the misconduct of players was that it reminded the England team that the public would not accept such a poor level of application;

¹ Paxman's (1998) journalistic style follows the invention of 'Englishness' until its current day crisis. It is he suggests 'based on values that are so deeply embedded in the culture as to be almost unconscious'. (p. 266) In Thompson's (1990) terms modes of reification through eternalisation are operating.

We build 'em up to knock 'em down. That's the time honoured complaint of the British celebrity, most of all the sporting superstar. (*Daily Mail*, 20/6/96 p. 77)

The suggestion that the media coverage was significant in effecting raised levels of application and performance from the England team, is an interesting and highly contentious one. Significantly, too, following success against the Scots and the Dutch the media promptly forgot their condemnation of the team's drinking habits, offering contradictions from their prior moral high ground, with references such as;

Drink up Lads (*Daily Mail*, 17/6/96, p. 61)

England's resurrection is deserving of a drink. I for one, will be happiest pouring the champagne, for the Guzzler included, even if it has to wait until after their campaign is over. (*Daily Mail*, 19/6/96, p. 69)

Following the defeat by Germany, a Snickers advertisement in *The Sun* (27/6, p.49) reinforced 'the footballing lad lager lout' image;

Never mind lads. The Bar's Open.

The ancient concept of brave warriors in combat as heroes is reiterated in Euro '96 discourse surrounding English footballers and creates tensions with 'New Lad' images;

The best since 1996- valiant Shearer. . . defiant Seaman . . . Sturdy Pearce, creative Redknapp and Shearer . . . he led the line with the robust conviction of the authentic sporting warrior. (*Daily Mail*, 17/6/96, p. 61)

Character, Integrity and Honour - Pearce showed all of these qualities. . . by surviving a Spanish Inquisition which demanded every inch of courage. (*Daily Mail*, 24/6/96, p. 59)

In years to come students will be schooled in the precise moment Scottish forces were so heroically repelled by Lord Admiral David Seaman at Wembley on June 15th. Seaman stood strong a mere 12 yards from the massed Caledonian cannons - and emerged with no greater injury than a tiny ball on his left elbow. (*The Sun*, 17/6/96, p.35)

If footballing contests are narrated as contests of combat, then naturally footballers acquire the status as warriors and leaders of men - hence Alan Shearer as the sporting

warrior leading the line, and David Seaman as the Lord Admiral, standing firm in facing the onslaught during the penalty shoot-out. That saving or scoring a goal in a penalty shoot-out can be paralleled with a famous victory in battle, says much about the ways in which hero status in contemporary culture is so readily accorded as well as the tongue-in-cheek jingoism of the tabloids. It also reflects the long standing relationship between sporting rhetoric and military discourse, and references to famous English military victories confirm the association with aspects of national character.

The Sun, too, developed narratives of footballing heroes. Paul Ince was photographed at the start of the competition on the front page, draped in the English flag, thus affirming both his status as a hero, and his loyalty to the country. The selection of a black player wrapped in the flag of St George could be designed to represent a united nation, and draw in readers from other ethnic backgrounds, to the Euro '96 spectacle.

England hero Paul Ince yesterday proudly draped himself in the red and white flag of St. George and pledged 'We'll win Euro'96' (*Sun*, 8/6/96, front page)

In a tongue in cheek 'Booze ratings' *The Sun* (16/6/96) awarded champagne to the heroes (Gazza, Shearer and Seaman), beer to the stars, and water to those players who could do better, thus further trivialising the 'hero'. This, too, confirms it is acceptable to be a 'lager lad' if successful, but condemned as unbecomingly if the national team is not performing well.

The ways in which the media accredits hero status, and trivialises and ridicules the heroic concept is a point for further discussion. For whilst they can switch from acting on the public behalf in their condemnation of 'unworthy' national representatives, to according 'hero' status as a result of a singular sporting moment, the degree of fickleness of audience identification is less certain.

Gascoigne, too, received a number of comments reflecting his fluctuating status as a national hero, suggesting that both the media and the general public can be quite

fickle in their selection and rejection for application of 'hero status';

Paul's party proves he's our hero again. (*Sun*, 17/6/98,p.4/5)
 Gazza is loved by the football nation . . . Are we the critics too harsh of his drinking and loutish going's-on? But do the fans really care? (*Sun*, 17/6/98, p.5)
 Gazza the Lionheart. (*Sun*, 16/6/96 back page)

Stuart Pearce was also the 'heroic' subject of media attention, following his successful penalty in the shoot out against Spain, making him the comeback man following his missed penalty in the 1990 World Cup. Linguistic comments reflected references to past warriors, and prove how a single action accorded a player hero status. Visual imagery showed a photograph of Pearce as a schoolboy, thus providing a mirror image for schoolboys everywhere to model themselves on.

My England Lionheart. He's the pride of the country...
 (*Sun*, 25/6/96 front page and p.3)

Through out the competition *the Sun* identified a small core of players as heroes, in a hierarchical order reflecting the scoring of critical goals, spectacular saves or moments of courage and bravery. By the end of the competition, the sentimental euphoria led to all the players accredited with a common status;

Tel's boys are all heroes. (*Sun*, 27/6/96,p.53)

These comments show the term 'hero' is used both liberally and transiently by the media. It is uncertain whether the ways in which media critics might accord such status to certain football stars reflects the opinion of football fans.

Such characteristics indicate these social qualities are most valued in the nation's sports stars, and as such are seen to be heroic qualities. Whether such qualities are admired by young people and are aspects that they would model their own behaviour and sporting performance on is debatable, and an issue developed in the interpretative analysis of this investigation.

Yet, following the developing narratives on the England team as "Our Heroes" (*Mail on Sunday*, 23/6/96, p.104), media representation worked to convince readers of the significance of sport stars as role models;

There will be a few English lads in their shirts this morning who will want to kick a ball like Gazza, score like Shearer, ping it about like Steve McManaman and dive to make a few saves like David Seaman. These are our heroes today. (*Daily Mail*, 19/6/96, p.70)

Visual images showing the England team as schoolboys, reminded youngsters that today's superstars had once been in their social position. Comments from the footballers' former PE teachers or head teachers confirmed that such exploits were within the capabilities of today's schoolboys;

In school playgrounds across the land, their exploits were suddenly the only topic of conversation. Every boy wants to score goals like Alan Shearer, tackle like Stuart Pearce, curl free kicks like Paul Gascoigne and save penalties like David Seaman . . . for some of the fledgling footballers kitted out in their smart new replica England shirts it may be a serious ambition to follow in the stud marks of their heroes. So here, the *Daily Mail* gives a timely reminder that dreams can come true. (*Daily Mail*, 21/6/96, p.3)

Both comments use a number of similar players as the reference points, despite others within the squad who might be equally as popular with young people. The notion of role models consistently refers to boys, resisting the idea that girls too, might choose footballers as role models and might want to copy aspects of their play as well. Generally, footballers are placed as objects of physical and sexual admiration for girls rather than as sporting role models. However, in view of the scarcity of media coverage portraying female footballers as role models for young girls, and the fact that football is becoming one of the fastest growing sports for women around the world (Lopez, 1997), girls and women too may seek to emulate male footballers. We are however reminded, that girls should 'just lie back and think of England' (Harris, 1999; Miller and Valentine, 1998), not think about playing for England.

Euro '96 clearly drew attention to the ways in which the social and cultural

construction of heroes and role models is determined by media coverage. Yet the notion of the infallible, superhuman sporting hero becomes increasingly difficult to maintain in a media culture that thrives on an ever changing star system of celebrities.

Media coverage amplified the significant impact of footballers as role models for young people, and promoted the idea of a national outcry over their unacceptable behaviour. *The Times Educational Supplement*, (1996, July 12th, n 4176, p. 4) raised the possibility that young people are able to make their own judgements;

the error of Gareth Southgate soon gave way to a remarkable empathy on the part of many young fans. Individuals wrote him sympathetic letters and otherwise offered support, despite seeing their hopes dashed. That generosity of spirit and comfort it gave the children to offer it, suggest youths have more capacity to ignore cynicism and negativity than it is often assumed.

Whether football fans are as loyal or as fickle to their own particular favourites, whether they perceive them as heroes or celebrities, and the extent to which they model their sporting behaviour on a variety of both villain and hero, requires a further level of interpretative analysis, developed in chapter 6.

4.2.2 A patriotic and xenophobic discourse

There was no xenophobia inside Wembley, only a surging bond of excitement and fraternity in defeat. Old joined new. They began with the anthem of homecoming but in their collective disappointment went back to football's roots. Oh, England, we love you. (Powell, J. *Daily Mail*, 27/6/96, p. 78)

Media discourses of Euro '96 acted to promote national identity, collective unity and a sense of patriotism. Media imagery and icons such as St. George flags, red white and blue scarves, bowler hats and bulldogs connote notions of 'Englishness'. There was clear evidence of the ways in which the media sporting spectacle works to provide an intensely nationalistic discourse. This operates not solely through images of 'Englishness,' but also by constructing fragmentation and division, through ideological differences between nations, and stereotypical characterisation of 'foreign'

performers. Maguire and Poulton (1999, p.18), in an article focusing on European identity politics in Euro '96 media representations suggest;

international sport contests involve 'patriot games' in which the 'special charisma' embodied in the view nations have of themselves can be nurtured, refined and further developed.

This 'charisma' in Thompson's terms can be maintained through eternalisation, where tales of past glories are revived and evoked in media sport representations alongside the distinct differences of 'others'.

There is an unclear dividing line between media representation of patriotism, national pride and identity, and the ways in which they choose to portray national stereotypes and characteristics. Coupled with war-like metaphors and references to the 'old enemy,' a xenophobic discourse, rather than simply an ethnocentric approach, becomes evident;

Players from other countries are often presented as ruthless cheats, lacking core qualities of fair play and sportsmanship...There is a fine balance between cultural caricaturing, offensive stereotyping and damaging xenophobia . . .(Tomlinson and Fleming, 1995, pp.92-95)

The English popular press, has, in its most downmarket manifestations, long appeared licensed to exhibit a particularly nasty approach to other nationalities. (Blain , Boyle and O'Donnell 1993, p. 59)

Euro '96 proved to be no exception. Despite a Football Association brief that the marketing and advertising of the event should not include any specific British icons and imagery and should rather focus on modernity and Europeanicity, the British media, principally the tabloid press, received criticism for their use of war slogans, especially in association with the England versus Germany match. The quality press, too, amplified the issue of racist and xenophobic discourse, in their condemnation of the tabloids. ¹

¹ Maguire and Poulton (1999) use a discursive framework of analysis alongside Elias' examination of national character and habitus codes in their readings of sport, national identity and media during Euro '96. This reinforces the themes in this section of stereotypical and jingoistic language used to reinforce national character as opposed to European 'others'.

The Sun provided evidence of war rhetoric with phrases such as 'The Tartan enemy', 'battle cry', 'England on War Alert' and 'Let's Blitz Fritz'. *The Mirror's* front page (24/6/96) received criticism, both at home and abroad for its 'Achtung! Surrender' headline above shots of Pearce and Gazza wearing second world war helmets. *The Daily Star* headline, 'Watch out Krauts England are gonna bomb you to bits', reinforced the tabloid signification of an anti-German campaign. *The Daily Mail* used headlines such as, 'Only victory will do in battle of Britain'; 'It's going to be war'; 'The avengers. Now we make those Germans pay'. Subsequent excuses about the parody and jocular nature of the articles did not satisfy the complaints of the general public, Members of Parliament and the German press.

A number of articles was also quick to condemn the xenophobic and jingoistic tone of the tabloids. *The Telegraph* (25/6/96) suggested that, although *the Mirror* claimed it was a joke, it had not been viewed in this light by the German embassy. *Bild*, Germany's equivalent of *the Sun* responded with 'The German's are coming... England has declared football war ahead of tomorrow's semi-final'. Despite suggesting that the England versus Germany game was likely to be billed as a compressed and bloodless Battle of Alamein, features in *the Independent* (24/6/96, front page), too, were quick to condemn;

In the meantime, expect more hysteria and jingoism in the tabloids. They encouraged England to "give the Spanish el" and the Dutch "edam good thrashing". Given two world wars and a battle over beef, coverage has thus far been tame. . . Police will be hoping that nationalist fervour does not spark violence between rival fans. In 1994, a proposed friendly was postponed because it coincided with Hitler's birthday.

In a match report, in the sports pages on the same day (*Independent*, 24/6/96, p. S3) there was a suggestion that the Spanish fans, following their defeat by England, were taunted outside the ground with chants of 'adios, adios, adios'. It questioned,

What fuels this ugly and xenophobic triumphalism - apart from alcohol? Crawl forward tabloid press. Some of the pre-match coverage was offensive and racist. One article listed "10 nasties Spain's given Europe" including it alleged, syphilis and carpet bombing.

The article suggested that the tabloid press would be the first to condemn hooliganism, despite their own obvious use of negative images of 'foreigners' which could provoke xenophobic discourse on the terraces. However, the quality paper acknowledges that such discourse did not appear, on this occasion, to have provoked any evidence of trouble from the English fans against foreign spectators. This suggests that the effects of media coverage are not all powerful, and that readers do not necessarily imitate all they see and read, but make their own decisions. The impact of the discourse according to Macquire and Poulton (1999, p. 25) is that ;

One by one England's European foes - historical and contemporary, real and imagined were being defeated symbolically.

The following day, front pages headlines in *the Independent* (25/6/96) 'Don't be beastly to the Germans' and a full page spread on page 12, 'Made in Germany' continued to dominate the sports news outside of the sports pages. The message strove to counteract 'a tide of anti-German sentiment sweeping the country';

This newspaper hopes England wins tomorrow's football game. We are properly, wholly, patriotic about Britain. But it is time to blow a final whistle on juvenile xenophobia. It is time to say - we like the Germans. (*Independent*, 25/6/96, front page)

David Walker reminds us of our shared heritage and how much we owe to Teutonic creativity. . . (*Independent*, 25/6/96, p.12)

Clearly, consumers across the range of national papers were subject to differing headlines and messages, where some of the intended parody might have been lost on its less discerning reader. Despite its high media profile, the extent to which the armchair fans were swept along with the patriotic fervour of unification, or entered into a xenophobic discourse, is unclear. *The Independent* (27/6/96, front page) suggested that at the German-owned Siemens electronic factory in Wallsend, N.E. England, both German and English staff overcame the xenophobia whipped up by the tabloid media to hold a barbecue at their boss's home. Similar stories could be reiterated throughout the country.

To suggest then, that it is only a game, would indeed be to underestimate the effects of the sport. For the media relationship between football, national identity and patriotism remains fraught with xenophobic overtones. The distinction between patriotism and nationalism is at times too readily dismissed by the media.¹

The tabloids did provide a host of images of a flag-waving nation, supposedly united by a team of footballers proudly representing their country in combat. In reality, gender and racial diversity and exclusion are interwoven in the footballing spectacle and the long term effects of patriotic and xenophobic discourse are uncertain;

the tabloids are awash with a fever of specifically English patriotism. The scarlet faces of Gazza and the roaring face of Pearce, both transmuted into lions, have become icons of a revitalised national sensibility. An identity, formerly choked by irony and self-loathing, has been resuscitated by football. But football is, of course, only a game, certainly more, for the moment, than a matter of life and death, but still only a game. The flags will soon be lowered. This phase will pass. (Appleyard, 1996b, 27/6, p. 17)

The extent then, to which the audience and readers are drawn in to, and or experience racist and patriotic thoughts and feelings, either fleetingly or in a sustained way, are expounded upon in the case study section.

4.2.3 Unification : football, collective identity and the state of the nation

Whilst stereotypical and xenophobic discourses serve to identify the distinctiveness and divide between the English national identity and European 'others', patriotic symbols strove to unify by elucidating a collective 'feel good' state of the nation.

When Football Coming Home came on the video we all broke into song. That single has now become our anthem to and from matches . . . suggested David Seaman writing on behalf of the England team. (*Daily Mail*, 20/6/96, p. 78)

¹ Whilst a comprehensive discussion of the conceptual distinctions between the two is impossible here, the English literary writer George Orwell (1994) offers a useful explanation. He suggests that patriotism reflects a devotion to a particular place or a way of life, yet not accompanied by a desire to force it on others. A nationalist, in contrast, has chosen to sink his individuality into a nation, accompanied by a desire to secure power and prestige for that particular unit at the expense of others.

According to media coverage he was reflecting the feeling of the nation, which widely adopted Baddiel and Skinner's musical use of the English FA's football slogan for Euro'96 of "Football Coming Home". For the weeks of the competition and beyond it was to take the place of the national anthem as the popularised 'people's anthem'. Accompanied by Simply Red's theme tune, of "We're in this together", sung at the Opening Ceremony, it promoted the idea of a united nation. Followed by a successful run in the competition by the England team, contrary to initial expectations, the media promoted the idea that in uniting the nation, the sporting success of the national team had incited a feel good factor that was widespread.

The ideological construction of unity through media representations of public ritual and celebration, confers a strong sense of public belonging and collective identity. Hargreaves (1986, p.154) suggests this sense of unity, and belonging to a nation that cuts across other social divisions of gender, race and class, is a 'lynchpin of the hegemonic system'. A number of media sport narratives evoked notions of the collective character, rather than diversity of the English nation at this time. This confirms both Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell's (1993, p.80) findings;

the most universal form of expression we have found is the notion of the nation as one sentient being.

and Rowe, McKay and Miller's (1998, p.133) confirmation that;

there is surely no cultural force more equal to the task of creating an imaginary national unity than the international sports-media complex. The task ahead is not to tell the media to desist from speaking of the nation - that would be futile - but to encourage the cultural brokers of the sports media to re-cast their regimented images of sporting citizens and represent them in their chaotic, hybridic diversity.

The Telegraph (20/6/96, p.32) suggested that the feelgood factor had spread from Lands End to Berwick, and images of St George's Day flags, painted faces and the singing of anthems proving that there was no denying this was so. Several days on, a further article reflected the nature of the shared experience;

On Tuesday night a pin striped gent was reported to be hugging homeless people in Trafalgar Square: a Coca Cola poll revealed that half of teenage girls would prefer to see England play than a Take That reunion, and yesterday up to 20 million people were expected to gather around tv sets for the match against Spain. (*Telegraph*, 23/6/96, p.23)

Developing media narratives worked to confirm the idea of football crossing race, religion, age and class divisions, unifying the nation on an emotional high,

Talk about the feel good factor. This is over the moon and way out the other side . . . to think that it was just a football match . . . we couldn't believe it. We could hardly take it in. It was just too good to be true. Again and again, the flags waved and the anthem rang out. Yes, football was coming home. (*Sunday Telegraph*, 23/6/96, p.3)

However, the assumption behind such notions is questionable, for although beliefs about the effects of a nation's sporting success are often quoted, there is scanty evidence to support the interim or long term effects of such feelings. Similarly, despite the suggestion that these feelings unite a nation, contrary reports indicate that both women (Whannel, 1998 and Harris, 1999) and people of colour (Carrington, 1998), might have perceived themselves as excluded from the feeling of collective unity.

At times of super mediated sports events, especially football, the expectation that women should not be, or would not want to be, included is perpetuated by media reports. Despite the FA attempt to interpellate women, and research evidence from them that women are one of the fastest growing groups of spectators to football, who especially get drawn in to media sporting spectacles, even if they are not regular fans, a number of media comments highlighted the 'supposed' plight of women.

An article in *The Independent* (28/6/96, p.1) reflected on this;

Reactions to Euro '96 . . . among men and women indicate the strong social impact which football can have. Football especially unites men, and women are unable to compete with its power.

A number of images worked to legitimise the fact that many women had little interest

in whether football came home or not. A cartoon in *The Sun* (24/6/96, p.6) shows a wife returning home after the England Germany game asking her partner "Was the penalty shoot out exciting, Darling?" The *Asda* shopping bags in her hands, confirming she had been shopping whilst the game was on. This supports the stereotypical role of females as providers, feeding their men during the sporting events as identified by Whannel (1998, p.34). Similarly another cartoon in *The Mail* (26/6/96, p.2) reinforced the idea that men would be watching the matches whilst women would want to be involved in other activities. This showed a woman at the bookmakers asking "What are the odds on my husband taking me to the cinema tonight instead of watching the match?"

The Sun's topless models were featured adorned with football accessories, and other female imagery confirmed the role of women as cheerleaders at the event. Other photographic images of fans at the matches did reflect fans from both sexes, although these were more typically of men. Television images prior to the first England game showed a number of English fans arriving at the game. The commentator, on viewing a close up shot of a female said 'and a few mums', too. And why not?' suggesting that this was an unexpected occurrence but on second thoughts acceptable. The advertisement for the official album of the event, "The Beautiful Game" portrayed five boys, excluding female imagery. (*Sun*, 9/6/96, p.79)

Germaine Greer, (1996, front page) writing in *the Independent*, explains how she had been drawn in to Euro' 96, and identifies her newly formed bond with Gascoigne. Her interpretation of the viewing experience of Euro '96 provides one of the few female accounts apparent in media coverage. She wrote;

Every woman in Europe should have watched Euro 96, watched it and wept, not because Germany keeps beating better looking teams, but because the phenomenon illustrates just what women are up against when they try to mitigate the maleness of the world. . . these were men of all kinds, from suits and anoraks to naked savages . . . The collective energy that they generated burst upon the female viewer like a high pressure storm system. Anyone who stood there shouting "It's only a Game" would have been inviting a thunderbolt.

The way in which other women, however, view the sporting texts continues to receive scant attention from sports media sociologists investigating the audience experience.

Carrington (1998) strongly argues that although football was supposedly coming home, a semiotic analysis of media texts reveals that a policy of exclusion was in operation, and that the home it was coming home to excluded people of colour. *The Sun*, however, used photographs of both Paul Ince and Frank Bruno, wrapped in English flags to reaffirm their Englishness and the inclusion of people of colour in seeking to represent the notion of one nation. The 176 local English schoolchildren, representing the sixteen teams in the opening ceremony consisted of both girls and boys across a range of ethnic backgrounds and Mick Hucknall, in his rendition of 'We're in this together' was accompanied by a multi-cultural band and choir. However, the ways in which people of colour, themselves, felt excluded or united in their 'Englishness' during Euro '96 has not yet been reported upon.

In addition to members of society, who are either intentionally or might indirectly be excluded from the sporting spectacle, there are likely to be those who deliberately seek to play no part in the proceedings. For some presumably, although the media would not have us believe it, especially of the male half of the population, could not care less whether football was coming home.

The Daily Mail (23/6/96, p.3) with its photograph of a deserted London Mall at 3.22 pm, during the England versus Spain game and its accompanying headline, "They were all in front of the television - or at Wembley", together with the A. A. prediction of empty roads by 7.30 pm on the night of the England versus Germany game, suggests few, if any were not gripped by the event. If as suggested by the media, Euro '96 was such a significant ritual spectacle, collective social event and topic of national importance, we can question how and why some individuals chose to ignore it, and the consequent impact such action had on their feeling of belonging.

In conclusion, the argument here is that the 'feel-good factor' was not a spontaneous experience for all. Secondly, it is difficult to identify precisely what the 'feel good factor' actually was. Media reports indicated that it was reflected in people across all walks of life communicating and sharing the experience with each other, an increased consumption of goods, and individuals taking pride in themselves and their country.

Following elimination from the competition, one media headline amongst many could not avoid prolonging the sense of national pride through eternalisation of the past;

We must regard last night's defeat as another sort of victory - not a moral victory but a historical one . . . teaching the Germans how to beat us at our own game. (*Daily Mail*, 27/6/96, p. 8)

Despite football not quite making it truly home, the media hype and attention, through modes of unification, legitimisation and eternalisation, clearly drew large numbers in to the experience, and for many it provided an emotional sporting spectacle that excited, enchanted and enhanced their everyday lives, even if it was for just a short while.

4.3 'Fragmentation' - the social divisions and distinctions in media representations of Wimbledon 1996.

4.3.1 The socio-historic context of Wimbledon discourse

Many individuals when asked to reflect on what they know about Wimbledon, will conjure up images that have been developed from media representations of the events. For many will never have actually attended the event yet feel they have been there, such is the nature of the media sporting spectacle. This discourse provides the receiver with the language and knowledge through which the meaning of Wimbledon is constructed.

This section argues that the ideological mode of fragmentation operates to represent social divisions and distinctions of gender, class, race and nation. For in an individual event, such as Wimbledon, national and collective signifiers are less visible. Notions

of 'Englishness' contrast with 'fragmented 'others', as gender, class and racial identities are more overt than national character.

Wimbledon conjures up traditional images of 'Englishness', strawberries and cream, the hallowed Centre court turf, long distant past English winners (Kitty Godfrey, Fred Perry and Virginia Wade), the English class system, the exclusiveness of the All England Club and the conservative all white dress code. Contemporary contradictions focus on discourses of 'The People's Sunday', the consistent lack of English title holders in the home competition, and the rise of increasingly youthful (e.g. Martina Hingis) and unconventional (e.g. Andre Agassi) challengers.

Discourses of Wimbledon encompass gender relations, and the ways in which female players have been represented, offer sexual signifiers of dress and appearance, together with connotations of vulnerability and weakness (injury, tears, reliance on fathers and coaches). From the onset female tennis players were associated with their style and dress - the early media attention focused on issues of female clothing, from Suzanne Lenglen casting off her corsets to Gussy Moran's frilly knickers in Wimbledon 1949 when;

Two hundred press photographers lay on their backs at courtside, with their camera lenses aimed up Moran's skirt. (Blue 1987, p.12)

Tennis has also been a site for both gender equality and contestation, forming strong associations with the women's rights movements in the States, the billed "Battle of the Sexes" match between Bobby Riggs and Billie Jean King, and the attempt by trans-sexual Renee Richards to be accepted on the women's professional circuit.

Recent news value has amplified distinctions between male and female players. The vulnerability of sportswomen represented through their problems and relationships with their father /coach (Steffi Graf and Mary Pierce); the physical and emotional trauma of Monica Seles following her stabbing; the homosexual warnings with issues of locker room sexuality and lesbianism (Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova),

and the detraction from sporting images by the sexual connotations given to images of 'Latin looks' Gabriella Sabatini, 'The Body' Mary Pierce and more recent 'Luscious Anna' and the 'Vamp' Martina;

They are teenagers dressed to kill, playing for the cameras like models and pop stars. . . Anna Kournikova was dressed in a raunchy red outfit for the benefit of readers of *Rolling Stone* . . . Martina Hingis . . . laughed out from the front cover of GQ 'The champ is a vamp,' the magazine said. (*The Times*, 28/11/98, p. 11)

The recent emergence of the French female tennis player Amelie Mauresimo, has also been contested;

Watching her in action, biceps taut and huge shoulder muscles rippling, you can see how she simply overpowers her more feminine opponents. Amelie Mauresimo is the new sensation of women's tennis - but her game is bereft of the artistry and grace seen in so many champions of the past. Her style is built around brute force and ferocity (*Daily Mail*, 30/1/99, p.3).

Such qualities would be admired in a male tennis star, yet confirm the ways in which sporting narratives seek to identify distinctions between femininity and masculinity, and condemn the female player striving to cross boundaries to the role of villain.

There is more limited documentation focusing on discourses of race, a reflection of the lack of black tennis players in evidence at elite level. Arthur Ashe, the only black player to win Wimbledon and Zina Garrison, the most recent long term successful female black player on the circuit, have both received coverage within the media.

The recent emergence of Venus and Serena Williams and Mal Washington offer an increasing range of tennis players from different ethnic backgrounds receiving media coverage.

Discourses of class continue to reflect the historical development of tennis, since its introduction by Major Wingfield, as a game for the English upper classes. References to Pimms, champagne, the occupational background of the English tennis players'

fathers, connote class issues around tennis, the players and the audience. Blain, Boyle & O'Donnell (1993) indicate how the European press plays on the English class system, and the ways in which Wimbledon comes to symbolise this.

The globalisation of tennis, and its growth as an individual sport has clearly promoted the development of an elite group of players, both male and female, who function as individual 'stars' within media narratives. Female players do receive some, though not equitable media attention. Celebrity players are involved in product endorsements, modelling and commentary on events. Comparatively new and inexperienced players receive lucrative sponsorship deals and commercial support. It was reported in *The Sun* (3/7/96, p.36) that Trocadero PLC had offered Tim Henman £1 million as an incentive to win the title in 1996. He was on record to become a millionaire before the end of the year, irrespective of a successful outcome on court.

Wimbledon provides a key site in Hall's term (1997, p. 225) for 'representing difference' and providing dimensions of gender, class, race and nationality. Many of these conjured images are interwoven with ideologies of social divisions and distinctions. Historically, media representations have consistently addressed a number of central themes in their coverage of the event. The discussion above identifies particular trends that have provided the framework for the content analysis of Wimbledon '96 discussed in this section. In this way, comparisons can be drawn both between past and contemporary media discourse, and across different newspapers.

4.3.2 A comparative content analysis of *The Sun* and *The Telegraph*

This section focuses on an in-depth analysis of the media content of *The Sun*, as the most popular newspaper amongst young people in my sample group, during July and August 1996. This complies with *The Sun* as the most popular British newspaper which consistently continues to reach a wide audience. During September 1995 to February 1997 it was the most widely read newspaper (*Guardian* national newspaper

circulation figures, Media section 10/3/97 p.9). This suggests that *The Sun* can have a considerable influence on both the way people receive, and perceive the news.

Comparisons, in both quantity and quality of tennis coverage, are drawn with *The Telegraph*, the most widely read of the quality press. However, according to Sampson (in Engel, Papering over the cracks, *Guardian*, 3/10/96 p.2) "the frontier between qualities and popular papers has virtually disappeared". This section explores the distinctions and similarities in discourse inherent in both newspapers and considers the extent to which such barriers were eroded during Wimbledon coverage.

Appendix G identifies the coding frame and themes identified within the textual analysis. This section explores the contrasting news values and house styles of the newspapers. The ways in which the discourse is structured to represent distinctions in class, race and gender of both players and supporters, and the construction of sport stars in both the hard news and sports chatter, provide the main focus of analysis.

4.3.3 What happened to Wimbledon'96?

Contextually, it is significant to remember that the first week of the tournament coincided with Euro '96 and that Wimbledon was mid point between that and the Atlanta Olympics, in the so called 'Summer of Sport'. Audience figures of 17.5 million tuned in to BBC to watch the England versus Germany game during Euro '96. (*Daily Mail*, 18/10/97) suggesting that the BBC2 Wimbledon viewing figures must have suffered as a result. The centre court standing ovation for David Seaman as he took his place in the Royal box confirmed, according to *Total Sport* magazine, "tennis' inability to generate a fraction of the emotion created by the footie"(August edition, p. 10). With the English soccer team still in the latter stages of the competition, and amidst the fervour of 'England Coming Home', it was anticipated that press coverage of the football would over-ride the usual prominence given to Wimbledon on the British media sport agenda.

Following England's successful and inspiring displays during Euro '96, the nation's pride and aspirations transferred to Tim Henman. Through the eyes of the media, the

preceding Wimbledon tournament failed to match the heady euphoria and hype that was ignited by the football competition.

The first round departure of 'the centre court darling' Andre Agassi; the 'All whites' clothing rule preventing the French tennis player Mary Pierce, known in media terms as 'the body', slipping into that little black 'number' worn in the French Open competition; the predictability and integral professionalism of the top seeds Graf and Sampras; the quarter-final exit of Tim Henman and the eventual emergence of two unseeded players in the men's finals denied the range of sexualised, personalised and sensationalised images most likely to sell newspapers.

In an attempt to capture readership attention, the narratives of Wimbledon '96, rather than for 'tennis coming home', might best be remembered for the following headlines (selected from *The Sun*), which were perceived of as news value across the print media at the time: "Wimblesong" (Cliff Richard singing in the rain); "Absent Toffs" (those members of society who unpatriotically chose to wine and dine before supporting Tim Henman in his hour of need, leaving many empty seats on the centre court); "Two Match Points" (the female stalker who gained coverage for her five minute performance during the Mens final) and "the emergence of Our Tim" (the solicitor's son from Oxford).

4.3.4 House style: ways of addressing the reader

The long established and persistent differences in the house style of quality and popular papers are reflected in both the presentation, style, and ways that the two papers address their audience - *The Sun*, compact, easy to handle and a cheaper purchase price than the larger, broadsheet *Telegraph*. Both present their sports pages as a distinct section at the back of the paper, and both signify the importance of sport with occasional sport specific pullouts.

The results from this analysis reinforce Bignell's (1997, p. 93) comments that there

are distinct styles of reporting between the tabloid and quality press. *The Telegraph* uses a more elaborate linguistic style, with longer sentences and players are referred to in a formal way, normally by surname. There is an expectation that readers will be familiar with the history and significance of Wimbledon and there are references to the development of English tennis and past players. In contrast *The Sun* uses shorter often incomplete sentences, alliteration, slang and puns.

Tim Nukes Luke. (*Sun*)

Agassi can't take the Flach. (*Sun*,)

Agassi pays dearly for lack of practice with first round exit. (*Telegraph*)

Bates bows out with a whimper in front of the polite society. (*Telegraph*)

Bye, bye for now Bates. (*Sun*)

The Sun in its form of address connotated familiarity and personalisation with the star players referring to them as Tim, Boris and Pete, contrasting with the greater formality of surnames in *The Telegraph*.

4.3.5 News Value of Wimbledon

As the Wimbledon event is staged in England with home competitors, and is one of the 'crown jewel' television events, it is likely to be of significant 'news value' and a vehicle for signifiers of 'Englishness'.

During Wimbledon fortnight, as shown by Figures 8, 9 and 10, 24% of total space in both *The Sun* (137, 020 cm²), and *The Telegraph* (305, 822 cm²), was devoted to sport specific pages. This excludes aspects that were considered newsworthy beyond the sports pages. As the first week of Wimbledon coincided with Euro 96, on a number of days sport was covered on other pages. In *The Sun*, an additional two or three pages, including the front page, were often focused on sporting issues surrounding the football competition.

In *The Sun*, Wimbledon news only took up 16% of space in the sports pages (21,776 cm²), despite the emergence of British players such as Tim Henman and Luke Milligan, and the continued success of the former through to the quarter finals.

Figure 8: A comparison of the use of news space in *The Telegraph* and *The Sun* during Wimbledon 1996 24th June- 8th July

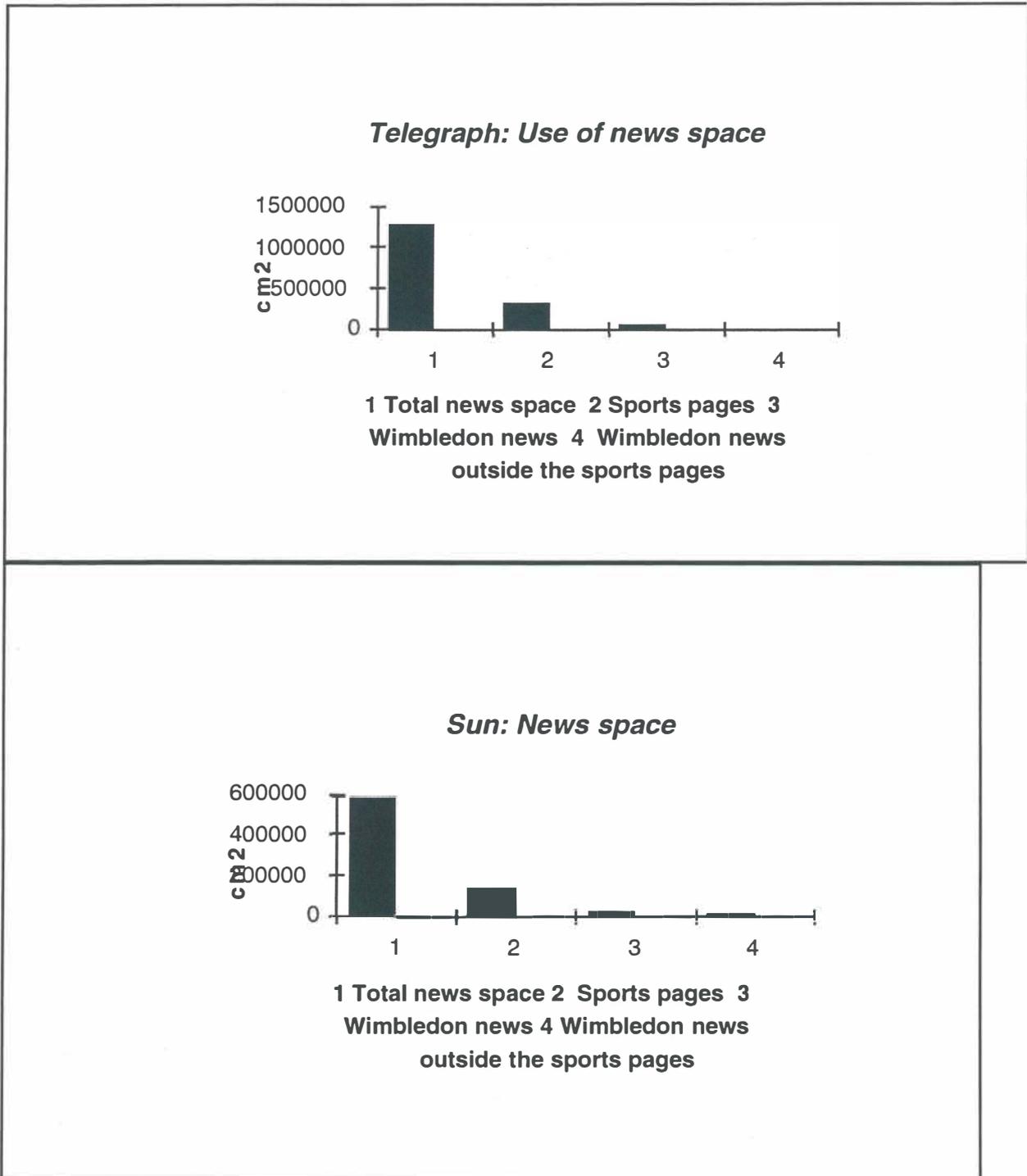
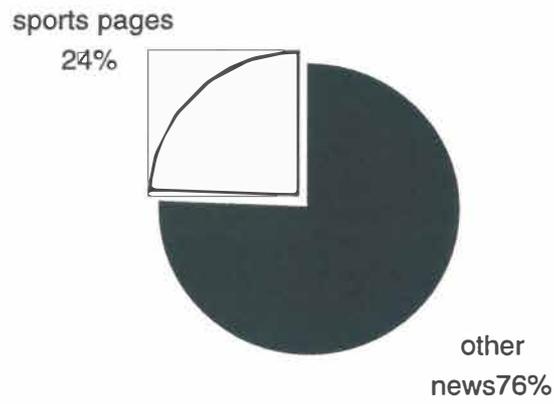


Figure 9: A comparison of sports page coverage to other news space

Telegraph: percentage of sports page space to other news



Sun: Percentage of sports page space to other news

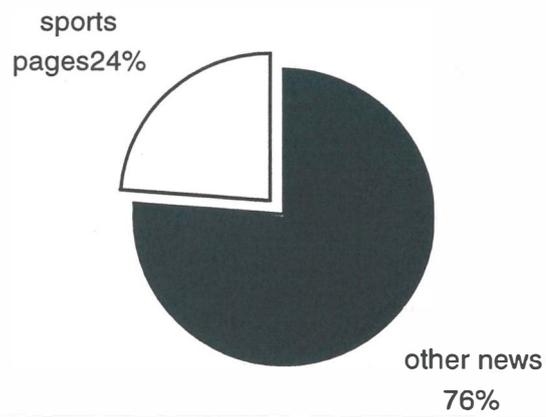
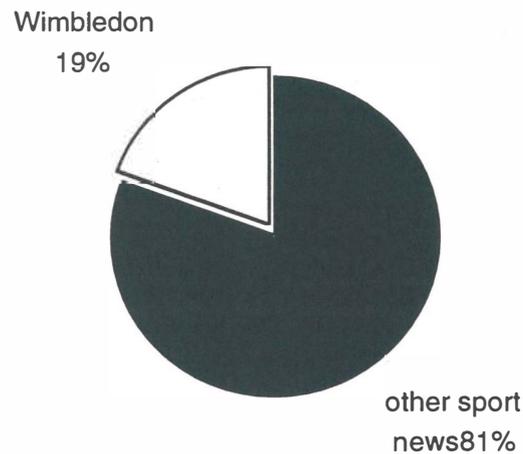
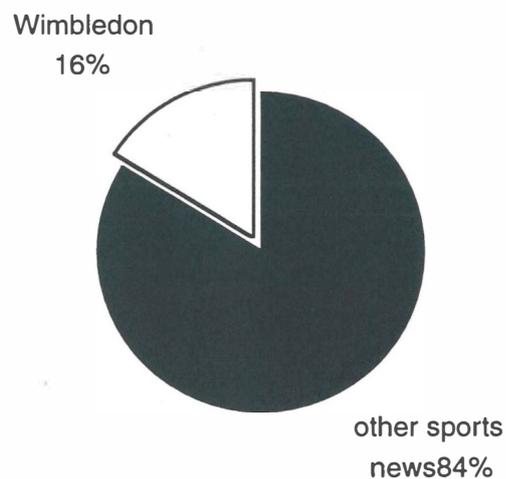


Figure 10: A comparison of Wimbledon News Space in the sports pages

Telegraph: Percentage of space devoted to Wimbledon in the sports pages



Sun: Percentage of space devoted to Wimbledon in the sports pages



Clearly, other sports were perceived as more newsworthy, and certainly in the final week of Euro '96, Wimbledon did not feature significantly. It neither appeared on the back page, nor outside of the sports pages, although after the football event concluded

FIGURE 11: The Sun: Wimbledon News which received coverage beyond the sports pages

Headlines	date	page	cm2 space	significance
Tennis is coming home. Hen Might!	2/7	front	66	British player victorious
Page 3 Smasher Anna's ace	2/7	3	414	Pg 3 topless girl
Save my life, Dad begs tennis ace Mary and	3/7	front	66	Mary Pierce - relationship with father.
	3/7	4	128	"Blonde Mary, 21- known as The Body on the tennis circuit. . ."
Tim Henmania	3/7	4/5	1190	Sun salutes a new British hero
Ace Steffi well ahead at 15 love- bite	3/7	11	317	Steffi's boyfriend in town
Wimblesong Sir Cliff thrills centre court crowds	4/7	front	546	centre court sing a long in the rain
I never thought I'd get to play centre court	4/7	centre 30/31	1224	Cliff Richard and female players as his backing group
Our Tim's Terrific	4/7	9	220	"What a pity that Euro 96 was spoilt at the end by a bunch of louts rioting. At Wimbledon they wouldn't know how to start a riot, but how they have enjoyed seeing Tim Henman go further than any English player for years . . . Perhaps we are not so dumb at sport as we have come to believe."
I will rain yet, says hero Tim	5/7	front	40	Britains big hope was beaten . . .
Your Tim will come my son!	5/7	7	517	'Heart throb Tim . . . Wimbledon dream shattered
Wobbles of Wimbledon. Centre Court's first streaker	8/7	front	508	"For a look at her forehand smashers turn to page 13 "
I would have done it last week but I didn't want to upset Cliff	8/7	6	209	cartoon of streaker
Two Match Points. Streaker shows off her sporting form	8/7	13	884	"Steaker. . . in all her Wimbledon glory-showing off a couple of the finer points of tennis."

FIGURE 12: Telegraph: Wimbledon News which received coverage beyond the sports pages

Headlines	date	page	cm2 space	significance
Agassi beaten in first round	25/6	front	550	defeat of the darling of the centre court crowd. Overview of other main results Price of strawberries
No lions on your shirts please, says Wimbledon	26/6	5	272	US doubles pair forbidden to wear England football shirts to play in
Day of Victory for Britons	26/6	front	481	Tim Henman's victory and other British players
Brothers with their eyes on centre court	27/7	13	1085	Lloyd brothers and revival of British tennis
Becker is out after injuring his wrist	29/6	front	442	Becker injury and withdrawal
Britons with different approaches to the net	29/6	6	750	Tim Henman - the boy who wanted to be an ace from the age of 5 Luke Milligan - the boy who wanted to be a soccer
The next generation serves notice on Henman	4/7	6	520	Future British tennis hopes
The sunshine girl warms to her task on court	6/7	8	544	Arantxa Sanchez Vicario's character and match v Steffi Graf
Seventh Heaven	7/7	front	289	Steffi Graf - champion
Unseeded Dutchman and student streaker make centre court history	8/7	front	416	Krajicek victory and streaker

both occurred. *The Sun* also included several Euro 96 pullouts, but no identical products for Wimbledon coverage, again prioritising the importance of the football event.

For those readers of *The Sun*, who did read the sports pages during week one, there was little evidence that Wimbledon existed. This presumes that the predominantly working class readership of *The Sun* is, or should be, more interested in football, the 'people's game'.

In contrast, *The Telegraph* devoted 19% of its sports pages to Wimbledon (59426 cm²). In terms of total area of space this represented 2.7 times as much as that of *The Sun*, although with regard to percentage of space within the paper *The Telegraph* allocated 3% more of its space in the sports pages to Wimbledon news than *The Sun*. *The Telegraph* did include pullouts on both Euro 96 and Wimbledon. From allocation of space within the sports pages, it can be seen that *The Telegraph* placed the Wimbledon event higher on the sporting agenda than *The Sun*. This is attributed to media assumptions that the higher proportion of *Telegraph* readers in social classes A/B would want to read more about tennis than *The Sun's* working class readers.

Figure 11, shows that thirteen articles (6329 cm²) in *The Sun* received coverage beyond the sports pages, covering the personal lifestyles of players such as Mary Pierce (and her relationship with her father) and Steffi Graf (pictured according to the headline with a love bite on her neck, indicating that her boyfriend was in town); five articles on Tim Henman, as the new British hero; two on 'Wimblesong' and Cliff Richard singing in the rain; and three signifying the female stalker who made the front page headline "Wobbles of Wimbledon" page 6 and page 13, "Two Match points". For her brief appearance on centre court she managed to receive more coverage (1601 cm²) on one day than many of the female tennis players achieved during the entire Wimbledon fortnight. A number of these articles contained sexual

associations - the love bite, the body of Pierce, the streaker 'showing of a couple of the finer points of tennis' and the topless model on page 3 'Smasher Anna's Ace', sporting only tennis accessories.

As indicated in Figure 12, there was 5349 cm² of Wimbledon-related news outside the sports pages of *The Telegraph*, representing less in both relative and total percentage terms than *The Sun*. These articles contained only two similarities - the focus on Tim Henman and front page news on the streaker. In *The Telegraph*, the streaker only warranted a quarter of the more blatantly sexual coverage seen in *The Sun*.

Of the ten articles, four focused on British hopes and the revival of British tennis. The opening day coverage saw Agassi 'the centre court darling', make front page news where the female readership would be more likely to see it. His celebrity appeal and his surprising loss in the first round, only warranted front page coverage in *The Telegraph*. In the same article, the prices of strawberries were also raised as a point of interest for *The Telegraph* readers. Other articles on specific tennis personalities included Becker, Sanchez-Vicario, Graf and Krajicek. In *The Telegraph* the champions both received front page coverage yet neither achieved this status in *The Sun*.

Comparisons between Euro '96 and Wimbledon were drawn beyond the sports pages in both papers. *The Telegraph* reported that a US doubles pair were forbidden to wear England football shirts to play their match in: "No lions on our shirts please says Wimbledon", (26/6/96, p. 5) stressing the formality and conservatism of the event. *The Sun* also made reference to an issue which suggested the gulf between the sporting world of football and the tennis scene, "What a pity Euro '96 was spoiled by a bunch of louts rioting. At Wimbledon they wouldn't know how to start a riot" (4/7/96, p. 9).

The papers set different agendas in determining what makes news that receives

coverage beyond the sports pages. In *The Sun*, stories reflecting the lives of female players, photographs of sexualised female images, Cliff Richard singing in the rain and the success of a British player emerged as the most newsworthy of the fortnight. By contrast, *The Telegraph* reflected on national tennis development and the success of Henman, the success of the two champions, the streaker and the lives of other male and female players.

4.3.6 Women on the tennis agenda

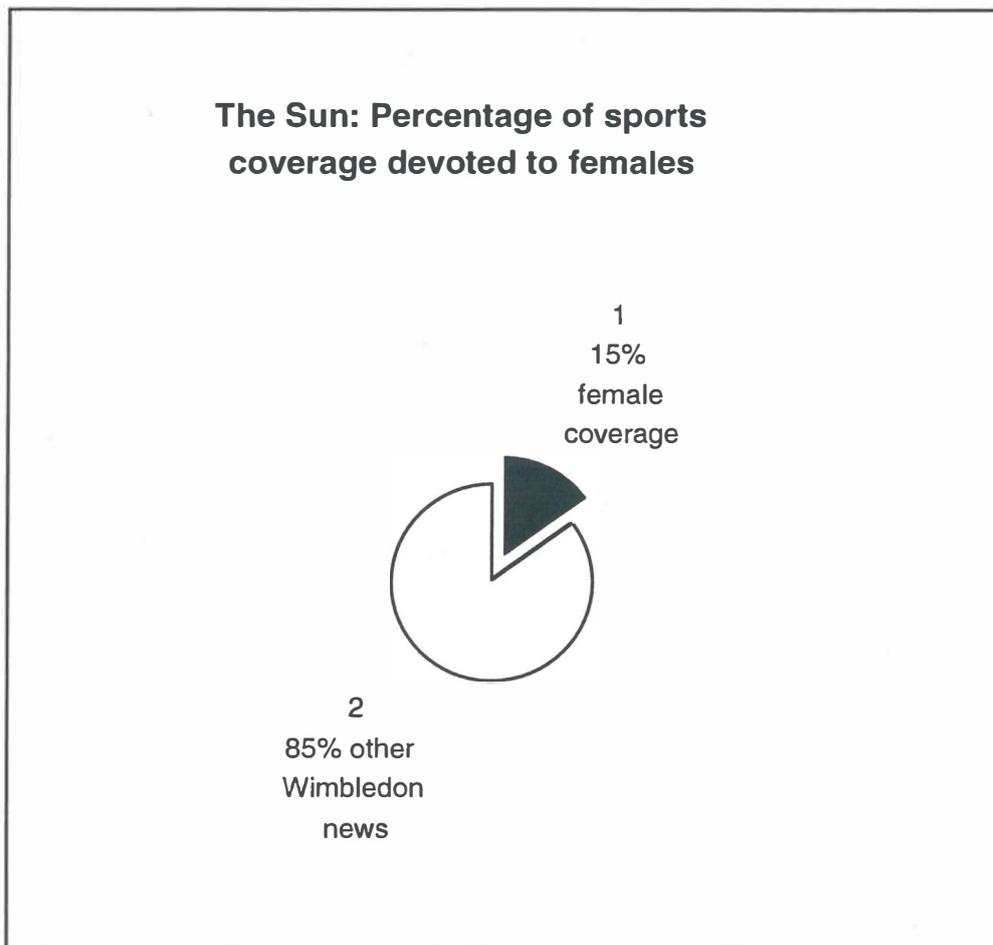
The work of Duncan and Hasbrook (1988), Kane and Parks (1992) and Hilliard (1984), specifically on professional female tennis players in the media, confirms the re-occurrence of central issues apparent in gender representation, a focus on physical attractiveness and sex appeal, rather than female athletic accomplishments.

The analysis of both *The Sun* and *The Telegraph* during Wimbledon 1996 reiterate a number of identical themes. Despite the same competitions taking place for both male and female players during this time, coverage of the women's matches reaffirmed female under-representation.

Figure 13 shows that *The Sun* devoted just 15% of its sports news coverage to women's tennis, with only four female tennis players receiving headlines. Figure 14 indicates Graf and Seles both received 33% of the female headlines, surprisingly as Graf was the eventual ladies' champion, yet Seles lost in the first round. Seles's vulnerability and emotional problems placed her high on the news agenda. Sanchez-Vicario, as the runner-up, might have been expected to have received more headlines than Seles, whereas she in fact shared the remaining 17% of female headlines with Mary Pierce. The latter's relatively high profile in comparison to her success in the tournament, is explained by the sexual news value of 'that little black dress' worn at the French Open.

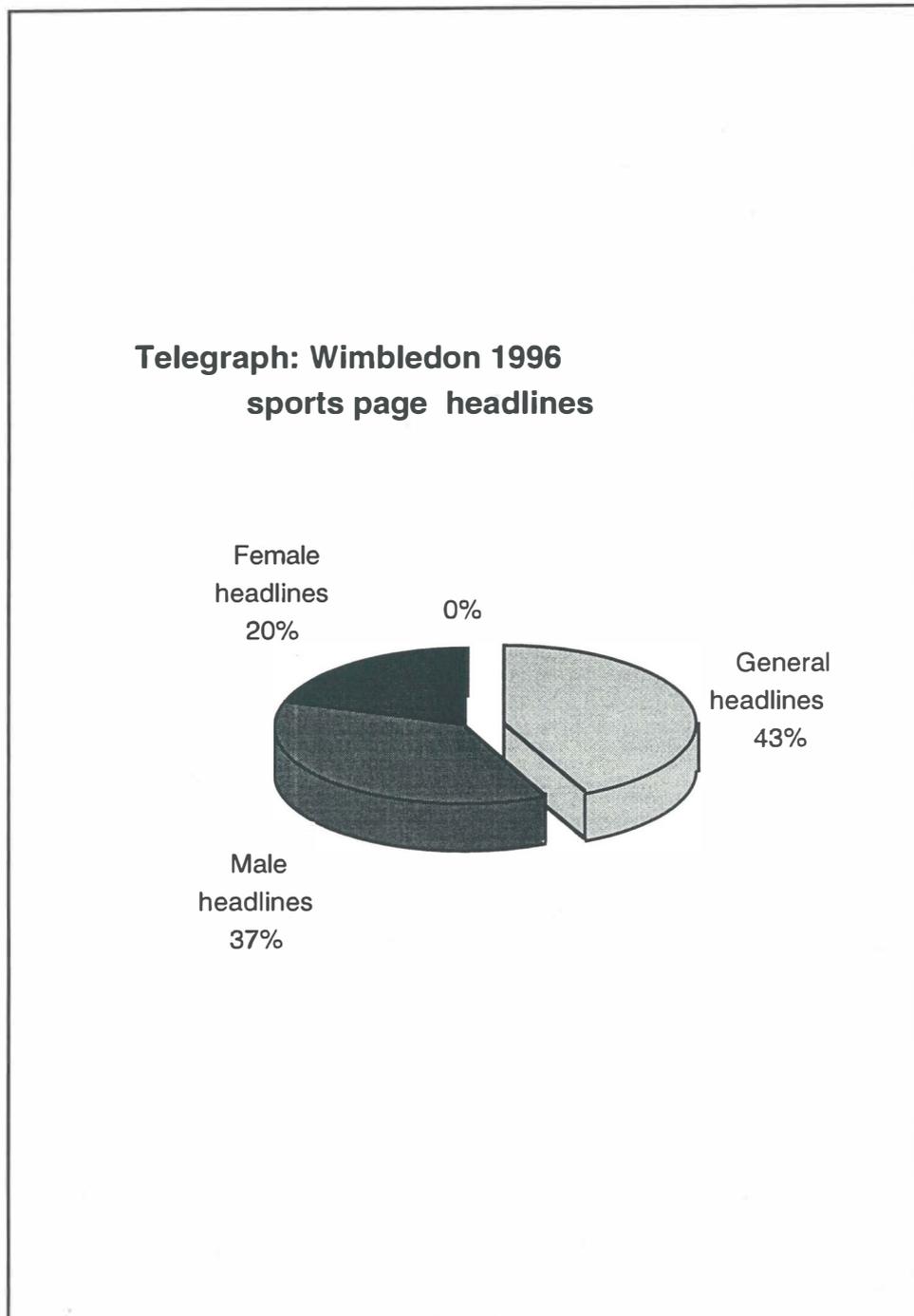
In contrast 20% of all headlines in *The Telegraph* were devoted to females (figure 14) representing eleven different female players (figure 15). The highest representation was to those players who reached the later stages. Both Pierce and Seles each received only 4% of the female headlines respectively. For readers of *The Sun*, the little information that they received, focused on a relatively limited number of female players. More successful players in the competition received less coverage than Seles and Pierce, who clearly held news values for reasons other than sporting success. *The Sun's* agenda indicates that its readership was either, unlikely to be as interested in the women's event as the men's; or that the female section of the readership was unlikely to be reading the sports pages anyway. This raises questions as to whether male

Figure 13: *The Sun* : Coverage of Women Players at Wimbledon



readers are perceived to be more interested in sexualised images of sporting females,

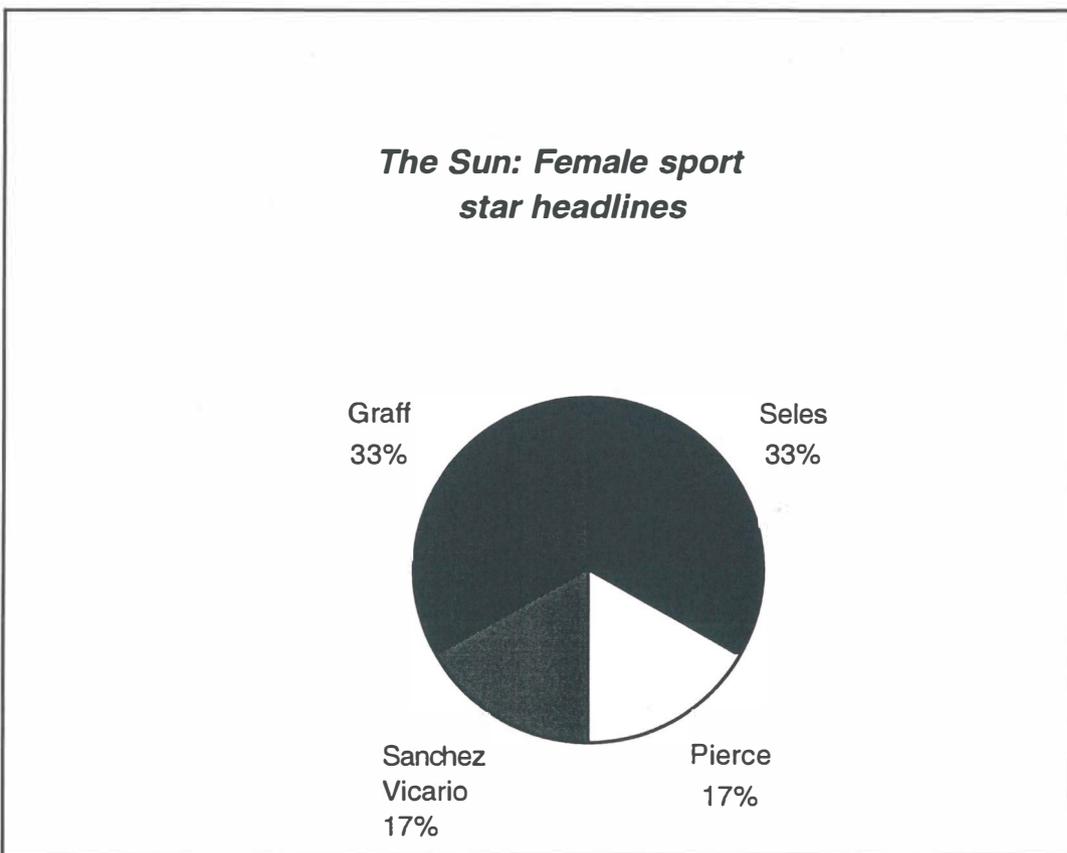
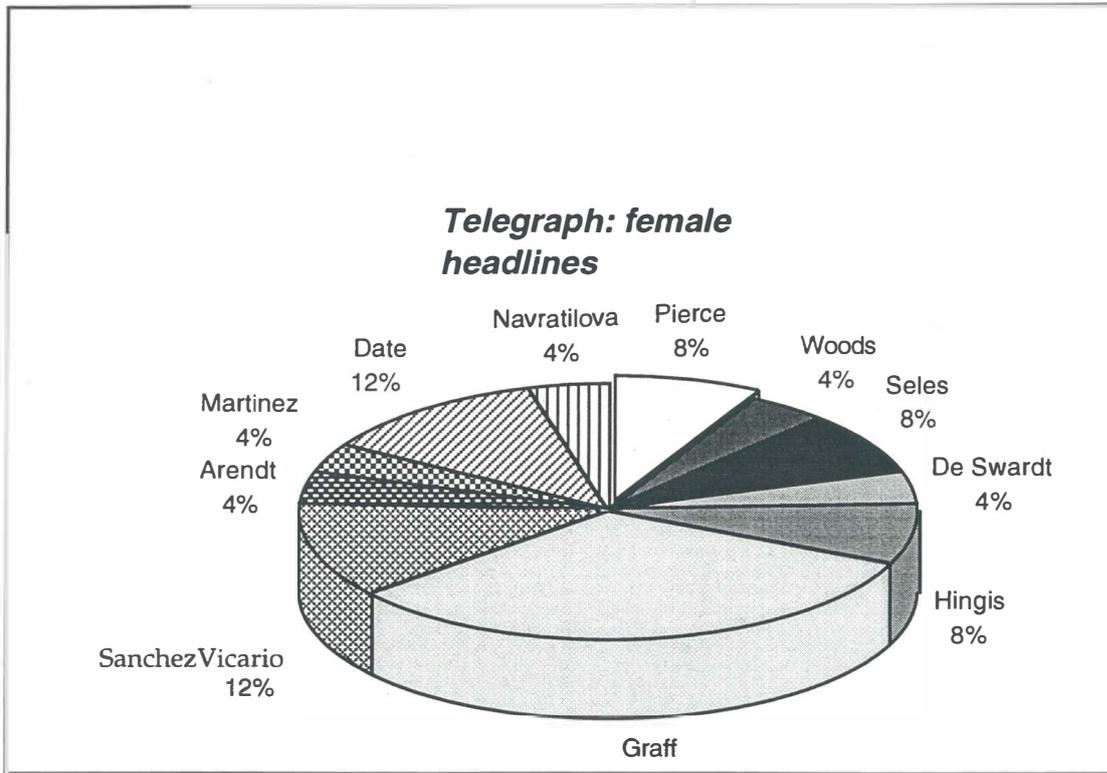
Figure 14: *The Telegraph*: coverage of Women Players at Wimbledon



rather than athletic ones.

Both newspapers contained headline articles reinforcing the physical attractiveness of several of the female players. Coverage of the women's final in *The Sun* (1996, 6/7 p. 39) reflected both Graf's vulnerability and sexuality;

Figure 15: A comparison of female headlines in *The Telegraph* and *The Sun*



the blonde bombshell . . . and at just 27 she has time on her hands if her body stands up to it.

The former theme develops further in reports the following day;

the odds were stacked against ailing Graf, father in jail, nagging knee injury and suffering from a heavy cold. Asked if her Dad would be watching, Graf fought back the tears ... (*The Sun*, 7/7, p. 78)

Both *the Telegraph* and *the Sun* devoted front page coverage to Krajicek's girlfriend and the stalker. Whereas *the Sun* allocated 3 separate accounts and full frontal photographs of the stalker, *the Telegraph* showed a rear view shot of her upper body. These two women received significantly higher profile than most of the female tennis players, reinforcing media professionals' focus on images of sexuality and beauty over female athleticism.

To the last, and regardless of her elimination from the tournament. *The Telegraph* (8/7/96, p. 59) continued to evoke sexual connotations of Mary Pierce;

meanwhile over in the women's changing rooms the fragrant Mary would have been slipping into the kind of little black number . . .

Despite the 'all white rule', the myth of the black dress continues to be evoked, and the trivialisation and sexualisation of the female players remained in evidence.

4.3.7 Distinctions of Class

Class connotations filtered through the discourse of both newspapers. There was constant referencing to the background of British players and the differences between Tim Henman and Luke Milligan, referred to as the taxi driver's son from Muswell Hill. The following quote from *The Telegraph* (1996, 25/6, p. 32) encapsulates this;

Henman has the disarming English Christian name of Tim, comes from dreamy Oxford, has a solicitor father, Anthony... and already finds himself a favourite of the middle class newspapers. The feature editors of those organisations would love to see their daughter bring him home for a barbecue.

The Telegraph also uses phrases such as "Becker's power is to the manor born", and "Bates bows out in front of the polite society", signifying upper and middle class connections with both audience and players.

The most revealing distinction between the two papers was the way in which Tim Henman's final match in the tournament was dealt with. *The Sun* dealt with his defeat by apportioning blame to sections of the crowd, which they referred to as "Absent Toffs"-

Tim Henman was let down by his country, or at least those of its upper crust and privilege who shamefully deserted Britain's brightest hope . . . some people, many people put lunch before loyalty, Pimms before patriotism, champagne ahead of their support for the would be champion . . .

The inference, by reference to Pimms, champagne and 'Toffs', was that it was the unpatriotic upper class section of the crowd who had let the English player down. *The Sun* obviously felt sure that they would not be offending their readership by making such references and allocating such blame.

The Telegraph took a more cautious line to lessen the risk of ostracising a larger share of their readers, (1996, 5/7, p. 42)

ROYAL ABSENTEES LEAVE BRITON TO FIGHT ALONE
Britain's new hope finds little backing from privileged and corporate sectors as queuing aficionados are shut out.

Another example of differences in behaviour and attitude was made when *The Sun* (4/7/96, p.9) compared the Wimbledon crowd (who they suggested wouldn't know how to riot) with Euro '96 supporters, reinforcing class and cultural differences between soccer and tennis, and the respective newspapers' target readership.

4.3.8 Making an Issue of Racial Difference

Black American, Mal Washington's unanticipated path through to the men's final generated coverage around notions of race. The main reference points were to him as the first black player since Arthur Ashe to reach the final. Personal comments, from both the player and his opponents, emphasised his colour difference. Emphasis was also placed on the role of sport in black lifestyles and his colour prioritised over

his nationality;

. . . it inspired me and was a dream of mine to reach that level. I just hope I can spur more black players into playing the game. (*Telegraph*, 7/7/96, p. S2)

. . . I had a lot of support from the black community. It's an honour. (*Sun*, 7/7/96, p. 50)

Todd Martin, defeated by Washington in the semi-final, was quoted making reference to his opponent's colour;

whether he's black, white, brown or green I think he's done a great job and nobody should let the colour of his skin overshadow what he has done on court. (*Sun*, 7/7/96, p. 50)

The Sun provided a story focusing on racial issues that was not covered in the *Telegraph*. The 'Kraijcek Racist Row' headline just prior to the final signified ideas that it was related to references Kraijcek was making about his black opponent in the final;

an ugly race row threatens to overshadow today's final between outspoken Dutchmen Richard Kraijcek and black American Mal Washington. (*Sun*, 7/7/96, p. 79)

In fact, closer reading revealed that the article was over concerns that the player had expressed about Turkish immigrants in Holland.

In reading these examples of coverage, especially in *The Sun*, it appeared that the notion of racial difference was made an issue when it need not have been. Martin's comment above suggest racist overtones regarding attitudes to Washington's success, yet there is no supporting evidence for this, or indeed any suggestions as to who might be making them. The 'Kraijcek Racist Row' statement also works in the same way, with a headline that read alone could infer the racist attitudes of Kraijcek towards his black opponent. In fact, reading further into the article, it seems that it was an item that was of no sporting news value, but more specifically acted to draw racist issues to the reader's attention.

4.3.9 The Construction and representation of sports stars

Telegraph (1996,8/7, p. S9)

Malivai Washington's heroic semi final victory notwithstanding, the 1996 men's singles was the most tedious of modern times. Had Henman not beaten Yevgeny Kafelnikov . . . then the nation might have lost all interest amid the daily welter of mediocrity . . .

every sport needs its quota of superstars and tennis is desperately short of charismatic personalities who can lure youngsters off the basketball court . . .

Such a comment infers the immense emphasis placed by both the media, and contemporary sports culture, on the desire for sports personalities. Sports chatter refers to information around the stars' character, background, family and social life that both personalises and provides a means of identification with the sports star as a real life person.

This analysis reflects the hierarchical attention paid to players who are prioritised according to specific news value. Sporting success of a player is expected to attract high media coverage, but Pete Sampras, the current world number one exemplifies that success alone does not ensure celebrity status in the eyes of the media.

Acknowledged by fellow professionals and coaches as the greatest player of modern times, he has failed to capture the imagination and amplified attention of the media, and consequently we are led to believe, the general public.

The Sun headline (1996 28/6, p. 45) reiterates the point "I just wanna be loved, says Pete". The short article reports Sampras' desire to be loved by Wimbledon as much as he wants to win it. The journalist's statement that the American *ground out a* (my italics) 7-6, 6-4, 6-4 victory, implied that his style and way of playing could be the reason for his lack of spectator appeal. The scarcity of tantrums, lack of trendy good looks and dearth of details indicating a wild social life, reflecting a man dedicated to success and tennis, does not provide for scandalous and sensational coverage that will sell newspapers.

On the other hand, Agassi has attracted enormous media and public attention, suggesting that the two clearly are synonymous. Both *The Sun* and *The Telegraph*, following Agassi's early departure, chose to focus on the shock at his defeat and reflected more on concern for the disappointed female fans, than the impact of his loss on the men's championships.

Heart throb Agassi went down ... and sent thousands of teenage fans into mourning. Agassi can't take the Flach! The female half of Wimbledon was left mourning as Andre Agassi crashes out to a qualifier. (*Sun*, 25/6/96, p. 26-27)

Agassi beaten in the first round - defeat of the centre court darling. (*Telegraph*, 25/6/96, front page)

With the early elimination of Agassi, and Pete Sampras failing to reach the last four, Wimbledon '96 was unusual in that two unseeded players reached the finals. Both players were relatively unknown to the readers and have subsequently failed to achieve celebrity status since. The newspapers clearly tried to provide an interest and focal point for both players with which readers, could identify. Krajicek became best known for his girlfriend 'the stunning Daphne, a model' (the number of photographs of his blond partner suggesting that her sexuality was more newsworthy than the player himself), and Washington, as previously stated, 'the first black player since Ashe, and voted in the top 50 of the beautiful people in the USA.'

The ways in which Seles, Pierce and Graf are depicted, reflect contrasting narratives with male players. Prior to the Wimbledon 1996 tournament, both Graf and Seles received coverage. *The Sun* serialised articles outside of the sports pages that focused on her stabbing and the emotional fight back. The first article (*Sun*, 14/6, p. 25-26 & 31) included five photographs - one of her during the stabbing, one with her security guards after the incident, one of her playing and two of her glamorised images. Both of these latter photographs were dominant in their size and positioning on the respective pages. The second article included a photograph of her as a young girl with her father, accompanied by information about her becoming a recluse, bingeing and putting on over two stone as a result. The following reported comment from her to her

sick father, suggests her vulnerability and need of support from her father, "I need you here to help me make my comeback. I need you to help me put the attack behind me". (*Sun*, 1996, 15/6, p. 21)

Steffi Graf also received coverage in the Sunday magazine of the *News of the World* (1996, 23/6, p. 16-17) in a two page spread entitled "Pain, Set and Match!" It listed the details and dates of her fourteen illnesses and injuries since 1989, and the concern at seeing her father sent to jail for tax evasion over her business affairs;

At the tender age of 26 she has pushed her body to the limits through years of torturous court work. Her grim determination to reach the top is taking its toll.

The three photographs show one of her after a victory alongside the heading 'Steffi's sore spots' listing her injuries, one of her father, and the most dominant one of her dressed in a low cut vest, black leather gloves and holding a plastic baby crocodile with a heading 'Game for a laugh.' Whether this comment relates to her sexualised outfit, or the number of injuries reflecting how laughable it is for women to seriously want to take part in 'mens' games, is open to individual interpretation.

Both features on Graf and Seles show repeated themes focusing on problems caused by their involvement in sport (injuries, emotional and personal trauma), references to their early dependence on their fathers as coaches, and the largest coverage of photographic space given to the most glamorised and sexualised images of them. These issues deflect attention away from their sporting success, and reinforce a patriarchal selection of female sporting imagery.

Readers are far more likely to know about Mary Pierce not because of her notable wins, or sustained success in tournaments, but for her sexualised images and the mythical little black dress. Arguably, the player exploits this to raise her profile and the dress was perhaps worn as a powerful statement of her femininity and sexuality.

The lack of research investigating elite female athletes' perceptions of their own media images, and issues related to sexuality and femininity, is a serious omission in the field.

It could be argued here that these images simply show that they are both women, as well as sportswomen, and that it is possible to be feminine and sexual, as well as sporty. Alternative meanings suggest that it prioritises the sexual image over the sporting image, showing the dangers that being too sporty and successful can hold for women. Arguably, sportswomen should not allow themselves to be portrayed in such a way if they find it offensive - and by pursuing this issue with them it might simply be that they see any publicity as better than none. The main point, however, is that sportsmen are more likely to be photographed in action shots and sports clothing than sportswomen, who are frequently shown in casual, passive poses. Additionally, there is less likelihood to be significant others identified as the driving force behind their success. Male sporting success is also less likely to be equated with subsequent emotional, social and physical trauma.

The extent to which the audience recognises female marginality, and acknowledges sportswomen's vulnerability and inferiority, in comparison to male dominance, is discussed in the interpretative level of analysis.

4.3.10 The emergence of 'Our Tim'.

The predominant media theme of Wimbledon '96 was the emergence of 'Our Tim.' After years of media nostalgia reflecting past winners and mourning the absence of any contemporary British tennis heroes, Tim Henman materialised as the potential answer

The fate of British tennis also becomes symbolic of a nation defined by failure (Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell, 1993)

Here was a player reminiscent of the era of the clean cut hero, an upstanding role model for young people with a background befitting the images of Englishness and

Wimbledon. Conveniently, his disqualification from the tournament the previous year for hitting a ball girl with a ball struck in anger was long since forgotten, despite John McEnroe's BBC interview attempts to remind the audience of the incident. From relative obscurity and swept along by the wave of Euro '96 patriotism and euphoria, Henman became the obvious personality the media could portray as tennis's answer to the footballing 'Lionhearts' of England. Images and narratives of Henman constructed around notions of 'Englishness', promoted his 'star' status and intensified readership interest around him. In the words of *The Telegraph* (1996, 2/7 p.32);

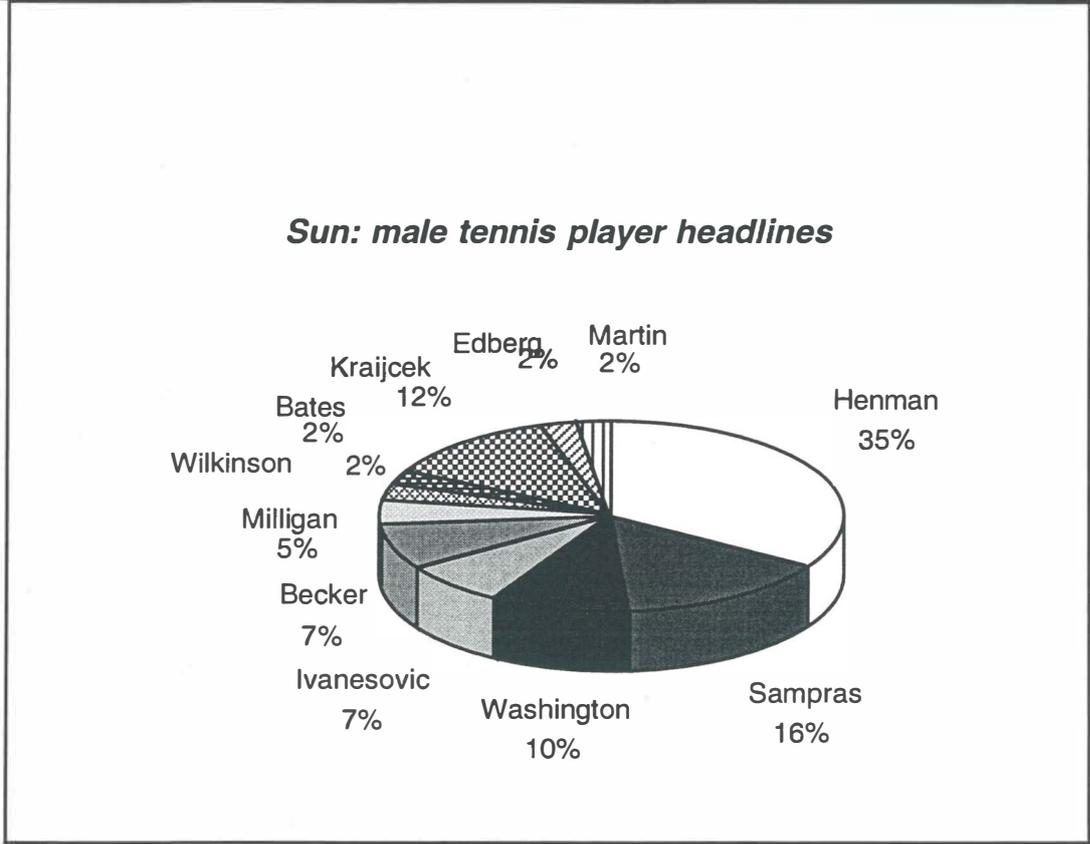
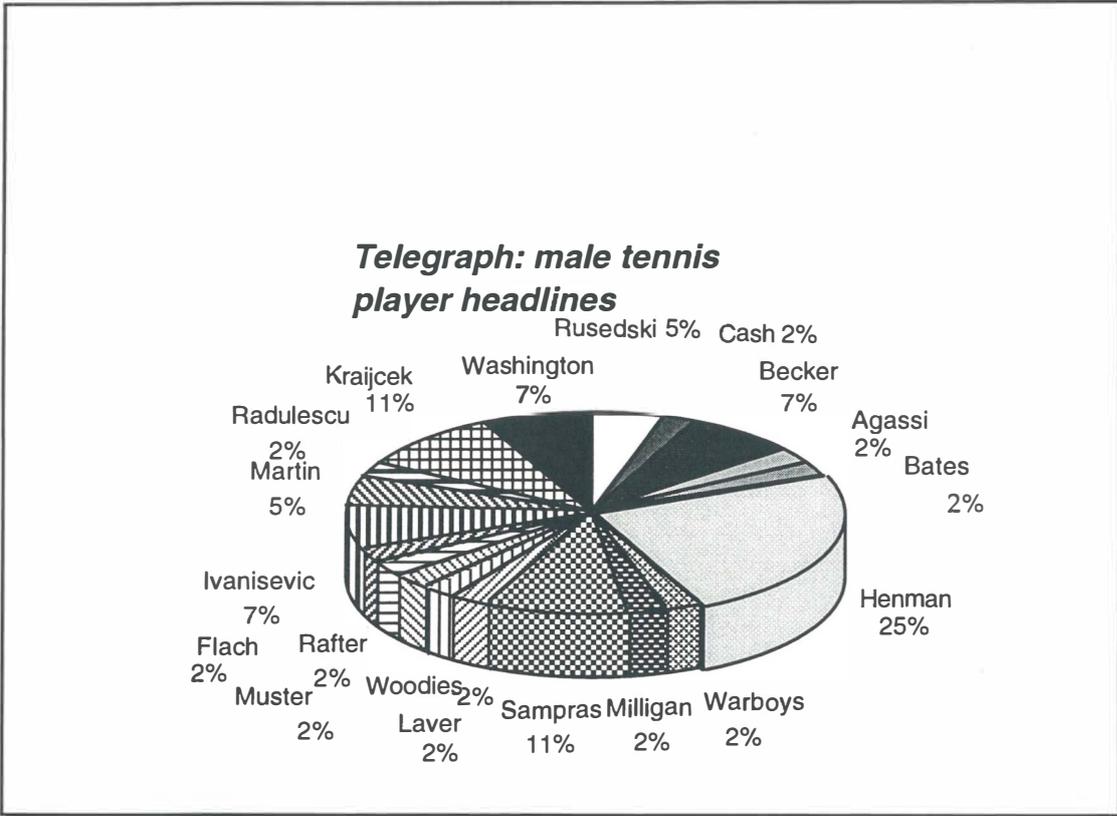
There has been more than a touch of wishful thinking of the suggestion that Tim Henman is suddenly bigger than Gazza and the Princess of Wales combined . . .

Blame it on Henmania, currently sweeping the land . . . He is affectionately known as the GBH (the Great British Hope) enter Tim Henman, GBH into our affections. Twelve days ago he walked out on centre court . . . as the anonymous 21 year old son of Anthony an Oxford solicitor and Jane Henman who designs a small but exclusive range of women's tennis fashions . . . he has supplanted Seaman and Gascoigne in the public consciousness. (1996, 5/7 p.44)

To suggest that Tim Henman's popularity and impact had exceeded that of David Seaman, Gascoigne and the Princess of Wales highlights the ways in which the media can distort and amplify views and beliefs that the readership might hold, or suggest it should hold. For those individuals who chose not to watch Wimbledon or read a newspaper during this time, might not have heard of Henman, and those who did might have made their own decisions about his popularity. Yet, the more we begin to see and hear about him across a range of media products, the more he is likely to be known about and reflected upon.

Both newspapers drew attention to Tim Henman by the number of headlines which included his name, the number of photographs of him and the number of times he was the focus of a feature outside of the sports pages. Both *The Sun* and *The Telegraph* devoted more space and headlines to him than any other tennis player during the tournament (figure 16). Although he did not emerge as the eventual winner, as a young good looking male English sportsman, with the potential to be a successful

Figure 16: A comparison of Male sport stars headlines in *the Telegraph* and *the Sun*



world class player, he was perceived to be of high news value.

The Telegraph allocated 11 headlines to him, 25 % of the male total during this time, and more than the total devoted to the winner and runner-up. The constant use of his surname, stressed formality. In contrast *The Sun* devoted 19 headlines to him, securing 35% of all male headlines, again significantly more than the finalists.

Constant references were to his class background, his national identity (True Brit, British No 1 and Super Brit.), and to his Christian name (Tim'll fix it, Our Tim's terrific) connotating personalisation and familiarity.

Four themes emerged in the Henman narratives that are developed in the case study (Chapter 5.ii.). Firstly, his background; secondly, his character; thirdly, the notion that tennis too, was coming home; and fourthly, the likening of Henmania to the Gazzamania of the early '90's. In terms of the media construction of Tim Henman as a sport star, there are several questions that will be considered with regard to Henman's potential for maintaining media prominence. As a pre-requisite we can begin to question whether Henman will fit the mould of the modern sporting world of flawed heroes. Does he embody the contemporary socio- cultural characteristics that the media love, and and love to hate? Will the constructions of 'Englishness' be strong enough features of identification for Henman to be adopted by the nation? If the answer is positive to some, or all of these questions, then we might indeed anticipate a future, sustained wave of Henmania.

4.3.11 Conclusions- "Fading Into Mediocrity . . . "

It was a Wimbledon clearly overshadowed by Euro '96. There was a commercially focused attempt to encourage the reader that tennis, too, was coming home, but in actuality, the finals were played out by four players who were not of home news value, and media attention diverted to trivialities beyond the essence of the championship in an attempt to blur popular and sporting cultural boundaries.

Both papers, whilst revealing obvious differences in house style and ways of addressing their readers, showed distinct similarities in discourses around differences in class, race and gender. The notion of white, upper, middle class males as the most accepted and newsworthy frame of reference within mediated tennis discourse was reaffirmed.

Media representations best recall the emergence of 'Our Tim', a national answer to dreams of an Englishman lifting the sacred trophy once again; to Absent Toffs who favoured Pimms in preference to supporting such a dream; to Cliff Richard 'Wimblesing in the rain' and to the two match points of a streaker whose on court play was considered more newsworthy than serious sporting females. In effect, Wimbledon '96 as a super-mediated sports event faded into mediocrity.

4. 4 'Legitimation and Dissimulation' - Patriarchy and the Spectacle of Women at the Atlanta Olympics

4.4.1 The Media spectacle - global unity or division?

The Olympics, irrefutably, are the global sporting event, relayed to more countries than any other event and watched by billions around the world in a truly shared mediated experience.

The Atlanta Olympics provided 3, 000 hours of television and radio coverage, a projected audience of 35 billion across 200 countries, and a total of 17,000 media representatives actually exceeding the number of athletes performing at the event (Barrett, 1996). The marketing programme of the Games was estimated to raise £500 million, with ten major sponsors. Coca-Cola, based in Atlanta, and the longest sponsor in Olympic history, spent nearly a quarter of its 2.5 billion annual budget on the Olympics (*The Times*, 15/7/96).

The BBC screened more than 300 hours, sometimes with coverage simultaneously on both BBC1 and BBC2. On the first Tuesday, for example, there was almost blanket

coverage on BBC1; 7-9am; 9.05-12.35pm; 1.40- 5.35pm; 7-8.30pm; 10.10pm-4.25am with BBC2 occupying the 8-30pm-10.10pm slot. Due to time differences much of the 'live' broadcasting was scheduled in the early hours of the morning. The bill for costs and rights for this was £30 million with the total global television rights at £600 million. Britain was estimated to have approximately 600 media professionals at the Games. *The Independent on Sunday* (4/8/96, front page) confirms the popularity of Olympic viewing;

Despite the dearth of medal hopefuls and the tricky time zone differences between the UK and Georgia, the BBC has posted massive audiences, with as many as two million tuning in, even in the small hours of the morning.

Linford Christie's disqualification from the 100 metres final drew a British audience of 5.6 million, and several late Saturday night slots attracted audiences in excess of 10 million.

The Olympics are mythically billed as an event of sporting unity and friendship, promoting peace and co-operation amongst the youth of the world. Mystical images of the Olympic flame, torch bearers, doves of peace, the symbolic five rings and amateur sporting heroes provide a link with traditions of the past and act to perpetuate the traditional ideals of the modern Games. During the Atlanta Olympics, the resemblance of the flame to a MacDonald fries packet, the endless billboard advertisements of Coca Cola, Swatch and other sponsors around the stadia, the bomb blast in the centennial park and the drug controversies surrounding the gold medal winners superseded traditional imagery. In essence, the mediated spectacle provides a platform for political conflicts and rights, a global market for commerce and economic profit, a means for the home nation to promote their social status and identity, and for the hierarchical representation of different groups within society (Tomlinson and Whannel, 1984). Thus reinforcing social distinctions and divisions rather than global unity and solidarity.

The mediated experience of the Olympics is inevitably a differentiated one for

audiences. Real (1989), refers to the post modern 'designer Olympics' as media professionals, from country to country, set their own agendas selecting, fragmenting and framing particular events and moments to suit, in their opinion, particular consumer groups. This is a point of particular discussion, as according to Andrews (1998)¹, the Atlanta event was a moulding and designing of the Olympics as a feminine-appropriate product. This confirms that sports media consumption is perceived to be gender differentiated. The media professionals' means of determining the ways in which it should be altered to accommodate women, might in reality, be contrary to the perceptions of the female viewers. This encompasses ways in which cultural ideologies influence how sporting narratives are constructed, the amounts and type of representation of both male and female sport stars, and the nature of the events highest on the viewing agenda. An increase in the coverage of female sportswomen, and consideration given to female viewers, will not necessarily transform inherent traditional patriarchal attitudes and ideologies, if the nature of the coverage continues to reflect stereotypical gender differences in the world of sport. Similarly, female consumers, through negotiated or oppositional readings, might resist patriarchal and hegemonic codes.

This section identifies the differentiated nature of female representation in the largest mediated sporting event with female performers. Patriarchy refers here to the unequal social relationship in which men dominate, exploit and oppress women. The focus in this section on sporting women, through the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, identifies ways in which the sporting spectacle can act to perpetuate gender division, and or function as a transforming agency for unity between the sexes. It argues that through modes of legitimation and dissimulation, the selection of female media sporting imagery at the Atlanta Olympics acts to question women's legitimate place in the world of sport, and to deflect attention away from female success, by prioritising vulnerable, trivial and

¹ Andrews (1998) offers a perspective on the re-designing, by its television company N.B. C., of the USA television coverage of the Atlanta Olympics, to accommodate a larger female audience.

sexual images over powerful, athletic, sporting imagery. For as Van Zoonen (1991, p. 37) states;

Since the mass media are in the hands of male producers they will operate to the benefit of a patriarchal society - the power of the media to affect women's behaviour and women's perceptions of themselves.

This has direct relevance to the ways in which sports women are represented by the male dominated sports professionals - a sports world with few serious sports women or with pretty, feminine and vulnerable women unable to offer a serious challenge to male sporting dominance.

4.4.2 The spectacle of women and the Olympics - performers, media portrayal and the female audience experience

In a socio-historic context, the role of women as performers at the Olympics was always one of omission, oppression and contestation. Patriarchal control and inequalities are consistently reinforced, from De Coubertin's early sexist remarks that the Olympics, 'were to be dedicated to the solemn and periodic exultation of male athleticism ... with female applause as reward' (Cashmore, 1996, p.122) to the continuing outnumbering of male performers (63.53%) to females (36.47%) and sixty-four more male events at the 1996 event (Womens Sports Foundation, 1993). In reality, the expanding percentage of women currently taking part, together with the number of events they participate in, reflects a growing acceptance of female sportswomen;

Even Barbie is becoming an athlete. Olympic Barbie comes in a gymnastic uniform, complete with her gym bag and hairbrush. At thirty-five, Barbie is about twenty years too old and rather unbelievably proportioned to be a believable member of the US gymnastics team . . . It's no surprise that Barbie chose to go out for gymnastics, the most lady-like of women's sports, where you can be a great athlete and still be compared to a doll. (Conniff, 1996, p. 11)

However, this quote emphasises the continued stress on the feminine-appropriate nature of acceptable sport for women and the 'doll-like' quality promoted in the current trend of young adolescent female gymnasts at elite level. The under-

representation and lack of female acceptance in some sporting events, continues to question issues of equality that the Olympics purport to support. Only when 'Olympic Barbie' sweats, bruises and wears boxing gloves, and Action Man takes up synchro swimming can we truly acknowledge a sporting cultural transformation in gender ideals.

Such inequalities are further accentuated by the media representation of women at the Olympics. For as Kane & Greendorfer (1994, p.29) suggest;

Gender difference is translated into gender hierarchy because in existing social arrangements' females are defined not only as 'other', but as 'less than' their male counterparts.

This is especially the case in sporting representations. A number of content analyses such as Duncan (1990) and Daddario (1992), exploring female representation in the print media, photographic images and television commentaries, confirm the ways in which Olympic sportswomen are under-represented, trivialised and marginalised. More recently there are suggestions that equality reform, such as Title IX, have given US women's athletes more Olympic success and better media coverage than ever before. Conniff (1996, p.11) goes on to argue that the '96 Games advanced women's athletics in a thrilling fashion, providing more attention to images of powerful, female athleticism than ever before. Similarly, Weidman's (1997) quantitative content analysis of selected segments of the National Broadcasting Company's (NBC) broadcasts of the 1996 Olympics suggested that there was no longer significant evidence to support gender differentiated use of commentary;

This is the second study of 1996 US television broadcasts of men's and women's sports in which I have found no statistically significant differences in the ways that sport announcers talk about male and female athletes and mens' and womens' sports. . . Recent advances in the popularity of women's and girl's sports - among participants, live audiences and media audiences - are further indications of the increasing acceptability of female athleticism and improved status for women's sports. (Weidman, 1997, p. 24)

However, it is the underpinning ideologies, rather than the statistical data, which offers more interesting and revealing gender issues that are still apparent in media sport coverage.

Mikosza and Phillips (1999, p.12) focus on positioning of the female athletic body 'as a site of heterosexual pleasure' through analysis of an Australian magazine, entitled 'The Atlanta Dream,' reveals that the majority of naked female bodies are presented in similar poses and photo spreads to those of the naked sports men. Yet the visibility of female pubic hair and concealment of male genitalia, together with the privileging of a particular body type over a larger more muscular female imagery, suggests that gender differentiated and feminine appropriate selections were made.

Although I would argue that such changes alone do not provide convincing evidence for gender unity in sports media coverage, the Olympics do provide one of the largest stages to provide images of female athletes across a range of physical disciplines and from a range of different cultural backgrounds. The sights of successful female, Muslim athletes crossing the finishing line wearing western athletics clothing, transmitted around the world, are focal points for reflection on the nature of social change and consciousness-raising about the role of women in other cultures. Media imagery reflecting the acceptability and desirability of the physical strength, power and stamina shown by women participating in marathons, pole vault, soccer and other such contested sporting terrains clearly shows the sporting capabilities of women, refuting physiological and medical myths, whilst providing positive female role models for girls and women.

However, much depends on the ways in which such images are selected and portrayed, for if feminine-appropriate sports and sexualised images and commentary, are prioritised over more powerful, sporting representations then the persisting stereotypes of sporting women will not change. For these reinforce rather than challenge the patriarchal dominance of sport.

Attempts to target women by the F.A., and the deliberate focus of the N.B.C. to 'feminise' the Atlanta Olympics, raise a number of discussion points about the stereotypical ways in which this targeting and marketing has been deployed. Conniff (1996, p. 11) suggests that the Olympic coverage was strategically geared towards women, who made up more than half of the television audience. According to her, N.B.C. accommodated women by redesigning the event in a 'sappy, soap opera style'. Andrews (1998, p.10) too, acknowledges that, '1996 witnessed the discovery of women as an important and hitherto largely neglected market segment'.

This was a deliberate attempt by the television company to ensure the widest possible ratings, and in order to do so, they had to target and appeal to women, who whilst more likely to be drawn into the Olympics than many other sporting events, are less likely than men to watch whatever the event or situation. To avoid a decline in female viewers, as happened at the Seoul Olympics, N.B.C. interviewed 10, 000 people, prior to the event to ascertain their viewing preferences (Impoco, 1996, p.36). Such results, encouraged them, through their economic power over the I.O.C., to obtain an increased gymnastic, diving and swimming programme of events coinciding with prime viewing time. It would be interesting to note the gender composition of the production team here, whether female producers were involved in determining the final practices, and how males, as outsiders, can accurately predict what female viewers might want.

Several comments from Pollack (1996, p.8) suggest ways in which production practices were considered inappropriate;

Apparently pandering to female viewers in hopes of raising ratings, but actually insulting mature and intelligent women who are not excited by immature, skinny, pale drawn Barbie Dolls . . . the New York Times noted that appealing to female viewers does not require shooting every background feature with amber lighting and swelling music that suggests the finale of *Lassie Come Home*.

An article too, in *The Times* (24/7/96, p. 45) criticised the nature of the agenda, seemingly unaware of the feminine-appropriateness of the activities and the aesthetic (and sexual) appeal of women's bodies ;

More gymnastics, and more swimming? Wasn't that what we had last night and the night before? It is and it's what we get tonight and tomorrow night as well . . . gym, swimming and a bit of boxing for those of us doing the Atlanta Olympics the live way...they are hardly proving the spice of sporting life. Quite why gym and swimming are providing such good television is a mystery. . .

The ways in which N.B.C. strove to produce feminine-appropriate discourse and imagery, suggested that it saw its female consumers as a traditional, stereotypical and uniform group. With priority given to femininised, vulnerable, aesthetically body-focused imagery, Andrews (1998) confirms that despite their relative success, the USA women's football, basketball and softball teams received less prime coverage than gym, swimming and diving; and traditionally, hyper-masculinised events, such as weightlifting, boxing and wrestling were subsequently relegated to day time coverage. Pollack (1996, p.8) indicates that some events were given only fragmented coverage, and suggests more viewers, "would have liked to see an entire half of a women's soccer game".

Whilst media producers' acknowledgement of the significance of female consumers is a positive advance, and soap is clearly one of the most enduring of popular cultural forms, it is disappointing that their philosophy perpetuates ideologically entrenched ideals of feminine appropriate sports, and acts to trivialise women's interest in sport for its own sake, by redesigning sport as 'soap'. A radical feminist approach to the re-design would have advocated the opportunity to transform women and girl's consciousness, by presenting new, powerful images of female athleticism, across a range of diverse and growing sports. This, accompanied by positive and forward thinking commentary, could have provided a powerful innovative platform for cultural reinforcement and acceptance of new female sporting imagery.

The following section looks at the ways in which the British press coverage and television highlights of the Atlanta Olympics, presents photographic imagery of female Olympians, and questions the ways in which female consumers are positioned in the sporting agendas, during such a global event.

4.4.2 Beach Babes, Gymnastic dollies and images of female athleticism - female sports stars for the male gaze, or as transforming role models for women?

The image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man then carries this over into the structure of representation, the ideology of the patriarchal order. (Mulvey, 1988 p. 68)

An analysis of photographs of female sports and sport stars at the Olympics shows ways in which gender inequalities are interwoven in the representational imagery of sporting women. It confirms the ideological ways in which, despite women's increasing and improving acceptance within the sporting culture, such acceptance still functions within a wider framework of hegemony and patriarchy. Whilst some images do act to empower both the athletes themselves, and the ways in which the female audience might come to perceive their own opportunities within the sporting world, a wider range of images trivialises, stereotypes and reinforces notions of female vulnerability.

From within the total range of female events taking place during Atlanta '96, viewers and readers receive a fragmented and selected part. The argument proposed here is that the agenda set for the nature and type of images selected and constructed by media professionals, continues to reinforce the notion that 'women in sport' are a contested issue. Photographic images act to show the inherent dangers if women do choose to take part (injured, vulnerable gymnastic dolls), provide aesthetically, femininised and often sexualised images (bikini clad beach volleyball babes) appropriate for the male gaze (men are after all perceived to be the dominant sports media consumers), as well as providing powerful images of strong, athletic women in the same ways we have come to expect sportsmen to be represented. Duncan (1990, p.24) suggests sport offers;

a market setting of photographic imagery for the relative disempowering of women.

Kuhn (1985) believes that sports photography offering powerful athletic representations of sports women makes it difficult to operate readily understandable codes of difference from men. One way the media strive to do this, is by questioning the sexuality of such women, suggesting that they are not 'real' women.

Firstly, the range of female sports represented across the four daily papers analysed provided for the categorisation of three types of sporting images; a) aesthetic body-focused b) team games-focused and c) combat / target-focused. Appendix G. v., shows a maximum of seventeen different female sports selected from the 97 different events that women participated in at Atlanta. Broadsheet papers offered a wider range of photographic images, by comparison only six different sports were visually represented in *The Sun*. Figure 17 reflects the differentiated representation of male and female photographs, and the nature of the female photographs selected in *The Independent*.

There are a number of commonalities across all papers in the kinds of sports that were photographed. Beach volleyball, gymnastics, athletics, hockey and swimming were evident across all newspapers. Neither of the first two events was expected to bring British medal success and home performers had little prior 'star' status. Michelle Smith's quadruple medal haul partially explains her dominant image within the swimming news. The Great Britain women's hockey team was also worthy of news coverage during its successful run in their respective competition. However, if success is deemed as newsworthy, then this still was not proportionally equal coverage to that of the less successful men's team. (Brennan, 1997)

The high profile of athletics is attributed to the relatively well known British athletes, Sally Gunnell, Denise Lewis, Kelly Holmes and Liz McColgan. Such women provide the powerful reality of successful female athletic images. Whilst swimming, hockey and athletics male imagery was also evident, in

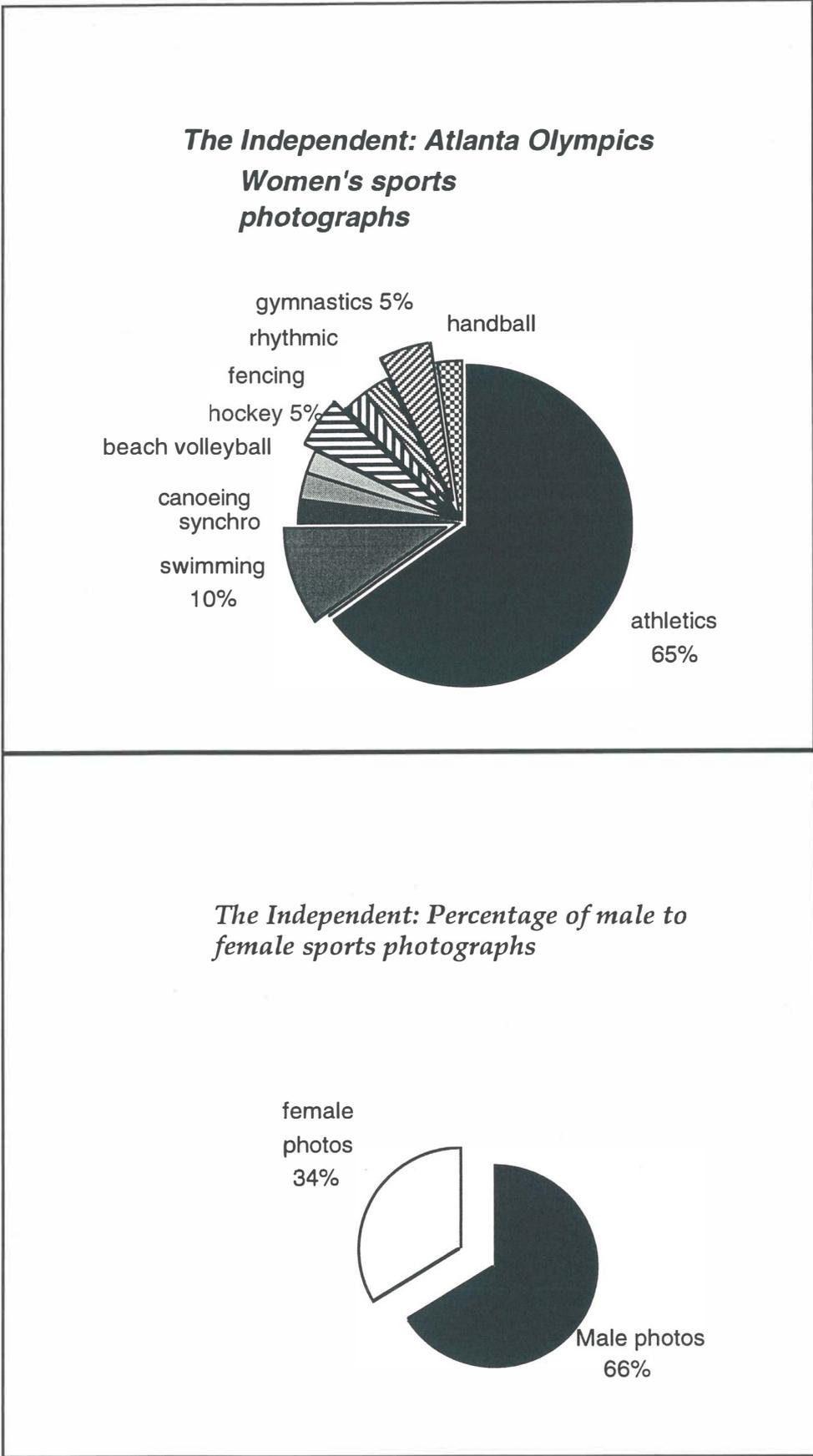


Figure 17: Female sports photographic images and coverage in *The Independent*

contrast, despite male competitors in both beach volleyball and gymnastics, female images completely dominated.

If beach volleyball imagery was high on the agenda due to its status as a 'new' Olympic sport, then we might similarly have expected to see male images. In contrast there were no images to accompany the new Olympic event of female soccer. News value it seems, has more to do with gender appropriateness and 'sexuality' than sport. The International Beach Volleyball association's (*Daily Mail*, 12/1/99, p.16) recent remit, that bikini bottoms should be no more than two inches wide from upper thigh to waist, confirms that sex rather than sporting females sells.

Gymnastics too, continually draws in large television audiences at the Olympics, one of the reasons for N.B.C.'s promotion of the event. I argue that the youth of the female performers makes it more acceptable - girls clearly will grow out of it when they become 'real' women. Additionally, the decrease in age of the gymnasts, accompanied by increasingly complex tumbling and vaulting routines has led to media amplification, contrasting the thrills and spills of the performances, with its associated emotional and physical health of the (*vulnerable*) female competitors.

Both beach volleyball and gymnastics are focal points for this case study, in an attempt to understand why 'sporting babes and the dolls' receive amplified attention. Clearly, both sports have the opportunity to provide powerful, athletic images and this could be viewed as a positive feature in representation. However, it is the nature of the representation that is under question in the following section.

Secondly, in relation to the events that media professionals selected for coverage, the number of female performers raises issues about the depth and nature of sporting role models for women and girls. A total of thirty-five females, across a range of

ages, ethnic and national backgrounds, were chosen. Appendix G v. shows that of those only three received photographic status across all of the newspapers. The remaining performers, apart from Liz McGolgan, Denise Lewis, Kelly Holmes and Merlene Ottey are unlikely to have been widely identified by the general British public.

This confirms the lack of female sport stars who receive consistently high profiles across a range of media texts. This notion of invisibility is particularly marked at the Olympics where there is no justifiable argument for the lack of coverage of elite female performers . Appendix G vi. shows an analysis of the events and performers represented on the BBC highlights programme, scheduled at the end of the Olympics. Whilst a relatively wide range of events was shown, 20% more were of men's events. Female sports stars covered were the same ones as featured in the newspapers and a higher proportion of female individual to team performances were shown.

Sally Gunnell, as a British athlete and former Olympic gold medallist, might have anticipated receiving considerable media attention. Her fight back from injury and subsequent collapse in the second round of her event, ensured some prominence during Atlanta;

Britain's most cherished athlete for her successes, homeliness and cheerful demeanour, admitted yesterday that she might be at the end of her glorious career. (*Times*, 31/7/96, p.44)

Significantly, when "Gunnell, defending 400 metres hurdles champion, swept aside her injury fears with a comfortable debut yesterday" (*Independent*, 29/7/96, p. S9) there were no accompanying action photographs. However, her subsequent race featured a number of images across the newspapers either of her distraught and collapsed on the track, or being carried from the track and on crutches. Such captions accompanied the photographic images;

Final anguish: Gunnell carried off. (*Mail*, 29/7/96)
Injured Gunnell considers retirement. (*Times*, 31/7/96, p.44)

Readings of the text indicate considerable focus on her recent injuries, her imminent retirement and her opportunity to concentrate on starting a family, thus re-affirming her femininity and role for motherhood.

The second athlete, featured across the newspapers was Kerrie Strugg. Prior to the Olympics it is unlikely that the American gymnast would have been widely known to the general British public. The priority given to television coverage of the gymnastics competition, and the fact that she provided one of the 'mythical' moments of the Games, catapulted her to the attention of the audience. Newspapers, too, provided amplified attention, and photographic images resembled similarities with the Gunnell themes - injury focus, being carried by her coach to the medal podium and in tears. Some of the following linguistic messages accompanied the visual images;

picked herself up off the floor after a botched first vault . . . and her second effort left her crumbled in pain, but a hero to the nation.

(*Independent*, 25/7/96, p.27)

Kerrie Strugg became an all American heroine and the wounded bird of gymnastics with her last vault heroics at the US team won the gold medal.

(*Times*, 29/7/96, p.29)

US gymnast, Kerrie Strugg's completion of her 2nd vault despite a badly strained ankle was the defining moment of the first half of the 1996

Olympics. . . she added another word to the Olympic credo. . . faster, higher, stronger, braver. (Wulf, 1996, p.32)

The Sun viewed it somewhat differently from the rest, trivialising the moment with its points of references;

She cried, audiences cried and everybody gasped in disbelief when the teenage acrobat, with a voice like Minnie Mouse, was carried to the medal ceremony. She had enough strapping around her leg to supply St. John's Ambulance for a year . . . (*Sun*, 3/8/96, p.36)

More positive, action images of other successful individual female gymnasts, such as the individual all round Olympic champion, Lilia Podkopyeva were not deemed to be so newsworthy.

Michelle Smith, Irish swimmer and Ireland's first ever female flag bearer (1992 Barcelona Olympics), as might be expected, received high profile for her spectacular

four medals in the swimming events. The photographic images of her, represented by both action and posed shots reflect her success as an athlete. However, the positive features are overridden by constant references to the American-led drive to discredit her achievements by drug allegations.

An article focusing on Michelle Smith and issues around women in sport, helps to draw reader's attention to the oppression women in sport have had to face. An alternative reading might suggest that Smith's controversial improvement in performance and the drug insinuations, reaffirm concerns about women's participation in sport, as indicated by the Archbishop below;

In Ireland, Smith's success is being celebrated widely as a long overdue resurgence in women's sport . . . mass euphoria has yet to touch the Irish World Cup campaign levels . . . her golds were also the first Irish success at Atlanta by either male or female. The breakthrough by Smith and O'Sullivan is part of a wider Irish women's emancipation. In sport this has been nothing short of revolutionary. Irish women's athletics was in effect wiped out for over a decade by the Archbishop of Dublin. In 1949 with women's sport on the increase he wrote a Lenten pastoral letter damning it as unbecoming. (*The Independent* 24/7/96, p.30)

A positive feature of the drugs controversy was the media focus on Smith's training methods, and its impact on her performance. Such information is rarely reported on in female sports star coverage unless it gives medical cause for concern. One image of arms aloft after victory, shows a powerful and well-defined upper body. *The Times* (22/7/96, p. 28) in the accompanying article states;

Smith puts her new found musculature and strength (made all the more noticeable by her 5ft. 3" height) down to hard work in the gym as well as the pool.

The Sun (24/7/96, p. 29) cannot resist gender stereotypical references to her hair (photographed with her long hair loose and flowing), whilst positioning her within the drugs issue; "Michelle - Our Belle. . . flame haired Michelle, 26. Golden girl said my success is sheer hard work not hard drugs". Michelle Smith's image as a sport star clearly is contested in itself - her success and incredible four medals, tarnished by the drug innuendoes.

Appraisal of the three dominant female sport stars across the British press raises concern about how and why their images appeared across all of the daily papers analysed. In this case it seems that active images of athletic success are less likely to be amplified than media images of female vulnerability that are selected, reinforcing the dangers that being a physically active and successful female can bring.

With regard to other female sportswomen who received photographic representation, a number of themes emerge that these images signify. Firstly, images of sexuality for the male gaze, posed or focused on scantily clad body images. These images were evident in beach volleyball, for example, with several camera angles focusing on close ups of the players from the hips upwards, and linguistic messages about Baywatch babes, bikinis and breast implants. The archery photograph and article on Alison Williamson entitled "Pin-Up aiming for a perfect profile", appeared to only be covered because of her modelling potential;

remembered by many as 'that bird' with the bow and arrow who appeared starkers in some glossy magazine, *Esquire* . . . Archery being such a minority sport, even an Olympic medal will provide Alison with less lasting fame than the notoriety she achieved when taking her kit off for the lens.
(*Daily Mail*, 27/7/96, p. 77)

Such comments confirm media agenda-setting that gives higher profile to sexual, body poses than female athletic success. It confirms Lenskyj's (1998, p. 20) comments;

women tend to be shown in submissive, sexualised poses, with camera angles that focus on the breasts or crotch.

The Sun, when reporting on two successful athletic performances chose to represent them with rear view photographs of the female hockey players bending over "Rear we go. . ." (23/7/96) and the women's 100 metres winning trio whose shorts had ridden up "Top of the Bots' (3/8/96). Clearly sexualised and revealing body imagery, selected here in preference to action shots, provided more visible opportunities for male gaze than female empowerment.

Secondly, images of vulnerability, signified by photographs focusing on injuries, tears, disappointment and distress, and comments such as "Sonia O'Sullivan failed to qualify as she has not recovered from the severe stomach problems that caused her such distress in the 5,000 metres"(*Sun*, 1/8/96); "Synchronised snivelling. . . Kerri Strugg . . . shed enough tears to fill an Olympic pool"(*Sun*, 3/8/96) "Wounded bird . . ." (*Sun*, 3/8/96).

Thirdly, trivial and frivolous imagery, connotating a lack of seriousness about women's participation in sport. For example, discourse around Beach volleyball, focused more on Baywatch and breast implants, trivialising the performances;

Silicone Volley! Baywatch it ain't but no-body could spot a Pamela Anderson look-a-like in the daftest game of all. If competitors had dabbled with silicone implants then the ops had failed or the contents melted in the 100's. (*Sun*, 25/7/9, p. 65)

If beach volleyball is billed as the 'daftest game of all' this explains why only female imagery is selected to represent it. The audience is encouraged to forget that men take part too!

Similarly, a sailing photograph showing two female competitors sunbathing whilst waiting for the race to start;

Olympic team skipper, helming with her crew, sunbathes . . . she covered up with a towel when photographers' boats converged on theirs (*Times*, 30/7/96, p. 22).

and that of a gold medal winning female windsurfer, smiling and waving on the board, connotated a light-hearted and non-serious approach by these sportswomen. Action shots of these women were deemed less newsworthy than the trivial imagery which deflects attention away from their sporting success.

Duncan and Messner (1998, p.178) using Foucault's concept 'formulae of exclusion' suggest that defensive discursive practices in media sport operate a selective agenda where;

Some attributes of the players are socially visible by bringing those qualities to the audience's attention; simultaneously commentators make other characteristics of the athletes socially invisible.

In the selection of photographic images taken at the Olympics, the inclusion of the above discussed choices, has been clearly prioritised whilst more active, powerful less 'feminine appropriate' ones excluded from the reader's vision.

There was evidence of athletic, powerful, strong and successful imagery portrayed by action photographs particularly in the hockey, swimming, diving, basketball and athletics. Shots, such as Fu Mingxia, were accompanied by positive comments such as "Grace and power were evident as she captured the springboard gold." (*Times*, 2/8/96, p.38) Judo commentary was similarly positive and empowering;

Watching these women . . . power, energy, purpose: it was splendid to be close to such things. . . these judo fighters offer something a little more substantial than chocolate box femininity. (*Times*, 20/7/96, p.46)

The article in 1015 (*Times Supplement for Young People*, 20/7/96, p.7) provided the most comprehensive and positive portrayal of a female Olympian observed in the daily press analysed during this time. The American basketballer, Sheryl Swoopes, identified as the first female athlete to have a Nike trainer named after her, was featured in written text accompanied by a number of great action shots, showing her physicality and skill;

Young girls fanatical about basketball now have hoop heroes of the same gender. They want to be like Swoopes and her team mates, not Grant Hill and his.

Swoopes promotes the importance of sporting role models for females;

We've shown young girls that if we can do it, so can you. Work hard and your dream can come true.

Although the effects of such media portrayal are uncertain, a wider range of similar articles focusing on female performers as role models could assist in both the acceptances of, and desirability in becoming a successful sportswoman. Such articles could be included on the sports pages of newspapers and women's magazines rather than simply felt as appropriate for young girls, for adults, too, might like to read them.

The coverage of handball, synchro swimming, rhythmic gym and beach volleyball whilst positively represented with female imagery, in the various articles across the papers was accompanied by texts criticising the inclusion of such sports in the Olympics;

Sport or spectacle? The Russian swimming team makes patterns in the water whilst the rhythmic gymnasts of the American team jump through hoops in order to impress the judges. (*Independent*, 1/8/96, p.26)

The article headline above "Rhythms out of sync with Olympic spirit" criticises two Olympic sports that have female-only participation. The photographs whilst visually appealing, showing athleticism, aestheticism and co-ordination are trivialised by the accompanying text. As Hargreaves (1994) suggests, if women had designed the Olympic motto it might have been balance, ultra endurance and flexibility instead of higher, faster and stronger. As such, activities requiring differing sporting qualities to the patriarchal determined mottoes are undermined.

Both handball and beach volleyball had male competitions taking place, yet where headlines questioned the validity of the sport, the accompanying photographs were of female participants. "Sublime or ridiculous? Welcome the Olympics of the Absurd" (*Independent*, 24/7/96, front page). By criticism being given to feminine appropriate sports, and those considered inappropriate, signified with female images, hegemonic values continue to be perpetuated about the place and value of women in the Olympics. The 'formulae of exclusion' acting to disempower women in sport.

Of these, Beach volleyball and gymnastics provide some of the more interesting areas of contestation of women's sporting representation. The 'Beach Volleyball Babes', in the Olympics for the first time, drew sell out live crowds at Atlanta. This confirmed the high status of the sport in the USA, as one of the most lucrative for females. It is suggested that the biggest selling point for the game is its sex appeal, rather than the sporting prowess on display;

Tanned, well-toned, scantily clad women are on display. And although Gabrielle Reece is the only one who has been named "one of the 5 most beautiful women in the world" by Elle, there are plenty of prominent players who look terrific in bikinis. (Silver, 1997)

Holly McPeak, the volleyballer, who received media coverage focusing on her perfectly sculptured build as a result of breast implants, raised the difficulty with female coverage of the sport;

Men's volleyball sells sex and it does so effortlessly, without being judged . . . men aren't uncomfortable being perceived as sexy, because no-one questions their legitimacy as athletes. With women's athletes there's always the question of whether we're sex objects who aren't being taken seriously. (Silver, 1997)

In the case of British press coverage, the women's beach volleyball players received high photographic coverage, yet there were no photographic images of scantily clad muscular male volleyball players for its women's readers to gaze at. The sports pages remain predominantly for heterosexual, sports loving men anyway who would prefer to gaze at female bodies.

The references to the female players, such as Gabrielle Reece, (even though she didn't make selection for the US Olympic teams) as the 6'3" Amazonian, a model who has lucrative sponsorship deals, is on TV chat shows and has written a book on her career entitled 'Big girl in the middle', suggests that it is possible to be athletic, strong and sexy. This can project new interpretations on notions of acceptable feminine body shape and image, and the ways that sport can provide successful and lucrative careers for women as well as men. In this way female sporting images, portrayed by the

media, of the 'Beach babes', whilst offering sexualised images for the male gaze could also be read as redefining athletic and sporty as compatible, rather than conflicting, with sexual appeal.

By contrast, the imagery of gymnastic performance connotes dangers and concerns about female participation in sport.

It is the place where little girls fly, where little girls pout and preen, where little girls fall to the ground and weep. (*Times*, 27/7/96, p. 46)

The nature of the amplified attention given to the 'Gymnastic dolls' reflects the patriarchal media jealousy of societal ideals, which prevent male gymnasts from attracting the same kind of historical adoration and attention given to female gymnasts. From the emergence of Olga Korbut in the 1972 Olympics, with the increasing complexity of tumbling, and the grace and aesthetic nature of more mature female bodies, becoming seemingly less appealing to the subjective marking of the judges, gymnastics has been for girls rather than women. Whilst it can provide images of amazing athleticism, balance, co-ordination and suppleness, newspaper portrayal at Atlanta focused instead on images of vulnerability, weakness, reliance on male coaches, tears and the prevention of developing into 'real' women by delayed puberty and long term implications of infertility and injury.

A US team nutritionist, in the Overseas News in *The Times* (27/7/96, p.13), suggests that such discourse relies on old myths that can no longer be substantiated as the health and welfare of the girls are closely monitored. Concerns about boys' involvement in gymnastics does not seem to receive any media focus, yet presumably males have similar injury, if not medical risks. Yet, when male performers take part in sport the inherent injury risks and overcoming of such obstacles are part of the challenge, and a means of proving manhood.

Gymnastics has traditionally been seen to be a more feminine-appropriate sport, although historical ideals promoted it as both remedial and therapeutic for women, rather than serious sport. Perhaps it is this dichotomy that now creates a contested sporting site, for the amplification of injuries, little girls made up as 'Barbie', and the tearful releases at the end of competitions in many ways contravene healthy ideals. There can be no argument that women's gymnastics is now highly competitive and big business. The USA women's gymnastics team receives high profile. Dominique Moceanu, 14 years old, has already appeared on the front cover of *Vanity Fair* and had her story in the *New York Times*. Kerrie Strugg, 19 years old, has earned \$1.3 million since the Olympics, endorses Danskin and Ace bandages and has written her autobiography, a children's book, 'Landing on My Feet'. The whole team toured 34 cities after the Olympics, and each received \$6,000 per performance (Leavy, 1997).

The active, sporting image of female gymnasts was subsumed by connotations of vulnerability through one mythical moment, amplified by close-up of injuries, tears and the ultimate dependence on a male coach to carry her to the medal podium. For the media, it was seen as one of the defining moments of the 1996 Olympics. In essence, it provided a number of elements confirming patriarchal control; it gave readings of girls not yet women but made up like dolls, the continual need of male protection and the warning of the dangers of females taking sport too seriously. Such is its appeal for both men and women;

a crowd of 32, 000 screamed; six small red, white and blue Olympians marched out for their medals, trailed only by their wounded team-mate who was carried in the arms of a coach who never met a camera he didn't like. There was much debate about this later, but it was the men in the Georgia dome who were the first to start weeping. The women stood and cheered...For those at home, it was a reason to switch on NBC a few hours later, spiking the ratings to an Olympic peak that has become a national plateau. (Starr, 1996, p. 40)

Considering the claim in the opening sections for the "Oprah Olympics" and the re-designing of Atlanta as a feminised product, the stereotypical ways in which this might have happened, and whether such an event did provide positive imagery for

women can begin to be questioned. There clearly were some positive features - to see women performing at all on prime time television is one step forward in the equity battle. Secondly, some of the images from athletics, hockey and swimming did show athletic, female bodies in action. However, the way in which women were framed as weaker than men, reflects the ideological modes through photographic imagery that distracted attention away from the sporting action and success of female Olympians.

Such readings are only some in a range of polysemic images. The way in which the female audiences were interpellated, and did read the texts requires another level of analysis, for audience figures alone, even if the Atlanta Olympics did draw in more female viewers, does not inform us about the ways in which women felt part of global sporting unity, or whether they too sensed that the mediated sporting versions of events were selected within a patriarchal, stereotypical framework. For if such messages are internalised we can question the extent to which women are disempowered in their perceptions about their place across sporting terrain, and the ways in which men can reinforce their belief that women have no serious place in their 'sporting sanctum'.

4.5 Summary

Readings of the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 revealed a primary discourse celebrating 'national character', fusing long standing ideals and myths of sporting legend with traits of national identity. Ideological constructions legitimised the 'united' nation, masking the multi-cultural and gendered social divisions of contemporary Britain. This was strengthened by the positioning of overseas teams, competitors and spectators as 'others'.

The gender differentiated discourse affirmed the female audience and sportswomen as outsiders across patriarchal sporting terrains. Codes of difference between male and

female representations intimated the female audience was more interested in shopping, soap and the sexiness of male sport stars than serious sports viewing. In the press especially, sportswomen were marginalised and confirmed as less worthy than men, through vulnerable, sexual and trivialised imagery.

Sport stars were essential elements of identification and personalisation within the sporting narratives. Functioning as national representatives, and role models for young people, these were presented along a continuum of heroism and villainy.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONSTRUCTION AND INTERPRETATION OF SPORTS STARS

5.1 Young people Interpreting Gazza: 'There are two Paul Gascoignes'

5.1.1 Constructing the image and audience identification

This section deals with a long term appraisal of the ways in which Paul Gascoigne, the England soccer star is interpreted by groups of young people across a six year time span. The question is how is 'Gazza', as he is known to England fans, received and in what way does the construction of his media image reflect the attitudes about him, and knowledge of him, that young people have.

The time span for the study identifies the emergence of him as a high profile media star during the 1990 World Cup, through to his Euro 1996 notoriety both on and off the pitch. The inclusion of material prior to the Euro '96 soccer competition provides evidence of changing opinions and fluctuating long term attitudes about the player.

From 1990 when he emerged as a sport star and national celebrity who;

unlike almost any other player, his sporting life is a catalogue of fantastic memories and broken dreams. The ecstasy and agony of that World Cup semi final ...when a nation cried along with the pink punk ... (*Observer Review*, 22/3/98, p.20)

Until six years later when;

At the start of Euro '96 many questions were being asked of Gascoigne. . . (*Gazza Euro '96 Glory video*)

Such continued media attention and hype over a relatively long time span for a sportsman, and the fragmented nature of his coverage across a range of products provide an ideal case study subject for hermeneutic analysis. For a three week span of analysis cannot provide a complete picture about the ways in which young people

alter their perceptions of a star player as a result of changing media constructions. Harris (1994) has suggested that more longitudinal work on sports stars is needed, and the fieldwork corroborates this recommendation.

There is a number of ways in which the media construction and interpretation of Paul Gascoigne can be developed through media analysis. It is intended that a fuller textual analysis, portraying how his image has developed, and been manipulated from 1990 to date, incorporating data from newspapers, magazine, academic texts, fanzines, autobiographies and videos, will be developed following the completion of this thesis.

'Textual analysis identifies the construction of 'Gazza' as hero, villain and fool in the narratives. Sociological analysis can question how Gascoigne functions as a sport star, and the kind of meanings he embodies. The media present him as a polysemic image, multi-layered and multi-referential. The response of the audience could be anywhere along that continuum, and as such provides for cross levels of analysis between the production and consumption of such images. We can question the nature of Paul Gascoigne's appeal, as he develops super star potential, and the extent to which his image is seen to be 'embodying central but threatened values within a given social conjuncture' (Gledhill, 1991, p. xvi).

Gascoigne is frequently referred to in the public domain as a role model for young people. From perspectives of effects theory and insinuations that the vulnerable audience might adopt his image, analysis can focus on the extent to which media constructions do effect behavioural change and modelling. The ways in which fans adopt him, and replicate his image can become an issue for analysis.

As Real (1996, p.95) suggests reception theory and audience interpretation consider the way in which media texts are appropriated and decoded as meaningful. This section looks beyond the 'Gazza' texts to explore the readers' response and knowledge of the star. It considers the extent to which young people are

critical and reflective, and how they appraise the messages they receive through identification or rejection.

As the main focus of this section is more specifically on the interpretative stage of analysis, selected aspects of the textual analysis will be used to contextualise the interpretations. The personalised discourse allows individuals to develop their own concepts and meaning about media stars (Real, 1996). Aspects of fandom and the ways in which individuals are drawn towards certain images and develop their own identities around their associations with particular stars are a neglected, but required area of sports, media and cultural studies. A range of diverse public figures offer suggestions about the nature of Gazza 'fans';

In streets from Glasgow to Belfast, Gazza's faithful peroxide their hair like their anti hero's. (*Sports Illustrated*, 21/8/95, V.83, No. 8, p.14)

According to a poet, Hamilton, in *Publishers weekly* (1/11/93, vol 240, n.44, p. 73) an obsessive fan of 'Gazza' must be 'part jock and part connoisseur'. Yet the extent to which this can be justified is limited.

The significance of sports stars within the readings of sporting texts has been confirmed;

Sports stars have attained growing prominence within popular culture during the last two decades. Increasingly some sports stars have been able to break out of the sports page ghetto. (Whannel and Wellard, 1995, p.33)

Of these, Paul Gascoigne has become one of the most highly prolific sports stars in the British media since his tearful exit during the 1990 World Cup. His image has extended beyond the sports pages across a multi-array of products to the extent that it is not conceivable that many British individuals, whether sports fans or not, would not have heard of him. Since those early days the nature of personal media intrusion on his family and social life, has ensured that the audience might know or remember more about this, than his sporting career. According to *The Observer Review* by 1992,

alongside Margaret Thatcher and Princess Diana, his was one of the most famous of English faces (22/3/98, p.20).

5.1.2 The heroic and patriotic tears of a clown - a defining moment in image making

What is evident is that a media hero, such as Paul Gascoigne, develops as a result of extreme media hype and coverage. In just six months, Gascoigne was wrapped and packaged as the national hero 'Gazza'. Media coverage in both the tabloid and quality press suggested that he was an important social figure (Lines, 1991, p.12).

The Times Higher Educational Supplement (Giddens, 1990, 11) offered a full page spread on Gazza's development as a commodity, *The London Review of Books* (Miller, 1991, p.25) gave an eulogy on the player referring to him as 'a marvellous, equivocal sight. A priapic monolith in the Mediterranean sun', a biography was published almost before his glittering career begun (McGibbon, 1990) and photo sessions of him with Maggie Thatcher at Downing Street were published in most of the popular press. All of this created "Gazzamania"- a highly consumable product.

Over twenty five million viewers (*The Daily Mail*, 11/2/98, p.24) who tuned in to watch the match, saw Paul Gascoigne's upset as England were defeated by Germany in the 1990 World Cup semi-final. The tears of 'Gazza', when he was booked for a tackle during England's match (he could not have played in the next round had England qualified), were according to Whannel (1992, p.148) mythologised the following day when an image of 'Gazza' crying appeared on a tee-shirt proclaiming "There'll always be an England". This patriotic image, and his tears could be seen to represent the feelings of the whole nation following England's defeat. Since then, this image has become an enduring and sustained one, across a range of texts and products. The front cover of his autobiography featured it in 1991, *Total Sport* (November, 1997) claimed it as top of Sport's fifty most heartbreaking moments, and a

more comical version of Gascoigne crying over losing his crisps, appears in a current *Walker* potato crisp advert.

In this moment, Gascoigne could have signified the epitome of either hero, villain or fool depending on individual interpretation. A villain for getting booked which would have left England short of a key player in the next round (David Beckham's sending off in the 1998 World Cup match receiving such interpretations); a fool, for real men don't cry, it's only a game of football; a hero, his tears taken to represent the feelings of a true patriot and hero. Clearly, the latter image was constructed as the dominant meaning, and the 'tears of the clown' an acceptable and defining moment in the image making of Paul Gascoigne.

The rhetoric surrounding the myth of the crying Gazza has persisted. *The Economist* reported that Dr. Casey, an expert in ethics of Ancient Greece believed;

Gazza was the perfect exemplar of pagan virtue, the weeping, doomed, inarticulate idol of the working classes. (23/6/92, V.323, No.7760, p.64)

Total Sport (November edition, 1997, p.108/9) perpetuates the association between the tears, national pride and football;

It wasn't so unusual to see a footballer cry, although of course it was stunning to see one who cared so much ... Gascoigne had put pride back into English football . . . this moment ensured his immortality.

Paxman (1998, p.174)) supports Gascoigne as an English cultural hero;

. . . whether in the music hall tradition or on the football field, from Stanley Matthews to Paul Gascoigne. Because of where they came from, and the fact that their speech identified them with their birthplace, all became working class heroes, even when hugely rich.

Gascoigne's accent and background accentuates his Geordie roots, and this working class identity is stressed in image constructions of him. As his biographer suggests (McGibbon 1990), Gazza's is a rags to riches story 'that will prove both irresistible

and heart-warming'. Thus his early construction is established - a stereotypical English working class lad, committed to both football and his country, whose hard work and endeavour has helped him 'make good'. The French derivation of his surname seemingly offering tensions with the building of an English working class hero, makes it come as no surprise that his surname is shortened, personalised and anglicised in the popular press as 'Gazza'.

The early construction of Gascoigne begins to determine readings of the emergence of an English sporting hero amongst young people whom I was working with.

Young people's reception of a range of media sports in 1991 was investigated through questionnaires issued to 240 14/15 year olds. As Lines (1991) reported, 'Gazza' was the second most popular sports star to Gary Lineker. More girls (32) than boys (24) identified him as their favourite star. Forty per cent of the sample (9% more boys than girls) selected their favourite star because they were skilful, 'brill' or simply the best, reflecting most specifically on aspects of their sporting performance. Eighteen per cent of girls selected their favourite because of his attractiveness and male body physique. 'Gazza' was the sports star that young people suggested they would most like to be, of these nine were male and one was female.

The popularity of Gascoigne amongst girls could be explained by the vast media coverage he received both during and since the 1990 World Cup. During the time of this analysis, Gascoigne received a full page pin up in *Just 17* (Jan 9th 1991) and in the same magazine free membership for his fan club was being offered as a competition prize. The photograph did not show him in his soccer kit, but bare chested in order for girls to admire his physique. Even if girls did not watch football either live or on TV, they were still receiving images of 'Gazza' through favourite female magazines. During this time a content analysis (Lines, 1991) of *The Sun* and *News of the World*, the most widely read newspaper amongst the sample group, showed that 'Gazza' featured on 7 out of 8 days of analysis. This included 8

photographs of him. On one day he featured on 3 separate pages - the front page, page 5 and the sports pages (*Sun*, 13 April 1991).

5.1.3 The changing faces of Gazzamania

During the years leading up to Euro '96, Paul Gascoigne as footballer and celebrity, continued to make media headlines. McGibbon (1990) who suggested that 'Gazza's' story was 'real *Roy of the Rovers*' stuff, even at seven, surely was not to know that his subject was to make the front cover of the *Roy of the Rovers* annual in 1992 where the rhetoric of Gazza as a national hero was adopted for its readership;

He's the most talked about player in Britain . . . Gazza returned from Italy a national hero and Gazzamania was rampant. . . (*Roy of the Rovers annual*, 1992, p.66)

The accompanying visual comic book images show the player as both clown and fool together with an impression of how Gascoigne might have looked as a soccer star of the 1890's. This traditional hero representation contrasts explicitly with the clowning images, nostalgically harking back to the golden age of sporting heroes.

As Gledhill (1991, p.xiv.) suggests;

Textual analysis shows how star images reconcile, mask or expose ideological contradictions. However the premise that such images are intertextual and contradictory opens up the possibility for divergent or oppositional readings by different audiences.

Gascoigne embodies two distinct social trends. Firstly, he is seen to be a traditional working class footballing hero, patriotic, immensely skilful and loyal. Yet, increasingly through the early 1990's he fits the mould of the 'New Lad' - gorgeous blondes, childish pranks, boozy exploits, laddish friends and a growing affluent lifestyle become alternative and central characteristics of his image;

Gazza inspired the nation by blubbing like a child. He belched into microphones, turned up on a formal occasions wearing a pair of plastic breasts, was paired in headlines with 'sexy Miss Whiplash', produced a book called 'Daft as a Brush', made a rash tackle. And was never the same again. (Barnes, *The Times Euro '96* pullout, 3/6/96, p.3/4)

In 1995, a further group of young people was interviewed and their interpretation of Gascoigne was discussed around a collage of media photographs of the footballer. This reflected the variety of images of 'Gazza', encompassing him as hero, villain and fool. The tape transcripts from a boys group; girls group and mixed group reflected the mixed and changing receptions to the star as more is becoming known about his life beyond the soccer pitch. If identity and desire are essential features for the effective consumption of star images we can begin to question the extent to which the media amplification of Gascoigne's personal life becomes problematic for the reader.

Despite some popular conceptions of the star as of moral influence, my survey data showed that young people are not so gullible as effects research suggests they might be. They are critical of stars and celebrities and make judgements in their own terms. Gascoigne, revered figure of the post 1990 World Cup year was recognised by young people in the summer of 1995 but was hardly hailed as the hero or influential role model. All interviewees recognised him in photographs and knew about incidents in which he had been involved. Three group interviews produced some revealing results (Tomlinson and Lines, 1995, p. 72). The female group when asked "what do you think about him?" responded;

don't like him
crap
he loves himself
he likes to be in the news
he's just stupid

A group of boys was scarcely more positive;

he's a superstar
he's fat
he's northern
nobody likes him
he drinks a lot
he goes to a lot of night clubs and gets into fights

A mixed group generated different responses from the others, the girls said;

he's ugly . . . he's ugly now

the boys observed that;

he's funny
he's well liked
he's well fit

This clearly shows the generating of alternative meanings and interpretations, revealing the polysemic images of Gascoigne and suggesting individuals' opinions rest anywhere along that continuum. It is also consistent with similar mixed responses from adults;

I love it when he smells the referee's armpits. (Franco Zeffirelli, in Barnes, *the Times Euro '96 pullout*, 3/6/96, p.4)

He's a dog of war with the face of a child. (Juventus president, in Barnes, *the Times Euro '96 pullout*, 3/6/96, p.4)

The range of comments from the young people reflect that they do know and make judgements about Gascoigne's personal life, and that these opinions in many cases supersede the appeal of his role as a footballer. They make derogatory comments about his physique, his origin and his social life. The interview group of combined boys and girls showed some of the more positive comments given by the boys in face of opposition from the girls. Whether this was in admiration of Gascoigne, or in support of the male image he portrayed, which was criticised by the girls, was difficult to determine. The comments that Gascoigne 'liked himself and loves to be in the news' suggested that these young people believed that the player himself was responsible for the media attention he received. This provides a reader interpretation of the question posed in *the Observer Review* (22/3/98, p. 20);

Is he making the headlines or are the headlines making him?

There is an indication of the changing audience view of Gascoigne as a celebrity and hero. The age of the young people suggests that as 10 year olds at the time of the 1990 World Cup they were not so susceptible to the positive media hype that he received at

that time. Most of these comments reflected on Gascoigne as a person rather than as a sportsman, with little, if any reflection on his playing prowess.

This corroborates tabloid comments about Paul Gascoigne that,

in time he might have earned a similar tribute as Sir Stanley. But he chose a different, shoddier path. His gifts will be easily dismissed and swiftly forgotten . . . (Collins, *Mail*, 1997, p.89)

The longitudinal survey data results of 240 young people in 1995, show that some young people do still identify 'Gazza' as one of their favourite sports stars, and a sports person they would like to be. However, he is no longer a clear favourite, and has been overtaken by footballer, Ryan Giggs and rugby player, Will Carling.

5.1.4 There are Two Paul Gascoignes (*The Telegraph*, 17/6/96, p. 1) or more? - a site for semiotic struggle

In 1996, *The Telegraph* headline suggesting that there were two Paul Gascoignes, identified the nature of the construction of the 'Gazza' image, and supported reasons why he continues to receive amplified attention. For his reception lies along a continuum of complex signs, which goes beyond just two simplistic images of the sporting hero and villain.

The following quotes (White, *Media Guardian*, 30/9/96, p.2) suggest how he represents both good and bad values in contemporary British culture;

In the six years since he spilt public tears at the 1990 World Cup, he has metamorphosed from being a merely gifted footballer into a convenient metaphor for the state we are in . . .

As a national hero;

He's a genius capable of doing things with his feet which lift the spirits of his followers out of their dreary norm . . . a glorious cavalier grating against puritanical killjoys . . . a living example to the rest of the world of Englishness. . .

As a villain, embodying contemporary values of the 'New Lad';

He's the nation's biggest Lad . . . the prat with the gob who represents the triumph of the yob . . . he's the crass example of the society with values inverted . . . he has everything that is supposed to matter in this society; wealth, celebrity, a chesty bird. Yet he still behaves like a kid.

This confirms the claims and the rhetoric of Paxman's (1998, p.245) references to the English as a population who see fighting and drunkenness as part of their birthright, and as a way to establish their identity. Values of 'Englishness' are embedded in 'Gazza's' construction, and exemplify a working class lad who cannot handle his good fortune. As such the media play on this problem, his waste of talent and loss representing a nation in a state of social and moral decline.

At the start of Euro '96, the role of Paul Gascoigne as both an England footballer, and as a role model for young people, was under considerable media scrutiny as demonstrated in section 4.1. Newspaper comments suggested that his popularity and fan club members were diminishing. Throughout, and after the competition, he received considerable media coverage across a range of products, drawing the readers' attention to his exploits. This culminated in *Hello* magazine's highest ever circulation figures at the time of 650, 000 copies, for the exclusive of Gascoigne's wedding day.

Paul Gascoigne was consistently featured across the four daily papers analysed during Euro '96. *The Sun* gave nineteen headlines to 'Gazza', in comparison to ten in *The Telegraph*, nine in *The Daily Mail* and eight in *The Independent*. Both *The Daily Mail* and *The Independent* used the terms Gascoigne and Gazza interchangeably. *The Telegraph* maintained formality with the use of his surname, whereas *The Sun* connotated familiarity with consistent use of his nickname. Positive and negative references were made across all newspapers but *The Daily Mail* and *The Telegraph* specifically identified his 'dual' personality. According to Collins (*The Daily Mail*, 6/4/97, p. 89) the media would have the public believe that;

Gascoigne enjoyed an inspiring Euro'96. The truth was there for us all to see; the man child was a shadow of his former talent.

Perhaps the media chose to represent attitudes like Manzini of the Italian paparazzi (*The Daily Mail*, 4/10/97, p.79);

When you think of Paul Gascoigne you do not remember the bad things.
You think of all the good occasions, the occasions he made you smile and laugh, the occasions of sheer genius on the field.

Figure 18 gives examples of headlines during Euro '96 that confirm the multi-dimensional nature of 'Gazza' representations.

Figure 18: Euro '96 Media Images and Representations of Gazza
... there are two Paul Gascoignes (*The Telegraph*, 17/ 6/ 96, p.1)

<p>The Hero The Genius..... It's Gazza, the great (<i>The Sun</i>, 16/6/96,p.72) Gazza carves his name in history (<i>The Sun</i>, 17/6/96 ,p. 35) Gazza's touch of Genius (<i>The Daily Mail</i>, 16/6/96,p. 104) I Love You Gazza (<i>The Sun</i>, 13/6/96,p. 64) Gazza's Moment Gives England Momentum (<i>Independent</i>, 24/6/96,p. 2) Gascoigne's Gifts (<i>Independent</i>, 19/6/96,p. 12) England's Genius reveals his better Half (<i>The Telegraph</i>, 17/6/96,p. 14) Gascoigne really is in a class of his own (<i>The Telegraph</i>, 21/6/96,p. 8) Hero Gazza, towed Shezza (<i>The Sun</i>, 18/6/96,p. 3) The Fool.....The Clown.....The Lad.....The Man child.....The Tearful Greer on Gazza; In his lumpy shorts, the idiot savant who won us all over (<i>The Independent</i>, 28/6/96,p. 1) Hawaii, the Lad, Gazza flies out (<i>The Telegraph</i>, 3/7/96,p. 10) Bookies back Gazza to shed a tear at his big match (<i>The Daily Mail</i>, 2/7/96,p. 4/5) Out of Gaz.....(<i>The Sun</i>, 10/6/96,p. 32) Gazza cries the Knot (<i>The Sun</i>, 2/7/96,p. 4/5) The Villain.....The Lout.....The Guzzler.....The Abuser..... Party time Gascoigne leads the revellers (<i>The Telegraph</i>) The Guzzler dries up (<i>The Daily Mail</i>, 10/6/96,p. 64) Sling your Hook , Gazza (<i>The Sun</i>, 17/6/96,p. 36) From Prat to paragon in an instant (<i>The Daily Mail</i>, 21/6/96, p. 78)</p>

The ways in which young people perceived Gascoigne, identified with him, and saw him as a hero to people of their age, was a focus of the group and individual interviews held after the summer of 1996. The diary analysis confirmed that he was a figure whom some still admired, his spectacular goal was readily acknowledged and several mentioned trying to emulate it at the park later that week .

Prior to the interviews held with the case study group, a short questionnaire that they filled in revealed that none of them saw Gascoigne as their favourite sport star or a

person they most admired. His most admired qualities were his excellent skills although his bravery, professionalism and sense of humour were also acknowledged. More negative features of his image were shown revolving around his looks and body, and his violent, aggressive nature.

The interviews that took place during the year following the 'Summer of Sport' 1996, placed some emphasis on interpreting Gascoigne in view of the amount of media attention he received during Euro '96. In spite of this coverage, the young people were clearly able to select alternate stars they admired, and he did not necessarily receive any direct diary comments. The discussion was phrased to reflect the young people's views about their identification with Gascoigne - what they knew and thought about him, and the ways in which they might choose to emulate him. Comments ranged from those who continued to regard themselves as fans, those who no longer felt strong associations with him, to those whom were openly critical of him. Points of identification similarly ranged from moments of soccer skill, through to his personal lifestyle and behaviour.

It was clear that the 'Gazza' myth was in decline. Contrasting media representations of both hero and villain had led young people to decode the sportsman as an ageing star, lacking in responsibility as a role model for younger children. Whilst appreciating some of the finer points of his sporting performance, they were judgmental, yet realistic about his personal lifestyle and behaviour.

Firstly, a few boys displayed features of identification with Paul Gascoigne, engaging with his character and showing support for his values;

He's always been one of my favourites.
He's such an inspirational player.
He's always been an idol.

Significantly, one suggested that it was important to identify with, and recognise the real image rather than a glorified version. A number of comments reflected their

realistic appraisal of stardom;

But people should know about that, that sport stars aren't exactly brilliant, they're really human.

But when you think about it all geniuses have got something wrong with them. And that's what he is, he's a genius.

It was Paul Gascoignes birthday and he had a drink. Exactly, everyone does. It doesn't matter how old you are, you go out, everyone gets slaughtered when they go out and have a drink. And it's like because they're idols, they shouldn't be doing it, they should be toning it down, have a quiet meal and a drink, which is stupid because no-one does it .

Secondly, with regard to aspects of worship or devotion there seemed to be little reference to Gascoigne being placed on a pedestal and worshipped from a distance.

Only one boy saw him as his personal hero;

When he was at Spurs he was always a hero to me, and when he scored the free kick against Arsenal in the semi-final in the F.A. Cup, that was the best moment and he was a hero to all Spurs fans then.

It was noteworthy that most of the 14 and 15 year olds suggested that devotion or adulation, was more likely to come from younger children than themselves, who would not be able to look beyond Gazza's heroic exploits on the field, and make the kind of critical judgements that they could. Several of them were in fact sceptical of the role that Gazza might play and questioned his responsibilities as a sport star;

But he's still a role model kind of thing for young children and when they see that what are they thinking.

There must be someone who likes him, but after what he's done... little ones you know, they don't understand.

He's representing our country, and they should have more pride, and they're idols for young children.

I suppose other young people my age don't see him as a hero 'cos they know all the stories that have been going around in the papers but I think younger kids probably do because they don't pay as much attention...they don't see him as the real person.

The comments here suggest that young people have the skill to read through the trivialised media constructions of the star as hero, and make long term associations with characteristics of the real person.

There was limited evidence of emulating Gascoigne, the main reference to imitating his skill level on the pitch;

You go over the park and you try and copy what they all do.

When asked whether they were successful, they acknowledged that it was unlikely that they would be able to replicate such moves. There were no suggestions of copying aspects of his clothing or appearance, although several suggested that there were probably others who would.

Positive pleasures that they gained from his image revolved around his physical prowess with some mention of appearance or personality traits as proving meaningful for them;

He's skilful.
 He's a good player . . . but. . .
 Gascoigne is good, I mean that goal he did where he flipped it over.
 He's got natural talent.
 Actually what I really admire him for, he's got character.
 He's got a good sense of humour.

The only other mention of his personality reflects on aspects of his new lad construction. Yet this contrasts with perceptions of the ageing star;

He's got the naughty laddish side but when it comes down to it he was pretty good.

I don't know. He's a bit of a nutcase, but he's quite a good footballer, he's getting a bit old now though.

Some of the more re-occurring interpretations by both boys and girls, reflect a condemnation and resistance to the values his image portrays;

I've gone off Gazza because of all that thing with his wife. I'm not into all that wife bashing stuff . . . big sport stars have got an obligation to set a good image.

Well there's all that stuff about him beating up his wife wasn't there . . . but he just gets on my nerves.
 He's such a bad boy.
 Cos he goes home drunk.
 Cos he's got that reputation.
 Don't like the way he treats women though. Especially that beautiful blonde bird.

A group of girls all agreed;
 He's an idiot.
 He let the country down.
 Quite soon after Euro '96 everyone was going on how brilliant he was, and then he spoilt it all.

His most ardent fan in the group could scarcely believe the wife beating incident and questioned whether the press should in fact report it. A final aspect to emerge from the young peoples' discussion of Gascoigne is the nature of media intrusion and their reporting of the truth;

I don't know if I believe what I read about him, did he beat his wife or not, you just never know the truth when you read it in papers like the Sun.

To a certain degree they should give him a break . . .when it's talking about him hitting his wife then that has nothing really to do with sport.

No well, he's always been an idol, it's just the way of the papers, one minute he's a prat, the next they're saying he's an idol.

Why do we want to know about Paul Gascoigne hitting his wife?

The public concern about the 'effects of Gazza' on young people is somewhat distinct from the reality of their interpretations;

Perhaps we should discuss the fate of the boys for whom Gazza was and will remain an icon . . . don't cry for Gazza, a has -been at 31, the real tears should be shed for the wannabes who are still genuinely too young to know any better. (*Independent*, 3/6/98, p. 21)

Unfortunately it doesn't take much to be classified as an all round good guy, one of the lads, a real geezer. (*Independent*, 3/6/98, p. 21)

. . . No-one has more powerful influence than sport stars. They are eulogised and emulated . . . teenagers don't heed politicians, but they do ape their pop and sport heroes. They've learnt horrendous lessons about violence, vulgarity, promiscuity and obscene language from people like Gascoigne, Gallagher and Stan Collymore. (*Daily Mail*, 7/10/98, p. 11)

For young people are able to make critical appraisals of the information that they receive. There is little support for the fact that Gascoigne is perceived as a 'real geezer' by the sample group. They are not 'Gazza Wannabes' but are conservative in approach and express moral concern about the responsibilities of the player. His sporting skills were the most frequently admired but few mentioned approval of his behavioural characteristics. Wealth and success gained little respect, and only one of the group mentioned that they admired him because he was rich. In this way they have heeded the social and moral warnings of media reports. Young people's reflections on 'Gazza' show they can be critical and judgemental of sports stars and they are not easily impressed or quick to condone aspects of poor behaviour.

Yet, they more readily accept that sporting behaviour and responsibility on the field is distinctly different from everyday reality, that sport stars in their own time, can and should behave the same as everyone else, and that the idealism of sporting heroism is not realistic in contemporary culture. They firmly reject the notion that they, or their peers, would seek to emulate Gascoigne, although they acknowledge that others might. Media coverage of Paul Gascoigne's personal life has served to restrict their hero worship of the soccer star, and show how young people in 1996 make realistic appraisals of the man.

As the final whistle awaits, there is however one enduring image from 'Gazza's' emergence in 1990, which young people continue to recall, for when asked what they know about him one group said, 'He cries a lot'. Such is the myth and on going legacy of Paul Gascoigne, the soccer star who through media constructions is interpreted along a continuum of the hero, villain or fool.

5. 2 The Construction of Henman and Notions of 'Englishness' : "The Emergence of Our Tim"

5.2.1 Tim Who?

Wimbledon 1996 saw the clear emergence of a new sports star whose Englishness,

youth and apparent potential for success appeared destined for celebrity status - 'Our Tim'. Following the 'Brave Lions' attempt to bring football home, came 'Tiger Tim', eager to secure the Wimbledon crown for the nation. Despite previous media coverage, and the notoriety of being disqualified from a previous Wimbledon as a result of accidentally hitting a ball girl, Tim Henman was relatively unknown to the general public.

Section 4.3 provided evidence for the rise of Tim Henman as a sports star receiving amplified media attention. For during Wimbledon 1996, his headline coverage exceeded that of either of the finalists and the world number one at the time, Pete Sampras. This provided an opportunity for case study analysis of an emerging star.

Firstly, identifying the ways in which the media constructed and promoted his image, providing the reader with information about his background, personality and character; secondly, the ways in which the developing narratives of personalisation and individualisation provided identification with the nation; thirdly the nature of his function as a sport star and finally the hype needed to promote his commodity and celebrity status. Additionally, it offered scope for interpretative analysis, identifying the relevance of his image to youth culture and determining the ways in which young people began to build up their own knowledge and thoughts about, and associations with, an emerging star.

This case study argues that Henman functions to fulfil a perceived national need for a British tennis star and role model. The media uses notions of British and English interchangeably in their discourse, although Paxman (1998) suggests that the term 'British' includes a range of oppressed groups, and an adopted citizen can be British, whereas references to 'Englishness' tend to signify more traditional images;

. . .gallant, upstanding, modest, absolutely trustworthy and with impeccable manners. It is the ideal of the English gentleman . . . (Paxman, 1998, p. 80)

the English gentleman is seen at his best the moment that another man starts throwing a ball at him. He is then seen to be neither spiteful, nor vindictive,

nor mean, nor querulous, nor desirous of taking an unfair advantage. . . it is all taken in good part. (Vita Sackville-West, 1947, p.196, in Paxman, 1998)

The latter comment reflecting the on-going relationship of sport and constructions of national identity.

Through the construction of Henman, notions of 'Englishness' are signified. Media publicity and information stresses his class background, representing class distinctions in tennis and his character is constructed as embodying traditional values of the English sporting gentleman, under threat in contemporary sports culture. As such, he is at times contrasted with both Gazza and Beckham, whose on and off field exploits often contradict social and moral expectations of sports stars.

Audience associations with the image construction of Henman might reflect contradictions between an image "harking back to a golden era in sport" (*On Track*, Spring, 1997, p. 13), and contemporary cultural values reflecting masculinity and the New Lad. Despite media amplification of 'Henmania', and his successful climb to within the top ten players in the world by October 1998, it can be argued that the Henman 'traditional' image might not sell successfully in the current climate .

5.2.2 "A Star Rising Out of the Ordinary." (*Daily Mail*, 1/7/96, p.54) The background and personalisation of Tim Henman

During the 1996 Wimbledon fortnight, Tim Henman emerged beyond the sports pages (*Mail*, 27/6/96, p.7; *Independent*, 29/6/96, p.3; *Telegraph*, 29/6/96, p.6), with a number of feature articles across both the quality and the tabloid press, designed to promote and publicise his image. His sporting achievements at this stage do not take the high profile we might expect, rather the accent was on providing the audience with personalised information. A documentary entitled, "Tim Henman; *The Silver Service*," was also shown on Channel 4 following his quarter-final exit of that year. This acted to provide information about his background that would establish personalisation of the star, and identification with the readers. A number of features focused on his home

background and his life story to date. His draw against fellow Briton, Luke Milligan drew attention to the class distinctions between the two players, reinforcing Henman "as a boy who was born to play tennis". (*Daily Mail*, 27/6/96, p. 7). In many ways this contradicted the headline in the sub-title above, for clearly much of the information provided about Henman suggests that his was more than 'simply an ordinary' background. For the private school education and a tennis court in the back garden, suggest a somewhat more privileged existence, that some of the readers might find difficulty equating with their own lifestyles.

In many ways, Henman is constructed as embodying traditional upper/ middle class values of British tennis. At a denotative level, his background is continually stressed with references to his education;

In tennis terms Henman is a pedigree prospect, from privileged surroundings of Oxford's elite Dragon School, to boarding at Reed's Public School, Surrey. (*Independent*, 29/6/96, p. 3)

And to his father's occupation and the family home;

It's a delightful middle England home baked cake's type of background: father a solicitor, mother a costume designer, two strapping older brothers, country house in a picturesque Oxfordshire village, tennis court in the garden, serene home counties prep and boarding schools." (*Guardian*, 14/4/97, p. 12)

The facts given about him also continually reiterate his family's long term success in the tennis world, and as such, at a connotative level he is perceived to have the 'perfect' background to answer the need for a successful British tennis star.

The Henman family and Wimbledon go back a long way. His great grandmother, grandmother, grandfather, played there. His mother and father were both county standard. He grew up in a home with a tennis court in the back garden. (*You Magazine, Mail on Sunday* 1/10/97 p.40)

As Dyer (1992, p.15) suggests, it is possible to trace connections between the star image, and features of the surrounding culture to which it relates. In Henman's case, it reflects the current concern about the lack of a successful British tennis star, whilst

promoting his perfect credentials to meet such a demand. This is also fairly consistent over the two years of analysis, with re-occurring reminders of his pedigree, across a range of media texts.

Other important aspects of his background information cover his social life and interests - we get to know that he is a keen golfer, that he "likes reading sports biographies and listening to music, normal things really", that although he was between girlfriends in 1996, by 1997 he has a girlfriend, Lucy who is a television producer.

In addition to information about his background, opinions expressed about his looks and character also begin to build features of a particular stereotype. Initially, he clearly meets Whannel's (1992) high profile sport star criteria of young, male and good looking. The character image of him during Wimbledon '96 begins to focus on issues of looks, personality traits, age and sexuality. Qualitative content analysis during the following two years identifies commonalities across time. The 'cult of youth' prioritised in sports media coverage (Whannel, 1992), is accentuated to the extent that the audience might be forgiven for forgetting that he is actually twenty-one in 1996. His age and youthfulness are stressed in a number of ways - in 1996 as the boy, the kid, the chick, Mummy's boy, the new young gunslinger, the boy who represents the next great hope;

Mrs Henman indeed seems to have herself a very nice boy. (*Mail* 1/7/96, p.54)

This contradicts research themes which suggest that whereas female sport stars are referred to as girls, male sport stars are invariably referred to as men or young men. Additionally, whereas female athletes are often spoken of with regard to their relationship with their fathers, little media research evidence has supported the notion of male athletes denoted as 'mummy's boys'. In many ways this contradicts notions of sport developing masculine traits of toughness, courage, and strength and acts to feminise his image.

Whannel (1992) suggests that poise, balance, judgement and timing are seen as relatively unimportant sport stars' qualities in comparison. This confirms priorities made in the statement below, which stress the quality of courage, likening him to English footballer, Stuart Pearce, whose very name connotes masculine values;

Henman may have poise, he may seem to take everything in a still coltish stride. But above all, he has the sort of courage men like England's Euro '96 hero Stuart Pearce would applaud. (*The Sun*, 2/7/96, p. 30)

In this case, we can begin to question why a twenty one year old should be referred to in this way, and why it continues in 1998 - 'the boyish smile' and the 'young pretender'. Inevitably, his youthful looks do belie his age, and the notion that he's "Middle England's favourite son" works by promotion of his youth, and references to his mother. The amplification of characteristics, more usually associated with female portrayal, suggests a feminisation of the male tennis player's image but perhaps more specifically acts to promote him as "Our Tim", a son needing the support and protection of the 'family' if he is to achieve the nation's dream.

His personality traits construct a thoroughly well adjusted person, displaying mental toughness, self-assuredness without being arrogant, coolness, resilience, courage and intelligence. His image epitomises sporting behaviour and the perfect gentleman. The Wimbledon disqualification for hitting a ball girl is swiftly forgotten, at least for the moment.

In contrast his Davis Cup coach suggests that, "he has the nastiness and arrogance on court that a player needs nowadays." (*Sun*, 2/7/96, p.30) This is a side of his character that we rarely see featured in the media. One of the few media headlines characterising his unsporting behaviour was in 1998, "Tantrum Tim" (*Express on Sunday*, 18/1/98, p.41) reporting Henman's warning for smashing his racket in the Australian Open.

Rather, his character and personality since 1996, have come under scrutiny for the ways in which he appears to be too nice, almost too good to be true. In fact, Henman, himself argues against his media construction by saying, " I'm not some sort of goody, goody. I think it's important to go out and have a few beers and relax" (*Mail*, 1/7/96, p.30). This aspect will be developed more fully in the final section of this chapter which considers the meanings and effects that have been created from the construction of Henman's image.

Clearly a major commercial feature of Tim Henman revolves around his sexuality. This works at two levels ; firstly, to confirm his heterosexuality with references to his love life and his current girlfriends. Since 1997, the audience is familiar with his girlfriend, Lucy, there are photographs of them together leaving Wimbledon and the camera frequently pans to the player's box as she watches his matches. Such images connote an uncontroversial, conservative love life with no evidence for a high life of clubbing and pubbing, which we might have come to expect of a wealthy, sport loving, single lad.

Secondly, his sexuality is promoted to target the female audience, which is frequently reminded of his appeal, 'as one of the most eligible young men around.' The hunky 21 year old, dead dishy, dead sexy, the slow sexy walk, the thick trendy hair sets off his angelic face, the shy smile and sparkling brown eyes all connote his sex appeal. For those of the audience, who fail to read such connotations from this media image, we are informed that;

Tim is a bit of a goer with a reputation as a ladies' man. (*Sun*, 3/7/96, p.5)

However, the media does not appear over the last two years to have been able to substantiate this claim about his sex and social life with any supporting features, gossip or photographs.

5.2.3 "Tennis is coming Home" (*Sun*, 30/6/96). Our Tim and identification with the nation

The Wimbledon 1996 event saw the build up of headlines in the *Sun*, acting to personalise and identify the audience with "Our Tim". The repetitious use of his Christian name across the tabloids, together with the constant use of 'Our hunky ace', 'My son', 'Our Tim' signified the notion of Tim Henman as part of the nation's family. The nation was signified with re-occurring images of Union jack flags, faces and clothing of the spectators, as well as the references to the Euro '96 anthem, morris dancers' sticks and the sports grounds of Britain.

Inevitably, the concurrent scheduling of Wimbledon and Euro '96 ensured a carry over effect of the nationalist and patriotic feeling created by the fairly successful run of the England football team. Tim alone took on the mantle of the whole England team and is seen to be perpetuating the feel good factor of Euro '96. In 1998, he is accredited with being the perfect response;

to blow away a nation's sporting hangover after the England football team were knocked out of the World Cup. Henman cheers us all up (*The Daily Mail*, 2/7/98, front page).

The perpetuation of the national feeling from one sporting event to Henman is continually reinforced;

A Nation expects as Henman rises to the Challenge. . . Henman rode a wave of nationalism yesterday. . . just as the World Cup team had been exalted the night before. Some come to the centre court with faces painted with the cross of St. George, whilst others brought flags large enough to act as cloaks when the sun vanished. (*The Daily Mail*, 28/6/98, p. 86)

The nature of the ways in which the media amplifies the national role that Henman plays, contrasts sharply with the individualistic nature of tennis. The player himself is reported as suggesting that he does not see himself as the nation's representative but that ;

Tim Henman walks out onto centre court today carrying the expectations of the British public, but declaring that he is trying to win purely for himself. (*The Daily Mail*, 1/7/96, back page)

The nation doesn't come into it at all, he said. Tennis singles is a lonely business and it is about individuals, not nations . . . (*The Times*, 29/6/96, p.32)

This theme of Henman disputing his national role, is reiterated in 1998;

The nation don't come into it at all. When I go on the court I have great support, but in an individual sport, you play for yourself. (*Independent*, 29/6/98, p.22)

In this sense, Henman is under an illusion for he functions as England's answer to the diminishing sporting and moral behavioural expectations of their sports stars, as well as providing at long last, a potentially successful male tennis player after years in the wilderness. For he is the tennis sporting warrior, whose 'Englishness' is signified, as he is seen leading the nation into battle on the tennis courts of Wimbledon;

Henman leads the British charge. (*Independent*, 26/6/96, p.S12)

Not just for him the accolades of the gallant loser. He has spoken of killing, or being killed on the court. He eschews the notion of the sporting gladiator in preference to the real thing. (*The Times Wimbledon pullout*, 23/6/97, p.5))

The nature of the references to his Englishness are of traditional images, such as Morris dancing, yet we see here the ways in which English and British identity are used interchangeably;

Henman is as English as the morris dancer's stick but he was identified by all even the rabid tabloids as very much a British hope. So much so that when young ladies turned up at the gates of Wimbledon their faces were decorated not with the cross of St. George but the Union Jack. (*Independent on Sunday*, 7/6/96, p. 23)

and of stereotypical views of English behavioural characteristics;

He does everything he can to keep his emotions bottled up. He mixes immense theatricality with almost painful diffidence. He would die rather than make a public exhibition of himself in the way that Jimmy Connors did. . . watch those odd little mannerisms, the funny little skip he does when walking back to the baseline, the rarer skip when he is especially pleased. . . But he is English and this is Wimbledon. All the passion has to be expressed in that little skip. (*The Times*, 29/6/98, p.32)

Henman's quintessential Englishness will make him rich this year. (*The Mail on Sunday*, 6/4/97, p.45)

This is the essence of the successful emergence of "Our Tim", for initially he does not appear to have the charisma of an 'Agassi', the clowning of a 'Gazza' or the idiosyncrasies of 'Eddie the Eagle', that has worked to create both the sport star and celebrity. As it stands, it is the very 'Englishness' of Henman, together with the national identification, and potential for success that works to sell his image.

5.2.4 "Britain's Number One . Everybody's favourite." Henmania- constructing the sporting role model, commodity and celebrity

The growing celebrity and commodity status of Henman are reflected in the number of media texts available to promote his image consumption. In 1996, we learn that his earnings for prize money alone are £ 200,000, a sum easily doubled by endorsements. In 1997, he accrues a £7.5 million commercial deal with Adidas, a Mercedes car and is used to sell both cereal and margarine. A number of advertisements, for example, begun to emerge using Henman in the marketing of products. The Flora Margarine advertisement suggests that Henman, in the same way as Flora margarine, is everybody's favourite and Britain's number one. It also confirms the star's function in 'encouraging kids to take up an active lifestyle', thus affirming him as a potential role model for young people.

This section questions the extent to which 'Henmania' has developed within media narratives since 1996, for the follow up individual interviews were conducted a year later, supporting on going interpretations by the young people.

It questions whether Henman really is everybody's number one. It considers the ways in which the initial personalisation and characterisation of Henman as a sport star has enhanced his popularity and celebrity appeal, and whether a legitimate claim for 'Henmania' can really be made. For it appears that Tim Henman may not yet have achieved the super stardom and notoriety of the contemporary sporting hero, and that

'Henmania' has not yet proved to be the media's answer to the demise of the mythical era of 'Gazzamania'.

As Dyer (1992, p.13) argues;

Although stars are commodities, their only 'value' (i.e. what people use them for) resides in what meanings and effects they have. Stars and films sell meanings and effects.

This raises questions about the nature of the meanings that the star creates, and why some sports stars sell better than others. It's clearly something about the way in which they embody or seem to be the actual values that they represent, and the subsequent cultural appeal that such values have at a particular period in time. Such appeal might also vary across different social groups, thus the media construction might take a particular direction to appeal to a particular target group.

Real (1996, p.143), suggests that characteristics such as flamboyance, self-promotion, consumption, fame and extravagance are rewarded in the 'post-modern culture of excess'. Images of Henman hardly seem to embody such values, thus identifying the dilemma that begins to emerge in developing media narratives.

For the characterisation of Henman represents a sporting lifestyle, with no visible evidence of excess, except perhaps in the serious, dedicated, sporting and moral manner of his performances both on and off the court. This traditionally reflects all that is valued in a sporting hero, yet will not on its own make headlines that will sell newspapers on a regular basis nor will it necessarily make a 'celebrity';

Players like Henman hark back to a golden era in sport when sport stars seemed to appreciate their status as role models. (*On Track*, 1997, Spring edition, p.13/14)

Advantage, Mr Nice Guy. . . (*You Magazine, Mail on Sunday*, 1/6/97, p.38/39)

Of course he's a brilliant tennis player, and yes, he's just the right age to appeal to the kids who buy sports gear . . . But his public image is so clean cut, so vice free, so damn dull that the only thing he's in danger of attracting is a crowd of Jehovah's Witnesses. (*The Mail*, 18/10/97, p.18)

Henman is routinely describe in interviews as a "nice chap" -more of a Steve Davis than an Alex Higgins, an Alan Shearer not a George Best . . .I start to think that there might be more to Henman than King Dull.(*Guardian*, 14/4/97, p.10)

They cry out for a tennis player and you give them a tennis player and they say he's got no character. What do they want, Paul Gascoigne?(*You Magazine, Mail on Sunday*, 1/6/97, p.38/39)

It appears that the media take the opportunity to snipe at Henman's vice-free image, as well as questioning the type of audience he will appeal to. An article reflecting on his commercial value for an Adidas advertisement suggests how the company tried to give him street cred in order to appeal to the 'young, hip crowd.' It is suggested that he should go home for another four days and not shave before the photographs in order to provide a more rugged, unshaven look. His masculinity is again under question when the Adidas female representative said she had more hair on her chin than he did when he returned (*Mail*, 18/10/97, p.18). If media representations of the male sport star are perceived to celebrate dominant masculine qualities (Vande Berg, 1998), then Henman's function is under scrutiny in such articles.

Yet, this is overcome to promote Henman as appealing to the female audience. The rise in supposed 'Henmania' in 1996 was attributed to his growing band of female fans;

It's Tim Henmania . . . Britain was gripped by Henmania yesterday as millions wished the country's tennis hero, Tim Henman success in his crunch Wimbledon showdown . . .

The Nation's potty over hunky ace . . . an army of teenage girl admirers were also backing the dark haired pin up they have nicknamed Timbo. (*The Sun*, 3/7/96 p.4/5)

FAN-TASTIC. Tim is a favourite with the girls. (*Sun*, 3/7/96, p.35)

Antonio Lazzeri writing beyond the sports pages to address the female readership of the paper confirms that Henman holds appeal for women,

Girls I got closer to Tim Henman than most yesterday - and I have to say he is gorgeous. On court he may look cool, robotic and calculating. But off it he is dead sexy and dead dishy. (*The Sun*, 3/7/96, p.5)

Another article in *the Times* in 1998 (25/2/98, p.4) reflects on the contrasting characteristics of Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski, reaffirming that the Henman image is more appealing for females;

They are fine ambassadors for the sport. Both are young, clean cut, happy to sign an autograph . . . their followers split neatly into two distinct groups with the girls attracted to Henman and the boys admiring Rusedski because of his thundering service and nervous energy. To the young and enthusiastic Tim is cute and Greg is cool.

The evidence for such clear gender differentiation however is lacking, and it is questionable as to the nature of such a distinct gender split in the purchasing of the £1.5 million worth of Henman kit during the two weeks of Wimbledon 1996. Similarly, the voting of Rusedski, as Sports Personality of the Year 1997, presumably did reflect some female voters.

The ways in which the qualities of Henman are perceived to appeal to females more than males, reflect stereotypical assumptions about the female audience. For the above quote makes no mention of the girls admiring Henman's tennis skills, only his physical attractiveness whereas the boys are seen to admire the (masculine) power of Rusedski's serve.

This promotes the function of sport stars to act as role models for young people, and Henman is seen to be a worthy role model to set a good example and inspire future generations of English tennis players. *On Track* (1997, Spring, p.13/14) suggests that Henman appreciates this important function he has to play, and it questions whether other sport stars today do give as much as they get in terms of goodwill and ambassadorship. One reason suggested for Henman's awareness of the importance of this role is that he did not have any British role models himself. (*The Times, Wimbledon pullout*, 23/6/97, p.5) This function is amplified through a range of newspapers;

Henman is a role model for youngsters. (*The Times, Wimbledon pullout* 23/6/97, p.5)

He is portrayed as the perfect role model, in contrast to other sport stars whose off

pitch behaviour has raised social and morals concerns in the media;

Henman is certainly preferable to Gazza as a role model, and good naturedly gives up his time to do just that - in the Midland Bank schools tennis programme. (*The Mail on Sunday, You magazine*, 1/6/97, p.10)

He is also suggested as a role model for other sport stars;

Petulant Beckham can learn a lesson from hero Henman. (*Sport First*, 5/7/98, p. 10)

Another issue is raised in his portrayal as a role model, confirming the perceived gulf between Henman's background, and those who he is meant to be inspiring;

Ironic that after trying to move away from elitist, middle class, moneyed image, the LTA now finds itself with a role model who is exactly that. (*The Times, Wimbledon pullout*, 23/6/97, p.5)

The same article suggests that despite differing backgrounds, young people do recognise both Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski as role models.

By contrast this headline indicates that the effects of Henman as a role model might not be as significant as the media suggests;

British young hopefuls fail to catch the Henman bug as LTA millions go down the drain. (*Sport First*, 5/7/98, p.15)

This shows that Henman's role and function as a sport star is open to varying interpretations, and the nature of that those meanings are analysed in young people's readings of 'Tim' in chapter 6. For the audience makes judgements according to diverse criteria, as exemplified below;

What I feel for Henman, I suppose, is primal primitive nationalism but I've never been able to like him. Put it this way, I felt very differently when I discovered that he'd voted Conservative in the last election. Imagine anyone that doesn't know anything but Thatcher and Major and still doesn't think it's time for a change. And I think it's depressing to vote Tory in your early 20's. . . . But he has a beautiful game, more graceful than Rusedski. (novelist, Martin Amis in *The Telegraph*, 27/6/98, p. S8)

So what of the future for Henman - sport star, hero, villain, fool, celebrity or icon? Following Henman's defeat of Andre Agassi in the Swiss Indoor Championships in October 1998 the following headline seemed pertinent, for will Henman ever be able to replicate the likes of the impact of Agassi on the audience?;

Now what are we going to do for charisma?... the loss of Agassi ... is a serious blow to tennis fans who like their players exotically married, in long trendy shorts and growing a bit of a beard. (*Telegraph*, 26/6/98, p.42)

For the little we have seen of Henman beyond the sports pages, suggests that unless he produces a truly mythical moment, by getting 'Sporty Spice' pregnant or crying on the Duchess of Kent's shoulders when he loses in the final at Wimbledon, his character construction will rest uneasily in a narrativisation of the cherished sporting past of the English gentleman, contrasting sharply with the reality of the 'sporting lad'. As such, the media might have difficulty in persuading the mass audience he has charisma and celebrity appeal.

5.3 Summary

Paul Gascoigne and Tim Henman are only two from many English sporting personalities. Their selection reflects their significance in the sporting agendas of the 'Summer of Sport' 1996. Similarities between them lie in their high media profile, the ways in which their image construction embodies essential English class characteristics in their respective sports, and the national hero and role model status they have been accorded by the media. Distinctions reflect Gascoigne as an ageing star of working class origin, embodying contemporary values of a nation in decline, who invites multiple readings from young people of hero, fool and villain. In contrast, Henman embodies essential qualities of the traditional English sporting Gentleman, which contradicts with contemporary representations and expectations of 'the sporting lad'.

CHAPTER SIX

ADOLESCENT CONSUMPTION, IMPACT AND INTERPRETATION OF SUPER - MEDIATED SPORTS EVENTS A case study of the Summer of Sport 1996

6.1 The Findings : Euro '96, Wimbledon '96 and The Atlanta Olympics;

The positioning of the audience is critical in understanding the social contexts and meanings of media texts. Textual analysis alone provides researcher and academic interpretation of ideological themes, political discourse and perceived subject positioning. It only partially explains the complex relationship that the audience has with the vast array of media texts they can select from.

This section provides a further source for discussion in the scrutiny of the role that the media has to play in sporting discourse. It offers a translation of audience thoughts, feelings and meanings that they made in their interaction with the sporting texts of Euro '96, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics. It considers the nature of the cultural participation indulged in by a group of young people, the social practices and appeal of the genre during a period of intense media coverage of globally significant sporting events. It uses personal reflections, comments and statements from diary, group and individual discussions held at varying times, during the year following the event.

It also discusses the ways in which individuals were drawn in, consuming a range of affiliated products, or opted out, excluding themselves from the sporting spectacles on offer. It considers how personal pleasures and interpellation move beyond the specificity of the text, to identification with certain stars and associated products. The spaces and places for viewing are seen to be negotiated, contested and shared. At other times they are within the solitude of the bedroom.

Young people as audience, whilst receiving the texts from differing positions to that of the researcher and academic, bring their own levels of understandings and interests that researchers can analyse alongside their own semiological readings and ideological discourse. This case study explores the knowledge and recall that young people have of the sporting narratives, the application of the experience to their personal pleasures, social values and ideals, and their identification with the functions of sport stars within the narratives. Their interpretation suggests that what is found is salient and relevant to their understanding of social life, and they make judgements around a number of ideological themes related to gender, race and nation, with expressions about collective identity, patriotism and the patriarchal dominance of sport. Yet the reality and transparency of the sporting coverage suggest that for many the emotive, excitement and physicality of the events and competitors supersedes their conscious awareness of deeper ideological readings.

6. 2. Viewing, reading and sports consumption

6.2.1 Consumption Patterns

Discussion of empirical data focuses on trends apparent in the consumption patterns of young people during the scheduling of these events. This theme reflects the decisions of the individual to watch and listen to the television, and read newspapers and magazines of the event. It considers the matches and events with highest viewing totals, and the sports stars and teams who were most frequently mentioned. The extent to which they consumed other associated products, such as sports clothing, food, drink, souvenirs and memorabilia highlight the impact on the overall pattern of consumption for each event. The significance of the sporting genre in relation to other aspects of media consumption is also discussed. Qualitative statements recorded in the diaries by the young people are used to support, and explain possible reasons for such patterns.

6.2.2 Television viewing figures (as shown in figure 19)

As expected, television viewing across a range of genres was a dominant feature of lifestyle for many of the young people. During the three weeks of Euro '96 the total amount of viewing time ranged between 138 hours and 14 hours in total. This compares with between 77 hours 35 minutes and 62 hours 30 minutes (highest), and 10 hours to 0 hours (lowest), during the two weeks of Wimbledon and the Olympics respectively. Over 30% of the group watched on average more than 20 hours weekly during the first two events. This compares with only 12% during the scheduling of the Atlanta Olympics. The decline in total viewing at this time is explained by a number of the group being overseas and the school holiday period leading to changes in daily routines. Favourite programmes of each day were identified, but details of specific content other than the sporting genre was not requested.

Euro '96 was clearly the most popular event, watched by all of the sample group, although not always by choice, for one 'coerced' daughter wrote, "I was glad when it was all over and my dad couldn't make me watch anymore". Scheduling, success of the England team, and the intense national feelings that developed created a growing commitment to the event, especially for some who initially had tuned in reluctantly, "because there was nothing else on".

For 24% of the group, over a half of their total viewing focused on watching the football. Thirty-six per cent watched over 20 hours in total. The wide range of time devoted to Euro '96, from 60 hours to 3 hours and 20 minutes, suggested a diverse interest in the event, and/or commitment to doing other things. One girl who watched over 124 hours of television during this time, managed to include within this only 3 hours and 20 minutes of the football. Another girl questioned, "Why is there so much football on?"

Wimbledon viewing was scheduled overlapping with, and following the final week of Euro '96. In contrast to all of the group watching some of Euro' 96, only 82% of the

young people watched any of Wimbledon. Two of the boys, both watching over 25 hours each, and one of who spent two days at Wimbledon, as keen tennis players were clearly focused on the event. More significantly 28% watched one hour or less, suggesting that it failed to appeal to the adolescent audience in the same way as Euro '96. This, despite the unanticipated success of Tim Henman, and the intense coverage that he received. One girl, with the highest television viewing of over 77 hours, successfully negotiated her programmes to ensure that she only caught up with 20 minutes of the event on a news update.

A number tuned in on the first day but there was initial disappointment at the early departure of Andre Agassi. After the numbers of hours spent viewing the football, some of the group chose to do other things. A wide range of reasons was given by young people for their apparent indifference and disinclination to tune in to the tennis. These revolved around the following issues:

i) young peoples' interest in tennis as a game, such as:

I don't enjoy tennis.
I have no time for tennis, it seemed stupid to waste my time watching it.
I don't find tennis as interesting as football.

ii) the lack of significance of the tournament scheduling:

I totally forgot all about it.
It wasn't on, if it was I didn't know and I didn't want to know.

iii) identification with the players:

Agassi got knocked out.
I don't like the players.

iv) reflections on the 'Summer of Sport':

I'm bored of sports.
I read that sport is taking over the summer.

v) other more important things to do:

I had homework to do.
 I went shopping.
 Other programmes were more interesting.

During Euro '96, a number of the activities mentioned above, were not placed in order of priority above watching the event. The impact of Euro '96 was such that a number of their friends were watching the event with them, providing the social interaction that during Wimbledon they decided to get at the park.

Although several suggested that they simply did not know, or forgot that Wimbledon was on, it seems unlikely that during Euro '96 they could not have been aware of the competition and the success of the England team, such was the high profile the event received.

Figure 19: Television Viewing Figures

	Euro 96 3 weeks	Wimbledon 2 weeks	Atlanta Olympics 2 weeks
individual range of total television viewing in hrs.	138 hrs - 14 hrs	77 hrs 35 mins- 9 hrs 55 mins	62 hr 30 min- 0hrs
average of young people with over 20 hrs. total television viewing per week	36 %	31%	12%
individual range of hrs. spent watching the specific sports event	60 hrs- 3 hrs 20 mins	26 hrs 40 mins-0 hrs	24 hrs 15 mins - 0 hrs
average viewing time of the event	over 17 1/2 hrs	approx. 6 hrs	nearly 9 hrs
percentage of group who watched	100 %	82%	36 %
	36 % watched over 20hrs	28 % watched 1 hr or less 1 watched more than 20 hrs	56 % were away on holiday

The Atlanta Olympics were more popular for some than either of the other two events, but its timing in relation to both screening times (late night and early hours of the morning, reflected in comments like, "I was too tired to stay up"), and its clash with holiday time affected viewing figures.

Only 44% of the sample group completed the daily diaries during this time. An additional sheet attached to the diary asked them to complete this section if they were away on holiday, and to recount how their viewing of the Olympics was affected as a result of this. During the holidays a number of the group were either away for the whole time, or had a different schedule from the normal school or working week. As several of the group suggested;

I didn't really want to watch on holiday.
I went on holiday to enjoy myself, not to write in this diary.

Others who were away did appear to consider viewing the event but were restricted;

The hotel didn't have a good T.V.
My flight to India was delayed for 2 days and I couldn't find a T.V. at the airport.
I went on a caravan holiday to Clacton and it didn't possess a T.V.

In comparison with both Euro '96 and Wimbledon, only 36% of the total group watched any of the Olympics, indicating that two of those not on vacation did not watch the event. The highest total viewing was 24 1/4 hours, and only one of the group watched more than 20 hours. Yet this event had as intense a scheduling as the other two events. The status of the Olympics as a significant global event was not it seemed, sufficiently important to this group of young people.

The disappointment at the lack of British success contrasted sharply with the excitement and achievement of Euro 96. As one boy suggested;

There wasn't really any special moments because England didn't really get to win any medals.

Another supported this;

It's getting boring seeing England lose all the time.

Viewing figures suggest that the excitement, national pride and 'feel good' factor,

aroused during the European Football Championship, had a knock on effect on the meanings and pleasures derived from the two sports events that followed. The euphoria, sense of satisfaction and the cultural significance could not be recaptured. Consequently a number of the group did not choose to become intense viewers of either Wimbledon or the Atlanta Olympics. The several keen fans who already had an interest in the sport(s) maintained their commitment to the event, although even their recording of it failed to capture the same intensity of feelings and emotions that were evoked during Euro '96.

6.2.3 Favourite Programmes (as shown in Figure 20)

By drawing comparisons with the normal daily favourite programmes the significance of the sports events in the daily viewing habits of the young people could be seen. As expected soap operas were frequently indicated as personal favourites. Indeed several of the group expressed frustration at the ways in which the scheduling of these sports events disrupted the normal viewing times of such programmes.

Eastenders, rather than the anticipated *Neighbours* or *Home and Away*, was the most frequently mentioned programme. This was popular amongst both boys and girls suggesting that soap opera is not solely a female genre amongst adolescents. The popularity of *Eastenders* might be explained by the location of the school within miles from the East End of London, the origins of some of the group and their family from the area, and the fact that several pupils of the school had occasionally been members of the cast. Additionally, at the time of the 'Summer of Sport', the *Eastenders* narrative was building towards a climax of interpersonal relationships (the Cindy Beale and David Wicks affair). Viewing figures and media attention across the nation were similarly significant.

During Euro '96, 52% of the sample group most regularly recorded the sport

event as their favourite daily programme. A further 4% indicated that it was the England games that specifically appealed to them. Euro '96 was the only event that overtook *Eastenders* in the popularity stakes.

There were clear gender differences though, as Euro '96 was the most popular programme for over 80 % of the boys in comparison to only 28% of the girls. For one girl, it was the England games specifically, which were of most significance. A further 64% of girls remained loyal to their favourite soap operas, *Eastenders*, *Home and Away*, *Neighbours*, and to *Ricki Lake*. The only two boys who did not select the football event, preferred *Eastenders*.

Figure 20: Favourite T.V. programmes during the events
(those most frequently mentioned each day)

Euro 96		Wimbledon		Atlanta Olympics	
Euro 96	52%	Eastenders	40%	Eastenders	46%
Eastenders	32%	X-Files	20%	Joint choice of Olympics and favourite soap	27%
Neighbours/Home and Away/Ricki Lake	12%	Wimbledon	12%	Olympics	18%
England games	4%	Other Not completed (8%)	20%	Other	9%

During Wimbledon, where the daily intensity of coverage generally exceeded both the football and the twice or three time weekly soaps, *Eastenders* still retained its number one spot. For 20% of the sample, *X-Files* was also more frequently mentioned than Wimbledon. Only 12%, both boys indicated that Wimbledon was their most preferred viewing choice during this two week scheduling. Half of the girls selected *Eastenders* as their favourite, whereas the boys were more equally divided between this and the *X-Files*.

Despite the apparent disruption to their normal viewing schedule during the Atlanta Olympics, 46% of those who completed their diaries still identified *Eastenders* as their favourite programme. A further 27% jointly listed the latter alongside the

Olympics. Eighteen percent identified the sports event most frequently during those two weeks. Several more girls than boys mentioned the Olympics as of equal importance to their favourite soaps during the scheduling.

Throughout the 'Summer of Sport' a number of other programmes were also identified, but the sports events, together with *Eastenders*, clearly dominated the preferences of many young people. The intense scheduling of all of these programmes could reflect their selection, as some other popular programmes were only shown once during that time. However, comparisons between the three sports events and favourite soaps can be drawn.

6.2.4 Matches / Events / Sports Star Preferences (as shown in Figure 21)

Viewing figures alone do not fully describe the types of matches and Olympic events that received high consumption levels. Certain sports stars also encouraged some young people to specifically tune in.

During Euro '96, the England games were the central feature of the viewing selection for all members of the group, irrespective of their ethnic background. Everyone watched at least some of England's pathway to the semi-finals. Surprisingly more tuned in to their matches versus Spain and Switzerland than the semi-final.

Inevitably the disappointment at England's defeat, and the suggestion by several that they did not like Germany, resulted in a decline in numbers watching the final.

Viewing did not just focus on England, as at least 68% of the group, including all of the boys watched some other matches. Twenty percent watched more than ten other matches. Twenty-eight percent, all girls, only watched England games, and one other girl only saw other matches on news highlights.

Identification with certain stars, and the significance of certain characteristics of young peoples favourites, must be acknowledged in the consumption figures and

popularity of matches and or events. Shearer's goal scoring ability, Seaman's brilliant saves and McManaman's good looks, made them the sports stars most frequently mentioned as daily favourites.

Figure 21: Most frequently viewed Matches, Events and Favourite Sports Stars

Matches/events	watched by	Favourite sport star	Position
Euro 96			
England v Switzerland	80%	Shearer	1st
England v Spain	80%	Seaman and McManaman	2nd
England v Germany	76%	Gazza	3rd
England v Holland	72%	Klinsman and Poborsky	4th
England v Scotland	64%	Sheringham and Bergkamp	5th
Final	60%		
Other games	68%		
Wimbledon			
mens singles	89%	Tim Henman	1st
ladies singles	33%	Steffi Graff	2nd
matches not listed	11%	Flach, Krajicek and Washington	3rd
mixed/ladies	0%	Agassi and Seles	4th
mens doubles	5%		
Agassi match	39%		
Henmans matches	56%		
Singles Finals	44%		
Atlanta Olympics			
Athletics	55%	Steven Redgrave	1st
Swimming	73%	Dominique Dawes	2nd
Gymnastics	73%	others mentioned were:	
Rowing	55%	Colin Jackson, Paul Palmer, Linford Christie, Gail Devers, Michelle Smith, Tim Henman, Nick Gillingham	
others mentioned were; Tennis, Diving, Basketball, Football, Weightlifting, Judo Hockey, Cycling, Synchro swimming, Beach volleyball, Boxing			

Gazza, Sheringham, Klinsman, Poborsky and Bergkamp also received significant mentions. Several of the continental European players described as favourite players were from clubs supported by some of the young people, and this loyalty remained constant despite them playing for the opposition in the European Football Championship. Some of the young people tuned in to other matches to watch their overseas club heroes play. A further seventeen overseas players received mentions as

favourite players of the day, indicating that many of the young people were not totally engulfed in the pro-English fervour of the occasion.

Men's singles matches monopolised the viewing during Wimbledon. Of the third who tuned in for any women's tennis, all of them watched all or part of the singles final. Only three adolescents watched any other women's matches. Doubles matches (even the finals) did not figure in their choice, reflecting the lack of status and scheduling given to many of these matches. Several individuals were unable to list the types of games, as they could not remember who they were watching! Forty-four percent were still sufficiently motivated to watch the singles finals, despite no British interest and two relatively unfamiliar names in the men's finals. Both Washington and Krajicek did receive a number of votes as favourite players, winning admiration for their unexpected success.

Thirty-nine percent tuned in for Agassi's opening match on the first day. His surprise defeat by Flach caused both disappointment and loss of interest in the remainder of the tournament, especially for two girls, who showed no further involvement in the event. Despite this, Agassi was sufficiently popular with the group to receive enough mentions on the day he played to place him in the top five. It can only be speculated that had he had a more successful run, both viewing figures and event popularity would have been higher than it eventually was.

Tim Henman was the most popular player, and 56% of the group watched his progress through the rounds. The media attention and focus on him carrying the British flag following Euro '96, ensured that a number of the group who had no knowledge of him prior to the event, was now aware of the rising star. More than three times as many boys as girls watched some of Henman's matches.

Despite the vast number of performers across a range of different activities, there was a distinct lack of Atlanta Olympic heroes. Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell, both high profile celebrities, failed to live up to expectations. Steve Redgrave and Roger

Black, two of the most successful performers, lacked the 'celebrity' status to capture the imagination of the young people. Several of the girl gymnasts from the USA and China seemed to appeal most, due perhaps to age similarities with the group, or the 'magical' routines that they produced.

The lack of quality performances by British competitors partially explains why the Atlanta Olympics did not appeal to the group in the same way as Euro '96, supporting the significance of 'star' characters in the sporting narratives.

The individual activities of athletics, swimming, gymnastics and rowing featured significantly in young people's choices. Team sports such as football, basketball, hockey and beach volleyball were also chosen. Events not regularly televised such as weightlifting, judo, synchronised swimming and diving also received support. No dominant sport captured a regular and committed group of young people on a daily basis during the Olympics, suggesting a preference for diversity, over specific focused attention. There were relatively few gender distinctions in the choices made, although twice as many girls as boys showed a preference for watching athletics events. Events such as synchro-swimming and diving, were only selected by girls, and judo, hockey and cycling were only mentioned by boys.

6.2.5 Other associated products consumed

The ways in which Euro '96 captured the imagination of young people is reflected in the range of associated products they purchased, the detailed ways in which they completed the diaries, and the emotive tone of moments and feelings captured in their recording of the event. The purchasing of sports kit, CDs, England flags, coins, scarves, programmes and other memorabilia were clearly related to the success of England, and the extensive media hype and advertising, helping to generate the national feeling that developed during the event. Over 75 % of the young people brought some such souvenir. Nearly a third of the group purchased an item of England's team kit. This represented more girls than boys - reflecting the appeal that

the event held for them, together with the possibility that a number of the boys already had such kit. One girl proudly recorded that she spent £35 on a McManaman shirt.

There is little evidence that either Wimbledon or the Atlanta Olympics achieved that degree of consumption. During Wimbledon, the only significant response towards purchasing items as a result of the event, was one girl who although not particularly 'into' the tennis bought her cousin a tennis racket as a birthday present. None of the young people recorded any purchases associated with the Atlanta Olympics. Despite the intensity of marketing, sponsorship and merchandise at the Games only two of the group were able to mention any sponsored products that they bought during the event - a can of coke. However, during Euro '96 there was a clear awareness of McDonalds and Coke as sponsors of the events and their products were bought by 36 % of the group at this time.

6.2.6 Magazines / Newspapers (as shown in Figure 22)

Some young people also purchased magazines and newspapers during these events. Consumption of other forms of media suggests that the combination of linguistic signs and visual images could intensify the impact and significance of the events, increasing knowledge about them and or influencing attitudes of young people towards the events. Symbiotically, the impact of television viewing of the events might have encouraged individuals to consume other media products.

Newspapers were not recorded as particularly significant in the lifestyles of the young people. Many never read a paper on a regular basis, although they did occasionally see one throughout the six weeks of analysis. Of those who completed the diaries during the Atlanta Olympics, over 90% read a paper at some time. This suggested having more time to read during the school holidays, or reflected the significantly smaller sample group. As a result it was difficult to determine the ways in which

newspaper reading might have affected the overall consumption patterns. However, it did reflect the types and quality of sports reporting of those that chose to read a newspaper.

Figure 22: Newspaper and Magazine Purchases

	Euro 96	Wimbledon	Atlanta Olympics
Newspapers % of young people who read a paper occasionally	88%	50%	91%
% reading most popular newspaper	<i>The Sun</i> 60%	<i>The Sun</i> 23%	<i>The Sun</i> 54%
Magazines purchasing most popular magazine	<i>Just 17</i> 36%	<i>Just 17</i> 14% <i>Sugar</i> 14%	<i>Just 17</i> 27%
others mentioned across the three events	<i>Sugar, Big, Smash</i>	<i>Hits, Inside Soap,</i>	<i>Games Master</i>
Specific to the event	<i>Shoot, Euro '96 magazine, Euro '96 programme</i>	none	none

The highest number of newspapers was read during Euro '96. The impact of the event might have encouraged them to read the headlines and the sports pages during this time. Their reading of such texts was reflected in their comments in the diaries about articles read. Several of them used their diaries during this time like scrapbooks, sticking in photos and articles taken from newspapers.

The Sun, The Daily Mirror and *The Daily Mail* were the most frequently mentioned. Quality papers were rarely, if ever, mentioned. Sixty percent of the sample looked at *The Sun* during this time, but only one appeared to read it on a daily basis. Twelve percent recorded seeing no papers at all. *The Sun* was the most widely read newspaper, with 23% and 54% of the sample group occasionally reading it during Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics respectively. However, it did not appear to have a committed readership amongst the group, and some read a variety of different papers throughout the week. Several occasionally looked at more than one a day.

Magazines did feature in many of the young peoples' weekly purchases. As expected from my previous research (Lines, 1991, 1992, 1996), *Just 17* was the most widely read female magazine, although *Sugar* and *Bliss* were the main choice of some girls. During the three weeks of Euro '96, only one girl did not read any magazines.

Few said the articles they read covered the event although there were several dossiers on players and one entitled 'football heroes'. One girl recorded that the article she read suggested that "boys were enjoying the 120 hours of football and girls were hating it". The positive response of a number of the girls in this sample to Euro '96 suggests that this was not an accurate representation of the feelings of all girls. One girl also mentioned that there was a fashion spread on Wimbledon clothing during that particular event, but no other mentions of references to the events were recalled.

The boys in the group, on the whole, read fewer magazines on a regular basis, but indicated a wider selection of titles around sport, computers and music. Several mentioned *Shoot* as a specific football magazine purchase during the first two events. One girl also purchased it during Euro '96, but did not maintain her readership through the summer. A Euro '96 magazine and programmes of the event were also purchased during this time. No specific print purchases related to either Wimbledon or the Atlanta Olympics were identified, suggesting their lack of consumer appeal.

Consumption patterns offer one stage towards understanding the total audience response of young people to the 'Summer of Sport' 1996. They alone can identify trends, but do not fully explain ways in which young people actually watch, interpret and interact with the texts. Viewing and reading figures indicate neither the extent of focus and concentration, nor the participation levels in active reception. Reasons why they accept or reject participation still remain unclear. However, it does provide evidence that young people select and reject sporting texts in a variety of different ways, gaining different pleasures from, and interpretations of the same sporting agenda.

For many, the 'feel good factor of football coming home' was a socially significant experience that they actively chose to be part of. This represented some who were caught up in the tide of events as the competition progressed. For others it simply reflected a commitment to their chosen sport. During their leisure time they engaged wholeheartedly in the texts, and chose to spend personal capital on associated products such as CDs, football kit, scarves and English flags. Many of the young people were generally consumed by the emotive, patriotic feelings and excitement at the success experienced by the English team. Even though it touched all of the group in some way, for several, the most significant impact it had on their daily lives was the inconvenience and disruption it caused to their normal viewing habits.

The consumption patterns here suggest that despite the placing of Wimbledon high on the BBC sporting schedule, and the mythic and historic significance of the Olympics, compared with Euro '96 neither achieved the same relevance or importance for this particular audience. In fact some positively distanced themselves from the sporting texts during the weeks of these events. Although the sequencing of events might have some significance here, with the latter two failing to recapture the performances of the English football heroes, many simply suggested that they had better things to do. Clearly, despite some sports fans in the group, young people do not just consume every sporting event, but actively and selectively make their own decisions to engage in the texts of their choice. Such choice and personal taste may be dependent on a wide range of things, such as the nature of the event, the success of the 'home performers' and the presence of recognised stars.

The diary trends identified here offer a general overview of adolescent consumption patterns, and provided the framework for further interpretative work that will more fully identify and explain the diversity and complexity in audience appropriation and reception of super-mediated sports events.

6. 3. Reception, Appropriation and Ritual Participation

Consumption and use are necessary but not sufficient explanations of audience relations. (Nightingale, 1996, p.149)

This section expands upon the nature and significance of the consumption patterns by exploring both the context of reception during the 'Summer of Sport', and the practices within the viewing environment. Thompson (1990, p.314) identifies the relevance of exploring the "everyday appropriation of mass mediated products" as a means of identifying the significance, nature and holistic view of the reception context. Consumption figures alone do not identify the varying levels of interest, attention or concentration that are paid to the screen whilst the event is in progress, nor the kind of social interactions within the viewing environment.

It firstly, discusses the varied levels of social interaction and participation of the group. It identifies who they watched events with, and the nature of the viewing context, providing evidence of shared and solitary spaces used for media reception. Secondly, it explores the diversity in viewing practices, for the domestic scene with its distractions, interruptions and interactions suggests an environment where the acts of consumption and interpretation are both contested and negotiated. The social grouping around the television set for sport viewing is seen to be varied, and does not just focus on the family. Finally, it discusses the ways in which some young people manipulated the domestic viewing context to recreate the 'live' atmosphere of the sporting stadium, becoming active spectators rather than passive armchair onlookers.

The reception context generally focused on the domestic home scene, especially during Euro '96 and Wimbledon. Only two of the focus group attended any of the 'live' events, highlighting the importance of the mediated versions in constructing reality. During Euro '96, the Chinese take away, the garden and the work environments were also mentioned as viewing sites. Wimbledon was the only event where several of the group watched at school. The Olympics held during the

peak holiday period did, as anticipated, offer a more varied range of opportunities for viewing - caravan portable television, airport lounges and hotel rooms. None of these were spaces in constant use and some of the group openly expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of reception. Individuals away on holiday during the Games failed to complete the diary. For several suggested;

There was a lot of coverage in France but when you go on holiday you don't sit in and watch TV.
I was on holiday . . . you're not thinking, 'Oh, I'm missing the Olympics'.

Although the domestic context was the most frequently identified site for reception there was a variety of social arrangements which took place around the television set. Family viewing did not dominate as might have been expected, as others from outside the immediate family circle were often present. Figure 23 shows that from the diary analysis a combination of social groupings watched together, indicating fairly large numbers for some events. It also shows that for over a third of the group across all three events, viewing alone was the most frequently mentioned context. During the Atlanta Olympics nearly half of the young people more frequently watched the event on their own, due to late night viewing schedules and the school holiday, where young people were home alone during the day.

A higher proportion of young people watched Euro '96 with both a wider variety of social groups, and a higher number of different people. It suggests that it was perceived as more of a social occasion, with the whole family present - parents, siblings and other relatives sharing in the viewing environment. Other relatives were not mentioned at all during Wimbledon, and were only featured marginally during the Olympics. The diaries alone, did not identify whether the nature of the event was such that more of the family wanted to watch it, whether it united the whole family and brought them together, or whether larger viewing groups were specifically brought together to recreate a stadium type atmosphere. However, the interviews reveal some significant comments;

If England are playing nine times out of ten, we're all round one person's house. Cos you know you're going to have a laugh no matter what. It's sort of like a family affair.

I watch it, my Dad watches it, a few mates come round, it's like a social thing, have a couple of drinks, and get more merry.

I remember there were about thirty people around my house, my Dad's mates. It's a better atmosphere.

Everyone was really happy and cheering and everything, if they weren't doing so well, then everyone was really tense and you didn't want to say anything in case someone turned round and bit your head off.

Yeah, cos we got excited when there was going to be a goal, so it was actually a bit better with the family there, it brought the crowd home.

When England played it was normally a few of us got together and watched it or we went down to the pub with one of my friend's Dads on the big screen, and it was a really good atmosphere. . . the atmosphere just built up, there's loads of people and some were drunk and started singing and stuff and it was like you were at a football match it was so loud.

On the one with Germany, I brought my friends round and there was like an atmosphere in the house, it was more realistic.

During Euro '96 watching with parents, siblings, other relations, friends and solitary viewing were all listed. Over 80 % of the group watched at least once with their parents. Euro '96 was the only event where watching with groups of friends was the most popular type of group viewing. This was the case for 36% of the group, 4% more girls than boys. Slightly more boys (4%) than girls chose to watch with their parents, and of the 36% who watched alone most often, 4% more were girls. Despite these small differences there were no obvious gender distinctions in social viewing contexts.

Although groups did watch together, on a number of occasions solitary viewing took place and only 16% did not watch alone on some occasion. This reflects the high percentage with their own personal television, and early viewing times when other family members were either at work, or were completing domestic chores.

The football competition was not viewed at school, possibly due to the scheduling of the England games during the evening and weekends, and the seasonal nature of the school PE curriculum. Football was less likely to be part of the curriculum at this time, thus proving difficult for teachers to justify watching it in their lessons.

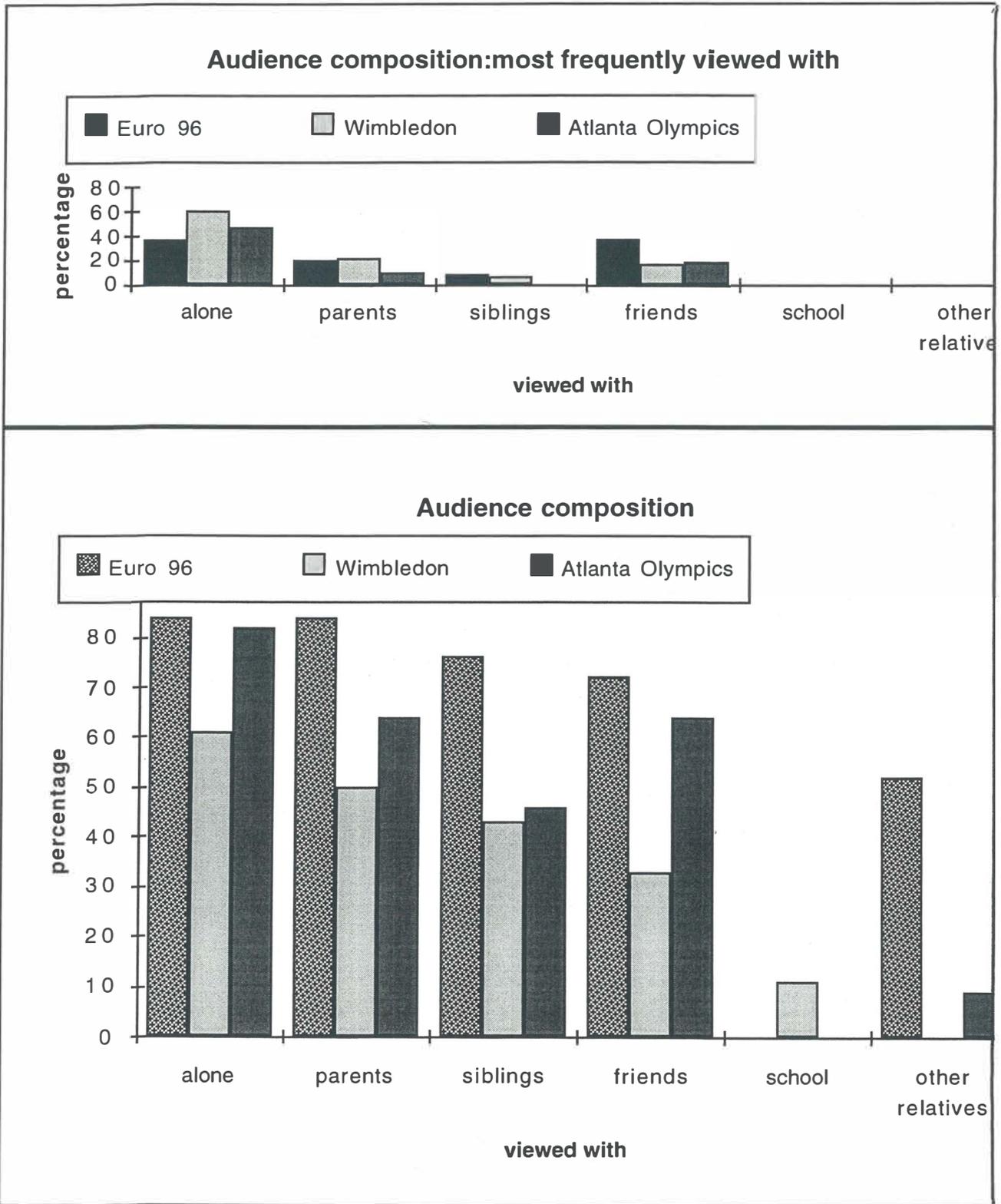


Figure 23 : Audience composition during the televised sports events

The only event viewed with teachers and peers at school was Wimbledon. This reflects the afternoon scheduling of the event, and tennis being taught in PE lessons at the time. Only 11% mentioned it, suggesting this was not a compulsory arrangement for the whole year group. This raises questions about the role of the school, and the ways in which PE or Media Studies Departments can use such scheduling for discussion and interpretation within peer groups. The popularity of Euro '96 amongst girls in the group, suggests that watching some of the event may have been a useful informational and motivational tool to aid performance, and encourage participation at this particular time.

Both Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics were most frequently watched alone by 33% and 46% of the young people respectively. The high figures for the Olympic Games seem to reflect day time viewing, when other family members were out at work, or late evening viewing when the young people may have been watching in bed. The interview data confirm this ;

The Olympics was too late at night, and I was too tired to watch it downstairs.

My brother isn't interested in tennis and I'm the only one in my family who is. . . . I remember watching a lot of it on my own as it was so late at night that I stayed downstairs and watched it by myself.

By the time it was on no-one could be bothered to stay up and watch it because it's not that big in their lives so I watched it on my own, my Dad didn't get in till late from work, so by the time he got in I was asleep on the couch.

Figures reflect diversity and inconsistency across the events, with regard to the significance of parents and friends. Five percent more frequently watched Wimbledon with parents than friends, yet during the Atlanta Olympics nine percent more, watched most frequently with their friends than parents. The school holidays, and having friends round for the day might explain the Olympic figures, rather than anything significant about the event. Siblings and other relatives were not especially significant during these events, but did occasionally feature in the overall audience composition figures.

Other relatives were most significant in the three weeks of Euro '96, suggesting the significance of the event in bringing people together, for social relations were of greater focus during this time. Groups of families and friends meeting together in the domestic viewing context were designed to share in, and to help create an atmosphere. The significance for recreating the live atmosphere will be discussed in a later stage of this section.

The number of young people who watched the events on their own at various times, suggest that the use of the television in the family lounge may not be such a contested space as previous research (Morley, 1989) has indicated. Clearly, a number of the group did have their own television in the bedroom on which they could choose to watch specific programmes;

Sometimes I sit in my room late at night and if there's something on I watch it if I'm not allowed to watch it downstairs.

Like the tennis I could watch in my bedroom because it was on BBC1.

The lounge television was generally perceived as a viewing space where a collective decision took place to view as a family;

. . . when *Eastenders* is on, we're all together and watch it.

In my family the tv is kind of a meeting place for the whole family where we all go and watch programmes together. We've got two tv's in the house, one in the dining room and one in the living room, and the one in the living room is where *Eastenders* is on so we'll all go and watch together, so that's quite good as well, you know we talk and stuff at the same time.

At other times young people chose to select in the comfort of their own rooms, supporting the growth of the 'bedroom culture' (Livingstone and Bovill, 1999). The increasing number of households with more than one television, is supported across the longitudinal study. Additionally, the facility to video may also have enhanced opportunities to watch selected events or matches alone at a later time. However, from the times indicated in the diaries it does seem that a considerable amount was live rather than time-shifted viewing.

The range and depth of interactions with different social groupings throws into question the kinds of negotiations and power struggles that were in evidence amongst those watching television together. The patriarchal dominance of sport and identification with the sporting genre, and the frequently suggested female avoidance of media sport, suggests that a number of conflicts were taking place around the communal television set in some homes.

The interactions within such viewing contexts also identified aspects of peer group pressure and the interpersonal nature of family life. There was evidence of power struggles in terms of who controls programme choice, for when asked about family arguments, one boy suggested that ownership of the remote control was the answer;

Yeah, we have a system in our house that whoever gets hold of the remote control first is in charge of the tv.

Others suggested that interest in the sports event was divided;

My sister was a bit moany.
 My nan, she didn't want to watch.
 I thought my Mum didn't want to watch, but she got into it, she didn't have much choice, my Dad made her watch.
 My mum loves it, but my Dad got a bit annoyed.
 My Dad had to watch it and at this time I didn't have a tv in my room, so I had to sit and suffer all this, just sit there and watch it . . . I thought thank God, I won't have to go through this again for another couple of months.
 My Dad was at work for most of the games, like the weekday ones so I got chucked into the little room.

Clearly, the arguments did not just revolve around sport at this time;

My Mum's a Home Economics teacher so she likes to watch all the cookery programmes, but my Dad says they're boring.
 There's Friends on now at 9 o'clock and my parents want to watch the gardening programme so I get up, go in the other room, watch telly in the other room, so we have arguments about that.
 Me, my sisters and my Mum like to watch the soaps but my Dad doesn't, it's the same with the chat shows too.
 My Mum never watches a football match, there's no way she'd even watch Euro '96. She'd fall asleep during them.

There was evidence of gender power relations, for some of the group such as Clare who was forced to watch by Dad and was so glad when it was all over that she could go back to the normal scheduling of her favourite programmes. At this time she did not have her own television, and her extensive hours spent viewing suggested that she did experience a contested viewing site which was dominated by her father. A number of the comments above do reflect stereotypical assumptions about gender distinctions in viewing, yet there was also some suggestion that once forced to view some women did get involved in the event. The nature of the 'force' that took place suggests that this was emotional and coercive rather than physical, for with the availability of other televisions and spaces in households, it did seem that individuals might have more choice to leave the room than was suggested.

It was not just girls who experienced frustration in their subjection to the sports events, for several of the boys confessed to being upset that their favourite programmes were disrupted;

I mean you switched on Channel 4, right I've had enough of this, and you go to Channel 3 and the same thing's on. It's really annoying.

During Wimbledon there was evidence that one mother decided to abandon her normal role in the kitchen;

My Mum watched the whole two weeks. I had to make my own dinner 'cos she was watching every night.

The sports viewing experience was not entirely male dominated, and there is evidence from the interviews that a number of girls and mothers did engage in the events, even if their commitment and involvement was at times of a different intensity.

The nature of the collective and shared experiences, especially during Euro '96 suggests opportunities for audience discussion, discursive elaboration and re-interpretation of the events. To some extent this might explain why some individuals

felt obliged to participate in the viewing experience, for if they had not seen a particular match during Euro '96, it seems that they felt excluded from peer group talk the following day;

It was in everything, all the programmes as well, and lots of people talking about it. I watched it because of that. I know that sounds a bit stupid but I did because everyone else was talking about it, it was like peer pressure but indirectly, so I'd know what everyone was talking about, but most of the time I'd watch the highlights.

Well after Germany beat us everyone was quiet and saying things about Germany. After the Holland match it was a brilliant atmosphere at school, everyone was really happy.

When there's sport on that's the main thing that comes up in general conversation.

One girl suggested that it was predominantly boys who were discussing the football the next day, and that they made fun of her interest in Euro '96;

Yeh, the boys were mostly making fun of me. Here comes McManaman Girl! I don't mind let them do what they want as long as I was happy.

She also confirmed that although the football was a topic of conversation at school each day, after the big matches Wimbledon rarely featured in the same way;

Generally the lads are more into football. If they do talk about tennis it's not in the same way, like with football they have to re-enact every goal on the pitch after a match.

Several confirmed the ways in which the girls got drawn into the boy's sporting conversations, yet sometimes had different agendas;

Well the boys talked about it a lot so I suppose you sort of got drawn into their conversation, but with the girls it was more - 'oh did you see Steve McManaman, or did you see so and so', it wasn't so much the game it was more the people playing the game.

With Euro '96 . . . I remember into school and normally its the boys going on about football, but everyone including the girls were going on about it.

Whether intentional or not, there does appear to be evidence of the setting up of a stadium style atmosphere during Euro '96. The viewing context of groups of people

gathered together, wearing England scarves and kit and waving flags suggests evidence of what Geertz calls 'deep play' (Real, 1996, p. 51);

We all wore England kit.
I've got a massive England flag that I got for the England Holland game.
With friends it was, when we scored we all went mad.
It was weird because we all really wanted England to win and we were screaming and shouting.
We were all hugging each other, it was quite funny.

Euro '96 of all the events, offered an aesthetic and emotive experience which excited and enthralled the audience who responded accordingly. Real (1996, p. xix) refers to ritual participation as the extent to which the individual inhabits, interacts and enters into media experience. From interview comments and response to diaries, there is evidence that members of the group were involved in such ritual participation.

Such behaviour shows an attempt to identify with the national team, patriotically waving flags, shouting, cheering and wearing team kit in their own homes. Little direct evidence of this was reported in the other two events. This could be explained by the number of the group who had experience of the 'live' football scene, and could attempt to reenact aspects of crowd behaviour. The role of the crowd is also more in evidence in televised football in comparison with the quiet of the Wimbledon stands during the rallies and the different nature of the crowd in terms of group applause rather than continuous noisy chanting and waving during play. Is this then something about the 'real' nature of the event, and how it is then reflected and replicated in the mediated viewing context?

This also produces evidence for the debate concerning the audience as passive or active recipients of sporting texts. For as Thompson (1990, p. 24) argues ;

the idea that the recipients of media messages are passive onlookers who simply absorb what flashes before them on the screen ... or page, is a myth that bears no resemblance to the actual character of appropriation as an on-going process of understanding and interpretation, of discussion, appraisal and incorporation.

Evidence here refutes the notion of the 'passive' spectator, and suggests that they are active both in terms of responding emotionally to events (crying, screaming, cheering in reaction to sporting moments), and in their interpretations of what they see before them (critical analysis of referees decisions, sport stars responses and actions), together with oppositional readings of the media texts themselves.

The solitary nature of viewing on privatised portables suggests the possibility of focused and concentrated involvement in the texts. Criticism against audience viewing figures is that it does not account for the ways in which the audience are attending to the programme. For within the domestic scene, and with other viewers present, there will be distractions and interruptions that might offer only a partial focus on the screen.

Figure 24 reflects the nature of other activities taking place during viewing time. This supports the viewing scene that might have been anticipated - one predominantly of eating, drinking and talking as part of the social setting during the scheduled events. A number of other, although less significant activities support Wilson's statement (1993, p.79);

. . . a frequent mode of attention in the television viewing is that of the 'glance' rather than the 'gaze'. Consequently whole segments of a TV text are never seen by the viewer.

The mention of other activities such as playing on the computer, playing snooker, on the phone, cleaning the bedroom, painting nails and playing with the dog clearly suggest that these activities need a focus of attention that must distract from the concentrated gaze at the screen. This fits with Lull's work on structural uses of television (1980, pp. 20), where he suggests that the television can be a flow of background noise for other domestic chores and routines. The main difference with young people is that they are less likely to have the same type of domestic responsibilities such as preparing dinner and Hoovering. Noticeably for several, their own personal tv appears to be used in this way when they are tidying their bedroom.

However, the main types of activities they do within the viewing context focus on socialising and using other technological or media products at the same time.

The 56% who were doing homework at various stages of Euro 96 viewing, might have found both activities were equally distracted. Significantly, during Wimbledon several of the group suggested that they did not have the time to watch the event as they had too much homework to do. During Euro '96, it appeared that the event either took priority, or that both activities were able to take place simultaneously.

During Euro '96 nearly twice as many girls as boys were doing their homework whilst watching, whereas more than twice as many boys were using the computer at the same time. Girls seemed to be involved in a far wider range of activities, mentioning at least twelve others, from washing hair, flicking over to other channels, sunbathing, playing monopoly, cleaning bedroom to baby-sitting. In comparison, boys only mentioned six other activities, such as playing snooker and reading magazines;

I could never sit through a whole football game and watch it for 90 minutes.

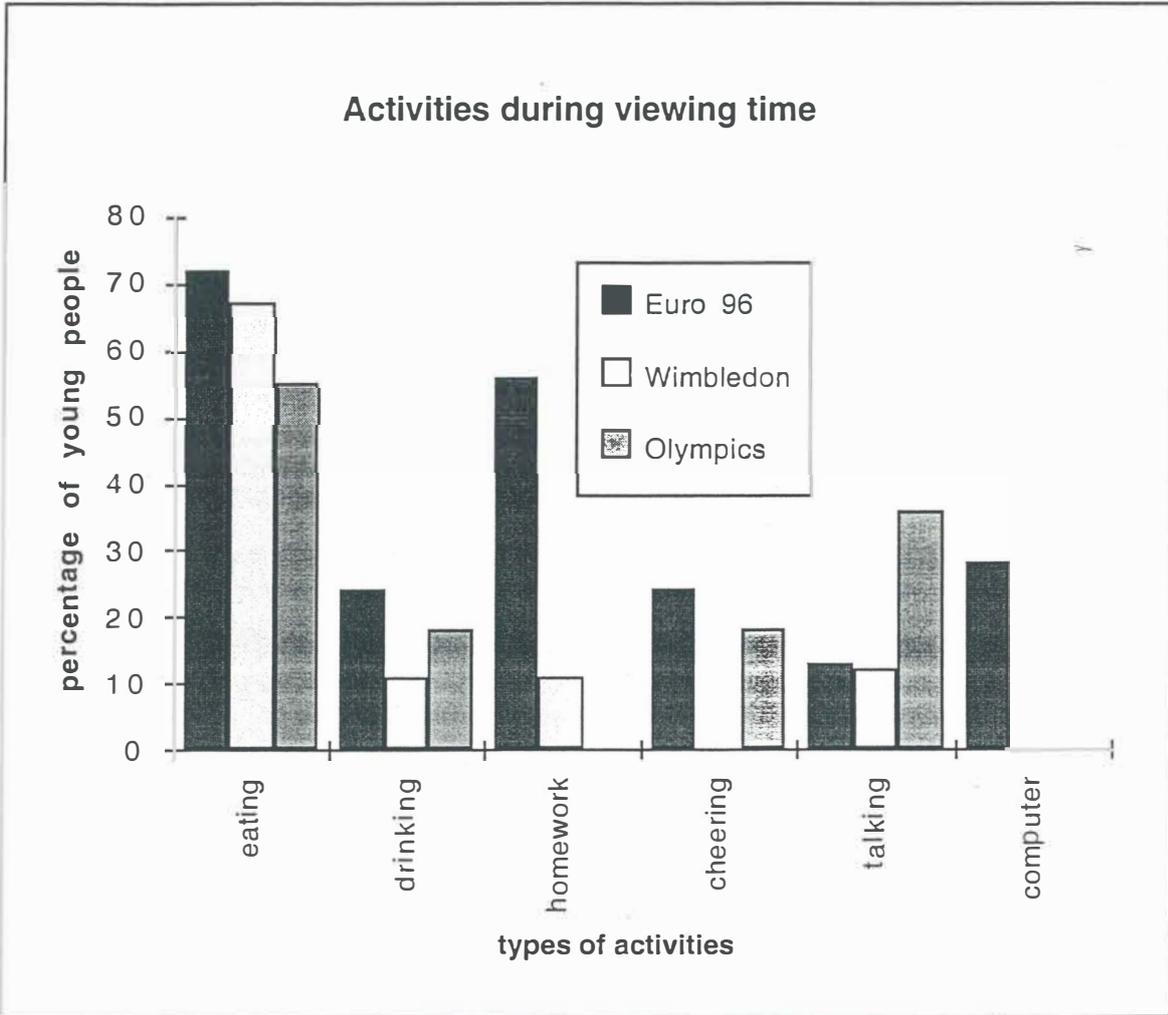
On Wimbledon;

Sometimes they got boring and I'd flick through the channels.
And the Olympics, I didn't sit and watch it, only if I was doing something it was on in the background.

One boy 'crying and biting his nails' at the same time, indicates that some of the boys, for whom football was a favourite programme, were more focused in their attention, and less likely to be distracted with other activities.

From the interviews, there are times when the audience became more focused on the screen than others. This shows the ability to switch happenings to the forefront at certain crucial moments, for on several occasions when asked what else they were doing, they stated 'just concentrating'.

Figure 24a: Other Key Activities during televised sports viewing



Wimbledon: other activities during viewing

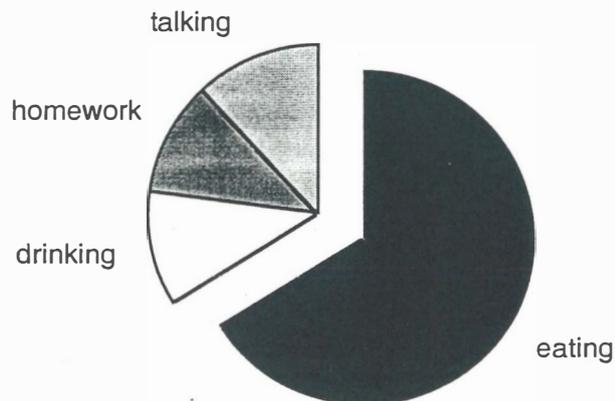
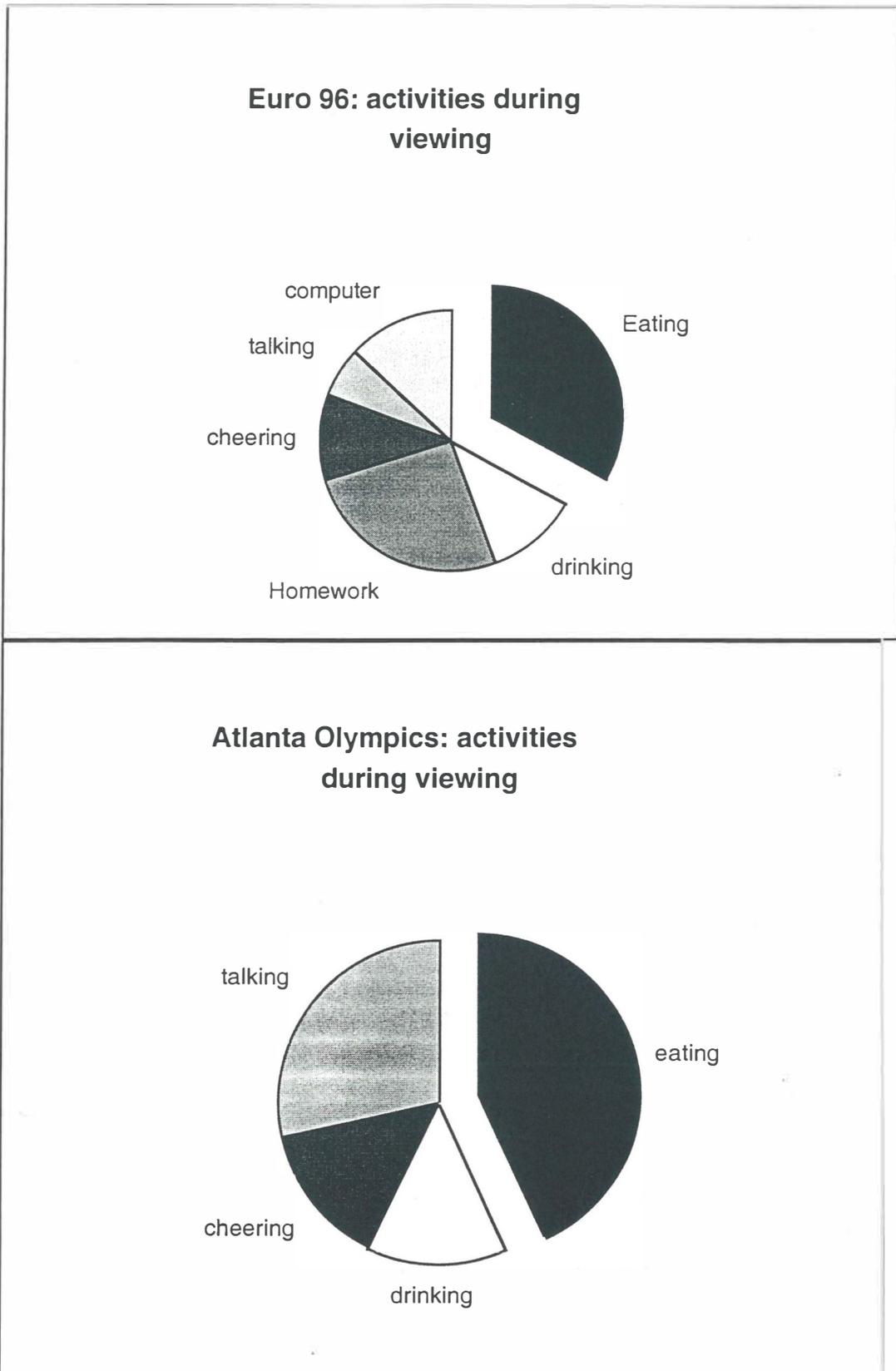


Figure 24b: Other Key Activities during televised sports viewing



The England football games were a key time of concentrated and focused attention;

We were like holding our bladders to half time.

The whole family were like glued to the box when normally they'd be doing other stuff, like Mum'd normally be cleaning, my dad'd go to work - there was one day when he stayed at home to watch Euro '96 which I thought was a bit sad.

When it was England matches, then yeah everyone was really concentrating, you are trying to communicate with the people on the tv. You really get into it.

My Dad used to get really annoyed with me because I used to phone people up during the matches and talk and he'd be like, be quiet . . . but the only ones I really paid attention to were the England matches.

A group of boys summed up the ability to switch from ritual chanting to concentrated focus at critical moments of the event;

One of my mates was talking and shouting and we kept doing things like everyone jump up and down ten times or we'll lose, we kept on doing these luck things. We were mucking about but when it came to the penalties we were like everyone shut up, shut up and watch.

Evidence from both the diaries, and the interviews supports Euro '96 as the central and most significant media sport event during the summer of 1996. At no other time were the group so intensely and emotionally involved, nor were they able to recount so many audience memories and incidents. Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics failed to encourage ritual group participation and reception in quite the same way as the success of the England football team was able to do.

6.4. Reception: Pleasures, Meaning and Interpretative practices

This section conceptualises the discourse young people created with the three sporting events under investigation. It considers the ways in which the sporting texts engaged their attention and why. Interpretation and appreciation of such meaning in their everyday lives are further explored. For in receiving the polysemic representations, it is clear that sporting texts do hold young people's imaginations in

differing ways, and produce various meanings and pleasures. It is suggested that the nature of the sports viewing experience offers a dimension of spectacle, emotion and physicality which is unique.

Little is written about the meaning and pleasures of mediated sports experience from the audience perspective. The researchers' interpretations (as shown in Chapter 4) may be very different from the audience who have tuned in for a different purpose, and who may not consciously search beyond the excitement of the penalty shoot out, the quest for Olympic Gold or the charisma of Andre Agassi, for deeper ideologies and cultural meanings.

This section also considers the ways in which young people associate with, and make judgements about the sports stars they view and read of. The notion of sports stars as heroes and heroines is a complex and developing area of research. Diary completion during the summer of sport identified a number of favourite players and performers. The characteristics most admired in sport stars was discussed further in the interviews, and provides a focus for consideration here.

A taxonomy of the pleasures and feelings that the events evoked are identified in Figure 25, and placed alongside the taxonomy of pleasure for sports viewing as shown in Figure 3 of the literature review. This reveals reasons for young people's selection and rejection of participation in mediated sports experiences. The pleasures of young people focused around the sports spectacle with its narratives of emotional intensity, energy and identification, its apparent realism and transparency and its opportunities for body gazing. It provides a response to Whannel's (1998) repeated demand for a sports viewing taxonomy using audience discourse.

The diaries asked them to tick pre-coded comments about their feelings after each day's events. Figure 26 shows that emotional comments, such as excitement, enjoyment and fun were central across all three sports events. Other feelings listed in

the diaries revealed that during Euro '96 they felt stressful, anxious and relieved at England winning.

**Figure 25 : Pleasures and Meanings
Taxonomy of Sports viewing and the young people's experience**

<p>ENERGY * goal scoring * I watch and admire how good they are * the things they can do with their bodies it's amazing * a brilliant performance * the best performance I've ever seen England play * the diving was wicked * Gascoigne's goals were brilliant</p>
<p>ABUNDANCE * it was cool * gets the world together * all the crowds * amazing to see all those different countries together * the singing and lighting the candle * when you have dominant British stars * it's an occasion * it's such a big event * the way you see all the countries parading and being happy</p>
<p>INTENSITY * I was really sad * everyone was crying * it was a shock * exciting * I love 'em * watching them muck up and seeing them hurt * I absolutely loved it * a kind of spirit * it was brilliant * really lovely * I was really upset * I was so upset * it was like someone had died * it was like our whole family in tears * I thought it's not fair * I thought they have to win * I cried for an hour * I thought my Dad was gonna cry * everyone was really happy and cheering * the atmosphere * it was electric * it provokes a lot of tension * the whole country was devastated * it was a good feeling when we were winning * that sort of buzz * the lighting of the fire was really touching * it was tense * a brilliant atmosphere * everyone was really happy * if we lost everyone was serious * Elliot was sobbing * it provokes a lot of attention and you see that the world is a good place * you can get frustrated * I could hear people outside my house screaming</p>
<p>TRANSPARENCY * They got Mohammed Ali to talk to us * I think fake wrestling is wrong * Like you were actually there * you see the world is a good place * everyone around united together * it brought the crowd home</p>
<p>COMMUNITY / IDENTIFICATION * united in sport * everyone supporting their country * it's a social thing * a coming together * they try to imitate that * everyone was supporting one person * it made young boys more confident * everyone working together * it encourages younger people to take up sport * it's a way to get together and be social * the whole country was united * people were really proud * everyone around united together * the way it brought everyone together * everyone had one common interest * you feel like part of it , it's a national thing * there was a really good England spirit</p>
<p>VOYEURISM / BODY GAZING * it was really funny watching those big fat people * I saw some fit birds * watching the players * they're fit * we've got the best looking football team * really sexy * sexy legs * the players are nice * she's really skinny * Cor, then you think he's a fit thing *</p>

Figure 26 Feelings most often experienced during sports viewing

Euro 96	Wimbledon	Atlanta Olympics
1. Exciting	Exciting	I appreciate the skill
2. I appreciate the skill	Enjoyable	Exciting
3. Enjoyable	I wish I could be that good	I love the Olympics/ its competitive
4. It's competitive	Its fun(ladies final by one boy who didn't mention it as a characteristic of the men's final)	Its fun
5. It's fun	I appreciate the skill	I'd like to be that good
6. I love football	It's competitive	It's inspiring
7. It's good to watch my favourite sport	7. It's good to watch my favourite sport	there's nothing better to do
8. I prefer to watch it's enjoyable	It's relaxing	it's enjoyable it's violent I'd rather watch men than women it's good to see women competing in sport I'd like to buy that kit
9. I wish I could be that good	It's helping me improve I want to copy this when I play	
10. I wish I could see it live	There's nothing else on	

The likes and pleasures of many of the young people clearly revolved around the intensity and emotional commitment they felt during the event. They keenly expressed Euro '96 as a talking and bonding point with their peers, they referred to the tension and excitement, the emotional highs and lows and their own surprise at the strength of their feelings;

When they missed it was like someone had died, it was like our whole family was in tears.
I was so happy, I was crying.
I don't know why I let myself get so emotional because it's only a game.

Strong focus was given to the swings in moods, from moments of supreme elation to extreme despair and the ways in which this release of emotion was shown as a collective group feeling. The unity and bonding of these shared emotions was very important to them and an over-riding memory which they were prepared to share, even in the group interviews. Several hinted at the emotional significance of the occasion by the fact that a number of male members of family and friendship groups were seen to be crying, or close to it. A number discussed the ways in which the

emotions carried over into everyday life - talking about it the next day, even discussing it with peers that they didn't normally speak to, running out into the streets from pubs and homes in a public display of unity and sharing of the sporting moment. This supports Real's (1996) and Whannel's (1998) comments, about the affective, emotional and expressive experiences offered by media sport, which few other genres can compare with.

As suggested by Figure 27, neither Wimbledon nor the Olympics aroused such fervour of emotion and commitment. Mohammed Ali's appearance at the Opening Ceremony was one of the few moments which kindled similar sentiments about courage and spirit. Britain's rare moments of medal success, and highlighted points of failure were scarcely worth a mention. Wimbledon clearly lacked any over-riding mythical moments for the group. Tim Henman, as the British hope, provided some viewing pleasure, Cliff Richard's singing in the rain had one mention, and the Centre Court staker highly profiled at the time of the Men's Singles final, appeared to be long since forgotten. As one boy suggested, Wimbledon was overshadowed by the preceding soccer competition, and relatively quickly forgotten.

The Olympics captured a feeling of 'abundance'- the nature of the spectacle, the variety of events, the sheer size of the crowds and the number of different countries taking part. Although the notion of the Olympic spectacle was popular, it seemed that the young people had limited awareness about the historical traditions, myths and meanings of the Games. They vaguely talked using their own terminology, about the six circles, lighting 'the candle' (instead of Olympic Flame) and different continents coming together, with their main perceptions of the event uniting the world in sport, and showing it to be a good place;

The way you see the countries parading and being happy and you see the world is a good place, all the time you care about wars and stuff that is going on around you, well this is a time to see everyone united together and competing in the friendly games.

In this sense, the dominant meaning of the Games for many young people revolved around its traditional ideological myths of peace, harmony and friendship, for only three comments exposed concern at current contemporary values. One mentioned that it was about 'being the best', another questioned its over commercialisation, and a third was dismayed at the bomb explosion in Atlanta Park during the Games.

For girls, much of the pleasure of watching the events, especially Euro '96 revolved around body gazing and admiring the physiques and looks of the footballers. Boys too, during Wimbledon and the Olympics, were quick to mention body gazing at female players. The physicality and focus on the body was of significance in the sports viewing of both adolescent girls and boys, and a legitimate opportunity to view scantily clad physiques of the opposite sex. For the media spectacle, and coverage across newspapers and magazines, emphasises the sexuality of sport stars as a key selling point of their image. A number of girls spoke of the ways in which their magazines profiled footballers during the time of Euro '96, and offered pin-up posters of several of the players, encouraging them to tune in to the event itself for more intense 'body gazing';

The other thing is the players, I suppose all girls say that, because I suppose that's all they are basically watching it for. It was good you really had your favourites and you were rooting for that player. (female)
I just tuned in cos I saw some fit birds and I just kept on watching. (male)

Identification with both the nation team and affiliation with certain players were key elements in the audience memories of the sporting events, especially Euro '96. There were clear recollections of the ways in which individuals experienced feelings of collectivity and unification as shown by the comments in the taxonomy. A genuine belief was expressed by many that the event brought together family, friends, the wider community and even the whole country. The extent to which this provoked feelings linked to nationalism, patriotism and xenophobia, and created a sense of national identity are discussed further in the following chapter.

The intensity of feelings and identification with the nation's players remained in the long term memories of the young people, and in some ways superseded the discourse about the actual physical energy and performances of the events. Yet many of the group still had vivid recall of specific moments of skill during the year following the events. Figures 27, shows that the best moments of the events, captured from the diaries, reflected the physical energy and performances that meant the most to them, and "I appreciate the skill level" was a highly featured comment made across all three events as shown in Figure 26.

During Euro '96, the favourite moments of sporting action focused on England's victories, key goals, penalties, the golden goal and exceptional goal keeping saves. The fact that Cliff Richard singing to the crowd while rain stopped play at Wimbledon, appeared more significant than many of the matches, summarises the lack of appeal of Wimbledon 1996. For almost all of the young people, tennis seemed to lack the energy, vitality and emotion of the soccer competition. Similarly, the Atlanta Olympics failed to offer many performances that captivated the audience. The gymnastics, diving and athletics offered brief moments of interest, but several suggested that the emotional intensity and identification with national competitors was missing owing to the lack of British success.

The ways in which the young people perceived the televised version of the sporting events to be selected representations of the 'real' event, or saw the media production as if it was the actual live event (reflecting the transparency of the production process in offering a window on the sports world), was not obviously apparent from comments made. Yet the role of the media in the production process was rarely raised, suggesting that the young people were absorbed by the transparency of the events. Only on one occasion was a concerned discussion generated about the role of the media and 'fake wrestling.' At other times the reality of the events were such that it seemed the

audience felt a very real part of the spectacle to the extent that 'it brought the crowd home' and 'you were actually there'. A number of comments used terms such as 'we' and 'us' in personalised ways as if the audience, the competitors and crowd were united as one indistinguishable body.

Although most of the group gained pleasure from their involvement at some time during the six weeks of sport, for others there was obviously less interest and positive dislike for the sports viewing context. Figure 28, shows that general comments ranged from boredom, repetition, too much sport, to concern at disruption to their normal viewing routines. With both Wimbledon and the Olympics, several mentioned that they only watched because there was nothing else on.

As Figure 27 shows, dislikes about Euro '96, focused essentially on England's defeat by Germany in the semi-final. The fact it was Germany, as opposed to any other nation, was a key issue for several of the group. Some individuals sensitively expressed criticism and obvious dislike of the violence by supporters following the game. There was continued annoyance over too much coverage of the football, and its priority in the scheduling over other programmes. Wimbledon, as intimated from previous audience discussion, was most disliked because it was boring, its timing following Euro '96, the rain, and Agassi and Henman being knocked out. The Atlanta Olympics brought a general lack of response and emotion, in terms of either likes or dislikes.

The intensity of sport in the summer scheduling of 1996 was a complete turn-off for some young people. Although there were more negative comments from girls, reflecting their everyday reaction to media sport, which went beyond the three events, these were not completely gender specific. Despite some obvious dislikes of certain sports, events and intensity of everyday sports coverage, during the six weeks of analysis there were no individuals who did not in some way participate in at least one

Figure 27: FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE EVENTS**BEST MOMENTS OF EURO 96****BOYS**

- * when England beat Spain on (lucky) penalties (x4) * England beating Holland 4-1 (x4)
- * slaughtering Holland 4-1 and Sheringham's goals (x1)*Alan Shearer scoring so many goals (x2)
- * England beating Scotland 2-0 (x2) * and Gazza's great goal (x1)
- * Poborsky's great play and wonder goal (x1) * when we beat Scotland and Seaman saved a penalty and Paul Gasgoine scored a cracker (x1)
- *when Stuart Pearce scored. I thought he was going to miss like the World Cup (x1)
- *All of England's wins (x1) *The golden goal- it was exciting and thrilling (x1)

GIRLS

- *David Seaman saving the penalty (x1) *England v Spain and it came to penalties (x2)
- *When Stuart Pearce scored, I was so happy I was crying (x1) * Watching England(x1)
- *England beating Holland 4-1 (x3) *the atmosphere around town was excellent (x1)
- *England scoring the first goal against Germany (x1) *All of England's wins (x1)

LEAST LIKED**BOYS**

- *Germany as they did not deserve to win (x1) *England not winning versus Germany (x5) *the riots after England played Germany (x1)
- *many of the matches were boring and scrappy(x1)
- *the Opening ceremony was very stupid and cheaply made (x1)
- * I was so sad Gareth Southgate missed the penalty(x1)
- *the violence it caused and the fights between the supporters(x1)
- *too much coverage. I didn't enjoy all of the matches (x1)

GIRLS

- *that the Germans won (x3) *too much coverage in the build up to Euro 96 (x1)
- *it made you sick of it (x1) *I wouldn't have minded any other team but Germany winning(x1) *the golden goal shoot out (x1)

BEST MOMENTS OF THE ATLANTA OLYMPICS

- *gymnastics and diving. (female) (There wasn't really any special moments because the England team didn't get to win any medals) *when Bailey won the 100m for men and Linford got disqualified. (male)
- *when the UK won a gold medal. (female) *there wasn't any as I didn't watch. (female)

LEAST LIKED

- *nothing really. (female) *that Linford Christie said it was unfair. (male)
- that it did get boring at times. (male)

BEST MOMENTS OF WIMBLEDON**BOYS**

- *when Cliff Richard sang (x2) *women's and men's finals (x1) *Henman's very good win (x1)
- *Tim Henman doing so well (x2)*the streaker in the final (x1) *I didn't have any (x1)
- *when Henman beat Kafelnikov (x1)

GIRLS

- *seeing Stefi Graff win the ladies singles(x1) *I didn't have any(x1)
- *I didn't watch any as I had a lot of homework to do (x1)
- *None, because I didn't watch any(x1) *when Agassi got knocked out (x1)
- *when it finished and the programmes went back to normal (x1) *the final (x1)

LEAST LIKED**BOYS**

- *it was really boring and that's why I hardly watched it (x1) *Agassi went out (x2)
- *its timing straight after Euro 96- too much sport (x1) *bit boring (x1)
- *how rain kept interrupting matches (x1) *Tim Henman going out (x2)

GIRLS

- *I don't like watching tennis (x1) *All of it-I don't enjoy watching tennis (x1)
- *I felt sorry for Tim Henman when he lost as he is an excellent player and also my favourite (x1)
- *I didn't watch enough- in fact any of it (x1) *it was overplayed on tv (x1) *nothing (x1)
- *that the English lost (x1) *that the programmes had to be moved around (x1) *it was a bit boring

of the three events. All of the group were able to contribute to discussions, offer opinions about, and have some feelings towards aspects of the mediated content. To have withdrawn completely from the sporting spectacle, would have cast some young people adrift from everyday social chatter, and therefore they felt obliged to tune in, even if only for the results, or the news headlines.

Figure 28: Dislikes about Media Sports Viewing

Male comments

*I think people were drained with that, and the Olympics, Wimbledon as well. I got a bit exhausted.. I think 3 major sports in one year is a bit much. They should have spread it out a bit.
 * if it wasn't the actual games there was stuff about it as well * it was the content of programmes as well, instead of having normal things it revolved around football more than it did before
 *So do I (think there's enough sport on tv.) *I don't like the marathons I think they're pretty boring
 *it put me off watching sport on tv because I was so sick of it, it de motivated me from watching sport

Female comments

* I went out more to avoid it * It was really annoying * it is a big deal , but it just gets annoying being always on tv, it like dominated * I think there's enough sport on television * They cancelled every other programme to put Euro '96 on, you couldn't get away from it * you can't really escape it
 * You do get a bit fed up with it after a while * I don't like the game, can't play it * I might as well watch if there's nothing else on * I think there's too much sport on television * Boring. I never watch it
 *I don't ever watch tennis * Olympics...Oh boring * I didn't sit down and watch it, only if I was doing something it was on in the background * I don't see any benefit in watching sport unless you enjoy it * there was so much coverage it got really tiring * it was annoying, it was everywhere, just one after the other and it just, you couldn't get away from it

Sports stars were obviously a central feature of the sporting narratives. The predominance of English footballers was clear from the interview discussions and summarised by this statement, for when asked who do you think are sports stars young people your age really admire, one boy said;

It's going to be a footballer, nearly everytime a footballer . . . cos football is the most popular game. All over the world.

The key sport stars mentioned showed that few other sportsmen and women, were as familiar and personalised to them as footballers. They talked about their skills, football club, personality, lifestyle and looks. Figure 29 shows that positive features

rather than negative ones, constantly provided the framework of admired characteristics. Often young people were critical of poor behaviour, and rarely expressed any admiration for immorality or violent behaviour. Their moral stance against the expectations of sport stars as role models, discussed further in the following chapter, offered a divergence from media predictions about the vulnerability and gullibility of adolescents.

Following similar trends to those identified in the diary analysis, England footballers, Shearer, McManaman, Seaman, Gascoigne, Sheringham, Pearce, Southgate were some of the most admired players discussed in the interviews. Tennis players, Sampras, Henman, Bates, Martin, Kafelnikov, Krajicek were the key male competitors and female players; Graff, Seles, Sanchez-Vicario and Pierce were mentioned. Although Agassi was a key feature in the diary because of his surprise early defeat, he only received a brief recall in the interviews. Tim Henman was raised as a key discussion point to determine the extent to which his media construction was decoded in the same way by this audience. The Olympic athletes received a relatively low profile in comparison, and there was even confusion with the names of some performers, such as Ben Johnson instead of Michael Johnson, the mention of Flo Jo, and the long fingernails even though she was not competing and the inability to remember the name of Kelly Holmes. Christie and Redgrave received specific mentions, yet it was Mohammed Ali, who lit the Olympic flame, who was most frequently discussed as a popular figure. Gunnell, Sanderson and Dawes were the female competitors who were most frequently named in the interview discussions. Other overseas competitors, mentioned at the time of the events, were generally less significant as time elapsed. For some young people had forgotten who they were, or why they had named them as their favourites.

Aspects of admired characteristics, as shown in Figure 29, were identified as performance related, personality /lifestyle related or physique/looks related. Both

Figure 29: Sports Stars' admired characteristics in the words of young people

Performance related
<p>Euro 96 * played well * outstanding player * scores goals /great striker / brilliant goals *he's class</p> <p>* one of the greatest players in the world * the style they play in * they were spectacular</p> <p>* brilliant penalty taker *he's brilliant to watch *good tackler * he's a genius *he's the best</p> <p>* he's got class *skilful *brilliant saves / crucial saves he made *very skilful * he's exciting</p> <p>*he's a great goalkeeper *the best goalie in the world *he's such an inspirational player</p>
<p>Wimbledon * played well *she's really good *he's the king on grass *he has skill *his serve</p> <p>*he's an excellent server and player *he played brilliantly * he's talented *he's brilliant</p> <p>*because of her skill level * she's always winning</p>
<p>Atlanta Olympics * he runs so well, he's amazing * the first British woman to win a race for such a long time * an amazing runner * she's brilliant * he's really fast * he's really good * she's good</p> <p>* he's the worlds best ever boxer * an amazing runner * he holds the world record</p> <p>* 12 gold medals an amazing achievement</p>
Personality / lifestyle related
<p>Euro 96 * he's brave to take the penalty * he had nerve *he showed courage *he's married</p> <p>* he had confidence * he's funny (Gazza) * he's like a daddy * he coped with the pressure</p> <p>* he's lovely * he's got character *he's nice</p>
<p>Wimbledon * he played with guts and determination and refused to lose *he tried his hardest</p> <p>* he played well and with courage *he never gave up *good manners and everything, they've got an aura about them *he's a nice lad * he's English</p>
<p>Atlanta Olympics * she comes form Essex * showed great courage *her enthusiasm</p> <p>* he's done a lot for his community, his race * he's got determination *he stood up for his race</p> <p>* he's obviously British</p>
Physique/ looks related
<p>Euro 96 * they're fit *he's sexy *he's good looking *their bodies * Yum!</p> <p>* Oooh he's nice * sexy legs * he's cuddly * he's cute * his face</p>
<p>Wimbledon *she's well fit * she's more exotic * Mary Pierce wearing those little all in one things</p>
<p>Atlanta Olympics</p> <p>* she's really skinny * powerful * the Americans with their sunglasses on * the woman with the long nails</p>

male and female stars were acknowledged across all three categories, although there were more references to male sport stars in the latter section. Outstanding levels of skill, style, successes and being the best were greatly admired. Goal scoring and goal keeping feats made players such as Shearer and Seaman popular; Graf was rated because of her consistent winning tennis. The speed of the Olympic sprinters was frequently mentioned, as well as being the world's best.

Personality characteristics such as bravery, determination and courage were used to describe young people's admiration of their favourite stars. Local and national identification also featured strongly during Wimbledon and Atlanta, associations with home counties, and 'being English' as reasons for liking certain stars.

References to physique relate to the 'body watching' pleasures of sports viewing. Comments made reflect their concerns with looks and body image as desirable traits. Sport stars function to provide visual images of physicality, desirability and sexuality. For a group of girls when asked what makes a player exciting to watch, suggested, 'how they look'. McManaman, Shearer and Seaman were perceived to be the sexiest of the sport stars during the events, confirming the appeal and desirability of footballers. This confirms the results of a survey of 5,000 girls aged 14-18 by *Bliss* magazine (*Daily Mail*, 26/3/99, p.17) where the popularity of soccer stars eclipsed Hollywood heart-throbs as pin-up hunks. Michael Owen, the Liverpool 19 year old footballer was voted the 'Sexiest Man in the World', with Beckham, Rednapp and Shearer within the top 50. Sports photography offers a concentrated gaze at male bodies and confirms Gledhill (1991, p.210) suggestion that;

Stars reach their audiences primarily through their bodies.

The age of the stars was a point of concern - one girl apologised for thinking Seaman was sexy, another considered Shearer to be cute more than sexy because of his receding hairline. Another suggested he was a bit like a 'daddy'.

Finally, Tim Henman, as an emerging sport star during Wimbledon 1996, was promoted as a main discussion point in conversations about the significance of sport stars for Chapter 5.2. raised a number of features in the media construction of Tim Henman. The reading of Tim Henman's image as shown by Figure 30, was fairly

Figure 30: Reading Tim Henman

<p>Performance</p> <p>*He's like brilliant * He's talented * I think he's a good sport star * He's good * Plays good, clean games</p>
<p>Personality</p> <p>*He's young (x 3) * he coped well with the pressure * you can tell by looking at him he's a nice lad * he doesn't look worried, he's out for a game, he likes the sport * he keeps himself to himself * he doesn't start crying at every incident</p>
<p>Notions of Englishness</p> <p>* He's British * He's English (x2) * So for the whole of England he's the last hope * He's done a lot for tennis, no-one can say Britain are nothing * How much pressure to be the first English player * He's putting British tennis back on the map * He was British and doing well * Because of his nationality</p>
<p>Physique/Looks</p> <p>* He's cute * I don't think he's nice particularly * I don't think he's nice looking</p>
<p>Hero</p> <p>* He's a bit of a hero * He's inspiring more young people to go out and play * I don't think they see him as a hero, he hasn't achieved anything major yet</p>

limited as might be expected with an emerging star. One girl summarised his emergence;

Tim Henman. I'd never heard of him before and he did really well.

There was obvious limited knowledge about his personality and lifestyle. Only one recalled the ball girl incident from the previous Wimbledon, and several said they didn't know him at all. His main significance to young people at this stage, was the

fact he was English / British (both terms that were used interchangeably by a primarily English set of respondents), and his standard of play was seen to be improving Britain's status in tennis. As Figure 30 shows, they interpreted his image as the 'perfect' sporting gentleman - 'he plays a good, clean game'; 'he's a nice lad'; 'he likes the sport; he's playing for the love of it'; 'he keeps himself to himself' and perhaps as a sly dig at 'Gazza', 'he doesn't cry at every incident'. These reinforce the internalisation of myths about the conservatism, reserve, honesty and pure love of the game of the traditional English sportsman.

Whilst these interpretations match the preferred readings of the media texts at the time concerning Henman's image construction, the young people were more discerning in their acceptance of him as a hero. For although the media termed him as 'Our hero', and the Flora advertisement classes him as 'Everyone's Number One', there was a general feeling expressed that he needed to have achieved more before they were prepared to accept him as a hero. They were more accepting of him as a possible role model and inspiration to play.

This does confirm that young people, whilst admiring a number of characteristics of their favourite sports stars, do have certain standards and expectations of sport stars as heroes and role models. This provides a key issue for discussion in the following chapter.

6.5. The Media and active sports participation

As identified earlier in this investigation, concerns have been voiced regarding the activity levels of young people today, with the decline attributed to a more sedentary lifestyle, aspects of safety preventing unsupervised play, the decrease in extra-curricular school sport and hours spent involved watching television or playing with computers. A recent survey confirmed that young people, aged 8-16 spend five times as long in front of the television as they do outdoors;

The idle youngsters still list professional sport stars as their heroes - even though their lack of exercise means they have little chance of emulating their idols' success. (Halpin, 1998, 'The Idle Generation', *Daily Mail*, 21/1/98, p.20)

This section identifies a number of connections between the media involvement of young people during the six weeks of intense media sport coverage, and their patterns of physical activity and sport. It discusses the extent to which time spent watching television and mediated sport compared with live sports viewing and active participation, and the subsequent role of the media as the primary agency for the construction of sporting values and ideologies. It explores what motivational meanings are apparent from young people's interpretations, addressing how a desire to play, to watch live sports events, and or, to copy moments of skill or behaviour of sport stars' impacts upon everyday behaviour, and active sports participation. Whilst it is difficult to ascertain the long term effects of such actions, it identifies a number of examples of impact during the weeks of analysis.

Prior to the events many of the group listed at least one sport as amongst their favourite leisure activities. Yet the diaries revealed few, if any, participated in physical activity on a regular daily basis. Amongst the boys, soccer featured significantly for 80 %, and a number mentioned supporting their favourite soccer teams as an interest. Tennis, basketball and swimming were also popular. Alongside this, a number of media related interests were also popular - television, personal computer, computer games and films. For girls, swimming was the most frequently mentioned sport, although tennis, football and athletics were also cited. Television, music and shopping were more popular leisure activities for a number of the girls.

Comments from the diaries and the interviews revealed the centrality of television viewing as a leisure activity; they saw it as stimulating, social and bonding. For many it was something they could not do without;

It's a major part of my life, whenever I'm not sleeping and doing homework, the tv. is always on . . . I wouldn't be able to live without the tv.

I think watching tv is really important, it helps you to socialise, when you get to school you can talk to people about what you've seen on tv and it's a starting point of conversation.

I watch tv because it's there, it's in the background, it's something to do ... it's just there, it's a distraction, it's easy, it's enjoyable.

I think it's a way of getting away, like if you watch a soap about someone else's life like I was just now. I watch tv quite a lot, all the soaps. It's like a pastime . . . I couldn't do without it.

Sport on the other hand, was not discussed in this emotive way; whilst acknowledging interest in some physical activities, its everyday appeal and significance was generally lacking. Although they were clearly aware of the benefits of regular exercise, there was little confirmation that they chose to participate on a frequent basis;

I play the sports in school but apart from that I don't really do a lot at all, I'm a bit lazy actually.

I've never been a sporty person as long as I can remember, I've never really enjoyed sports that much.

I like watching it and playing it, I'm quite sporty. I like to go for a kick about in the park or something but I do like supporting football more than playing it because you can look up to the players.

No, I'm not a sporty person. To keep yourself more challenged, fit and healthy. Yeh, it is important but I don't do a lot myself.

One of the Asian boys suggested that there were cultural distinctions between English and Asian parents with regard to the emphasis they placed on sport, although this was contested by an Asian girl, who suggested that this stereotypical assumption was not necessarily correct;

I'm saying in England, Asian parents are more into education than sport . . . Asian children's parents want them to have a proper job and education . . . they don't see sports as a proper job.

No, actually my mum's alright, my brother wants to be a tennis player.

What is clear, is that sport is not as central a feature in everyday life for most of these young people as media consumption is.

The relative ease, inexpense and frequent opportunity to watch sport on television, was a more popular option for a number of the group, than either participating themselves, or attending live events. Preferences between taking part themselves, or watching sport on television, was somewhat mixed;

I don't like playing I prefer watching.

I prefer to play, it's boring on tv.

I don't watch a lot of sport, I don't really enjoy sport so I suppose I don't get involved as much.

Watching sport on television was important to Lee, who indicated that he preferred this to playing himself and that;

when it comes to sport it is a cheap alternative to going . . .

The sports media coverage during the summer of 1996 clearly had varying impact on young people with regard to the amount of time they spent viewing, and the ways it motivated them to participate, or to watch more sport;

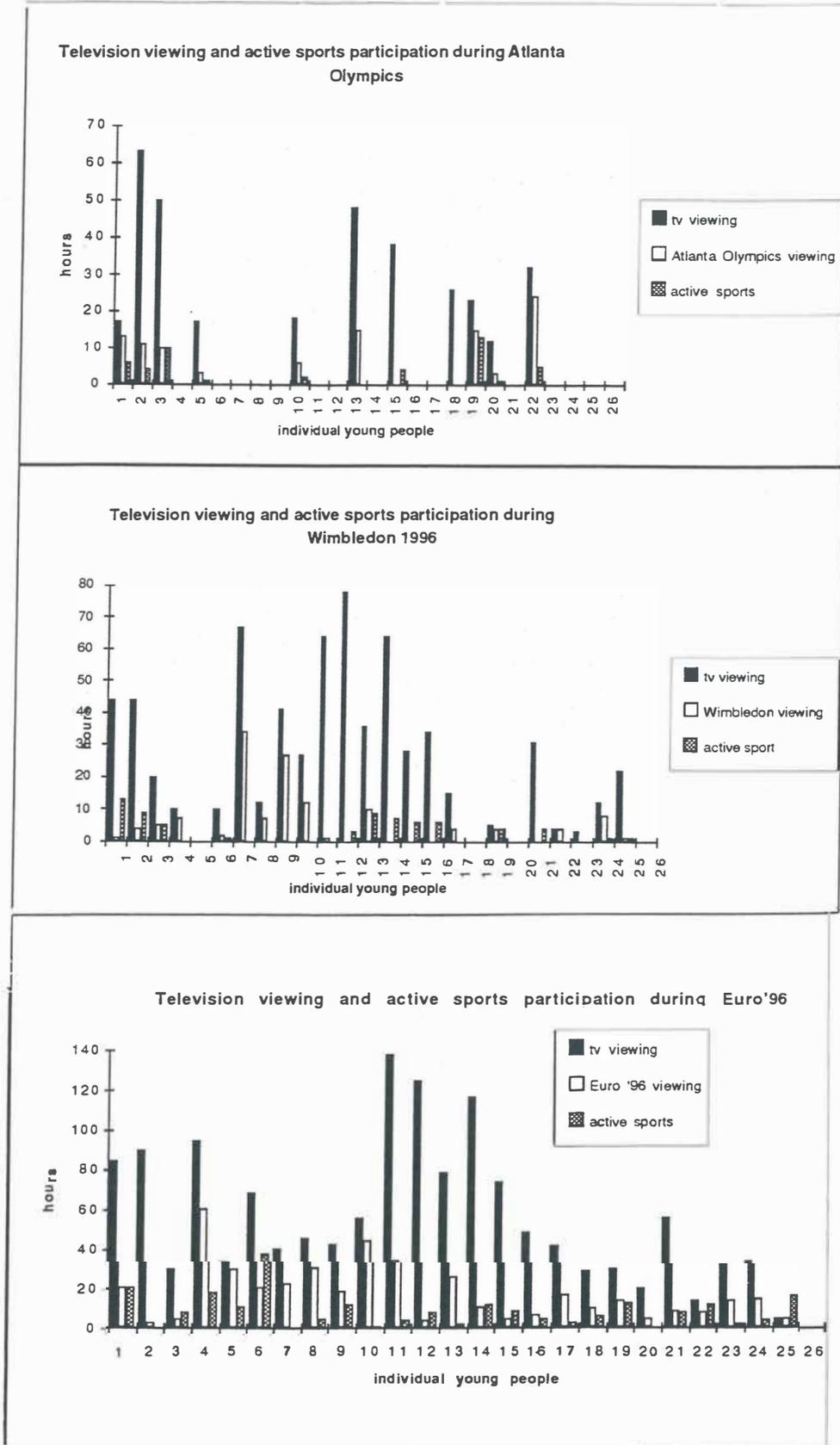
For a little while after it put me off watching sport on tv because I was so sick of it, so it demotivated me from watching sport.

It was pretty exciting, pretty thrilling . . . that has to be one summer of sport to remember.

It's really good, you don't normally get such a big amount of coverage in the summer, normally I'm really bored because the football season is over . . . but it was just a whole summer of sport.

As Figure 31 shows, throughout the six weeks of the investigation no-one in the case study group took part in more active sport than total television viewing. The time for active sport ranged from just 20 minutes to 25½ hours (Euro '96), 0 to 13 hours (Wimbledon) and 0 to 12 ½ hours (Atlanta Olympics). These figures appear

Figure 31: A comparison of television viewing and active sports participation during the sports events.



confusing as some of the group did not identify PE lessons (one hour a week), whereas others included this during the first two events.

Atlanta gave the clearest representation of practical activity in their own time, yet offered the lowest figures. This is surprising considering the group had more spare time during the holidays. During both Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics 36% took no part in physical activity in their own time over both two week periods. For many young people, media consumption is definitely prioritised in their lifestyles over active sports participation.

With regard to the place of mediated sports viewing in comparison to active participation during Euro '96, 68% watched more of the event than played active sport. During Wimbledon this decreased to 28%, yet explains the decrease in popularity of Wimbledon rather than significantly more activity.

Figure 32: Active Sports Participation during the events

	Euro 96	Wimbledon	Atlanta Olympics
Individual time range spent on active sports participation	20 mins - 25 hrs 30 mins	0 - 13 hrs 36 % no activity	0- 12 hrs 30 mins 36 % no activity
% individuals who participated in sports activity	soccer 60 % tennis 24 % swimming 4 % running 0 %	soccer 28 % tennis 28 % swimming 4 % running 0 %	soccer 18 % tennis 36 % swimming 46 % running 36 %
% individuals who imitated sports skills	soccer skills 36%	tennis skills 14%	none listed

A number of the group suggested that an immediate impact of watching sporting events was a desire to take part themselves. Results from the diary show that sporting activities related to each of the events did receive some resurgence in popularity during the event and a subsequent decline post event. As Figure 32 shows, playing soccer was at the height of its popularity during Euro '96, whereas swimming and running both increased substantially during the Olympic coverage;

At half time I wanted to just go out and kick about.

After a game when England win you want to go out and have a little game of football cos you're in the mood.

I watched the swimming . . . and it gave me the impulse 'cos it's in the holidays. I went swimming with my friend every day for a week . . . partly because you want to be as good as them.

In football, not any other it made me want to go outside and play the game.

You know what it's like when Wimbledon is on and the whole courts are booked out.

Others also mentioned how they noticed that during Wimbledon the local courts were often busier than normal. They were more sceptical however, about the long term motivational effects and the extent to which the 'mood' of participation was maintained;

Yeah, but after Wimbledon finishes. . .

No, when it was there I thought I should go out and get more exercise but then you forget about it, when it's all gone, you don't think about it as much as you did when it was around, you always make promises to yourself but you never keep them.

Young people found it difficult to acknowledge many benefits accrued for their own sporting performances from watching sport on the television. Yet a number did admit pretending to be certain players when they next played. During Euro '96 36%, and during Wimbledon 14% of young people, identified certain skills that they attempted to imitate;

When you go over the park you are always trying to copy what the players do.

I remember going over the park, seeing all the boys trying to do the moves of Gascoigne. They kept shouting look at my Gascoigne move.

There were strong convictions held that younger children were the more likely to copy certain aspects that they saw and wish to purchase sports kit. Despite these comments, the diary data determined that a number of this group did purchase England team kit during Euro '96, as did their fathers.

You see everyone coming out in their England kit after.

I was going to get the England top if we won.

Part of the difficulty for young people was that previous experience seemed to have taught them that images of skill on television make sporting success look easy, yet in reality it is far more difficult to achieve. When asked whether what they had copied had been successful there were derisory comments like;

No, not normally no!

Oh yeah, . . . I could serve in the box for a change.

You think I'm gonna go out and play - it goes miles and you think, how the hell do they do that. You watch it, and they're whacking that ball, there's so much topspin, and then you think how the hell do they do that. And it's just unbelievable, just the skill.

I learnt a lot about the gymnastics..the things they can do with their bodies is like really amazing, no normal person could do that unless they took a lot of training.

You look at them admiringly 'cos they're doing something you definitely can't do. I couldn't do it.

Several suggested that tennis was a more difficult sport to copy than others;

I think that was a good serve but I don't think that I can learn from it . . . whereas people who watch basketball think I can imitate that dunk or whatever, tennis isn't one of those sports you can imitate because you either know how to hit the ball or not.

Another boy makes a similar point in comparing tennis to football;

If you see Tim Henman win a game you really fancy going over the park to play but I never try and copy things because they are world class players and it's not so easy to imitate a tennis player as a footballer.

When asked why this was he suggested that;

You hear about tennis players with 130 mph serves but you know you'll never be able to do that, so you just don't, it doesn't appeal as much.

Achieving high level tennis performance appears more elusive, and seems to act to deter some youngsters, whereas basketball and soccer present themselves as more attainable.

In this sense, it is argued that the camera fails to emphasis the hard work, training, moments of failure, and varying yet acceptable levels of performance on the pathway to success. It amplifies instead, elite performance, high achievement and instant success. As a result sports performance seems all the more elusive to the armchair fan, who quickly becomes despondent with their limited success at imitation.

A number of girls expressed disinterest in imitating some of the sports stars because of the body image, lifestyle and commitment involved in sporting participation. One girl who said she loved the sumo wrestlers best, when asked if she would like to be as good as any of the sport stars said;

No, not even the sumos. I thought I'd have to put on weight to do that, I ain't going to put on no weight to go out and do that.

The female gymnasts also received similar concern;

I wouldn't want to do that all the time, cos you have to train all the time.

You can only do certain things, like eat certain things.

Yeah, they're all short and skinny. Stunted. It's not natural. They're all the same. They're what I call steroid.

Despite the obvious appeal of watching sport, the connections that can be made with active sports participation are tenuous. The immediate motivation to take part themselves during the events were evident as tennis courts, park pitches and the swimming pool soared in popularity. However, the young people themselves suggested that this was short lived, despite their own good intentions to maintain their enthusiasm. The media focus on elite performance and success, signified a level of unattainability for some of the viewers, and others who sought to emulate admired skills were quickly deterred, when they were not so readily successful.

6.6 Summary

This section confirms the centrality of media consumption in the lives of young people, and the peripheral role of active sport by comparison. The appeal of super mediated sports events, especially Euro '96, was significant for a number of the group, exceeding the amount of time spent either on physical activity, or watching the events live. Domestic viewing contexts reflect a diversity of social interaction, participation and engagement with the texts. The taxonomy of pleasures placed celebration of national sporting success, the thrills of emotional intensity, and the admiration of sport stars as essential elements of the sporting spectacle. When the celebratory effect, celebrity appeal and national identification were missing, young people actively engaged their attention elsewhere. Connections between intensity of media sport coverage, and sustained involvement and improvement in young people's sporting activity remain tenuous. For although the events appeared to create an initial wave of enthusiasm to participate, for some young people this was short lived and failed to compare with the performances of their favourite sports stars. This has implications for Physical Educationalists and coaches to consider ways in which they should, and can strengthen such links.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONTEXTUALISING YOUNG PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO SUPER-MEDIATED SPORTS EVENTS

7.1 Revisiting Media Effects - Ideologies, discourse and meanings

The interpretative practices of young people show that they can actively define their own experiences, and articulate certain pleasures that they gain from participation in mediated sports events. Whilst this takes place within the constructions of the texts, it demonstrates that young people are not passive and vulnerable, but capable of making lucid and critical judgements of the images that they receive. They have in-depth background information, a range of knowledge and long term memories of the mediated sports experience during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996. Throughout the following year during which the interpretative analysis took place, many of the group maintained a comprehensive recall of incidents, and elicited clear accounts of their emotional highs and lows during the six weeks.

To elaborate upon, and develop understanding of young people's comments and actions about their experiences of the sports media, this section draws upon cross levels of media analysis, provided for within the hermeneutic framework (Thompson, 1990). The case study of adolescent consumption, pleasures and meaning as the interpretative level of analysis, drew three key issues for discussion in relation to the ideological readings of the formal sports media texts during Euro '96, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics. By moving between the two levels of text and audience reception and interpretation, a closer scrutiny is made of the interplay between

meaning and power when making sense of symbolic media constructions. For the young people's dialogues contributed ideas about the ways in which they make sense of meanings between nation and individual, nation and nation, gender and ethnic distinctions, and the ways in which sports stars function within these constructions.

Firstly, a dominant feature to emerge from the findings was the over-riding emotional association with the national team during Euro '96, promoting a strongly expressed pleasure from feelings of unity and collectivity. The media modes of address in Chapter 4, offered ideological modes of unification apparent in the mediated football discourse, and the interpretative meanings confirm a similar positioning and reading by the audience, who expressed feelings of patriotism, nationalism and identity, which were evoked and strengthened by their involvement in the sporting spectacle.

Secondly, the dominant acknowledgement of the ways in which the football competition drew in a wide audience and propagated the feeling of national unity, conflicted with a variety of gender differentiated and stereotypical comments about the nature of the sports viewing experience for the audience, the commitment and interest to the events by the girls, and the marginalisation and trivialisation of sportswomen in the young peoples' sporting discourse. As such these results suggested that the sense of collective unity masked a fragmented reality of gender power relations within the reception, appropriation and interpretation of media and sport.

Finally, sports stars were prominent in the thoughts and associations of young people with the sporting texts. Identification, modes of imitation and hero adulation assumed a number of directions. The functions of sport stars as characters within the sports spectacle are brought under scrutiny by the ways in which young people perceive them as celebrities, role models and simply ordinary people. The ways in which sports stars are trivialised or idolised, provides the third key area for discussion.

7.2 Unification, Collective Identity and Nationalism

" What a feeling."

The role of the media in symbolising the nation and constructing unity and collective identity has been a key reading across sporting texts (cf Blain, Boyle, and O'Donnell, 1993; Rowe, McKay, and Miller, 1998 and Whannel, 1991, 1998), although there has been little attempt to identify ways in which the citizens themselves assume such consciousness. Euro '96 was no exception - media constructions legitimised the support for the home country. Persuasive symbols of the nation, and the narrativisation of England's footballers as redeemed heroes, provided ideological readings of unification. This work extends beyond such readings, to determine the extent to which young people articulated their sense of citizenship and national identity.

The feeling of being part of a wider group, and a genuine desire not to be isolated from the perceived social significance of an event such as Euro '96, emerged as a central feature of the interpretative analysis. Ideological constructions of unification successfully drew young people in to a collective identity. An over-riding concern for, and identification with the national team, as it successfully encountered other European nations provided a ritual and emotive experience for many of the young people;

I don't mind watching the England matches because they were special because they were your country, but the others I couldn't care less. (female)

Although support was maintained for the English competitors, the individuality rather than team association, the relative lack of success and the perceived importance of football as the national sport ensured that 'such a feeling' could not be sustained at the same high through Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics.

Media coverage during Euro '96 amplified collectivity and the 'feel good factor', which was decoded similarly by the young people. Unification was perceived to be bonding and of carry over value from the event, into everyday life. In some instances there was a blurring of ethnic, gender and age barriers as groups of family and friends gathered together for Euro '96. Many of the young people themselves commented on this feeling of bringing everyone together, using terms 'everybody', 'we', and the 'whole nation' stressing a complete togetherness. This verifies Real's (1996) readings of national and international competitions as providing unifying and collective experiences for the audience;

Everyone was rallying around England
 It brought the nation closer to together
 It's like the feel good factor of the nation - 'cos when we're winning it's like a buzz.
 I think that lifted the spirit of the country.
 The way everyone was buzzing about it and the whole country was united.
 English people supporting and getting together
 Everybody together was really brilliant ... everyone had just one common interest which was good.

Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell (1993, p.195) suggest that the 'notion of togetherness in celebration' is theoretically false, yet the young people accepted the naturalised and mythical representations. The sense of unity was powerful, and irrespective of contrasting comments they also made about gender differences. So strong were the perceptions of collectivity, and the dominant readings of a united and successful nation, that there was a complete omission of any consideration given to those in the community from other national and ethnic backgrounds. Indeed, several identified ways in which the euphoria of the moment did over-ride social distinctions normally prevalent;

I even spoke to Damion about it the next day.
 So did I!
 It's nice actually, finding that people do actually stick up for their country, cos sometimes people are just so divided, it's nice seeing them come together and support one thing.

The latter comment indicates the ways in which the ideological myths of collectivity and unity, through sport and the nation, are constructed to overcome a sense of division and diversity. An Asian boy who expressed strong feelings about Asian identity, role models and sport in British Asian cultures, showed no awareness of British Asians, like himself, being marginalised from these feelings of unity;

I'll remember how the whole country got together to support England, it's quite amazing really. . . we had come so far . . . the best thing was England doing so well.

This contravenes Carrington's (1998, p. 101) reading of Euro '96, as one that was both gendered and racially exclusive, working to exclude certain categories of people, for this group of young people strongly advocated the feeling of inclusivity rather than exclusivity. Yet it also supports the 'naturalising' effects of media constructions, in which collective identity and a sense of 'Englishness', eclipsed the reality of a fragmented community.

Pleasures in the daily exchange of gossip, feelings and emotional displays was constantly cited as an important reason for watching the event. This social exchange of sports chatter, group gatherings and collective and public displays of emotion were the essence of the 'feel good factor' that the young people strongly identified with, and gained pleasure from. However, this was also coupled with the sense of pride in one's country, and the associated sporting success;

We went and stuffed them 4-1. That's such a feeling.
You want your country to win don't you, that boosts spirits.
What a feeling when we won, I don't think that will ever be created again.

Young people clearly made strong associations between sporting success and the symbolic power and status of the nation. This supports a *Sunday Times* survey of 1500 young people who suggested that their national identity was best represented by the nation's football team (Norton, 1997).

All England sports ain't doing too badly . . . it's important. It's like important for the feel good factor of the nation.
 I suppose in the football world it made people respect England more.
 I feel we had something to prove.
 It was important and people were really proud because it's like a national achievement, that's what's important, sport is about competition and everyone likes to win .

Victory over other teams provided a vehicle for a display of patriotism, although the young people often found it difficult to express in words;

I was proud to be British, when the England team won.
 'Cos we're English and we want the England team to win.
 That lifted the spirit of the country.

Several points can be developed from these connections between national identity, the role of football and the feelings of young people from different ethnic backgrounds. The terms 'English' and British were often used interchangeably as reflected above. This supports the complexity of distinguishing between the two identities (Paxman, 1998; and Whannel, 1998), for as one young person suggested;

Anyone can be British, but if you're English, you are more English than British.

Several young people of Asian backgrounds, although born in England, referred to themselves as British, and used the term 'British Asians', confirming Gillespie's (1995, p.208) findings. Although reasons for these distinctions were not pursued, it provides an indication of the confusing nature of young people's attempts to articulate their own national identity. Norton (1997), found that two thirds of the 1500 teenagers questioned about nationalism in his survey, felt more English than British. When the young people in this case study were asked whether they felt English or British when watching, one group said;

English. Not British.

The following comment from one of the group suggests how football is perceived to be culturally significant for the status of the nation;

England's more into football than tennis. England's main sport is football.

The individuality of other sports during the summer of 1996 was also seen to deflect attention away from strong ideas of national representation;

Linford Christie was doing it for himself, as well as the country. Like a football team does it for the country.

Patriotic feelings of pride and identification did carry over to the other two events but without such a depth and intensity. Tim Henman was the main focus of national association, yet his relative obscurity prior to Wimbledon 1996 meant that some young people were not initially aware of potential English interest in the competition.

The international flavour and appeal of the Atlanta Olympics expressed in the pleasures of young people, was contrasted sharply with their dislike and disappointment that national medal success was not forthcoming. Their expectations of the nation's best competitors challenging the rest of the world was met with a feeling of loss of pride and status in England's Olympic performance. The ability to disassociate themselves from the event because of national failure, shows the overriding significance of national identification, success and pride over viewing the event simply for its own sake, or the excellence of the competitors from other countries. The poor viewing figures for the Euro '96 final following England's exit from this case study group is supported by this comment;

That's when Euro'96 ended for me, when England lost, I didn't bother watching anything else, that was it.

With unification and national identity strongly stated, it might have been anticipated that patriotism and the strong pro-English fervour could have given rise to nationalistic and xenophobic overtones.

Young people were patriotic in their vocal support, loyalty and priority given to the England team and competitors during the summer sports events of 1996. Many of the young people expressed a nationalist desire for sporting victory to secure greater prestige and status for their country at the expense of others. Nationalist and xenophobic tendencies were rarely echoed by the young people in the group, except towards Germany during Euro '96. There were no stereotypical references to foreigners, in fact they were often generous in their praise of overseas players and remained loyal in their support of club favourites, suggesting that local identification can overcome national divides. Young people also did not remain biased towards their home country, for when analysing sporting failure they critically appraised national sporting policies alongside those from more successful sporting nations, and gave credit to other systems than their own;

Because in this country sport is kind of, in the back seat, there's not enough places that play sport.
 Instead of making all these centres for excellent sport, they should encourage the whole country to play sport, like facilities for everyone, free facilities not like private clubs. . .
 The Government don't do enough to encourage everyone, it's just that you find someone that's skilled, you raise the standard of the whole country.
 There's a lot of American tennis players that are good, there's no proper English tennis players.
 But no, America have a system where they can get the best. They go through college with grants whereas in England like you can be good at sport, but if you don't get recognised then that's it, it's off on your own.

Nationalistic and xenophobic views were most obviously expressed in their comments about Germany. The major focus of young people's scorn was, as to be anticipated, directed at Germany who defeated England in the semi-final of Euro '96. This supported *The Independent*'s (25/6/96) claim of an 'anti-German sentiment sweeping the country'. Despite their youth, the association between Germany and the

war remained strong. Orwell's (1994, p.332) suggestion that international sport is seen by spectators as mimic warfare, and the German minister, Michael Naumann's accusation that Britain was the only nation in the world to make the Second World War a spiritual core of its national self understanding and pride (*Daily Mail*, 15/2/99, p. 16), was indicated in the ways in which the young people included war rhetoric alongside discourse of the England versus Germany football match;

But when we lost to those Germans. . . everyone starts beating up Germans, but everyone 's like shouting out, but we won the war.
I mean you look back at the wars, well don't you with Germany and you think, Oh it's not fair. . . show 'em.
My Dad said, Germany's playing. I don't want them to win.
I think if it had been a team other than Germany it wouldn't have been so bad but because the Germans always beat us at football and there's the hype between England and Germany, because of the war it was worse.
I think it's like Germans, like in the past they used to follow Hitler and stuff like that.

An Anti-German stance was clearly reflected here, which would not necessarily have been used in the same way against other teams who might have beaten England;

If it had been Italy, they're renowned for being a brilliant team and the English people have nothing against them in general then it wouldn't have been so bad.
I wouldn't have minded if they'd been playing Holland but it was Germany.
I liked France.
I liked Holland because of Bergkamp.
I don't know everyone just hates Germany.

Whilst the young people indicate that these comments have connections with opinions voiced by older family members and expressed in the media at the time, they are also able to be judgmental, suggesting that they could distinguish between playing field rivalry and everyday life;

people going on about the war - and you get all that stuff so it's stupid. Lots of people haven't been in the war.
The way they were writing it up I think that was wrong.
If you're going to sit in your home and have a moan that's fair enough but the way they just done German people's houses and beat some man and woman up because they had a Volkswagon car it was stupid.
It's silly because that was in the past, and the war was life or death and this was just a game. I mean you went in there, you were either shot or you survived. But like a game of football, you might get injured or something, and you might get upset, but you're not going to die.

The power of the media sporting text to draw in the audience to a feeling of collective unity was clearly in evidence during Euro '96. Identification with national sporting success, through media amplification of narratives focusing on national pride, brave heroes and the feel good factor was a dominant meaning read collectively by the audience. Even those who were not on-going football or sports fans, became involved at some time during the three weeks of Euro '96. The over-riding sense that they should not be left out from the collective social experience, and the accompanying wave of patriotism, ensured that the widest possible audience from this case study group were able to articulate their sense of identity and association with the national soccer team.

7.3 Fragmentation, gender power relations and the sports media audience.

" Girls don't understand it really do they ?"

The gendered nature of sport, and the patriarchal dominance of its media representation, suggested that young people's discourse might articulate aspects of sexual difference and gender power relations, both across the sporting texts and through audience reception, with evidence of male dominance and control as a key feature. However, an emphatic stress on the unifying and bonding emotions of Euro '96 deflected attention away from contradictory statements they made, which did indicate a number of gender differentiated issues within the sports media experience. The ways in which young people perceived male dominance and female marginality in the sporting representations of men and women, and saw their own gender positioning in the world of sports media, provides the focus of the following discussion. Figure 33 shows, in young people's own words, the central issues of the marginality of women's sport in the media, the significance of the sports genre for males and the positioning of females as sports viewers.

Gendered social positioning of the sports audience as predominantly male, provided common sense assumptions about the reaction of females to a six week period of extensive sports coverage. Whilst textual readings strove to position female audiences as admirers of sporting masculinity, or nurterers of male fans, rather than as serious sports fans, some girls were active, interested and informed readers. The Atlanta Olympics, it was suggested by the producers was deliberately feminised to appeal to female audiences, indicating that in order to attract women a different focus was required in sporting narratives. This research indicated that Euro '96 was far more popular with most girls, than the 'deliberately' feminised Olympics.

In reality, it is clear from this research that young females are consumers of mass mediated sports events, and that the gender divide is not so distinctly split. Just as some girls showed a strong commitment to sport and the media, so some boys profess to being more into other activities, such as music and soap opera. Super-mediated sports events as a focal point of national attention and social interaction, meant that through peer group pressure some young people felt obliged to tune in. Investigations into everyday sports viewing may show groups of young people to be more gender divided than these results. The fact that significant sports events do draw females into the consumer group, suggests that media producers might follow up the motivations for this more carefully if they do wish to expand, and provide for, an integrated target group.

Where girls articulated themselves as fans, they portrayed similar emotions, modes of identification and commitment to the sports media experience. Both girls and boys with fluctuating interest were able to opt in and out of the events, making selective choices in their viewing and associated purchases. Generally though, more girls did express aspects of dislike and disinterest across the events, than did boys. Most boys showed some interest and involvement in the sports genre. Despite consumption, reception and pleasures obviously crossing the gender divide, the perceptions and

Figure 33: Gender Distinctions in the sports viewing experience of young people.

Marginalisation and Trivialisation of Women's Sport, stars and Media

Female sport stars

*Then there's some of the women. How big are they? They're 6' 4. * Sally Gunnell had an injury * She's a bit old * I think she's a bit forgotten * I think it's a shame they can't leave in their glory, they have to come back and flop (Tessa Sanderson)* That black girl * I saw some fit birds * Mary Pierce wearing those little all in one things * * Like that girl, she was doing the vault, ...and she fell over * then there was the one whose leg all swell up and she had to have an injection. Do you remember her name? * Dominique she was doing really well and then she fell over and carried on * I can't remember her now. She was a Chinese person * There's no one female star who is up there in a league of their own * There's what's her name. . . Denise uuum? * She's Irish and ugly * There's no big female football players, rugby, nothing * I do admire female stars it's just that they are not given as much importance as the males

Women's sport

* I think some of the women's tennis is good but sometimes it is too slow * Women's tennis is too much on the baseline all the time * With women's tennis there is never much change * In women's tennis you have one woman who is always at the top * No I've never seen a female basketball match on television * It's a man's sport *I'd like to see trampolining * You don't see a lot of gym * You don't see hockey, netball * What about ice skating, you see a bit of that? * All the women's finals have to follow the men *Men have dominated, if they put the women's first, that'd like you'd go and get a cup of tea * More people expect men to be playing than women * I know there's women's things around and they're really good but the men get more publicity about it * I don't think men watch women playing football * The final was the men's final, definitely men above women * If you get a male footballer he'll be more dominant in the media than a female and female sport stars are usually portrayed as gymnasts, ice skaters and things like that so they are not taken so seriously * I'd flick through the channel's and if there's nothing else on then I'd watch the women's * People see football as a man's game * I suppose if there was a Euro '96 for women there wouldn't have been so much hype as there was for men * When you put it up against men's football...it's not as exciting. Men's football has been going for 150 yrs and women's football for about 5 yrs *Men play the game with more style and skill

Significance of the Sports Genre to Men

* I think men took it more personally * I think for men they were heroes, like idols * Loads of boys would, or blokes would (copy sport stars) * well the boys talked about it a lot so I suppose you got drawn in * My dad watches all sport like me, my mum doesn't really mind * The men if they were talking together they would bring it up (Atlanta) * he gets so involved, I think why do you bother it's only a game? *Men are more influenced to play sports and women are more influenced to cook and things like that

Girls sporting knowledge and commitment

* It's different for them (girls) if it was volleyball or netball * women aren't so keen in actually sitting down and watching sport, they prefer actually doing it * when we lost everyone got upset but the girls go so what? * except the girls don't understand it really, do they? * they go what happened there, what happened there? * there's nothing like that for girls on television * There's like no volleyball, no netball * there's nothing to do with women * cos it's not emphasised in girls programmes so they don't really bother with it kind of. * with the girls it was more did you see so and so, it wasn't so much the game, it was more the players * the other thing is the players, I suppose all the girls say that * because most girls aren't really into football * I had to sit and suffer all this * I thought, thank god I won't have to go through this for another couple of months

stereotypical views about each others interest, knowledge and place in the sports world was more obvious.

The textual analysis of the media coverage during the three events strongly identified the marginality of women competitors, especially in newspaper coverage of Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics. The ways in which ideological modes of representation sought to deflect attention away from female sporting success and focus instead on vulnerable, trivial and sexual images was discussed as a key issue in Chapter 4. The ways in which young people firstly, failed to significantly acknowledge female sports stars, and then when directly asked generally perceived women's sport as inferior to men, reflected male dominance in the sporting genre.

Issues of the marginalised place of women's sport and sports stars within the sporting narratives, whilst not a central feature raised by the group generally, was a point pursued through questioning in the interviews. The fact that relatively few of the young people selected female sports stars, or raised comments about female sport unless specifically questioned, suggests that their low profile on the news agenda means that they are neither taken seriously, nor feature in the sporting discourse of these young people. This invisibility confirms the marginal place of women in the sporting texts, and makes it an issue which is rarely, if ever, up for discussion. When pressed, there seemed to be an acceptability and inevitability of sport being a male dominated world, and relatively little concern expressed about it. When asked why they had not mentioned any female sport stars in their diaries, in many cases it was either something which they had not considered, or even realised they had done. The 'formulae of exclusion' from the sporting texts carried over into everyday 'sports talk'.

Male sport was articulated as the sporting norm. The lack of opportunity to view female basketball, hockey, gymnastics, trampolining and volleyball was raised by several girls. This indicates the restricted range of female sports on offer that were participated in by these girls, and has impact on the number of female role models they might choose from. The hegemonic belief in male sporting performance as

superior (Kane and Greendorfer, 1994) was evident in a number of comments. It was suggested that female sport was unpopular because; 'women's tennis was too slow, and lacked a variety of top players'. A number of remarks suggested that the men's final was the final, 'definitely men above women' and that if women's events were first, it would have been a good opportunity to go and put the kettle on!

Rather than questioning why male coverage was at the forefront of the sports agenda, there was an aura of acceptability and inevitability about it;

I know there's womens' things around and they're really good but men get more publicity.
More people expect men to be playing than women.

The invisibility of women's sports within the media also perpetuates the myth that it's not for women;

I've never seen a female basketball match on television.
It's a man's sport.

The pleasures and meanings of the sporting narratives revealed in chapter 6, did show that male dominance was not complete, for young people were able to accord some praise and credit to female sport stars but the dominance of males was significant. Both boys and girls could name a whole range of male sport stars, especially footballers. Only a handful of female stars was mentioned, and these generally were those that had long term coverage, such as Steffi Graf and Sally Gunnell. The young female gymnasts from the USA, Rumania and China were mentioned, reflecting the intensive coverage of the women's gymnastics at Atlanta. Female beach volleyball, in spite of my concern as a highly profiled media sport showing sexualised and trivialised images of sports women, was not dominant in the thoughts of the young people.

Firstly, there were references made to several performers whose names they could not remember such as; 'that black girl' and 'like that girl doing the vault'. This reflects the

lack of high profile and continued media attention given to many female sports stars. Discussion around the female stars showed that many of their central memories were around images of vulnerability, such as the injuries to Sally Gunnell, Kelly Holmes, Kerrie Strugg and Arancha Sanchez-Vicario, and the issues of age (Sally Gunnell) and failed comebacks (Tessa Sanderson). Dominique Dawes, the black American gymnast and her fall in the floor exercise was also mentioned. Such incidents, highlighted at the time by the press, did successfully deflect attention and recall away from more positive aspects of female sporting success during the summer of 1996. Surprisingly, Denise Lewis' bronze medal success for Britain in the heptathlon was not recalled by the group. Steffi Graf, although admired by some, was to some extent blamed for making women's tennis boring by her dominance at the top for so long. Several comments suggested that women's sport is not taken seriously, and that male sport is seen as the benchmark for comparison;

Female sport stars are usually portrayed as gymnasts, ice skaters and things like that, so they're not taken so seriously.
It doesn't appeal to me at all, especially rugby with women playing. I think because you expect the skills of the men's game and you just don't see it there, there's no charisma or anything, it's not as appealing.

Not only were women perceived to be peripheral to sporting narratives, but their place as legitimate and discerning sports viewers was also brought into question. The generalised and stereotypical comment below, made in relation to gender differentiated knowledge in pub quizzes, was to some extent perpetuated by some of the comments made by young people;

Most men have a knowledge of sport that starts at encyclopaedic and ends at somewhat close to psychiatric. Most women in comparison, have just about heard of Gary Lineker. (*Daily Mail*, 27/4/99, p.11)

Amongst the girls there seemed to be a general acceptability that most boys were fans and enthusiasts of the sporting genre, especially football;

I think men took it more personally.
Well all the boys talked about it.

Boys on the other hand, were less likely to be so convinced that girls showed the same level of interest or commitment as them. The comments below support Whannel's (1998) suggestion that the general relation of women to sport, is lack of interest and avoidance. He affirms that women are 'unwelcome in the inner sanctum of sport; the female gaze is that of an outsider';

When we lost everyone got upset but the girls go so what?
Women aren't so keen in sitting down and watching sport . . .

In suggesting that the experience during Euro '96 was different for girls, several boys tried to suggest it was because, it was essentially a male experience that excluded what girls were most interested in, or knew about;

There's like no netball, there's nothing to do with women.
Cos it's not emphasised in girls programmes so they don't bother with it kind of thing.
Except the girls don't really understand do they?

Levels of competence in comprehensive of, and familiarity with the sporting genre did appear to be gender differentiated. Girls generally, offered a more limited range of sport stars mentioned, spent on average less time watching the sports events and made more comments about the physicality and personality of favourite sport stars than the boys who displayed a wider understanding of the events, skills and performance characteristics. Boys were more likely to recapture particular moves of the game, make comparison with past events, and try to emulate skills they had seen.

Comments made by boys and girls about each other's interest, knowledge and place in sport was supported to some extent, and does raise a valid point, for girls do come to the sports genre from a different social positioning to boys. The role of females in sport is perpetuated as that of the 'outsider'. As Whannel (1998) and Sabo and Jansen (1998) have suggested, sports talk is a site of male bonding. Boys are drawn in to the media sports experience from an early age, watching sports events with fathers and brothers. Commercial products such as toys, comics and children's programmes often

explicitly identify the significance of sport in the socialisation of boys. In contrast for girls, the appropriation of sports information is far more limited, especially with the virtual exclusion of sport as code from girls magazines, which are seen to be a central leisure activity. As *the Independent* (26/6/96, p.21) reminds its readers, 'football unites men and women are unable to compete'.

The importance of magazines, especially to girls across a range of research and from the diaries in this investigation led to discussion around the central features of their reading material. For as one boy suggested;

I think obviously us chaps are always going about football and just really like sport but girls are more into magazines and soap.
Danny must be the only boy I know that buys all magazines, everything like *Pink*.. I mean I don't know any other boys that do that.

The auspicious lack of attention given to sport as code was questioned by the researcher, yet of little consequence for the girls concerned. They did not perceive that it needed to receive space in their magazines for beauty, fashion and music were essential features identified. A sport specific magazine would be chosen if that's what girls wanted to read about they suggested;

No, I wouldn't buy it if I picked up *Sugar* and I've got this stuff on football in it.
If you want sport in a magazine, you'd go out and get a sports magazine don't you?

Several were however, more aware that there was little availability of such texts on the newsagents shelves. In fact, one boy suggested that if there was a sports magazine for both boys and girls, it wouldn't do that well. When asked why, he suggested ;

Cos girls' and boys' opinions and views are completely different. See different sports appeal to different people, and it's like the same, different sports appeal to girls as appeal to boys.

The social positioning and conditioning about the role and place of sport, and the sports media in their lives, is not then derived just from the young people's

experiences of the 'Summer of Sport' 1996, but reflects the continuing legacies of sport, as essentially a male domain, with notions of distinct sexual difference. Consequently, reasons for girls being drawn into the sporting narratives may be very different from boys, and may seek to serve alternate purposes.

There was evidence of gender differentiated uses and meanings of the sports media. The boys particularly gave the impression that they were involved because 'it's what boys do,' and only two boys offered any consistent resistance to sports viewing across the six weeks of analysis. Boys also showed strong bonds of identification with local football clubs and players and male sport stars. At this stage of their maturity, they generally were more interested in male sport with its physicality, skills and tactics than opportunities to 'gaze' at female bodies in action. Comments about female sport was often unflattering, and although there were several asides made in relation to 'gazing' at females in action, the sexualised images of female sport stars was not a consistent feature of their enjoyment from sports viewing.

Girls on the other hand, do use the sports media for different purposes. It can be seen as a means of empowering for girls as they enter into the male dominated sports world. Firstly, it provided them with opportunities to join in the sporting discourse with boys. During Euro '96, a number of girls deliberately watched matches so that they could be part of the boys' daily conversation. This offered girls resistance against the male dominated discourse of the event, although clearly there was a struggle for positioning within this site, for boys openly expressed criticism and sarcasm about the girls' knowledge and commitment. This correlates with Barker's (1993, p.197) observations of female readers of *AD2000*;

Girls tend to participate in the comic's world from some more oppositional sense. They participate despite gender.

Secondly, girls used sports viewing as an opportunity to 'gaze' at male bodies. It could be argued whether this is patriarchal resistance, giving them power over men, or

simply accepting consumer positioning, and the way that producers and agents draw women into the sports media from a feminine perspective. For as sport is not idealised as an appropriate activity for girls, then they are instead positioned to admire masculinity, male power and dominance across sports terrain. Consequently, the most frequently mentioned focus on sport in girls magazines during the 'Summer of Sport', was pin-ups of male athletes. Watching male footballers especially, was a key feature of identification within the sporting narratives for the girls. For as one girl suggested;

With the girls it was more did you see so and so, it wasn't so much the game, it was more the players.

This was reflected in the number of girls who stopped watching the tennis following Andre Agassi's first round defeat at Wimbledon. The event no longer held meaning for them without their favourite player.

The ways in which they referred to them was not always as sex objects, although body image, youth and looks were significant. More romantic images of the players as father figures, family men and 'nice' personalities were also mentioned. However, the comments made do support ways in which girls are drawn in as consumers of the 'male body image'.

Although this is reminiscent of ways in which film and pop stars are identified as 'heart throbs' for the female audience, the physicality of the sports media ensures that visual pleasures focus on images of strength and masculinity. As Ang (1983, p.421) argues, this voyeurism still operates within patriarchal boundaries as male sports photography is distinctly different from the passive, sexual images of feminine heroes;

These pictures are a compromise between activity and passivity; the male body tolerates the transformation into an object of visual desire only when it is in motion.

Whilst the gender divide is not rigidly fixed, young people do associate with sporting texts from their own gendered identities, and are differently positioned by the texts. However, this does not marginalise girls as much as might be assumed, for they could express a variety of pleasures gained, some of which provided a means to negotiate access to the male social world. Whilst such access can be interpreted as empowering girls, the invisibility and triviality of meanings expressed about female sports performers affirms the hegemonic construction of sport's reality as essentially male. The lack of dissatisfaction and general apathy expressed by both boys or girls about such readings, confirms that ideological modes of legitimation work to confirm the patriarchal order within sporting narratives. It suggests little resistance to either the oppression of sporting women, or the male exclusivity of the sporting texts.

7.4 Critical reflections on the sporting hero and the function of sports stars as role models.

"All geniuses have got something wrong with them".

As anticipated sports stars emerged as a central feature of audience appeal within the sporting texts. The results confirmed that young people identify with, and know about, the sporting and personal lifestyles of a significant number of sports stars. Narratives around some stars are more extensive, probing and revealing than others. Information and character construction comes from a variety of media texts - young people suggest that they like to read about the gossip surrounding high profile stars, yet they are also critical of the ways in which media intrusion can distort the truth, and foreground personal concerns over sporting matters. Identification with some stars is short lived, and their names and achievements forgotten several months after the events, if they are not subsequently featured on the media agenda. With some other sports stars, young people develop an enduring and sustained engagement.

The extent to which young people do justify their sporting favourites as 'true heroes' is debatable, and argues for the demise of the contemporary sports star. Nominal

discourse about women in this category confirms the virtual exclusion of females as either sporting heroines or role models. This supports the general invisibility of women as credible public role models.

The media analysis of texts during the period of investigation, identified the extent to which sports stars are constructed around narratives of moral dilemma and social distinctions. This was apparent with Euro '96 stories of traditional brave and heroic on-field exploits contrasting with tales of sporting men behaving badly. The consequent impact of sports stars as role models, on a continuum through hero, fool and villain was mediated as an issue of social and moral concern for the welfare of young people. The ways in which the images of Paul Gascoigne, and Tim Henman were portrayed across that continuum, provided evidence to contextualise these readings in line with young people's interpretation of the sports stars they most admire, and alongside their articulation of perceived hero characteristics. This is a significant development in the field, for both Dyer (1991) and Whannel (1998), suggest that most previous sociological theorising about both stars, and sport stars, has ignored the audience phenomenon, in terms of reception and interpretation.

Young people's relationship with sports stars, as individuals they admire, provided a number of distinct features. Firstly, they show ability to appraise characteristics, reflecting upon cultural norms and values, determining whether they are worthy of support, and the degree to which they wish to make an affiliation with the star. Secondly, they show evidence of identification with the star through varying levels of admiration, through to strong emotional attachment. Modes of imitation encompassing aspects of attitude, behaviour and skill ranged from singular attempts to copy isolated moments of skill, through to wearing the same type of clothes or imitating style in an on-going way. Adulation and obsession with the star through merging identities and desiring to assume aspects of the star's identity, were less in

evidence than the former categories. Young people did see the possibility for differing levels of identification, attachment and fandom;

He's a bit of a hero, if you are into tennis. I'm not a fanatic.

Public concern about the consequence of the moral behaviour of sports stars as role models for young people, was reiterated by the young people themselves. However, their concern rests with young children who they perceived are unable to make mature judgements about media representation of stars. There was a strong and coherent argument from young people that they were able to make prudent decisions about modes of imitation, and that they were not readily fooled. Although they identified with, and admired certain stars, there was in many cases an emphatic denial of wanting to be like their favourite star.

The ways in which young people perceive the functions and roles of sports stars as admirable or heroic, reveals the multiplicity of the media messages that they receive about them. The previous section discussed the women sports star dilemma and positioning, which inevitably impairs female potential for 'hero' status. Figure 34 shows, that in discussing traits they most admire, the complexity of the male sporting hero for young people becomes evident. Most frequently, their articulation of heroic characteristics conjure images of a traditional hero. At times, the concept is trivialised with references to looks, fame and singular moments of success. Despite the focus of the questioning being directed at positive characteristics, some young people were able to acknowledge and reflect upon weaknesses. To some extent this caused the biggest dilemma for them, for although they suggested that they desired a traditional hero, they also realistically acknowledged that sports stars were just like everyone else, and so were likely to exhibit everyday social behaviour, such as getting drunk.

The positive characteristics of the hero reflect a traditional standpoint; excellence at sport accompanied by social and moral virtues of determination, hard work, coping with pressure, courage and the love of the game. This corresponds with the findings of Harris (1994). Legendary perceptions of the hero as someone unattainable, with super natural qualities are raised with comments such as; 'an aura about them, a mystique and inspirational'.

Young people do not just see shining images of their heroes. They are discriminating, critical and perceptive about the lives and roles of sport stars. In fact they suggest that they do not want a mythical image, but acknowledge that everyone has problems and attitudes that cannot always be perfect. As one boy strongly stated;

But people should know that, that sport stars aren't exactly brilliant, they're really human.

Figure 34: Characteristics of the sporting hero as articulated by young people

Positive	Trivialised	Flawed
How good they are at sport	Good Looks	Letting country down
Dominance	Young	Should have more pride
Inspirational	British	Violence towards women
Hard Working	When he scored the free kick in	In it for the money
Genius	the semi- final of the FA cup he	Aggressive
Copes under pressure	was a hero then	Big headed
Love of the Game	Well known	Psycho
Good manners		Idiot
An aura about them		
Courage in the face of adversity		
Determination		
Mystique		

This supports Dyer's (1979, p.31) account that ;

stars are representations of persons which reinforce, legitimate or occasionally alter the prevalent conceptions of what it is to be a human being in society.

They are aware of contemporary issues and the values of new lad, accepting and tolerant of this on the one hand, yet demanding of maintaining traditional values on the other. The Corinthian ideals of courage, bravery, playing the game for the games sake and moral upstanding support the traditional stance, yet they do not want the bad points to be concealed. They acknowledge the difficulty in the contemporary world of remaining unblemished. Abercrombie and Longhurst's (1998, p. 65) suggestion that;

The star is set apart, extraordinary, endowed with special, almost superhuman qualities.

is not generally supported in the statements made by young people. For media representation and intrusion into aspects of sports stars' lives beyond the sporting arena offer them alternative readings. For young people seek the utopian ideal, yet are tolerant in their identification that today's sports star embodies current social problems and as such suggest that the star does not have superhuman qualities.

Whannel (1995, p. 122) asks to what extent sport stars provide role models for the reproduction of correct and incorrect moral behaviour. This investigation offers some answers to this question, providing young people's interpretations and meanings of their identification with sports stars.

Young people in accord with media discourse, expressed anxieties and concern about the behaviour of sport stars and questioned a number of conflicting issues encompassing morality and sport. Young people were not idealist, but realistic about the function and role of sports stars. The ways in which they articulated their thoughts on sports stars identified a number of issues in the 'moral dilemma' represented in the

sporting narratives of contemporary stars. This suggests that sporting discourse does provide a channel for young people's development of attitudes, towards aspects of morality and acceptable social behaviour;

Stars are figures whose fragmentation can make them sites of ideological contestation - of struggle to redefine the 'moral occult' for different social groups. (Gledhill, 1991, p. 217)

Firstly, one group raised concern about the ways in which footballers play for financial gain rather than the love of the game. The raising of the 'professional versus amateur debate', by a group of fifteen year olds brought up in the commercial world of sport, seemed surprisingly an old fashioned, yet lingering ideal. One discussion developed in this way;

Everything's revolved around money
I think you should be prepared to play for your country and a club without getting paid at all.
It's your love of football.
Yeah, if you actually love the game so much you could get a sort of flat rate wage.
I'd be happy to play for any team for next to nothing, a fiver a week would do me.

One boy suggested that other perks could compensate for low financial rewards;

Can you imagine how many birds you'd get if you played for a premier league club?

The argument here, focused on young people's perceptions of the ways in which wealth was more of a priority, than playing the game for its own sake. For some this depreciated hero status, whilst several other adolescents offered fortune and wealth as an admirable characteristic of their favourite players.

Although concern has been expressed about the impact of violence in sport on the young audience, there was a clear disdain shown for violent traits displayed by sport stars such as Paul Gascoigne and Eric Cantona. The case study on Gascoigne shows

ways in which young people's interpretations of the footballer become more derogatory and critical, as the media reveal aspects of his personal life and behaviour. Rather than eulogise and idolise him as the media suggested, many young men actively expressed their disdain for such behaviour. One disillusioned boy following the revelation that Gazza had beaten his wife suggested;

After Euro '96 everyone was saying how brilliant he was and then he spoilt it. And he let his country down. There must be someone who likes him, but after what he's done...

The responsibility of sports stars as national representatives supported the social and moral stance, that is made by the public towards sports stars, more than any other national celebrities. For several instances of bad behaviour were cited as instances of letting the country down, rather than fans or the player themselves.

Yet Gascoigne and Cantona, whilst criticised for aspects of bad behaviour, both receive acclaim as a genius. Yet a realistic appraisal by one boy supports the ways in which young people are able to accept stars at both ends of the hero-villain continuum;

But when you think about it, all geniuses have got something wrong with them.

The media it appears, has eroded notions of the superhuman sports stars placed on a pedestal and worshipped from afar. For in their quest for scandal, sensationalism and an ever-changing star system, the news and sports agendas are quick to discredit celebrities for their own ends.

Some aspects of the sports coverage during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 raised issues about the ways in which the media now affords hero status too readily, and in essence trivialises the concept. Particularly during Euro '96, the ways in which some of the English footballers were re-constructed from villain to hero in an instance, as a result of singular exploits on the field supports this point. Tim Henman, similarly after one

Wimbledon victory, was positioned as the 'All England Hero'. Klapp (1962) suggests that some characteristics of hero status are superficial and shallow. The media, arguably, can be credited with the amplification of such characteristics in order to draw in the consumers to the sporting spectacle. The audience are encouraged to be intrigued by the ways in which the sport stars handle their fame and fortune, and to be commercially attracted by the appeal of the stars image.

Young people's interpretations of their admiration for sport stars suggests that whilst they do trivialise aspects of the 'hero' image, they are also able to acknowledge that such characteristics should not necessarily be the most important criteria for selection.

Preoccupation with body image, looks and youthfulness of their favourite stars supports the importance of style and appearance in consumer culture, and the ways in which young people, especially girls, are drawn in by the physical and visual appeal of a star. One of the discussions followed this point;

Some people admire sports stars because of the way they look, but some others you know admire them because of how good they are.

When asked if it was important for a sports star to be good looking;

No, but it does help a bit though. It makes you want to watch them more.

Media attention ensures that some sports stars are well known, and this research shows that those who do not receive high and continued profile, tend to fall from audience memory and recall. Most of the sports stars who were mentioned continually throughout the period of investigation were high profile, especially the football stars. Most of the young people were only able to identify with their favourite sports stars because of media coverage. Yet young people, oblivious to the transparent role of the media in providing such forms of identification, were critical of the ways in which some stars were constantly in the news. Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell were both

cited as being big headed and attention seeking, although their criteria for such judgements was limited. This reiterates the symbiotic nature of the relationship as to whether the media seeks the star, or the star seeks the media.

The complexity of sports stars as heroic and admirable characters, follows similar features to those identified by Harris (1994). However, this research extends the idea to consider the contested ways in which young people perceived them as role models. Figure 35, shows that whilst a number of statements supported this function of sports stars, others were more questioning about the nature of the role that sports stars could play.

Figure 35: Young People's Perceptions of Sport Stars As Role Models

Supportive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *You see people in the crowd with the same haircut * They're idols for young children * I reckon for younger children or blokes * For athletes, people who want to run * Especially in Scotland (copying Gazza) *There's a few Asian role models * I think they're role models when they're playing football but they don't ask to be role models * Prince Naseem, he's encouraged more Asian people to do boxing * People look up to them so much * There are stars worth looking up to, like Michael Jordan * Little ones would, they don't understand * I think they have a responsibility to put on a face * I suppose the boys might copy different moves and that in football *Big stars have an obligation to set a good image because younger children respect them and look up to them
Questioning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I don't think they'd go out and get drunk to be like Gazza * Don't need Gazza to show them the way. They'd do that anyway * Just because they're idols, they shouldn't be doing it ...which is stupid cos no-one does it. * He's a role model kind of thing for young children, and when they see that what are they thinking? * People should know that sport stars aren't exactly brilliant, they're really human * I don't think they should deliberately set a bad example * Like Vinnie Jones who plays for Wimbledon, he's hardly a brilliant example is he? * People of my age don't see him as such, cos they know all the stories that have been going around in the papers but I think younger kids probably do because they don't pay as much attention * Sport stars say they are not role models but they are, it comes with the job, if you are good at sport you have a responsibility to behave because young children are going to look up to you because they need someone to inspire them. * People like to have heroes when they are our age, but they can see them with a touch of reality..but when you are that bit older, you know people they don't seem as good as they were, they don't have that mystique anymore.

Whilst acknowledging modes of imitation with regard to style and performance, there was a general reluctance to accept that they were personally influenced by specific role models. Instead, it was suggested that others might be more receptive to influence. Girls suggested that 'blokes, boys and younger children', were likely to consider sport stars as role models. Boys generally offered younger children, and those who wanted to be athletes.

Discussion amongst the group of young people from Asian ethnic backgrounds, expressed concern about the lack of Asian sporting role models, the positive contribution of Sheffield boxer Prince Naseem, and the stereotypical representation of Asians as doctors, shopkeepers and dentists, rather than sportsmen and women across media texts. This suggested that they did consider sports stars to be significant as role models, and recognised the marginality of Asian sport stars in media coverage.

There was more of a tendency to question the ways in which sports stars could, and should be positive role models for others. This reflects the ways in which young people were able to identify flaws in sports stars, and also shows their awareness of public arguments about role models for young people. Whilst they voiced concern about the responsibility of sports stars to set examples for others to follow, they firmly suggested that as adolescents they were able to make their own judgements about acceptable behaviour, and would not necessarily need a sport star to lead them astray. This seems to reflect several points; the stage of adolescent development in their search for their own identity, the unconsciousness awareness of modes of imitation and the desire to express themselves as their own person.

Lusted (1991) identifies the glut of personalities in today's media narratives, and this similarly applies to sports stars. The criteria that young people use to determine who stands out as a rare and special person, beyond celebrity status is more difficult to

determine. Michael Jordan was the only sports star strongly promoted as a valid role model, and hero for young people. As one boy said;

There are stars worth looking up to, like Michael Jordan, because he hasn't done anything bad, and he's good at his sport, and working with children and stuff, and that's someone you look up to.
He's such a character, he just sticks in your mind. He's worked really hard to get where he is, so I think I admire that . . . in a sense he is a hero to young people, more of an inspiration actually. They get inspired about how hard he worked and where he came from because he came from downtown America.

Michael Jordan has featured across my longitudinal research since 1990, was identified in the diary analysis as a favourite star prior to the sports events of 1996, and continued to be identified during the following year. Vande Berg (1998) confirms Michael Jordan's place as a sports hero, and McDonald (1996, p.347-348) supports some of the comments made by the boy above;

Michael Jordan is popular precisely because his commodified persona negotiates historically specific and complex gendered, racialised and sexualised meanings in ways which are socially acceptable and culturally envied by mainstream audiences.

Attention to his longevity as an admired sports star is also made by Harris (1994), who shows that he consistently appears across at least six years of study on young people's favourite athletes. His inclusion in this study questions the nature of his 'heroic sport star characteristics,' and how his image has maintained a high audience profile over a long time span for a sport star. His overseas base has perhaps meant that the British press has made a less critical, probing investigation into his private life, for the young people in this case study seemed unaware of his alleged dealings with gambling and fights during games (Harris, 1994).

Although longevity of career and continued media visibility, were not explicitly mentioned as characteristics of admiration, there does seem to be a claim that these features may be significant. Muhammad Ali was noted as a very popular figure from the Atlanta Olympics, the myth and legend of the man affording him hero status by some of the young people over and above the 1996 Olympic competitors. Harris

(1994) provides support for Ali as a hero of the 1960s, who consistently appears across data gathered from adolescents about their favourite athletes, through to the 1980s. Although Harris (1994) suggests that Ali receives mixed receptions from American youth across these studies, his portrayal during the Atlanta Olympics produced a wave of sympathy and praise regarding his political stance, current ill health and courage;

He was a great geezer. He came back to the Olympics like nothing had happened, he put it all behind him. He's got Parkinson's now, it made it all special and they gave him his medal back and he accepted, so he was a hero coming back after it all happened.
 He's the world's best ever boxer, I know about when he threw the medal in the river, he stood up for his race and showed that nothing was more important and that made loads of people love him.
 He showed great courage, he was an inspiration as well. I think he has done a lot for his community and his race.
 He's got determination and he keeps on with whatever he is doing and even now with his disease he's still fighting all the way and I think that is a true hero to show courage in the face of adversity.

Several of the group spoke of how they had read about his career, heard about him from others, and seen videos of his boxing. Long term memories and the dramatic imagery of Ali lighting the Atlanta Olympic flame, evoked a nostalgic and mythical impact of Muhammad Ali as a true hero, alongside contemporary sports stars.

In contrast, the media construction of Tim Henman as a hero for young people during his rise to fame at Wimbledon 1996, was opposed by a number of the case study group. This showed that young people were less inclined to trivialise notions of the hero, and supported the significance they placed on long term and sustained achievements. Firstly, a number of them had little awareness of him as either a player or a person and felt reluctant to make judgements on him. When asked if he was a hero, some comments reflected an uncertainty in according full hero status;

I'd heard of him once before.
 I think he probably is.
 I think Tim Henman has a long way to go yet. I don't think they see him as a hero yet because he hasn't achieved anything really major.
 Yes, he's a bit of a hero.

There was too a sense that several of the young people found it difficult to identify with aspects of Henman's image. One group conversation developed as follows;

Like as a tennis player he's absolutely brilliant. The thing is he sits there in interviews and goes, yeah very nice - all the time.

Yeah, he should make more of an effort.

Too quiet.

The time I see him laugh . . .

Tim Henman- he's like ugly. . . ugly .

But he's a good player.

No, I wouldn't like to meet him.

I don't think he's nice particularly.

He's good but I don't think he's nice looking or anything.

Perceptions of him as a potential role model on the tennis court were more accommodating;

You watch someone like him play and you want to go to the park and play a game of tennis.

Whilst there is evidence that young people do not wish to trivialise the heroic concept in their regard for level of achievement, it is clear from the data that young people do place importance on sports stars' personality and appearance, as well as their sporting prowess. Some of the comments here, suggest that although they might admire Henman's current tennis potential, their ability to identify with him as a favourite, role model and hero is currently questionable. He offers an ideal case study to explore the ways in which modes of identification and interpretation alter as media scrutiny intensifies and his career progresses.

Sports stars do offer the audience close associations with the sporting spectacle. The ways in which sport stars function as a reflection of contemporary social and moral concerns provide young people with a conflicting complexity of readings. Whilst they can articulate these issues in their efforts to determine meanings about sports stars as heroes and role models, it clearly provides a dilemma for them in identifying what they perceive to be 'true' heroes in the traditional sense. As such, they seem to make

liberal associations, rather than strong and undying bonds, with favourite sports stars, which are susceptible to change as media amplification of personal incidents makes them reappraise their priorities.

Their expectations suggest that young people desire the 'social - moral exemplar' of sporting myths, and reject some stars who move beyond these boundaries. This could silence some critics who suggest that the youth of today adopt unfavourable and undesirable role models. For young people suggest that they have the power to see beyond the images of the texts, and make realistic appraisals of sport stars. It is, they perceive, younger children who are more vulnerable than themselves. Yet they are realistic about the nature of everyday life, and judge behaviour they read and hear about, within their own social situations, suggesting that they want sports stars to be natural, and that they, the audience, want truthful rather than glossy images of their sporting heroes and role models.

7.5 Summary

This chapter demonstrates that young people are active and critical in the ways they move between the sporting texts and the social reality of their own lives. Young people's recall suggests ways in which certain values, ideals and sporting moments become embedded in their consciousness. Moving between the texts and audience, provides a synthesis of understanding of how young people talk about national identity, and gendered discourses in relation to sport and self. The social and moral concerns about contemporary sports stars provides a complexity of readings, yet young people articulate a sense of realism and astuteness about heroism and villainy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

This section draws together concluding remarks concerning the methodological framework for analysis and the research questions this thesis set out to investigate. It reflects on the themes and issues apparent in the analysis of the media-sporting texts of the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 and the significance of the European Football Championship, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics in the lives of young people during that time. My own professional concern about the relationship between the media, young people and active sport is also revisited in the light of young people's readings of the texts and their response to active sport during the six weeks of the analysis.

8.1 Exploring the Hermeneutic - a justifiable framework for analysis

This thesis has provided a specific and concentrated focus on three sports events receiving high media profile and global appeal. It uses a hermeneutic approach to reception studies, in a genre that has received relatively little focused attention in the interpretative paradigm. It offers a methodological approach to audience analysis framed by social theory, and informed by hermeneutics (Thompson, 1990).

Aspects of the media sport production process within the socio-historic context have been identified, acknowledging the significance of the sporting spectacles within the global consumer market place and the deep seated patriarchal control to which they are exposed. It recognises that young people are situated in a contemporary 'mediascape' where reality and media constructions coalesce. The capitalist driven commercial culture of the '90s, with its emphasis on individualism, youth, style and body image targets adolescents as active consumers. The media producers hold the

power to present a range of selected images, as commodities for audience consumption. The images of media sport, with its glamour, show-biz appeal and abundance of stars provide an obvious market for such targeting. The pervasiveness of the media suggests that it is unlikely that any of the young people in this study had not heard of the events taking place during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996.

A more detailed, fieldwork based analysis of production practices for each of the particular events would have enhanced the tripartite framework. The main analytical focus of this investigation has however, prioritised the formal, textual analysis alongside qualitative based audience interpretation. The tradition of depth hermeneutics provides for differing levels of analysis, exploring how ideological modes operate within the production and construction of media messages, and the ways in which such meaning and power intersect in audience interpretations.

The media-sport relationship blurs boundaries between production and consumption processes to the extent that a complete picture of the sporting mediascape cannot be determined through one level of analysis. Media technologies, sporting texts, consumer activity and individual consumption patterns of sport and leisure are inextricably linked (Merkel, Lines and McDonald, 1998). A singular approach is not sufficient to provide solutions to the variety of demands of audience analysis and the multi-methods selected for this investigation supports Real's (1996, p. 267) argument for depth understanding of media culture;

Only by employing a combination of tools can we begin to explore completely the range of meanings and effects in any one media experience, and the totality of media culture.

This methodological framework was designed to structure a series of steps in providing a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the audience experience. For it argues that interpretative analysis can only be fully developed

alongside formal analysis of the media texts. It endorses Ang's (1990, p.155) difficulty of locating a fixed, stable audience;

The social world of actual audiences consists of an infinite and ever expanding myriad of dispersed practices and experiences that can never be and should not be contained in one total system of knowledge.

So, whilst it does not profess to offer a wider and fixed understanding of meanings and pleasures beyond the context of the viewing experience of this audience group during the selected events of the 'Summer of Sport' 1996, it does provide a framework for much needed further interpretative and comparative work in the field. This can then confirm whether similar trends and patterns emerge across different groups and other media sports events.

A review of the sporting texts drew together both content and textual analysis (for it is argued that they can be supportive of, rather than oppositional to each other), across a number of different media products that the young people had access to. This provided evidence of re-occurring signs and ideological themes during the three events. It gave the opportunity to consider preferred readings of the texts and subject positioning in relation to audience reading. Identification of the nature of the sporting discourse during that time provided ways for framing discussion within the in-depth interviews.

The use of diary data collection, whilst potentially vulnerable in terms of satisfactory completion, provided the foundations for the immediate recall of actual consumption, modes of reception, and personal feelings and emotions. The quantitative and qualitative data they generated were invaluable, and provided the selection criteria for the group and individual interviews, as well as the frameworks for discussion. In view of the absence of work on young people's interpretations of media sport, the decision to keep the discussions diverse and wide ranging across individuals, themes and events have provided a more holistic account of the media sports experience. It must

be acknowledged, as Wenner and Ganzt (1998) discovered, that the reaction to the global appeal of the selected events might be very different from the interpretations of day to day media sports coverage. Similarly, although future events can offer comparability, they are unlikely to offer exact equivalence, such is the unpredictable reality of the sporting spectacle.

Both the diaries and the interviews explored situated practices of reception and the aspects of attention, power relations and social interaction evidenced within that context. Preferences and tastes in consumption patterns, together with the pleasures and meanings they expressed, offered ways of understanding the significance of the sports media experience for these young people. Beyond the level of consumption, such activity clearly provided them with messages that they decoded and evaluated within their own social setting. Their opinions, views and recall suggested ways in which certain values, ideas and sporting moments became embedded in their consciousness. By moving between levels of analysis and reflecting upon the formal reading of the texts and the ways in which young people engaged with them, the framework provided for discussion of the ways in which audience thoughts correlated with, negotiated, or resisted ideological readings.

There is clearly a danger in the researcher interpreting interpretations. Buckingham's (1993a) warnings about the power relationship between researcher and subjects in the collection of data was considered in my insider/outsider role. The social positioning of young people, their differing levels of experience, maturity and language will influence their ability to articulate their experiences. The openness and ease of young people to reveal their thoughts and feelings, have been reflected in the case study through the use of their own words about personal consumer tastes, media choices and understanding of the sporting discourse.

However, it must be acknowledged that the research process itself afforded opportunities for critical appraisal, evaluation and re-interpretation of the object domain, for through the in-depth interviews both with their peers and the interviewer, the audience was able to elaborate on its original readings, and re-visit interpretations. As such some young people made comments like;

Did I really watch as much as that?
I had not thought of it like that before.

Secondly, the hermeneutic approach provided a framework that allowed for the researcher to move beyond the audience expressions, and begin to conceptually explain the audience interpretations. For clearly, the young people whilst able to express themselves with clarity and a sense of critique, do not explicitly articulate their interpretations as ideological readings. For as Thompson (1990, p. 323) suggests;

Mediated by the processes of the depth hermeneutical approach, this more elaborate interpretative process may enable the analyst to interpret symbolic forms in a way that differs from the everyday understanding of the lay actors.

8.2 Reading the Sporting texts. Young People, consumption, impact and interpretation.

The media, during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 drew in huge audiences to the sporting spectacles. Young people across gender and ethnic groupings were no exception. The selection of three different events across a six week period proved advantageous, as all three offered varied and unpredictable outcomes. Had Euro '96 been the only selection, pleasures and meanings would have been both sport and gender specific; Wimbledon alone might have offered little response, as many of the young people failed to tune in, and the Atlanta Olympics offered frustration and disappointment in contrast to the feel good factor of Euro '96. The reasons why young people prioritised some events over, and the way in which feelings from one event transcended others,

was also evidenced from the six week analysis. This provided for a more diverse and complex view of the media sport experience.

The key distinctions between the events suggested that Euro '96 media constructions worked to reinforce a sense of 'the nation' and interpellated individuals as loyal citizens, unified in pursuit of national status and pride. The heroic success of the nation's representatives on the soccer field contributed to a feel good factor that young people strongly expressed as reality, rather than constructed. In contrast, the individuality of Wimbledon offered a more fragmented reading, and the intensity of high drama and emotion from Euro '96 could not be replicated. Despite the media construction of 'Our Tim', and signifiers of 'Englishness' in an attempt to retain audience attachment with notions of the nation and sport, Wimbledon failed to appeal to many of the group. The Atlanta Olympics were anticipated to be a huge attraction, with its overt commodification and show-biz design. Many of the young people were selective in their engagement with the event, suggesting scheduling and lack of British success over-rode its historical significance, the abundance of the spectacle and the diversity of competitors and events. The lack of appeal of the two events following Euro '96, reinforces the importance placed on modes of identification and intensity, as pleasurable and meaningful features of media sport texts for young people.

What becomes apparent is that young people are aware to some extent of the significant role that the media plays in their everyday lifestyles, yet at the same time they are less reluctant or able to acknowledge its impact on their decision making, consciousness and identity formation. For they believe that they are mature and dependent enough to read and appraise moral and social issues, and be their own person.

Figure 36, summarises the young people's response to the media sporting texts during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996. The nature of consumption patterns, the ways in which it impacted on their everyday lives through modes of reception and influence, and the significance of their interpretations, provide for a clearer understanding of the ways in which textual analysis only offers a partial understanding of the media experience.

Their tastes and preferences reflect the socio-historic importance placed on football as a significant feature of British culture. The ways in which the sport has been globalised and commodified, widely televised and a focal point of newspaper sport reporting, together with the highly visible images of footballers across a range of media texts, suggests that its popularity amongst young people is no surprise. Most of the group expressed some sort of attachment to a particular football team or player.

Young people suggest that good television sports viewing needs to be exciting, fast and tense, offering emotive and highly dramatic moments of 'pure theatre'. If it fails to reach this intensity they do other things at the same time, or simply switch off. The ideological link between sport and the nation, is a strong form of identification and affiliation for them, and those whose tendency is to avoid everyday media sport can be persuaded to join in the ritual participation of British sporting success. The celebratory effect of 'togetherness' in moments of national sporting success is a powerful and enduring memory.

Young people are both diverse and fickle in their engagement with the sporting texts. Although there were no occurrences of complete avoidance during the summer of sport, some young people, both boys and girls, expressed their preferences for other media genres, especially soap opera. The audience was often discerning in its choices, even if this contradicted family and peer group tastes.

Figure 36: Summarising The Audience Experience during the 'Summer of Sport' 1996

Young People's Response to Super Mediated sports events - Euro '96, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics

<p>TASTES AND PREFERENCES</p> <p>Soccer Young, good looking, skilful sportsmen, Footballers Exciting, tense, fast moving action Emotive, dramatic moments Winning England matches England players and competitors Size of the sporting spectacle</p>
<p>MOTIVES</p> <p>Collective, group and national identity Star Identification Social Discourse Male bonding Girl empowerment</p>
<p>USES</p> <p>Personal - pleasure, attachment, interest, leisure, daily routine, knowledge & information Social - interpersonal relationships with family and peers, sharing of experiences, media talk Emotional - release of tension, feelings, meanings</p>
<p>ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SPORTING TEXTS</p> <p>Avoidance Selectivity - dipping in and out Affiliation - drawn in as the event progresses Attachment - identification with specific individual, team, sport or event Fandom - across a range of sporting events</p>
<p>MEANINGS</p> <p>National pride, status and celebration through sporting success Military and sporting connections, and association with past war rivals The social and moral responsibility of sport stars Sport stars are only human - few transcend to hero status Male sporting dominance at levels of excellence Marginalisation and trivialisation of women's sport and female sport stars Sport generally more significant for boys than girls</p>
<p>INFLUENCES</p> <p>Identity - self, national, ethnic, gendered Lifestyle - media significance, role of sporting activity, sporting ideals and values Consumption - other media products, clothing, images</p>

Selectivity occurred both whilst watching the action, and in determining whether to switch on or not. At times they were focused and concentrated, at others they were engaging in a range of social activities that were inevitably distracting their attention. There was clear evidence that initial dislike or lack of knowledge for a sporting event could be overcome, and some audience members affiliated more closely as the national representatives progressed. Just as readily some disengaged themselves if their reason for identification was eliminated, or unsuccessful. The true fans attached themselves to particular events and sports, and were knowledgeable about past events, results and personalities. Media sports fans, who watch intensely and are knowledgeable across a wide range of sports, events and programmes on a daily basis, require a more specific research focus, beyond the remit of this investigation.

The more intensely the individual was engaged in the text, generally the more significant the experience, the longer and more vivid the recall of the happenings, and the more elaborate the specificity of the discourse surrounding the narratives.

The inter-related aspects of motives and uses of the media sport texts provided examples of ways in which young people used them for personal, social and emotional purposes. On a personal level, as individuals they had the power to make their own choices about the media products they bought, and with their own televisions many of them could escape the restraints of parental control during family viewing. In this way they believed that they could express themselves through personal taste and choice of media consumption. Media sport was seen by some to be an enjoyable way of spending their leisure time. It was a cheaper, accessible and more convenient form of entertainment than live sports viewing. For some it provided a personal sense of attachment and identification with a particular sport, team or player.

As a social tool, the significance of 'media talk' as an important form of social interaction, and the stress on the shared nature of experiences during the events,

reinforced the ways in which media exchange filters into everyday life. This correlates with the adolescent interpretative work of Palmer (1987), Buckingham (1993a) and Gillespie (1995), but develops specifically the role of 'media sport talk'. Young people stressed the enjoyment of a collective sharing of emotions and feelings, which some perceived rarely happened on a normal everyday basis, due to cultural diversity.

The shared experience masked underlying gender differentiated motives. For girls, it offered entry into a male dominated world, enabling them to participate in media sports talk and to legitimately gaze at masculine bodies. For boys, it was seen as a ritualistic bonding of male interest and imagery. Those few boys who confessed to their general dislike for media sport, acknowledged they were different from other boys, and enforced their resistance to masculine sporting ideology by claiming soap opera preferences instead.

Media-sport provided an important channel for emotional release. Its very character of physicality, unpredictability, suspense and links with the nation, celebrities and teams affords key elements of audience identification and intensity. Soap opera by exposing storylines before the moment of high drama occurs, loses some of the suspense that live sports coverage can guarantee. The ritualistic participation - the shouting and cheering around the television set, wearing clothes of identification and sharing a few beers, during the high intensity of events - can provide an emotional experience which few other genres can compare with. For many of the young people this provided a very important motive to share in the experience.

Readings young people made of the sporting texts, were determined by moving between the two levels of analysis. Young people expressed pleasures and enjoyment gained through engagement with the texts. These were developed through the interviews, in line with themes that had emerged from the formal, textual analysis.

The adolescents were active, critical and sometimes resistant to messages in the texts. This supports the idea of negotiated readings of the sporting texts - young people see openness and complexity of messages within the narratives.

They made close associations between sporting success, national pride and their own sense of attachment to the nation as an 'imagined community'. Their allegiance to the nation was not however unswerving. They questioned the role of the state in sporting provision, offered support for other national policies and maintained attachment to overseas club players during Euro '96. They disputed the ways in which war-like metaphors and soccer rivalry spilled over from sport into behaviour in everyday life.

They saw sports stars as real people, rarely placed on a pedestal of perfection. They reflected on whether their heroes could, and should reflect the utopian ideal, as social and moral exemplars. They did not trivialise and idolise sports stars to the extent that they could not detect flaws in their character or behaviour. As such, young people gave the impression they were adequately equipped to make sound judgements about what aspects of a star's performance, personality and lifestyle, they felt appropriate to emulate.

Despite opposition to patriarchal readings of the sporting texts, by some girls who did enter media sport territory, the experience whilst empowering in terms of social interaction, did little to change stereotypical gender attitudes about either sportswomen, or the female sports audience. It also reflected the on-going struggle between boys and girls about the acceptability of females in the sporting world.

The ways in which these events impacted on young people and were absorbed into their everyday life - talk about them pervaded daily conversation, they kept copies of articles, newspaper clips, made video recordings and bought associated products suggested that media sport is influential in terms of identity, consumption and lifestyle. The long term influence is more difficult to determine, but this investigation

does reveal the ways in which engagement with media sport can inform young people about differences in self, national, ethnic and gendered identities. It also confirms that aspects of the media, especially television viewing are seen to be an indispensable phenomenon.

One significance of watching television and reading magazines was that it erodes the time available for an active lifestyle. Whilst the sporting events gave indicators of motivation to take part in similar activities and imitation of skills and actions, for most young people it was generally short lived. They were not gullible about the demands of sporting excellence, and often saw it as unattainable for them. The high values placed on elite televised sport seemed to act as a demotivator to participation, and those that tried were disillusioned with their own less successful attempts.

Sport too, was competing not just with television viewing but a whole range of other commercial activities, such as shopping, listening to music and going out. All of the case study group was drawn in as consumers of Euro '96, many bought at least one other related product, especially during Euro '96. A feature of audience activity was the ways in which strong association with any one of the events influenced associated consumption choices.

The integrated analysis of ideological readings of the sporting texts alongside depth analysis of young people's consumption patterns, reception contexts and pleasures and meanings, revealed through both diary and interview techniques has provided a synthesis and critical evaluation of young people's interpretations of the media sport experience.

8.3 Revisiting the professional concern - Media, sport and Physical Education

My professional concern about the role of the media, and more especially media sport, in the lives of the young people that I was working with at the time led me into this area of research. To some extent, I set out during the initial research with the notion in mind of the media as a 'problem' agency with regard to its influence on active lifestyles and positive sporting attitudes amongst young people. Whilst there are contested areas that I would like to pursue further, with regard to the media sport portrayal of gendered and ethnic identities of young people, which can influence their perceptions about their own sporting identities, I have developed a more positive view of the ways in which young people do read the sporting texts. Whilst notions of the 'couch potato' in terms of hours of viewing remain, the 'moral panics' of young people as undiscerning readers of the sporting texts are unfounded.

In light of the findings, I believe that media sport should be developed as an agency of partnership in promoting school sport, and considering the attitudes and motives of young people in developing active lifestyles. There is no doubt that the media, especially television, is an indispensable daily feature of adolescent lives, and that global media sports events can even attract non-sports fans to the television audience. Physical Education teachers cannot ignore the impact that this can and does have, and should consider ways of working in partnership with media sport to promote their subject discipline.¹ The research findings confirm that young people do imitate some aspects of skill they see, and are initially motivated to participate in activities they have just watched. The rise in numbers taking part in soccer during Euro '96, tennis during Wimbledon, and swimming and jogging during the Olympics confirms that the media does have some influence. However, clearly this is often short lived and

¹ Appendix J contains my paper entitled 'Setting the Challenge; Creating Partnerships: Young People, PE, Sport and the Media', presented at the 1997 British Association of Advisors and Lecturers in P.E. conference, and currently awaiting publication in the British Journal of P.E.

frustrating for those who cannot readily achieve the level of excellence of televised sport. Physical Education teachers have their part to play in discussing with their pupils, the social and moral tensions inherent in the sporting spectacle.

Some ideas are listed here for future consideration;

1. As media sports talk was an important feature of peer group interaction during the events, teachers should develop these as areas for discussion within their practical lessons. This could include identifying moments of particular skill which pupils admire, such as Paul Gascoigne's goal in Euro '96 or Henman's backhand, and designing practices for pupils to work on set skills. Included within this can be discussion on the stages in skill development, and the acceptability of foundation and performance, as well as elite levels.
2. Super mediated events did create a temporary wave of interest and momentum that was not sustained. The timing of Physical Education curricula activities to match key events in the sporting calendar may provide two way benefits. The media event can trigger off a desire to participate in the school activity, and the timing may maintain the momentum after the event has finished. Euro '96 provided a clear example where the girls especially were motivated to kick a ball around in the garden or park - the introduction of a new soccer programme for them at this time may have proved an incentive to learn the game.
3. Little, if any television viewing of the two events scheduled during term time took place in school. Although teachers often feel unable to justify watching instead of doing sport, the significance of the events suggests that some viewing may have acted as an incentive to participate, even if it was just a few clips from the events before going out to play for the rest of the lesson. Additionally, top level media sport provides ideal material to develop the analysis and evaluation component of the Physical Education National Curriculum attainment target.

4. The ability of pupils to articulate opinions around social and moral dilemmas of sport stars, such as alcoholism, wife abuse and sexuality suggest that these could be used as case studies for the personal, social, moral and spiritual components of basic skills in Physical Education lessons.

5. Physical Education notice boards could have a media sport section where schedules, match reports and relevant articles from magazines and newspapers are displayed. Pupils could be encouraged to bring in material that they would like shown. This will keep pupils informed of particular events that they may not have been aware of, and will provide a focal point for teacher led discussion and peer group media sports talk. During Wimbledon, for example some of the group said that they were unaware that the event was on. This may raise awareness for some girls, who seemed less likely to be as media sport literate as the boys. Additionally, this will provide a useful resource for the media component of the GCSE and A level Physical Education syllabi.

6. The diary research technique used in this study, showed the ways in which some young people gained satisfaction from completing them like scrapbooks, cutting and pasting some of their favourite media material. For younger pupils, especially, media sports events can provide project ideas across a range of subject disciplines.

7. The marginality of female sport and the lack of favourite female sports stars came through as a strong issue in the discussions with young people. This has implications about the lack of role models for girls, and the extent to which adolescent girls perceive it unimportant for females to be sporty. There are several implications here for Physical Education teachers. Firstly, it is important to ensure that the media coverage they themselves use does not under-represent women. They will need to find positive imagery of females in media coverage and incorporate this in lesson

time, to overcome the discrimination apparent in 'everyday' viewing. This is equally important for both boys and girls, as it was the boys particularly that made a number of negative comments about sporting females.

8. A more difficult and idealistic task, is to challenge media sport production to provide imagery, scheduling and programming which can capture young people's engagement beyond the viewing of super mediated events. The scheduling of national events for young people, and coaching programmes alongside major sporting events, such as the Olympics, may maintain that wave of enthusiasm and unity that national sporting success and star players inspire. For little, if any consideration is given to the programming of youth sport. This corresponds with Willis (1990) call for media commitment to the programming of material relevant to youth experience, and which provides young people with the opportunity to have their voices heard. This suggests the need for further institutional and media sport production based research.

The scheduling of a Michael Jordan basketball coaching programme on the basis of the game for young people, during an Olympic competition, may give young people something to go out and practice. As it stands the media agenda prioritises elite level performance that deters many young people, because they believe they have neither the ability, nor the dedication to achieve that. As an educationalist this is a challenge worth striving for. However, an awareness of the commercialisation of media sport suggests that this will be no easy achievement.

9. Finally, Physical Education teachers are ideally placed for ethnographic research on young people's responses to media sport. They are daily witnesses to peer group media talk and responses to media events on the playing field, and in the sports hall. This provides a rich and diverse environment for further work, on the ways in which young people's media sport experiences influence their everyday response to active sports participation.

8.4 Seeking the Media Sports Audience - future directions.

Whilst analysis of the sporting texts has accelerated during the last decade, the media sport audience has remained more elusive. It is difficult to locate at a specific time and place, for each sporting event is different, there are a diversity of texts and an unpredictable nature to the final outcome of an event or match. Media sport too, lacks to some extent the continuity and consistency of some other genres, such as fictions like soap opera.

Clearly, the audience cannot simply be described in relation to viewing figures or consumption patterns, for the levels of activity are far more complex than that. In supporting the hermeneutical framework, audience interpretations cannot be fully comprehended in isolation from the socio-historic contexts of production, and the formal discourse of the texts. This integrated approach calls for a variety of methodological tools and a wide range of data for analysis. As such, the researcher is likely to have to prioritise across the levels of analysis.

Access to the audience is a considered issue, the difficulty of gaining entry to their everyday life is problematic, and in itself must change the viewing environment. The focal group, diary and interview approach here has opened up a range of themes within a specific location of set events, and within the confines of a particular age group. Even this confirms the diverse nature of the audience; it is difficult to predict what texts they might use, and impossible to analyse everything they might have seen and read. There is also difficulty in capturing both the 'here and now,' and the long term memories and ideological impact, although the diaries supported the former, and the spacing of the interviews over the subsequent year the latter methodological dilemma. Additionally, through the on-going period of time from the media sport

events taking place until the final data was collated, young people's interpretations are constantly subject to review. For as Thompson (1990, p. 319) suggests;

This process of self-understanding and self-formation is not a sudden, one for all event, it is a gradual process that takes place slowly, imperceptibly from day to day and year to year. It is a process which takes place in the course of making sense of messages and relating to them, and in the to-ing and fro-ing of re-telling them to others and hearing them re-told to oneself.

Media audiences are thus involved in an on-going process of assimilation and appropriation of media messages, which are inevitably affected by the research process. The Paul Gascoigne case study, shows the importance of on-going longitudinal work, and the ways in which there are endless cycles of interpretations, and new stars replacing old.

Finally, in seeking the media sport audience, questions are raised as to whom that actually refers to, and the nature of the kinds of groups that might be worthy of consideration. This investigation can initiate a range of future directions for exploring audience interpretations.

This investigation provides frameworks for firstly; longer term tracking of sports star constructions and audience interpretations; secondly, longitudinal studies of the same events across time, with similar groups of young people; thirdly, comparative studies of a particular sports event across different gender, ethnic, age, class groupings; fourthly, cross-cultural audience analysis of a specific sports event. For example, audience groups from two different European nations during Euro '96 could be compared, as could an English with an American audience during the Olympics. Fifthly, specific, focused groups of media sport fans and particular events and sports could be targeted. Importantly, in view of the marginalisation of women in the sporting genre, this work could be developed to offer a specific focus on the constructions and interpretations of female sport stars, or a concentrated focus on the female audience and their interpretations of media sport.

8.5 A Final Summary: Celebration and Contradiction in the Readings of 'the Summer of Sport' 1996.

The unique contribution of this thesis is the focus on young people's readings of the sporting texts, for whilst other super mediated sport events have revealed similar researcher based readings, audiences have more frequently been positioned by researchers, but not questioned about the consumption, impact and interpretations of these events for them as individuals. This thesis argues for a focus on the interaction between audience and text, rather than prioritising one over the other. In asking about meanings and interpretations of the audience, it has supported the need to integrate ideological readings of the sporting texts and the contextual setting of the reception, alongside questioning of the memories, pleasures and experiences of the young people.

The media construction of the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 is revealed as one of celebration and contradiction. Firstly, narratives celebrated national identity and unity, through myths and legends about sport, military and war exploits, and past sporting heroes, fusing national character and sport as one. Secondly, the sporting discourse celebrated masculinity, applauding the exploits of brave and heroic men on the sporting battlefield. Thirdly, there was a celebration of the nation's sports stars, embodying national characteristics and cultural values, designed to draw in the audience to the collective identity. Fourthly, the celebratory nature of winning and success by the 'home' nation was reflected in discourses surrounding the carry over value of sporting glory to the collective 'feel good factor' of the everyday life of the nation.

The primary ideological discourse of a nation united by sport, was contradicted by underlying discourses masking the multi-cultural, class and gendered diversity of contemporary Britain. Tensions too were evident between 'Englishness and

Britishness', and celebrations of European unity were negated by European opponents distinctly positioned as 'others'. Celebrations of heroism were contrasted with tales of fools and villains, as sports stars were condemned for their use and abuse of financial wealth, poor performances and amoral behaviour. At times, the media assumed public responsibility for reminding the sports stars of their national responsibilities.

The three main discursive themes of nation, gender and heroism contributed to an overall discourse of sport, which positioned the audience as patriotic, national citizens. This contradicted with females placed as 'outsiders', codes of difference and a 'formulae of exclusion' operating to position women as inferior to men, in terms of sporting performance and as knowledgeable viewers. However, the commercial need for the widest audience appeal of mega sports events has persuaded production teams that women need to be invited in, and persuaded to stay for the sporting spectacle. Rather than an act of empowerment, production practices worked to position women in a stereotypical way as 'others', with personalised, 'soap' style narratives and as admirers and desirers of male physicality, rather than as 'pure' sports fans.

The results of the case study work with young people, contributes to the passive versus media literate debate, and shows them to be articulate and informed in their readings of the sporting texts. The 'mediascape' that they inhabit is one of diversity and complexity, embedded in their consciousness, yet they are realistic, critical and selective in their use of the wide range of media messages they receive.

The first level of interpretative analysis sees young people moved by the spectacle, and level of ritual participation. Sports talk refers to the pleasures of the texts - excitement, sporting performance, excellence and celebrity appeal. Deeper analysis of the interaction between audience and text shows that young people do see themselves as patriotic, national citizens during the events. They enjoy the sense of 'togetherness' and adopt rhetoric about the united and celebratory state of the nation. Yet they are

not gullible, and celebrate the fact that these occasions overcome the 'normal' diversity and tensions of everyday life.

Positioned as consumers of celebrity images, young people negotiate the readings of sports stars projected as their role models, and are judgmental and at times, surprisingly conservative in their opinions. Widely publicised stars, such as Paul Gascoigne and Tim Henman, did not feature significantly on their lists of favourites, showing that media amplification does not necessarily equate with audience appeal. Young people acknowledge the contradictions between legendary sporting heroism and the actuality of the lifestyles of contemporary sporting celebrities. They demonstrate the ability to make sound moral judgments between heroism and villainy, and justify their statements according to the reality of their own social experiences.

The gendered nature of the sporting discourse was reflected too, in the sports talk of young people. This has wider implications for the way that females perceive their place in the sporting world and the ways that men receive them. The positioning of girls to admire masculinity and male power and dominance through 'body gazing' during sporting action came through as a strong feature in sports viewing. This reflects the growing commercial exploitation and sexualisation of the athletic body. Deeply embedded gender power relations operate across all levels of media sport production and textual construction. This investigation revealed examples of tensions too, within the domestic viewing context and in audience readings of the texts, yet young people are generally accepting of the 'natural', rather than questioning social significance of patriarchal control and dominance.

Young people's opinions and recall suggested ways in which certain values, ideas and sporting moments became embedded in their consciousness. The celebratory aura of the sporting spectacle, did create an initial wave of enthusiasm to go out to play

themselves, but the disappointing contrast between their own performance and elite super stars provided a contradiction for young people, which meant for some the momentum was short lived.

The readings of the 'Summer of Sport' 1996 identify the complexity of sport, and the contradictory nature of the social and moral values it purports to develop in its participants. This identifies a mismatch with the promotional benefits of sport as an invaluable leisure activity for young people, for media sport representations reveal it to be fraught with tension and social division. For rather than offering readings of sport as open and accessible to all, young people interpret meanings that prioritise elitism and excellence over participation for all, that portray sports performers as equally likely to be villains and fools as heroes, and offer reflections on the gendered and ethnic hierarchies in sport. It is of no surprise that a number of these tensions surface in Physical Education and sports participation, for the sporting spectacle naturalises notions that sport is unattainable and insignificant for a number of young people.

By moving between the levels of analysis this framework has provided evidence that audience thoughts reflected active and critical readings of the celebration and contradictions surrounding discourses of national unity, gendered identity and constructions of sporting heroes.

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Videos

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTERS

i. Parental request letter

28th May 1996

Dear Parents,

I am writing to request your permission to ask your son/daughter to assist me with my research into media /sporting interests of adolescents.

As part of my PhD degree I am investigating the extent to which young people are involved in viewing and reading about large sports events such as the European Cup, Wimbledon and the Olympics and the impact these might have on their thoughts about sport and sports stars.

As your son/daughter has decided to study PE and/or Media Studies at GCSE, it is hoped that taking part in the research might give them greater insight into project ideas and material that will assist them in their studies.

If you agree to my request it will involve each student in completing a daily diary during the weeks of the events. This should not take more than 5 minutes a day and they should not watch any more TV than they would normally do during these events. I anticipate some will not watch any of the competitions and that is fine. They just need to explain why in their diaries. This will then be followed up by some group interviews conducted during the Autumn term.

All diaries will be provided and will be easy to complete. It is essential however, for the validity of the research, that once started they are completed daily .It is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers!

If I receive your consent, I will explain the procedures to your son/daughter's GCSE group at the end of this week.The Euro-96 diaries will be handed out at this time. Mr.Wookey/Mr Thomas will kindly collect them in on completion and hand out the Wimbledon and Olympics Diaries at the appropriate times.It is essential that all three diaries are completed as part of the research considers the viewing differences between all 3 events.

Many thanks in anticipation for your support,
Yours faithfully,

Gill Lines
Senior Lecturer in PE, Sport and Leisure (formerly Head of Girls PE, Beal HS)

ii. Letter to individual interview candidates

Dear

I am writing to inform you that following your completion of the media diaries for me during Euro 96, Wimbledon and The Atlanta Olympics I would now like to conduct an individual interview with you. This will provide additional information to our group interviews and will focus more specifically on your individual diary material.

This will take place :
in the Media Studies room
on Thursday 3rd July / Friday 4th July
from

I appreciate your time and effort in helping me with the research and I look forward to chatting with you .

If you are unable to make the time above please let Mr Thomas know immediately as I am travelling from Sussex especially for this meeting.

With thanks and best wishes,

Gill Lines
Senior Lecturer in Socio-Cultural Aspects Of Sport, Leisure and PE

APPENDIX B: LONGITUDINAL SURVEY AND THE CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF YOUNG PEOPLE 1991- 2001: Questionnaire

MEDIA INTERESTS OF FOURTH YEARS

I am conducting some research for my MA course in PE at Brighton Polytechnic. I would be grateful if you could give me some information on your interests in television, newspapers and magazines. All answers will be treated in confidence, so please answer honestly. THANK YOU.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE CORRECT NUMBER BY EACH ANSWER

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					Serial	
					No	(1, 2, 3)
School	1 Beal	4 Brighton 1		<input type="checkbox"/>		(4)
	2 Harwich	5 Brighton 2				
	3 Edmonton					
Form:			<input type="checkbox"/>		(5, 6)
Teaching Group:			<input type="checkbox"/>		(7, 8)
Religion:	1 Christian	5 Hindu		<input type="checkbox"/>		(9)
	2 Jewish	6 Jehovah's Witness				
	3 Muslim	7 Other				
	4 Sikh	8 Atheist				
Sex:	1 Female	2 Male		<input type="checkbox"/>		(10)
Q1	Which of the following newspapers do you usually look at every day? Please circle 1 answer.			<input type="checkbox"/>		(11, 12)
	The Sun	01	Daily Telegraph	06		
	Daily Mirror	02	Guardian	07		
	Daily Mail	03	Times	08		
	Daily Express	04	Independent	09		
	Today	05	None	10		
Q2	Which of the following newspapers do you usually read on Sundays? Please circle 1 answer.			<input type="checkbox"/>		(13)
	News of the World	1	Sunday Express	5		
	Sunday Mirror	2	Sunday Sport	6		
	Mail on Sunday	3	None	7		
	Sunday People	4				
Q3	Which of the following papers do you usually read on Sundays? Please circle 1 answer			<input type="checkbox"/>		(14)
	Sunday Times	1	Independent on Sunday	4		
	Sunday Telegraph	2	None	5		
	Observer	3				

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Q4 Which of these magazines do you read regularly?

- | | | | |
|--------------|----|--------------------------|----------|
| Just 17 | 01 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (15, 16) |
| Mizz | 02 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (17, 18) |
| Smash Hits | 03 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (19, 20) |
| Viz | 04 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (21, 22) |
| Clothes Show | 05 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (23, 24) |
| Amega Action | 06 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (25, 26) |
| Fast Forward | 07 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (27, 28) |
| Shoot | 08 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (29, 30) |
| The Match | 09 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (31, 32) |
| Other | 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (33, 34) |

Name

Q5 Please circle 1 answer only to show your favourite section in the magazine you like most

(35, 36)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Fashion | 01 |
| Stories | 02 |
| Quizzes | 03 |
| Stars | 04 |
| Beauty | 05 |
| Pin-ups | 06 |
| Problems | 07 |
| Technical Information | 08 |
| Adverts | 09 |
| Pop Music | 10 |
| Sport/Exercise | 11 |

Q6 Do you read the sports pages of your newspapers?

(37)

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Always | 1 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| Never | 3 |

Q7 Which of the following do you have at home?

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------|------|
| TV | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (38) |
| Very Own TV | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (39) |
| Video Recorder | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (40) |
| Cable/Satellite TV | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | (41) |

Q8 For how long do you watch TV daily, on average?

(42)

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 0 hours | 1 |
| 1-2 hours | 2 |
| 2-4 hours | 3 |
| 4-6 hours | 4 |
| 6-8 hours | 5 |
| 8+ hours | 6 |

Q9 What are your favourite TV programmes? List a maximum of 3 in order of preference.

- | | | | |
|-----|-------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1st | | <input type="checkbox"/> | (43, 44) |
| 2nd | | <input type="checkbox"/> | (45, 46) |
| 3rd | | <input type="checkbox"/> | (47, 48) |

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Q10 Give the main reason why you like your favourite TV Programme.

(49, 50)

.....

Q11 Who are your 3 favourite TV personalities? Please list in order of preference.

1st

(51, 52)

2nd

(53, 54)

3rd

(55, 56)

Q12 Give the main reason why you like your favourite TV personality.

(57, 58)

.....

Q13 (a) Which TV star, if any, would you most like to be?
 If none, please tick here

(59, 60)

Name

(b) Why?

(61, 62)

.....

Q14 What sports programmes do you regularly watch on TV?

- Grandstand 01
- Sportsnight 02
- Rugby Special 03
- Ski Sunday 04
- American Football 05
- The Match 06
- Saint and Greavsie 07
- World Sport Special 08
- Transworld Sport 09
- Other 10

Name

- (63, 64)
- (65, 66)
- (67, 68)
- (69, 70)
- (71, 72)
- (73, 74)
- (75, 76)
- (77, 78)
- (79, 80)
- (81, 82)

Q15 Give reasons (if any) why you like watching sport on TV:

(83, 84)

.....

If none, please tick here

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Q16 What sports, if any, do you most enjoy watching on TV? Please list a maximum of 3.

1st

| | | (85, 86)

2nd

| | | (87, 88)

3rd

| | | (89, 90)

If none, please tick here

Q17 What sports, if any, do you most enjoy playing? Please list a maximum of 3.

1

| | | (91, 92)

2

| | | (93, 94)

3

| | | (95, 96)

Q18 (a) Did TV encourage you to take part in any of these sports?

- Yes 01
- No 02
- Unsure 03

(97)

(b) If yes, which ones?

| | | (98, 99)

| | | (100, 101)

| | | (102, 103)

Q19 Who are your favourite 3 sports stars, in order of preference?

1st

| | | (104, 105)

2nd

| | | (106, 107)

3rd

| | | (108, 109)

Q20 Give the main reason why you like your favourite sports star. (The 1st one in Q19).

| | | (110, 111)

.....
.....

Q21 Which sports star, if any, would you most like to be?

If none, please tick here

Name

| | | (112, 113)

Why?

| | | (114, 115)

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Q22 Do you own any sports, fitness, dance videos?

(116)

- Yes 01
- No 02
- Unsure 03

Q23 If yes, please indicate which types

- Sports 1 (117)
- Dance 2 (118)
- Fitness 3 (119)
- Sports Coaching 4 (120)
- Sports Movies 5 (121)

Q24 Please tick the box to indicate how you most feel about the following, using the key below the boxes

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(a) playing sport/exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	(122)					
(b) reading magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	(123)					
(c) reading newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	(124)					
(d) watching TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	(125)					
(e) listening to pop music	<input type="checkbox"/>	(126)					
(f) family outings	<input type="checkbox"/>	(127)					
(g) going out with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	(128)					

- really love it 1
- like it 2
- it's ok 3
- dislike it 4
- hate it 5
- unsure 6

Q25 Please tick the appropriate box below to show which statements are:

- very much like you 1
- like you 2
- unlike you 3
- not at all like you 4

	1	2	3	4	
(a) I buy fashions that I see TV stars wearing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(129)
(b) I like to look like my favourite TV stars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(130)
(c) I copy activities I see on TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(131)
(d) I have picked up/learnt from TV, how I should dress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(132)
(e) I have learnt from TV, magazines what I should look like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(133)
(f) I have tried to take up a sport I have watched on TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(134)
(g) I try to copy the way my favourite sports star behaves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(135)
(h) I believe it is important to be good at sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(136)

6

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	1	2	3	4		
(i) I enjoy taking part in sport						(137)
(j) I enjoy watching sport on TV						(138)
(k) Watching sport on TV encourages me to take part myself						(139)
(l) I believe sport/PE is more important for boys than girls						(140)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX C: DIARY SCHEDULE

MY PERSONAL MEDIA DIARY

**ATLANTA
OLYMPICS
96**

NAME:

SCHOOL:

date _____

How long did you watch TV for today?

.....hrs.....mins

What was your favourite programme today?

.....
.....

How long did you watch THE OLYMPICS for?

.....hrs.....mins

At what times did you watch it?

.....
.....

List any other activities you were doing while you were watching this sports programme.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

Were you watching with:(please circle correct answers)

friends : parents : brother/sister
alone : other relatives : at school

What matches/events did you watch?

.....
.....
.....

If none, please tick here;

.....

Please tick any of the following thoughts/feelings you had as you were watching .Please add any others you would like to.

- IT'S EXCITING ITS FUN OENJOYABLE
 I APPRECIATE THE SKILL LEVEL
 IT'S GOOD TO WATCH MY FAVOURITE SPORT
 I REALLY LIKE THE OLYMPICS
 IT'S SOMETHING TO DO I WISH I COULD BE THAT GOOD
 THERE'S NOTHING ELSE ON IT'S RELAXING IT'S VIOLENT
 THERE'S NOTHING BETTER TO DO IT'S COMPETITIVE
 I WISH I COULD SEE IT LIVE
 I'D RATHER BE DOING IT MYSELF THAN WATCHING
 THIS IS HELPING ME TO IMPROVE/LEARN IT'S BORING
 IT ENCOURAGES ME TO PLAY SHE'S ATTRACTIVE
 IT'S GREAT TO WATCH MENS BODIES IN ACTION
 HE'S GOOD LOOKING IT'S INSPIRING
 IT'S GOOD TO WATCH WOMEN COMPETE IN SPORT
 I'D LIKE TO BUY THAT KIT I'M GOING TO COPY THIS WHEN I PLAY
 IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A LAUGH WITH MY FRIENDS WHEN WE WATCH
 I WOULD RATHER WATCH MEN THAN WOMEN IN THE OLYMPICS
 I WOULD RATHER WATCH WOMEN THAN MEN IN THE OLYMPICS
 I REALLY LIKE THIS COMPETITOR/PLAYER

ANY OTHERS;.....

Who was your favourite performer today?

.....

Why do you like them?

.....
.....

After watching todays sports programme did you play any sport/physical activityYES / NO

list any sports you played today

.....
.....
.....

How long for.....hrs.....mins

Did you try to copy anything you saw on tv today?
YES / NO

If Yes, what did you copy?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Did you read a newspaper today?
YES / NO

Which one(s)?.....

Include any newspaper articles that you have read aboutTHE OLYMPICS in your diary.Make any comments here about anything you found interesting from reading these articles.....

.....
.....
.....

Did you read any magazines today?
YES / NO

If yes, which one(s).....
.....
.....

Which articles did you read in the magazine which included info on this sports event?

.....
.....
.....

Include it in your diary if you can.

Please list any products you bought /used today that referred to THE OLYMPICS

.....
.....
.....

Which ones did you buy because they specifically mentioned this event?

.....
.....
.....

Any other comments about what happened during THE OLYMPICS today?...(if you did not watch this event today please give reasons why)

.....
.....
.....
.....

* PERSONAL INFO PAGE *

NAME.....

AGE.....

ETHNIC ORIGIN.....

RELIGION.....

MALE / FEMALE

HOBBIES/LEISURE

INTERESTS.....

.....

.....

FAMILY TV ... YES / NO

OWN PERSONAL TV..... YES / NO

FAMILY VIDEO... YES / NO

OWN PERSONAL VIDEO.... YES / NO

SATELLITE/CABLE TV AT HOME

.. YES / NO

FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMME

.....

FAVOURITE TV STAR

.....

FAVOURITE SPORTS TO PLAY

.....

.....

FAVOURITE SPORTS TO WATCH ON TV

.....

.....

.....

.....

WHO ARE YOUR FAVOURITE SPORTS STARS?

.....

.....

.....

.....

WHY DO YOU LIKE THEM?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for completing this media diary for me. It will make a very valuable contribution to on-going research about media interests of young people like yourself and the influence of media in sporting participation.

Please number in order which sporting event you have enjoyed most:

EURO 96.....

WIMBLEDON.....

THE OLYMPICS.....

Give reasons for your 1st choice.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Which sports star do you admire most from these events?.....

Give reasons why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

If you have not enjoyed watching any of these sports events please explain why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please list any ways in which you think watching these events has changed your thoughts/feelings about these sports.....

.....

.....

.....

A big thank you for your help in making my research possible. I do appreciate the time and effort you have put in to the diaries. I look forward to discussing them with you in more detail next term. Have a good summer holiday!

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES OF INTEREST about this event.

STICK/ATTACH THE ARTICLES HERE IF YOU CAN.

PLEASE INCLUDE NAME OF NEWSPAPER/DATE OF ARTICLE

MAGAZINE ARTICLES OF INTEREST about this event

PLEASE INCLUDE THE NAME OF THE MAGAZINE/DATE OF COPY
STICK /ATTACH THE ARTICLE HERE IF YOU CAN.

FAVOURITE SPORTS STARS FROM THIS SPORTS EVENT

PLEASE ATTACH/STICK HERE ANY PHOTOS/INFO ABOUT YOUR
FAVOURITE STARS FROM THIS SPORTS EVENT

OLYMPIC VIEWING HRS		11hrs 10mins
OTHER ACTIVITIES INVOLVED IN WHILST WATCHING SPORT reading magazine, reading, eating, shouting, talking		
OTHER PEOPLE WATCHING WITH Euro 96 brother x 4, parents, friends, other relations x 1 Wimbledon alone x 3 brother, friend x 1 The Olympics alone x 5 parents x 4 brother x 3		
KEY MATCHES / EVENTS WATCHED EURO 96 Eng v Switz Eng v Scot Eng v Holland Eng v Spain Eng v Germany Italy v Russia		
WIMBLEDON Monica Seles v ? quarter finals Tim Henman Womens final Mens final Mens doubles final Ladies doubles final		
OLYMPICS opening ceremony gymnastics x3 swimming x 2 weight lifting tennis doubles final closing ceremony		
THOUGHTS/FEELINGS WHILST WATCHING	EURO 96	WIMBLEDON
its competitive	3	1
its exciting		2
its fun		1
its enjoyable		1
I appreciate the skill level		1
I wish I could be that good		2
I wish I could see it live		1
		2
FAVOURITE SPORTS PERFORMERS	REASONS	
Gazza	scored an excellent goal	
Southgate	had the verve to take the penalty	
Monica Seles	her skill level\	
Steffi Graff	she won	
Tim Henman	he tried his hardest	

"" " at the Olympics		he's the best England tennis player		
Ma Lin		she really tried hard and just missed a medal		
<hr/>				
SPORT/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AFTER	EURO 96	WIMBLEDON	OLYMPICS	
tennis	2	4	2	
basketball	6	4	3	
athletics	1	1	2	
biking	1		1	
<hr/>				
AMOUNT OF SPORT PLAYED				
DAILY RANGE 0 - 2 hrs				
WEEKLY				
DURING SUMMER OF SPORT				
	Euro 96	10hrs		
	Wimbledon	9 1/4 hrs		
	Olympics	4 1/4 hrs		
TOTAL		23 1/2 hrs		
<hr/>				
COPIED	tennis backhand x 2			
	service x 1			
<hr/>				
NEWSPAPER READ				
Daily Mirror x 7				
Sunday Mirror x 1				
Yellow Advertiser x 1				
<hr/>				
INTERESTING ARTICLES/THOUGHTS				
Euro 96 "there's a lot of hype around the England v Scotland match"				
Olympics "it's really sad that Gunnell wants to quit"				
<hr/>				
MAGAZINES READ				
computer , video, games				
Games Master x3				
Electronic Gaming Monthly				
Nintendo Magazine system				
Smash Hits x2				
Super Play				
Edge				
NMS				
Inside Soap				
TV Times				
<hr/>				
SPORTS EVENTS IN THE MAGAZINES				
1 article on how to win some Euro 96 stuff				
<hr/>				
PRODUCTS PURCHASED	EURO 96	WIMBLEDON	OLYMPICS	
cornflakes	*			

socks	*			
diet Coke		*		*
Mcdonalds				*
<hr/>				
ANY COMMENTS	EURO 96	WIMBLEDON	OLYMPICS	
It was good to see an English player get that far		*		
The Opening ceremony was beautifully done			*	
England should have won some medals by now			*	
I think todays game was good because of the rivalry between Eng /Scot	*			
It was really exciting	*			
England should have won	*			
England have done so badly			*	
<hr/>				
REASONS FOR NOT WATCHING	EURO 96	WIMBLEDON	OLYMPICS	
it was a bit boring		*	*	
getting bored of the tournament and sport	*			
no matches on that interested me	*			
wasn't interested		*		
I didn't stay in just to watch the football	*			
didn't have time		*	*	
I was too tired to stay up			*	
its getting boring seeing Engkand lose all the time			*	

ii. Diary Data Analysis Sheets

The diary data provided a range of different spreadsheets incorporating information on the following themes from the 25 young peoples' diaries over the 3 events. A selection of these spreadsheets have been included.

1. Media and sport interests : Boys before the Summer of Sport 1996
2. Media and sport interests: Girls before the Summer of Sport 1996
3. Euro '96: Reception data
4. Euro '96 :Other Media Consumption
5. Euro '96: Pleasures from Sports Viewing
6. Euro '96:Favourite Sport Stars
7. Euro '96: Active Sports Participation
8. Wimbledon:Reception data
9. Wimbledon:Other Media Consumption
- 10.Wimbledon: Pleasures from Sports Viewing
11. Wimbledon: Favourite Sport Stars
12. Wimbledon: Active Sports Participation
13. Atlanta Olympics:Reception data
14. Atlanta Olympics:Other Media Consumption
15. Atlanta Olympics:Pleasures from Sports Viewing
16. Atlanta Olympics:Favourite Sport Stars
17. Atlanta Olympics: Active Sports Participation
18. Final Thoughts on Euro '96
19. Final Thoughts on Wimbledon
20. Final Thoughts on the Atlanta Olympics

3.Euro 96 reception data

pupil name	tv view total h	Euro 96 tv hrs	fav prog	parents	friends	siblings	alone	other rel	school	opening cerem	Engv Switz	Eng v Holland
Simon Flavin	84hr 55 min	20hrs 25mins	Euro 96	4	1	2	5	2	0	*	*	*
Waleed Akhtar	90 hrs	3hrs 20mins	Eastenders	1	4	1	0	1	0	*	*	*
Danny Wynter	30hrs 20min	5hrs 10mins	Eastenders	0	0	0	4	1	0	*	*	*
Simon Felstein	95hrs 25mins	60hrs 45mins	Euro 96	6	10	7	2	4	0	*	*	*
David Palmer	33hrs 55mins	29hrs 45mins	Football	8	11	8	1	1	0	*	*	*
Warren Marks	68hrs 45mins	20hrs 50mins	Euro 96	3	8	1	2	0	0	*	*	*
Andrew Sinden	40hrs 30mins	23hrs	Euro 96	4	1	0	4	0	0	*	*	*
Michael Fields	46hrs 20mins	31hrs	Euro 96/Easte	6	4	3	0	2	0	*	*	*
Joe Bitton	42hrs 40mins	18hrs 30mins	Euro96	5	0	6	0	0	0	*	*	*
Lee Kott	56hrs 15mins	44hrs 45mins	Euro 96	7	6	3	10	3	0	*	*	*
Adam Leigh	138hrs	35hrs	Euro 96	11	4	0	2	1	0	*	*	*
Claire Snewin	124hrs 55mins	3hrs 50-mins	ricki Lake	5	0	2	1	0	0	*	*	*
Nazima Farook	79hrs	25hrs 40mins	England games	3	0	2	10	1	0	*	*	*
Laura Sennett	116hrs 30mins	11hrs 20mins	Euro 96	5	4	0	4	0	0	*	*	*
Emma Dowding	73hrs 50mins	4hrs 55mins	Eastenders	0	0	2	1	1	0	*	*	*
Claudia Knight	48hrs 43mins	7hrs 25mins	Neighbours	0	2	0	3	1	0	*	*	*
Dani Yershon	41hrs 45mins	17hrs 20mins	Euro 96	3	7	4	1	1	0	*	*	*
Lara Cohen	28hrs 40mins	10hrs 20mins	Eastenders	1	2	0	0	2	0	*	*	*
Sangeetha Ver	29hrs 45mins	13hrs 40mins	Euro96	1	2	1	2	0	0	*	*	*
Karen Scottow	19hrs 30mins	4hrs 30mins	Eastenders	2	5	3	1	0	0	*	*	*
Sara Gundlash	55hrs 55mins	8hrs 45mins	Eastenders	1	5	1	5	0	0	*	*	*
Judy Higginbo	14hrs	8hrs 15mins	Home /Away	2	2	1	1	0	0	*	*	*
Elaine Connolly	31hrs 51mins	13hrs 45mins	Euro 96	0	1	1	5	0	0	*	*	*
Chris Jarvis	33hrs 30mins	14hrs 45mins	Eastenders	10	0	8	2	0	0	*	*	*
Dipti Patel	4hrs 42mins	4hrs 42mins	Eastenders	1	1	1	1	0	0	*	*	*
										7	20	1

3.Euro 96 reception data

Eng v Scot	Eng v Spain	Eng v Germany	Final	Other	None	Eating	drinking	homework	talking	computer	cheering
*	*	*	*		9	0	6	5	0	0	0
*	*	*	*		1		2	0	0	0	1
*	*	*	*		3		0	0	3	0	0
*	*	*	*		20		1	0	4	0	3
*	*	*	*				0	0	0	0	1
*	*	*	*		13		0	0	0	0	0
*	*	*	*		8		4	0	2	0	0
*	*	*	*		8		3	0	1	7	3
*	*	*	*		13		4	1	0	0	1
*	*	*	*		6		7	0	0	4	0
*	*	*	*		15		0	0	4	1	2
*	*	*	*		19		2	0	0	0	0
*	*	*	*	highlightsx2			2	0	1	0	0
*	*	*	*		1		4	2	3	0	0
*	*	*	*		5		0	0	0	0	0
*	*	*	*		0		1	0	3	0	1
*	*	*	*		4		1	0	2	0	1
*	*	*	*		8		2	2	1	0	2
*	*	*	*		0		2	0	2	0	0
*	*	*	*		0		0	0	0	0	0
*	*	*	*		4		3	3	4	0	0
*	*	*	*		0		1	0	0	0	0
*	*	*	*		0		0	0	1	0	0
*	*	*	*		0		1	0	1	0	0
					0		2	2	0	0	0
16	20	19	15				18	6	14	3	5
							11	3	9	1	2

9 Wimbledon other media data

pupil name	Express	Sun	Mail	Star	Tynes	Mirror	Other	J17	Sugar	Shoot	Other	Items purchased
Simon Flavin	12											
Waleed Akhtar												
Danny Wynier		News of world					evening Standard				Smash His Games Mast er	1 Coke
Simon Felsein												
David Palmer												
Warren Marks												
Andrew Sinden												
Michael Fields												
Joe Bitton												
Lee Kott		8										
Adam Leigh		1										
Clare Snewin									2			
Nazma Farookh												
Laura Sennett												
Emma Dowding		12					Evening Standard					
Claudia Knight										2	Bliss	
Dani Yershon	5								1			
Lara Cohen												
Sangeetha Venug						1						
Karen Scollow												
Sara Gundlash			3							1		
Judy Higginbottom												
Elaine Connolly												
Chris Jarvis			11				Ilford Recorder			1		
Dipii Patel		3			3							a tennis racket for cousins birthday

No articles on Wimbledon in my magazine because it's a girl's magazine

15 Olympics pleasures

pupil name	exciting	fun	enjoyable	apprec skill	love Olympics	some to do	I wish that god	nothing else on relaxing	its violent	no better to dd	competitive	wish see it live	rather be doing it
Simon Flavin	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	2	0	1	0	4	2
Waleed Akhtar	1	1	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	4	0
Danny Wynier	6	4	0	5	4	1	3	0	0	0	2	3	0
Simon Felsein													
David Palmer	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	2	2	2	0
Warren Marks													
Andrew Sinden													
Michael Fields													
Joe Bitton													
Lee Kott	3	3	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Adam Leigh													
Clare Snewin													
Nazma Farookh													
Laura Sennett													
Emma Dowding													
Claudia Knight													
Dani Yershon													
Lara Cohen													
Sangeetha Venug													
Karen Scollow	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	5	1
Sara Gundlash													
Judy Higginbottom	10	7	1	11	7	0	5	0	0	0	0	9	1
Elaine Connolly													
Chris Jarvis													
Dipii Patel													

15 Olympics pleasures

like men bodies	good looking	encou to play	she attractive	inspiring	women compete	buy that kit	have a laugh	men not worn	women not me like player	its boring	good to watch	copy a	other
0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
0	0	0	1	1	2		1	1	0	1	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
1	2	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	helping me improve 1 real

APPENDIX E: GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

A range of questions were selected from the following for the group interviews according to interest and response of each group.

Football as part of lifestyle

1. In what ways are you keen football fans?

What enjoyment do you get from playing?

How regularly do you play?

How often do you normally watch football on television?

Do you ever see live matches?

Do you prefer playing, watching live or watching on tv?

Why?

Were you looking forward to Euro 96?

Consumption of Euro 96

2. Did you watch every match scheduled?

Did you select?

How did you select which match to watch?

What things stopped you from watching?

Family viewing

3. Did the whole family watch?

Who else did you watch with?

Do you prefer watching on your own or with other people?

Why?

Were there any arguments about what to watch on the tv during this time?

Ways of watching

4. What else did you do whilst you were watching?

Why?

..or did you prefer to concentrate on the game?

Do you find it easy to concentrate for a whole game?

What helps you to do that?

If you didn't watch Euro 96 was it still on at home?

Who was watching?

Meaning

5. Which matches did you prefer?

Why?

What feelings did you have watching the England games?

In what ways did you feel patriotic about England?

What did you feel about teams from other countries?

Did you feel proud to be British? How? In what ways did you show it?

Do you think it is important for England to do well?

Why?

6. What did you like/ dislike about this event?

What feelings/ thoughts did you have whilst you were watching the football?

Do you always have these feelings when you watch football?

How did Euro 96 compare to watching other football matches?

Modelling

7. Did you feel inspired to go out and play after watching any of the matches?

What did you learn about the game from watching?

Did you copy anything when you play now that you saw?

What did you buy special as a result of watching Euro 96?

Newspapers

8. Did you read any newspapers during the event?

Why?

Why not?

What did you think about the press coverage?

Magazines

8. How many of you bought J17/ Sugar/ Mizz/ Shoot/ Match during the event?

What did you learn about Euro 96 from reading it?

Should it have included info on the event in it?

In what ways?

Wimbledon

9. In what ways are you keen tennis fans? plus (see Q1- Q8)

How much of Wimbledon did you watch?

Do you watch it every year?

What do you think about the event?

Which matches did you watch? Why?

Was it on at home even if you chose not to watch it?

Who was watching it?

What did you like/dislike about this event?

How did you feel whilst you were watching this event/

Do you think that there is something special about Wimbledon?

How does it compare to other tennis tournaments you might have seen on tv?

How did it feel when you were watching an English player?

Do you think that it is important for England to do well at Wimbledon?

Did any of you feel inspired to go out and play tennis after watching one of the matches?

Did you try to play like any of the players ? In what ways?

How did it feel?

Did you buy anything as a result of Wimbledon?

Olympics

10. see Q1-8

plus

Which of you watched the Opening Ceremony of The Olympics?

What did you think of it?

What do you think about The Olympics?

Why do you think they are held?

Why is it such an important event?

What do you know about The Olympics?

In whatb ways did you enjoy coverage of the games?

What would you change about it?

What were the best part/ what did you like least?

What did you choose to watch most?

Why?

What did you think about the England team?

Was it important for England to do well?

Why?

Why do you think England didn't win many medals?

Sport Stars

11. Do you think that there are sports stars people your age really admire?

Which ones?

What qualities do they have that makes them respected?

Is sports ability the most important?

What would you copy about him/her?

12. Who do you think were the stars/ heros during the Summer of Sport?

Why?

Why haven't you named any female sports stars?

Do you see them as less mportant than males?

In what ways?

What do you think about Gazza?

Do young people admire him?

Why/why not?

Do you think that it is important to know about him as a person?

What do you like best/least about him?

What else do you know about him/

Would you copy anything that he does?

What do you think about Tim Henman?

Do young people admire him?

Why/why not?

Do you think that it is important to know about him as a person?

What do you like best/least about him?

What else do you know about him/

Would you copy anything that he does?

APPENDIX F : INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

This offers a sample individual schedule designed to reflect the diary analysis for this interviewee. Each of the 4 individual interviews followed the same themes, although the questions were pertinent to each individual response to the diaries.

Interview schedule: Claire Snewin

Interests

1. I enjoyed reading your diary for Euro 96 and Wimbledon. Is there any reason why you did not complete one for the Olympics?

2. I see your main interests are riding, swimming and clothes shopping. In what ways do you see watching tv as an interest to compare with these?

tv viewing habits

3. Do you think it would make any difference to your viewing if you had your own tv?

In what ways might it change what you watch?

... and how you watch?

Do you find family viewing a problem?

4. Do you think that you watch tv a lot?

... why/why not?

interpretation of favourite programmes/ stars

5. You seem to watch a number of favourite programmes during the week.

What's good about the one's you like best?

... take Home and Away. How involved do you get in the storyline?

What does it mean to you?

Do you ever cry, applaud, cheer when something happens in these?

6. In what ways do you discuss the episodes with your friends or family after you seen them?

7. Your favourite star was Mal in Neighbours. What's special about him?

Is he still your favourite?

8. You do not have a favourite sports star. Any reason why?

sport interests/ viewing and participation

9. You list a number of favourite sports - netball, hockey, badminton, horse riding and swimming. Would you say that you are a sporty person?

... do you think it's good to take part in sport in your own time?

... why?

... what would you choose to do instead of taking part in sport?

10. What about watching sport on tv. Do you ever choose to watch sport?

... which ones?

... why?

Euro 96 reception and interpretation

11. You watched about 4hrs of Euro 96.

What encouraged you to do that?

What did you think about it?

What do you still remember as important for you?

I notice you said you were glad when it was over and your Dad couldn't make you watch it anymore. Tell me about that.

12. How did you watch the parts that you saw? ... concentrating, doing something else ...

How involved did you get with what was happening? How did you really feel?

What sort of atmosphere was there when you watched with the family / alone?

Did you find that a lot of your friends were talking about it at school?

COuld you join in with the conversation if you hadn't watched that much?

13. What was the best about watching?

....and the worst?

14. You said that you liked Mcmanaman the best. What do you know about him?
What does he mean to you?

15 ...What about Gazza? What do you know about him?

What do you think of him?

Do you think that he is a hero for young people of your age?

Wimbledon reception and interpretation

16. YOu watched about 20 mins of WImbledon. Can you explain why that was?

...did your friends at school talk about the event? did they seem to be watching it?

...what about your family did they watch it?

17. Do you play tennis?

Do you see any benefit in watching Wimbledon...

... might it encourage you to play?

... might it help you to improve?

... do you think it's important to know what's going on there during this fortnight?

... would you be concerned to know how the England players were getting on?

... what do you know about Tim Henman?

... do think that he is a hero for young people your age?

Olympic reception and interpretation

18. What about the Olympics?

... tell me what you remember about them

... how important an event are they to you?

... in what ways do you think that they are an important sporting event?

....Do you wish you could have watched more?

The summer of sport media experience

19. Do you think it was right that there was coverage of all of these events last summer?

... how did it affect what you would normally have done?

... how would have altered the coverage if you could have done?

20. You read J17 during these events. Why do you buy it?

... does it have any articles on sport in it?

... what do you think about that?

21. Do you think that it might have encouraged you to tune in to Euro 96/ Wimbledon or the Olympics if you had read more about it in your magazine?

22. You don't read a newspaper then. Any reason?

...what do you think about the sportspages when you do have a look?

22. Can you remember anything about the sponsors of these events.?

23. If you had to sum up what does watching tv really mean to you?

24. ... and sports viewing?

25 . Did the summer of sport affect your attitude to taking part in these sports in any way? How?

26. Finally, how would you sum up what was called the summer of sport 96 ...and Euro 96/ Wimbledon and the Olympics?

APPENDIX G: CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA

This appendix includes some of the sample data sheets gathered for the content analysis

i. Case Study : Gazza Headlines during Euro '96

Gazza: Daily Mail Coverage during Euro 96

8 June p75 " The Guzzler and his drinking pals...

J.Powell Paul Gascoigne does not hold the key
Getting the message : Gazza keeps a low profile

9 June p.103 "With Paul Gascoigne infuriatingly over-elaborate"

p.103 Bob Cass "...they were very tired after an hr, especially Gascoigne. If Gascoigne is out of the game England do not produce much in attack.

p.104 "...and is the same official who sent off Paul Gascoigne last season..."

10 June p.64 " Gazza must go"

The Guzzler dries up leaving coach Venables no option.

...England must sling out Paul Gascoigne on his earring.They must devise a way to play without this playboy relic of what might have been a great playmaker.

p.63 " Gazza must be given the boot"

p.60 " Beer we go: Mcmanaman, Gascoigne and Sheringham fail to go the distance

...contrary to reports, Mr Gascoigne did not dominate the first half of yesterdays proceedings. He knocked a couple of decent passes and entertained us with a clever piece of footwork. He looked overweight and out of condition, as well as a complete berk. Littlejohn

12 June p.70/71 " Let Gazza be supersub"

Jeff Powell believes 30 mins of magic could destroy the Scots

...chance of transforming Gascoigne from wheezing villian into national hero

...t his glimmer of encouragement for the surviving members of the Gazza Appreciation society...

plus a cartoon

14th June Timebomb

back page " Play Gascoigne don't push him over the edge warns Dalglish"

...They say there is a fine line between madness and genius and sometimes Gascoigne goes both ways. But strip away the worst of him and he's a marvellous talent.

15th June p.76 " Gazza's skill will give us the vital edge"

D.Seaman..." now he has the opportunity to become a national hero again rather than the villain.

16th Jun p. 104 " Gazza's touch of genius

...the country's most controversial player

p.103 " Gazza and Seaman are trump cards..."

p.102/3 P.Collins "No comfort in the tears of a clown"

...for vast tracts of this match Gascoigne had performed like a clown-irritating, ineffective and thoroughly irresponsible"

...he 29 year old man child who put it there was capering dementedly across the turf."

17 June p.61 " It was the moment when Paul Gascoigne fanned that last dying ember of his natural born genius into one, vital spsark of brilliance.

Ah yes, The Guzzler.

p.60 "Gazza revives dreams of glory

...He's one of the class acts of the tournament.I've never known a player to live with so much pressure.

p.48/49

Ian Woolridge double page spread. " Prat to Paragon in an instant

18 June p.6 " Not with Europhoria rife and Gazzamania rampant."

J.Powell "But Gazza is showbiz"

19th June " Party time: Gascoigne begins his celebrations

Back page

p.69 "...Gazza...was his full match of redemption..."

20th June p.77 " Gascoigne in group photo

21st June p.3 Gazza as a schoolboy plus photo " Ah, yes, Gazza was an irrepressible clown."

p.78 " Saint or Sinner but born to be a winner." headline , whole page article plus photo

...despite his excesses it is undeniable that Gascoigne is by far the most gifted footballer of his generation. A natural born thriller..."

22nd June " Real hard man fears fan powered Gazza"

ii. Case study: Tim Henman headlines during Wimbledon 1996

SUN/NEWS OF THE WORLD

HEN PARTY Tiger Tim best since Fred Perry 24/6 p25
 HENMAN EATS HIS SEED 26/6 p28/29
 TIM PLANS HEN PARTY Milligan next for Brit Hero 28/6 p44
 Tim Nukes Luke 29/6 p42
 WHAT A HENSATION 30/6 P64
 AT THE CENTRE COURT OF KING HENMAN 1/7 p33
 HEN-SOME TIM 2/7 p32
 HENMAN'S A PLUCKIN MARVEL 2/7 P30
 HEN-MIGHT 2/7 p1
 HENMAN KIT SOLD OUT IN £1.5M RUSH 3/7 p36
 TIM'LL FIX IT 3/7 p34/35
 IT'S TIM HENMANIA THE NATIONS POTTY OVER OUR HUNKY ACE 3/7 p4/5
 OUR TIM'S TERRIFIC 4/7 p9
 I WILL RAIN YET SAYS HERO TIM 5/7 p1
 YOUR TIM WILL COME MY SON 5/7 p7
 ...strawberries and cream instead of cheering our Tim 5/7 P46/47
 HENMAN OUT AS TOFFS SNUB HIM 5/7 p48

DAILY MAIL/MAIL ON SUNDAY

A BOY WHO WAS BORN TO PLAY TENNIS 26/6 p7
 IS IT AN OMEN? ENGLISH PLAYER TRIUMPHS AT WIMBLEDON 26/6 p1
 HENMAN LEADS THE GREAT BRITS 26/6 P68/69
 ILLNESS, 2 REMARKABLE WOMEN AND THE MAKINGS OF A TENNIS HERO 27/6 P78/79
 HENMAN TAKES THE UPPER HAND 29/6 P78/79
 HENMAN FINDS ROUTE TO GLORY 30/6 P102/103
 I CAN DO IT-HENMAN HAS HIGH HOPES 1/7 P60
 ADVANTAGE HENMAN, BANKING ON SUCCESS 1/7 P5
 STAR RISING OUT OF THE ORDINARY 1/7 P54/55

HENMANS DAY OF GLORY 2/7 P1
 HENMAN KEEPS THE DREAM ALIVE 2/7 P62
 HENMAN ON ROLL FOR THE FINAL 2/7 P64
 HENMAN FACING MATCH OF HIS LIFE 3/7 P64
 HENMAN QUALITIES IMPRESS MCENROE 4/7 P79
 YOUR DAY WILL COME,HENMAN HAILED 5/7 P80
 SLOW DEATH FOR HENMAN DREAM 5/7 P78/78
 HENMAN'S MATCH 6/7 P1
 WHY TIM IS AHEAD OF HIS CLASS 7/7 P94

INDEPENDENT/INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

HENMAN LEADS BRITISH CHARGE 26/6 P12
 HENMAN TRIES TO KEEP UP THE IMPETUS 29/6 P26
 WHY HENMAN BECAME AN ACE 30/6 P30
 HAPPY CAMPERS PITCH UP FOR HENMAN 1/7 P1
 HENMAN FACES HARD WORK 1/7 P14
 IS TENNIS COMING HOME? 2/7 P1
 HENMAN SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT 2/7P24
 THE MAKING OF A TENNIS HERO 3/7 P12
 HENMAN GOES ON DAY OF DEPARTURES 5/7 P28
 ALL BRITAIN CHEERS THE ALL ENGLAND HERO 7/7 P23

TELEGRAPH/SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

DAY OF VICTORY FOR BRITONS 26/6 P1
 HENMAN REALLLY EARNS 5 SET VICTORY 26/6 P44
 HENMAN AND MILLIGAN SET UP CENTRE COURT MEETING 28/6 P40
 BRITONS WITH DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO NET 29/6 P6
 OPPORTUNITY IS KNOCKING FOR IN FORM HENMAN 1/7 P6
 CENTRE COURT HAILS A BRITISH HERO 2/7P1
 COLTISH HENMAN MOVES ON WITH A SPRING IN HIS STEP 2/7P32
 ROUSING DISPLAY BY HENMAN ENDS 23YR SLUMBER 2/7 P36
 THE NEXT GENERATION SERVES NOTICE ON HENMAN 4/7 P6
 SLAZENGER ADVERT COLOUR MAGAZINE 6/7

iii. Euro '96 content data sheets

THE SUN : OCCASIONS WHEN REPORTING ON EURO 96 WAS PUBLISHED OUTSIDE THE SPORTS PAGES

DATE	page	headlines	news value
8 JUN	front page	* 'We're Ince this together'England will win vows hero Paul	star /hero
	pp.2/3	* ' On me Red,son.'Popstar Mick flies flag on day of destiny' * ' Roar for England'	nationalism/ patriotism
11 JUN	front page	*'England Aces back on the booze: nightclubbing 'til 2.20am'	*social/ moral/ stars
	pp.4/5	* ' You've got a nerve,Teddy.' Fans and MPs' slam striker for night on town.	*social /moral stars
13 JUN	front page	* ' Bang the drum for England'	*nationalism patriotism
	pp.4/5	* 'Get Yer Kits out for the lads'	
15 JUN	front page	* ' England expects every man to do his beauty.'	* nationalism patriotism
	pp.2/3	* ' Give 'Em stick England.We'll roll over Scots vow stars'	
16 JUN	sunday mag	* 'Why Gazza's little smasher turns him to mush.	* star/ personality
18 JUN	pp.3	* ' It's for Richer for Scorer.Hero Gazza to wed Shezza'	* star/ personality
19 JUN	front page	*'England 4 Ever'	* nation/success
20 JUN	front page	* ' Give 'Em a Spanking.Hero Frank flies the flag for England'	*nationalism patriotism
		* 'Gazza grabs his wedding tackle and it's OK by Sheryl'	*star info
	pp.2/3	* ' Readers and showbiz stars back lads as they march on..... If this is what a bit of boozing causes make mine a double..	* comments by England fans
	pp.4/5	* 'Our kit out and keep guide to backing Win-Gland'	nation

21 JUN front page	* 'Spanish Vanish'	*foreigners
pp2/3	*' Paint your flag on to give Spain the brush off'	
pp.4/5	*' We're all behind you .We're masking in glory'	nation unity
22 JUN front page	* ' Turner 'Em over England'	*link with ottery
pp.2	* ' England expects every man to do his booty'	nation unity
pp4/5	* ' Roar for 4 More.Come on England'	
23 JUN front page	* 'Now for Juan El of a party' Joy as heroes beat Spaniards	* national/ success
24 JUN front page	* ' It's hats wot Juan it'	
pp.2/3	* ' We've all got SUN hats on,hip hip hooray Englands got Sun hats on and we're going all the way'	
pp. 3	* ' Stars honour our boys'	*nationalism patriotism
pp.4/5	* ' Let's Blitz Fritz'- Sun sign up Jake the Lion to maul Germans	*xenophobia
25 JUN front page	* ' My England Lionheart.He's pride of country says hero Stu's wife.	* star /hero personal
pp.2/3	* ' Stu or Die.England is ev erything to him.He'd be a fine soldier...a great man fightin for his country	* star/ military links
pp.3	* ' Cheer we go'	
pp.4	* 'Simply the Chest.Big Frank flies the flag for Tels' boys	
26 JUN front page	* 'Three Lions'	
pp2/3	* 'We'll be fine in the hands of my Mr Safe:Hero Goalie David Seaman's girlfriend tells Sun of her pride'	* star/ personal story from girlfriend
pp.4/5	* ' Up and Hat 'Em .Sun Army give England a head start for victory'	
pp.7	* ' For better for Wurst'	

27 JUN	front page	* 'Lion Kings' England 1 Germany 1 Germany win on penalties	*national pride
		* 'Brave Englands penalty anguish'	
	pp.2/3	* 'Land of Hope and Roary' The LionKings	
	pp.5	* 'Lions of Gongleat. We honour the heroes with our special medal'	
<hr/>			
28 JUN	front page	* 'England hero transfer sensation'	* star
	pp.3	* 'Gazza's Goalden Wedding'	
	pp.4/5	* 'Why didn't you belt it, Son? What Gareths Mum asked after the penalty'	
<hr/>			
29 JUN	pp.17	* 'The Sun salutes Hero Teddy-Sherin -gong and Gareth South-Great'	*hero
<hr/>			
1 JULY	front page	* 'Gazza:I'll quit Britain'	*star

iv. Wimbledon news space content analysis sheets

Framework for Content Analysis : Wimbledon

The coding frame used to describe the meanings of content material for analysis and the structures of the measurements. Both measurements in cm² and phases /words used have been selected for comparative analysis.

Firstly it aims to explore the news value of Wimbledon both between papers and within the paper with regard to :

- i. the significance of Wimbledon in comparison to other news
- ii. the coverage devoted to Wimbledon in comparison to other sports
- iii. issues which give the event coverage beyond the sports pages

Secondly, it will consider the house style of each of the papers:

- i. identifying linguistic styles
- ii. nature of headlines,
- iii. % of written text to photographs

Thirdly, it will explore themes around representations of gender, ethnicity and class.

- i. proportional representation of male/female coverage in cm², both written text and photographs
- ii. qualitative discussion of textual references to female/male physical/ emotional attributes, dress and personal circumstances
- iii. qualitative discussion of textual references to different class and ethnic backgrounds and issues

Fourthly, it will focus on the construction and representation of sport stars, both in the hard news and in the sports chatter. It will identify :

- i. those sports stars who receive highest % of coverage in both written text and by photographs
- ii. a qualitative discussion of the kinds and type of coverage received with relation to constructing the stars image

The Sun	cm2 paper	cm2sport	cm2Wimb ledon	articles outside sportspages	Telegraph	total space	sport page cm	Wimbledon cm	Wimbledon beyond sports pages
Day 1	28288	7072	416	none	24-Jun	95824	31984	8299	
Day 2	28288	7956	1508	none	25	79800	13965	2730	550
Day 3	31824	9724	1105	none	26	95760	13965	2223	753
Day 4	49504	9724	995	none	27	63840	13965	3640	1085
DAy 5	45968	9724	1105	none	28	95760	17955	3104	
Day 6	42432	10608	1150	none	29	59850	17955	2240	1192
Day 7	63648	12376	935	none	30	123804	31984	5406	
Day 8	35360	9724	628	none	1-Jul	94960	27130	2541	
Day 9	28288	7956	2080	480	2	71820	11970	4666	
DAy 10	31824	7956	2414	1701	3	95760	19950	3815	
Day 11	49504	8840	432	1990	4	59850	11970	2775	520
Day 12	42432	8840	2582	557	5	91770	15960	3423	
Day 13	35360	7956	1768	none	6	59850	17955	3301	544
Day 14	70720	10608	1768	none	7	99814	31984	5278	289
Day 15	31824	7956	2890	1601	8	94960	27130	5985	416
total	587264	137020	21776	6329		1283422	305822	59426	5349
	443915	115244	21776	6329		972251	246396	59426	5349
	news space	other sports							

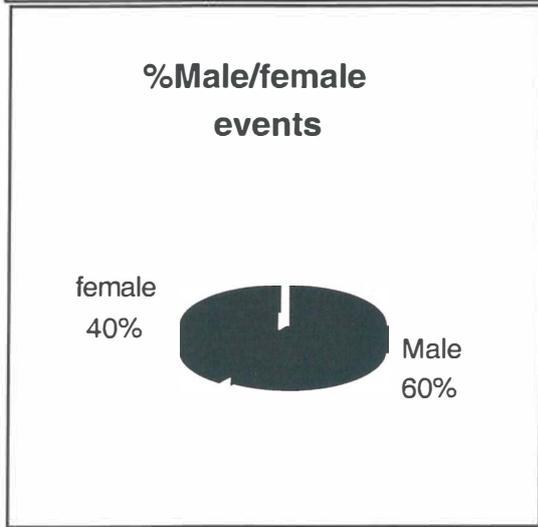
v. Atlanta Olympics content data sheets

	INDEPENDENT	TIMES	SUN	MAIL
Sports photographic images	athletics	athletics	athletics	athletics
	canoeing	basketball		canoeing
	beach volley	beach volley	beach volley	beach volley
	rythmic gym	diving		shooting
	gymnastics	gymnastics	gymnastics	gymnastics
	hockey	hockey	hockey	hockey
	fencing	sailing		judo
	handball	sailboarding		archery
	swimming	swimming	swimming	swimming
	synchro swim		synchro swim	
sport stars photographic images	Sally Gunnell	Sally Gunnell	Sally Gunnell	Sally Gunnell
	Kelly Holmes	Sheryl Swoops	Kelly Holmes	Kelly Holmes
	Svetlana Masterkov	Audrey Cooper	Sonia O'Sullivan	Diane Modahl
	Ludmila Enquist	Mo Glover	Marie-Jo Pereg	Mandy Nicholls
	Rhona Simpson	Fu Mingxia	Merlene Ottey	Rhona Simpson
	Gail Devers	Jane Sixsmith	Liz McColgan	Liz McColgan
	Lynn Simpson	Jill Atkins	Denise Lewis	Denise Lewis
	Kerri Strugg	Kerrie Strugg	Kerri Strug	Kerrie Strugg
	Merlene Ottey	Bethan Raggatt	Holly McPeak	Nicola Fairbrother
	Michelle Smith	Michelle Smith	Michelle Smith	Michelle Smith
	Gwen Torrance	Lee Laisan	Audrey Cooper	Monica Rodriguez
	Sharron Millar Mandy Davis	Susan Carr	Sharron Davies Velia	Sharon Rendle Lynn Simpson
	INDEPENDENT	MALE	FEMALE	
photographs	79	40		
weightlifting	2	0		
athletics	58	26		
tennis	3	0		
swimming	3	4		
synchro	0	1		
canoeing	0	1		
beach volleyball	0	1		
hockey	0	2		
handball	0	1		
rhythmic gym	0	1		
gym	2	2		
fencing	0	1		
cycling	3	0		
wrestling	1	0		
diving	2	0		
rowing	1	0		
sailing	3	0		
baseball	1	0		

BBC Atlanta Olympics Highlights		Day	Event	Male	Female	Name of female performer
1	400m swimming medley Basketball Weightlifting Shooting Hockey 100m breastroke -swimming			*	*	Michelle Smith Team
2	100m breastroke- swimming cycling road race 200m freestyle -swimming 72k judo Judo			*	*	Penny Heyns Jennie Longie Claudia Paul Ind
3	400m freestyle- swimming Freestyle- swimming Weightlifting Gymnastics team comp 200m freestyle- swimming Gymnastics team comp Freestyle- swimming			*	*	Michelle Smith Kerrie Strugg Michelle Smith
6	Cycling -individual pursuit Tennis singles Judo Boxing Eventing Hockey 50m freestyle- swimming 200m backstroke Sailing Gymnastics floor			*	*	Ind Ind Krisztina Egerszegi Dominique Dawes

	800m freestyle-swimming		*	Sarah Hardcastle
7	Javelin		*	Tessa Sanderson
	20k walk	*		
	200m butterfly-swimming		*	Michelle Smith
	Weightlifting	*		
	Tennis singles	*		
	300m pursuit cycling		*	Ind
	1500m freestyle-swimming	*		
	Pole Vault	*		
	Tennis	*	*	Ind
	Shooting	*		
	Eventing	*		
	Gymnastics individual	*		
8	Rowing pairs	*		
	Rowing coxless 4's	*		
	Canoeing		*	Lynn Simpson
	Hockey	*		
	100m athletics		*	Gail Devers
	Triple jump	*		
	100m athletics	*		
9	marathon		*	Liz McColgan
	110m hurdles	*		
	5000m athletics		*	Sonia O'Sullivan
	Tennis singles	*		
	Hockey		*	Team
	Boxing	*		
	High Jump	*		
	Heptathlon		*	Denise Lewis
10	400m Hurdles		*	Sally Gunnell
	110m Hurdles	*		
	10,000m athletics	*		
	Hockey	*		
	Tennis doubles	*		
	Gymnastics floor	*		
	400m athletics	*	*	Ind
	800m athletics		*	kelly Holmes
	Sailing	*		
11	Basketball	*		
	Gymnastics ind		*	Ind
	Softball		*	Team
	Weightlifting	*		

	Boxing Hockey	*	*	Team
12	Tennis Cycling 110 m hurdles 400m hurdles 800m athletics	* * *	 * *	Ind Ind
13/14	200m athletics Marathon	* *	*	Ind
			51	34



APPENDIX H: GROUP INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Group 3 - Mixed Ethnic Group

Hi I'm Waleed, I like music, computers and magazines

Hi I'm Dipti, I'm 14 and I like music.

Hi I'm Danny - I'm 14 and I like music, ... and dancing.

Well what I'd like to start to talk to you about today is to go back to the summer of sport that you might remember that started with Euro 96 back in June/ July 95, and I know that you all have mixed involvement and interest in this area of TV and newspapers, but hopefully we can start to talk about it... and things you're interested in as well. In what ways would you say you were keen football fans? Maybe you can...

No, not really...(m)

Definitely, I actually do support Man United and I quite like the players in it as well, so you fancy them (f)

Most of the time cos I just support Man U cos you know there's guys in it, but that's part of it as well. (f)

Right ok, do you play football, any of you?

No (m)

No (f)

Occasionally with my mates, but not regularly. (m)

I don't really find football interesting, but like, Euro 96 you couldn't miss it. Because it was in this country there was more media hype about it, and because England did so well more people tuned in just to see it ... the kind of spirit. (m)

Do you normally watch football? You're talking about Euro 96 but would you normally watch football on the television?

No (m)

No. It depends who's playing actually. If Man U are playing then I'll watch it definitely.(f)

Right. Do you prefer playing or watching football /sport on television?

I don't really like playing it, but I prefer to watch it. (m)

I prefer to play it, because on TV it's a bit boring, I don't actually like the game itself.

It depends what sport it is though, doesn't it? (m)

No, because it was summer and there were three sporting events, I'd rather have just gone out instead of staying in and watching TV, cos it was like hot weather and everything.

Yeah, in the summer we used to go down to Clayhall Park to play tennis, some of us. (f)

Let's concentrate on Euro 96 for a while - which matches did you watch?

England v Germany.

Yeah that was the best one. I had to watch that one.

I just watched the England matches,.

So that's how you selected, you looked to see when the English games were on and just switched on at that point.

But they did like crop up I mean you switched to channel 4, right I've had enough of this and you go into channel 3 and the same thing's on. It's really annoying. (f)

And if it wasn't the actual games, there was stuff about it,... (m)

It is a big deal, but it just gets quite annoying being always on TV. It like dominated. (f)

So what other things do you think you missed out on as a result of Euro 96 that you would've preferred to have watched?

Well we got to see Eastenders for ... (m)

No that was in the Olympics ... (m)

No, but, Euro 96, I didn't mind watching it but, I'm not missing it. (m)

But you would've rather had your Eastenders programmes on at the same time. So were the schedules changed?

Yeah.

Was that frustrating, cos it put your normal Euro programmes out?

It was the content of the programmes as well, like, instead of having the normal things it revolved around football more than it did before. (m)

No, but it's like, ok, this time you're sitting, and one bit you do homework and then you go for a shower, and that, and it was all completely changed. It's like, ok I can't go now cos this

is going to be on, and it was like that. It was annoying though, but was quite good watching it. (f)

Did anything stop you from watching? Say that there was a game that you particularly wanted to watch, were there other things that you would have given higher priority to doing?

If you want to watch TV, you base your day around that, kind of thing. Like if you've got to watch to watch a programme, you do your stuff before that, you go out before that,...

Or you tape it. (f)

Well I found I didn't have any choice, cos it was on all the time, and my family wouldn't turn it off. (m)

Yeah, my dad.. oh no! (f)

I was lucky in a way, cos I had cable so there was a lot of stuff on at the same time, but it was still, cos most of the stuff on cable was repeats anyway, so, it's a bit annoying. (m)

So did the whole family watch generally when the England games were on?

Yeah (all 3)

Was that do you think, was that a good thing to do?

Yeah, because it's supporting your country, isn't it?

Yeah. but I mean, before football, it was the Olympics, wasn't it, and that was quite good, I quite enjoyed that cos you got all the different sports on and that, and you get to watch all the sump wrestlers. It was funny. (f)

No, the Olympics, it was on too late at night, and I was too tired to watch it. (m)

No I watched it.

.... especially that opening ceremony. I thought it was brilliant, it really was lovely. (m)

What did you like about that?

It was amazing to see all the different countries get together

All the crowds

I liked the way, when they got Mohammed Ali to talk to us, that was good.

And because I'm into singing, all the different singers ...

And I thought the way they did it was brilliant, must have been the Barcelona one

What do you think the opening ceremony was all about, why do they have that?

To show that it's important ...

I think it's a bit too commercial now, though.

In what ways?

It's going away from the sports bit now, it's more like sponsorship(m)

What do you think the Olympics is really about then?

The six circles(f)

What do you think they represent then?

I don't know, I don't know a lot about it. (m)

Different continents, a coming together. (m)

Yeah, working together as one group. But I mean, it's nice to see when someone you want to win wins, but when they lose, you think, no, I didn't watch that, it's all right. (f)

So going back to Euro 96, who else did you watch with?

There were times when I went out of the room, my family was glued to the TV, when normally they'd be doing other stuff, like my mum'd normally be cleaning, my dad'd go to work - there was one day when my dad didn't go to work, stayed at home to watch Euro 96, which I thought was a bit sad. (m)

Me, my mum, my brother and my dad have never sat down to watch Euro 96, never. It's always been bits and bits, but when Eastenders is on, we're all together and watch it. My mum's nearly always off doing something, my brother's watching it so I have to watch it, but it's never like, altogether. (f)

I basically watched it, I was either watching it or my mum was watching it, most of the time. I didn't try and switch on the TV and watch it. It was just on .(m)

But after going to the pub, you could see little kids with t-shirts on and

Do you think that only happens with little kids, or ...?

Well, every magazine you look in there's like this Bears, with the Euro 96 shirts on.

I noticed that my friends stayed in more while it was on.

But it was good while it lasted, it was good.

Have any of you bought any products of Euro 96?

No (all 3)

Just coca cola. (m)

But the thing is, after the tennis was on, my brother really got into tennis, and he went to Redbridge sports centre, and started tennis lessons there, and he goes there twice a week, and he wants to be a professional tennis player now. (f)

There was too much sport on in the summer, I think. Too much, with the tennis, the Olympics and Euro 96. I just got annoyed. (m)

Annoying for you, would you think?

Yeah. So, I didn't watch much of the tennis, cos usually I watch Wimbledon all the time. (m)

So do you think that was a bad effect of Euro 96, that it actually led straight on into Wimbledon?

Yeah.

I reckon Wimbledon wasn't as heightened as it was last year because of Euro 96 overshadowed it a lot. (m)

What I think about it is that people who like sport, they have a lot of chance to see sport, but people like us who prefer to watch a good old soap opera, we've got that all the time, and like, people who like sports, they've got it like, I think it's Wednesdays and Saturdays.

But you've got Sky Sports (m)

But people who haven't got Sky, so they don't have much of a chance, so this is for them...(m)

So you think there should be more sport on television?

No. (f)

I think there's enough sport on the telly. (f)

So do I. (m)

I think they should balance it out more. Like with BBC - when they've got sports on one side, then they have the other channel which doesn't have. (m)

I mean, you've got the Match of the Day, Saturday night, is it? You've got that, which is quite good actually, depends who's playing though, but I would watch it. Not always, but you know (f)

Specially when Man United's playing

Yeah, but it's quite good watching it, you know. I mean you get to know, I mean, I've never really known how football, just kick a ball anywhere, but when I started watching it, how you, you know, where you, and all the rules. (f)

What else do you do while you're watching? I mean I know you don't appear to be that keen on some of the sports on television, so if it's actually on when you're in the room, how do you watch it - do you get on with other things,?

Yeah, normally do my homework. (m)

Normally sit there reading, something like a magazine. I'm not paying full attention to it. Unlike my brother, he'd be there glued to the TV, I'd be like reading something else. (m)

It's just in the background some of the time.

Yeah, it's like, you're working and there's just something there.

So I just usually tune in when my brother starts shouting. So, I know something's about to happen, but. (m)

So what matches did you really prefer from Euro 96 of those that you saw - was there one that was really good?

Germany v England. I was really upset there (f)

The penalty shoot-out (m)

I was so upset. (f)

My whole family were there, we were all watching it. We all came into the room, kind of thing, and when they missed, (f)

it was like someone had died, it was like our whole family was nearly in tears.(m)

Yeh. (f)

I was so upset, I thought they have to win. I mean, you look back to the war as well, don't you, with Germany and that, and think, oh it's not fair ... show 'em. (f)

I could hear people outside my house screaming, that's when Euro 96 ended for me, when England lost, I didn't bother watching nothing else, that was it. (m)

I loved the Olympics though, it really, really got me there...them Sumo Wrestlers. I don't know why ..it was just so funny watching those big fat people.... and I like javelin as well, that's really good. (f)

England did crap in the Olympics, which was disappointing. (m)

Why do you think that happened?

Because in this country sport is kind of, in the back seat, kind of thing, there's not enough places that play sport and stuff. (m)

Yeh. It's very true.(m)

Do you think it should have a higher profile then?

Yeah.

And who should be responsible for doing that?

Government. Instead of they making all these centres for excellent sport, they should encourage the whole country to play sport, like facilities for anyone, free facilities. not like private sports clubs and stuff. (m)

Or, you know, they could like, I mean they had Euro 96 for elders, for adults and that, but you should've had something for kids as well, there'd've been loads of kids really interested in it, wouldn't they. Could have a small game now and then for them. cos they get really excited watching it thinking, oh I wish I could be a part of that. If you've got a good skill might as well show it off, while you've got it. (f)

They've got under 21 teams (m)

Under 21! (m)

When I turned on the TV in June, they actually said that our country's not that bothered about sport, but we are, but not as much as other countries. We do well for the size of our country, but there is potential - the government doesn't do enough to encourage everyone, it's just that if you find someone who's skilled, if you raise the standard in the whole country, obviously it's going to be better for those people. (m)

I mean everyone's good at doing something in their own way, I mean Europe did loads and loads of activities in the Olympics this year, you had the diving, you had the swimming - it was really good, I really watching the Olympics, I didn't really enjoy watching Euro 96. (f)

Yeah, but the Olympics is on too late or too early in the morning cos of the time difference, so that was a bit annoying having to stay up to watch it , or in the morning or whatever. (m)

Did you select particular events or activities to watch from the Olympics, like did you look at the schedule for the week?

They didn't really have it, did they? Did they have a schedule? (f)

Yeah they did. (m)

No, I just turned it on, if I liked it I watched it. (f)

What were the best parts of the Olympics then?

The divers ... (f)

Yeah the swimming was good. I don't know why, I just watched the gymnastics. I just tuned in cos I saw some fit birds and I just kept on watching it. (m)

I think that the Olympics is better than Euro 96 cos you're concentrating on loads of different things instead of just one thing (m)

There's like a sport to suit everyone kind of thing (m)

Did you feel motivated by watching anything to go out and compete or try out?

No, not even the sumos - just jumping up and down like hitting each other. I thought, I'd have to put on weight to do that. I ain't going to put on no weight to go and do that ... (f)

I heard that you're not allowed near the ring or anything

Oh that's good in it, we're all sexist. but I mean, some of it was good though, I really enjoyed it.

That's another thing With Euro 96, coming back to that, I remember coming into school and normally it's the boys going on about football, but everybody, including the girls was going on about it. (m)

Why do you think that was then? I mean why do boys normally go on about it and not so much girls?

Cos it's not really emphasised in girls programmes like ... and stuff, so they don't really bother with it kind of thing. When Euro 96 happened it was more for everyone, apart from just the boys. (m)

Do you think that's the way it should be? Do you think girls' magazines should actually portray more about sports and Euro 96?

No, I wouldn't like it if I picked up Sugar and I've got this stuff on football. (f)

Do you buy magazines the 3 of you? What magazines do you buy?

I buy loads of magazines. I mean, I get £15 a week (m)

No to tell you the truth, Danny must be the one boy I know that buys all magazines, (f) everything like Pink, everything. I mean I don't know any boys that do that

I have to but them because I'm so into that media .. (m)

I buy magazines, I buy computer ones, and I do buy I dunno, I just do, cos when I was younger my older sister, she used to buy them and so now I just like reading them like that and so occasionally I do buy them or I just read my sister's. (m)

What do you get from magazines, I mean where do you buy them?

I don't really buy them for the posters cos I think it's a bit tacky, but what I really do like is the gossip and everything cos apparently ... (m)

And the fashion (f)

No, no I don't. (m)

I buy it for the fashion. (f)

She buys it for the fashion, she still doesn't look any different (m)

And also I want to go into singing hopefully, and like different pop stars etc, but one thing I did find was that when it was Euro 96 and the Olympics, they still didn't have pictures about it. (m)

Some of the magazines did, like the computer magazines they had Leo logo? (m)

Just little bits of it, not much, cos they know that people don't really exactly like that so much.

And some of the other magazines, my little sister buys them as well, they had more football stuff in it than usual. Cos they wouldn't have before but cos it's Euro 96 they had to include something about it. (m)

Was Wimbledon or the Olympics included in the magazines?

Not as much as Euro 96, especially not Wimbledon. (m)

Do you think it should've been?

No. You had enough on TV let alone go to a shop, buy a magazine, open the front page: Wimbledon, Euro 96. I think you should get away from it. (f)

I think they should have something on Wimbledon, cos we did quite well in that, Tim Henman came and we did quite good in that and they should have some more stuff about him. Cos it was about the first time in about 20 years that someone has reached that position. (m)

What magazines do you read? Do you buy magazines?

Everyone... Sugar, Bliss, everything. But I like the way they actually make you involved in things. They have competitions to make you involved in things, I mean even with sport, you open it and that, and oh, try being like this for a day, that for a day, it's really good. (f)

So is there a lot of sport in the magazines that you buy?

No, not a lot, it depends what kind of magazine, no actually. You've got loads of like gossip and that in it, but not a lot of sport.

Why is that, do you think?

No idea. Why? Depends, but like you don't really have a sport magazine for yourself, do you? (f)

But like in our media-studies class at the moment, we're making up our own magazines and like we find that there's not that many sport magazines. Well, there's no sport magazines for girls and there's hardly any for boys, well, the odd football magazine, but hardly anything apart from football. (m)

But, yeah, there are magazines for boys, it's just, like Reno and GQ (m)

No, they're more like fashion and all that. (m)

Yeah, but they're still there, and like if a boy wants to get them they're there, but I'm saying, depends what people are really interested in it? Because you get a certain amount of money to spend on something, and boys and girls are different in what they like to spend their money on. Like girls like buying a magazine, like £2.50, whereas a boy would think that's a bit (m)

Why's that do you think, why's there that difference between you ?

Cos the boys don't like being sociable. (f)

No, cos, for boys, right, for girls, if you buy a magazine, they find what's the gossip and stuff, they can talk about that in their socials, but boys don't really talk about that sort of thing, do they, so they buy things which interests them, or do things which interest them. (m)

Do you think they would talk about it more if there was a magazine that was for girls or boys of your age? If there was one that covered things that both of you were interested in?

Yeah (f)

Magazines appeal to people because of what they're interested in, people don't buy magazines so that they get interested in something. (m)

No, if I bring a magazine into school, although the boys take it off me, and they're like where's the problem page, and I'm like, calm down. (f)

But boys wouldn't go out and buy it straightaway because they think, oh this is a girls' magazine, oh girls buy this sort of thing. (m)

I'm just going to wait till someone brings it in my class. (f)

I must say, I've never ever read Sugar or anything like that, but Smash Hits, Top of the Pops (m)

Yeah, that's for boys and girls (f)

That's for boys and girls, but the fact is more girls do buy them. (m)

... those types of magazines, but further than that, I bet you no boy buys them, but maybe Smash Hits and like .. cos they're more gossip, and like as soon as you see a boy buying Sugar or something like that, you think of them as a sissy. (m)

Yeah, you never see someone doing that. (m)

But if there was a sports magazine on the market that was for both boys and girls, do you think that would be popular?

Yeah, probably, I wouldn't buy it, but probably. (f)

I wouldn't buy it. I don't know, I'm not really into sports, I mean, ok, fair enough you gotta play it, you gotta do it in school. (f)

I don't think it would, if there was a magazine like that for girls and boys, I don't think it'd do that well. (m)

I like being active (f)

Cos girls and boys opinions and views are totally different. (m)

No, I wouldn't want to do football and that. My mum goes to aerobics and I go to the gym 2 or 3 times a week, and I quite enjoy that, but I wouldn't like to do football and that, I go to the gym and that's it. (f)

See, different sports appeal to different people and it's the same, like different sports appeal to girls as appeal to boys. (m)

Did you feel proud to be British when you were watching all these different sporting events on television?

Not when I was watching the Olympics, no. (m)

Actually I didn't mind, you know, it's just like everyone going together and being together and that, ok if you lose ok, you're bummed, but you know everything's all right. (f)

No, Euro 96 was good, I think that lifted the spirit of the country, and I was proud to be British then when England were winning. (m)

Not when they're losing, though, we're not British. (f)

Did you see any players or sports stars from your own sort of backgrounds, I mean obviously you come from different ethnic backgrounds yourself?

There's not many Asian people in the sports, there's none. (m)

No (f)

There's one Asian football player, isn't there? I mean, that's it. And there's not many Asians in athletics or nothing. (m)

Why do you think that is?

I've got no idea. (f)

Just to do with the culture or something (m)

Or, you know, the countries. I mean, you know, you go to India and it's not a wealthy country, I mean you can't exactly have loads of people going into sports. I mean, they haven't exactly got enough money to give people food, let alone build up a sports centre. It's probably like that. (f)

British Asian culture as well, like in this country, Asian children's parents want them to have a proper job, and their education .. (m)

Yeah, they don't see sports as a proper job. (m)

They are sporty there though, cos my cousin, he's an Indian in Bombay, and he loves Chicago Bulls? and Orlando Magic - for some reason he knows about them. And he loves basketball as

well, dad's going the end of January... my mum bought him a basketball, so he'll probably like that, he loves basketball. (f)

Yeah, I know, I'm not saying, I'm saying though in England as well Asian parents are more into education. (m)

They value education more than sports. I mean, I'm not Asian but I think they still put that, I know because of my cousin's married to an Asian and they have 2 children, and they do, and they do value education more than sport. (m)

No, sports is like recreational to them, yeah, like do sports in your time to relax and stuff, but as a career, no. (m)

No, actually my mum's all right, my brother wants to be a tennis player (f)

Yeah your mum's all right but there are Asian parents who think like that. (m)

Yeah, I know what you mean, my mum goes yeah do it, it's up to you what you're going to be like. (m)

It's changing now though with people our age, so you might see in like 10 or 5 years time more Asian sports stars, like this ... But at the moment there isn't, there's a few Asian sports role models but, the biggest one is Prince Naseem and he's encouraged more Asian people to do boxing. (m)

No, I don't really like that, I hate boxing hitting people on the heads(f)

I like boxing, I think (m)

Cos we had to do an essay in English about it (f)

I reckon they should wear safety helmets kind of thing, things over their heads.(m)

And wrestling, no it's too violent. (f)

No, I think boxing is all right because, it's a good sport, people get into it, it's aggressive, you let out your aggression, and afterwards you can just let it go. (m)

No! You get injured. (f)

No, but then people watch that on the TV and then let out their aggression in copying it.

But if they actually want to copy it they'll go to a sports club or something, and do what the boxers do. (m)

It's like my brother ,he sees it on the TV, gets up and starts punching. I'm thinking, you know, they're giving bad roles (f)

If children watch the Power Rangers, they're going to go out and imitate the Power Rangers. (m)

They do, that's just the thing. Nobody can help that, that's where the parents get involved and like help them out. Like say if they're interested in boxing, can't they go to an actual club. (m)

Do you think people do go out, do you think people your age go out and copy things that they've seen on the television?

Actually when you get to our age, you think I aint gonna do that, it's quite immature, but younger kids, yeah, probably. you watch wrestling, you know, even sumo wrestling, you see them jumping on top of each other, and they just go out, and think, oh no it's all right, I've seen it on TV. If I saw it on TV it's all right. (f)

I think the fake wrestling is wrong, like the WWF, cos the children watch that, it's like the whole storyline around it as well, like, the undertaker etc, and they try to imitate that, and then some of the moves there are impossible to do properly, and if you do them properly, they're really lethal, but as they're doing it as acting, it doesn't affect them. So when the kids imitate it, it can be really lethal. So I think WWF and American wrestling and that are stupid. (m)

Scarumms?, and I'm thinking get this off the TV and my brother's just watching it.

It's like a soap opera really, WWF, cos they have the title storyline with the characters all hating each other (f)

All coming in ..

And gladiators (f)

It's ridiculous, like they've got this gay wrestler about, called Golddust, and I was watching it and they were stereotyping this gay wrestler as like he was trying to snog the rest of them and touching them up, and I was like, what the hell is this, this is worse than Eastenders.

Like, you get people complaining about the gay kissing in Eastenders, what about this? (m)

So do you think there is a parallel between soap opera and sport on television?

Yeah. (all 3)

In what ways are there similarities then, I mean you've obviously highlighted some of them, can you see other ways?

The life of sport stars in the newspapers and tabloids as well, they're like everywhere, like Paul Gascoigne hitting his wife (m)

Do you think it's important that we know about things like that?

Yeah, I think it is. (f)

Yeah, not their personal life, like if they were having a break-up, then probably I wouldn't want to know about it. (f)

What happened with Paul Gascoigne, yeah, and him hitting his wife, that was just something terrible. They let him back in to the football, yeah, and nothing happens (m)

Yeah, it's got nothing to do with us (f)

But still, he's a role model kind of thing for young children, and when they see that what are they thinking. (m)

That's what I hate, because I would not want to be famous, I would not want to be found out (f)

But people should know about that, that sports stars aren't exactly brilliant, they're really human. (m)

Yeah, everybody's human, everyone knows that, but people look up to them so much. (m)

Yeah but there are stars who are worth looking up to, like Michael Jordan (m)

Why do you look up to him?

Because he hasn't done anything like bad, and he's good at his sport, and working with his children and stuff, and that's someone you look up to. But like Paul Gascoigne hits his wife, aggressive and everything. (m)

It's not really of no interest, people are interested in it, but like I was saying to her the other day, why do we want to know about Paul Gascoigne hitting his wife, or Pamela Anderson getting a divorce, I mean those are things of no interest whatsoever, it's just people being absolutely nosy, and it's nothing to do with us. (m)

Yeah but if nobody wanted to know about it then people wouldn't write about it, but because people do want to know about it, they write about it, and they put it in the media. (m)

The thing is, right, they film the actors, the sports people, and all of them are really snobby.

You think they're lovely, you think they're all right, but when you meet them, they're like, oh go away, I just want to do .. it depends. It's just the personality. You just think they're good-looking, they play football, when you meet them, you think, of forget it, I don't like them. It depends what they're really like inside. (f)

I think they've got a responsibility to put on a face, otherwise why do it? Cos if you're a star, if you're acting, that's part of the job. because then people will go out and watch a film, and if you're rude to them, what's the point of it? (m)

How about sports stars then, do you see them as actors and actresses?

No, I think they're just good at sport and should keep it that way. (f)

No, but I don't think they should just deliberately set a bad example. (m)

Yeah, I mean they get so aggressive on the playing fields sometimes as well. And my brother's like, look at him, look at him, and my little cousin, watching it, going, oh this is brilliant, it's going to be punch-up in a minute. (f)

Would you copy anything like that you saw on the television?

No, not at our age it's not worth it, but at a younger age. (m)

Yeah, probably. (f)

Like Vinnie Jones, who plays for Wimbledon, he's hardly a brilliant example, is he, and children imitate that on the football field. (m)

I think it just shows you how important football is to this country, cos .when Michael Harding died a few months ago, for instance, the whole country just comes to like a standstill, like as if it was the Queen or something, rather than a football match. (m)

Do you admire Gazzer? You've spoken about him a few times.

No, I think.. I used to (f)

I thought that it was just totally stupid, and I thought that the England football team encouraged it, they should've banned him from football, done something.... but they're thinking more of success, setting an example. (m)

I mean, they look at these football teams and they get people into arguments - he supports this club, I support this club, they're playing against each other, yeah. We lose, start getting into an argument, start hitting each other. It's like that.. (f)

Something like that happened the other day, near my friend's house, just cos of football, had a fight in the park. (m)

Yeah, just cos of football. I mean, what have they got to do with you, it's just a club.

It's just people are passionate about it (f)

Oh, they're gonna win, they're gonna win (f)

I tell you what I love, I love it when people say, oh we fought blah blah, and they're playing for us, it's not we, they have, you were just merely watching it, you're the spectator. (m)

Who likes Tim Henman ? What do you think of Tim Henman?

I think he's a good sports star. Like before he was so famous, he hit a girl with a tennis ball or something in the leg, but nobody's really mentioning that again because his success is overshadowing what he did in the past. (m)

Why do you think that is?

Cos people don't want to know about that. People just want to know about the good things. (m)

They should an interview, a really truthful interview. I mean some of these pop stars ... and I love the way they say things, I heard them interviewing Peter Andre the other day, and they go what do you feel about what you've done in your life (f)

Yeah, but he's a creep (m)

No, but he goes you shouldn't look at what you've achieved, you should just see what you're going to achieve. (f)

But interviews on TV are so false, because they just come up with the answer straightaway... (m)

I never actually believe what sports say for one thing, and what pop stars say until I've them say it in their own words. Like I'm a big fan of Madonna, and I didn't believe she was having a baby, but until I heard her saying in an interview that she was, then I didn't believe it. You can never take notice of anyone. (m)

No, but if you're like a star, and you cannot keep your private life to yourself, it's really annoying. Cos, I mean, someone is going to know about you, somehow, and you never know, the whole country will know about you soon. (f)

What about stars from your own background? We started talking about ethnic backgrounds, do you try to identify with people from your own backgrounds, do you think that's important, or does it not bother you?

Yeah, I think that to a certain extent it is. (m)

I don't know if I would ... cos like now young children have seen Prince Naseem about boxing, making it big, it gives them hope as well, thinking, oh we can do that as well. But there's not many black? people anyway in the media, like on TV you don't see many of them, like on radio (m)

Yeah, that's right. My mum goes to me, you know, you're gonna go out and get knocked back cos of your culture .. , and I go no I won't, if you've got journalistic skills? you'll do it, you'll get there. If they want publicity, you can't just have one culture on the TV, you have got like an Asian news-reader, haven't you? (f)

Yeah, that's like what Asian people have fitted into, like categories, Asian people thought of as like dignified and stuff like that, and cos of their culture, on TV that's how they're perceived, as a news reader and stuff like that, dignified jobs. Don't see them everywhere, just news-reader and that's it. (m)

Yeah, I want to be a journalist. (f)

I wonder if like for instance like black people, cos there's Ian Wright like black people that are told that they're worthless. So, I think that's good. (f)

I think that black people, Asian people have got many people to look up to. Cos if you've got more people to look up, it gives you, it makes you achieve more. (m)

How can we improve that then do you think?

Put more people as the leaders from different cultures. (f)

Yeah but the thing is, people see Asian people as one thing, like corner shop owners
Like as doctors

Stereotype of Asian people. .. we're not getting on TV, and ... that stereotyping's lost before we can go on TV and stuff. (m)

I want to be a famous journalist when I grow up. I want to go out there, collect the news, give it to someone and tell them to read it out. And then my name gets into it as well, like this is the person who went there. You get to travel, it's really good. I wouldn't mind, I'd love to work in the media. (f)

Good. Great, thanks very much.

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APPENDIX I: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Nazia

In what ways did you enjoy doing your diaries?

Yeah, I did. It was a sport, a sport I enjoyed like Euro 96. I was very much involved, the playing and winning of the games, so it was interesting - the newspapers and articles and things, recording how I felt, if I was happy or sad, I did enjoy doing them.

Good. Your main interests at the time, a year ago now, your main interests were reading, TV, swimming and music. Is this still the same?

Yeah.

In what ways do you see watching TV important in your life?

I don't know.

I think it's a way of getting away, like if you watch a soap story about someone's life, like I was just now. I watch Tv quite a lot, and the soaps. It's like a past-time.

Do you think it would make any difference to you if you had your own TV?

Yeah. I've got my brother who wants to watch his cartoons all the time. It's really hard if you want to watch something you've got to come to a compromise. Sometimes you miss one of your favourite programmes.

Yes, that's what I was going to ask you, do you find family viewing a problem where you want to watch different things? How do you come to an agreement?

Depends. If it's during the day, I'll be watching, and my mum or dad wants to watch a classic or something we usually our times, but sometimes it co-incides with my brother.

You've got Sky, in what ways does that improve your viewing?

It keeps me round the telly longer.

You watch more hours?

Yeah, it does. I can't imagine life without it though. It's quite a challenge deciding what to watch. (laughter)

So you switch about from channel to channel?

Yeah, Yeah.

Any preferences what you watch on Sky?

MPV, The Box - lots really.

Yes, that's funny you should say that, you don't seem to have one favourite programme - a whole range of them. Is there one that you like best?

Sunset Beach on Channel 5.

Ok, what's good about that?

I dunno, I watched it from the first episode. I get my mum to tape it everyday so I've just continued with it, I thought it was good. Yeah.

So it's good, it's a new one. Take Home and Away, you mentioned that several times. Are you still into that?

No, not much.

Ok. Let's take the one you've just been talking about. How involved do you get in the storyline?

A lot, yeah. I get pretty much involved.

Do you ever cry?

Yeah, I do.

In what ways do you discuss those episodes, do you chat about them with your mum, for example? Friends at school?

Yeah, I do. My friends make fun of me for watching so much of it - like American type drama. But sometimes they watch it, so ... My mum watches it so I can talk with her about the storylines.

Do you think it's important to talk about it?

Yeah, I do. It's a bit annoying you can't talk to your friends about it, but at least I've got my mum, that's ok.

It wouldn't stop you watching it just because your friends take the mickey out of you?

No.

Ok, good. Your favourite star during your diaries was Dean Cain.

Yeah, he still is.

Ok, what's special about him?

I think he's gorgeous. I like his character, his glasses, and he's cool. Clark Kent, yeah.

What do you know about him?

Everyone thinks he's getting a bit old but I still think he's ok.

He's still your favourite, though a year on. How long has he been your favourite?

Since he started in Superman, about 4 years ago.

You also have a range of sports stars, you listed quite a few. You mentioned Michael Joraan. What does he mean to you?

Oh, he's probably the best one ...

Probably it's footballers now ...

Eric Cantona was, but he left Man United

There's Alan Shearer ...

You mentioned Jamie Rednap. Is he still special to you?

He was more because he was good-looking, but he plays for Liverpool, which is like the enemy team. You've got to be careful.

Ok. McManaman?

He's my favourite England star. Yeah.

You've still got his shirt?

The England one. Not the Liverpool one.

Shaquille O'Neill?

Yeah. I've not seen much of him these days.

Do you think they're heroes?

Yeah, especially the England players after Euro 96.

Why?

Because they did pretty well, even they didn't win, the whole country got behind them.

Is there any reason why you didn't list any female sports stars?

I never thought about it that way. No, there aren't any female football stars or female basketball stars, so

Do you think there's no famous female stars in those sports?

Yeah ... maybe if there were more female stars I would know them more, purely it's the sports I follow, not because they're male or female.

You listed a number of favourite sports. Tennis, volleyball and badminton. Would you say you were a sporty person?

No. If there was one I had to choose, it would probably be one of those, but ...

Do you take part in sport in your time?

Yeah, I do. To keep yourself more challenged, fit and healthy. Yeah, it is, but I don't do it myself.

What would you choose to do in your spare time instead of sport?

I read a lot, even during my exams. I read a lot. I get pretty involved in the characters. I do read a lot. I've got a big collection of books.

What about watching sport on television. What ones do you choose to watch?

Football, basketball.

What about your favourite sports to play, do you watch them on TV? Tennis, volleyball, badminton?

Not really. I haven't watched any of the Wimbledon yet.

Why's that?

I don't know. I've listened to some on the radio, like when they up-date it

What about your favourite sports star from the sports you like to play? Tennis, volleyball, badminton.

Tim Henman. I think he's good actually. He's doing pretty well now. We might have some sort of hope for a champion.

Badminton. Volleyball?

I don't really follow them that much. They're more sports I play.

Let's cover Euro 96 now. It's obviously a year ago but let's see what you remember.

I've got them on all tapes.

Have you watched them since?

Yes, I have a couple of times. The tug games most - it was pretty amazing.

Yes, you watched about 26 hours of Euro 96. What encouraged to do that?

The more better we played, the more I watched it. I was pretty annoyed actually. I remember the England/ Holland game we had to go to the airport, and as we were passing Wembley we had our flag out, cheering, and that's when we were scoring. It was amazing 4-1, not we really expected though. Yeah, it was really good.

What do you still remember about it that's important to you?

Getting through to play against Germany. yeah. That was really important, the big matches I was really nervous. I don't know why, especially the tug v Germany one.

You mentioned you were really happy when Stuart Pearce got a goal and you started to cry?

Yeah, I did. I was really happy cos I remember that one when he missed in the World Cup. That really upset me. I was only young, but I had all my uncles and cousins round the TV with me. And now that he got the goal I was pretty happy. It was a really good feeling and remembering what it was like with them, my cousins. So I called them up in Canada to tell them as they've all moved away. They were pretty amazed.

What about when England lost? How did you feel then?

I cried my eyes out. I sat there and cried, and my dad was away on holiday and he called and said they can't do well anyway. And then on TV they put that song on Walk Away and that was worse, showing the clips of it, that was really upsetting.

How did you watch it? Did you really concentrate on the game or were you doing other things?

No, I was pretty much concentrating on the game. I didn't do much else.

You watched quite a lot on your own. Was there any reason for that?

No, I mean, my brother's not that much involved with football, not wrapped up like.. My mum, my dad was away mostly on business that's why I watched on my own. My friends weren't so into it.

Do you think it's a good atmosphere on your own? Or do you think it would've been better with more?

I think I could have got pretty distracted with other people. I prefer it without, or maybe one other.

Did you find a lot of your friends were chatting about it the next day?

Mm.. You heard more from boy friends.

Why was that do you think?

I dunno. The boys were more..

Do you think that you were unusual?

Yeah, the boys were mostly making fun of me. Here comes McManaman girl. I didn't mind, let them do what they want, as long as I was happy.

What was the best about watching?

The goals. You know Alan Shearer - I think he scored every match.

And the worst?

Germany.

Why was that?

Because they win everytime, it's really annoying. I think we had a chance as well, nobody believes me, a couple of chances, a couple of goals, I think we could have won it.

You said you really liked quite a lot of players. Who was your favourite?

Steve McManaman, Alan Shearer, Jamie Rednapp, Darren Anderton - yeah, Teddy Sheringham.

What do they mean to you now? Do they still mean the same to you now?

I wish I could see more of them - like Anderton, Mcmanaman haven't played much. Glenn Hoddle doesn't put them on much.

What about Gazza?

Yes, he is pretty important. My dad doesn't like him much.

Why's that?

He thinks he's a bit of a, you know, a show-off. He goes a bit over the top. I think he's got the skills though.

How does he compare to these players you like?

I don't know. He's got a lot of skill, more than other players, yeah I think he'd come pretty high up because of those skills. But not as high as Alan Shearer, Teddy Sheringham.

Are there other things that make him lower down then?

He's not as good-looking as the younger ones.

Is that important then?

Yeah, no. Not really when it comes down to it. More in a fun kind of way. The reason for liking Mcmanaman apart from his looks is he's pretty good at getting the ball across from the wings.

Do you think Gazza's a hero to young people like yourself?

Yeah, not even to young, vene to a older, he's a hero. You look in the crowd and see people with the same haircut.

Let's focus in on Wimbledon. You watched about 10 hours of Wimbledon.

Did I?

Can you explain why that was? What you remember about it?

No, I can't. No, I was pretty focussed on Euro 96. I remember watching Tim Henman a couple of times. I can't remember much else.

You mention tennis is one of your favourite sports to play. Does watching Wimbledon help in any way, encourage you to play?

Yeah, it does in a way. Yeah, it helps but I didn't take much in. The way people do backhands.

Did you try it on court?

Yeah, I did a bit.

Did it work?

Kind of (laughter). I suppose I've got different talent for it.

Is it important to know about Wimbledon and what's going on during that fortnight?

Yeah, even now I'm not that interested in it, I try to know who's winning, cheering them on.

Why do you think that is?

I don't know. I'm pretty much of a "our country winning" kind of person, so who's playing for England is important.

So you particularly follow England players?

Yeah, I do.

What about your friends talking at school about it? You mentioned it happening with Euro 96, was it the same for Wimbledon?

Not really, you might see it once or twice, but it's definitely not the same as the football matches.

Any reason for that?

Generally the lads are more into football. If they do talk about tennis, it's not in the same way, like with football they have to reenact every goal on the pitch after a match.

You mentioned liking Monica Seles and Steffi Graf. Tell me about them.

Yeah, I think they're pretty good. They're not British though, are they? I think they're pretty good players. Monica Seles won, didn't she? I think she's good.

No, not last year. and Tim Henman, what do you think about him?

I think he's a good player. I think he's very good. Last year he was in for the first time at Wimbledon.

Tell me what you feel like watching a game at Wimbledon

Oh golly it was exciting.

Do you think it would be better to be there?

Yeah, I think it would be more of an experience. Like when Cliff Richard started singing. It think it does make a difference to be there.

Have you been to any live sports events?

No. My dad's pretty strict, no, you know, drunk people there, you might get hurt and that, but with France 98 coming up, I'd like to go there, but I don't know.

When Wimbledon finished, you wrote in your diary, "No more tennis!" What did you mean by that?

It was on everywhere, every channel. Like I only watched Henman matches and other players, but like every match was on, and it got pretty boring. So I was pretty happy when it got back to normal programmes.

So that was important, was it?

Yeah, it was (laughter), but then when Euro 96 was on, other girls were deprived and I didn't feel that way then.

Let's think about the Olympics. You watched about 6 hours which wasn't as much as the others. What do you remember about them?

We weren't doing too well. It was a bit embarrassing that we weren't doing too well. I had hopes in the races - Linford Christie, Roger Black, we did ok there and the swimming we did ok, so I watched more or less the gymnastics. I think it's good how they do it.

How much about an event is the Olympics do you think?

It's pretty important, you know, countries coming together every four years, every country taking part. I think that's the important part of it.

What did you mean by the Opening Ceremony? In your diary you said you thought "it was really cool and hyped up". Can you remember that?

I remember that - Mohammed Ali lighting the fire. That was a real experience, it really moved me. I made sure that I taped that.

Have you watched it since?

Yes, I have. I thought that was really good, and the fireworks. That was the best part.

Do you wish you could've seen more?

Mmm ... Well, now I think it's not going to come back for another 3 years, maybe I should have.

Do you think it was as a result of Euro 96 and Wimbledon being on?

Yeah, all those sports, it was tiring.

You watched mainly on your own, any reason for that?

My dad was mainly out. Yes, I watched quite a lot.

How did you feel when you watched the Olympics? Was it the same as Euro 96, cheering etc?

Yeah, yeah, in the swimming.

Did you cry when any of the England competitors lost, like in Euro 96, or wasn't it quite the same?

It wasn't quite the same. I was upset that we didn't do quite so well in the races, Linford Christie and that, but it wasn't quite the same as the football. I think I'm naturally more interested in football anyway.

It seems from the diaries that you watched more swimming, gymnastics, rowing, track and field.

Yeah, I was pretty into the rowing. If I remember, we were doing particularly well - I think we won. That was pretty exciting.

Do you think that it helps you to learn anything about these events?

Mmm. Not really, I'm not really into half of them, no.

You don't think it encouraged you to want to take part in any of them, like rowing?

No, I don't think so.

You talked about the England performance and said you were disappointed.

Yes, I think I was. We came pretty low down in the medals. We could have done a bit better, but then there were all these articles saying that the government doesn't fund enough. That could be part of it. America has so many people to choose from, so you can't blame those taking part.

You mentioned Dominique Dawes as someone you liked. Tell me about her.

I don't really remember her. Was she a runner? Or a I can't remember.

A gymnast.

Oh yes, that's it. Was she from America? I think she was good. I was impressed by a lot of the American gymnasts if I remember.

And Linford Christie?

Yes, I was cheering him on during the races.

Colin Jackson?

Yeah.

And you mentioned someone Alex ... I don't know him.

Yes, oh he was a gymnast. I was really impressed by him. He was a gymnast, I wasn't sure where he came from.

Do you think it's important to support stars from your own ethnic background? I know you're from an Asian background.

I don't know. I would've been happy for India to do well, but I'm more interested in Britain cos I was born here. I was getting annoyed with America because it seems so unfair.

And Steve Redgrave you mentioned?

Yeah, I think he was the swimmer, or the rower. Yeah, he was good.

Let's look at the whole of that six weeks of sport. I call it the summer of sport. Do you think it was right that there was all this coverage?

Yes, I think it was. I would have been pretty upset if there wasn't all that coverage, I watched every little bit of Euro 96, everything. So it would have been a bit out of order if people were really into Wimbledon and there wasn't enough coverage for them. I mean, I got a bit bored with it, but other people must have got bored with Euro 96, so it's important that everyone has their sports.

How did it affect what you might normally have done at this time? 6 hours, 10 hours, 20+ hours. You watched nearly 40 hours of sport during that time.

I mean, I stayed at home more, didn't go out as much and didn't read as much. I was more into watching the coverage of 96 on every channel.

How would you have altered the coverage?

Mmm. I don't know. maybe if it was a bit more in the evening than 2 o'clock in the day.

You read Shoot and Match as magazines I think during these events, and Big. Do you normally buy these 3 magazines?

Sometimes I bought them more during Euro 96, but I still buy them sometimes.

Why?

If they've got anything to do with Man. United I buy them.

Does Big have any articles on sport?

No, I don't think it does.

What magazines do you buy now?

Mizz or Sugar. More of the girlie ones, but I still buy some of the sports ones.

do you find any sport in the "girlie ones", as you call them?

Yeah, they have more or less the good-looking players. I find that a bit annoying, it's not everything. It makes me sound a bit hypercritical I know, because of Jamie Rednapp. I do like them, but skill and talent is important. You can't just like them because of their looks, you don't know how they're going to do on the pitch.

You don't appear to read a newspaper regularly, any reason for that?

No. I read more books. During Euro 96, I read them because of the articles to see what they said about it after. I read quite a few during Euro 96.

Do you have a family newspaper at home that's bought every day?

My dad buys the Telegraph, and the Yellow Ad comes. Sometimes I read it.

Do you read the Sports Pages?

Yeah, I do.

What do you think about them?

I think they're ok. I mean, if there's a definite sports article I want to read, I'll buy the paper or magazine. I just flip through them really.

Can you remember any of the sponsors of the events?

I think MacDonalDs sponsored Euro 96. I don't know about Wimbledon. I think maybe Coke for the Olympics, I don't know.

If you had to sum up. What does watching TV really mean to you?

I don't know. I think it's more like a part-time for me. I couldn't do without it. I do watch TV a lot, there's so many programmes on I like. When you have Sky there's like something different on every channel. It's a good way to get away and I can't miss my soaps.

And watching sport on TV. How would you sum up what that means to you?

We don't have Sky Sports so if there's an England one on we do get it. It's important. I don't like the radio. I don't like it when it's taped. I don't like it when you already know the scores and you watch it. I don't think there is the thrill, the expectation, when you already know what the score's going to be. So I prefer watching it live. You don't know when they're gonna score a goal, and the ball goes flying in, you know.

Do you think the summer of sport encouraged you to take part in sport yourself?

No. I played a bit more football I think. I don't really play it, but it did encourage me. I played more with my cousins in my spare time.

Did it affect you in any other way, the summer of sport?

I was more at home, I didn't see so much of my friends. But then I preferred it, you can see them all the time. I didn't want to miss it, it was more important to watch the matches.

Finally, how would you sum up the summer of sport 96?

It was pretty exciting, pretty thrilling, yes. It was pretty good if you think about it. It was so much sport, I don't think we'll have that again. That has to be one summer of sport to remember. Especially how well we did in Euro 96. I wouldn't mind going back to it and watching more. I enjoyed it a lot.

Great. Thanks very much.

APPENDIX J: JOURNAL ARTICLES

1. Lines, G. (1998) 'A Case Study of Adolescent Media Consumption during the Summer of Sport 1996'. in Merkel, U., Lines, G. and McDonald, I. (1998) *The Production and Consumption of Sport Cultures*. Leisure, Culture and Commerce, LSA Publication No. 62, Brighton, LSA

A Case Study of Adolescent Media Consumption during the Summer of Sport 1996

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Introduction

This paper addresses one phase of an on-going research project exploring media interests and sport amongst young people. Clearly, media consumption is central to many young peoples' lifestyles and few, if any, do not have considerable exposure to a range of different products. Earlier research (Lines, 1991; Lines, 1993; Tomlinson and Lines, 1996) identifies that they express obvious personal favourites across a range of genres and select them because they wish to be part of that particular world. Access to their own bedside TV, and capital to spend on related products, provides the opportunity for personal choice rather than selection solely determined by other family members.

However, the nature of the association young people make with the sporting genre remains undetermined. Soap opera, comedy and teen drama are often more popular than sports programmes. Magazines such as *Just 17*, *Viz* and *Mizz* are more frequently purchased than specific sports types. There are also distinct gender differences in patterns of consumption, especially in relation to the sporting genre.

The complex inter-relationship between media choice and consumption, pleasures and meaning gained from the mediated sports experience and the sporting interests, behaviour and attitudes of young people has yet to be clearly defined. There are ever increasing sports productions and availability of sports specific TV channels and magazines and high profiling of sports stars as celebrities at a time when young people are showing an heightened attention to media consumption. In view of government concern, expressed in *Raising the Game* (DNH, 1995) about both the moral and social role sport should play in the lives of young people and the increasing concern about the inactive lifestyles they are adopting (Roberts, 1996), more needs to be known about the relationship young people form with the media, and more specifically the sporting genre.

Real (1996: p. 1) uses the term 'reciprocal causality' to describe the way in which media and culture interact to provide a context for exploring development of personal and social identity. He suggests that personal identity and consciousness are constructed in interaction with media and culture (1996: p. 12). Despite investigations into the cultural and social significance of active sport the role of mediated sport as a socialising agency remains irresolute. Media practices and ideologies can inform us about broader aspects of cultural construction, thus the response of young people to media representations of the sporting image, reflecting such themes of gender, race, class, national identity and morality could be significant in providing explanations for their sporting attitudes and interests.

As Nightingale suggests (1996: p. 147), the audience/text relationship might only exist during the time and space of viewing. Long term effects are difficult to determine yet many of us hold long term memories of significant Olympic performances, a golden goal scored by our favourite player or a moment of national sporting triumph. It is likely that a relationship formed during viewing time might just as readily continue beyond reception, with viewers re-enacting personal situations seen in soap operas, imitating their favourite sports stars or simply being motivated to go out and participate in an activity they have viewed.

Wenner (1989: p. 44) advocates that if research is to offer a complete understanding of mediated sports viewing it is necessary to ask the audience themselves what they make of their experience. However, he advises that they do not always have a coherent explanation of their media usage.

It is evident that difficulties do exist in determining both causality and meanings in audience research. Rather than seeking to determine causal effects this case study attempts to identify the cultural products and practices evident in young peoples' media sport selection. It discusses the ways in which young people identify with, and participate in, a globally shared sporting experience, how they receive and interpret their cultural meaning(s) and the extent to which such events enter into their daily lives and interact with the values and interests that they hold.

Little is known about the way in which young people select or reject participation in the ritual of super mediated sports events of national and international acclaim. "The Great Summer of Sport" 1996 (as captioned by *The Times* and other sections of the media), specifically targeting Euro 96, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics has been selected for the period of investigation. It is suggested that if the sporting genre holds meaning for young people then such intense scheduling will be significant.

Research design

This paper reports findings from one area of a sequential multi-method research project designed as part of a PhD investigation. To summarise, the stages involved were:

- i. 1991: questionnaire survey on adolescent media consumption and sport completed by 240 14/15 year olds across 4 schools in the South East of England;
- ii. 1995: questionnaire survey repeated with a further group of 240 young people from 3 of the 4 schools plus a further similarly-sited school;
- iii. content and textual analysis of television and print media during the European Nations Cup, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics;
- iv. daily diaries completed by 25 young people during the 3 sports events;
- v. follow-up group and individual interviews.

This paper concerns itself with stage iv. in the research design.

A sample group of 25 14/15 year olds were selected from one of a group of 5 schools involved in a longitudinal case study over the last 5 years on media consumption patterns amongst young people. The school catchment area in an Outer London suburb provided a representation of young people across a range of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Data from the original research (Lines, 1991) suggested a number of common findings across all the schools involved in the survey. This indicated that the sample group in the selected school would provide a range of 'typical' young people with both varying leisure interests and involvement in sporting media products.

A comprehensive set of daily diaries (see Appendix) was designed to be completed by each individual throughout the 3 selected events. Diaries were selected as a result of successful completion by young people of both physical activity and healthy eating diaries during work that I had done previously with teaching groups in the school environment. These had proved to be both revealing and detailed in completion, often providing an intimate account of lifestyle behaviour. It was hoped that similar trends would become apparent in the completion of daily media diaries, revealing individual identification with events and stars and allowing the recall of significant moments recorded in the young peoples' own language. As Nightingale (1996: p. 95) suggests, "...it is possible to concentrate on the performance of the audience as memories, reflections, conversations, impersonations, improvisations, even interior decoration or personality can become expressions of audience."

Wilson (1993: p. 6) also supports the importance of determining both the sense of the text together with the audience reaction to it. For, as he suggests, both are "inextricably and mutually related". It was felt that the nature of the diaries would allow for both immediate reaction and feelings to be recorded in the young peoples' own words. This could then be correlated with the content and textual analysis of TV and print media to determine the extent to which young people reflected upon common themes detected from such analysis.

The diaries were seen to be the precursor, providing the groundwork for determining themes and patterns, acquiring such information in an immediate way rather than reflections, post event. It was also perceived that they could provide the structure of the discourse for follow up, in-depth,

Interpretative work with similar groups of young people. More specifically, the diaries alone provided evidence related to 3 key areas of the media sport experience:

- I. Viewing, reading and sports consumption — patterns and trends in receiving and reading the sporting texts:
 - range and depth of related products consumed
 - significance in relation to other genres
 - comparison with active sports participation
- II. Appropriation and ritual participation — ways of watching and interaction with the texts in everyday life:
 - levels of attention
 - social interaction with others
 - social participation — active / passive
 - recreating the live atmosphere
- III. Reception pleasure, meaning and interpretative practices — conceptualising the discourse young people create with the texts:
 - knowledge provider
 - motivator
 - modelling
 - social identity
 - taxonomy of pleasure and meaning
 - sports star characteristics

The reporting of data in this paper focuses specifically on evidence of trends and patterns prevalent in media and sports consumption during the scheduling of Euro 96, Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics. This is detected purely from diary analysis. The latter two themes, relating to participation and reception, can be more fully explained alongside the interview data and is beyond the remit of this paper. It is intended that more substantial statistics, description and interpretative analysis incorporating all 3 themes will be reported at a later date.

The findings: Euro 96, Wimbledon 96 and the Atlanta Olympics — Viewing, reading and sports consumption

Consumption patterns and trends in receiving and reading the sporting texts

Discussion of empirical data focuses on trends apparent in the consumption patterns of young people during the scheduling of these events. This theme reflects the decisions of the individual to watch/listen to the TV broadcasts of the events and read newspapers and/or magazines of the event. It considers the matches and events that received highest viewing totals and

the sports stars and teams who were most frequently mentioned. The extent to which they consumed other associated products, such as sports clothing, food, drink, souvenirs and memorabilia, highlights the impact on the overall pattern of consumption for each event. It also discusses the significance of the sporting genre in relation to other aspects of media consumption. Qualitative statements recorded in the diaries by the young people are used to support and explain possible reasons for such patterns.

Television viewing figures

As expected, television viewing across a range of genres was a dominant feature of lifestyle for many of the young people (see Table 1). During the three weeks of Euro 96, the amount of individual viewing time ranged from 1.4 hrs to 138 hrs; during the 2 weeks of Wimbledon between 66.5 to 77.5 hours; and during the Olympics 0 to 3 hours. Over 30% of the group watched TV on average more than 20 hours weekly during the first 2 events, but only 12% during the Atlanta Olympics. The decline in total viewing at this time can be attributed to the event being televised during the school holiday period.

Table 1: Television Viewing Figures

	Euro 96 June 8-30	Wimbledon June 24 - July 7	Olympics July 20 - Aug 4
duration of event	3 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks
diary completion	100%	88% (12% away on holiday)	44% (56% away on holiday)
individual time range on total TV viewing during the weeks of the event	138 hrs maximum / 1.4 hrs minimum	77 hrs maximum / 9 hrs 55mins minimum	62 hrs 30 minutes maximum / 0 hrs minimum
watched 20+ hrs of TV per week during event	36%	31%	12%
individual time range spent viewing the event	60 hrs maximum / 3 hrs 20 mins minimum	34 hrs maximum / 0 hrs minimum	24 hrs 15mins maximum / 0 hrs minimum
average group time spent viewing the event	over 17 hrs 30mins	approx. 6 hrs	nearly 9 hrs
% of sample group who watched the event	100% 36% watched over 20 hrs	82% 28% watched 1hr or less	36% 2% watched more than 20 hrs

Favourite programmes of each day were identified but details of specific content other than the sporting genre were not requested. Euro 96 was clearly the most popular event, watched by all of the sample group, albeit somewhat reluctantly by several, especially one 'coerced' daughter who wrote, "I was glad when it was all over and my dad couldn't make me watch anymore."

Scheduling, success of the England team, and the development of intense national feelings appeared to create a growing commitment to the event, especially for some who had reluctantly tuned in initially, "because there was nothing else on". For 24% of the group, over half their total viewing focused on watching the football. 36% watched over 20 hrs in total. The wide range of time devoted to Euro 96 (60 hrs maximum to 3 hrs 20 minutes minimum) suggested a diverse interest in the event and/or commitment to doing other things. One girl who watched over 124 hours of television during this time, managed to include within this only 3 hrs 20 minutes of the football. Another girl questioned, "Why is there so much football on?"

Wimbledon viewing was scheduled overlapping with and following the final week of Euro 96. In contrast with all of the group experiencing some mediated aspect of Euro 96, only 82% of the young people watched any of Wimbledon. Two boys, both watching over 25 hours each, and one of whom spent two days at Wimbledon, were keen tennis players themselves and clearly focused on the event. More significantly, 28% watched one hour or less, suggesting that it appeared to fail to appeal to the adolescent audience in the same way as Euro 96, despite the unanticipated success of Tim Henman and the intense coverage that he received. One girl, with the highest TV viewing of over 77 hours, successfully negotiated her programmes to ensure that she only caught up with 20 minutes of the event on a news update.

A number tuned in on the first day but there was initial disappointment at the early departure of Andre Agassi. After the numbers of hours spent viewing the football, some of the group chose to do other things. A wide range of reasons were given by young people for their apparent disinterest and disinclination to tune in to the tennis. These centred around the following issues:

- i) young peoples' lack of interest in tennis as a game, such as:
 - "I don't enjoy tennis."
 - "I have no time for tennis, it seemed stupid to waste my time watching it."
 - "I don't find tennis as interesting as football."
- ii) the lack of significance of the tournament scheduling:
 - "I totally forgot all about it."
 - "It wasn't on, if it was I didn't know and I didn't want to know."
- iii) identification with the players:
 - "Agassi got knocked out."

"I don't like the players."

- iv) reflections on the 'Summer of Sport':

"I'm bored of sports."

"I read that sport is taking over the summer."

- v) other more important things to do:

"I had homework to do."

"I went shopping."

"Other programmes were more interesting."

During Euro 96, watching the event was prioritised above other activities. Perhaps the impact of Euro 96 was such that their friends were with them watching the event, providing the social interaction that during Wimbledon they sought elsewhere. Although several suggested that they simply did not know or forgot that Wimbledon was on, it seems unlikely that during Euro 96 they could have been unaware of the competition and the success of the England team, such was the high profile the event received.

The Atlanta Olympics was more popular with some of the sample group than either of the other two events, but its timing in relation to both screening time (late night/early hours of the morning) and its clash with prime holiday time affected viewing figures. Only 44% of the sample group completed the daily diaries during this time. An additional sheet attached to the diary asked them to complete this section if they were away during this time and to recount how their viewing of the Olympics was affected as a result. Clearly, during the holidays a number either were away for the whole time or had a different schedule from the normal school/working week. As several of the group suggested:

"I didn't really want to watch on holiday."

"I went on holiday to enjoy myself, not to write in this diary."

Others who were away did appear to consider viewing the event, but were constrained:

"The hotel didn't have a good TV."

"My flight to India was delayed for 2 days and I couldn't find a TV at the airport."

"I went on a caravan holiday to Clacton and it didn't possess a TV."

In comparison with both Euro 96 and Wimbledon, only 36% of the total group watched any of the Olympics, and two of those not on vacation also chose not to watch any of the event. The highest total viewing was just over 24 hours, and only one of the group watched more than 20 hours of an event that had as intense a scheduling as the other 2 events. The status and significance of the Olympics was clearly not sufficiently important to this sample group of young people. Perhaps disappointment at the lack of British success contrasted sharply with the excitement and achievement of Euro 96. As one boy suggested, "There wasn't really any special moments because England didn't really get to win any medals." Another supported this: "It's

getting boring seeing England lose all the time."

Viewing figures do suggest that the excitement, national pride and 'feel good' factor aroused during the European Football Championship had a knock-on effect on the meanings and pleasures derived from the two sports events that followed. The euphoria, sense of satisfaction and the cultural significance of Euro 96 could not be recaptured, and consequently a number of the group chose not to become intense viewers of either Wimbledon or the Atlanta Olympics. The several keen fans who already had an interest in sport(s) maintained their commitment to the events, although even their recording of it failed to capture the same intensity of feelings and emotions that were evoked during Euro 96.

Favourite programmes

The significance of the sports events in the daily viewing habits of the young people can be seen when comparing them with their normal daily favourite programmes (see Table 2). As expected, soap operas were often frequently indicated as personal favourites. Indeed, several expressed frustration at the ways in which the scheduling of sports events disrupted the normal viewing times of such programmes.

Within this sample group, *Eastenders*, rather than the anticipated *Neighbours* or *Home and Away*, was the most frequently mentioned programme. This was popular amongst both boys and girls, suggesting that amongst adolescents soap opera is not attractive solely to females. The popularity of *Eastenders* might be explained by the location of the school within miles of the East End of London and the fact that several pupils of the school had occasionally been members of the cast. Additionally, at the time of the Summer of Sport, the *Eastenders* narrative was building towards a climax of interpersonal relationships (the Cindy Beale and David Wicks affair).

Table 2: Favourite tv programmes during the events (those most frequently mentioned each day)

Euro 96	Wimbledon	Atlanta Olympics
Euro 96 52%	<i>Eastenders</i> 40%	<i>Eastenders</i> 46%
<i>Eastenders</i> 32%	<i>X-Files</i> 20%	Joint choice of Olympics and favourite soap 27%
<i>Neighbours/Home and Away/Ricki Lake</i> 12%	Wimbledon 12%	Olympics 18%
-	Other 20%	Other 9%
England games 4%	Not completed (8%)	

However, during Euro 96, 52% of the sample group most regularly recorded this event as their favourite programme of the day. A further 4% indicated more specifically that it was the England games that appealed most to them. This was the only sport event that overtook *Eastenders* in the popularity stakes.

During Wimbledon, where the daily intensity of coverage generally exceeded both the football and the twice/three times weekly soaps, *Eastenders* still retained its number one spot. For 20% of the sample, *X-Files* was also a more frequently mentioned favourite than Wimbledon. Only 12% indicated that Wimbledon was their most preferred viewing choice during this two week scheduling.

Despite the apparent disruption to their normal viewing schedule during the Atlanta Olympics, 46% of those who completed their diaries were still recalling *Eastenders* as their favourite programme. A further 27% jointly listed the latter alongside The Olympics. 18% identified the sports event most frequently during those two weeks. Throughout the Summer of Sport a number of other programmes were also identified, but the sports events together with *Eastenders* clearly dominated the preferences of many young people. The intense scheduling of all of these programmes could also reflect their selection as some other popular programmes might only have been shown once during that time. However, comparisons between the three sports events and favourite soaps can be drawn.

Matches, events and sports star preferences

Viewing figures (see Table 3, following page) alone do not fully describe the types of individual matches and Olympic events that attracted young people. Certain sports stars also encouraged some young people to specifically tune in. During Euro 96, the England games were the central feature of the viewing selection of all members of the group, irrespective of their ethnic background. Everyone watched at least some of England's pathway to the semi-finals. Perhaps surprisingly, more tuned in to their matches versus Spain and Switzerland than the semi-final. Inevitably the disappointment at England's defeat, and the suggestion by several that they did not 'like' Germany, resulted in a decline in numbers watching the final. Viewing did not just focus on England as at least 68% of the group, including all of the boys watched some other matches: 20% watched more than 10 other matches; 28%, all girls, only watched England games and one other girl only saw additional matches on the news highlights.

Although it is not the intention within this paper to discuss in depth the significance and characteristics of sports stars as young people's favourites, it must be acknowledged that consumption figures and popularity of matches and of events might be explained by their identification with certain stars and celebrities.

Shearer's goal scoring ability, Seaman's brilliant saves and McMan-aman's good looks made them the sports stars most frequently mentioned favourites on a daily basis. Gazza, Sheringham, Klinsman, Poborsky and

Table 3: Most frequently viewed matches/ events and favourite sports stars

	Matches/Events most frequently watched	by %)	Sports Stars mentioned by pupils
Euro 96	England v Switzerland	80%	1. Shearer
	England v Spain	80%	2. Seaman & McManaman
	England v Germany	76%	
	England v Holland	72%	3. Gazza (Gasgoine)
	England v Scotland	64%	4. Klinsman & Poborsky
	Final	60%	5. Sheringham & Bergkamp
	Other Games	68%	
Wimbledon	men's singles	89%	1. Tim Henman
	Ladies' singles	33%	2. Steffi Graf
	Matches not listed	11%	3. Flach & Krajicek & Washington
	Mixed/ladies doubles	0%	4. Agassi & Seles
	Mens doubles	5%	
	Agassi's match	39%	
	Henman's matches	56%	
	Singles Finals	44%	
Atlanta Olympics	1. Athletics	55%	1. Steven Redgrave
	2. Swimming	73%	2. Dominique Dawes
	3. Gymnastics	73%	
	4. Rowing	55%	
	Others mentioned were:		Others mentioned were:
	5. Tennis/Diving/Basketball		Colin Jackson, Paul Palmer, Linford Christie, Gail Devers, Michelle Smith,
	6. Football/Weightlifting/Hockey/Cycling		Tim Henman, Nick Gillingham
7. Synchronised Swimming/Judo/Beach Volleyball/Boxing			

Bergkamp also received significant mentions. Several of the continental players mentioned were favourite players from clubs supported by some of the young people and this loyalty remained constant despite them playing for the opposition in the European Championships. There is a sense that some of the young people may have tuned in to other matches to watch these heroes play. A further 17 overseas players received mentions as favourite players of the day, indicating that many of the young people were not totally engulfed in the pro-English fervour of the occasion.

Men's singles matches monopolised the viewing during Wimbledon. Of the third who tuned in for any ladies tennis, all of them watched all or part of the singles final. Only 3 adolescents watched any other ladies matches. Clearly, doubles matches (even the finals) did not figure in their choice, possibly reflecting the lack of status and scheduling given to most of these matches. Several of the sample group did not list the types of games as they indicated that they could not remember who they were watching! 44% were still sufficiently motivated to watch the singles finals, despite no British interest and two relatively unfamiliar names in the men's finals. However, both Washington and Krajicek did receive a number of votes as favourite players, winning admiration for their unexpected success.

Significantly, 39% tuned in for Agassi's opening match on the first day. His surprise defeat by Flach caused both disappointment and loss of interest in the remainder of the tournament, especially for two girls, who showed no further involvement in the event. Despite this, Agassi was sufficiently popular with the group to receive enough mentions on the day he played to place him in the top 5. It can only be speculated that had he had a more successful run, both viewing figures and event popularity would have been higher than it eventually was.

Tim Henman was the most popular player with the group and this was reflected by the 56% of the group who watched his progress through the rounds. The media attention and focus on him carrying the British flag following Euro 96 ensured that a number of the group who had no knowledge of him prior to the event were now aware of the rising star.

Despite the vast number of performers across a range of different activities, there was a distinct lack of Atlanta Olympic heroes. Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell, both high profile celebrities failed to live up to expectations. Steve Redgrave and Roger Black, two of the most successful performers, lacked the 'celebrity' status to capture the imagination of the young people.

Perhaps this lack of 'star' performances by British competitors explains why the Atlanta Olympics did not appeal to the group in the same way as Euro 96. For as Holt and Mangan (1996: p. 5) suggest, "a sport without a hero is like Hamlet without the Prince".

Several of the girl gymnasts from the USA and China seemed to appeal most, perhaps because of the similarity in age with the group or because of the 'magical' routines that they produced. It is not clear from the diaries alone why these gymnasts did capture the imagination of some of the group, and this will be developed in the follow up interpretive work.

The individual activities of athletics, swimming, gymnastics and rowing featured most significantly in the choices of young people. A number of team sports such as football, basketball, hockey and beach volleyball were also chosen. Events without regular television coverage such as weightlifting, judo, synchronised swimming and diving also received some support. There was, however, no dominant sport that captured a regular and committed group of young people on a daily basis during the Olympics.

The consumption of other associated products

The ways in which Euro 96 captured the imagination of young people is reflected in the range of associated products they purchased, the detailed ways in which they completed the diaries and the emotive tone of moments and feelings captured in their recording of the event. The purchasing of sports kit, CDs, England flags, coins, scarves, programmes and other memorabilia was clearly related to the success of England and the extensive media hype and advertising, helping to generate feelings of national pride that developed during the event. Over 75% of the young people bought some such souvenir. Nearly a third of the group purchased an item of England's team kit. This represented more girls than boys — reflecting the appeal that the event held for them, together with the possibility that a number of the boys already had such kit. One girl proudly recorded that she spent £35 on a McManaman shirt.

There is little evidence that either Wimbledon or Atlanta Olympics achieved that degree of consumption. During Wimbledon there was only one significant response towards purchasing items as a result of the event. One girl who was not particularly 'into' the tennis bought her cousin a tennis racket as a birthday present but did not explain her reasons for this.

None of the young people recorded any purchases associated with the Atlanta Olympics. Additionally, and despite the intensity of marketing, sponsorship and merchandise at the Games only two of the group were able to mention any associated products that they bought during the event (a can of Coke). However, during Euro 96 there was a clear awareness of McDonalds and Coca-Cola as sponsors of the events, and their products were consumed by 36% of the group during Euro 96. One boy mentioned that his cornflakes box was promoting the soccer event!

Magazines / newspapers

Some young people also purchased magazines and newspapers during these events (see Table 4). Consumption of other forms of media suggests that the combination of linguistic signs and visual images could intensify the impact and significance of the events, increasing knowledge about them and/or influencing attitudes of young people towards the events. Symbiotically, the impact of television viewing of the events might have encouraged individuals to consume other aspects of media communication.

Newspapers were not recorded as of any importance in the lifestyles of many of the young people. Many never read a paper on a regular basis.

Table 4: Newspaper and Magazine Purchases

	Euro 96	Wimbledon	Atlanta Olympics
% of individuals who occasionally read a newspaper during the event	88%	50%	91%
most frequently read newspaper during the event	The Sun : 60%	The Sun : 23%	The Sun : 54%
most widely read magazine during the event	Just 17 : 36%	Just 17 : 14% Sugar : 14%	Just 17 : 27%
specific to sport/event	Shoot, Euro 96 magazine, Euro 96 programme	none	none
Others mentioned included: Shoot, Sugar, Big, Smash Hits, Inside Soap, Games Master			

although a number did see one on occasions throughout the six weeks of analysis. Of those who completed the diaries during the Atlanta Olympics, over 90% read a paper at some time. This might reflect having more time to read during the school holidays or the significantly smaller sample group. As a result it was difficult to determine the ways in which newspaper reading might have affected the overall consumption patterns. However, it did reflect the types and quality of sports reporting of those that did choose to read a newspaper.

The highest number of newspapers read during these events was throughout Euro 96. The impact of the event might have encouraged them to read the headlines and the sports pages during this time. Their reading of such texts was reflected in their comments in the diaries about articles read. Several of them used their diaries during this time like scrapbooks, sticking in photos and articles taken from newspapers.

Generally, *The Sun*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail* were the most frequently mentioned. Quality papers were rarely, if ever, mentioned. 60% of the sample looked at *The Sun* during this time but only one appeared to read it on a daily basis. 12% recorded seeing no papers at all. *The Sun* was the most widely read newspaper with 23% / 54% of the sample group occasionally reading it during Wimbledon and the Atlanta Olympics respectively. However, it did not appear to have a committed readership amongst the group and some read a variety of different papers throughout the week. Several also looked at more than one a day on occasions.

Magazines did feature in many of the young peoples' weekly purchases. As expected from my previous research (Lines, 1991, 1992, 1996), *Just 17* was the most widely read female magazine although *Sugar* and *Bliss* were the first choice selection for some of the girls. During Euro 96, only one girl did not read any magazine during the 3 weeks. Few, if any, said the articles they read mentioned the event although there were several dossiers on players and one entitled 'football heroes'. One girl recorded that the article she read suggested that "boys were enjoying the 120 hours of football and girls were hating it." The positive response of a number of the girls in this sample to Euro 96 suggests that this was not an accurate representation of the feelings of all girls. One girl also mentioned that there was a fashion spread on Wimbledon clothing during that particular event but no other mentions of references to the events were recalled.

The boys in the group, on the whole, read fewer magazines on a regular basis, but indicated a wider selection of titles around sport, computers and music. *Shoot* did feature as a specific football magazine, mentioned by several during the first 2 events. One girl also purchased it during Euro 96 but did not maintain her readership through the summer. A Euro 96 magazine and programmes of the event were also mentioned by several of the group as reading material purchased during this time. No specific print purchases related to either Wimbledon or the Atlanta Olympics were identified, again suggesting the lack of consumer appeal of these events for this particular group.

Conclusions

This paper identifies consumption patterns as one stage towards understanding the total audience response of young people to the Summer of Sport 1996. It acknowledges that consumption patterns alone identify trends but do not fully explain ways in which young people actually watch, interpret and interact with the texts. Viewing and reading figures do not indicate either the extent of focus and concentration nor the participation levels in active reception. Reasons why they accept or reject participation still remain unclear.

However, it does provide evidence that young people do select and reject sporting texts in a variety of different ways, gaining different pleasures from, and interpretations of the same sporting agenda. For many, the 'feel good factor of football coming home' was a socially significant experience that they actively chose to be part of. This represented some who were caught up in the tide of events as the competition progressed. For others, it simply reflected a commitment to their chosen sport. During their leisure time they engaged wholeheartedly in the texts and chose to spend personal capital on associated products such as CDs, football kit, scarves and English flags. Many of the young people were generally consumed by the emotive, patriotic feelings and excitement at the success experienced by the English team. However, even though it touched all of the group in some way, for several, the most significant impact it had on their daily lives was the inconvenience and disruption it caused to their normal viewing habits.

The consumption patterns here suggest that despite the placing of Wimbledon high on the BBC sporting schedule and the mythic and historic significance of The Olympics, compared with Euro 96, neither achieved the same relevance or importance for this particular audience. In fact, some positively distanced themselves from the sporting texts during the weeks of these events. Although the sequencing of events might have some significance here, with the latter two failing to recapture the performances of the English football heroes, many simply suggested that they had better things to do. It is clear that, despite some sports fans in the group, young people do not just consume every sporting event, but actively and selectively make their own decisions to engage in the texts of their choice. Such choice and personal taste may be dependent on a wide range of things, such as the nature of the event, the success of the 'home performers' and the presence of recognised stars.

The trends identified within this paper offer a general overview of adolescent consumption patterns and provide the framework for further interpretative work which will more fully identify and explain the diversity and complexity in audience appropriation and reception of super-mediated sports events.

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Appendix

This appendix contains a sample extract from the media diary distributed to the sample group of young people. A separate diary was issued for each event, each consisting of a front cover illustrated with the name of the event, a personal information page, a set of pages pre-dated for each day of the particular event and a final thoughts page. This appendix gives an example of the set of pages required for one day's data. Blank, scrap-book style sheets were also added for the inclusion of any media material the young people wished to save.

MY PERSONAL MEDIA
DIARY

EURO 96

NAME: ♂

SCHOOL: ♂

Appendix (continued)

* PERSONAL INFO PAGE *

NAME.....

AGE..... ETHNIC ORIGIN..... RELIGION.....

MALE / FEMALE

HOBBIES / LEISURE

INTERESTS.....

.....

FAMILY TV YES / NO

OWN PERSONAL TV..... YES / NO

FAMILY VIDEO... YES / NO

OWN PERSONAL VIDEO... YES / NO

SATELLITE / CABLE TV AT HOME.. YES / NO

FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMME

FAVOURITE TV STAR

.....

FAVOURITE SPORTS TO PLAY

.....

.....

FAVOURITE SPORTS TO WATCH ON TV

.....

.....

WHO ARE YOUR FAVOURITE SPORTS STARS?

.....

.....

WHY DO YOU LIKE THEM?

.....

.....

Appendix (continued)

DATE:.....

How long did you watch TV for today?.....hrs.....mins

What was your favourite programme today?.....

.....

How long did you watch Euro 96 for?

.....hrs.....mins

At what times did you watch it?

.....

.....

List any other activities you were doing while you were watching this sports programme

.....

.....

Were you watching with: (please circle correct answers)

friends : parents : brother / sister :

alone : other relatives : at school

What matches / events did you watch?.....

.....

.....

If none, please tick here:

Appendix (continued)

Please tick any of the following thoughts / feelings you had as you were watching.

Please add any others you would like to.

- ITS EXCITING ITS FUN ENJOYABLE I APPRECIATE THE SKILL LEVEL
- ITS GOOD TO WATCH MY FAVOURITE SPORT I LOVE FOOTBALL
- IT'S SOMETHING TO DO I WISH I COULD BE THAT GOOD
- THERE'S NOTHING ELSE ON IT'S RELAXING IT'S VIOLENT
- I THERE'S NOTHING BETTER TO DO I IT'S COMPETITIVE
- I WISH I COULD SEE IT LIVE I'D RATHER BE DOING IT MYSELF
- I THIS IS HELPING ME TO IMPROVE / LEARN I IT'S BORING
- I IT'S GREAT TO WATCH MENS BODIES IN ACTION I HE'S GOOD LOOKING
- I IT ENCOURAGES ME TO PLAY I SHE'S ATTRACTIVE I IT'S INSPIRING
- I IT'S GOOD TO WATCH WOMEN COMPETE IN SPORT
- I I'D LIKE TO BUY THAT KIT I I'M GOING TO COPY THIS WHEN I PLAY
- I IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A LAUGH WITH MY FRIENDS WHEN WE WATCH
- I I WOULD RATHER WATCH MEN THAN WOMEN IN THIS SPORT
- I I WOULD RATHER WATCH WOMEN THAN MEN IN THIS SPORT
- I I REALLY LIKE THIS COMPETITOR / PLAYER

ANY OTHERS:.....

Who was your favourite player today?.....

Why do you like them?.....

After watching today's sports programme did you play football? YES / NO

List any other sports you played today

How long for?.....hrs.....mins

Did you try to copy anything you saw on tv today? ...YES / NO

If Yes, what did you copy?.....

Appendix (continued)

Did you read a newspaper today?....YES / NO

Which one?.....

Include any newspaper articles that you have read about Euro 96 in your diary. Make any comments here about anything you found interesting from reading these articles

Did you read any magazines today?...YES / NO

If yes, which one(s).....

Which articles did you read in the magazine which included info on this sports event? Include it in your diary if you can.

Please list any products you bought / used today that referred to Euro 96

Which ones did you buy because they specifically mentioned this event?

Any other comments about what happened during Euro 96 today?... (if you did not watch this event today please give reasons why)

2. Lines, G. (1999) 'Setting the Challenge: Creating Partnerships; Young People, PE/Sport and the Media'. *British Journal Of Physical Education*, Summer edition, Vol. No.2, pp. 7-12

Setting the Challenge: Creating Partnerships: Young People, P.E./ Sport and the Media

■ Gill Lines

Introduction

This paper reflects issues around the current educational focus on creating partnerships within PE, Sport and the Community that will facilitate the sporting participation of young people. It is developed from my on-going research investigation into media interests and sport amongst 14/15 year olds. It suggests reasons for acknowledging the importance of the everyday partnership young people create with the media and sets the challenge for forging links between the media and school sport.

Material is selected from my presentation at the 1997 BAALPE conference, 'A Vision for Partnership in the Millennium'. It explores some of the key principles of partnership put forward by Murdoch and Campbell (1997); developing a shared philosophy, mutual respect, common goals and dual responsibility. It offers strategies that could be promoted between both media and sports and PE professionals.

Numerous partnerships have been identified between teachers, coaches, sports development officers and a range of national and local agencies. Discussion on the interface between PE and sport, and on debate around the delivery of the PE curriculum in schools has addressed some of the main challenges to be met. A complete edition of the *British Journal of Physical Education* (1995, volume 26 no.2) featured partnerships and the networks necessary for young people and sport. The significance of the media as a key agency in this field has, though, been neglected.

During the late 1980s the Government began to express concern about the role of sport in schools. As a witness for the British Council of PE at the "Sport in Schools" House of Commons

Education, Science and Arts Select Committee meeting, (1991, p.92) I put forward concerns about the changing lifestyle and attitudes of young people. I indicated the wide availability and popularity of media products as leisure activities and suggested that in many cases these placed significant demands on the time and interests of young people. For some young people, these were likely to be

more influential and central to their lifestyles, than extra-curricular school sport.

I believe that some years on, these arguments will also inform the on-going debate, promoted by the Department of National Heritage and John Major (1995), about the importance and value of sport to the beliefs and morals held by young



Photo: Alan L Edwards

people. This somewhat naive and idealist approach, emphasising the mythical values of team games, suggests a lack of perception about the contemporary, cultural preferences of young people. For despite proposals to increase sporting opportunities in extra-curricular provision at school level and to raise standards of excellence, adolescent sporting values, behaviour, and incentives to participate are driven by socio-cultural pressures that extend beyond school level.

Persistent claims by both the media and the government focusing on the 'decline' in school sport, have failed to acknowledge that many young people simply do not identify with, or wish to participate in competitive sport, when given a whole range of commercial leisure provision to choose from. The rival attractions exerted by media consumption on young peoples' developing style, identity and consciousness and its relationship to their attitudes and values about a healthy, sporting lifestyle should not only be a key focus for the government's attention, but also centrally discussed within the debate on developing partnerships.

It is suggested that the partnership young people make with the media cannot be ignored, for clearly the media have the power to represent certain images of sport, whilst ignoring others, and the impact this has on young people remains unclear.

A Professional Concern

It is argued that if young people are at the heart of the notion of partnerships, then their interests, attitudes and motivations must be considered. This research idea germinated during the late 1980s, when as a secondary school physical education teacher, I became increasingly aware of young peoples' immersion in media products. Changing room, playground and morning registration talk focused my attention on the knowledge and involvement of pupils in the total media experience. They were clearly TV literate and familiar with a variety of genres and characters ranging from teen drama to sport.

School ski trips abroad and weeks away camping suggested that they struggled to live without television for the duration. The morning after

another exciting episode of "Home and Away" the form room would be a buzz of discussion and debate about their favourite characters. Those that had not made the same programme selection, myself included, were simply outsiders as individual viewers used the peer group forum to negotiate and re-interpret the previous nights' texts. They were talking a different language, discussing individuals I'd never heard of and agonising over storylines I knew nothing about.

After one very detailed discussion on the latest episode of "Neighbours" whilst I was driving the minibus on the way home from a netball match, and amidst growing concern that the traffic would prevent them from reaching home in time for that evenings programme, the team asked what I thought would happen to Kylie.

"Who's Kylie?" I asked in all innocence.

"Get real, Miss!" they chanted.

And so the seeds were sown. I decided to get real. I rushed home to watch 'Home and Away' and 'Neighbours'. I eagerly retrieved 'J17' magazine from the lost property bin and confiscated copies of 'Viz' from groups of giggling schoolboys at the back of classes I covered for absent teachers. As a teacher working daily with young people I perceived it as important to be familiar with adolescent interests and motivations. I became curious to know the ways in which their developing identity and consciousness about sport might be attributed to their involvement in media.

It became clear to me that the hours which seemed to be spent consuming media products could be important in developing adolescent peer group attitudes, behaviour and learning about many aspects of their lifestyle. If meanings derived from media consumption inform young peoples' activities, then connections might be suggested between the sporting media image and its influence on their interest and participation in aspects of sport and leisure.

Despite a lack of sustained research, it seems that sporting images presented by way of newspapers, magazines and television can have an impact on adolescent values. The effects of Olga Korbut on girls' gymnastics as a result of coverage during the 1972

Olympics, the adoption of a crying Gazza as the nation's hero during the 1990 World Cup and his subsequent demise as a result of adverse reporting, and the complete sell out in sports shops, of Henman's tennis outfits, during his unanticipated success at Wimbledon 1996, all indicate that the media do have an impact on the consumer.

More significantly, the values and ideologies portrayed about the sporting image via their media interests seemed likely to have far greater power and influence than those which I was trying to foster through the school PE curriculum. I began to question how salient the on and off field behaviour of sports stars, such as Cantona, Lineker and Gazza might be to the sporting behaviour and attitudes of the young people I was working with. Similarly, I challenged that if 'Eastenders' was a more popular television choice amongst adolescent girls than programmes from the sporting genre, what meaning might characters such as Bianca and Tiffany hold for young girls?

I speculated upon the kind of impact such characters might have if they were shown each episode going off to play netball or tennis for the Albert Square team, rather than chatting up the 'fellas' inside the Queen Vic. Would girls be aware of their more physically active images and see it as congruous in their lifestyles? Similarly what impact does the Spice Girls currently have on young people? There certainly appears an increase in young girls wearing Adidas sports clothing in vogue with 'Sporty Spice'. The extent to which this might make them more physically active as well is an area for debate.

For as a reflective practitioner, I had become increasingly concerned during the late 1970's and 80's about the gender constraints in, and differences towards, participation and involvement in school sport that became markedly accentuated at adolescence. Constant adaptations and innovations to the PE curriculum in my school to motivate and encourage adolescent girls and to counter the evidence of a "cult of femininity" had not been totally successful. Physiological gender differences, the role of the family and the structure of the Physical Education curriculum did not appear to fully explain why previously enthusiastic

skilful and sporty young girls switched off sport and became obsessed with beauty, fashion and young men.

Such concerns began to focus my attentions on exploring the growing relationship that young people have with the media.

Partnerships: Young People and the Media

Empirical evidence gathered and reported from my original research with two hundred and forty young people (Lines, 1991; Lines, 1993; and Tomlinson and Lines, 1996) suggests that firstly, young people do form a leisure partnership with the media. The extent to which they do share common goals and values with the media products they consume, and the way in which the media set the agenda of sporting themes for young people to think about, is under-investigated and a focus of my current research entitled, 'Consumption, Impact and Interpretation of super mediated sports events: a case study of 14/15 year olds during the Summer of Sport 1996'. This will provide a detailed interpretative analysis of the meanings, pleasures and impact of the sporting genre in the everyday lives of young people. (Lines, 1998)

Figure I: Partnerships: Media and Young People

PARTNERSHIPS	
MEDIA YOUNG	PEOPLE
1. Current research suggests media interests are central to young peoples lifestyle	
2. Consumption patterns show a significant range on interests across a variety of genres and products	
3. For many, the hours spent viewing television exceed the time spent in school	
4. The number of young people with their own bedroom television and video and the purchasing power to buy several magazines a week suggests personal autonomy, influence and choice about what they read and watch.	
5. Young people are not passive consumers but make selective choice and interpretative analysis of the texts.	
6. The role of the sporting genre offers gender differentiated meanings and opportunities	
SCHOOL SPORT	
7. What kind of partnerships and of conflicts are forged with school sport as a result of the media interests of young people?	

Figure 1 identifies a number of key features drawn from the initial research, that supports the strength and extent of the relationship young people have with the media. It is suggested that such a partnership can have both positive and negative effects on young peoples' involvement in sport and that teachers and coaches should reflect on such issues.

Secondly, the 1991 research began to explore the place that the sporting genre holds in the overall media consumption patterns of young people. Figure II indicates some of the trends that have emerged with regard to the types of media products young people choose to consume. It also identifies some of the key issues that should be addressed by both media, sport and PE professionals.

Figure II: Young People and the Sporting Genre: Media Interests and Issues

a) Television and video

1. Young people select a wide range of products- teen dramas, soaps and comedy are often more popular on the television than the sporting genre
2. Sports programmes were generally expected to be entertaining, exciting and interesting. Young people did not generally acknowledge their role as knowledge provider or motivator to participate.
3. The sporting genre holds distinctly different meanings for boys and girls - Girls are more likely to own dance and fitness related videos, boys are more likely to own sports specific or sports coaching videos. Is the marketing of the videos available encouraging such gender specific purchases or is this simply reflecting young peoples' interests?
4. The time spent consuming media products suggests that there is less time available to pursue a healthy lifestyle. In many cases time spent watching television far exceeds time used in active sports participation.

b) Television and sport stars

1. Favourite TV stars they admire such as Chris Evans, Rick Myall and Rowan Atkinson are selected because they're good for a laugh. Favourite sports stars in 1995 included Ryan Giggs, Will Carling and Steve McManaman.
2. Boys admired their skill level and sporting success whereas girls were generally more impressed by good looks and physique.
3. The range of male sports stars listed as favourites, indicate the vast number of role models in a variety of sports for adolescent boys. Few female sports stars received such high acclaim and few role models are known by young girls in their favourite sports. Sally Gunnell and Denise Lewis are two recent female athletes who have received high profile and positive publicity that may appeal to young girls, but athletics was generally not listed as one of the most popular sports by girls.

c) Magazines and newspapers

1. There are clearly gender differentiated magazine purchases. Girls identify strongly with J17, Mizz and Sugar that offer articles on fashion, beauty, pin-ups and problems. Magazines are important to many girls and questions can be raised about the kinds of messages contained within these selections and the ways in which the 'sporty' young female may or may not be portrayed.
2. Boys more frequently purchase Viz, computer or specific sports related magazines that reflect a wider range of individual interests and hobbies.
3. The lack of specific sports magazines that cater either specifically for girls or both male and female readers.
4. 'Sported', is one of the newer adolescent sports magazines in publication. The marketing, audience targeting, philosophy and readership figures of this magazine have been questioned but I have yet to receive a reply from the editor on these issues.
5. Although newspapers do not appear to be particularly significant in the media interests of young people, generally boys read the sports pages of newspapers far more than girls. Popular rather than quality press reflects their choice of reading with The Sun the most widely read paper throughout the analysis. Sports that boys enjoy participating in are more likely to receive greater newspaper attention, with sports mentioned by girls, such as netball, badminton and volleyball, rarely, if ever covered.

The Role of the Media as a Sport Socialising Agency

For some young people, much of their sports experience is mediated sport, as opposed to reality. Figures III and IV identify ways in which the media could be utilised as a knowledge provider and motivation and modelling agency in the sporting lifestyles of young people. Causal media effects, however, are difficult to determine but the impact of such representation and narrative on the meanings, attitudes, behaviour and sporting interests that young people develop cannot be ignored. It should be the concern of the PE professional to explore ways in which the media can be utilised as a positive sport socialising agency whilst aspiring to raise the awareness of young people to the bias and ideologies in the media sporting agenda. Negative features of the media can also be counteracted by sensitive discussion of issues within classroom and practical situations. This also underpins the whole notion of developing partnerships with the media in a way that both agencies work together to provide types of sporting representation that negates less desirable images of sport. Although what are deemed to be "less desirable" might be open to a varied interpretation.

A number of such positive aspects might be offset by other features of media portrayal that could be seen to have more negative attributes. The way in which the viewer or reader chooses, interprets and uses, the products they consume, might determine the kind of balance the individual makes between positive and negative aspects. From another viewpoint, it could be argued that the media's portrayal of commercialism, aggression and winning at all costs simply represents a true reflection of modern sport that prepares young people more realistically for the real sporting world than the idealist, traditional attitudes expressed in *Raising the Game*. In this light this could be seen to be a positive rather than negative feature of media representation.

The "uses and effects" of mediated sport, and the balance achieved between such features identified here, are raised as a starting point for both future research and discussion. For the role of the media as a sport socialising agency has yet to be explored in the same ways that both the family and the school have been.

Figure III: Positive Features

Knowledge Provider

1. Offers knowledge of a variety of sports which might not normally see or participate in.
2. Provides information about skills, tactics and rules.
3. Develops positive values of sport – trying one's best, Olympic ideals etc.
4. Develops aesthetic appreciation and evaluation of movement through watching televised sport at elite level.

Motivator

5. Encourages participation in a variety of sports.
6. Provides incentive to watch live sport.

Modelling

7. Offers role models for techniques, tactics, dress and behaviour.
8. Offers hero, team and national associations – a sense of belonging and identification.

Figure IV: Negative features

Knowledge Provider

1. Places values on certain sports at the expense of others.
2. Implies those sports not scheduled may not be widely played.
3. Emphasises commercialism, competition, aggression, winning at all costs.
4. Implies excellence in sport is easily achieved. Rarely acknowledges dedication and hard work required to succeed. Young people trying to participate may be disillusioned because it's harder than it seems.

Motivator

5. May deter girls from participating by portraying a male dominated image of sport.
6. May reinforce ethnic stereotypes in certain sports.
7. May encourage armchair sport rather than active participation.
8. May encourage televised rather than live spectating.

Modelling

9. Offers amplification of sports irrelevant behaviour such as bad manners, referee abuse, fouls, gamesmanship etc.
10. Offers opportunities to watch aggressive, violent behaviour and hooliganism.
11. Over commercialism of the 'hero' and the individual as celebrity – greater emphasis on lifestyle and looks rather than sporting prowess
12. Limited female and ethnic sports star representation across a range of sports as role models.

Creating Partnership: A Challenge to the media and Sport/PE Professionals

Educational concern over the role of the media in the lives of young people is not a new phenomenon although the extent to which PE departments have taken on board such issues remain debatable.

Crowther Report (1959, paragraph 66) ".....there is a duty on those who are charged with responsibility for education to see that teenagers, who are at their most insecure and suggestible stage of their lives, are not suddenly exposed to the full force of the media without some counterbalancing assistance."

Newsom Report (1963, para. 474)"
little attention is paid to the degree to which film and television enter into and influence the lives of our pupils and to these media as legitimate means for the communication of personal experience.."

The study by Murdoch and Phelps (1973) also demonstrates the 'experiential gap' between the lived experiences of teachers and pupils, which was exemplified by differences in both their media preferences and behaviour. This reiterates my personal experiences, referred to earlier, with the group of pupils in the minibus and the "Kylie who?" discussion.

Current media research has moved away from the notion of what does the material do to the people who select it, towards an emphasis on what people do with the material that they select. Young people are not passive consumers of all they see and read, but do make selective and critical judgements. However, with increasing growth in the mediated sport genre this paper questions the dual role the PE profession and the media could play in such provision.

It has been identified that the role of the media as a sport socialising agency offers both positive and negative aspects. A partnership between media and sports professionals needs to determine a shared philosophy about the kinds of media products, sporting imagery and agenda setting required to attract adolescent consumers to a positive representation of sport and healthy lifestyles across social divisions of gender, race and age. Figure V, proposes a series of issues for consideration by the media professional.

PE departments already committed to their role in developing community partnerships, should embrace both local and national media as agencies for consideration within this model. The challenges identified in figures V and VI, suggests considering the significant role the media already plays within the everyday lifestyles of the young people they are dealing with, the role the media could play as a tool within the curriculum and the capacity it could have as a powerful communication channel, in promoting the work of school sport to a wider audience.

Figure V: A Challenge to the Media

Challenge to the media

1. Provide more sports programmes during early evening viewing – scheduled around popular teen soaps.
2. Introduce young peoples' sports series featuring school sport – possibly with regional focus on schools.
3. Adolescent sports magazines with consideration to equality in gender/ethnic representation.
4. Promotion of sport/healthy lifestyle campaigns by tv and sports stars admired and respected by young people.
5. Consider professional ethnics and codes of practice when representing young people in the media.

Figure VI: A Challenge to School Sport and the PE Profession

Challenge to School PE/Sport

1. Develop raised awareness of the significance of the media in the lifestyles of young people.
2. Use mediated sport as an educational tool e.g., in relation to National Curriculum evaluation strand and both GCSE and A level analysis of performance work. Ask pupils to video and analyse top performers on tv.
3. Consider impact of super mediated sports events such as Euro 96, Wimbledon and use them for motivation, modelling and discussion within appropriate practical sessions.
4. Demand high quality media sports products appropriate for young people and encourage pupils to critically interpret them.
5. Raise awareness of media sporting agendas, bias and ideologies which could be affecting young peoples' perceptions of the sporting image.
6. Liaison with other departments to promote use of media sports products – Media Studies, English, Photography Club etc.
7. Use local media channels to publicise and promote school sport.

A Vision for Partnership

Firstly, such a vision requires a shared philosophy and value system between media ideology and representation and those promoting school sport. It also means empowering young people to actively interpret the media texts and develop skills and ability to use the mediated sports experience as both knowledge provider and motivating agency.

Secondly, it means developing awareness and respect between media professionals and those promoting school sport. A clearer understanding of young peoples' media involvement and a non-critical cultural appraisal of their interests will show that young people are at the heart of such a partnership.

Thirdly, there must be communication and co-operation between both the media and sports and PE professionals to ensure that there is a shared responsibility for the media products that young people might receive.

A number of these challenges clearly require innovative solutions and idealistic situations. The power of the media and the difficulty of seeking values and priorities that may not be shared with the commercial philosophies of media organisations and professionals provide a seemingly impenetrable barrier to partnership, especially at national level. However perhaps the first developments can be sought at local level – identifying sympathisers within the media (possibly parents/relatives working within the domain), utilising a member of the PE department as a



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media liaison agent and encouraging school visits by media professionals.

At national level, governing bodies and agencies for school sport need to address the significance of the media portrayal of the sporting image, developing critiques of both its positive and negatives' aspects, with particular reference to young people. In partnership they could work towards developing codes of practice that can positively promote participation in sport. They too need to appoint media liaison officers and invite media professionals to join working groups and conferences on such themes. In this tripartite relationship between media, sport/PE and young people, there must also be an emphasis on the teacher being aware of and open to the nature of pupils everyday cultural lifestyle and experiences, and an attempt made to create partnerships between the classroom, playing fields, sports halls and the world of leisure.

In this way, it is suggesting developing common goals and shared responsibility between the professions in order to provide young people with mediated sports experiences that complement, enhance and increase opportunities for practical sports participation and healthy lifestyles.

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