California Dreamin':

Popular Music and Place-Myths of California

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PhD Thesis

Submitted to the School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology

University of Salford

March 2023

Contents

This thesis is dedicated to my mum and dad, who inspired my enduring love of music (and who procured copies of *Grand Theft Auto* videogames for me before I was old enough to buy them for myself!)

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Nicola Spelman and Dr. Maria Perevedentseva. Without their support and guidance this thesis would be far poorer.

I also wish to thank Dr. Timothy Wise, my primary supervisor at the inception of this project, for inviting me to join the doctoral programme at Salford and for his invaluable advice and instruction throughout my studies.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Philip Brissenden and Professor Sarah Hill for their invaluable contribution as examiners of this thesis. I am deeply thankful for the time and expertise they dedicated to reviewing my work.

To Anton Piskarjov, Dr. Enrique Galvan-Alvarez, Ansels Kaugers, Alice Rech, Adam Skevington, and Bridie West I say a huge thank you for giving me the motivation to keep at it. I couldn't have done it without you!

Finally, I would like to offer special thanks to David Sanjek, who is fondly remembered and whose work continues to bring inspiration.

List of Illustrations

Abstract

In this thesis I develop a concept of southern California place-myths based on themes from a selection of popular songs from the earliest phase of California statehood (c. 1849) through the first half of the 1970s, examining the role that music plays in the representation of place and demonstrating how popular music has been instrumental in the mythmaking of southern California. I reveal that place-myths of California are established and interpreted through engagement with, and circulation of, images embodied in popular music and a variety of other media. While I consider the texts I have chosen as products of their historical and cultural contexts, I question the conception of myths as veils obscuring the realities which lie beneath, instead arguing that myths play a vital role in shaping our understanding of the world and our experiences within it. They hold communication value and become available for reinterpretation, adaptation, or transformation in new textual forms to suit contemporary contexts or to convey new messages. The early 1960s, the period of main focus in the thesis, is a significant period in southern California place-myths, when a particular leisured and youthful lifestyle shaped ideas about the state. Through an investigation of place-images, the components of broader place-myths, such as the beach and the California girl, I argue that popular music texts engage in dialogue with existing place-myths, which are then transformed for new contexts.

1. Introduction

1.1. Origin

> Why did I move here? I guess it was the weather. Or the… ah, I don't know - that thing, that magic. You see it in the movies. I wanted to retire from what I was doing, you know? That… that line of work. Be a good guy for once, a family man. So, I bought a big house, came here, put my feet up. Thought I'd be a dad, like all the other dads. My kids, they'd be like the kids on TV. We'd play ball and sit in the sun. But, well… you know how it is.

These were the lines spoken by one of the main characters, Michael De Santa, in the trailer for *Grand Theft Auto V*, the highly anticipated and critically acclaimed 2013 video game from the renowned publisher Rockstar Games. I remember my excitement on hearing these words for the first time, the excitement of learning that there would soon be another instalment in the *Grand Theft Auto* series. I grew up playing the *GTA* games, experiencing many of the early games while still below the age advised by the certification, and I had poured hours into the previous titles.

Grand Theft Auto V, it appeared from the trailer, would see the series return to the City of Los Santos, in the state of San Andreas—a fictionalised version of Los Angeles, California—which had featured heavily in an earlier Rockstar Games title, *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* (2004), the setting of which also took in fictionalised versions of San Francisco and Las Vegas, as well as more rural locations in the vicinity. Barring a single foray into the UK for *Grand Theft Auto: London 1969* (1999), the *GTA* series has always taken place in an alternate version of the United States of America. The maps, in turn, were always based on existing cities, taking their layout, architecture and culture as a basis for the game's setting. Purchasing a copy of the latest game on the day of release, I proceeded to lose yet more hours of my life exploring Los Santos.

Like Los Angeles, its real-life counterpart, the City of Los Santos is a huge and sprawling metropolis with a variety of urban areas; the prestigious film-making industry of Vinewood, the low-income housing projects of South L.S., the beachfront stores and open-air gym at Vespucci Beach, and the funfair on Del Perro Pier, to name just a few. Each of these locations is easily recognisable as its Los Angeles counterpart and countless landmarks have been recreated, albeit with some artistic licence, making the game's location uncannily familiar.

A main theme in both Los Santos-based games is that of upward mobility, of coming from nothing and rising to the top, in the city where anything is possible. The gameplay in the *GTA* series, to risk oversimplification, is balanced between shooting at people and driving (usually stolen) cars to different locations, but the opportunities for exploration and immersion outside of the main objectives are why many players, including myself, fall in love with these games. One evening I found myself driving aimlessly along a coastal highway, the sun setting over the ocean to my left, flicking through various in-game radio stations that are available in the cars, when on came Marlena Shaw's "California Soul." After some serious thought about how Shaw's California could possibly exist in the same world as Rockstar's San Andreas, I began to consider my own experience of, and impressions of, the real-life state of California.

Only in November of the following year, 2014, would I actually make it to California for real, yet I already felt as if I knew what California was like: sun, sea and sand, with the beaches filled with surfers and sunbathers by day and beautiful sunsets every night; sprawling metropolitan areas with vibrant night-life and whole towns made up of movie studios' stages and sets; hippies living in communes in the valleys, just down the road from yoga retreats; liberal politics, individual liberty, and heaps of leisure time; cars everywhere, miles of highways and

tonnes of traffic. The impressions I had of California, I realised, were shaped by my consumption of popular media. Through the music I'd listened to, the films and TV shows I had watched, the news stories I had read, and the video games I had played, my ideas about the place had become well developed. Whether accurate or not, my impressions of California were strong.

"Like a sound you hear that lingers in your ear/But you can't forget, from sundown to sunset, now/It's all in the air, you hear it everywhere/No matter what you do it's gonna grab a hold on you" (Ashford & Simpson, "California Soul," 1969). Listening to Marlena Shaw sing the lyrics of "California Soul," I was reminded of an essay I had written during my undergraduate degree; I had already begun to raise questions about the contribution of popular music to my impressions of California. Just like a lingering sound that I couldn't forget, similar questions persisted for a few years until I decided to embark on the research project which has culminated in this thesis.

1.2. Literature Review

In her introduction to the book *Music, Space and Place: Popular Music and Cultural Identity*, Sheila Whiteley wrote that "both as a creative practice and as a form of consumption, music plays an important role in the narrativization of a place" (Whiteley, 2004, p.2). The description Whiteley gives of the function at work here is that music is a resource used by individuals and cultural groups to "define their relationship to local, everyday surroundings" (Whiteley, 2004, p.2).

Music, Space and Place (Whiteley, Bennett & Hawkins, eds.), an edited volume published in 2004, contains a collection of chapters on a variety of topics related to music and place which are divided into three sections by topic. First, the connections between musical and cultural practices that help to establish a collective identity, then the particular resistant language of rap and hip hop in specific geographical communities, and, in the final section, the recording studio is taken as the space in question, foregrounding in particular the identity of female artists in relation to the power of modern technology in production. These accounts of connections between music and the identity and representation of people in particular places demonstrate that there is value in pursuing these lines of inquiry. It was also important in the formative stages of this thesis to understand the importance of context in these investigations, and the emphasis on context here underscores the close relationship of musicology and sociology in studies of meaning and identity in music.

The perspectives taken in these chapters tend to consider human identities, both individual and collective, while my focus instead turns towards the identity of a place. The

introduction is useful in laying out some of the foundations of these ideas, although, the focus on human identity, rather than representation of place, in many of the main chapters leans away from the questions I intend to tackle. The most directly useful of the individual chapters is Sarah Daynes' contribution, "The Musical Construction of the Diaspora: the case of reggae and Rastafari." In this essay, Daynes presents accounts which demonstrate how the musical genre of reggae and the Rastafari movement link people together across space and through time. The African diaspora, says Daynes, is a "multi-dimensional space of memory" connected to Africa as a "spatial 'elsewhere'" (Daynes, 2004, p.25). Reggae music offers listeners a connection to the culture of the 'elsewhere' and, subsequently, they offer some understanding of that 'elsewhere.' It is in this supposition of an 'elsewhere' constructed from a collective memory that Daynes' work begins to illuminate my own investigation. It is my position that the popular images of California function in a similar way, allowing us a connection to an otherwise unknown 'elsewhere.' Rather than understanding resulting in a sense of belonging, as Daynes suggests in the case of the African diaspora, instead understanding leads to an idealised image of California which stands in for experience of the real place.

Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place (Connell & Gibson, 2003) represents an attempt at an inclusive summary of scholarship on popular music, place and cultural identity. As a result, it tackles a vast array of different topics including authenticity, nationalism, scenes, genre formation, tourism, ownership and globalisation. Working from a background in geography more generally, Connell and Gibson's main argument is that the rise of globalisation does not mean that geography is culturally unimportant, rather that both the global *and* the local are important, and that the local is in fact even more important in the global context.

Regarding the use of music as a multi-modal form of communication, they write that "popular music is much more than soundtrack alone: images of lifestyles, places and particularly performers are enhanced by live performance, record and CD sleeves and music video" (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p.84). It is suggested that a focus on lyrics can be very fruitful when investigating place as a feature of popular music, as "nothing should more closely signify the relationship between music, place and identity than the words of songs" (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p.71); however, it is only in connection with other modes of communication that "popular music has been pervasive enough to create enduring images" (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p. 88). The authors contend that "music offers the experience of other realms, imaginary and imagined places… and new destinations" (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p.89), writing that "themes of place in popular music—nostalgia for lost or distant places, dreams of 'making it' elsewhere, concerns over problem places, or simply evocations of idyllic landscapes—are all part of the ability of music to transport listeners away from their ordinary lives" (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p.73). The idea that popular music and its associated cultures and subcultures are able to inform the popular image of a place, local or foreign, is already widely accepted in popular music studies. This sense of music allowing an experience of a new destination supports my argument that the popular images of California function in a way which allows an equivalent to the experience of the (un)real place.

Studies of music and heritage indicate that intangible qualities of place are important for cultural memory. The collection of essays presented in the book *Music and Heritage: New Perspectives on Place-making and Sonic Identity* (Maloney & Schofield, eds., 2021) demonstrate how musical activity can be shaped by the place in which it happens and how, in turn, the music-making shapes the place. Places themselves are described as "palimpsests" (Maloney &

Schofield, eds., 2021, p. xvi); they are built upon, modified, and repurposed over time, resulting in a complex layering of histories, cultures, and identities. Places may also serve different purposes or provide different qualities, both tangible and intangible, for different communities at the same time.

The relationship that music has with images of place is explored from the perspective of popular music tourism in Les Roberts' article "Marketing Musicscapes, or the Political Economy of Contagious Magic" (2014). Roberts suggests that, based on economic impact, the draw of popular music tourism is generally quite minimal. "Liverpool's capacity to trade on its Beatles heritage" (Roberts, 2014, p.18), Roberts says, marks it out as a notable exception to the rule. Roberts' main aim in the article is to assert that, while the individual draw of many niche sites of popular music tourism is minimal, "they can be tapped as one of many reservoirs of symbolic capital cities or regions might have at their disposal" (Roberts, 2014, p. 18). What Roberts suggests here is that connecting music artists or musical scenes to physical locations is valuable because it adds to the aura of a particular place.

Sara Cohen's *Decline, Renewal and the City in Popular Music Culture: Beyond the Beatles* (2007) covers a wide range of topics exploring the connections between popular music and the city of Liverpool, including the development of cultural policy at local government level, the impact of redevelopments on local diversity, the complex history of immigration to the city, the music industry, and tourism, amongst others. Cohen addresses the complex challenge of defining the specific nature of the 'Liverpool sound,' ultimately critiquing the notion of a definitive local sound as it promotes "an essentialist view of music" and "suggests that cities can have a 'natural', 'authentic' sound" (Cohen, 2007, p.68). However, Cohen also contends that the notion

of a local sound can be seen as having arisen in collusion with “familiar local narratives and stereotypes” (Cohen, 2007, p.66). While I do not intend to investigate or attempt to uncover a definitive California sound, the connection Cohen draws here between the meaning of music and familiar narratives leads towards further discussion of stories and myth later in this section. Cohen also discusses at length the delivery of cultural developments in the city, revealing that how Beatles tourism influenced the city's symbolic identity, sparking disputes over ownership and portrayal of Liverpool's culture.

Cities like Liverpool, which can be said to trade on their musical heritage, are often referred to as music cities. In the introduction to her book *The Great Music City* (2019), Andrea Baker asks a straightforward and useful question - what is a ‘Music City’? “Is a music city a place of memory embedded in public and private spaces and venues? Is it a location in regional and global networks? Or is a music city an arena wherein music communities form and reproduce themselves?” (Baker, 2019, p.4). These elements can be seen as some of the “reservoirs of symbolic capital” (Roberts, 2014, p. 18) on which Roberts focused. Baker concludes that a ‘Music City’ is all of these things. A ‘Music City’ is therefore a place which is seen to rely predominantly on its music-related symbolic capital. The two most prominent cities of California, Los Angeles and San Francisco, can be demonstrated to fulfil all of these criteria. Along with the references to the state of California in this essay I frequently refer to the cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco, while other California locales appear much less frequently. The decision to focus on these locales so strongly was forced by the study of music in the state - there is simply more music made in and about these places than any other specific cities of California. These places are two of the most recognisable music cities, with some of the most remarkable music histories, in the world.

Interestingly, a previous study of the factors which create successful music cities, *Mastering of a Music City* (Terrill, et al., 2015), does not include any of California's cities. Success here is largely defined as providing "economic, employment, cultural and social benefits" (Terrill, et al., 2015, p.5). Instead, the list of 27 world cities includes the following eight from the United States of America: New York City, New York; Austin, Texas; both Nashville and Memphis in Tennessee; New Orleans, Louisiana; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; and Seattle, Washington. The only mention that the state of California receives, in fact, is to give due respect to the immensely popular and profitable Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, known simply as 'Coachella.' *Mastering of a Music City* (2015) takes a holistic view of musical activity in urban areas from a mainly political and economic point of view, and their choice of locations for study therefore suggests that there is more to be learned from a smaller and more focused Music City such as Nashville, Tennessee than from a sprawling megalopolis like Los Angeles. The authors state that "Nashville, famous as 'Music City', in 2014 welcomed approximately 13 million visitors who contributed over US$5bn in revenue, creating 50,000 jobs. While the contribution of music to that figure is not broken down, attractions like the Grand Ole Opry almost certainly make music the city's main tourist draw" (Terrill, et al. 2015, p.24). Los Angeles has so many parallel draws for tourists, such as films and fashion, that it would be near impossible to isolate the contribution of music from the pack, making such a study extremely difficult. We can say for certain, however, that music is a huge draw for leisure and tourism in Los Angeles. Using figures from the World Cities Culture Report, commissioned by the Mayor of London's Office - first by Boris Johnson (2012, 2013) and later Sadiq Khan (2018) - we see that Los Angeles has maintained a high number

of live music venues. In 2012 the city came top of the list with 510 venues, that number dropping to a still respectable 409 in the 2018 report.

While the idea of the music city is useful to demonstrate a deep, resounding connection with both music in practice and music as heritage in a particular place, my interest is in narratives and myths because I aim to investigate how people understand places at a distance or understand places of which they have no first-hand experience. Studies of popular music tourism and heritage are generally invested in the physical, tangible connections with places and, while even these physical connections have their own myths, this diverts too far from the focus of my investigation.

Following the line of inquiry into the topic of popular music and place led me to literature on the geography of music in the United States of America. A well established volume on this topic is *The Sounds of People and Places: A Geography of American Folk and Popular Music,* edited by George O. Carney. Its third edition, published in 1994, became a classroom anthology for the study of the cultural geography of music. Divided into four parts, the first three deal broadly with the origins and diffusion of popular music styles across the United States. The final section is focussed on "The Role of Place in American Folk and Popular Music" (Carney, 1994, p.251), a title which was altered from "Perception of Places in Folk and Popular Music" in the book's first edition in 1987.

In the chapter "Texas (When I Die): National Identity and Images of Place in Canadian Country Music Broadcasts", John C. Lehr writes about the unique issues of national identity in Canadian country music because of the country's geographical position. Canada's

neighbour, the United States of America, is the origin nation of country music and contains within it the most recognisable locations of country music; Texas and Tennessee are given as examples by the author. From 1970, in an effort to safeguard and strengthen the cultural fabric of Canada, the Canadian Radio-Television Commission required TV and radio broadcasts to attain a minimum level of Canadian content. It is in this particular setting that the author examines the success of this initiative in an effort to "determine whether the Canadian content regulations were effective in directing the attention of Canadians to Canadian places, in developing images of Canada and its regions, and building a sense of national identity" (Lehr, 1994, p.277). In undertaking this investigation, Lehr uses lyrical analysis to uncover images of place in the content of popular music. This approach is useful as the presence of these references in lyrics is a good indicator of the presence of these ideas in society.

Lehr discovers some robust evidence for the promotion of mythologies of Canadian places, remarking, for instance, that "since the late 1960s Canadian songwriters have begun to employ the prairies and Alberta as an image with complex structures similar in some ways to that of Texas or Tennessee in the United States" (Lehr, 1994, p.285) Lehr suggests that "the [Canadian] West is used as a surrogate for the ideal, in much the same way as California was by the writers of popular music in the mid-1960s" (Lehr, 1994, p.285). However, the mythic strength of American country music locales, in conjunction with the economic strength of the American country music markets, is demonstrated to be a tough obstacle to overcome. One key example provided by the author is Canadian country singer Tracy Lynn's cover version of "When I Die, Just Let Me Go to Texas," a recording accepted as 'Canadian content' by the Canadian Radio-Television Commission regulations: "While there may have been economic benefits from recording and

playing this song in Canada, the lyrics scarcely contributed to the building of a Canadian self-image, and the cause of cultural nationalism was not much furthered" (Lehr, 1994, p.283). The author refers to the popular images of various North American locations throughout this piece of writing, finding, for instance, Texas to be portrayed as a "kind of easygoing, macho utopia" (Lehr, 1994, p.282).

The use of the term utopia here is worth consideration as it refers to an imagined, ideal place or society, typically depicted as having an abundance of desirable qualities, such as social harmony, political stability, and economic prosperity. This is related to the mythologised view as California has often been associated with the concept of utopia, particularly in popular culture and media. The state has been portrayed as a land of opportunity, with a beautiful climate, stunning natural landscapes, and a diverse population that welcomes and celebrates differences. However, the idea of utopia can also be seen as unrealistic and unattainable, as it tends to ignore the complexities of human nature and the challenges of real-world problems. Kenneth Olwig warns against abstract utopian visions of the future that have become so rationalized and idealized that they are unattainable, like a 'no place.' Utopia effectively displaces any meaning that is already established. Instead, Olwig suggests moving beyond the utopian and dystopian perspectives of modernism and postmodernism to a view "that human beings, as the creators of history, consciously and unconsciously create places" (Olwig, 2019, p.72).

References, in the field of geography, to the generalised, mythologised character of real locations provoked my further research in cultural geography and particularly the topic of place-myth. To establish the concept of a place-myth, it is useful to first understand what is meant by myth since I use the term throughout this piece of writing, especially when talking about the

wider place-myths of California. Myth, in its most common use, is a widely held idea or explanation which is untrue or unproven. It is from the field of semiotics that I have drawn my own understanding of the term myth. While "popular usage of the term 'myth' suggests that it refers to beliefs which are demonstrably false," it is important to recognise that "the semiotic use of the term does not necessarily suggest this" (Chandler, 2002, p.143).

Gilles Deleuze argues that signs are not just simple representations of pre-existing meanings, but rather, they actively participate in the creation of meaning. According to Deleuze, the relationship between signifiers and signifieds is not fixed or predetermined, but rather, it is open to interpretation and subject to change over time. This sense of creation and fluidity is important to the following discussion of myth as it highlights the function of signs as an active system of communication. Deleuze also discusses the idea of a 'sign regime,' which refers to the dominant system of signs and meanings within a given culture or society. He suggests that sign regimes are not neutral or objective but are instead shaped by social and historical forces (Deleuze, 2004).

Roland Barthes defines myth as a system of communication and argues that this communication is not limited to spoken language and written text. Myth is a second-order semiotic system; it takes an already constituted sign and turns it into a signifier. Barthes' example is a magazine cover which shows a black soldier saluting the French flag. At the level of first-order language, this picture is a signifier (an image) which denotes an event (a soldier saluting a flag). But at the second-order mythological level, it signifies something else: the idea of France as a great and diverse empire, free from discrimination (Barthes, 1972, p. 115).

Barthes asserts that the function of myths is to naturalise socially constructed notions and narratives. In the process of mythologising, these notions, constructed from dominant cultural and historical values, are taken unquestioningly as given within a particular culture. According to Barthes, someone who consumes a myth – in the example of the magazine cover that someone might be the average magazine reader – does not see its construction as a myth. The image simply stands in for the essence it signifies. In the image of the saluting soldier on the magazine cover, for instance, they might see the essence of patriotism, or that of French imperialism. Not understanding the construction of the myth, they are convinced that what they have seen is reality. This, for Barthes, is the ideological function of myth (Barthes, 1972, p.115). Conceptualising myth as a system of signs in this way leads to the understanding that myth can function to make signs appear natural, static or total, often by reducing the complexity of the phenomenon to a few distinctive traits which come to stand in for, and define, the whole.

Barthes' semiotic analysis of myth is politically motivated, attempting to uncover the constructs behind social realities, and his theories have influenced many scholars in a variety of disciplines. Notably, this perspective on myth underlies many revisionist histories. One such example is Kenneth Rose's book *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II* (2008), which challenges established ideas about the wartime Greatest Generation, a group frequently celebrated for unparalleled unity and patriotism in the face of threat from Nazi Germany and Japan. Rose suggests why this kind of social construction can be dangerous, explaining that in the case of myths about unity during conflict, "it leaves behind the impression that war draws all people closer together" (Rose, 2008, p. 254). By bringing to light some less well represented events as well as seeking new perspectives on others, the author

demonstrates a more balanced representation of the period and contends that the Greatest Generation is not reality. It is instead a myth of unity and heroism created several decades after the events in popular histories and biographies such as *The Greatest Generation* (1998) by journalist Tom Brokaw. In examples like this it is made clear that myths are socially constructed and that they can become powerful elements in our perception of, or memory of, reality.

When writing *Introduction to Communication Studies*, John Fiske chose to define myth as "a story by which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature" (Fiske, 2011, p.82). This is a more romantic perspective on myth than that of Barthes, bringing the definition of myth closer in line with the idea of myths and legends. However, the suggestion that myth is story is rather illuminating and provides an analogy for the way that myth operates. Myths are not only tools of capitalism, or of the military-industrial complex, but they exist everywhere, helping to shape and reinforce the values and beliefs that make up any particular ideology.

John Shepherd and David Buckley conclude in the *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World Vol.I* entry for 'Myth' that "myth and popular music intersect in a number of ways… one constant remains: the necessity and ability of myth as manifest in popular music and its history to help people make acceptable and workable sense of the world in which they live" (2003, p.287). Myths are the stories that we tell, and the stories that we hear, which help us to understand the world in which we live. They allow us to break down complex phenomena into digestible chunks; these individual images give us glimpses of reality or history that in turn stand in for that reality or history. Larger and larger collections of these images can stand in for larger and larger realities and histories, amounting to what can appear to be, but never truly is, the 'whole picture' or a thorough understanding, or even experience, of a particular phenomenon.

Jean Baudrillard, a post-structuralist known for his analysis of media and contemporary culture, takes this idea of the unreality of myth further and predicts the conversion of reality into empty signs which hold "no relation to any reality whatsoever: [they are their] own pure simulacrum" (1983, p. 10). Myths appear to gestate easily in the mass media of popular culture. One reason for this, Baudrillard suggests, is that mass communication does not allow for a dialogue between the media and its audience: mass communication is one way. For Baudrillard, it is this code of one-way communication that makes the mass media oppressive, leading to the view that the mass media does not possess intrinsic liberating or democratic potential (1979). The transformation of reality into image in the age of mass media is a prominent concern for postmodernists. Ethnomusicologist Veit Erlmann suggests that images have completed their transition into units of culture: "in the new global culture, it is things and increasingly also images – designed, produced, and marketed to represent an experience – that become the basic, universally valid units of culture" (1996, p. 478).

The replacement of real experiences by representations is reflected in Arjun Appadurai's description of what he calls "mediascapes," referring to the images of the world created by a variety of media, which "tend to be image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places" (Appadurai, 1990, p.299). These scripts, made up of many elements, "help to constitute narratives of the 'other'" and in doing so develop fantasies which can lead to a "desire for acquisition and movement" (Appadurai, 1990, p.299).

Myth is necessarily an elusive concept and diverging definitions of the term can be useful, particularly as the topic of myth, and the field of semiotics as a whole, is distinctly interdisciplinary. These less overtly political definitions which position myth as story or script are more directly relevant to the employment of the term in this thesis, where my interest lies in the various myths of the state of California. Appadurai's division between the 'elements' of the story and the 'scripts', or the story itself, is a very useful way to think about myth. Corresponding to my suggestion of collections of discrete images, Appadurai's description also suggests that it is not one neat image that creates our perception, rather a collage of individual images which are stitched together to create the whole myth. Understanding the function of myth in this way, my aim is to explore and document this intersection of myth, music and place.

Thinking about myths of the past in the context of the present leads me to the concept of nostalgia. Nostalgia, a term coined in 1688, initially referred to a feeling of homesickness so grave it could push someone to commit suicide (Hofer, 1934). Historically, nostalgia has been linked with feelings of separation and loss. In the early twentieth century the definition of nostalgia became part of wider social currency, moving from the memory of a lost or distant place to the sense of a bygone time. Nostalgia as a sense of the past is by no means the same as history; it is a subjective emotional condition which is based on memory.

Nostalgia as a concept appears in many academic fields, including politics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and history. When the term nostalgia is invoked in relation to politics it carries a mostly negative connotation. Nostalgia is often deemed to be a sign of dysfunction within the wider system of politics and governance, and it is seen to serve illiberal fantasies and right-wing agendas. Interpretations of the events leading to the 2016 'Brexit' vote in

the UK cite a potent form of nostalgia mobilised in support of escaping the bureaucratic European Union and regaining the sovereignty of once-great Britain (Hatherley, 2017). At the same time in the United States, Donald Trump's US Presidential Campaign saw reliance on a call to "Make America Great Again" (Solnit, 2018).

In political terms, this type of nostalgia, reactionary nostalgia, is often seen as one half of a binary system. Reactionary nostalgia is the realm of the political right wing, informed by romanticised visions of a past golden age in which different communities were content in their place and happy to play their part for the wider good of the nation (Lilla, 2016; Bauman, 2017). This vision of a nation's past as a heterogeneous melting pot of meritocracy and opportunity lent itself very easily to Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan. This understanding of nostalgia has been useful as a perspective on Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign, discussed in chapter nine. Reagan also used the phrase "make America great again" (Reagan, 1980), epitomising the campaign's focus on a past 'golden age.' Progressive nostalgia, reactionary nostalgia's binary alternative, looks instead to the complexity of the past, favouring critical engagement over romanticised constructions.

While a lot of writing on the topic takes nostalgia as the negative attachment to one's past, or the attachment to one's own past due to negative stimulus in life in the present moment, nostalgia in common use has become synonymous with warm, positive memories, or the experiences and behaviours which elicit them. This shift in definition in turn influenced a shift in attitude in scholarship on the topic, epitomised in Svetlana Boym's book *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001). Boym suggests that nostalgia exists in two forms: restorative and reflective. Restorative nostalgia actively simplifies and mythologises history by resurrecting and establishing the icons

of cultural moments perceived to be neglected, forgotten or defeated. Implied here is an obsessive drive to reclaim and reinstate a particular imagined past. It divides communities and fuels nationalistic agendas that marginalise people. However, to simplify what is essentially reactionary nostalgia purely in this context of restorative nostalgia misses something of its complexity. Boym's reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, aims to criticise history and encourage social change. This is reminiscent of the progressive nostalgia already encountered in this discussion. In this second mode there is no desire to drag the past, imagined or otherwise, into the present. Instead, a sense of ironic dislocation, an acknowledgment that the 'good old days' never really existed at all, allows for ambivalence in perspective and has the potential to inspire critique and effect change in the present. Illuminating in many ways, particularly in revealing that nostalgia does not simply have one discrete function, this duality leaves little space for the engagement with nostalgia as a means to evoke a sense of comfort or familiarity.

Working on the subject of nostalgia as a commercial force, S.D. Chrostowska (2010) identified three types of nostalgia: Capitalist, romantic and philosophical. Capitalist nostalgia, the main focus for Chrostowska, "issues from an economy of representations simulating … lost pasts, indeed, lost temporalities" (2010, p.64). Similarly to Boym's restorative nostalgia, Chrostowska's capitalist nostalgia suspends consumers in a state of unattainable desire. However, the goal is not to actually go back in time, or, indeed, to drag the past into the present, but instead to hang in stasis, the longing for the past remaining unfulfilled. "Nostalgic fulfilment […] is by design provisional," wrote Chrostowska (2010, p.52), emphasising the sense of nostalgia as an unattainable desire. In this way, the commercial mass production and selling of nostalgia objects intends to persuade consumers to purchase simulations of their personal, and our collective,

histories. The popularity in recent decades of throwback products attests to this and capitalist nostalgia uses the connotations of historical form as leverage in marketing. What Chrostowska calls romantic nostalgia differs from capitalist nostalgia as the past is experienced as irretrievable. Philosophical nostalgia in turn makes the irretrievable past of romantic nostalgia the focus for insight. Like Boym's reflective nostalgia, Chrostowska's concepts of romantic and philosophical nostalgia maintain a sense of dislocation from the past, allowing for ambivalence in the mode of romantic nostalgia and having the potential to affect critical change in the present in the mode of philosophical nostalgia. Chrostowska's concept of capitalist, or consumerist, nostalgia is more useful when thinking about the production and consumption of California place-myth than the decidedly political concept of restorative nostalgia in Boym's work.

Studies of nostalgia marketing, or retro marketing as it is also called, also suggest that nostalgia can be evoked from both direct and indirect experiences. Direct experiences consist of experiences gained or acquired through personal interactions and experiences, while indirect experiences consist of experiences acquired from social groups and media sources (Keskin & Memis, 2011; Rousseau & Venter, 1999). Benjamin Halligan's contribution to the *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture* (2011) on the topic of nostalgia suggests that nostalgia "has emerged as a pre-eminent, if not the pre-eminent, commercial category." Rather than referring to a particular time or period, commercial nostalgia is a mode targeted towards developing and reproducing a familiar language for the main consumers. This semiotic perspective on nostalgia leads Halligan to conclude that, as new waves of nostalgic interest build on top of the existing nostalgia, the signifiers of nostalgia come to exist without a recollection or historical sense of what it was that is actually being signified. This is clearly in parallel to the concept of the empty sign.

The particular relationship between myth and place that is of interest to me, specifically the mythic representation and perception of a real place, is widely referred to as place-myth. The concept of place-myth appears in the book *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (1991) by Rob Shields and is shown to function in the same way as my claims about myth in general. Shields' overarching point is that the spatial is a social construct and his primary focus is the use of stereotyped images of geographical areas or regions in everyday discourse. Considering the cases of Brighton, Niagara Falls, the Canadian North and the North of England using varied sources such as socio-economic data, tourist board surveys, and popular literature, film and television, he contends that the names we use when talking about places rarely refer directly to that location. Instead, they draw together a complex of images that reflect and stand in for reality. The main process of this social construction is referred to as place-myth and image-myth. Shields defines place-myth as a collection or set of place-images, where the wider connotations invoked by these place-images are image-myths. Place-images are "the various discrete meanings associated with real places or regions regardless of their character in reality. Images, being partial and often either exaggerated or understated […] result from stereotyping […] or from prejudices towards places or their inhabitants" (Shields, 1991, p. 60). Collected together, these place-images form place-myths which hold a "communication value as conventions circulating in a discursive economy" (Shields, 1991, p. 61). This idea of communication value speaks to a subtlety in the function of myth; myths are not simply stories which lie dormant, but rather are better framed as the stories *we tell*. In this sense, a myth continues to have a life after its initial reception. It is subject to dissemination, transformation, or even discredit. The most ubiquitous myths "become accepted in common parlance" (Shields, 1991, p.61).

Discussing studies of the relationship between music and place broadly, Andy Bennett observes that these have generally focussed on "the impact of local socio-economic conditions upon music-making activities, the urban narratives of place and identity constructed by local musicians, the relationship between place, music and ethnic identity, and the way globally circulated popular music genres are appropriated, re-worked and inscribed with local meanings" (2002, p.88). Using the term 'urban mythscape,' derived from Appadurai's (1990) work, Bennett suggests a perspective on music and place which acknowledges the potential of individuals to "construct particular, and often highly romantic, ideas and images concerning the nature of places" (p.89). This highlights both the romantic nature and the communication value of mythscapes. Bennett uses this perspective to examine how fans of the Canterbury Sound have created a "retrospective and 'virtual' scene" and argues that this produces Canterbury itself as a mythscape, or "a space which is mythologized as in some way informing the essential spirit of a body of live and recorded music" (p.98).

Hill (2016) uses the concepts of mediascape and mythscape to describe enduring, yet shallow, ideas about the countercultural Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco in the latter half of the 1960s. Hill identifies that the mediascape of Haight-Ashbury, the narrow way in which the area was presented in a variety of media, attracted many people to the area even after the originators of Haight-Ashbury's culture had moved on. As mediascapes are accounts of strips of reality, there is a reliance upon an existing reality in their formation. In the absence of that reality, the absence of the 'real' counterculture, Hill argues that the Haight-Ashbury became a mythscape. This highlights a key distinction between mediascape and mythscape. While mediascapes are narrow, narrative-based, and superficial, they are, in a sense, anchored by their relation to, and

representation of, a reality. Mythscapes, on the other hand, exist as ideas and do not require a corresponding reality in order to thrive.

The concept of place-myth has been useful for a variety of work in a variety of disciplines. *Challenging a Place Myth: New Zealand's Clean Green Image Meets the Biotechnology Revolution* (Coyle & Fairweather, 2005) is a fascinating demonstration of the type of negotiation that takes place when the particular values which are foregrounded in a place-myth are brought into question with the appearance of new information. The established place-myth here, according to Coyle and Fairweather, is that of a "clean green New Zealand" (Coyle & Fairweather, 2005, p. 148). This place-myth is used in "the marketing of New Zealand to the global community" but is also representative of a national identity. The authors propose that this myth is being challenged by a new government policy which aims to recreate the country as a forerunner in biotechnology. Through focus groups, the researchers discovered that some respondents mobilised the clean green place-myth in order to defend their reluctance to pursue biotechnology nationally. Alternately, other participants saw the possibility for co-evolution of the place myths, with biotechnology enabling the re-construction of a 'picture-perfect', clean green country. This demonstrates how place-myth is subject to transformations through negotiation and that the construction of any myth is the result of interpretation.

Duncan Light's work on the Transylvania place myth (2008) demonstrates how myths are constructed and negotiated in the objects of popular culture. Light describes the Transylvania of the Western imagination as a backward and sinister place, wrapped up in the supernatural, and provides many examples of texts which have fueled this particular place-myth. The most famous of these, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Light credits with the invention of

Transylvania as we might imagine it: “Bram Stoker was not describing Transylvania; instead he was effectively inventing it. His account of Transylvania owed more to his imagination than to any first-hand experience of the region” (Light, 2008, p.10). This representation, Light adds, “reveals much about specifically British attitudes and fears at the end of the nineteenth century” (Light, 2008, p.11) and reveals much less about Transylvania itself. Had the novel not been successful, Light asserts, then Transylvania itself “would be known not as an ominous place haunted by vampires and the supernatural but simply as a mountainous region of contemporary Romania” (Light, 2008, p.12). This underscores the important consideration in the creation of place-myths, and of myths in general, that, like Baudrillard’s simulacrum (1983), the myth does not need to have a grounding in reality.

The edited volume *Urban Space and Representation* (Balshaw & Kennedy, 2000) demonstrates that the study of place-myth in cultural geography is necessarily interdisciplinary: place-myths are, in some small part, constructed by the place itself, but the majority of myth-making happens in representation of place in a variety of media. The main areas of cross-pollination of ideas appear to be literary, film and cultural studies. While popular music studies has much in common with these fields, it does not feature as strongly, indicating that popular music lacks representation in this area. Similarly, a look at the type of examples used for the representation of the city - literature, film, architecture, painting, tourist guides, postcards, photography, city plans - reveals a distinct lack of music. These studies demonstrate that there is much value to uncovering the power of popular media in representation and myth-making, however they also highlight a need for more work on the intersection of popular music and myth.

Maria Balshaw's chapter "Elegies to Harlem: *Looking for Langston* and *Jazz*" (Balshaw, 2000) is about the representation of gender, sexuality, race and urban identity in two texts, Toni Morrison's 1992 novel *Jazz* and Isaac Julien's 1989 film *Looking for Langston*, both set in the Harlem neighbourhood of New York City in the 1920s. Balshaw offers some consideration of the function of music in representing place: a particular scene in *Looking for Langston*, Balshaw says, is established by "situating itself in relation to […] a number of clearly recognisable cultural discourses: stereotypes of Jazz Age Harlem […] . On the soundtrack Bessie Smith sings 'Freakish Man'" (Balshaw, 2000, p. 87). Balshaw also mentions the "gay blues singers whose songs make up the soundtrack to the film" (Balshaw, 2000, p. 86). The soundtrack is somewhat overlooked as an add-on to the film itself, rather than an integral part of it. Considering the accompanying music may have extended the reach of the author's evidence; the film and its soundtrack have more myth-making power together than when taken separately. However, this could also be seen as indicating the signifying power of music; this simple stating of an artist's name or a song title, as in the case of Balshaw's mention of Bessie Smith in this example, can provide a plethora of sounds and images to one who is familiar with that body of musical work.

There is a lot of valuable scholarship on representations of California in the fields of film and literature. When asked in 2016 about the title of the millions-selling Eagles album *Hotel California* (1979), Eagles member Don Henley said that "the word, 'California,' carries with it all kinds of connotations, powerful imagery, mystique, etc., that fires the imaginations of people in all corners of the globe. There's a built-in mythology that comes with that word, an American cultural mythology that has been created by both the film and the music industry" (Henley, quoted in Browne, 2016). Films, literature and popular music function similarly in the construction of

myth, so it has been beneficial to understand some of the perspectives on this topic from the field of film studies. The film industry itself, based in large part in Southern California, is swathed in its own mythic representations and has been a draw for people moving to the state.

In the book *Go West, Young Women: The Rise of Early Hollywood* (2013), Hilary A. Hallett offers a fascinating history of the attraction of young women to Hollywood in the early twentieth century. According to Hallett, women flocked to the growing town and swelled the film industry's growing workforce. While some pioneers emerged as actors, writers, publicists and producers, many more moved into service and office positions in the growing tourist and real estate industries. For all of these women, both pioneers and consumers, Hallett suggests, the allure and magic of the cinema promised a form of fulfilment that appealed to a uniquely feminine desire. Widespread interest in the film industry and in the celebrity culture of Hollywood helped to boost the appeal of migrating to California.

While Hollywood is worthy of further consideration as a component of California place-myths and the media of film in general features as a tangential theme throughout this piece of writing, evidenced strongly by inclusion of important films such as *Gidget* (1959), I have chosen not to investigate this as a theme in and of itself for two reasons. First is that my topic, the matter at hand, is popular music; unpicking the impact of music, from amongst the thousands of films and millions of newspaper column inches, upon the wider myths of Hollywood itself is beyond the scope of this thesis. The second reason for not exploring Hollywood and its myths further is that there is already a vast repository of writing on exactly this topic. Film is seen as the principal conduit of popular mythology in the modern era, largely because "in film, the signifier and the signified are almost identical" (Monaco, 1981, p.127).

Much writing on the topic considers the society which spawns the films, such as Robert Brustein's insightful article "The New Hollywood: Myth and Anti-Myth" (1959), covering the changing style of film in Hollywood at the end of the 1950s, which suggests that the new fascination in films with rebels, down-and-outs, "grubbiness and poverty" was due to the relative prosperity of the majority of the American population at that point in time. There is also a pot of material, equally plentiful, about the evolving relationship between particular genres of film and American ways of life, aspirations and myth. Crime movies and film noir appear to be the most theorised, standing *Dreams and Dead Ends: The American Gangster Film* (Shadoian, 2003) and *Somewhere in the Night: Film Noir and the American City* (Christopher, 1997) as just two examples.

There is valuable writing about the representation of California and its locales in various forms of media and I have found that scholarship on the topic of California's representation in film and literature to be most informative for my own studies. Dana Polan (2000) finds in his investigation of the representation of California in Hollywood cinema that there is not a "single overriding cultural representation of California in film. The state's image has been in flux across genres and as the film industry responds to changing social conditions" (Polan, 2000, p.130). Citing first the optimism of representations of California in cartoons of the 1950s and 60s, Polan moves on to discuss a darker vision of California as central to film noir, demonstrating a change of perspective between genres. Through his reading of examples, Polan demonstrates a variety of themes present in film representations of California, including Hollywood's exploitation of the pioneer myth, optimistic visions of California as a migratory destination, and the rise of Hollywood and its own particular set of myths. However, Polan also uncovers many contrary themes,

including stories of outsiders or of broken dreams. For example, in his persuasive discussion of *Psycho* (1960) as a California film influenced by noir, Polan asserts that "unlike the exuberant and eternal sunshine that greets voyagers at the border in boosterist mythology, *Psycho*'s California rain", which causes a character to veer their car and crash off the road, "is a cruel commentary on pioneer dreams" (2000, p.148). Polan's conclusion, that there is not one representation of California which is sufficient to summarise the complex history of the state's portrayal in Hollywood films, uncovers meaning in the fact that "no single image is adequate" (2000, p.149). The light and dark are both part of California's ever-evolving mythology and that duality, Polan suggests, "continues to speak to the triumphs, tragedies, and contradictions in the California experience" (2000, p.150).

Similarly, in David Fine's *Imagining Los Angeles* (2000), the city of Los Angeles is cast in literary works as both the best and worst of twentieth-century America. Focussing on the work of several Los Angeles-related writers, including F. Scott Fitzgerald and Luis Valdez, Fine narrates a history of the city through nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. He charts an evolution from its origins as an eighteenth-century Mexican outpost, through the boosterism which grew Los Angeles as a promotional city, to its more contemporary representation as a centre of the popular culture industry. From its beginnings as a promotional city, Fine suggests, Los Angeles grew on speculation. Themes of fantasy and kitsch feature strongly in its architecture and its literature. In this land of promise and novelty, a certain darkness emerges, exemplified in the noir literature of the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

California and its locales have been represented in a variety of different ways throughout their history and understanding this duality of light and dark, or of promise and

discontent, as a characteristic of California place-myths helped make sense of many musical texts cited in this thesis. For instance, the earliest popular music which features in this thesis is a collection of songs about the California Gold Rush in the late 1840s. Implicit in the songs is the promise of gold in California, the impulse to head out and strike rich which inspired the miners' journey to the state, but the narratives, more often than not, revolve around the harsh realities of life in the mines and the eventual failure of the endeavour. Themes of broken dreams or of toil not being rewarded recur throughout this thesis.

My work centres on representations of California found in the media of popular culture, in particular music, and as such it is important to understand the history of the state of California itself. This is presented most thoroughly and usefully in the book series written by the state's most prominent historian, Kevin Starr. The collection is known as *Americans and the California Dream*, also the name of the first book in the series, and this title outlines an interest in California's making in the national imagination. The series is informative and scholarly, with details of both well-known and lesser-known people and events across a span of more than 100 years. One thing this collection reveals is that, throughout its history, California has meant different things in the national, and international, imagination. It is these changing impressions of the state which have made California a useful and productive focus for my research. Most interestingly, California is the home of the California Dream. The California Dream is, in general, the belief that life in California is somehow better than life elsewhere, or the psychological motivation for moving to the state; expectation that the move will be rewarded with a better quality of life. In *Into the West: the Story of its People*, Walter Nugent states that, across the history of the state, "the California Dream has been the motivator of health seekers, retirees, entrepreneurs, hedonists,

hippies, escapees from Jim Crow or foreign repression, looking (with or without much accurate information) for a land of opportunity and 'the good life'" (Nugent, 1999, p.5). While the California Dream can, at first glance, appear to be a fixed, homogenous concept, this is not the case. The California Dream, like other place-myths, is constructed from other various myths about the place, which in turn are constructed from all kinds of associations and experiences. Aside from being the centre of the California Dream, California has also proven to be the ideal focus for my research because of the sheer abundance of musical material which lends itself for study. Over the century and a half which constituted the initial timeline of research, many hundreds, if not thousands, of songs have been written about California. Thousands more make some small reference to the state. Many more still have been influenced, at least in some small way, by the place, including those thousands of songs composed within California's borders.

In 1998, David Schkade and Daniel Kahneman conducted a study which revealed an interesting imbalance with expectations of 'life satisfaction' in the Midwestern United States and in California. The study goes some way to demonstrate the stereotype that California residents are happier than those in other states is widely recognised in the USA and around the world. The researchers had students from the Midwest and from Southern California rate their satisfaction with various aspects of life for themselves and their expectations of satisfaction for someone similar from the opposite region. What they found was that overall life satisfaction was very similar for both regions when subjects considered their own experiences. However, when asked to think about life satisfaction for someone from the opposite region, participants expected those from California to be more satisfied than those from the Midwest. The researchers were able to show that "satisfaction with climate and with cultural opportunities" (Schkade & Kahneman, 1998, p.36)

were the main areas that influenced the prediction of a higher life satisfaction for Californians. The notion that the climate is better in California, or that there are greater cultural opportunities to be had there, are just some of many elements which have constituted, and continue to constitute, various place-myths of California.

1.3. Literature Summary

Books such as *Music, Space and Place* (Whiteley, Bennett and Hawkins, eds., 2004) and *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place* (Connell and Gibson, 2003) offer writing from a variety of perspectives on the relationship between popular music and the identity and representation of people in particular places. These texts demonstrate the value in investigating how popular music can inform and affect identity and representation. While only treated tangentially, in relation to the topic of human identity, the idea that popular music and its associated cultures and subcultures are able to inform wider representations of a place itself, local or foreign, recurs throughout. Daynes (2004) discusses the African diaspora as a 'spatial elsewhere,' illuminating my own position that California place-myths stand in for our experience of the real place, allowing us a connection to an otherwise unknown 'elsewhere'.

The concept of a 'music city' (Baker, 2019) is helpful to an understanding of the relationship of place with both music in practice and music as heritage. Roberts (2014) suggests that connecting music artists or musical scenes to physical locations is valuable because it adds to the aura of a particular place. While this diverts somewhat from my main line of enquiry, it is useful to consider the ways in which various locales may use their music-related symbolic capital.

Work from the discipline of cultural geography which makes reference to the generalised and mythologised character of a place led me to the concept of place-myth, an idea based in the semiological understanding of myth. The concept of place-myth has been invaluable in understanding my own research area and I use the term throughout the thesis. Myth is a second-order semiotic system; it takes an already constituted sign and turns it into a signifier. Myth, as it is established by Barthes (1971), functions to make signs appear natural, static or total, often by reducing the complexity of the phenomenon to a few distinctive traits which come to stand in for, and define, the whole. The concept of myth is important in critical history and revisionist histories often use this perspective to uncover socially constructed elements in our perception of, or memory of, reality. In the work of Fiske (2011) and Shepherd and Buckley (2003) on the topic of myth, myths exist as the stories that we hear, and those that we share, which help us to understand the world that we live in. By breaking down complex phenomena into digestible chunks, myths provide glimpses of reality or history that in turn stand in for that reality or history. These definitions are most useful to the work in this thesis. Baudrillard (1983) predicts the conversion of reality into empty signs and Erlmann (1996) subsequently suggests that we have already crossed the rubicon. Discourse on nostalgia also leads to conclusions which are similar to the concept of the empty sign: Halligan (2011) states that, as new waves of nostalgic interest build on top of the existing nostalgia, the signifiers of nostalgia come to exist without a recollection or historical sense of what it was that is actually being signified.

Appadurai (1990) reflects this concept of the replacement of reality by representations with his concept of ‘mediascapes.’ Appadurai’s division between elements of the story and the story itself is a very useful way to think about myth; it is not one neat image that

informs our perception of something, rather it is a collage of individual images which are brought together to create the whole picture. Hill (2016) also recognises the capacity of mediascapes to inspire acquisition and movement, as well as the reliance upon an existing reality in the formation of mediascapes. This demonstrates a distinction between mediascapes and mythscapes, where mythscapes exist primarily as ideas and do not require a corresponding reality in order to thrive.

Bennett's (2002) perspective acknowledges the potential of individuals to "construct particular, and often highly romantic, ideas and images concerning the nature of places" (p.89). This definition highlights both the romantic nature and the communication value of mythscapes. Bennett uses this perspective to examine how fans of the Canterbury Sound have created a "retrospective and 'virtual' scene" and argues that this produces Canterbury itself as a mythscape, or "a space which is mythologized as in some way informing the essential spirit of a body of live and recorded music" (p.98).

Studies of place-myth are concerned with intersections of myth, place and space. Shields (1991) writes that the spatial is a social construct and he argues that the names we use when talking about places, for instance 'California', rarely refer directly to that location. The name instead refers to a collection of images which stand in for reality. The individual images in the collection are place-images and the process of these images substituting for reality is place-myth. Place-images function similarly to the 'elements' (and, too, place-myths function as 'scripts') described by Appadurai (1990). These ideas have been extremely useful in understanding my own research area and, as is fully described in the following section, "Methodology," I have used these terms (place-myth and place-image) throughout the thesis. Shields (1991) places an emphasis on the communication value of place-myth and myth in general, underscoring the point that myths do

not lie dormant after their initial conception and reception. Investigation of place-myth from a variety of disciplinary perspectives has demonstrated the processes of construction and negotiation to which place-myths are subjected long after they first appear (Shields, 1991; Coyle and Fairweather, 2005; Light, 2008). I found that existing writing on the topic of California place-myths from other disciplines was informative, particularly writing about the representation of California locales in film and literature. Most illuminating was the idea of a duality of light and dark in California place-myths (Christopher, 1997; Polan, 2000; Fine, 2000). Writing on place-myth comes from a variety of disciplines; film, literature and cultural studies; and, while these studies demonstrate that there is much value to uncovering the power of popular media in representation and myth-making, they also highlight that the relationship between place-myth and popular music is underexplored in popular music studies. It is that lack of investigation which I intend to address in this thesis.

1.4. Methodology

I present a number of topics, based on individual elements, or place-images, which contribute to southern California place-myths. The terminology I have chosen to use to discuss these ideas is informed by the work of Rob Shields (1991), discussed in the previous section, and includes the terms place-image, image-myth, image-theme, and place-myth.

Place-images are the basic component parts of a wider place-myth. One of the first place-images encountered in this thesis is that of the beach, which is demonstrated to be an important place-image in the construction of southern California place-myths. The wider

connotations invoked by these place-images are image-myths. If we take the beach as the place-image in question, we can say that something to the effect of "a place where you can relax, enjoy a leisurely existence and connect with nature" might be the image-myth. As the beach is not the sole place-image ingredient in that image-myth it is useful to have the term image-theme to refer to the related nature of these elements. For instance, surfing, the bikini-clad girl, sunshine and the beach are all component place-images in the collective image-theme which I might call southern California beach culture. Place-myth I employ as the overarching term for a complete construction of the myth. A California place-myth, for instance, is what California appears to be to any given individual. In this sense, there is no definitive place-myth and so it is more useful to talk about place-myths in the plural.

In this thesis I make the case for the usefulness of place-myth in understanding how popular music contributes to representation of place, beginning in chapter two, where I examine key California place-myths which emerged before the 1960s. Beginning with songs written about the California gold rush, and people heading out west to find their fortune, I present an early place-myth of California which is based on abundance and opportunity. Many songs of the gold rush era also feature themes of broken dreams, where the move to California was not rewarded as expected. I go on to address how expressions of Spanish culture in existing settlements and the natural beauty of the undeveloped state caused many comparisons to be made between California and the Mediterranean from the time of the gold rush, and the early Americanisation of the state of California, onwards. I identify a place-myth of California as America's own Mediterranean territory which informed later conceptions of California as a natural paradise. Finally, I present the music of Woody Guthrie alongside the events of the Dust Bowl migration to argue that the

migrants were attracted in large part by existing place-myths of California and that Guthrie's lyrical themes, like the songs of the gold rush, demonstrate both the pervasiveness of California place-myths and illuminate a sense of the unreality of the California Dream.

In chapter three I present surfing and the beach as key place-images of California in the early 1960s. Illuminated by examples from the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, I demonstrate that nationally popular surfing music, with lyrics inviting the listener to surf, and movies, frequently set and filmed on California's beaches, helped establish surfing as an innocuous and fun California place-image. Along with it, the place-image of the beach, as surfing's primary environment and a popular location for other leisure activities, helped to reinforce the place-myth of the state as a unique, natural paradise. I also address the lack of diversity in this image-theme and the partial nature of place-myths more generally.

Chapter four, again supported by examples from the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, highlights the car and the suburban home as place-images of California. The suburban home effectively partners the car, in that post-war suburbia "is a creation of the automobile and could not exist without it" (Rae, 1965, p.220). I argue that the car, and automotive infrastructure more widely, became emblematic of California in the mid-twentieth century as the development of automobile infrastructure progressed much earlier in the state than elsewhere in the nation. I demonstrate that this was seen variously as positive progress, as in the freedom of private travel, and negative decline; the move from natural to artificial. Thus, I argue, a place-image, such as the car, can have both positive and negative image-myths. However, in the place-image offered by the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, the car is either a vessel for carrying surfboards to the beach or an

object of desire and admiration. These car songs clearly reinforce the positive connotations of freedom and affluence as part of the image-myth of the car.

In chapter five I demonstrate the nationwide interest in California and California lifestyles, beginning with a Life special issue which hawked the wonderful sights and sounds of California to an eager readership. Discussing the Riviera's "California Sun" (Glover, 1964) allows me to contrast this garage rock offering with the vocal surf style of the Beach Boys, ultimately arguing that in their use of group vocal harmony, the Beach Boys bring a sense of community to each of their lyrical topics. Expressed in the multi-voice arrangements of the Beach Boys, both place-images of surfing and drag racing, essentially solo undertakings, become communal activities in their image-myths and the listener is invited to join in.

Chapter six highlights the California girl as a key place-image in 1960s California. Beginning with the Beach Boys' "California Girls" (Wilson & Love, 1965), I establish the particular image-myth associated with the group's conception of a California girl in order to argue that the Beach Boys adapted and transformed existing ideas about California girls which are present in earlier popular music and a variety of media. I present examples of popular music which actively engage in dialogue with the Beach Boys' California girls as further evidence of the communication value of image-myths and place-myths, supporting the assertion that place-myths exist in a "discursive economy" (Shields, 1991, p. 61).

In chapter seven I address the place-image of the hippie, which, I contend, has diverging image-myths in Los Angeles and San Francisco. While San Francisco's hippies were embedded in a complex and nuanced system of values (Miller, 2011) and part of a distinctly

psychedelic scene, typified by the audio-visual aesthetics of psychedelic music and the widespread use of psychedelic drugs, I go on to argue that the common image-myth of California's hippies comes from a superficial mediascape, endorsed and co-opted in southern California, which relies on only the most basic hippie symbols and gestures. My discussion of the Vietnam War, a conflict which had huge impact across the entire nation, allows me to contend that, in order for specific place-images and image-themes to be accepted as part of a wider place-myth they have to mark out points of difference.

My focus in chapter eight turns to negative representations of California which surface later in the decade. First, I contend that the sentiment of broken dreams, the unreality of the myth, can be seen as a challenge to, questioning of, or outright denial of the dominant, positive place-myths. The idea that expectations of California have not been met supposes that there were clear expectations to begin with and, as such, the more voraciously these topics are broached, the more power they lend to the positive place-myths.

The final chapter presents ways in which the dominant place-myths of southern California in the early 1960s have continued to influence representations of the state. I discuss the relationship of place-myth and nostalgia in the 1980s, referring to examples of 1960s icons that had a resurgence in popularity in the 1980s, arguing that the short revival helped to reinforce a nostalgic view of the period as a golden age of Californian exceptionalism. I contend that Ronald Reagan enacted restorative nostalgia in his speeches and public appearances in the late 1970s and 1980s, particularly during his presidential campaign which relied on a drive towards restoring the past greatness of America. I go on to highlight an EP from Norwegian band Datarock, which serves as an example of engagement with existing place-myths through direct referencing of the media

they originated in. This echoes my arguments about individual place-images in the California Girls section of chapter four, but here the example more clearly refers to a more complete place-myth.

My choice to focus on a particular set of place-images and place-myths has been informed primarily by my perspective on California—my personal California place-myth. At the core of this thesis is an investigation into popular music which has influenced my own ideas about California. As such, I initially collected musical examples from my listening history which connected to my own understanding of California. I then opened my search to any and all references to California in popular music in the period from approximately 1845, or just prior to the discovery of gold in California, to the present day. I had chosen to begin here because the in-migration of Americans to California during the gold rush of 1849 began the process of Americanisation of the place. It seemed logical to begin at that juncture and to eventually present a chronological, narrative history of the interplay between popular music and the imagined California of the California Dream. However, this approach presented a number of issues and as such I have narrowed my field in a few key ways.

Most importantly, I am now chiefly focussed on a much shorter period of time: the main focus of the thesis is on California in the 1960s. The sheer volume of available material and across the original 150-year period would make it impossible to bring any depth to my thesis, making this change to a shorter period necessary. The earlier period, before the 1960s, does offer a lot of useful themes for discussion; songs written about the California Gold Rush and the people heading out west to find their fortune, music of the dust bowl migration including Woody Guthrie's Dust Bowl Ballads and the popularity of the western swing style, the 1920s jazz of Los Angeles' Central Avenue, as well as the early Spanish folk music played in California from before until well

after the Americanisation of the state. Many of the examples from this earlier period are useful to demonstrate the enduring myths of California which fuelled the California Dream, as well as to provide some background in the construction and establishment of modern images of California. As such, the first main chapter of the thesis includes an overview of key stages of development of California place-myths, between the mid-1800s and the start of the 1960s, which, I argue, continue to influence the way California is mythologised.

My choice to focus on the 1960s was influenced by the transformation of popular music itself, in the wake of a new American consumer class and the disruption of rock and roll (Gillett, 1996), and the suggestion that, in the United States, "Southern California and its associated life style [sic] utterly dominated the popular music scene" (Ford & Henderson, 1994, p.299). The following chart shows a concentration in the 1960s of commercially successful songs about California, using data from the Billboard Hot 100 year end charts. It is also interesting to note that "in-migration to California reached a peak at about the same time as these songs were popular" (Ford & Henderson, 1994, p.299).

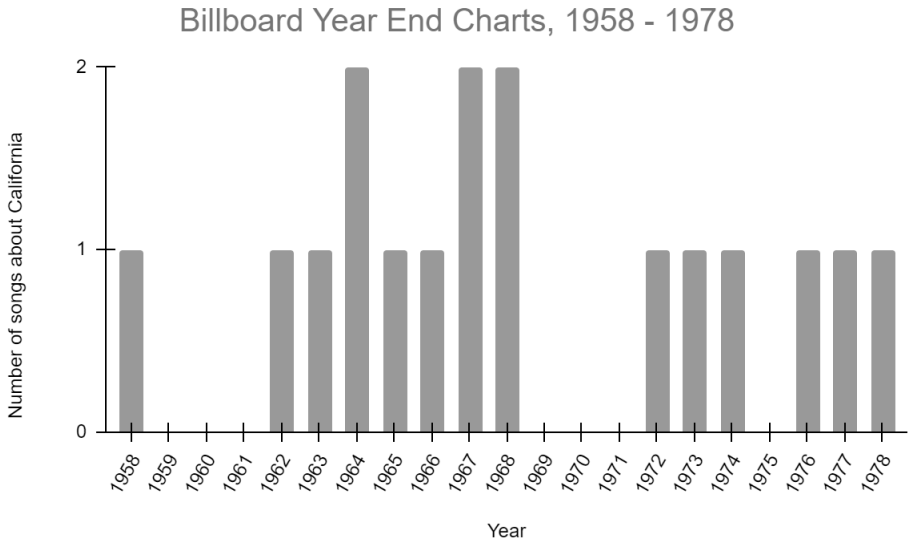

Fig. 1. Songs which reference California on Billboard Hot 100 Year-End charts (see appx. 1)

Another reason to work primarily from the 1960s onwards is that wider experience of the musical texts will be more consistent. In the earliest cases, the main source of the material is published sheet music, then on to a period of either hard-to-find or low-fidelity recordings. Forward to the 1960s and the primary source of almost all the material is audio recordings, which are, in general, readily available and of a high quality.

I also narrowed the choices of musical texts along with a definition of popular music. It has been remarked that "popular music defies precise, straightforward definition" (Shuker, 2013, p.5), and Shuker goes on to categorise definitions of the term into three diverging streams of thought: First are definitions which emphasise the 'popular;' generally that which is liked or enjoyed by many people. Second are those definitions which account for popular music on the basis that it is a commercial form. While related to the prior definition of popular, the

emphasis on the commercial performance of certain music leads to a diverging definition based on quantifying "sales, charts, radio airplay, and so forth" (Shuker, 2013, p.5). The final category of definitions is chiefly focussed on "identification by general musical and non-musical characteristics" (Ibid.). My own interpretation of the term popular music for the purposes of this thesis is most clearly related to the commercial nature of the music. As such, my initial longlist of musical texts that had influenced my California place-myth was narrowed as follows: Firstly, the song must mention, or can reasonably be assumed to mention by way of euphemistic language, California, or a specific location in California. This left me with a huge collection of songs, and so the second requirement, borne from the commercial definition of popular music, is that the song placed in the top ten of the US Billboard Hot 100 music chart between 1962 and 1972. These dates began as 1960 to 1975, but there are no other relevant hits in the years either side. Quantifying the commercial success of these pieces of music by their appearance on the Billboard charts allows me to make something of an assumption about their related success as music which has been heard, and enjoyed, by many people. A list of these songs presented in a table is available in appendix 2.

The first recording which meets the selection criteria is "Surfin' U.S.A." (Berry and Wilson) by the Beach Boys, which was released in March of 1963 as Capitol Records #4932. Backed with the B-side "Shut Down," the single reached number three on the Billboard pop charts becoming the Beach Boys' first top-ten hit. The track also placed at number one of the list of the overall top selling records Billboard Hot 100 for 1963 (*Billboard*, 1963, p.30), though later records show it at number two, after "Sugar Shack" by the Fireballs (Billboard.com, 2017). 1963 was a low-selling year for singles in the United States and the single did not initially sell a million copies. It has never been awarded an RIAA Gold Disc. The song also became popular outside of the United

States, according to Billboard. It is recorded as charting at number 34 in the United Kingdom, number nine in Australia, at number six in both Canada and Sweden, nine in Hong Kong, eight in Austria. When it was released in Japan in August 1964 it peaked at number nine. Later reissued as a single in the United States, this time backed with "The Warmth of the Sun", it again made it onto the Billboard Hot 100 chart, peaking at 36 in August 1974.

Originally written by the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson, Jan and Dean's "Surf City" (Wilson and Berry, 1963) was released in May 1963 as Liberty Records #55580. It became the first surf-related song to reach number one on national charts in the United States, remaining at the top of the Billboard Hot 100 for two weeks in July 1963. It also charted in the UK in August of the same year, reaching number 26. While Surf City is not specified as a California location in the song's lyrics, the assumption that the duo were singing about surf locales close to home in California is supported by the album cover for Jan and Dean's *Surf City and Other Swingin' Cities* (1963), which features a map marking out Surf City on the coast of Southern California.

"Little Old Lady from Pasadena" (Altfeld, Berry and Christian, 1964) was released by Jan and Dean in June 1964 as Liberty Records catalogue number #55704. The song reached number three on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. The 'Little Old Lady' in the song was based on a popular character created by Southern California Dodge Dealers for a series of ten TV commercials promoting their popular muscle cars with the tagline, "Put a Dodge in your garage, honey!" (Dodge Dealers of L.A., 1964). A Beach Boys cover version of this song appears on the *Beach Boys Concert* (1964) live record later in the same year. The first of Jan and Dean's string of seven hits in this year was another song about drag racing; "Drag City" (Berry, Christian and Wilson, 1963). While the location of the eponymous Drag City is likely to have been a California locale, there is

no evidence in the lyrics or related media to suggest exactly where it is - on that basis it was excluded from the final track list here. “Drag City” is very similar to the previous track, “Surf City.” The music remains the same and the lyrics have been altered to create one of the earliest examples of a car song in the vocal surf style.

Originally written by Henry Glover, “California Sun” was first recorded by rhythm and blues singer Joe Jones and released as Roulette #4344 in 1960 (Glover, 1960). A rhythm and blues tune featuring a surf rock styled intro, the song barely made it into the Billboard Hot 100 to peak at number 89. The cover version of the song by Indiana-based band the Rivieras (Glover, 1964), released in 1964, became much more commercially successful and peaked at number five on the Billboard Hot 100, staying on the chart for ten weeks in total. The first Rivieras single to feature this track included the song "Played On" as the A-side, with "California Sun" as the B-side. After the song received significant airplay, a second single was issued as Riviera #R-1401 with “California Sun” on the A-side.

Released as a single, Capitol Records #5464, in July 1965, the Beach Boys’ “California Girls” (Wilson and Love, 1965) peaked at number three on the Billboard Hot 100. It also made it into the top ten of national charts in many other countries around the world, making it the most globally successful Beach Boys single of their career. The song has been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame (Dillon, 2012, p.70) and featured on the *Rolling Stone* list of the greatest songs of all time (*Rolling Stone*, 2011). The song has been used many times over as accompanying music in commercials.

The Mamas and the Papas' 1965 version of "California Dreamin'" (Phillips & Phillips, 1965) is undoubtedly the best known, though it was first recorded by Barry McGuire for his album *This Precious Time*, which was not released until later that year. The story reportedly goes that Michelle and John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas wrote the song, then gave it away to producer Lou Adler who in turn passed it to Barry McGuire. The group ended up singing backing vocals on the initial recording and enjoyed the sound so much that they asked Barry McGuire if they could take the song back. He agreed, and so the Mamas and the Papas version became the first to air (Sullivan, 2013, p.483). The song was not an immediate hit upon its release in December 1965, eventually peaking at number four on the Billboard Hot 100 in March of the following year. Before the decade was out the song spawned no less than 20 cover versions from artists as varied as jazz musicians Bud Shank and Wes Montgomery, Bobby Womack, the Ventures, the Seekers, and Serbian singer Miki Jevremović, who sang a 1966 version of the song translated into Serbian, entitled "Zbogom, Kalifornijo" or "Goodbye, California." Upon its original release, the Mamas and the Papas' version of "California Dreamin'" reached number 23 on the UK pop charts. In 1997, the song was used in a UK TV commercial for the alcoholic beverage Carling Premier, which prompted Universal to re-release the single (Archer, 1997) and saw the song chart at number nine, an all-time high position.

Penned by John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas, "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)" (Phillips, 1967) was recorded as a single for Scott McKenzie. Released in 1967 on Lou Adler's Ode Records as #ZS7-103, the song was used to promote the Monterey International Pop Music Festival in June of the same year. While it peaked at number four of the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States, the song reached number one on national charts

in ten countries around the world, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, New Zealand and Norway. The song was described by the UK newspaper the *Telegraph* in 2012 as "the unofficial anthem of the counterculture movement of the 1960s, including the Hippie, Anti-Vietnam War and Flower power movements" (*Telegraph*, 2012).

"San Franciscan Nights" (Burdon, Briggs, et al., 1967) by Eric Burdon and the Animals was released as MGM #1359 in 1967. In September the song peaked at number nine in the United States on the Billboard Hot 100, followed by a number seven peak on the pop charts in the United Kingdom in November. Eric Burdon and the Animals are an English band, making them one of only two acts on this list to come from outside of North America. They were welcomed in the United States along with other British invasion groups such as the Rolling Stones and the Beatles. The recording starts with a spoken introduction encouraging European listeners to fly to San Francisco.

Otis Redding's "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" (Redding and Cropper, 1968) was released on Stax Records' Volt label as #V-157. Reaching the top of the Billboard Hot 100 in the third week of March, 1968, three months after Redding's death, the track became the first posthumous number one hit record in the United States. The album which featured the song, and shared the same title, became Redding's biggest-selling. In the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand the song reached number three on national charts. At the 1968 Grammy Awards, the song won both Best Rhythm & Blues Vocal Performance, Male and Best Rhythm & Blues Song (Merrill, 2018). In 1999, Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) announced that "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" was the sixth most-played song in the twentieth century, with over six million performances (BMI, 1999).

"Do You Know the Way to San Jose" (Bacharach and David, 1968) was composed for Dionne Warwick by Burt Bacharach, with lyrics by Hal David. Peaking at number ten on the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States, the song was also a hit internationally, reaching number eight in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada. The Bacharach-David songwriting team had already penned many of Dionne Warwick's releases by this time, including her 1962 debut single "Don't Make Me Over." The lyrics tell the story of a young woman from San José who has set her mind on returning home after failing to make it in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles. While Warwick had never been to San José at the time of recording, the song became such a popular emblem of the place that, in 2014, she was named the city's "global ambassador of goodwill" (NBCBayArea.com, 2014). For her recording of "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," Dionne Warwick won Best Contemporary Pop Vocal Performance, Female at the 1968 Grammy awards (Grammy.com, 2021).

Released in January 1972 as Reprise Records #1065, "Heart of Gold"(Young, 1972) is Neil Young's only number one hit in the United States. It reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100 in March of 1972, seven weeks after its first appearance on the chart, and entered into the top ten in national charts of at least five other countries worldwide. In 2003, *Rolling Stone* magazine ranked it No. 303 on their list of the 500 greatest songs of all time (*Rolling Stone*, 2003). Interestingly, the song which followed "Heart of Gold" to number one on the Billboard chart was "Horse With No Name" (1971) by America. In a style not dissimilar to that of "Heart of Gold," "Horse With No Name" is also about a long, arduous journey to find respite from the busy world. America's *Ventura Highway* (1972), which reached number eight on the Billboard Hot 100, was not included in this shortlist because it is not a song with which I was particularly familiar at the

inception of this research and because, like with “Drag City” (Berry, Christian and Wilson, 1963), the named location itself is not actually available to us in California. Ventura Highway likely refers to the Pacific Coast Highway near the city of Ventura, but there is no specific stretch known as Ventura Highway.

Albert Hammond’s “It Never Rains in Southern California” (Hammond and Hazlewood, 1972) reached number five in the United States on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in December 1972. Written by Hammond and Mike Hazlewood, both British-born singer songwriters, the song hit the top ten in six national charts from around the world but oddly did not chart at all in the United Kingdom. It remains Albert Hammond’s only top ten hit song. This is the final song to be featured in this list and only the second overall to have been performed by an act that hailed from outside of North America.

While by no means my only evidence, the popular songs which make up this list are a valid measure of social and cultural climate, in their specific time and place, for two main reasons. First, the content of popular songs tends to be shaped by their social and cultural ‘scene’ (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). The ideas and experiences most prevalent for the lyricist are the ones most likely to find their way out in creative work. Equally, ideas considered infrequently, or experiences never had, are much less likely to appear in a person’s creative work. Take for instance the Beach Boys’, and particularly lyricist Brian Wilson’s, engagement with surfing as a topic in their songs, discussed further in the chapter “Surfin’”. While Brian himself did not surf, his brother Dennis did, and the excitement around surfing in Southern California was already spreading. Brian Wilson’s surfing songs are a testament to this process, as his songs are not about his own experiences, but were shaped by the people and the culture around him.

The second reason for considering the themes in these songs to be a valid measure of the social climate is that communicators in all forms attempt to make their messages relatable for their audiences. Novelists, songwriters, and filmmakers (not to mention ad-men or political and religious leaders) alike would be more likely to refer to a particular theme if they expected it to strike a chord with their audience or get interest from a new audience. In contrast, a songwriter would be less likely to refer to any given theme if they did not expect it to resonate with their audiences. Here, Brian Wilson is again a perfect example: the popularity and commercial success of the Beach Boys, and the prevalence of surfing as a topic in their songs and in songs of their contemporaries, demonstrates that surfing was a popular experience, or possibly just a popular idea, for many at the time. For these two reasons, the ideas and experiences featured in these songs, which are both about California or its specific localities and commercially successful on a national or international scale, are expected to shed light on the dominant popular themes which have informed ideas about California.

I also cannot limit my focus entirely to the music and lyrics. In order to fully understand the ability of popular music to create for its consumers an image of a place, there must also be consideration of other modes of communication. Popular music is not created or consumed in a vacuum, in fact "much of [its] power lies in its use as multimodal communication" (Way & McKerrell, 2017, p.8). While music, on its own, is able to communicate some meaning, it is only able to represent specific values and ideas when experienced in dialogue with other modes of communication, such as visual communication through album covers, posters and music videos and written communication in band biographies, news stories and press releases. Richard Middleton writes about the semiology of music that, while "music has often been seen as an

internally coherent, autonomous system, relatively detached from 'real life'" (2003a, p.123) it is also the case that denotation is "secondary to connotation (the huge range of associations built on denotation)," inhibiting the "possibility of a rigorous interpretation of musical signs" as well as the dividing up of musical signifiers (2003a, p.123). Using paratextual references in conjunction with readings of the music and lyrics allows for a broader understanding of the connotations of the musical text itself. Music is also experienced alongside other forms of art, cultural practices and social or political events. In order to appreciate the wider social and cultural context of the popular music in my study I make reference to contemporary events and politics, as well as select readings of other texts, including literature, print media, film, television, and advertising. Adopting a historiographical approach alongside social semiotics, I consider the texts as products of their historical and cultural contexts and, through discourse analysis, examine how they reflect and contribute to impressions of the place.

1.5. Conclusion

Drawing from scholarship in various disciplines, such as cultural geography, film, literature, and cultural studies, I have established the concept of place-myth and emphasised the lack of investigation into place-myth in popular music studies. My aim is to address this by investigating popular music's contribution to establishing and negotiating southern California place-myths in the 1960s.

The concept of place-myths is central in this thesis to understanding how specific locations are mythologised and represented. Place-images serve as fundamental components that

contribute to broader place-myths, encompass the collective perceptions and narratives associated with a particular locale. For instance, the beach in southern California is a significant place-image, evoking notions of relaxation, leisure, and a connection with nature, thus contributing to the place-myth of California as a carefree paradise. These place-images, such as surfing, beach culture, and sunshine, collectively form an image-theme that shapes the overall place-myth. To understand the ability of popular music to contribute to wider place-myths, I reveal place-images and image-themes which are present in the lyrics, as well as other modes of communication such as album covers and music videos. Situating these themes in their social and cultural context, I also refer to contemporary events and politics as well as readings of select literature, print media, film, television, and advertising.

The main focus of the thesis is on place-myths of southern California in the 1960s, a decade which brought transformation of popular music driven by a new, younger American consumer class. There were many popular songs released during that time that reference California. However, important to my argument is the establishment of place-myths much earlier in California's history. As such, the following chapter provides an overview of the development of key place-myths in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2. California Before the 1960s

In around 1533, Spanish conquistadors visited Baja California by sea from the west coast of Mexico. Believing it to be an island, they named it after Califia, a mythical island paradise described in *Las Serges de Esplandian* by Garcia Ordonez de Montalvo, written around 1510. The name of the state deriving from a mythical paradise portends the construction of an abundance of California place-myths. In this chapter I present an account of the most important and well-established early California place-myths in order to indicate these as foundational place-myths which are negotiated and built upon throughout the twentieth century. The main topics in this first chapter are the discovery of gold in California in the late 1840s and the likening of the western seaboard of North America to the Mediterranean coast, an idea which owes its beginnings to the early Spanish settlements on the California coast. The concept of California as America's Mediterranean stood as a potent part of California lore throughout the twentieth century and came to inform a myth of California as the land of milk and honey, a paradise of natural beauty which would reward its settlers with bountiful harvests.

My investigation of the music which has informed California place-myths begins in the mid-1800s, at the time of the discovery of gold in California and the beginning of the Americanization of the state. While California's history stretches back much further than that — the first Paleo-Indians are widely believed to have explored and settled in the area as far back as 12,000 years ago, Spanish missionaries established settlements there throughout the eighteenth century, and Russian settlers even claimed some of the territory in the early 1800s — it is at the time of the California Gold Rush that American in-migration to California begins to boom and the

character of the state changes along with it. In the first section of this chapter, I find that songs about the Gold Rush come largely in two types: first, songs written by miners travelling to or living in California, and second, the songs published in the eastern states about those miners making the trip west. Many of the songs portray the failures of these miners, often in comedic verse.

When, during the 1930s, droughts turned a majority of mid-western farmland to dust, the long-lived construction of California as America's Mediterranean underpinned the westward migration of many farm workers. Hundreds of thousands of people were lured west, and to California primarily, to take advantage of the supposed abundance of farmland. However, for many, the dream did not come true. This is the topic for the final section of the chapter, where I discuss this migration as it is depicted in Woody Guthrie's semi-autobiographical album *Dust Bowl Ballads* (1940).

Establishing a history of key California place-myths as a natural and bountiful paradise, helps to demonstrate the foundations on which later versions of these place-myths are based. As I move forward, in subsequent chapters, to the 1960s, I argue that some of the more modern constructions of California and its place-myths are linked with these much older ideas about the place.

2.1. Eureka

Gold was discovered in 1848 at Sutter's Mill in Coloma County, California. The subsequent California Gold Rush of 1849 ensured that the name of the state would become inextricably linked with gold and the desire for wealth. From this point, which also marks the beginning of the Americanization of the state, California is imagined as a place to start over and find prosperity; that hard work on its endlessly bountiful land would be rewarded, quickly, with wealth and fulfilment. "The impact of the gold rush changed California's character and direction […]. Food, clothing, music and social interaction took on an American character" (DeWitt, 1996, p.73). The discovery of gold brought many immigrants to California by land and by sea; such great numbers of sailors deserted trading companies to seek their fortunes that "images of San Francisco at the end of 1849, its harbour crowded by nearly four hundred empty, abandoned ships, remain the archetypal symbol of the California Gold Rush" (Schwartz, 1998, p.75).

Since the time of the California Gold Rush, popular music made in and about California has provided images that help define wider impressions of the state, but that could not begin to capture the complexities of social, cultural and historical realities. This musical output reflects and shapes popular place-myths of California. There was, of course, music in California before Americanization began. Mainly heard on the large ranches in the countryside and in the settlements that developed around the missions, "it was music of Spain and Mexico, played usually on some combination of violin, trumpet, and harp, backed by guitars of several kinds and sizes and a variety of percussion [that] accompanied religious festivals, leisurely, colorful events in which the whole community participated" (Martin, 1993, p.9). The residents of Alta California retained

much of the repertoire of their Spanish and Mexican musical heritage: Charles Fletcher Lummis' extensive Edison wax cylinder recordings of music of 18th and 19th century Spanish-speaking Californian songs, recorded from 1904 onwards, document over 300 spanish language songs.

The music which can be said to relate directly to the American experience of the California Gold Rush consists of two main strands, the first of which is the songs of the American (or otherwise English-speaking) Forty-Niners; those who travelled to California to work in the mines in 1849. The lyrics, composed by the Forty-Niners, "were sung to folk and popular tunes familiar to early California settlers; they describe the trip to California and daily life in the mines" (Black and Robertson, 1940, p. 9).

The exemplary sources here are two collections of music: *Put's Original California* Songster (4th ed., 1868), originally published in 1854, and *Put's Golden Songster* published in 1858. John A. Stone, or "Old Put" as he called himself, was the most prolific and successful composer of songs during the Gold Rush. "Dime songbooks received a considerable boost with the California Gold Rush and the opening up of the west to wagon trains, a period when *Put's Golden Songster* was most popular" (Oliver, 2004, p.611). He knew from personal experience the hardships and disappointments of the average miner, and his songs are first-hand accounts of many of these experiences. It remains unclear exactly how much of the material was collected and how much was composed by Stone himself. Both volumes of songs are presented as lyrics with a note giving the title of the familiar tune to which the lyrics should be sung. The collections contain no transcribed melodies. For example, in *Put's Golden Songster*, the song "A Ripping Trip" is directed to be sung to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel."

The *Gold Rush Songbook* (1940), a collection compiled by Eleanora Black and Sidney Robertson, aimed to rectify the lack of transcriptions. The majority of the melody transcriptions, eighteen of twenty-five total, come "from collections of minstrel songs and fiddle tunes which appeared in print between 1850 and 1882" (Black and Robertson, 1940, p.10). The remaining seven texts are "set to variants of the proper melody recorded from oral tradition rather than from published sources" (Black and Robertson, 1940, p.10). In addition, there are audio collections available which contain faithful reproductions of the material from these printed collections. The most prominent of these is *The Days of '49: Songs of the Gold Rush*, performed by Logan English and Billy Faier, initially released in 1957 and now published in CD format by the Smithsonian Institute's Folkways Recordings. The songs are presented here in very simple arrangements with a solo vocal accompanied by acoustic guitar.

The collection *The Miner's Dream: Songs of the California Gold Rush* (2009) by The New Sierra Nevada Rangers presents a set of modern recordings of many of the songs featured in Put's Songsters. The arrangements are more varied, featuring many period musical instruments including the banjo, fiddle, bones, button accordion and jaws harp among others. The songs from these collections, almost without exception, reveal that the already difficult journey to California terminated in hardship and, in many cases, defeat. An example is "Prospecting Dream" from *Put's Original California Songster*, which tells the story of a miner, struck down by scurvy and plagued by hallucinations of gold in the rock:

> I took my shovel, pick and pan, to try a piece of ground/I dream'd I struck the richest lead that had ever been found/Then I wrote home that I had found a solid lead of gold/And I'd be home in just a month, but what a lie I told!/Oh what a miner, what a miner was I/All swelled up with the scurvy, so I really thought I'd die.

This tragic parody of life as a miner is representative of the whole collection in its blunt tone in dealing with such harsh realities. The protagonist of the song continues to dig and pan for gold until "John Chinaman" buys out his land. The name John or Johnny Chinaman is used in these songs to reference the stereotyped image of the Chinese immigrants who migrated to California during the Gold Rush. Next, our protagonist tries his hand at farming but, alas, fails here too. When the song comes to its end, our protagonist seems likely to meet his end too. "But when they caught me stealing grub, a few went in to boot him/And others round were singing out, 'Hang him, hang him, shoot him!'." Those who pursued this rush to California were often left disappointed, or worse, by what they found. This first strand of music of the California Gold Rush makes clear that the promise of easy riches in California is a myth; the reality of the time was much less hopeful.

The second of the main strands of popular music in the Gold Rush era is the music that was written and published back east about the Gold Rush and the pioneers who travelled to California. This material is found in the form of a small collection of published sheet music. These songs were performed in music halls and on stages in drinking establishments, and are usually presented in arrangements for solo voice and piano accompaniment. The most common type of lyrical theme in these songs is that of a miner returning to the east and lamenting the unfortunate, often humorous, story of his trip to California. A prime example of this style is the song "California as it Is", published in New York in 1849: "I've been to California and I haven't got a dime/I've lost my health, my strength, my hope and I have lost my time/I've only got a spade and pick and if I felt quite brave/I'd use the two of them 'ere things to dig myself a grave." These two types of songs are similar, each very telling of how California was perceived by Americans outside the

state both during and after the Gold Rush. These songs reveal the harsh realities of mining life in California and in doing so they confirm the existence of a California dream: California is a place to start over and, importantly, to find prosperity either mining or working the land.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the California of the American imagination was "a place where gold nuggets could be scooped up by the shovelful and fruit burgeoned year-round" (Haslam, 1992, p.1). But, as Haslam rightly goes on to say, "unrealistic expectations have led to disillusionment" (Haslam, 1992, p.1). The major gold deposits of the Golden State were soon depleted. The sudden return to San Francisco of "men disillusioned by their failure to make their fortune by mining" (Schwartz, 1998, p.77) caused sailors' wages to drop so low that it led to the first West Coast seamen's strike in August 1850.

It was around the time of the Gold Rush that California's nicknames Golden State and Land of Milk and Honey came into more common usage. However, California's links to ideas of gold and riches pre-date the Gold Rush era. The Golden Gate, the strait between the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay which is today spanned by the Golden Gate Bridge, got its name prior to the discovery of gold in California. Suggested in 1846 by John Charles Frémont, an American military officer tasked with exploring and mapping the Western territory in the 1840s, the name came from the perceived similarities to the Golden Horn of the Bosphorus in present-day Istanbul. Stories of the search for gold in North America also date back nearly 500 years: in 1542, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was charged with exploring the coast to the north. Cabrillo became the first recorded European to set foot in what is now California when his party landed at San Miguel Bay (present-day San Diego Bay), in September 1542 (Wagner & Keppel, 1922, p. 20). This first mission to the land that would become the Golden State was, in part, prompted by a

search for gold. An explorer returning to New Spain in the mid-1530s had told of cities made of gold and with limitless riches across the desert to the north (Wagner & Keppel, 1922, p.24). This rumour inspired New Spain's best conquistadors to make several expeditions north, by sea and by land, over the following ten years. While this search for gold took explorers all over the North American continent, the discovery of gold in California in the mid-1800s led to the revitalisation of this history as part of the foundation of the earliest place-myths of the Golden State.

It is important to note that the original California Dream, the idea that California is a place to start over and find prosperity either mining or working the land, is male dominated. The same can be said of early music made about California, as the protagonists of the vast majority of the songs are miners, and miners were almost exclusively male. The culture of public entertainment was also heavily male-dominated in English-speaking parts of California. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, many writers, of fiction and nonfiction alike, explored California, and more specifically the city of San Francisco in their work—Mark Twain, Frank Norris, RL Stevenson, and Bret Harte to name just a few. Growing along with the Gold Rush, the city is portrayed both as a West Coast metropolis and as a frontier town. Following the usual evolution of frontier towns, Northern California's saloons, patronised almost exclusively by men, hosted the first public entertainment presented by paid performers from a stage. Accompanied perhaps by a piano, violin, guitar, or accordion, standard saloon entertainment "consisted mostly of recitations, farces, songs, and dances performed by artists who were old, penniless, or simply untalented" (Martin, 1993, p.12). The show, whether it was good or bad, was always playing second chair to the liquor and gambling.

In an effort to remedy this, construction began in July 1849 on what would become California's first permanent theatre: the Eagle Theatre in Sacramento. There was also a music shop established in San Francisco, most likely the first in California, as early as November of 1849. Music and musical entertainment had become a large part of American life by the mid-nineteenth century and the early establishment of both a theatre and a music store is testament to the rapid growth experienced in California (more specifically in the northern regions of the state) at the time of the Gold Rush.

2.2. America's Mediterranean

Americans first ventured to the west coast in 1804 when President Thomas Jefferson, envisioning a Western empire, sent Lewis and Clark to find a passage to the Pacific Ocean and sent the Pike expedition to explore the south west. By the end of the 1820s, American trappers and mountain men had explored most of the western region. As the 19th century American doctrine of Manifest Destiny hailed the expansion westward to the Pacific coast as justified and inevitable, conquest of the Alta California territory was foreseeable from the beginning of American independence in 1776.

John Charles Frémont, an American military officer tasked with exploring and mapping the Western territory in the 1840s, arrived in California for the first time in March 1844. His *Report of the Exploring Expedition to Oregon and North California* (1845) was amongst the first American writings to liken aspects of California to that of the Mediterranean, "put[ting] forth a California drenched in Mediterranean beauty" (Starr, 1973, p.366). Frémont's cartographer,

Charles Preuss, agreed wholeheartedly: “it is true; this valley is a paradise” (Preuss, 1844; cited in Bergon and Papanikolas, 1978).

It was an easy comparison to make of a place that had been for the past hundred years a Spanish and Mexican Catholic enclave. Certainly many aspects of Mediterranean culture and style had been transplanted there with the early Spanish settlers. By the mid-1800s, Spain had established mission settlements in the territory of Alta California, including harbours in San Francisco, Monterey and San Diego to service ships on trade routes across the Pacific. The first nine of the missions were established by Junípero Serra, with a total of twenty-one missions eventually being established along the 700 mile long El Camino Real. While the buildings were constructed using materials available locally, the desire on the part of the founding priests to attempt to replicate notable structures from their Spanish homeland resulted in a style which evoked the Iberian Peninsula. Otherwise very simple structures, the mission buildings’ main ornamentation came in the form of bell-gables (espadañas or campanarios in Spanish), a common feature of smaller rural Romanesque churches in Spain. The styles of dress, too, became largely homogenised on the west coast as a result of mission culture. Jessie Benton Frémont, the wife of John Charles Frémont, wrote that “the old California dress was very like that that we know in Spanish pictures, and made them look like figures out of the scene of an opera” (Frémont, 1878, p.61).

In *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840), Richard Henry Dana gave a thorough account of his time travelling the Alta California coast in the mid-1830s as a sailor. Of a Sunday at liberty in Santa Barbara he wrote that “day after day, the sun shone clear and bright upon the wide bay and the red roofs of the houses; everything being as still as death, the people really hardly seeming

to earn their sunlight" (Dana, 1840, p.143). On an earlier visit to Santa Barbara, he recounted that, on "returning to the large pulperia [drinking establishment], we found the violin and guitar screaming and twanging away under the piazza, where they had been all day. As it was now sundown, there began to be some dancing" (p.99).

Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* became a popular volume for budding explorers considering a move west, while Frémont's report was reprinted in many American journals and periodicals. It was these communications, amongst hundreds more, which became the foundation for an early, westward-bound, American Dream and for the place-myth of California as America's Mediterranean.

In the late 19th century, essayist and novelist Charles Dudley Warner penned *Our Italy* (1891), aiming to highlight the similarities that Southern California bears to Italy. The book begins with a romantic depiction of a descent from the Alps into the heart of Italy, both for the benefit of those who had not had the opportunity of European travel and to awaken the memories of those who had. "Italy is the land of the imagination," Warner tells us,

> but the sensation on first beholding it from the northern heights, aside from its associations of romance and poetry, can be repeated in our own land by whoever will cross the burning desert of Colorado, or the savage wastes of the Mojave wilderness of stone and sage-brush, and come suddenly, as he must come by train, into the bloom of Southern California (Warner, 1891 p.3).

This place-myth remained strong throughout the nineteenth century and informed the view of California as a natural paradise into the twentieth century.

California's climate is often thought of as Mediterranean, with consistent warmth and sunshine and rain only in the winter, and "the image of California as a refuge from inclement weather and as a destination for unlimited possibilities continued to be a dominant visual theme

well into the 1960s" (Heimann, 2002, p.2). Despite the state's reputation for a pleasant and consistent Mediterranean climate, in reality there are many and great variations across California. Due to the geographical position of the state, as well as its topography, the climate varies greatly, ranging from semitropical to alpine at its extremes. Southern California, especially the greater Los Angeles area, benefits most from the balance of dry, warm summers and winter rain. This has attracted many inhabitants and played a major role in boosterism of the state. Boosterism here refers to a promotional strategy that aims to highlight the economic, social, and cultural advantages of the state of California. These strategies have been employed by various groups, including government agencies, businesses, and cultural institutions, as a way of attracting investment, tourism, and talent to the state. Boosterism of California has a long history, dating back to the late 19th century when railroads and land developers sought to promote the state as a land of opportunity and abundance.

The period from the end of the gold rush in California is considered a time of profiteering and boosterism. As we get to the turn of the 20th century, California at large is seen as a pristine heartland of agricultural abundance and scenic purity. The ultimate land of opportunity. The city of San Francisco stood as the jewel in the crown, at once fulfilling the role of the urban centre and the wild frontier. However, even as San Francisco continued to grow after the peak of the Gold Rush, a plan was coming together some four hundred miles to the south for a new urban centre which would surpass the population of San Francisco in just a quarter of a century.

Paul J.P. Sandul's book *California Dreaming: Boosterism, Memory, and Rural Suburbs in the Golden State* (2014) posits that the California dream at this point in time consisted

of an idealistic view of suburban life, where agrarian virtue meets with good infrastructure, social institutions and commerce. This image of suburban California became the ultimate symbol of American progress and modernity.

The incredible development of the Southern California region was enabled by the completion of two railroad lines and the subsequent land boom in the newly-connected areas (Fine, 2000; Starr, 1973; McWilliams, 1973). These were the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe railroads, which reached Southern California in 1876 and 1886 respectively (Fine, 2000). In the 1880s, when American migration to Southern California began to boom, Los Angeles' population grew from 11,000 to 50,000. By the turn of the century, Southern California had already been bought up by wealthy investors and shrewd lawmakers, and the land divided up and packaged ready for the scores of immigrants. Mainly white and middle class, these migrants were "lured by a national advertising campaign hawking consistently warm weather, open land, healthful dry air, and agricultural opportunity" (Fine, 2000; xix).

The image of California as a land of opportunity and wonder, with its pleasant climate and promise of a leisurely pace of life, was propagated and exaggerated by 'boosters' and 'hawkers,' the people tasked with selling California to the rest of the nation. As the gold had run out and the availability of farmable land reduced, promotion increasingly moved towards the climate and opportunity for leisure. Tourism was perceived as key to the growth of the region, and so much of the advertising material takes the form of brochures and travel guides. Increasing numbers of tourists meant increasing investment in the leisure and service industries of Southern California, which in turn attracted more migration and further investments.

Josh Kun, who headed up the 2013 collaborative sheet music project *Songs in the Key of L.A.*, said of the music of California at this time that "much of the early sheet music from Los Angeles and Southern California was in a way less about selling music, and more about selling the city, selling the region, selling the state" (Kun, quoted in: *Take Two*, 2013). This appears to be absolutely the case for one song in particular, 1913's "I Love You, California" (Silverwood & Frankenstein), a song which would be used as the official song of expositions held in San Francisco and San Diego in 1915 and would eventually be recognised as California's state song after the State Legislature passed a resolution designating it as such in 1951 (California State Library, n.d.).

The song "went 'viral' before things could go viral" (Kun, quoted in: *Take Two*, 2013). This was in large part because "Mary Garden, a very prominent opera singer at the time, started to sing the song" (Kun, quoted in: *Take Two*, 2013). On one version of the sheet music sold in music stores, the front cover declared that "Mary Garden stopped Grand Opera to make this California song famous," while the back cover featured an endorsement from Garden herself, which read "I am proud indeed to be the first to sing your most beautiful song in public - and I hope for it a wonderful success here in California and everywhere!" (Silverwood, 1913). The song itself takes cues from the marketing of the state as a land of geographical wonder and of bountiful agriculture: "I love your redwood forests, love your fields of yellow grain/I love your summer breezes and I love your winter rain/I love you, land of flowers; land of honey, fruit and wine/I love you, California; you have won this heart of mine" (Silverwood & Frankenstein, 1913). Marketing the state in this way, as America's Mediterranean, continued for decades, as did the influx of migrants and the buying up and subdividing of land. The advertising of California as a paradise destination continued, in some form or another, until well into the 20th century (Starr, 1986 &

1995; Farber, 1994; Fine, 2000; Schwartz, 1998). Taken from the foreword of *California: Where Life is Better*, essentially a marketing brochure funded by some of California's real estate developers in 1922, the following extract demonstrates the spirit in which the state was often portrayed:

> California is a constant challenge to the imagination and to the creative impulse of man. A country of countless scenic marvels, one thinks of it with a kind of awe, as of a thing seen yet too extraordinary to be wholly believed in […]. If California seems legendary to her own sons, what must she seem to the distant stranger? (Californians, Inc., 1922, p.2).

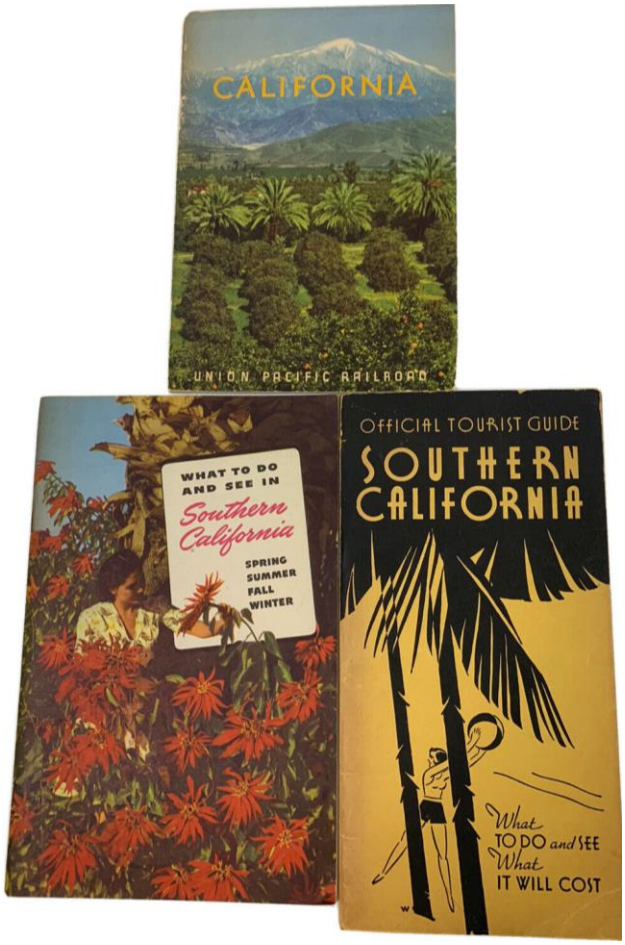

Fig. 2. Collection of 1930s California tourist pamphlets

While San Francisco's growth was directly throttled by geographical restrictions—the city stands on a narrow peninsula between San Francisco Bay to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west—the city of Los Angeles had space to expand. Figures quoted by Carey McWilliams (1973, p.14) shows Los Angeles' population shot up from just over 100,000 in the year 1900 to over 575,000 in 1920. Suddenly, Los Angeles had overtaken San Francisco as the most populous city in California.

The city of Los Angeles and the wider expanse which constitutes Southern California does, however, feel the impact of its unique geography in other ways. The area occupies the space between the San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountains to the east and the vast Pacific to the west. The Tehachapi range stretches across the north, plotting the natural line that divides Southern California from the rest of the state. It is this particular arrangement of features that gives Southern California its unique, favourable climate, and which in turn inspired Carey McWilliams to describe the area as "An Island on the Land" in the title of his book on the region's development between the 1920s and 1950s. "If California is a peninsula attached to the continent," he says, then "Southern California is an island at the bottom of the peninsula" (1973, p. 20).

The geographical isolation of Southern California and the ever expanding greater Los Angeles area presented many challenges, not least of which was the water supply for its growing population. Without the artificial rivers and vast aqueducts transporting water to its inhabitants, greater Los Angeles would be a largely barren and inhospitable land. This is another part of the allure and wonder of Los Angeles: a sprawling city which rose from the desert, the triumph of man over nature. "The promotion of Southern California was a strange and often

contradictory process, mixing profiteering and idealism, resource development and romance" (Culver, 2010, p.5).

Many early accounts of California from American explorers and cartographers focussed on the expressions of Spanish culture in fashion, music and architecture, which they discovered to be very different from American styles of the time. This, in hand with the natural beauty of the as yet undeveloped state, led to comparisons with the Mediterranean coast and established a place-myth of California as America's own Mediterranean territory. This place-myth remained strong throughout the nineteenth century and informed the conception of California as a natural paradise into the twentieth century. The sense of California as a natural paradise, a "country of countless scenic marvels" (Californians, Inc., 1922, p.2), and as a land prime for bountiful agricultural endeavours, has been used to sell the state to tourists and to potential new residents ever since, leading to large scale agricultural, urban and suburban development throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

2.3. The Dust Bowl Migration

During the 1930s, severe dust storms, caused by a period of intense droughts, seriously damaged the agricultural areas of the American and Canadian prairies. This caused a great migration from the midwestern states, mainly Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas and Kansas. While the initial motivation for the migration can be explained by the conditions back home, the fact that these migrants moved west, to California almost exclusively, is frequently attributed to boosterism and the national advertising campaigns selling the state as a land of opportunity (Stein,

1969; Fine, 2000; Schwartz, 1998). By the 1930s, residents of rural communities in the midwestern states were so under the influence of the California Dream, and moved to the state in such great masses, that "California mounted a fierce campaign, complete with border checks, to discourage the migration of hundreds of thousands of farmers" (Rieff, 1991, p.75).

This migration away from drought-plagued farmland in the Midwest was one of many which increased the population of California in the first half of the 20th century. However, the documentary photography of Dorothea Lange and the John Steinbeck novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, first published in 1939, brought it to more widespread attention. Lange's photography, the result of a commission from the Farm Security Administration in 1935, was intended to bring the poor living and working conditions of the migrants to the attention of the public. Her most influential photographs include a portrait of a woman with a troubled stare, her two sons shielding their faces on her shoulders, entitled "Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California" (1936) and a shot of a family car, filled to bursting, stalled on the side of a highway. More than twenty of Lange's photographs accompanied a series of articles written by John Steinbeck about the lives of American migrant workers, published in the *San Francisco News* in October 1936. Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic novel *The Grapes of Wrath* chronicles the Dust Bowl migration by following the journey of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads, driven from their homestead and compelled to travel west to the promised land of California. The novel captures the hardships of the dust bowl, the injustices of the Great Depression and probes the very nature of equality in America in the 1930s.

Another contribution to this myth-making comes from the "Dust Bowl Troubadour" (LoC, 2022) Woody Guthrie. Guthrie's album *Dust Bowl Ballads* (1940)—a semi-

autobiographical account of the hardships faced by migrant farm workers—casts light on the story of the Dust Bowl migration in this period. Guthrie's own experiences of the dust bowl migration, and his skill in distilling those experiences into song, allowed him to "communicate the life, feelings, attitudes and culture of his people from the inside" and become a "most articulate and able chronicler" (Reuss, 1970, pp.274-5). However, it is also notable that scholarly interest in Guthrie's work was slow to gain momentum: "The first meaningful comment of any kind by a scholar appeared in 1948, in Charles Seeger's important 'Reviews' article" (Reuss, 1970, p.274) and, by 1970, "the only detailed analysis of Woody Guthrie in an academic publication is found in John Greenway's *American Folksongs of Protest* (1953)" (Reuss, 1970, p.274). The popularity of Woody Guthrie today, and the perceived importance of Guthrie's story to the development of American folklore, is best demonstrated in the publication of the graphic novel *Woody Guthrie and the Dust Bowl Ballads* (2014) by Nick Hayes. In the book, Hayes lays out a narrative of Guthrie's journey from a teenager in Oklahoma, travelling west to California, to eventually becoming the voice of the downtrodden nationwide.

The Woody Guthrie album *Dust Bowl Ballads* (1940) begins with "The Great Dust Storm," which narrates the experience of the dust storm as an act of God: "It fell across our city like a curtain of black rolled down/We thought it was our judgment, we thought it was our doom." The next track, "Talkin' Dust Bowl Blues," is where the protagonist decides to take the journey to an uncertain future in the west, leaving the dust bowl for the 'fruit bowl:' "I traded my farm for a Ford machine/Poured it full of this gasoline/And started rockin' and a rollin'/Out to the old California fruit bowl." Like the songs of the Gold Rush, *Dust Bowl Ballads* demonstrates the pervasiveness of the early California Dream on those outside of the state.

Also, like the songs of the Gold Rush, *Dust Bowl Ballads* goes on to reveal that the expectations placed on California are never met: “Cross the desert sands they roll, gittin' out of the old dust bowl/They think they're goin' to a sugar bowl, here's what they find/The police at the port of entry say:/’You’re number fourteen thousand for today.’” The song “Do Re Mi” (1940), from which these lyrics are taken, tells the most complete story of the migration. It presents the reasons for leaving and the hope of finding the “sugar bowl.” It tells of the trip to California, ending in disappointment with the warnings of the authorities, with “police at the port of entry.” Ultimately, the reception in California is summarised in the lines “but believe it or not, you won't find it so hot/If you ain’t got the Do Re Mi.” The ‘Do’ in Do Re Mi standing in for ‘dough,’ or money. Once they abandoned everything back east to chase prosperity in the west, these pilgrims discovered that the great depression had left California little better off than the states they came from. If they managed to complete the trip, on arrival they were either turned away or, if they managed to gain entry to the state, they were oppressed both socially and economically (Stein, 1969; Gregory, 1989; Schwartz, 1998).

While this midwestern migration to California only represented one slice of the total in-migration to California during the first half of the 20th century, the struggles of migrants from the Dust Bowl, the ‘Okies’, gained prominence because of the myth-making power of the images and stories told about them. Migrants continued to move to California from a much wider area than just the drought-affected areas around the west-Oklahoma panhandle. Equally, the Okie migrants created their own culture in California, a fact that is often overlooked in wider histories, and were not entirely the victims of larger forces as they were portrayed (Shindo, 1997; Gregory,

1989). However, images of the persecuted rural poor dominated, illuminating a new discourse about the unreality of the California Dream.

2.4. Conclusion

California had already been the subject of strong place-myths before the discovery of gold in 1848. The Mediterranean beauty of the state, as reported by explorers and cartographers throughout the nineteenth century, stood as a strong California place-image well into the twentieth century and came to inform a place-myth of California as the land of milk and honey, a paradise of natural beauty which would reward its settlers with bountiful harvests. Right in the middle of the nineteenth century gold was discovered in California, bringing forth an influx of Americans and American culture. The California Gold Rush, and gold itself, are adopted as place-images of California in popular culture and inform a new place-myth of California as the Golden State. Songs about the Gold Rush, both those written by miners travelling to or living in California as well as the songs published in the eastern states about miners making the trip west, help to establish and develop the image-theme of the Golden State in the popular imagination.

It is the broader place-myths of California, the opportunities for prosperity, the land of milk and honey, which can be demonstrated to have attracted the migrants from the dust bowl to California in droves. The unreality of the myths was documented in Guthrie's *Dust Bowl Ballads* and Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, demonstrating just how pervasive the original place-myths were. Along with this place-myth of California as a place where work will be quickly rewarded, where success is easy to find, I have established two additional place-myths which concern the

preciousness of California; first, the sense that opportunity is abundant and riches can be plucked from the ground and, second, the vision of the state as a unique, natural, Mediterranean paradise. All three of these ideas continue to inform place-myths of California throughout the twentieth century.

3. Surfin’

Beginning with a look at the sport of surfing, this chapter explores the 1960s southern California youth culture that surrounded the development of surf rock and the vocal-led surfing music of which the title songs are prime examples. Surfing itself was initially seen as a dangerous activity, and much of the accompanying culture was seen by the general public as dominated by its antisocial aspects: wild athletes throwing late-night beach parties. (Granat May, 2002; Finney & Houston, 1996). Juvenile delinquency was a “national obsession” (Granat May, 2002, p.68) at the time. The fast-paced, instrumental, dancing (or ‘stomping’) rock music that developed in the beach communities of Southern California became known as surf music due to its ability to replicate, musically, the feeling of riding a wave. The surfing music of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, by contrast, is vocal-harmony led “beat music with a surfing lyric” (Ready, Steady, Go, 1964). The widespread popularity of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, as well as the films *Gidget* (1959) and the *Beach Party* series (seven films between 1963 and 1966), brought surfing to national attention and advertised Southern California’s good life, lived primarily on the beach, to a generation of young people. I explore the lyrics of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean to discover the place-images of the sport of surfing and the beach, in particular noting that they recount the virtues of the sport and ‘invite’ the listener to join them in surfing.

3.1. Let's go Surfin'

While the practice of floating on boards or reeds while fishing or travelling predates it by centuries, surfing as a communal leisure activity originated in Hawaii around 1,200 A.D. In Hawaii, surfing was universal and was practised by people at every level in society. English-speakers first used the term 'surf-board', to replace alternative terms like floatboard', in the late 18th century. The now universal terms 'surfer' and 'surfing' were not used until the early twentieth century (Warshaw, 2010).

Surfing came to the USA from Hawaii in the first decade of the twentieth century, when an Irish-Hawaiian named George Freeth moved from Honolulu to southern California (Finney & Houston, 1996, p.60). Popularity grew locally throughout the next fifty years, with the appearance of new California-based surfboard manufacturers and surf clubs paving the way for southern California's imminent future as the surf capital of the world. While the popularity of surfing grew along California's coastline in the late 1940s and 50s, it simply was not Hawaii. At this point in time, the islands were the most popular, the most notorious, surfing destination. "Every surfer worthy of the name […] spent a lot of time either reliving or planning their big trip to the islands" (Warshaw, 2010, p.122). In the years after the Second World War, Hawaii's political and economic relationship with the United States became extremely close, ultimately leading to statehood in 1959. Tourism was fast on the rise as commercial air travel became more affordable. Between 1947 and 1959, the number of people visiting Honolulu increased from 25,000 to nearly 250,000 (Warshaw, 2010, p.123).

During the 1950s, some independent filmmakers, most notably Bud Browne, attempted to document the sport. While these surfing movies gained popularity among surfers in California, Hawaii and even Australia (Warshaw, 2010), surfing itself was still relatively unknown until the release of the film *Gidget* in 1959. "Almost overnight, surfboard sales skyrocketed, and the beach became a typical weekend destination for many teenagers in Southern California" (Blair, 1995, p.9).

3.2. Surfing on Screen

Gidget is responsible for "dramatizing for the first time the state [of California]'s unique pastime, surfing, to a national audience" (Granat May, 2002, p.68). With its "tomboy" heroine (McGregor, 1993, p.20), the film represents the start of a shift in Hollywood towards depicting innocent, clean-living teens. J. Edgar Hoover had condemned the motion picture industry and their "celluloid poison destroying the impressionable minds of youth" (Hoover, quoted in Doherty, 2002, p.97). His indictment of the early fifties brand of teenpic, particularly the archetypal main characters of films such as *The Wild One* (1953), *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), and *Jailhouse Rock* (1957), continues: "in the face of the nation's terrifying juvenile crime wave we are threatened with a flood of movies and television productions which flaunt indecency and applaud lawlessness" (Hoover, quoted in Doherty, 2002, p.97). Gidget, the "girl midget" cast as the film's protagonist, represented a new brand of youth consumerism in the baby boom generation. She drives her convertible car to the beach, where she takes out her surfboard and dons her swimsuit to enjoy the surf and the California sun. The film offered an intimate view of California youth culture, in particular the surfing subculture, to an international

audience, and "helped define a marketable and attractive West Coast teenage lifestyle" (Granat May, 2002, p.75).

This version of the teenage lifestyle was much more acceptable, by parental standards, than the rebels and delinquents of earlier films. Gidget's access to the beach and the surf is enabled financially by her parents; her Father provides the money for a surfboard, and most likely her car too. This demonstrates a negotiated position between parent and child; much less rebellious. Later in the film, Gidget disobeys her parents to head out to a luau on the beach. Her night ends in disaster, however, and it is her parents that eventually save her, picking her up from the police station after she suffers a flat tyre on the way home. In the closing act, it is revealed that the "surfer bums" that welcome Gidget into the surf culture and provide her education in both sport and socialising do, in fact, have responsibilities; they are "part-time bums and full-time members of society" (Granat May, 2002, p.82). Moondoggie is actually a Princeton prep spending a summer at the beach, and Kahuna finally decides to eschew his surfer lifestyle to join the working world. Television was similarly inclined in the late 1950s; producers of children's programs understood that, between commercials and plugs for various consumer goods aimed at children, they were to encourage children to obey their parents and to obey established authority.

Following the success of *Gidget*, lots of surfing feature films appeared in the United States. These films were remarkably popular, especially with increasingly younger audiences, and found box office success when many film studios were struggling. American International Pictures found a lot of success as the producers of the *Beach Party* series of films, which were designed to appeal to the younger market. These beach films maintained the course of *Gidget*, departing from the dramas about troubled youths which were the most common 'teen pics' of the 1950s. The

character of Gidget reappeared in the TV sitcom *Gidget,* (1965-6) played in this iteration by Sally Field. *Gidget* and the *Beach Party* films were not about dangerous diversions or social problems, instead featuring, in the words of *Beach Party* (1963) Director William Asher, "kids having a good time and not getting in trouble" (Asher, quoted in McFee, *Fast and Furious,* 1984, p.144). Most of the beach films from this period are simple about good, clean fun at the beach. In contrast to the 'teen pics' of the 1950s, the beach films of the sixties have been called 'clean teenpics;' "the clean teenpics featured […] 'good kids' who preferred dates to drugs and crushes to crime" (Doherty, 1988, p.195).

3.3. Surfing Music

The Beach Boys and their California Sound contemporaries can be seen as offering the same 'clean teen' image as their movie counterparts. The Beach Boys often demonstrate that their relationship with authority is positive; that their freedom is not borne through rebellion but through negotiated permissions. In the song, "Surfin' USA", the group sings that, while they will "be gone for the summer" and they are "on safari to stay," we should "tell the teacher [they're] surfin'."

There is a lot of other evidence for the 'permissible' behaviour of the Beach Boys, especially in relation to school. Brian Wilson played baseball for Hawthorne High and had a girlfriend who attended the school at the time. The group, known as the Pendletones in their very earliest guise, would also perform occasionally at school events. The repeated appearance of the school in Beach Boys songs, the wonderfully imperative "Be True to Your School" as one

example, reinforces the authority of the dominant class, similarly to Moondoggie returning to school at the end of summer in *Gidget* (1959):

> On Friday we'll be jacked up on the football game/And I'll be ready to fight/We're gonna smash 'em now/My girl will be working on her pom-poms now/And she'll be yelling tonight/So be true to your school now/Just like you would to your girl or guy/Be true to your school now/Let your colors fly/Be true to your school (Love & Wilson, 1963)

The Beach Boys' protagonists are often independent; spending time with their friends away from authority figures, being able to drive to places some distance from home; yet their independence appears borne out of an agreement where permission is granted. Louis Althusser developed the concept of interpellation in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971). Interpellation refers to the process by which individuals are addressed by ideological state apparatuses (such as the education system, the media, and the government) and are thereby recognized as subjects of a particular ideology. According to Althusser, interpellation is a form of social control that operates by recognizing individuals as subjects of a specific ideology, which in turn shapes their identity, beliefs, and actions. Through their relationship with school, the Beach Boys demonstrate that they have been interpellated, or brought into the dominant social order, into a system of discipline which reinforces the idea that authority figures have the right to control their behaviour.

The songs in *Gidget* (1959), provided mainly by southern California's own Four Preps, are arguably the first examples of surf culture colliding with music on a national and international scale. The Four Preps, a clean-cut male quartet from Hollywood High School, had already been responsible for the 1957 island romance themed hit "26 Miles (Santa Catalina)" (Belland & Larson, 1957). Before Gidget, the only surfing movies were documentary films made

to showcase the sport. As there were no soundtracks on the early films, they were often shown accompanied by live narration. At most, the narrator would play a record at low volume during his narration, which, by 1960, was most commonly an example of rock and roll (Blair, 1995, p.9).

The sport of surfing found its sound in the early 1960s, in the ballrooms, civic centres and high schools of coastal Southern California. From a very specific geographic centre, the beach towns of Los Angeles and Orange counties, the popularity of surf music spread nationwide. Nationally, the most popular surf sound was the vocal style of the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, and their contemporaries. In its first and most local form, however, surf rock's main ingredient was instrumental electric guitar, swamped in spring reverb.

The originator of this style is Dick Dale. Along with his band the Del-Tones, Dale entertained hundreds, and later thousands, of teenagers each weekend at the infamous Rendezvous Ballroom. Initially performing at an ice cream parlour on the town of Balboa's Main Street, Dale was forced to find a larger venue after crowds grew too large. The ballroom venue stood right on the beach at Balboa Peninsula, Orange County, in close proximity to a notoriously risky and exciting surf spot known as the Wedge. Dale's "stomps" at the ballroom quickly became legendary, and the events routinely filled the four-thousand-plus capacity venue.

A passionate surfer himself, Dick Dale was first to use the term "surfing sound" to describe his guitar playing, though he credits this invention to his early Rendezvous audiences (Blair, 1995). In Dale's own view, his unique approach to playing the guitar came from an effort to convey musically the rush and excitement felt while surfing. The rapid tempo of the music,

pushed along by a heavy drumbeat, and the wild, manic, tremolo-picked lead guitar lines give the style its dangerous edge.

At the time the Del-Tones began to play stomps at the Rendezvous, the band was essentially composed of Dale's guitar backed by bass and drums—the standard guitar combo—with the addition of three saxophones and a piano. This meant that Dale had to be loud to be heard, fighting for space in the thick, full sound that the band created. He sought the help of a fellow innovator, and another of California's native sons, Leo Fender, of Fender Musical Instruments, Corp. Fender, with the help of Dale and many other musicians, would have a guiding hand in the revolution of electric instruments, which, by the mid- to late-sixties had launched music into a radical new age, empowering artists with a vibrancy and volume never before attainable.

Two of Fender's most important early contributions, after the solid body electric guitar, were the Showman amplifier—which gave Dale the extra volume and presence that he sought—and the infamous Fender Reverberation Unit; both were developed with the help of, and used frequently by, Dick Dale. Dale, in fact, cited the Reverberation Unit, and its resultant 'reverb' effect, as integral to the surfing guitar sound; "the flowing sound of a reverb unit to take away the flat tones on the guitar and make the notes seem endless" (Dale, quoted in Blair, 1995, p.21).

Dick Dale played his final stomp at the Rendezvous in December of 1961. After his departure, the ballroom venue's ticket sales declined sharply. Moving to the Pasadena Civic Auditorium in January 1962, Dale continued to attract thousands-strong crowds. Local police told reporters that they "had no idea the area contained that many teenagers" (White, 1997, p.139).

Dale's debut album *Surfer's Choice* (1962), released on his father's Del-Tone label received advance orders of 80,000 units from local record stores. The cover and sleeve of the album featured photos of Dale surfing, making it one of the first records to depict surfing in-action. The album featured "Let's Go Trippin'" (Dale, 1961), often cited as the first surf track to reach a nationwide audience after placing at number 60 of the Billboard Hot 100 (Blair, 1995 & 2015; Granat May, 2002; Crowley, 2011). At the time of this release, instrumental surf rock was mainly contained locally to southern California's beaches. Begun by Dale and another local group, the Bel-Airs, the surf rock style had shown a massive increase in popularity. More groups appeared, playing mainly instrumental, guitar-driven, rock and roll or rhythm and blues inspired three-chord songs.

At the release of *Surfer's Choice* (1962), the surf style got its national audience. Dick Dale later appeared on national television on the Ed Sullivan Show: "the performance presented a perfect tableau of the lure of the southern California surfing lifestyle: it was casual and athletic at the same time" (Crowley, 2011, p.125). The "Golden Age of Guitar Instrumentals" lasted only a few years, but saw national and international hits from such guitar-wielding rockers as Link Wray, Duane Eddy, the Ventures, the Fireballs and the Shadows. The similarities in these hits from across the rest of the United States and beyond somewhat diluted the Californian impact of the instrumental sound pioneered by Dick Dale. At the same time, however, the vocal surf style of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean was taking off. This alternative style of surfing music is the topic of section 3.5. The vocal groups caught on much faster nationally and internationally than the instrumental groups, largely because the songs of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean had the backing of major record labels. The Beach Boys signed a seven-year deal with Capitol Records in

July of 1962, while Jan and Dean had songs released by various major labels including Columbia and Warner Bros..

3.4. The Baby Boomer Generation

The baby boomers, the children of all the twenty-something couples who got together and started families of their own immediately after the Second World War, were the generation coming of age in the 1960s. Named for the increase in babies in the postwar years, the group eventually included over 75 million Americans, and "in 1965, 41 percent of all Americans were under the age of twenty" (Farber, 1994, p.57). While the previous generation had the radio, television was truly the medium of the baby boomers. Young people, while not television's most populous viewing demographic, were often the most actively engaged viewers. With a more positive view of television than their parents or grandparents, young people were also more susceptible to advertising. Commercials were not necessarily seen as an interruption, but as a continuation of the stream of programming that emanated from the screen. Throughout the 1950s, advertisers exploited the new market after learning that "an advertiser who touches a responsive chord in youth can generally count on the parent to succumb finally to purchasing the product" (Gilbert, quoted in Ozersky and Petrakis, 2003, p.29). By the 1960s, many of these kids had grown up to be young teens. Advertising followed, with corporate marketing now turning its attention to the disposable income of teens and young adults. This separate, yet shared, experience of watching television helped to construct a shared vocabulary of icons and images: a shared world of 'youth culture.' As Starr notes, "Beach Boys songs became the anthems and icons of southern California

life among the young, broadcast nationally to the teenagers of America, drawing them into life on the Day-Glo shores of the sundown sea" (Starr, 2009, p.373).

Another change to the norms of previous generations occurred in education. Where, twenty to forty years earlier, the majority of students would have left high school to join the world of work in their early teens, by the mid-1960s almost three quarters of students graduated high school, with about half going on to attend college. More so than any previous generation, the baby boomers were allowed to stay young for longer and had "years together to develop their own world" (Farber, 1994, p.57).

The idea of a unified youth in 1960s America, however attractive, can be shown to be flawed in many ways. There were still major divisions between America's young people; race, gender, as well as religious and political beliefs, as just a few examples. Many young people did identify with a common culture and felt a sense, however superficially, that they had a hand in the construction of their own new world.

Music had already played a big part in that new world, in the form of rock and roll in the 1950s. Although rock and roll music could already be seen as a commodity, packaged and sold by large corporations, the themes and issues of rock and roll reflected those of the record buying kids. Record executives listened to the opinions of the young rock and roll fans primarily because they had buying power, rather than any particular values or tastes, and in turn began to move away from the concerns of parents and other societal authority (Lipsitz, 1994).

Thanks to postwar affluence, as well as to the recent development of inexpensive recording equipment, the music business in the 1950s was rapidly expanding. Commercial

recordings, either heard on the radio or on an LP at home, were now the main way in which the general public engaged with and enjoyed music. Independent record labels appeared at a remarkable rate, looking for the next 'big thing' to catch the attention of the record buying public.

Rock and roll originated largely from the urbanization and electrification of the African-American blues and gospel styles. These first forms of African-American R&B music had been exposed to a white audience by the independent record producers, as well as disc jockeys like Alan Freed. By the first years of the 1960s, rock and roll was well under way, though largely under the control of major record labels and radio stations, and mainly performed by white musicians. It was this same push to find something fresh and new that led the independent labels and radio stations of Southern California to take an interest in surfing music.

1963 was the first big year for the vocal-styled surf of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean. It was the year that the local surf music scene, hot on the heels of surfing itself, became a nationwide craze. From 1963 onwards, most new listeners would see surf music as primarily a vocal style. In the first months of the year both the Beach Boys, with "Surfin' USA," and Jan and Dean, with "Surf City," had hits in the top ten on the Billboard chart. Even Dick Dale himself had a vocal-surf hit with "Peppermint Man" (Willis, 1962), taken from his *Surfer's Choice* album of the previous year. This was the year that "surf music went mainstream" (Crowley, 2011, p.152).

These Southern California vocal groups sang about surfing, cars, girls and endless summer fun, which was much easier for a wider audience to relate to than the instrumental surf music; "local suburban misfit Brian Wilson wrote honeyed hymns to beach and car culture that reinvented the golden state as a teenage paradise" (Hoskyns, 2005, p.1). The Beach Boys were

raised in a white middle-class coastal suburb, attended the local high schools and junior college, and worshipped at the local Presbyterian church. It was between school and church that they learned to sing and play their instruments. Brian Wilson became fascinated by harmony singing, both in the church music he heard as well as his favourite vocal groups of the time, such as the Hi-Los and the Four Freshmen. All this builds to an idealised, or at least normal, experience of an upbringing in suburbia from this period. However, this was not necessarily the case as, by most accounts, the Wilsons' father Murry Gage Wilson abused his children both psychologically and physically (Gaines, 1995; Leaf, 1978).

For the Beach Boys, initially known as the Pendletones, life in Hawthorne did not fit into the idealised popular images of life in southern California. Engagement with music and with singing became something of an escape from their own deficient upbringing. Escape into the music also led to escape into the surreal landscape and lifestyle of southern California—surfing and having fun at the beach, driving cars out on the open road, the endless sunshine, and the California girls. Their music began to reflect the daydream of young men singing, together in harmony, about life in a world that resembled their own, only better. It just so happened that in California there was a leisurely way of life which was already ripe for mythologizing. Whether the Beach Boys' music had anything at all to do with surfing is still a contentious point within the sport and the wider culture. Dennis Wilson, labelled "hippest and most hedonistic member of the Beach Boys" (Hoskyns, 2005, p.95), was the only member of the group to surf regularly. The instrumental rock of Dick Dale, the Bel-Airs, the Ventures, and many more besides, is celebrated for its representations of the power of nature, the mystery of the sea, and the raw sexuality of beach parties and dances. The sport and culture of surfing, as well as the surf films that recorded it, had

"sparked a demand for music that could be staged and performed quickly" (Crowley, 2011, p.66). Instrumental surf rock existed in direct relation to the culture of surf in Southern California; vocal surfing music did not. Besides, as David Leaf points out, "the natives didn't need Brian Wilson's fantasies; they were at the beach every day living them" (Leaf, 1978, p.8).

3.5. Getting Vocal about Surfing

Fans of instrumental surf rock and critics of vocal surf music alike consider the influence of the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, and Bruce and Terry to have corrupted the surfing culture and "encouraged a lemming-like invasion of dilettantes to the beaches in the early 60s" (Crowley, 2011, p.11). The same has been said of *Gidget* and other surfing movies. Despite that, the Beach Boys were responsible for bringing surfing music, and the sport itself, to a wider audience.

With the background chorus chanting "Inside, Outside, USA" between each line, the Beach Boys' "Surfin' USA" (1962) lists some of the most popular California surfing locations; "Haggerties and Swamis/Pacific Palisades/San Onofre and Sunset/Redondo Beach LA" (Beach Boys, 1962). Many more of Southern California's beaches are world-renowned surfing locations; Rincon, Malibu Beach, and Huntington Beach, also known as Surf City USA, in Los Angeles County; Lower Trestles in Orange County; and Black's Beach in San Diego County.

While surfing could be said to define the Beach Boys' early material, and they advertised themselves as a surf band, the sport actually gets little coverage in the band's lyrics before their third album, *Surfer Girl* (1963). Of the twenty four tracks which make up the band's

first two studio albums, only five songs are directly about surfing. The surfing image was bolstered musically by the appearance of four instrumental tracks in the surf rock style on the group's second album, *Surfin' USA* (1963), including two original pieces and two covers of the already well-known surf rock tracks, "Let's Go Trippin'" and "Miserlou" (both previously recorded by Dick Dale and the Del-Tones, released in 1961 and 1962 respectively.)

There are many examples of surfing images and language accompanying the Beach Boys' music, especially the covers of albums and singles in the first part of their career, as well as advertising, which show the band with surfboards and surfboard-carrying vehicles, including the popular 'woodie.' The group's style, which included casual clothing, Pendleton flannel shirts, short, cropped hair, and Levi's jeans captured the era's surfer fashion (Foley & Luecke, 2017, pp.70-1). The front cover of the Beach Boys' debut album *Surfin' Safari* (1962) is a great early example of this presentation in action. Shot at Paradise Cove in Malibu, the cover photograph shows the group assembled on a yellow pickup truck, barefoot and wearing Pendleton shirts while holding a surfboard and gazing out to sea on the lookout for breaking waves.

Fig. 3. Beach Boys' *Surfin' Safari* (1962) album cover.

Surfin' USA (1963), the group's second album, simply features a photograph of a surfer riding a huge wave. While, to many, the photo appeared simply as a generic depiction of surfing, the shot was taken by John Severson, a filmmaker now best known as the founder and editor of *Surfer* magazine, adding an element of authenticity to the album for any serious surfing aficionados.

Their third album, *Surfer Girl* (1963), has the group back on the cover, holding the same surfboard as on *Surfin' Safari*. The list of Beach Boys covers which are related to surfing is huge:

> Despite their questionable credentials as surfers, the record sleeves of the Beach Boys' first forty-five hits all featured surfboards and the group in surfing scenes. For promotional material, album covers, and appearances, the Beach Boys posed as avid surfers and beachcombers (Granat May, 2002, p.107).

In the Beach Boys' lyrical depiction of surfing, one of the most common themes is the invitation to surf. Right from the off, the group's very first single "Surfin'"(1961) told its listeners that "Surfing is the only life / The only way for me". The style of invitation present here seems more like a command: in imperative voice, with oddly staccato delivery, we are told "Now surf. Surf. With me." The protagonist of "Surfin'" (1961) is already an experienced surfer. He gets up in the morning to turn on the radio and check "on the surfing scene". It was a common practice for dedicated surfers to travel to the beaches which had the best surfing conditions, and the radio was the best place to find that information. Radio stations in beach communities in Southern California would broadcast regular short reports of the surfing conditions across the region (Warshaw, 2005, p.492). The protagonist is also so dedicated to the surf that "From the early morning to the middle of the night / Any time the surf is up the time is right" and he shows the physical consequences of many hours spent surfing in his "surfer knots": calluses formed on knees and feet from paddling a longboard out into the surf (Warshaw, 2005, p.326). This perspective on surfing, while certainly alluring and exotic, is necessarily exclusive. Those who don't possess the requisite skills can't just up and join in.

By moving from the voice of the experienced surfer, commanding the audience to surf, to a more inclusive open invitation to join the fun, the band made the world of surfing seem much more accessible. This is spelled out in the refrain which introduces the song "Surfin' Safari" (1962), and the album of the same name: "Let's go surfin' now / Everybody's learning how / Come

on and safari with me." In inviting even the uninitiated to join the band surfing, the Beach Boys welcomed everyone to surf, and, in turn, to the beach. The music "schooled landlocked teens across the country in the sport's appeal, offering a teenage element of the California dream" (Granat May, 2002, p.98).

This continues in other examples; "Don't be afraid to try the greatest sport around," the Beach Boys advised in "Catch a Wave" (1963), telling their listeners that "all there is to the coastline craze" of surfing is to "paddle out, turn around and raise." In other songs from the first three albums, the group sings the stories of individuals or groups of surfers, almost always accompanied by some hint of the shared community of surfing, the virtues of bravery demonstrated by the surfers, and the confidence with which they impress the (female) audience. "Noble Surfer" (1963), from the album *Surfin USA*, provides an excellent example of this: the noble surfer himself is "dedicated to the mighty sea, surfing night and day." His bravery when riding the waves is remarkable; "he's not afraid of body whop from ten feet or more. He never backs away from a swell." However, this experienced, hardened surfer is hardly likely to allow a novice to tag along with him; in fact, "where he's going, he'd never tell." While the "rough and ready" world of experienced and dedicated surfers, can make the surfing subculture appear unapproachable to those on the outside, the Beach Boys rarely take the role of experienced surfer for themselves in their songs. Instead the lyrics often place the protagonist of the songs as a relative newcomer to the sport, and someone who appears to surf for fun rather than 'training' as more athletic practitioners might.

From the lyrics of "Surfin USA," where the band list many of the most popular surfing spots in Southern California and around the world, it is clear that the Beach Boys are more

than happy to share where they are going, even when the noble surfer is not, and to have us along for the ride. Echoing the same here in "Noble Surfer," the singer, Mike Love in this case, tells us that the noble surfer is "something you and I would like to be." By giving an aspirational view of this noble surfer, "he's the number one man," the lyric confirms that the Beach Boys are not experts themselves. "Noble Surfer" is one of the best examples of Beach Boys casting themselves as novice or intermediate surfers, welcoming everyone to join them in the surf. The "you and I," the *we* implicit in the song, tells listeners that they and the band are all in this together. Popular music—which often uses lyrics that express relatable emotions and experiences, memorable melodies which are easy to sing or hum along to, and danceable rhythms—is considered a distinctly relatable form. This sense of expression, whether or not the music 'speaks to' a listener, has influenced popular music discourse for decades.

The main songwriters of the group, Brian Wilson and Mike Love, were not surfers and so had little, if any, direct experience with the Southern California subculture of surfing. "Noble Surfer" contains much of the surf-specific language and references to the culture which appear frequently throughout the rest of the Beach Boys early songs. The noble surfer in question wears, not by coincidence, "huaraches on his feet." A fixture of the "surfer look," huaraches were Mexican-made traditional style sandals with soles made from the tread of tyres (Warshaw, 2005, p.195). The song "Surfin USA" makes reference to huaraches too, along with "baggies" and a "bushy, bushy blond hairdo." Both the baggy shorts and the peroxide-treated blond hair were also popular among surfers at the time (Warshaw, 2005, p.195). While the noble surfer is only noted as wearing 'dirty white jeans' in the song, not the baggy shorts of "Surfin' USA," he does sport "bushy hair." Other surfing slang used here includes the 'body whop' and 'swell' quoted earlier:

the former is the impact of the body on the surface of the water when a surfer falls from the surfboard while riding high on a wave; the latter refers to the wave itself, or rather the rhythm of serial waves moving in towards the coast which, in the case of 'good swell', will provide the most ideal surfing conditions once the wave breaks closer to shore. Making references to surfer slang, such as the "surfer knots" in "Surfin'," and other references to the culture, as in the huarache sandals of "Surfin' USA", gave the Beach Boys lyrics a sense of authenticity, a sense that they were really a part of, that they really *got*, surf culture. Jadey O'Regan states that "they used terms like these with a self-aware wink, at the same time enhancing their image to advance their commercial interests" (O'Regan, 2016, p.146). The surfing lifestyle the Beach Boys sing about appears real to the listener, but in many cases their lyrics were not about their own experiences: "it was as much a fantasy to them as to many of their listeners. The Beach Boys' ability to simultaneously express reality and fantasy is one of their most enduring qualities" (O'Regan, 2016, p.158).

Authentic experience or not, California's new vocal-harmony-led rock and roll style was integral—alongside TV, films, literature and new journalism—to both the national and international spread of the sport craze, as well as the reworking of the images associated with surfing in the 1950s. If surf rock was the soundtrack of the surfing sport, the vocal surf style became the soundtrack for fun-in-the-sun hedonism, beach party romance, teenage freedom, and for California itself, earning the name 'California Sound.' The lyrics focussed on a specific lifestyle in a specific location, at odds with more general themes of the earliest rock styles. Borrowing heavily from established California place-myths, the music stood as an advertisement for Southern California's good life—lived primarily on the beach.

3.6. The Beach

It has long been said that "in Southern California, 'sand' and 'beach' are interchangeable" (Lencek and Bosker, 1998, p.10). Even nowadays, images of sandy Southern California beaches, for many, symbolise the wider California Dream. An article on the US Government's J-1 Visa Program website informs its readers that "for many exchange visitors […] California beach culture epitomizes the American dream – warm sunshine, sandy beaches, tall palm trees and talented surfers" (State Department, 2017).

In the first decades of the twentieth century, Southern California's beaches represented "the first shared public space, the first county parks, the most desirable locations for real estate" (Starr, 2004, p.6). By the late 1950s and early '60s, beaches were undoubtedly the most populated public spaces, the county parks most altered by human interference, and the most exclusive and expensive locations for real estate.

Fig. 4. San Onofre Beach, San Diego County, 1963.

The beaches were particularly important to Los Angeles, as a place which "placed recreation at the heart of its civic identity, yet rarely planned for parks and recreational space" (Culver, 2010, p.12). However, it was local governments, much more so than the county or state, that foresaw the need to preserve public beach access. Besides being favourite destinations for locals, beaches were one of the most important tourist attractions in the county, and therefore an important part of the region's economy. Unlike parks, playgrounds, or community recreation centres, which were usually under the sole authority of either the city or county, public beaches were administered in a variety of ways. Some were operated by the beachfront cities, including Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Santa Monica; others were operated by the county. Later, beaches would also be acquired by the state of California to be operated by the state parks system (Culver, 2010). In fact, Culver remarks that, while Los Angeles is cast as a "pastoral retreat from eastern urban woes," the city "set aside less parkland than any other major U.S. city," yet it "made outdoor

recreation and nature appreciation part of the city's school curriculum, and purchased beaches and mountain camps to ensure public access" (Culver, 2010, p.54).

In the early 1960s, the beaches of America were, in general, family friendly "extensions of the backyard patio" (Lencek and Bosker, 1998, p.248). Or, as Gary Morris puts it, "an *exaggerated* version of the suburban backyard" (Morris, 1993, p.7, my emphasis). "The image of the beach," as too the image of the suburban single-family home, a discussion of which is presented in the following chapter, "became a central component of the projected Southern California good life, and would continue to serve that function throughout the century" (Culver, 2010, p.70). Residents travelled to the beach counties from all over Southern California and tourists came from even further afield, so the beach towns and wider county governments had set up a system over the previous few decades that spread the cost of purchasing and maintaining beach properties, including the costs of employing lifeguards (Culver, 2010, p.62). This meant that the public beaches of Los Angeles and Orange counties, managed collectively, were all run in the same mode. There was ample parking for visitors from near or far, food and drink concessions to keep the beach population fed and watered, along with restrooms and shower facilities. Safety was of the utmost importance.

The most popular beaches had smaller waves, more ideal for swimming and bathing than surfing, and life guards. However, this beach-centred lifestyle was exclusive for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the majority of Southern California's beaches didn't allow African American bathers (Culver, 2010, pp.70-1). The beaches, and especially more remote surfing spots, were accessed mainly by car too, and looking good on the beach, no less surfing, was an expensive hobby. This meant that anyone without a good deal of disposable income (or allowance) was also

excluded from the beach and surfing. Kirse Granat May, writing about youth culture in 1960s America, is emphatic about the divide of race and class demonstrated within the surf subculture. Due to its exclusive nature and limited appeal outside of those that could access and afford to surf, mostly white middle-class teenagers and young adults, it is argued that "surfing represented a barrier as well as a tool, creating a blindness toward the multiethnic reality of life in the state" (Granat May, 2002, p.112). By extension, the same is said of the music of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean: "it served as an exclusive theme music for white, middle-class baby boomers" (Granat May, 2002, p.98).

The beach and the ocean are recurring themes in the lyrics of the Beach Boys. The group spent a lot of time inviting their audience to surf with them, but "even if you didn't surf, there was always the beach, and the magic of it all, as six thousand times a day, every fourteen seconds, waves surged and came ashore" (Starr, 2004, p.6). The beach appears foremost as a location for the surfing songs and a destination for the car songs. However, it is also through the beach and the sea that the Beach Boys encounter nature. In *The Nearest Faraway Place*, Timothy White tells that, by virtue of the Beach Boys' actions, "surf songs about one's inner sensibilities and *kinship to nature* had become synonymous with the pursuit of happiness - and excellence" (p.220, my emphasis). In fact, Bruce Golden suggests that, in their representation of the beach and surfing, "the Beach Boys reworked the pastoral theme to capitalize on the idea of Southern California as the new pastoral paradise" (Golden, 1976, p.15). This was an idea strongly supported by others (Granat May, 2002; Blair, 1995).

The concept of nature is socially constructed and varies across cultures. As such, any perception of what does and does not constitute nature is not based on a definitive, neutral

'nature' but instead agrees with a negotiated cultural idea of nature (Bang, 2015). The dominant mode of thinking about nature in the United States of America today remains like that of the past hundred years in that it casts humans as separate from nature; we talk about our connection to or distance from nature instead of our being a part of nature. William Irwin Thompson describes the development of American life as an active affront to nature in his book *American Replacement of Nature* (1991). "America is extremely uncomfortable with nature; hence its […] preference for the fake and nonnatural," he writes, using the food products Cheez Whiz and Cool Whip as examples to assert that the technological achievement in producing, chemically and scientifically, a cheese- or cream-like substance makes the synthetic product greater than the natural product (p.5). Following a similar idea, he talks of hunting and fishing as not a "commune with nature" (p.6) but as an assertion of dominance over it.

This also speaks to the common perception of people who do extreme and dangerous activities in natural environments: wingsuiters, waterfall kayakers, free-climbers, extreme skiers, and, of course, big-wave surfers. The popular understanding of this type of undertaking is one of conquering or battling nature, taking risks and asserting one's dominance over the natural world. This, however, may not be true for the majority of people who engage in these activities. A study published in 2009 saw Eric Brymer and Tonia Gray set out to learn what goes through the minds of people who do these kinds of extreme sports.

Through carefully designed interviews with several people who performed activities where a mismanaged mistake or accident could result in severe injury or death, the study found that "for veteran adventure athletes the natural world acts as a facilitator to a deeper, more positive understanding of self and its place in the environment" (Brymer & Gray, 2009, p.135). In

contrast to the idea that the substantial risk involved in these activities is the primary drive for involvement, participants often did not refer to the danger as a motivating factor. In fact, participants were more inclined to say that, once they were engaged in their chosen activity, they did not feel the danger because they did not see their environment as a threat, making the point that the environment does not care that you are there. As a result of this indifference the idea of 'conquering' nature becomes nonsensical and "participants suggest that a more appropriate understanding of the relationship is an interaction with the environment as partner" (Brymer & Gray, 2009, p.141).

This, however, does not detract from the widening gulf between perceptions of what is human and what is part of the natural world. Umberto Eco makes similar observations: "the coasts of California and Florida are rich in marine cities and artificial jungles where you can see free-ranging animals, trained dolphins, bicycling parrots, otters that drink martinis with an olive and take showers, elephants and camels that carry small visitors on their backs among the palm trees. The theme of hyperrealistic reproduction involves not only Art and History, but also Nature" (Eco, 1986, pp.48-9). Much of Eco's discussion is on Disneyland. He places the reality of a paddle-steamer trip on the Mississippi alongside the synthesised experience of the Adventureland river ride, explaining that the disappointment of not seeing alligators on the real Mississippi makes one yearn for Disneyland, "where the wild animals don't have to be coaxed" (Eco, 1986, p.44). Echoing Thompson's sentiments on the technological replacement of nature, he states that "Disneyland tells us that technology can give us more reality than nature can" (Eco, 1986, p.44).

California's beaches, as the favoured leisure destinations for locals and some of the most important tourist attractions in the state, were heavily altered by human interference. They

were made safe, accessible leisure locations, which offered mediated access to nature. The prominence of the beach as a location in all kinds of popular media representations of California, from California tourist brochures, through the *Beach Party* films, the music of the Beach Boys, to TV advertisements for Sunkist soft drinks, established the place-image of the beach as part of a wider image-theme of California beach culture. The Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, at the start of the decade, show us a fun and daring beach culture, youthful and vibrant, with surfing at its centre; when "the surfin' is fine/That's when I know my baby and I will have a good time" (Wilson & Love, 1962). "Surf fever brings them here to meet the test/And hanging round the beach you'll see the best" (Berry, Wilson & Christian, 1964).

3.7. Conclusion

The first place-image encountered in this chapter is that of surfing. The beach, while of course the main location for much surfing activity, is also a place-image in and of itself. The sport of surfing itself, while practised in many locations around the world by the early sixties, became linked to California through the films, music and wider popular media which celebrated California surfers and surfing lifestyles. Surfing originally gained a reputation, through news coverage, as a dangerous activity and an antisocial culture.

It was primarily the surfing music and movies which achieved national popularity in the early sixties that helped establish an innocuous, clean image for surfing. The Californian popular music which took surfing as a lyrical theme in the early sixties was instrumental in this development. The lyrics of the Beach Boys presented surfing as an exciting yet safe activity with

a welcoming community, inviting the listener to join in. The vocal harmony style of the Beach Boys' and Jan and Dean's music emboldens the sense of community, as the multiple vocal parts necessarily require the presence of multiple vocalists.

As the movies were frequently set and filmed on California's beaches and the music featured lyrics proclaiming the state's surf spots to be the best, the sport of surfing became established as a strong place-image of California. Along with it, the place-image of the beach, as surfing's primary environment and a popular location for other leisure activities, helped to reinforce the place-myth of the state as a unique, natural paradise. The associated lifestyle, leisured and youthful, of those with relatively easy access to the beach helped to reshape and update the place-myth of California as a land of opportunity for a new generation. While Duncan Light's work on the Transylvania place myth (2008) highlights the important consideration of place-myths, and of myths in general, that, like Baudrillard's simulacrum (1983), the myth does not need to have a grounding in reality, I have demonstrated in this instance that some form of this beach-based lifestyle was indeed the reality of life in California for a privileged few. As this set of place-images dominated in popular representations of the state it became understood as a common reality of Californians and California life. Place-myths are said to hold a "communication value as conventions circulating in a discursive economy" (Shields, 1991, p. 61). This idea of communication value tells us that place-myths are not fixed narratives which lie dormant, they are instead flexible and subject to negotiation. It is through this process of negotiation that the place-myth of California as a land of opportunity was stretched and transformed. No longer simply opportunities for financial prosperity, the myth now expanded to include comfort, ease-of-life, and, importantly, opportunities for social and cultural prosperity.

4. The Great Automotive State

In this chapter I begin by discussing the period of the 1950s and early 1960s as an automotive era, documenting a rise in popularity of cars and automotive infrastructure, providing examples of popular music which takes the car as its topic, and establishing a platform from which we can understand the relationship between cars, freedom, and teenage-oriented popular culture. From that platform I explore images of teenage rebels, constructed in films and on TV, which stoked national concern about juvenile delinquency and shaped the culture into which children of the 1950s came of age in the 1960s. The Beach Boys began their career with surfing as the primary lyrical topic, as established in the previous chapter, but quickly moved towards the topic of the car, or hot rods, which in turn broadened the music's appeal. Towards the end of the chapter I turn my attention to suburbia as "a creation of the automobile" (Rae, 1965, p.220) to suggest that suburban homes and the automobile were emblematic place-images of California in the early 1960s.

4.1. California by Car

The post-war prosperity of the 1950s brought with it a new culture of leisure and commerce in the United States. By the start of the 1960s, many Americans were able watch television in the comfort of their own homes. Kitchen appliances gained colour, dispensing with white in favour of bright hues and opening up the kitchen for entertaining guests. Convenient new devices, such as non-stick cooking pans, polyethylene food wrap (known as cling film, or Saran™ wrap), and the telephone answering machine, made life easier and saved time. As David Farber

remarks, by the start of the new decade, “telephones, televisions, refrigerators, and the electricity to power them were accepted as an American birthright” (Farber, 1994, p.9).

Nineteen-fifties prosperity also ushered in a new automotive era across the nation. Between the early thirties and the late forties, car ownership had plateaued. Most working class families still did not own a car by 1950. Just ten years later in 1960, almost 60 million cars were registered in a nation of fewer than 50 million families (Farber, 1994).

Southern California already had a great automotive craze in the 1920s, popularity booming largely due to the car’s relationships to popular cultures such as the movies. The basis for modern automotive law and guidance in California began at this point, and both hitchhiking and joyriding began to emerge in their modern form (Brilliant, 1989). As Daniel Miller writes it, the 1920s represent the beginning of “the struggle”, which continues today “to make the intensive use and reliance upon the car livable” (Miller, 2001, p.9). Los Angeles itself “has always been a city on wheels, an automobile metropolis” (McWilliams, 1976, p.236). Even at the very beginning of the 1940s, the city pulsed with traffic. Over one million cars split amongst its residents meant there were enough for at least one per family on average. By the mid-1940s figures showed that eighty percent of all travel taken in Los Angeles was by car (McWilliams, 1976, p.236).

The sheer volume of traffic on the inner-city streets and the ground-level roads in the Greater Los Angeles area, and, less critically, the greater San Diego area, led to the development of Southern California’s freeway system in the 1950s. “A metropolis like Los Angeles, often and accurately described as a collection of suburbs in search of a city, grew up on highway transportation […]. The city was conspicuously a product of the automobile” (Rae, 1965,

p.220). By 1962, *Life* magazine said of the car that "in California a car is like an extra, highly essential part of the human anatomy" (*Life*, 1962, p.69). For its 8.5 million registered motor vehicles, the state of California had 1,000 miles of freeways (with many more miles already planned), 850 miles of expressways and 2,400 miles of other highways (*Life*, 1962). John B. Rae agrees that the development of automobile infrastructure progressed much earlier in the state than elsewhere in the nation; "About fifteen hundred miles of metropolitan freeways existed in 1955, mostly in California" (Rae, 1965, p.222).

Fig. 5. Postcard depicting the Hollywood Freeway in the 1950s.

The landscape of greater Los Angeles is dominated by automotive infrastructure and the relationship between people and place in Southern California is largely negotiated through the automobile. In the popular reading, the car stands as the primary marker of our alienation from nature. The car, or personal vehicles in general, have many advantages, such as the ease and convenience of getting around, being able to travel directly to the destination, and the ample space

for luggage—or surfboards. Freedom and independence was also a very attractive advantage, especially for young people in the 1960s, one which was weighted heavily by advertisers. In their references to cars and motorcycles, the Beach Boys presented a vision of teenage freedom. "Freedom in the national myth has always been identified with mobility, with the open road" (Fine, 2000, p.134); and freedom stretches further too, offering drivers the chance to escape the discourse on wider transport choices and other political decision-making, over which they felt increasingly like they had little or no power.

Speaking of the Citroen D.S. 19 in his famous essay "The New Citroen" (1972), originally written in 1957, Roland Barthes remarked upon the changing culture of the automobile in the 1950s:

> Until now, the ultimate in cars belonged rather to the bestiary of power; here it becomes at once more spiritual and more objectlike […] it is now more homely, more attuned to this sublimation of the utensil which one also finds in the design of contemporary household equipment. The dashboard looks more like the working surface of a modern kitchen than the control-room of a factory […] all this signifies a kind of control exercised over motion, which is henceforth conceived as comfort rather than performance. One is obviously turning from an alchemy of speed to a relish in driving (Barthes, 1972, p.89).

This move towards comfort and convenience, in this case from power and performance, as primary drivers of innovation and development somewhat mirrors the development, in the same period of time, of appliances and conveniences in the suburban home, a discussion of which is presented in the final section of this chapter. However, this is not the complete story, as the case for power and performance in automobile innovation remains strong into the 1960s, as is evidenced shortly with the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean's use of drag racing and car modification as lyrical themes, and continues today.

While primarily a method of travelling from one place to another—from a bungalow home in the suburbs to the beach, for instance—the car itself represents a lived-in space all its own. The car keeps the occupants isolated from the outside world, away from contact, away from all the noise and goings-on experienced by the pedestrian. It is not simply the case that those in the car are separated in their own bubble, so to speak, where they can hear only themselves. In fact, with the company of friends and especially with the development of in car audio, there is potentially *more* to be heard when inside the car than outside of it.

For Dana Polan, the experience of California is wound up with the experience of the automobile and its related infrastructure. Discussing film noir, he suggests that the genre "looks at the city and shows its vulnerability to the modernizing influence of the car. Those aspects of city life that cannot keep up with vehicular modernization will be left behind, turned—like all of Los Angeles in *Blade Runner*—into so much refuse and rubble" (p. 144). Film noir takes as its most reliable setting a city "taken over by the car" (p. 145). Citing a variety of films as examples, Polan suggests that film noir often ties transit and mobility to themes of dreams, both fulfilled and shattered.

4.2. Teenage Rebels

"Rock Around the Clock" (Freedman & Myers, 1954), the Bill Haley rock and roll single first released as a B-side in 1954, has become a milestone in popular music history. Other rock and roll songs appeared before this, including Haley's own "Crazy Man, Crazy" (Haley, 1953) in 1953 and "Shake, Rattle and Roll" (Calhoun, 1954) by Big Joe Turner in 1954, the latter of which reached No. 1 on the Billboard R&B chart. However, it is Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" which is widely credited with bringing rock and roll music to mainstream culture not just in the United States but across the world.

Its use under the opening credits of the 1955 film *Blackboard Jungle*, as well as in multiple instances throughout the film, brought the song to a national audience and made it the first rock and roll song to reach number one on the Billboard pop chart. It topped the chart, re-released as an A-side, in July 1955. Echoing this popularity, the song was also used as the main title theme for the film *American Graffiti* in 1973.

Blackboard Jungle itself is about the threat of juvenile delinquency and features a written introduction card which states:

> Today we are concerned with juvenile delinquency—its causes—and its effects. We are especially concerned when this delinquency boils over into our schools. The scenes and incidents depicted here are fictional. However, we believe that public awareness is a first step toward a remedy for any problem (*Blackboard Jungle,* 1955).

The soundtrack of *Blackboard Jungle*, made up of rock and roll songs with traditional film score entirely absent, showcased the burgeoning rock and roll style to a wide audience. The use of Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" in the film, and its subsequent rise to number one chart spots

around the world, helped it become something of an anthem for rebellious teenagers in the mid- to late-1950s.

James Dean represented the epitome of the rebellious teenager, known for his acting roles as anxious, complex and misunderstood young men. Dean's big break in Hollywood was in 1955 as Cal Trask in the Elia Kazan-directed film *East of Eden,* based on John Steinbeck's novel of the same name. The role of Cal, a complicated and angry young man who is jealous of his father's obvious preference for his brother Aron, somewhat fills the mould of Cain in a modernised story of Cain and Abel. While initially a Cain-like figure, as the story progresses Cal learns to throw off his sinfulness and comes around to act for good. This role can be seen to foreshadow Dean's most famous performance as the rebel Jim Stark in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955).

Rebel Without a Cause represents an attempt to explore the perception of moral decay in American youth and the conflict between generations; the 'delinquent' teens in the film are shown to have issues at home which form the basis of their frustrations and rebellious behaviour. Jim Stark, as the protagonist, is shown to be disheartened by the life his parents share. Constantly bickering, Frank and Carol are portrayed as a weak, pushover father and an overbearing mother. This dynamic helps to unravel Jim's 'bad boy' persona and illuminate the situation which has created such a rebellious teen. He is shown to be dissatisfied with his current role and seeks to live an honourable life, though he does not understand how to make that possible. Despite presenting behaviours which are indeed rebellious or mischievous, Jim Stark is shown to be a brave, caring, responsible, and kind-hearted teen. This character, the teen-rebel identity, is referred to throughout this thesis.

In his life away from the movies, James Dean had a huge interest in cars and motor racing, even competing professionally for a short time between the end of filming of *East of Eden*, through *Rebel Without a Cause*, to the start of production for *Giant* (1956), when Warner Bros. banned him from racing while under contract for the movie. Once the filming for *Giant* had finished, Dean was eager to return to racing. He traded in his previous car for a brand new 1955 Porsche 550 Spyder, faster and more powerful than anything he'd driven before. He entered a road race in Salinas, California that was due to take place on the 1st and 2nd of October, 1955. Convinced by the Porsche mechanic who maintained his car that he should drive it from Los Angeles to Salinas, in Monterey County, to 'break-in' the new car and get used to the handling, Dean headed off to Salinas for the race a day early, on the 30th of September (Howlett, 1975). James Dean never made it to Salinas: his sudden death in an automotive accident on the journey to the race had a huge impact on would-be teen rebels of the time.

A fascination with the rebel star who burned out so suddenly along with the excitement of the new rock and roll music helps underline the experiences of teenagers in this age of youth culture. The experience of young people was undoubtedly influenced by the dawn of rock and roll and depictions in film of rebellious young men and women, both of which helped to strengthen the divide between the younger generation and their parents. Young people all over California and further afield while coming-of-age in the late 1950s were exposed to these sounds and images of youth culture.

As with the case of surfing, where the welcoming, wholesome activity advertised by the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean was at odds with the dangerous, anti-social popular media

representation of the sport at the time, those same groups' lyrical treatment of the automobile made little of the themes of rebelliousness.

4.3. From Surfing Music to Driving Music

The connection between cars and popular music had already been made many times over by the late 1950s, especially in rock and roll where references to cars were often used to demonstrate empowerment with a "flaunting of consumerist pleasure" (Den Tandt, 2014, p.88). Popular music tends to take an optimistic view of the automobile, with most car songs being appraisals of the beauty or performance of the car, or songs about being involved in the journey to another destination. For instance, the song often regarded as the first example of a rock and roll recording, "Rocket '88'" (Brenston, 1949) by Ike Turner and his Kings of Rhythm (credited on the original cut as Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats), is about the incredible performance of the Oldsmobile "88," itself considered one of the first muscle cars.

For Jan and Dean and the Beach Boys, the car initially appears in their lyrics predominantly as a means to get to the beach. In the Beach Boys' "Surfin' Safari" (Wilson & Love, 1962) the group are "loading up our woodie with our [surf]boards inside" so they can head out to find some good waves. The 'woodie' popularised in these early surf songs was a station wagon style vehicle with the main passenger and luggage compartment made from wood. In "Surf City" (Wilson & Berry, 1963), one of the two title songs from the previous chapter, we hear that Jan and Dean "bought a '34 wagon and we call it a woodie". In "Drag City" (Berry, Christian & Wilson, 1963) and "Little Old Lady from Pasadena" (Altfeld, Berry & Christian, 1964) we see a move

from the car as a mode of transport to the car itself, racing, and hot-rod culture as the subject of the songs.

Both of these songs speak about drag racing specifically, a sport that requires a lot of open, flat space. A straight run of a quarter of a mile is the standard drag strip. The salt flats of Badwater Basin in Death Valley are ideal, which is why the Southern California region saw dragsters in action as early as the 1930s. Popularity grew over the following two decades but drag racing remained largely underground. Races moved from the dry lake beds and salt flats to firmer ground after the Second World War, with events running on disused military runways. Dragster designers, always striving to go faster, were known to repurpose aircraft engines, and to run the high-performance cars on pure alcohol. The experimental nature of the cars and the engines created very high danger, and indeed many fatalities. What began as a series of unorthodox events led to the formation of the drag racing culture, and to the first centrally-organised meetings, the first of which took place in 1949 at Goleta Air Base, close to Santa Barbara in Southern California. The first organising body of the new motorsport, the National Hot Rod Association, was formed in 1951, and its first formal race took place two years later in Los Angeles.

For the Beach Boys, cars begin to feature most heavily in lyrics on the band's fourth studio album *Little Deuce Coupe* (1963), named for the 1932 Ford Coupe, the definitive hot rod car. All but one of the tracks on the album are about cars in one way or another, including the rerelease of four car-related songs from previous albums: "409" (Wilson, Love & Usher, 1962) from *Surfin' Safari*, "Shut Down" (Wilson & Christian, 1963) from *Surfin' U.S.A.*, and two songs, "Our Car Club" (Wilson & Love, 1963) and the title track "Little Deuce Coupe"(Wilson & Christian, 1963), from the album *Surfer Girl*, released only around a month earlier.

The one song on the album which doesn't relate to cars or 'hot-rod' culture specifically is "Be True to Your School" (Wilson & Love, 1963), which employs the melody of the Wilson brothers' own high school fight song to implore the listener to take pride in representing his or her school. In addition, "A Young Man is Gone" (Troup & Love, 1963), a tribute to James Dean, only touches the car theme tangentially when it remarks that "this daring young star met his death while in his car." As mentioned earlier, James Dean, a notorious 'petrol head', lost his life in a car crash near Cholame, California in 1955.

Following on from the lyrical promotion of the woodie, several new car types grab the attention of the Beach Boys' main lyricists, Brian Wilson and Mike Love. The group, particularly Dennis Wilson, were as interested in cars as any other American teenager, so there was a greater sincerity in their car songs than in their surfing songs. However, in much the same way as with surf culture, the Beach Boys employed a lot of car- and racing-specific language to make their songs appear more authentic. "Cherry, Cherry Coupe" (Wilson & Christian, 1963) is a prime example, reading somewhat like an automotive classified ad, listing "chopped nose and deck with louvers on the hood," "chrome […] rims with whitewall slicks" and "the rugs, seats, and panels now are looking good."

The song "Custom Machine" (Wilson & Love, 1963) maintains a similar approach: "Well, she's metal flake blue with a corvette grill", "Naugahyde bucket seats in front and back", and a "stereophonic speaker set with vibrasonic sound." Interestingly, in both songs mentioned and others besides, the cars are personified: "she's metal flake blue" in "Custom Machine," and, when talking about the Cherry Coupe, "she's got enough room now to barely seat two" (Wilson & Christian, 1963). Using metaphorical gender in this way, in order to personify objects or show

strong emotional involvement with them, especially cars, is nothing new. The application of a gendered pronoun is often used when referring to an object using the neutral pronoun 'it' seems too cold. The female pronoun, 'she,' is often thought to be used, in the case of cars (and other vehicles, such as ships) specifically, because the vehicle is a vessel carefully transporting its human cargo, much like the mother carrying her child in the womb. One alternative theory, more plausible in modern usage, is that the dominance of heteronormative behaviours and social cues means that any object that a 'man' desires to be inside of must be female. The song from *Little Deuce Coupe* that exemplifies this personification of the car is "Ballad of Ole' Betsy" (Wilson & Christian, 1963), the song is a love song to a car: "She was born in '32, and was she ever pretty [...] she must have had some favourites before I finally met her / And now that she's all mine, they'd better just forget her."

Writing songs about surfing had left the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean constrained by the requirements of surf music—a simple band lineup with guitarists on solid-body Fender electric guitars and Fender amplifiers. Car songs helped the Beach Boys (more so than Jan and Dean) move away from the surf sound and offered many new musical options, as there were no requisite features of 'hot-rod' music (Crowley, 2011, pp.111–2). Along with the changes being made musically, themes in the lyrics expanded in their range and consequently carried more meaning. For instance, the lyrics of "Shut Down" (Wilson & Christian, 1963) are mostly about the action of a drag race, but, told in first person, there is much insight into what is going through the driver's head: "got to be cool now," he tells himself, as his "fuel injected Stingray's really starting to go."

4.4. Driving into Decline

The abundance of motor vehicles in the 50s and 60s is often seen as progress, but it can also be seen as a symptom of the decline from natural to unnatural, synthetic or artificial. This was a major focus for artists of California, the Great Automotive State, by the start of the sixties. A few young artists, including Billy Al Bengston, Robert Irwin, Craig Kauffman and Larry Bell, were exploring and studying the effects of light on surfaces, using modern industrial materials such as Plexiglas and acrylic resin. Bengston, "who actually raced motorcycles to a professional level and cultivated a flamboyant, dare-devil persona that competed with the aura of Hollywood celebrity" (Crow, 1996, p.79), embraced the materials and the techniques used to decorate motorcycle bodywork and surfboards. In California, the dramatic subordination of nature to technology began in wartime emergency, which built up the region's lead in aircraft and electronic technology and had exponentially accelerated in the 1950s by the vast military expenditures of the Cold War. The group of artists that would become known as the 'Cool School' of American art, with Edward Ruscha its figurehead, turned away from the romance of the culture and instead saw the automobile, and automobile infrastructure, as repetitive and unnatural. The attention of these artists turned, to use the words of Billy Al Bengston, to "man-made things that we see in the harsh California light" (Bengston, quoted in Crow, 1996, p.80).

The subject of Edward Ruscha's most notable early-sixties study is the Standard Oil gas station, with the most notable reproduction of the station being the large-scale painting titled "Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas." The image is derived from a photograph of the same name and was reproduced by Ruscha many times, as in the book *Twentysix Gasoline Stations,*

published in 1963. The drawing of the station is carefully ruled and measured and the proportions are identical across the various versions, suggesting a repeatable, reusable format used to transfer the image from one work to another. This technical method, and the idea of multiple reproductions itself, links Ruscha's work heavily with Pop Art. In addition, the pieces "have all the indications of graphic design and very few signifiers of drawings […] – the overt display of the hand" (Rowell & Butler, 2004, p.28).

> The background is a chalky, light blue colour that clearly evokes an empty sky. There are streaks of pale canary yellow in the bottom right corner, at the point where the lines receding from the gas station's roof meet the corner of the sheet of paper […]. The presence of the yellow gives the impression of the beginnings of a smoggy sunrise or sunset, a visual motif often associated with Los Angeles and its combination of warm, sunny climate and automobile-induced pollution. There is no sense of human presence at this gas station […and it] becomes a moveable, interchangeable icon, the very opposite of a functional building (Straine, 2010).

The Standard Oil gas station is given new meanings as the subject of Ruscha's study. The station is no longer one particular building, somehow becoming the 'standard' for this type of endlessly repeated building. Gas stations would indeed have appeared on the corner of every major intersection of every major town or city at this point in time, with gas being a key commodity for a car-owning population. Ruscha went on to document the architecture of that "uniquely linear and discrete urban district" (Crow, 1996, p.84) of the Sunset Strip in the fold-out photographic publication *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966).

Possibly the most infamous automobile artwork of the time came from Edward Keinholz in the form of *Backseat Dodge '38* (1964), a sculpture depicting backseat teenage romance. When the LA County Museum of Art exhibited *Backseat Dodge '38* in 1966, the County Board of Supervisors threatened to shut down the entire museum and deny it funding on account

of the ‘revolting, pornographic’ sculpture. As is often the case, many of the Supervisors had not even seen Kienholz’s sculpture and all the fuss around the possible censorship catapulted Kienholz into the national spotlight. In response to the Supervisors’ demands, the car door stayed closed during the exhibition. A guard would open the door for museum goers over the age of 18 who insisted on peeking inside (Elliot, 2012).

4.5. Suburbia

The census of 1920 showed that more Americans were living in cities than were living on farms, a statistic that demonstrates the shift towards urban centres. At the other end of the twentieth century, the census of 1990 showed that the majority of Americans now resided in a new “demographic hybrid”, neither the city nor the country: the suburb (Cullen, 2004, p.144).

In the early urban mode, the centres of cities represented the most attractive, and most expensive, residential areas, while the poorest areas were found on the outskirts. The earliest examples of suburbs can be found in London as garden communities built in the eighteenth century within commuting distance of the city. Clapham Common, a village about five miles from London Bridge was one of the first considered “recognizably suburban in a modern sense: a low-density community dependent on the city economically but dominated by single-family houses in park-like settings” (Cullen, 2004, p.146).

The first examples of suburban development in the United States can be found on the eastern seaboard, around the most developed cities, in the early nineteenth century. Suburbs began to develop alongside new modes of transportation (especially important were the railroad

and, later, the car) which enabled suburban residents to travel in and out of the cities easily. At the most fundamental level, the car, preceded by the railroad, transformed cities by allowing access to the suburbs. "Modern Suburbia," says John B. Rae, author of *The American Automobile*, "is a creation of the automobile and could not exist without it" (Rae, 1965, p.220). Cars also transformed the environment of the inner-city and suburban street; houses with garages attached, and the shopping centres and strip malls with vast space for parking cars are just two examples.

Joan Didion comments on this development in her essay "On the Mall" from the collection *The White Album*: "The automobile accounts for suburbia, and suburbia accounts for the shopping centre" (Didion, 1979, p.179). A new American affluence came from postwar prosperity and "the zeitgeist of the 1950s is indelibly linked to the image of a monolithically white, middle-class suburbia and its nuclear family" (Walker, 2006, p.42), as is evident in this discussion of what might constitute an 'average' American in the latter half of the twentieth century:

> The 'average American' is a fiction of journalists, politicians, and social statisticians. But in the composite of characteristics that would make up this hypothetical individual, three would definitely emerge for the second half of the twentieth century: first, he lived in a metropolitan area and most likely in a suburb; second, he owned an automobile; and third, he and his family were almost completely dependent on their car for transportation beyond walking distance, or frequently within walking distance (Rae, 1965, p.219).

Inherent in this type of capitalist consumer society is the view that private ownership is key to freedom and developing individual identities. The individual is the keeper of their own person, personal capacities, and possessions, and is therefore largely responsible for their own position and trajectory in life. Privately owned products and goods are not merely markers of personal identity, they can also be said to constitute identity. As Farber states, the "car one drove, the cigarettes smoked, the TV shows watched, the products consumed became a common language

signalling who one wanted to be" (Farber, 1994, p.11). Certainly, this is the case with the car one drives in as much as the clothes one wears. The car functions as a marquee for its driver and passengers.

As we saw with cars in the previous section, privately owned houses too became seen as emblematic of the good life. Cars and houses were perfect partners for a new age of American prosperity; the house offers security while the car offers mobility. Take for instance the Little Old Lady from Pasadena. Just as important to her character as the Super Stock Dodge that she drives on Colorado Boulevard, is the "pretty little flower bed of white gardenias" (Altfeld, Berry & Christian, 1964) that she has in the garden of her, presumably suburban, single-family home.

After the Second World War there are more suburban developments, and suburban housing becomes less expensive. Within ten years, from the late 1940s to the late 1950s, 11 million suburban homes were built across the United States. "By 1960, as many people lived in the suburbs as in America's central cities" (Farber, 1994, p.9). In fact, the United States demonstrated a typical suburban home as an important piece of the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959. The exhibition, attended by U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, led to the famous Kitchen Debates, which centred on the topic of the superiority of US Capitalism versus Soviet Communism. American exhibitors built a model house at the exhibition site, representing, they claimed, a home that anyone in the United States could afford on basic wages. The key was not the home itself, but all of the labour- and time-saving gadgets inside of it. The home was presented as not simply a place to exist, but as a place to enjoy life and leisure.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I identified the car and, less prominently, the suburban home as primary place-images of California. The greater Los Angeles area, home of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, is dominated by automotive infrastructure. The accelerated development of the freeway system in Southern California meant that the state was at the forefront of the private transit trend. As a result, the relationship between people and place across California is largely negotiated through the automobile. Freedom and independence were well advertised as advantages to car ownership in the 1950s and 60s. Technological advancements of the 1950s and 60s were felt most strongly in the automobile industry and in the suburban home with its appliances and conveniences. An idealised vision of home in suburbia was characteristic of popular images of California at the start of the sixties, becoming an enduring place-image and an emblem of the California 'good life'.

Cars had been celebrated in rock and roll music since the beginnings of the popular style, the most frequently observed characteristics being the car's design and performance. The Beach Boys and Jan and Dean can be seen to continue this trend in their car songs. However, as was the case with their surfing songs, the groups don't rely heavily on the theme of rebelliousness in their car songs, which is at odds with the rebel teens depicted in films of the 1950s and 60s. Songs like "Be True to your School" (Wilson & Love, 1963), which appeared on an album of mainly car songs, strengthen the innocuous, non-rebellious attitude of this California style. Tackling car songs as they had surfing songs, the Beach Boys employed a lot of car- and racing-specific language to make their songs and themselves appear more authentic.

Alongside the rise of popularity of the automobile in the 1950s and 60s came a perspective which saw the car as a symptom of the decline from natural to unnatural or artificial. This became a focus in the work of visual artists and sculptors such as Edward Ruscha, Edward Keinholz and Billy Al Bengston. These artists turned away from the romance of car culture and instead saw the car, and the related automobile infrastructure, as repetitive and unnatural. Despite negative perspectives like these, and despite the well-reported and often-lamented California traffic, the car, as in the place-image offered by the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, is either a vessel for carrying surfboards to the beach or an object of desire and admiration. These car songs reinforce the positive connections of freedom and of affluence as part of the image-myth of the car.

5. The Call of California

The Rivieras' "California Sun" (Glover, 1964) is an ode to California written from outside of the state. Originally composed by an Ohio-based songwriter from Arkansas, it was first released in 1961 by Joe Jones as a rhythm and blues song. Formed in Indiana, the Rivieras, like the Beach Boys, were teenage high school students. The Rivieras' version of the song became a hit in 1964, during the height of popularity for the beach- and car-culture songs of the Beach Boys. The hit version of the song demonstrates that the California place-myth, especially those place-images that the Beach Boys and their contemporaries presented, were strong in the national imagination at this time. Speaking from some distance away, the lyrics share the positive attributes of life, and youth, in the California coastal communities: "Well, I'm goin' out west out on the coast/Where the California girls are really the most/Where they walk and I'll walk/They twist and I'll twist/[…]/Well they're out there a-havin' fun/In that warm California sun." Of all the hits featured as title tracks in this thesis, this song in particular indicates the nationwide feeling about California at the time. The chapter begins with a discussion of a *Life* magazine special issue (1962) about California, in order to demonstrate a wider popular interest in California lifestyles in the early 1960s. The band is miles away, but looking towards California as a place of guaranteed fun-in-the-sun.

In their early material, the Beach Boys and their California sound contemporaries packaged and marketed a particular myth of California. This dream southern California lifestyle was based on the beach, in the car, and in suburbia, as we saw in the previous two chapters, and showed California as a centre of leisured lifestyle and endless summer. The particular garage-rock

style of “California Sun” allows me to discuss the Beach Boys’ musical style in opposition, highlighting vocal harmony and falsetto as a standout feature which separates the music of the California sound from other popular styles at the time. Vocal harmony in particular is a feature which gives the music a very clear sense of community and togetherness, and one which continues to prove popular in Californian styles throughout the decade.

5.1. The View of California from the Rest of the Nation

Life magazine ran a California special issue in the early 1960s, entitled *The Call of California* (*Life*, 1962). While the popularity of these types of general interest magazines began to reduce from the sixties onwards, *Life*’s circulation still reached between eight and ten million copies in 1962. The issue begins with a note: “The longing in man’s heart for a better life has driven him throughout history to seek out a brighter land. It has often wrenched him from the familiar valley, the routine of tribe, the safety of establishment. He has gone forth to find glory, freedom of action, freedom to worship God […]” (p.1). The introduction conjures up images of the great migrations which came before, the struggles of the pioneers and the early settlers of the state of California. The passage continues: “or perhaps only to make a better living for the wife and kids in a climate of human dignity.” This is a more realistic depiction of the migration of the 1950s and 60s—moving the family to a new home in the California suburbs—just as California was about to become the most populous state in the union.

The first main article in the magazine is a photographic exposition of “The pleasures and palaces of a great golden land in the West,” featuring photographs by Ralph Crane

of some of the principal sights in the state, collected under the title "California Spectacle." With words inscribed upon a stunning nighttime landscape showing lights twinkling beneath Mount Shasta's snow-capped peak, the article reports that

> There is an overwhelming radiance to this land… For there has been magic union here, a rendezvous between man and nature. Nature provided a garden of wealth and beauty, and man swept west to fulfill it. Todays' jet age migration dwarfs even the storied marches of the Spanish settlers, the gold hunters, the Okies of the past. California—rich, vibrant, by now almost mythical—is[,] in the 20th Century more than ever before[,] the promised land" (*Life*, 1962, p.14).

This type of language continues throughout the California special issue.

The draw of California in the 1960s rested heavily on the climate and incredible natural topography of the state; "Sunlight, beaches, blazing deserts, rainy forests, gentle valleys, rockbound coasts … what else? You can't go any higher inside the 48 states than the top of Mt. Whitney and can't get any lower than Death Valley" (*Life*, 1962, p.69). We are also reminded of the agricultural opportunities on offer, with a summary of the output of what is called "the country's most bountiful farmland;" California's orchards and farms produce a third of the nation's fruit and a quarter of the nation's vegetables respectively (*Life*, 1962, p.19), while California's vineyards produce 85% of the country's wines (*Life*, 1962, p.21).

Technological innovations are lauded, including stating California's position at the forefront of the aerospace industry since the end of the Second World War, an industry which employs over half a million people in the state (*Life*, 1962, p.21). Coverage of the upcoming 1962 gubernatorial election followed—a hotly contested race in which the Democratic incumbent, Pat Brown, would eventually win re-election against former Vice President Richard Nixon—after which the issue returned to hawking the good life in California with articles such as "California

Here We Come - And This is Why" (*Life*, 1962, p.54) and "The Tomorrow Country" (*Life*, 1962, p.127).

In *Into the West*, Walter Nugent writes about California that, by the start of the 1960s "the West had become the leading edge of American culture, economy, and society. In the nineteenth century the West captivated the American imagination by its exotic and nubile emptiness. After 1945 it did so by its ebullience and by fulfilling so many promises" (1999, p.277). In this *Life* special issue, both perspectives ring out. The natural, exotic beauty of the state is given primary position but the sense of California being busy and full of cultural and social opportunities is also present. Articles on the arts in California, for instance, zero in on the jazz music in and around San Francisco, positing that "the best jazz festival in the whole nation takes place each autumn" outside of San Francisco in "the romantic old-fashioned town of Monterey" (Nugent, 1999, p.114). The discussion of music also asserts that the "national vogue for folk singing picked up enormous steam in California where balladeers shared the bill with sick comics in offbeat nightclubs" (Nugent, 1999, p.117).

While the content of the magazine does demonstrate a particular view of California as "the promised land" and finds that there is enough intrigue and wonder about the state to fill around 75 typed magazine pages, the fact that *Life* chose to present a special issue about the state, and the benefits of moving there, is a key indication in itself of the pervasive popularity of California lifestyles in the early 1960s.

5.2. Singing about Endless Summers

The style of the Rivieras' "California Sun" (Glover, 1964) is much more embedded in the garage rock style than the vocal surf style of the Beach Boys. The garage rock style emerged during the 1960s in the United States, gaining its name retrospectively from the fact that many garage rock bands started out playing in garages and other makeshift rehearsal spaces and later recorded in "unsophisticated studios" (Gillett, 1996, p. 313). The bands were commonly comprised of young, amateur musicians who were self-taught and often played with a sense of urgency. Musically, garage rock is characterised by a raw, energetic sound and simple song structures: "the typical performance was often aggressive and usually amateurish" (Rosenberg, 2009, p.112). Influenced first by R&B and, soon after, by the bands of the British invasion (Gillett, 1996), songs commonly featured catchy guitar riffs, basic chord progressions and strong rhythmic drive. The style's gritty sound and focus the spontaneity and immediacy of the performance has been linked to "a desire to transcend the restrictions of chart-based pop" (Borthwick and Moy, 2004, p.46). Examples of nationally successful artists in the garage rock style include the Kingsmen, the Standells and the Sonics.

The Beach Boys, by contrast to this definition, presented a musical style which was less aggressive and much more polished and rehearsed—a key distinguishing feature of the early Beach Boys style is more complex vocal harmony. In considering the overall sound of the Beach Boys' early music, my boundaries are drawn between 1961 and 1965—from the release of the first commercial recording of the Beach Boys' music, the single "Surfin'" (1961), to the release of the album *Beach Boys' Party* in 1965. These early Beach Boys songs are where the band honed their vision of California. The more sophisticated composition, arrangement and production of their 1966 record, *Pet Sounds*, demonstrated a new conceptual direction for the band. While *Beach*

Boys' Party already showed signs of the progression toward the proto-concept album *Pet Sounds*, the "beach party" style of the recording, with mainly acoustic arrangements, leaves it short of the large-scale wall-of-sound production and advanced studio techniques which defined the next period of the Beach Boys.

With the 1964 album *All Summer Long*, the band have solidified their vision of beachside Southern California as a land of eternal sunshine and eternal fun. While the album is still distinctly about California beach culture, only one song explicitly references surfing: "Don't Back Down" (Wilson & Love, 1964). There is also only the oblique reference to getting around by car in "I Get Around" (Wilson & Love, 1964), with the other automotive song on the album, "Little Honda" (Wilson & Love, 1964), being about a motorcycle. The cover of the album also demonstrates a move away from surfing and cars. There is not a surfboard or hot rod in sight, replaced instead by a variety of photos of the band hanging out at the beach with their girlfriends, "appearing confident in the sort of way that makes you believe there is something about growing up in Southern California that defines a person's attitude toward the world" (Sanchez, 2014, p.29). The California place-myth of endless summers, as well as freedom and mobility, is not that different from the qualities that were advertised by boosters and hawkers much earlier on: healthful air, open space and an idealistic view of suburban life.

The sound of the early Beach Boys, and, more generally, the California sound, can be defined by vocal harmony. The vast majority of songs recorded between the start of the Beach Boys career and 1965's *Beach Boys' Party!* make some use of vocal harmony; Brian Wilson tells us himself that "the harmonies that we are able to produce give us a uniqueness, which is really the only important thing you can put into records - some quality that no-one else has got… Most

of all, I love the human voice for its own sake" (Wilson, quoted in Abbott, 2001, p.73). "Vocalization," writes Richard Middleton, "is both vernacular and universal: all listeners can engage and identify with, hence participate in, the activity of singing" (Middleton, 2003, p.456). Reserving musical complexity, particularly in the early music of the band, for the vocal parts meant that the vocal—that most relatable, universal component—filled out the mix. The group harmonies that are typical of the Beach Boys' early sixties releases emphasised a sense of togetherness and companionship. Out surfing, driving hot rods, or admiring California girls on the beach, whether the song was about a typically solo activity or not, the whole group was always present on the records. In this way, the group's vocal harmonies can be seen to connote community and camaraderie in relation to their key place-images. While surfing may often be connected to the image-myth of the lone surfer, pitted against nature, riding a huge wave, for the Beach Boys, surfing's image-myth takes the sport as a group activity, as argued in chapter two, and their vocal style emphasises the sense of a harmonious community.

The Beach Boys' harmonies began to develop very early in the band's history. As brothers, Brian, Dennis and Carl Wilson began singing together from a very young age. The harmony singing expresses the familiarity and closeness of a group of brothers, as well as, less explicitly, their personal safety; many of the band's biographers have written about their father, who was also the band's manager, being abusive and manipulative and "Their singing sometimes became the only means of soothing their father's explosive anger" (O'Regan, 2016, p.154). In Carl's own words, the group getting together to rehearse and record harmonies "had become a church to us" (Wilson, quoted in Abbott, 2001, p.75).

In accounts of his recording techniques, it is revealed that Brian Wilson always treated the vocal harmonies as the most important ingredient in the band's sound. As most of the music in this part of the band's career was made using the three- or four- track recorders at either Western Recorders or Gold Star in Los Angeles, there necessarily had to be some consideration of available space. According to Kingsley Abbott, author of *The Beach Boys' Pet Sounds,* Brian would make as much space as possible for recording the vocal harmonies by mixing down all of the instruments to one track before the vocal sessions began (Abbott, 2001, p.72).

As the music develops throughout the first three studio albums, Brian Wilson's falsetto becomes much more prominent. Like many of the approaches taken to vocal harmony in the Beach Boys' early work, Brian's falsetto seem firmly rooted in the doo-wop harmony tradition, its earliest incarnations in the 1930s, which was brought to prominence in the style known as 'modern harmony' in the 1950s (Goosman, 2005, p.265). Doo-wop, itself a predominantly black musical style, drew upon blues and gospel, where falsetto voice already appeared frequently in commercial recordings from the 1930s onward, and in the folk traditions much earlier. "The absorption and, ultimately, reconception of doo-wop vocals became central to the development of the Beach Boys' sound, starting with Mike Love's doo-wop bass line in the group's first record" (O'Regan, 2016, p.155). Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, Goosman tells us in the endnotes of *Group Harmony* (2005), were instrumental in bringing white male falsetto vocals to modern pop music in around 1962: "[Frankie] Valli was a good singer, but few other white singers could sing falsetto very well. One notable exception was the Beach Boys' use of falsetto" (Goosman, 2005, p.272). As two of the only American pop bands to have sustained commercial success in the early sixties, and with the similarities in vocal arrangement, there was some rivalry between the two

bands, demonstrated most effectively by the Beach Boys lyrics in the final refrain of “Surfers Rule” (1963): “Surfers rule / (Four Seasons you better believe it).”

Brian Wilson’s falsetto begins appearing either in the top of block harmony vocals or as a lead line in choruses, often alternating with, and used in contrast to, Mike Love’s more assertive and boyish voice in verses. As an accompanying singer, rather than as the vocal lead, Brian’s falsetto can also be heard reinforcing the refrain of a song and in “wailing” melodies above the group in outro sections (O’Regan, 2016, p.156). Primarily because “characteristic pitch ranges and expressive styles appear to define ‘male’ and ‘female’ voice types and genres” (Middleton, 2003, p.167), the falsetto voice has a feminine quality. Often used as the voice of innocence and introspection in ballads, Brian Wilson’s falsetto is employed along with lyrical themes of anxiety and vulnerability. For instance, in the song “Surfer Girl” (Wilson, 1963), Brian opens up to the surfer girl that “made [his] heart come all undone” and asks; “do you love me, do you, surfer girl?” The same approach is taken in the later single “Barbara Ann” (Fassert, 1965), where Brian asks the titular girl to “ta-ake my ha-a-and.” It is largely this emotive falsetto, and the sensitive perspective that Brian’s persona took, that turned off the fans of more masculine rock and roll or garage rock styles of the time.

5.3. Conclusion

The Rivieras’ “California Sun” (1964) became a hit at the same time the beach- and car-culture songs of the Beach Boys reached the height of their popularity. In popular media, the attraction to California in the 1960s was, first and foremost, the sunshine and the salubrious

climate. Second came the natural topography of the state. This echoes the place-images of the natural Mediterranean beauty of the state, as it was reported by explorers and cartographers throughout the nineteenth century and by boosters well into the twentieth, which came to inform a place-myth of California as the land of milk and honey or a paradise of natural beauty. "California Sun," a song performed by an Indiana-based group and recorded in Chicago, demonstrates that California place-myths were strong in the national imagination at this time, but the style of the Rivieras' "California Sun" (Glover, 1964) is much more embedded in the garage rock style than in the California Sound of the Beach Boys.

The Beach Boys' harmony vocal style, largely through the necessary presence of multiple singers, helped to reinforce a sense of togetherness and community. The vast majority of songs recorded between the start of the Beach Boys career and 1965's *Beach Boys' Party!* make some use of vocal harmony. Having the layered harmonies fill out the mix meant that the vocal was foregrounded. In their use of group vocal harmony, the Beach Boys bring a sense of community to each of their lyrical topics.

Through the group's first three studio albums Brian Wilson's falsetto also becomes much more prominent, appearing either in the top of block harmony vocals or as a lead line in choruses. Often used as the voice of innocence and introspection in ballads, Brian's falsetto is employed along with lyrical themes of anxiety and vulnerability. The juxtaposition of Wilson's falsetto against Mike Love's more assertive and boyish voice allowed for greater emotional complexity and sensitivity in the Beach Boys' songs.

6. Wish They All Could be California Girls

The remarks about California girls in the Rivieras' "California Sun" (Glover, 1964) and the Beach Boys' "California Girls" (Wilson & Love, 1965) brings the discussion to a recurring character of sunny beach fantasies: the California girl. Alongside surfing and hot-rods, girls are a major lyrical theme in music considered part of the California sound. In this chapter I first explore the appearance of the California girl in the music of the Beach Boys and then go on to explore a history of California girls in popular music as far back as the mid-1800s. Following this history forward beyond the 1960s I uncover a web of intertextual links which situates the Beach Boys' "California Girls" at its centre, demonstrating the pervasiveness of this particular image-myth of the California girl. Towards the end of the chapter my focus turns to the role of women in the burgeoning rock scenes in California, discussing the popular misconception, based on documentary evidence, that women in these scenes were empowered beyond those in other places.

6.1. Beach Boys and Beach Girls

In the Beach Boys' early material, surfing and car songs were plentiful. Album covers and advertisements variously showed the group barefoot on the beach, surfboards in hand, or with the 'woodie' loaded up and ready to go. With their accessible lyrics and singable melodies, the group presented images of Southern California lifestyles to young people across the United States and around the world. In many of their songs, as discussed in previous chapters, the group actively invited people to partake in the fun of surfing and to join them on the beaches of California.

The success of the Beach Boys helped to neutralise the negative and dangerous reputation that surfing had gained. Their 1963 album *Surfer Girl* demonstrated the versatility of the group and of surfing music in general. Songs like the title track "Surfer Girl" (Wilson, 1963) helped to expand the boundaries of vocal surf music by introducing a more melancholic ballad style to the repertoire. This in turn allowed for more thoughtful and reflective lyrical content. Another song from the album, "Catch a Wave" (Wilson & Love, 1963) strengthened the unique images of the state of California by suggesting that if you "catch a wave […] you'll be sittin' on top of the world." Yet again, the message was clear; California is a magical place and its beaches are the place to be.

While the A-sides were mainly surfing songs, the B-sides of many early Beach Boys singles were car songs. As the popularity of the vocal surf style reached its peak, car songs were racing up the charts. Songs about automobiles were songs about freedom. In the same way as with surfing, the Beach Boys helped to normalise automobile culture, removing its dangerous and anti-social connotations, and songs about cars turned drag racing and hot-rodding into innocuous activities. Released in 1963, the same year as *Surfer Girl*, the Beach Boys' album *Little Deuce Coupe* featured a number of songs about cars. The song "Shut Down" (Wilson & Christian, 1963), for instance, attempts to capture the scene of a drag race, explaining to casual listeners that to be 'shut down' meant to lose a race. The album contained a lot of racing-specific language, helpfully explicated in a short glossary of terms included in the liner notes.

The Beach Boys' treatment of these topics in their music, along with their innocent, clean cut image, made all of the dangerous and threatening aspects of youth culture in California appear safe and innocent. In addition to songs about the dangerous pastimes of surfing, driving

and motorsport, the group recorded songs which were more generally about the pleasures of teenage living in Southern California. Even going to school was a joy if you lived in California. The song “Be True to your School” (Wilson & Love, 1963) exhibits high school spirit and the ideal Californian high school existence; the singer is a star athlete and his girlfriend is a cheerleader. The group’s 1964 album *All Summer Long* conjured up images of the perfect carefree summer in California, with the cover exhibiting examples of fun beach-based activities in which one might be involved: playing football, gathering at a barbeque, riding horses, and, of course, flirting with beautiful girls. Even while the themes of surfing and cars began to reduce in the lyrics of the Beach Boys’ songs, those about girls maintained, and even increased, their album share. The group’s first four albums combined contain 11 songs on the theme of girls, while the following four albums contain 28.

Fig. 6. Cover of the Beach Boys' *All Summer Long* (1964).

Despite the strong links to their home state and the specifically Southern Californian lifestyles that the Beach Boys advertised, they had only one hit in the 1960s which used the name of the state in its title. "California Girls" (Wilson & Love, 1965) concentrated all the power from the images of carefree teenage existence that the group had fashioned into a single three-minute "hymn to youth" (Wilson, quoted in Wise, 1994, p.25), to use the words of songwriter Brian Wilson. "If you had to reduce the Beach Boys to a single song, it might well be 'California

Girls.' The song established the band's entire worldview: Los Angeles is paradise, and no place has women that are more beautiful" (*Rolling Stone*, 2013).

The idea that California girls outnumbered boys two to one on the beaches appears in Jan and Dean's "Surf City" (Wilson & Berry, 1963), which begins with the single line "two girls for every boy." Later in the song it is revealed that "there's two swingin' honeys for every guy / And all you gotta do is just wink your eye." Bruce and Terry also sang that "the girls are two to one" when they're out "surfin' every day down at Malibu / 'Neath the warm California sun." (Barri & Sloan, 1964) California girls were present in the earlier songs of the vocal surf style suggesting that, while their "California Girls" (Wilson & Love, 1965) is arguably the most widely recognised, the California girl was not an invention of the Beach Boys.

The Beach Boys' "California Girls" (Wilson & Love, 1965) is not simply about the girls in California. The lyrics begin as something of a travelogue, noting some of the places the group have visited on tour and listing, albeit superficially, the benefits of the girls in each of the places: "Well east coast girls are hip/I really dig those styles they wear/And the southern girls, with the way they talk/They knock me out when I'm down there./The mid-west farmer's daughters/Really make you feel alright/And the northern girls with the way they kiss/They keep their boyfriends warm at night." Even despite all of the great girls they've met on their travels around the world, "the west coast has the sunshine, and the girls all get so tanned" so they "couldn't wait to get back in the states/Back to the cutest girls in the world." Ultimately, they "wish they all could be California girls." Touring around the world only helped strengthen the resolve that California was the best place to be. The state had plentiful opportunities for leisure, the nation's best surfing spots, and the most beautiful, well-tanned residents. For their first ever network TV

spot in spring 1963, the Beach Boys appeared on The Steve Allen Show and performed "Surfin' USA" in front of a beach-themed backdrop (Elliot, 1982, p. 309). The group frequently appeared on television in their surfer guises, with performances staged as beach parties and the group surrounded by California girls in swimsuits.

Fig. 7. The Beach Boys performing on The Jack Benny Hour, first broadcast November 13, 1965.

The *Life* magazine California special issue, discussed in more detail in the previous chapter, had plenty to say about California girls in an article dedicated to them, "California Lassie, Universally Classy." The article begins:

> California men are fervent boosters of their women… And they should be. Some carping anthropologists claim that the American woman is put together in monotonously uniform fashion from coast to coast - but they must have been walking around California with their eyes closed. The prettiest, biggest, lithest, tannest, most luscious girls this side of the international date line dwell in the area washed to the west by the Pacific, to the east by the gentle streams of the Sierra Nevada, and in between by the droolings of enviable men who have it so good. How California girls get this way is a true-life mystery (1962, p. 119).

This presentation of California girls resonated with a generation already well-versed in the superiority of the Golden State. The popularity of the California sound helped support a vision of California as a heaven for white, middle-class teens. The biggest hits that these groups had in the first half of the decade all employed images of Southern California as the ultimate paradise for fun-loving and beautiful young people. Nick Venet, a record producer at Capitol, said that "it was a pure California phenomenon. The Beach Boys just represented California to the rest of the country… [it was a] fantasy that got triggered by the Beach Boys records" (Venet, quoted in Leaf, 1978, p.36).

Beach and surfing movies were made for eager teenage audiences across the nation and by 1965, surfing and fun on the beach had become mainstream advertising images and commercials had begun to be tuned towards the white, middle-class teenagers to whom the Beach Boys sang. Soft drinks manufacturers adopted the dual images of surfing and teenage leisure time at the beach more strongly than most others throughout the late 1960s. Coca-Cola ran a television commercial in 1966 which was called "Surfing on Coke" (Coca-Cola, 1966). While filmed on location on Oahu, Hawaii, the commercial utilises many of the images made popular by the Beach Boys. It opens with a lone surfer riding waves that can be "as high as a two story building." The voice over tells us that it's not the surfing itself that's exciting; "what makes it exciting is knowing what happens when you get wiped out." Cue the surfer wiping out, or falling off his surfboard.

The commercial then cuts to what happens after the surfer has wiped out and reached the shore: "Back on shore they're really stoked about your ride," the voiceover says, while on the screen a tanned, blond, bikini-clad girl walks along the beach carrying two bottles of Coke, "so they bring you a Coke. Man, does that taste beautiful."

The Beach Boys' music and image had successfully capitalised upon existing ideas about California's young people and, in turn, strengthened popular place-myths of the Golden State. Kevin Starr asserts that the group are responsible for:

> One of the most important mythic brandings of Southern California since the creation of the orange crate label: a branding that would put youth, […] and a youth-oriented culture of surfing, beach life, cruising, parties, school, and romance, at the forefront of the California identity via the records and albums and live performances of the Beach Boys (Starr, 2009, p.20).

By connecting its myth to young America and inviting young America to buy into the dream, to find its own southern California, the songs of the Beach Boys transformed the California place-myth. These myths are not confined to the sixties. The common conception of California being inhabited by beautiful people has continued for decades. For instance, Gerald Haslam describes how, for those outside, looking in, California at the end of the twentieth century still "seems to be a land of tan, sun bleached blondes with straight teeth, blondes who don't have to work but who do hurry on roller skates from hot tubs to haute cuisine to the strobe-lit splendor of nightclubs" (Haslam, 1992, p.1).

6.2. The California Girl

The California girl is often thought of as a unique, timeless stereotype. Or that somehow the California sun has created a specific breed of women that inhabit the shores of the Golden State. In fact this idea of the California girl being somehow different from those in the rest of the nation can be shown to be as old as the state itself. The trend began as early as the California Gold Rush, strengthened in the 1960s by the proponents of the California sound, and continues with songs like the Doors' "LA Woman" (The Doors, 1971), Mötley Crüe's "Girls, Girls, Girls" (Sixx, et al., 1987), and Katy Perry and Snoop Dogg's "California Gurls" (Perry, et al., 2010).

The state of California takes its name from the mythical island of California in a 16th century novel by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo. The island nation, inhabited solely by women, was ruled over by Calafia, an attractive, virgin, pagan warrior queen. Arguably the very first California girl, Califia has frequently been depicted as the Spirit of California in modern art and literature. Symbolizing an untamed and bountiful land, she often features in myths of the origins of the Golden State. Going right back to the mid-1800s, and the beginnings of the Americanisation of the west coast of North America, I will explore how the concept of the California girl has developed over time through its deployment in popular music.

The move west to California was a tough and dangerous ordeal before the construction of the railways and the original California Dream, the idea that California is a place to start over and find prosperity either mining or working the land, is male-dominated. The same can be said of early music made about California, as the protagonists of the vast majority of the songs are miners who ventured to the state during the gold rush, and miners were almost

exclusively male. The culture of public entertainment was also heavily male-dominated in English-speaking parts of California. Following the usual evolution of frontier towns, Northern California's saloons, patronised mostly by men, hosted the first public entertainment presented by paid performers from a stage. Accompanied by a piano, violin, guitar, or accordion, standard saloon entertainment "consisted mostly of recitations, farces, songs, and dances performed by artists who were old, penniless, or simply untalented" (Martin, 1993; 12). The show, whether it was good or bad, was always playing second chair to the liquor and gambling.

Initially women are almost entirely absent from the musical texts which form the basis of my investigation. They appear, infrequently, as reminders of the lives back east - wives and girlfriends left behind by the California-bound miners. In order to find the first song which features a certain female Californian type as the subject we go back to the time of the Gold Rush. The song in question is "Sacramento Gals" (Stone, 1858), found in *Put's Golden Songster* (1858). The book indicates that the song should be performed to the tune of "Bobbing Around." This tune, originally known as "Bobbing Joe" (Playford, 1651), is a traditional Morris dance tune composed by John Playford and first published in the 1651 dance manual *The English Dancing Master*. The original dance is still performed by Morris troupes in England and is a favourite of the Bampton tradition. A performance of the song "Sacramento Gals" in the nineteenth century songster style, as solo vocal line accompanied by acoustic guitar, can be heard performed by Logan English on the Folkways Records collection *The Days of '49: Songs of the Gold Rush* (1957). As it is in turn based on the minstrel song "Buffalo Gals" (Anon., 1848), popularised in the 1840s and using the same basic tune, it adheres to the earlier assertion that many of the minstrel songs linked to the Gold Rush were simply new lyrics performed over popular tunes from back east. This melody, as

well as many other tunes from the oral tradition, were used over and over again, in Europe and the Americas, in songs with altered lyrics. This tune in particular, for example, appears to share many similarities with "Im Grunewald, im Grunewald ist Holzauktion" (Meißner, 1890), an old German music hall song (Hall, 2015).

The lyrics of "Sacramento Gals" (Stone, 1858) demonstrate that the girls of Sacramento are seen as different from those in the rest of the nation; in the second verse the singer tells us that "They're pretty gals, I must confess […]/And 'Lordy-massy' how they dress." An offensive style of dress it was too, as later in the song we're told that "Theres many a gal from Ar-kan-saw […]/Who well remembers hollowing 'haw'—" this being a misspelling, by modern standards, of "hollering 'whore'." The Sacramento gals wore a lot of makeup too, by the standards of the day: "their faces covered with paint and chalk;" their dresses were abnormally wide and airy and "their hoops take up the whole sidewalk." Tongue-in-cheek lines, of usual humorous minstrel style, tell us that the women were attractive, that "they're fresh and mellow as a ripe banana." The final verses indicate that the protagonist's view of the Sacramento gals is not so far dissimilar to Brian Wilson's view of the California girl, in that he has seen many different girls but always favours the Sacramento gals: "But of all the gals I ever see… The Sacramento gals for me." The writer may even wish they all could be Sacramento gals.

Another early example is the song "California Woman," from 1895 (Clark Brown & Dougherty). The song first champions the state of California itself: "there is much of beauty in this country that we love/with its fair broad lands of plenty, the undimmed heav'n above," before revealing that "the thing that is dearest in all the world beside/The California woman, oh that is our country's pride." The song does little to reveal any particular qualities of California women

beyond their beauty: “This Golden State of ours is set with jewels, fair … bright and beautiful … rich and rare/These jewels are our women.”

Al Jolson recorded “California, Here I Come” (DeSylva & Meyer, 1924) in 1924. Originally written for the Broadway musical *Bombo*, Jolson had been performing the song since 1921. While the song is short, the lyrics do cover a few of the essential features which draw people to California: the sunshine is represented, along with the abundance of nature, as California is a place “Where bowers and flowers bloom in the sun/Each morning at dawning birdies sing and everything.” The real reason that Jolson is so eager to get on the way to California, he explains, is because “A sun-kissed miss said ‘Don't be late’/That's why I can hardly wait/Open up your Golden Gate/California, here I come.”

California girls appeared as quantities rather than as discrete characters in early vocal surf songs, for instance when Jan and Dean sing about girls outnumbering boys two-to-one in “Surf City” (Wilson & Berry, 1963) and Bruce and Terry also sang that “the girls are two to one” (Barri & Sloan, 1964) on the beach at Malibu. By the mid-sixties, the California girl was already recognised nationally as a California place-image, demonstrated by the fact that the California girl was mentioned in the Riviera’s “California Sun” in 1964, the year prior to the release of the Beach Boys’ “California Girls” (Wilson & Love, 1965).

With “California Girls” (Wilson & Love, 1965), the Beach Boys continue, rather than invent, a trend of celebrating the women of the Golden State as different from, and often better than, those of the rest of the USA, or even the world. In doing so they make the ‘California girl’ an indelible ingredient of popular images of California. The Beach Boys’ California girls

were a unique breed: tanned, bikini clad ‘honeys’ inhabiting the west coast’s beach communities. Although the Beach Boys were eager to suggest that girls from across the whole United States were also very attractive, they were certain to prioritise the girls of California. The Beach Boys contemporaries Jan and Dean, as well as the less popular Bruce and Terry, were also fond of the Californian girls that played on their beaches and in the surf. Songs such as “Surf City” (Wilson & Berry, 1963) by Jan and Dean and “Summer Means Fun” (Barri & Sloan, 1964) by Bruce and Terry, as discussed in the previous section, offer a similar send-up of the California girl as part of California beach culture.

The protagonist of the song “Going to California” (Page & Plant, 1971), by English rock band Led Zeppelin, finds himself heading to California after breaking up with a “woman unkind” back home in order to find new love in the shape of a California girl. As told in the song, he has “made up my mind, make a new start/Goin' to California with an achin' in my heart/Someone told me there's a girl out there/With love in her eyes and flowers in her hair.” Once in California, however, the protagonist winds up finding nothing less than the ominous signs of the end of the world: “Mountains and the canyons start to tremble and shake/The children of the sun begin to awake/It seems that the wrath of the gods got a punch on the nose/And it's startin' to flow, I think I might be sinkin’.” The focus on a break up and the subsequent longing for a new love are typical of rock music during this period, but the specific thrust of the journey to California to find a girl reinforces existing ideas about the availability of California girls. This particular California girl has flowers in her hair, which is suggestive of negotiation between the Beach Boys’ California girl and later image-myths of hippies, or ‘flower children,’ as discussed in sections 7.2 and 7.3.

The Doors' "L.A. Woman" (The Doors, 1971) makes a departure from the depiction of California girls as sex objects. There is a seemingly derogatory reference to 'little girls' in the line "the little girls in their Hollywood bungalows." This is most likely in reference to the hippies and 'flower children' who lived in bungalows in the canyons outside of Los Angeles. By 1971, the peace-and-love lifestyle of the late 1960s appeared, in hindsight, to be naive; many young girls had been taken advantage of during that period and a small few had even been unfortunate enough to have gotten caught up with Charles Manson and the Manson Family. The lyric "Motel money murder-madness/Let's change the mood from glad to sadness," seems to directly reference the Tate-LaBianca murders, committed by the Manson Family in 1969, and the changing feelings at the end of the decade. "Are you a lucky little lady in the City of Light?" Jim Morrison asks, "Or just another lost angel?" The term 'lost angel' appears to be used in reference to the broken dreams at the end of the 60s because of its similarity to the name of the city, Los Angeles. The vocal lines are delivered in a mocking, sneering tone throughout the song, as if sung with a sardonic smile. In part, the lyrics suggest that the L.A. Woman of the title is the city itself; "I see your hair is burning/Hills are filled with fire/If they say I never loved you/You know they are a liar/Driving down your freeways/Midnight alleys roam." Forest fires in the hills around Los Angeles, like the earthquakes in "Going to California" (1971), are a frequent danger to residents. Note, too, the choice of the possessive in "driving down *your* freeways."

Randy Newman's "I Love L.A." (Newman, 1983), from the album *Trouble in Paradise,* makes clear a link between the Beach Boys' California girls and the experience of Los Angeles: "Roll down the window, put down the top/Crank up the Beach Boys, baby, don't let the music stop/ […] /Look at these women, there ain't nothing like 'em nowhere." Interestingly,

attention is first drawn to the natural geographic features of Southern California, then to the less fortunate residents of the city, before finally noticing the singular women of L.A.: “Look at that mountain, look at those trees/Look at that bum over there, man, he's down on his knees/Look at these women, there ain't nothing like 'em nowhere.” The fact that the women of L.A. appear as something of an afterthought begs a question: would Newman’s protagonist have noticed those women, or thought them to be special, if he were not listening to the Beach Boys?

The women of California become aesthetic sex objects once more in the male-dominated world of 80s and 90s rock and metal music which was produced and performed in California, the most notable scene being that of the Sunset Strip. Bands such as Mötley Crüe and Poison, and, a couple of years later, Guns N’ Roses, often sang about their relationships and experiences with women. “Girls, Girls, Girls/Long legs and burgundy lips/Dancin' down on Sunset Strip” sang Mötley Crüe on their 1987 single “Girls, Girls, Girls” (Sixx, et al., 1987); “Yankee girls ya just can't beat/But they're the best when they're off their feet/Girls, Girls, Girls.” Over half a decade after their debut album had declared “I want you, I need you/I want you to be mine tonight/You need me, you tease me/Use you up, throw you away” (Sixx & Neil, 1981), the band were still displaying their sexism and apparent misogyny. The Sunset Strip rock scene, along with other styles of rock and metal music which emerged concurrently in other areas of the United States and internationally, advertised women as objects of desire for men, ready for the taking by anyone willing to parade their virile machismo in rock clubs. It can be seen as an extreme example of the “explicit, crude, and often aggressive expression of male sexuality” that Frith and McRobbie call “cock rock” (1990, p.374). The term cock rock refers to a style of performance, rather than a style of music, which is typified by expressions of male sexual prowess.

While the treatment of women as sex objects is typical for many styles of rock, and especially so for the harder styles of rock music in the 1980s and early 1990s, for the bands in California there was already the archetype of the attractive and available California girl available for appropriation. This is demonstrated very acutely in the music video for David Lee Roth's 1985 cover of the Beach Boys' hit "California Girls" (Wilson & Love, 1985). Not only did the song peak at number three on the Billboard chart, just as the original had two decades earlier, it also featured the backing vocals of original Beach Boys member Carl Wilson. While the song is very similar to the original in its arrangement, though with more distorted guitars, the music video stands out as being a product of the ultra-sexualised 80s rock style. David Lee Roth stars as the driver of a bus-tour showing tourists the beach and bikini-clad women of California. The scenes of the video follow the lyrics of the song, offering the audience glimpses of more bikini-clad women playing the East-coast girls, southern girls, and the Midwest farmers' daughters. The video was nominated for the MTV Video Music Awards in 1985 for Best Male Video, where it was beaten by Bruce Springsteen's "I'm on Fire" (Springsteen, 1985) and Video of the Year, again beaten, this time by Don Henley's "The Boys of Summer" (Henley & Campbell, 1984).

When Guns N' Roses released their debut album *Appetite for Destruction* (1987), with thoroughly filthy lyrics like "You can taste the bright lights, but you won't get them for free/In the jungle, welcome to the jungle/Feel my, my, my serpentine/Uh, I, I want to hear you scream" gracing its opening track, the band's message was clear; the hedonistic lifestyle of sex, drugs and rock and roll, with a heavy emphasis on sex, was alive and well in the 'jungle' of Los Angeles. The final track of that same album, "Rocket Queen" (Guns N' Roses, 1987), even features the sound of lead singer Axl Rose having sex with a groupie in the recording studio. The Los Angeles

of this period, “Where the grass is green and the girls are pretty” was the ultimate adolescent male’s “Paradise City” (Guns N’ Roses, 1987).

Although it is no longer exactly as presented by the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, and Bruce and Terry, the enduring aspect of these images of California girls is one of beauty and availability. This image-myth of the California girl is a construction of the male gaze (Mulvey, 1975); the desirable qualities of beauty and availability clearly demonstrate the depiction of California girls from a perspective that presents women as sexual objects for heterosexual male pleasure, in turn offering an aspirational position for receptive young women. The impact of the original “California Girls” (Wilson & Love, 1965) on marking out this aspect of the California place-myth is still felt. This is demonstrated by the sheer number of songs from this point in time onwards which strongly reference the timeless hit, and the type of tanned, attractive, available young women who are its subject.

Gretchen Wilson’s 2006 song “California Girls” (Wilson & Rich, 2006) is a direct reply to the Beach Boys in which the unreal image of women depicted by Hollywood is critiqued: “I ain't never had a problem with California/There's a lot of good women from Sacramento to Corona/But them Hollywood types after a while wear on ya/Struttin' around in their size zeros/Skinny little girls no meat on their bones/[…]/Ain't afraid to eat fried chicken and dirty dance to Merle/Ain't you glad we ain't all California girls.” Wilson’s first single identified the country singer as a “Redneck Woman” (Wilson & Rich, 2004) who enjoys a night spent drinking beer “on a four-wheel drive tailgate” and says “‘Hey y'all’ and ‘Yee-haw,’” evidencing a need to represent a particular identity informed by the conventions and the culture of country music. Since the 1970s, with the music of Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, and Dolly Parton, among others, country music

has featured prominently the experiences of women and, in Lynn's persona and music especially, "showed an awareness of the fact that women of different classes have different lifestyles" (Bufwack, 1995, p.196). Wilson could have declared herself a redneck and relied upon already well-established ideas to fill in the details. However, her choice to position her redneck identity in opposition to that of California girls specifically serves as an indication of the power of existing California girl image-myths.

The Magnetic Fields' 2008 offering, "California Girls," (Merritt, 2008) picks up the same stereotype of California girls as young, skinny and on the big screen: "See them on their big bright screen, tan and blonde and seventeen/Eating nonfood keeps them mean, but they're young forever." As is the case in Gretchen Wilson's take on the matter, these aren't positive attributes for the Magnetic Fields' Stephin Merritt either: the refrain at the end of each verse is "I hate California girls." During the course of the song the lyric sidelines the California girls as those who have casual affairs with rock stars: "they breathe coke and have affairs with each passing rock star," not allowing the possibility that they might be rock stars themselves. Eventually, the protagonist of the song demonstrates his misogynistic and psychopathic tendencies with a revelation that he plans axe-wielding attacks on the California girls: "Then they will taste my wrath/They will hear me say, as the pavement whirls/I hate California girls."

These examples are evidence for the malleability of image-myths, supporting my assertion that place-myths exist in a "discursive economy" (Shields, 1991, p. 61) and continue to hold communication value. Once formed, pervasive place-myths become available for negotiation and dialogue. While the Beach Boys' California girl is the most well-established, other formulations have challenged or repurposed the image to create alternative visions of the

California girl. On somewhat similar lines, Shark's "California Grrrls" (2013) marks out California girls as self-centred and vapid: "Don't care about the rest of the world/I hate California girls/Let 'em burn let 'em burn burn burn/I hate California girls/Don't care who else may suffer/Just wants the world to love her/Oh, I hate California girls/They don't believe in nothin'." The portrayal of California girls as shallow and available, or 'easy', is common, demonstrating a diverging character in diverging image-myths of the California girl.

In a model example of the wide-reaching presence of this idea, Slavoj Žižek suggests that, in the movie *Psycho* (1960), Norman Bates' predatory behaviour could have been motivated in part by the discovery that his guest, Marion, is from Los Angeles; "is it rather that, upon hearing that she is from Los Angeles, he thinks that the girl from such a decadent town can be an easy pick?" (Žižek, 2008, pp.222-3). Myths like these are built on previous signs, in that "a sign in the first system becomes a mere signifier in the second" (Barthes, 1972, p.113), and necessarily, although sometimes unintentionally, propagate and strengthen the ideas and values of the original semiological system. The portrayal of California girls as either the (seemingly positive) sex object, or the (more clearly negative) 'whore', demonstrates the pervasiveness of sexism inherent in these diverging but closely related myths.

Some alternatives to the original Beach Boys hit "California Girls" (1965) take an opposing position on the topic, declaring that the superiority of the California girl is somehow unrealistic or distorted and, by doing so, highlighting the ubiquity and the power of the original myth. Between the critique of Gretchen Wilson's "California Girls" (2006) and the all-out loathing of Shark's "California Grrrls" (2013) came Katy Perry and Snoop Dogg's "California Gurls" (Perry, et al., 2010). Appearing on Perry's third studio album, entitled *Teenage Dream*, this song

stands at odds with the other examples from this period: “California Gurls” is an outright summertime pop anthem which promotes California girls as “unforgettable,” reinforcing the trope presented in the Beach Boys’ hit. With “sun-kissed skin” and wearing a uniform of “daisy dukes, bikinis on top,” it is said that “you could travel the world/but nothing comes close/to the golden coast/once you party with us/you'll be falling in love.” The idea of travelling the world only to discover that California girls are the best directly echoes the sentiments of the original “California Girls” (1965). As if to complete the circle, the Beach Boys’ Brian Wilson commended Katy Perry’s vocal on the song, calling the melody “infectious” (Michaels, 2010a). The song ends with Snoop Dogg, in the most obvious nod to the original Beach Boys’ hit, wishing that women everywhere could be California girls.

6.3. California Women

The arrival of the contraceptive pill in the early sixties, “along with all the other liberating movements afoot, gave young women a voice and a choice” (Kubernik, 2009, p.138). The combined oral contraceptive, created by Searle, was first marketed to physicians and supplied to the U.S. public in July 1961. By 1965, 95 percent of American obstetricians and gynaecologists were prescribing it (Marks, 2001). The pill quickly became one of the most popular forms of birth control and has remained so to this day. Younger people began to use the pill to have unprotected sex with a far lower risk of pregnancy. The sexual revolution of the hippie movement was in large part enabled by the appearance of contraceptive pills, which cut the rates of teenage pregnancies but helped increase the spread of STDs. The increased risk of STDs came primarily from a decline

in men using their own preventative measures, instead leaving women to ensure they would not get pregnant. The legalisation of abortions followed soon after.

The place of women in rock in the 1960s was primarily on the fringes. The British invasion saw the arrival of many all-male British rock bands with the likes of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Kinks and the Yardbirds taking centre stage. The American bands, especially those from Los Angeles, followed suit. Ray Manzarek, for instance, told a female friend that she could not be in the Doors because "there aren't any girls in rock bands" (Walker, 2006, p.43).

Some of the main exceptions to this came from San Francisco: Janis Joplin rose to fame in 1967 as the singer of Big Brother and the Holding Company. In an example of the unpalatable sexism of the rock industry at this time, an original member (the quote is credited variously to both Peter Albin and Sam Andrew) of the band is quoted as saying years later that Big Brother "were the established rock and roll band. We're in the newspapers all the time. We're working out. We are doing this woman a favour to even let her come and sing with us" (Andrew, quoted in DeMain, 2016; Albin, quoted in Taysom, 2020). The mezzo-soprano phenomenon quickly outshone the band she performed with, leading her to embark on a solo career only a short time later.

The presence of Signe Anderson and Grace Slick as successive lead singers in Jefferson Airplane also helped to pave the way for other women in rock music and inspired many young girls to pursue music. Slick, having replaced Anderson after the group's first album, is the most recognisable of Jefferson Airplane's singers. She has a particularly rough and fierce vocal style which helped to set the group apart from other bands. Slick also brought two of her previous

band's songs along with her when she joined the group. These songs, "Somebody to Love" (Slick, D., 1967) and "White Rabbit" (Slick, G., 1967), became Jefferson Airplane's biggest hits and, amongst others, they helped to give voice to the experiences of women.

The emergence of these examples against the field of male-dominated rock is plain to see in retrospect, but it also brought hope for observers at the time. In an article entitled "The Ladies Infiltrate Pop Music," Californian journalist Louise Criscione reported that some bands had recently found chart success "not only with incidental female members but with females who share and at times even *steal* the all-important spotlight" (1968, para.2). Highlighting the attempts of Grace Slick (the Jefferson Airplane), Elaine "Spanky" McFarlane (Chicago-based group Our Gang), and Thelma Camacho (the First Edition) "to dent the male monopoly in pop," Criscione concludes that it is "doubtful that the ladies will completely triumph, but one can never be sure. After all, women gained the right to vote" (para.15).

Beyond work as creators of popular music, women inhabited diverse roles in rock, as musicians, critics and fans, in the 1960s and 1970s. Representation was certainly increasing, but Mary Celeste Kearney points out that "while rock historians now valorize the work of Janis Joplin, Joni Mitchell, [and] Grace Slick… rock culture became increasingly male and inhospitable to women during that period" (Kearney, 2017, p.313). The term groupie appears in rock journalism around this time, used to describe a particular kind of female fan who follows rock bands around and prioritises sexual relations with musicians over engagement with the music itself. The "phenomenon of the groupie existed before the term itself was coined" (Hilts and Shepherd, 2003, p.237) and there are analogous female fan groups associated with other, non-musical, activities, "but it is with rock music that they are most closely associated" (Larsen, 2017, p.398). Rhodes

(2005), documenting patterns of gender representation in rock journalism from 1965 to 1975, establishes a 1969 *Rolling Stone* cover story, "The Groupies and Other Girls" (Hopkins, Burks & Nelson, 1969), as the essential text in the formation of a stereotypical groupie identity. While not the first appearance of the term groupie, the power and influence of this article set a standard with its "highly sexualized and misogynistic approach to the groupie and rock culture" (Rhodes, 2005, p.137). The sexist construction of a sexually available groupie identity "was conflated with 'female' which, in turn, engulfed all women associated with music, including other female fans, wives, and girlfriends of male rock musicians, and even those actually working in the industry" (Larsen, 2017, p.413). Gail Zappa, wife of Frank Zappa and Laurel Canyon resident from 1966 onwards, highlights this expectation of women proximate to the production of music to be sexually forthcoming: "anybody, including myself, got offered money for all kinds of sexual favours constantly" (Zappa, quoted in Walker, 2006, p.73). Larsen (2017) finds, in a number of published biographical accounts of groupies, a desire to reconfigure the groupie identity in ways which foreground autonomy and power in their relationships. While "the actual identities, stories, and experiences of groupies are rich and varied," Larsen argues, "the singular, dominant, and hegemonic groupie identity persists in media, practice, and popular culture" (p.413).

The *Rolling Stone* article also underscored strong connections between groupies and California. While the article mentions others, including Chicago's Plaster Casters, the groupies named on the cover, Anna, Trixie Merkin, and the groupie group the GTOs, were all based in California. San Francisco appears as both the first and final mention of locations where groupies may be found. Most tellingly, the authors use the lyrics of the Beach Boys' "California Girls" (1965) to introduce a section about the variety of groupie 'types' that might be encountered in

different cities—New York, Detroit, Chicago, as far afield as London and Singapore—where the broad consensus appears to be that the best groupies are found in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Guitarist with the Yardbirds and Led Zeppelin, Jimmy Page, is of the opinion that girls from New York are best looking but those in San Francisco are the friendliest. For Frank Zappa, New York girls are too uptight and Los Angeles groupies are the best. Jeff Beck, guitarist with the Jeff Beck Group and Jimmy Page's predecessor in the Yardbirds, thinks that American groupies as a whole don't compare to their British counterparts, but says that Los Angeles' groupies standout as exciting among an otherwise dull bunch. The groupies interviewed in the article, being mostly from San Francisco or Los Angeles themselves, don't disagree.

6.4. Conclusion

The Beach Boys' music and image capitalised upon already established ideas about California itself as well as the lifestyles of the state's young people and, by the middle of the decade, helped to rework and strengthen popular place-myths of the Golden State. The Beach Boys' treatment of the place-images of surfing and the car in their music, along with their wholesome, clean cut image, made the threatening aspects of youth culture in California appear more safe and innocent. Beach and surfing movies were made for eager teenage audiences across the nation and, by 1965, surfing and the beach had become common place-images in mainstream advertising. In addition to songs about surfing, driving and motorsport, the Beach Boys released songs which were more generally about the pleasure of teenage life in California. The popularity of the California sound helped support a vision of California as a heaven for white, middle-class teens. The biggest hits that these groups had in the first half of the decade all employed images of

California as the ultimate paradise for fun-loving and beautiful young people. Even while the themes of surfing and cars began to reduce in the lyrics of the Beach Boys' songs, those about girls increased.

"California Girls" (Wilson & Love, 1965) concentrated all of the Beach Boys' myth-forming power on the California Girl. However, the idea of the California girl being somehow different from those in the rest of the nation can be shown to be as old as the state itself. The earliest song I discovered which features a certain female Californian type as the subject is "Sacramento Gals" (Stone, 1858), which dates from the time of the California Gold Rush. Another early example is the song "California Woman" (Clark Brown & Dougherty) from 1895, which does little to reveal any particular qualities of California women beyond their beauty.

With "California Girls" (Wilson & Love, 1965), the Beach Boys are continuing, rather than inventing, the trend of celebrating the women of the Golden State as different from, and better than, those elsewhere. From the late-sixties onward, many songs make reference to the California girl of the Beach Boys' song. The enduring aspect of these representations of the California girl place-image is one of beauty and availability. This place-image of the California girl is a construction of heterosexual desire. Some of these responses to the original Beach Boys hit take an opposing position on the topic, declaring that the superiority of the California girl is somehow unrealistic or distorted and, by doing so, highlighting the ubiquity and the power of the original place-image in constructions of California place-myths.

7. Dreaming of California

When Michelle and John Phillips wrote “California Dreamin’” (Phillips & Phillips, 1965) they were experiencing a cold, harsh winter in New York and yearning for the sunshine of California (Stamberg, 2002). The average temperature in New York City in January 1963, when the song was initially written, was 30.1°F (-1.05°C) (weather.gov, 2018) while those lucky enough to be in Los Angeles were enjoying a comparatively tropical average of 55.6°F (13.1°C), with some strong winds in the wider Southern California region (U.S.D.O.C., 1963, p.9). Even without having the weather reports to hand, it is widely known that the Los Angeles climate is warmer than New York’s year-round. But when (Papa) Denny Doherty sings “I'd be safe and warm if I was in L.A./California dreamin' on such a winter's day,” listeners are less likely to think of fifty-five degrees and windy and much more likely to think of the sun high in the sky on a summer’s day, some surfers out amongst the waves, palm trees blowing in the wind. More than that, they might think of people in the Canyon wearing loose fitting, colourful clothes and flowers in their hair, and further, a distinctly Californian way of life defined by freedom and leisure which made California seem all that much further away from the rest of the nation. Centred in the oasis-by-the-city of Laurel Canyon, the California, and Los Angeles, of the protagonist’s dreams reflect wider place-myths, where small fragments of reality are utilised as surrogates for the presumed whole.

While the focus of this thesis is on Southern California, the introduction of the image-theme of the hippie is strongly connected to the northern part of the state. In the second section of this chapter I move north to California’s Bay Area to look at the 1960’s counterculture in its spiritual, and psychedelic, home, San Francisco. I describe the origins of the hippies in San

Francisco, and their most notable locale, Haight-Ashbury, in order to argue that the image-myth of hippies is a construction of the popular media and to demonstrate the differences between Los Angeles' folk-rock hippies and those of the psychedelic counterculture in San Francisco. This links to the discourse surrounding the Monterey International Pop Festival, the focus of section three, which leads me to argue that the release of "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)" (Phillips, 1967) demonstrates an endorsement and co-optation of a superficial hippie image-myth by musicians from the commercial Los Angeles scene.

In the final section of the chapter I discuss the Vietnam War. The involvement of the United States in the conflict began in 1954 and continued throughout the entirety of the nineteen sixties and into the nineteen seventies. The conflict is an important part of the history of the United States and intersections with the Vietnam War are unavoidable when dealing with the popular music of this period. Although numerous instances of Californian music opposing the conflict or expressing anti-war views exist, they are at least equalled in number by similar examples from other regions across the United States. Consequently, I conclude that, while the Vietnam War significantly contributes to the myth of the American 60s, it contributes very little to a distinct Californian place-myth. Despite the importance of the state to America's military during the conflict, California remained a mythical place of freedom and leisure, as referenced in Otis Redding's "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" (Redding & Cropper, 1968).

7.1. Music of the Canyon

Many musicians coming to the West Coast from around the country and further afield from the mid-sixties onwards chose to live in Laurel Canyon. Joni Mitchell, originally from Canada, moved to the Canyon from New York. Carole King, before this time known primarily as a New York-based songwriter, chose a place on Appian Way in the heart of the Canyon to pursue a career as a singer in her own right. Three quarters of the Mamas and the Papas lived together in a house a short distance from Joni Mitchell's place, and Cass Elliot, the fourth member of the group, moved into the Canyon shortly after. Laurel Canyon, while itself wild and rural, offered easy access to the edge of the city and especially to the Sunset Strip. "At night," says historian Michael Walker, "caterwauling coyotes and hooting owls made you marvel that you were only five minutes from the noise and neon of the Sunset Strip" (Walker, 2006, p.xiii).

Throughout the sixties and seventies Laurel Canyon filled up with musical talent. Cass Elliot, of the Mamas and the Papas, was responsible for introducing the Hollies frontman Graham Nash to Stephen Stills and David Crosby. Nash had grown tired of playing with the English band the Hollies and was looking to move in a new musical direction as a solo artist. This meeting, at the request of Cass Elliot, directly led to the formation of Crosby, Stills and Nash. The group of three voices was brought together "as if it was already a predetermined future to her" (Nash, quoted in Walker, 2006, p.55). The formation of Crosby, Stills and Nash in California, and specifically in connection with Laurel Canyon, is notable because of the sense of coming together and finding a place in California.

Frank Zappa moved into a log cabin-styled estate in the Canyon, on the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Lookout Mountain Avenue, in 1968. Although only a short four-month residency, Zappa's log cabin was infamous as a meeting place for the freaks and musicians of the Canyon (Kubernick, 2009). Alice Cooper, in earliest forms a band not a solo artist, was nurtured here, alongside the collection of groupies who became the GTOs. Further guests included the likes of Mick Jagger and Jeff Beck. Another British expat, John Mayall, stayed at the cabin before finding his own place nearby in 1969. Mayall released the album *Blues from Laurel Canyon* (1968) as a send-up to his time visiting the Canyon before he lived there. Remembering Zappa's cabin at 2401 Laurel Canyon Boulevard, he wrote; "There's a hero living at 2401 and all around a family circus in the sun" (Mayall, 1968). Also present in that celebrated cabin in the late Sixties was the eccentric Captain Beefheart, who spent time at the home of his mentor and producer Zappa. When the brief stay at the log cabin came to an end, Zappa didn't move far, relocating just a mile and a half away.

Chris Hillman and Roger McGuinn of the Byrds also lived in Laurel Canyon at this point in time, and the list goes on to include many residents and regular visitors to the Canyon: the Eagles' members Glenn Frey and Don Henley, Jackson Browne, Arthur Lee of the band Love, Micky Dolenz of the Monkees and Mark Volman of the Turtles. The band the Doors have links to the Canyon through members John Densmore and Robby Krieger, despite the fact that the band is known as hailing from the coastal suburb of Venice, home of organist Ray Manzarek.

Many members of this group of Laurel Canyon's musical residents voiced an anti-commercial ethos, which can be demonstrated in examples ranging from subtle to far more explicit. Frank Zappa is well known for taking satirical jabs at American conformity and his

opposition to consumerism is epitomised visually on the back cover of the Mothers of Invention album *Absolutely Free* (1967). Many elements are brought together in this collage of a city, but the declarative "Absolutely Freeeee," with extended vowels suggesting vocalisation, standing above invitations to "Buy!" suggests that freedom in commercial America comes at a price and from a catalogue.

Fig. 8. Back cover of The Mothers of Invention's *Absolutely Free* (1967).

At the end of the Doors' "Touch Me" (1969) singer Jim Morrison is heard saying the line "stronger than dirt". This line, as well as the four chords over which it is said, were taken from an Ajax cleaning powder commercial which was airing on TV at the time. Those unfamiliar

with the Doors may have thought this to be a simple quote of the catchy advertising slogan; however, it is reported to have been a message from Morrison to the other band members, chastising them for having agreed to 'sell out' by licensing the song "Light My Fire" for use in a Buick commercial. The licensing agreement required the consent of all four Doors members; Morrison was the only member who opposed the deal (Weidman, 2011).

At odds with this anti-commercial position, many of these artists signed lucrative recording contracts and scored major hits both nationally and internationally over the decade or so of Laurel Canyon's golden period. This string of hit songs emanating from the Canyon in this period helped underscore Los Angeles' reputation as a renowned centre of musical activity. In and around Los Angeles,

> the music was, literally, everywhere - being created in garages and kid' bedrooms as far away as Orange County, in dingbat apartments in Venice and the San Fernando Valley, but most especially in bungalows in Laurel Canyon, where every other long-haired person you saw on the street or driving a VW seemed to be carrying a guitar case (Dietz, 2009, p.3).

While the feverish creation of music in the 1960s was by no means unique to Southern California, the proximity to highly populated Los Angeles and the media industries in Hollywood ensured that the developing culture in Laurel Canyon was particularly visible and the commercial success of many musical residents brought national attention to the area. The tagline for the documentary *Laurel Canyon* (2020), "everything they touched turned to music," underscores the enduring interest in the Canyon as a site of significance.

The customary meeting place in the Canyon was a spot opposite the Canyon Country Store, on a concrete traffic island at the intersection of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Kirkwood Drive. Freaks, "that was the L.A. term, replaced nationally by the far more picturesque

'hippies'" (Dietz, 2009, p.3), would gather in order to show their allegiance to freakdom and to the canyon; it was "a stronghold from which to proclaim to the straight world roaring by on their way to and from the Valley: Behold the hippie" (Walker, 2006, p.82).

Barney Hoskyns said that "California Dreamin'" (Phillips & Phillips, 1965), when it was released in December of 1965, "summed up what the rest of the nation was already feeling about the Golden State." The song is a signpost, an homage, to the "blossoming hippie milieu of the Sunset Strip and its bucolic annexe Laurel Canyon" (Hoskyns, 2005, p.7). While Hoskyns' remarks are swept up in romantic nostalgia, popular music does indeed have the ability to reflect and contribute to our impressions of a place. The quote from Hoskyns highlights this process: the sense that the song summed up an existing feeling indicates that the theme of "California Dreamin'" was not an original idea but was instead a culmination of the existing ideas about California. In turn, presenting an idea which had already gained some traction nationwide meant that the message was relatable for their audience. However, the signposting to the hippie milieu, and to Laurel Canyon, which is so clear for Hoskyns, is not necessarily evident upon first experience of the song. The lyrics themselves say little more of California than to describe Los Angeles as a place where one would be "safe and warm" (Phillips & Phillips, 1965). As Bennett argues of his Canterbury mythscape, here California's established myths inform the "essential spirit" (2002, p.98) of the music, bringing with them further ideas about freedom, leisure and sunshine.

"California Dreamin'" (Phillips & Phillips, 1965) appeared on the charts at the end of a year that had seen another Los Angeles band, the Byrds, reach number one with an electrified cover of the Bob Dylan song "Mr. Tambourine Man" (Dylan, 1965) and, less than six months later,

reach the top spot again with a reworking of Pete Seeger's "Turn! Turn! Turn!" (Seeger, 1965). The Byrds melded the social statements of folk music with rock band instrumentation, shimmering 12-string guitars, and vocal harmonies, offering a new style which has become known as folk rock.

Bob Dylan was also a catalyst for this shift in 1965, incorporating electric instruments on the first side of *Bringing it All Back Home* (1965) in March and choosing to play with an electric backing group at Newport Folk Festival in July and on throughout his 1965-1966 tour. "Dylan's performance [at Newport] consciously transgressed key facets of authenticity that were deeply held within the folk movement" (Marshall, 2006, p.18) and, while Marshall argues that this was a culmination of a process of estrangement and not an isolated act, the "performance has taken on a mythological significance" (Ibid.) as the moment that changed the course of popular music. Even after the emergence of folk rock, "earlier 1960s folk music (Joan Baez, Dylan) continued to be played on hippie stereos" (Miller, 2011, p.42).

Esquire magazine placed Bob Dylan at number one amongst "the heroes of the California rebels" in their September 1965 article titled "28 People who Count," adding, "(and as Cal goes, so goes the rest)" (*Esquire*, 1965, p.8). Dylan's appearance at number one, along with the inclusion of Joan Baez, Chuck Berry and Shirley Ellis, demonstrates the importance placed on music and musicians at the time both as makers and measures of cultural change. The adoption in California of Bob Dylan, a Minnesotan who first came to prominence as a folk singer in New York's Greenwich Village, belies the impact of his music across the nation.

In Los Angeles, folk rock was to be found at the clubs on the Sunset Strip. Venues like the Whisky a Go Go or Ciro's, the latter of which was where the Byrds first found their

audience, were the main spots for the new sound. The young freaks or hippies would take over the Strip, congregating outside after the bands finished playing. Local business owners complained to the L.A. County Sheriff's Department and the city administration about the late-night gatherings and, in 1966, encouraged the passage of a strict 10pm curfew and new loitering laws. The Sheriff's Department began aggressively enforcing the curfew laws. This was seen by the young rock music fans as an infringement on their civil rights. For weeks tensions grew and protests gathered momentum. The climax came in November of 1966. Flyers had been distributed along the Strip inviting people to join a demonstration at Pandora's Box, a club on the Strip facing closure after the Los Angeles City Council voted to acquire and demolish the property. That evening, Saturday 12th, as many as one thousand demonstrators, including such celebrities as Jack Nicholson and Peter Fonda, erupted in protest against what they saw as oppressive implementation of the recent curfew laws. The police stormed in, arresting hundreds of demonstrators. The unrest continued to bubble over intermittently throughout November and December. Pandora's Box was eventually demolished to widen the intersection.

The most notable musical artefact about that moment is "For What It's Worth" (Stills, 1966), written by Stephen Stills and recorded by Buffalo Springfield. Regarding the events, Stills has said: "Riot is a ridiculous name, it was a funeral for Pandora's Box. But it looked like a revolution" (Stills, quoted in Rasmussen, 2007). The song has become renowned as a protest song and is often linked to other events, such as late-60s anti-war protests. Featured on soundtracks of feature films and documentaries about 1960s America, such as *Purple Haze* (1982) and *Forrest Gump* (1994), the song has been used as a marker of the atmosphere of the 1960s counterculture.

The riots were an important event marking the clash of mainstream- and counter-cultures in Los Angeles. As Bob Gibson, manager of the Byrds and the Mamas and the Papas, reflected: “If you had to put your finger on an event that was a barometer of the tide turning, it would probably be the Sunset Strip riots” (Gibson, quoted in Quisling, 2003, p.60).

Fig. 9. Demonstration outside Pandora’s Box, November 1966.

Within four months of the riots a feature film was released. *Riot on the Sunset Strip* (1967), produced by American International Pictures, the movie studio responsible for the *Beach Party* films, attempted to capture the feelings of that period around the Sunset Strip. However, the film’s subplot about an LSD trip leading a vulnerable young girl, already alienated from her parents, to become the victim of a gang rape, instead serves to summarise the feelings of the mainstream media about the dangers and fears of hippiedom and drug culture.

The song “Riot on Sunset Strip” (Valentino & Fleck, 1967) was recorded by the Standells to accompany the film. The Standells had become established as a garage rock band and

had already had a hit with “Dirty Water” (Cobb, 1965), the simple, riff-based structure and aggressive delivery of which make it a typical example of the style. “Riot on the Sunset Strip,” features an extended guitar solo and use of heavy fuzz distortion on the guitar throughout. These features became more popular in garage rock as the decade progressed and this developing style was an important antecedent and concomitant to psychedelic music and is often considered an integral part of the psychedelic era, as suggested in the title of the garage rock compilation collection *Nuggets: Original Artyfacts of the First Psychedelic Era, 1965-1968* (Kaye [prod.], 1972).

7.2. San Francisco

In Southern California, teenagers had transformed the Sunset Strip into Los Angeles’ rock club capital. Through the same few years in the mid-sixties, the Haight-Ashbury, an area at the eastern edge of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, became notorious as the home of the state’s hippie counterculture. In this section I outline important developments in the San Francisco counterculture, such as the audio-visual style of psychedelic music, the use of psychedelic drugs, and the hippie’s desire to withdraw “from the commonplace routines of their generation” (1968, p.8). Establishing the importance of these varied and nuanced elements, I go on, in the next section, to argue that the common image-myth of California’s hippies is a superficial mediascape, endorsed and co-opted in Southern California, which relies on only the most basic hippie symbols and gestures.

In the early part of the twentieth century, Haight-Ashbury, like the nearby Fillmore district, had been home to mainly low-income Japanese and Mexican, as well as low- and middle-income African American and Jewish, residents (Lai, 2012). However, the Immigration Act of 1924, "specifically designed to keep out 'undesirable' ethnic groups and maintain America's character as [a] nation of northern and western European stock" (National Park Service, 2017), and the incarceration of Japanese Americans in internment camps along the Pacific coast during World War II left the Fillmore District without much of its low-income, lower-class workforce. The port at San Francisco required more workers than ever during wartime and welcomed an influx of African American industrial workers to the city. African Americans became the majority population in the area by around 1945, in large part because laws prohibiting property ownership and rental to minority groups did not apply there. Through the late nineteen forties and into the nineteen fifties, urban renewal programs attracting wealthier and, by no accident, mostly white residents to the area threatened the housing rights of the existing population. As is the case for the minorities excluded from the Beach Boys' California in the early sixies, this diverse history is not available in the mythscape of the Haight-Ashbury district. Into the 1960s, the threats from urban renewal continued, but were joined too by an influx of students and other young people who were attracted by the large family-sized homes which were available for rent or purchase at relatively cheap prices (Zimmerman, 2008; Oaks, 2005).

The Charlatans, often credited as the first psychedelic band from San Francisco, were all either current or ex- students of San Francisco State University in 1965 and they shared a large house in the Fillmore district. First established as a gold rush frontier town, San Francisco is one of the oldest cities in the western United States and connections to a history which began only

a century before were still plain to see. Antique and thrift stores made the fashions of the 19th century, and, by association, of the much-glorified Wild West, accessible to anyone who cared to rummage through their merchandise. The Charlatans built their image from the artefacts of this history. Wearing their hair long under wide-brimmed hats, three piece suits in styles of the previous century, bolo ties and guns, the Charlatans had a carefully constructed image, a throwback to the 'old-timey' Wild West outlaws. However, the new rendering of the outlaw style was not focussed on its aggression and violence, but instead on a life lived outside of the establishment. The rebellious outlaw would not submit to be railroaded by the expectations of society, allowing for activity outside of the rules. This Wild West outlaw persona had far more in common with the rebels of 1950s pop culture—James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) or Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (1953)—than with the heroes of the westerns which came before, such as Roy Rogers or Gene Autry.

During the summer of 1965, the Charlatans became the house band at the Red Dog Saloon in Virginia City, Nevada. The Red Dog was modelled on the saloon in *Gunsmoke*, the popular western TV serial which ran for 20 seasons between 1955 and 1975. "For baby boomers raised on a steady diet of Westerns, the Red Dog […] was a dream come true" (Echols, 2002, p.35). The venue itself was originally conceived as a folk club, "but with San Francisco's first hippie rock band, the Charlatans, handling the music […] it became the first hippie rock saloon instead" (Echols, 2002, p.35). The Charlatans, never even having played together in public before getting their residency at the Red Dog (Palao, 1996), played music which "juxtaposed country music twang, clunky dancehall motives, and R & B rhythms" (Zimmerman, 2008, p.23) and was, importantly, "electric and got everyone dancing" (Hill, 2016, p.43). The element of dance, the

opportunity for free physical expression, was important to the development of the San Francisco scene (Hill, 2016).

Artist Bill Ham, a self-described Kinetic Abstract Expressionist, joined the Charlatans at the Red Dog and brought with him a light box machine which made the performances at the Red Dog unique and was crucial to the development of psychedelia as a strongly audio-visual style. The light box itself was operated by sound; the coloured lights projected onto a screen behind the performers would change and move depending on what was being played. Rather than being replicable at future shows, the way that Ham's machine worked meant that the lights and the music existed together only in that moment. The light shows, along with electric instruments and psychedelic drugs, distinguished the Red Dog from saloons of the real Wild West, *Gunsmoke* or any spaghetti westerns. Because of the unique setting and staging, the Red Dog Saloon quickly became a popular venue and a variety of San Francisco musicians and artists joined the Charlatans at the Red Dog Saloon throughout the summer of 1965.

At the Red Dog, the blend of the music and lights, psychedelic drugs, and eclectic staging and styles of dress "created the circumstances favourable for the creation of an entire subculture" (Chapman, 2015, p.62) and the movement back and forth to San Francisco allowed the Red Dog to become the prototype for dance venues back in San Francisco that would soon become a fixture of the counterculture. When the summer ended, the hip organisers of the Red Dog's performances went back to San Francisco along with the Charlatans and Bill Ham's light box invention. A few months later they had formed a new organisation, known as the Family Dog, that would put on dances and party events. Their first show took place in San Francisco on October 16, 1965, featuring, among others, the Charlatans.

A promoter named Bill Graham was working with the San Francisco Mime Troupe around this time and, following a clash with the Parks Commission that led to a troupe member being arrested and convicted, Graham worked with another local promoter, Chet Helms, to organise a benefit to raise money towards legal costs. The unanticipated success of this first benefit, held at the Mime Troupe's Howard Street loft, demonstrated a clear demand and led Graham to organise two further events at a larger venue, the Fillmore Auditorium (Hill, 2016). Soon after, Graham left the Mime Troupe to continue to organise and promote concerts independently.

Bill Graham was also involved in organising the Trips Festival, a three day event in January of 1966 at San Francisco's Longshoreman's Hall which represented the peak in a series of events known as the Acid Tests (Chapman, 2015, p.70). Initially beginning as informal events organised by author Ken Kesey and a group of friends and followers collectively known as the Merry Pranksters, by the end of 1965 the Acid Tests developed into advertised public events at which the raison-d'etre was the consumption of LSD-spiked Kool-Aid.

LSD, along with a vast array of sedatives, tranquillisers and amphetamines developed or repurposed for the fight against anxiety and depression, had begun to appear in medical practices in the 1950s. Popularity began to grow amongst a minority of psychiatrists and their, usually wealthy, clients. The CIA also made a foray into the use of the chemical in the 1950s, in the top-secret MKUltra project. The agency "prob[ed] its utility as a truth drug and as a way of driving people temporarily insane" (Farber, 1994, p.179).

Drugs, in the general definition, were already a big part of American culture in the 1960s. A strong majority of adult Americans smoked cigarettes and drank alcohol, but many were also "gobbling up heavy-duty drugs, most of them far more powerful than marijuana" (Farber, 1994, p.173). The hippies were not responsible for bringing drugs into the United States, or for bringing them into the cultural mainstream, but it is undeniable that the sales and use of drugs contributed to the economy and social order of the counterculture. In fact, many of the first hippies to reside in Haight-Ashbury sold or used marijuana (Lenson, 1995). Rock and roll had been integral in the increasing popularity of marijuana in particular and, more widely, the "effects of marijuana [use] on the audition of music were widely celebrated in the 1960s" (Lenson, 1995, p.105). Since the 1930s, the law was such that anyone using or possessing marijuana was doing so illegally. In the first half of the 1960s, the major concern was over the use of marijuana and heroin. Psychedelic drugs were seen as a minor issue, used only by beatniks and the new breed of long-haired hippie. One of the most well-known advocates of psychedelic drugs was Timothy Leary. Removed from his position as psychology professor at Harvard in 1963, Leary was discovered to have experimented with the drug on colleagues and students at the university. He would go on to promote LSD across America as a "spiritual cure-all" (Farber, 1994, p.180). The idea that a drug could somehow 'expand consciousness' or evolve the human mind seemed ridiculous to the authorities and the possession and use of LSD remained unlegislated until 1968. The counterculture grew concurrently with the spread of acid use. Many column inches in magazines and newspapers were dedicated to the spread of the acid culture, but few ever managed to put into words any useful account of an acid experience; "it was too hard to get a handle on something

about which nothing could be said" (O'Brien, 1988, p.62). There was no way to understand but to "see for yourself" (Ibid.).

Ken Kesey, following the success of his first novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), had the means and the reputation to spread the word about the new drug. In 1964, he and the Merry Pranksters had embarked on an LSD-fuelled road trip to the New York World's Fair. On their return to California, they began hosting the Acid Tests. The performances of the Grateful Dead, originally the Warlocks, are tightly linked with the Acid Tests, with the band having performed at the majority of the events. The band's developments and experiments, summarised in their evolution from revivalist 1920s-style jug band, through blues and garage rock, to the style that Dead member Phil Lesh described as "some kinda genre-busting rainbow polka-dot hybrid mutation" (Lesh, 2005, p.61) became more abstract with the influence of LSD. As the Dead's Jerry Garcia told *Rolling Stone*, "So our trip with the Acid Test was to be able to play long and loud ... we were improvising cosmically, too. ... The Acid Test was the prototype for our whole basic trip ... we could experiment with drugs like we were experimenting with music" (Garcia, quoted in Wenner & Reich, 1972). The Grateful Dead took influence from the traditional music of folk and bluegrass—principal songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Jerry Garcia had played bluegrass mandolin and folk guitar earlier in the decade, one of many reasons this influence found its way into the music—and incorporated this with the simple, blues-based rock music that underpinned San Francisco psychedelia more widely. The music was driven by free improvisation and transformed through heavy use of studio and performance technology. The folk stylings of the band and their references to nature helped "to balance the extent to which they indulge in cutting-

edge musical technology" (Zimmerman, 2006, p.198) to enhance their performances psychedelically.

The Acid Tests peaked with the Trips Festival in January of 1966, an important event which brought together for the first time many like-minded groups of people: "for the burgeoning hip community, it was the first real gathering, the first mass experience of the new consciousness" (Hill, 2016, p.64). For a few months following the Trips Festival at the start of 1966, Bill Graham and Chet Helms, the latter now representing Family Dog Productions, would promote concerts on alternating weekends at the Fillmore Auditorium, after which time Graham took on the lease at the Fillmore and Helms moved the Family Dog to the Avalon Ballroom. Many notable bands played concerts at both venues, including Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company, Country Joe and the Fish, and the Grateful Dead. These two dancehalls, the Fillmore and the Avalon, provided much needed venues for countercultural gatherings and "established an aesthetic template for the consumption of, and participation in, musical experience, that spread from the short 60s in San Francisco to the present day" (Hill, 2016, p.81).

Fig. 10. A poster advertising the Be-In at Golden Gate Park, January 1967.

Through the latter part of 1966, Golden Gate Park had been steadily transformed into the hippies' own garden. The main hang-out spot was a mound of earth by the tennis courts, now known as Hippie Hill. In January of 1967, the park was chosen to host the *Gathering of the Tribes for the First Human Be-in* and the hippies were more visible than ever. The idea of the gathering, the be-in, had been thrown around in Haight-Ashbury for a few months already, but the plan had finally come together. The local press was informed that the gathering was about to

happen and helped spread the word. One of the great hippie publications from the time, the *San Francisco Oracle*, supported the be-in:

> A union of love and activism previously separated by categorical dogma and label mongering will finally occur ecstatically when Berkeley political activists and hip community and San Francisco's spiritual generation and contingents from the emerging revolutionary generation all over California meet for a Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In at the Polo Field in Golden Gate Park on Saturday, January 14, 1967, from 1 to 5 p.m. (*San Francisco Oracle*, 1967; reprinted in Willis, 2015, p.23).

The *Oracle* presented hippie culture in many ways, from the articles, interviews and commentary about events of the time to the hand-drawn advertisements for concerts and hippie-friendly establishments. In one issue of the *Oracle*, Tom Law wrote a piece called "The Community of the Tribe" that goes some way to explain the hippie outlook:

> We are all—squares and the psychedelically enlightened alike—involved in our world of now. To take up the call, to respond to the cosmic forces, we must be the hard-working, harmonious, respectful, honest, diligent, co-operative family of man. Our words are inspired. Our feeling is deep and complete. Our devotion is strong. The precious revelations which have come through us with increasing magnitude must be fathomed until we are one with each other and can extend our awareness beyond the tribe to our entire planet. What is the natural karmic duty of a generation whose brothers, neighbors, and childhood friends now promote hate by killing innocent human beings around the world? It is to balance their jive and immature actions with the light of intelligent goodness; fearlessly to deal with the money-mad machine in order to release its hold on our bowels — the bowels of mankind (Law, reprinted in Willis, 2015, pp.32-33).

The Haight-Ashbury counterculture represented a collage of cultural radicalism that rose out of a reaction to the mainstream of American society and sought to rebel in ways disconnected from traditional notions of political protest such as sit-ins and confrontational marches. In "Hippies: An American Moment" (1968), Stuart Hall observes the desire of hippies to "drop out," meaning to "make the symbolic gesture of withdrawal from the commonplace routines of their generation" (1968, p.8) and, while they broadly championed free speech and equal rights, "the hippies, in the West Coast sense of the word, were not a politically minded culture" (Hill, 2013, p.62). There was a belief among hippies that they were set apart from those in the

established society because hippies were 'turned-on' to a "more authentic mode of experience" (Hall, 1968, p.7). However, the hippies were mostly from a well off, male defined sector of society, though Miller suggests that "perhaps it was inevitable that those who would reject middle-class comforts had to come from comfortable backgrounds" (2011, p.xxiv).

Hippie, it is important to note, was "one of those semiderogatory [sic] diminutives that journalists love to coin" (Stevens, 1987, p.xiii), the origin of the word itself indicating the construction of a hippie identity in the popular media. The preferred term was either freak or head, "names illustrative of their belief that they represented an evolutionary advance" (Ibid.). Timothy Leary said the following about it in *The Politics of Ecstasy*:

> Hippy [sic] is an establishment label for a profound, invisible, underground, evolutionary process. For every visible hippy, barefoot, beflowered, beaded, there are a thousand invisible members of the turned-on underground. Persons whose lives are tuned in to their inner vision, who are dropping out of the TV comedy of American life (Leary, 1968, p.14).

Timothy Leary is one of the names that appeared on the flyers for the First Human Be-in. Other notable names included Richard Alpert, a spiritual teacher known as Ram Dass, who helped popularise Eastern spirituality and yoga with the baby boomer generation and who coauthored the book *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1964) with Timothy Leary and Ralph Metzner; Allen Ginsberg, poet and writer from the core of the Beat Generation; Gary Snyder, an environmental activist whose essays and poetry have been linked to the Beat Generation; and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, social activist and co-founder of City Lights Booksellers & Publishers in San Francisco. Those designing the flyers for the First Human Be-in chose to name these eminent activists and free thinkers and simply include "San

Francisco Rock Bands" (Griffin, 1967), "All SF Rock Groups" (Mouse & Bowen, 1967), or some variation of the same. As Chapman (2015) points out, this could be read as an indication that the hip audience most probably knew who would be on the bill already but also acknowledges that, in San Francisco, "January 1967 still seemed an age away from a time when record companies, managers and promoters would be prepared to pull all kinds of stunts to make sure their band got top dollar and prominent publicity" (Chapman, 2015, p.41-2).

Highlighting in this section that northern California's hippie counterculture was not one homogenous entity—it grew from different scenes in different areas, each of which had its own influences—I go on in the next section to discuss how the image-myth of the hippies has been reduced to only its most basic components. While place-myths particular to northern California are beyond the scope of this thesis, the San Francisco hippie counterculture has been heavily mythologised. In *Counterculture Kaleidoscope* (2008), Zimmerman uses primary source material to illuminate an underlying reality and question the common myth of hippies as a collective of progressives who opposed the mainstream. This perspective highlights the conception of myth as a veil: for Zimmerman, the myths of the hippies serve to obscure their realities.

7.3. Monterey Pop

Not half a year after the First Human Be-in came the Monterey International Pop Festival. Conceived by the Mamas and the Papa's John Phillips and the producer responsible for their hit single "California Dreamin'" (Phillips and Phillips, 1965), Lou Adler, the festival was held in June of 1967 at the Monterey County Fairgrounds in Monterey, California. The event

brought together the very different groups of L.A. and San Francisco—as well as Chicago, New York, Memphis, and London—in a pioneering weekend long event that set a template for contemporary music festivals.

The festival featured performances from many renowned artists, including the first major American performances of the Jimi Hendrix Experience, the Who, and sitarist Ravi Shankar. San Francisco acts the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane were on the bill. Jefferson Airplane had already released two big singles and were one of the main attractions for festival goers. It was also at Monterey that Janis Joplin made her first large-scale public performance, as a member of Big Brother and the Holding Company. The response to Otis Redding's performance, writes Chapman, demonstrates Monterey as "the moment when the rock crowd briefly endorsed soul music" (2015, p.141).

Interestingly, the Beach Boys were scheduled to play a slot on the second day until they pulled out of the concert altogether. There are many reasons given for their cancellation, the most intriguing of which is the possibility that the group was simply too scared to compete with the new music (Gaines, 1986). John Phillips told a journalist at the time that "Brian [Wilson] was afraid that the hippies from San Francisco would think the Beach Boys were square and boo them" (Badman, 2004, p. 189). This is a clear demonstration of the perceived conformity of the Beach Boys; square means conventional, old-fashioned and, importantly, 'uncool.' As discussed in section 3.3. "Surfing Music," the Beach Boys, through their lyrical treatment of topics such as school and parents, showed themselves as subject to the dominant social order and a system of discipline that reinforced the idea of authority figures controlling their behaviour. As a result, the Beach Boys' music did not resonate within the countercultural movements of the late 1960s, which

rejected the traditional authority of the establishment and sought alternative ways of living and being. It was later asserted that, while performing at the Monterey Pop Festival, Jimi Hendrix set fire to his guitar and proclaimed, ‘‘Now you’ll never have to listen to surf music again” (Gaines, 1986, p.103). Hendrix did set fire to his guitar at the concert, a solid-body Fender Stratocaster, kneeling beside it and coaxing the flames higher. However, the quote appears, after the release of the full unabridged audio of the concert, to be untrue. The line is actually taken from one of Hendrix’s songs, “Third Stone from the Sun” (Hendrix, 1967), which was never even performed at Monterey: “Strange, beautiful grass of green/With your majestic silver seas/Your mysterious mountains I wish to see closer/May I land my kinky machine?/[…]/Your people I do not understand/So to you I shall put an end/And you'll never hear surf music again.” The fact that this story gained traction and found its way into a book about the Beach Boys (Gaines, 1986) a couple of decades later demonstrates the continued relevance of surf music as a point of reference, representing a conservative and commercial way of being in the world. As Chapman notes, “Monterey was the moment when California divided, and the Beach Boys found themselves on the wrong side of the cultural fault line” (Chapman, 2015, p.151). Casting the Beach Boys as the square old guard is an act of mythmaking in itself, at once consigning surf music and the uncool Beach Boys to the past and suggesting Monterey as an evolution from, or a concious disconnect with, what had come before.

The Monterey Festival itself was criticised widely for its commercialism, and its Los Angeles based organisers, John Phillips and Lou Adler, had failed to win the trust of many in the San Francisco musical community despite negotiations and assurances that the festival would have adequate facilities (Chapman, 2015). “There existed a conflict. John and I being “L.A.,” and

the type of business acumen that we had developed, gave us a reputation for being slick—too slick, in the eyes of the San Francisco groups and their management" (Adler, quoted in Kubernick & Kubernick, 2012, p.iv). The commerciality of the Los Angeles music industry was at odds with the virtues of the San Francisco scene, but its proximity threatened to draw away 'authentic,' local musical talent, as Cohen (2007) argues of the Beatles, who were pulled from Liverpool by the gravity of London.

This same criticism of the commerciality of Los Angeles rang through assessments of the music too. San Francisco *Chronicle* critic Ralph J. Gleason, who played a vital intermediary role during the festival's planning, thought that Southern Californian bands were "fostered and nurtured by L.A. music hype," whereas "what's going on here [in the Bay Area] is natural and real" (Gleason, quoted in Goldstein, 1989, p. 97). Where the Los Angeles bands were seen as driven by money, the authenticity ascribed to the San Francisco bands primarily rested on them being non-commercial and part of an underground scene, with few bands having signed recording contracts (Hill, 2006, p.30).

Key L.A. representatives at Monterey, The Mamas & the Papas hit the stage as the final act of the festival, riding high on the success of five recent top ten singles, with a set which included hits "Monday, Monday" (Phillips, 1966) and "California Dreamin'" (Phillips & Phillips, 1965). Joined on stage by Scott McKenzie, their set also included a performance of the single "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)" (Phillips, 1967). Hill writes that "if the subtext to any discussion of Monterey is the commercialism of Los Angeles versus the "authenticity" of San Francisco, nowhere is it more apparent than in discussions of this particular single" (Hill, 2016, p.148). Penned by John Phillips, recorded by Scott McKenzie and released on Lou Adler's

Ode Records label, “San Francisco” was used to promote the Monterey Pop Festival. The gentle, acoustic guitar led hymn to the love-ins of San Francisco has far more in common with the nationally popular and commercially successful folk rock of Los Angeles acts like the Mamas and the Papas, and the Byrds, and even New York’s Simon and Garfunkel, than it does with the psychedelia of San Francisco. This song, which employed the basic language and symbols of the hippies, fit in amongst other positive depictions of San Francisco and the hippie neighbourhood of Haight-Ashbury: “pictures of the concerts in the park, of beautiful people in ecstatic dress, of endless days of idleness—images of a utopian otherness, a mythical spot where everything is free and people love each other” (Hill, 2016, p.302). For those inside of the San Francisco community that was being advertised, it was easy to see both the song and the festival as a contrived attempt, on the part of the Los Angeles industry, to ‘sell’ something to which they had no direct connection. Sam Andrew of Big Brother and the Holding Company, for instance, told Sarah Hill that “they were gonna sell us, but they hadn’t really experienced us—I mean the whole San Francisco thing [...] They didn’t know what it was, and they were there to sell it” (Andrew, quoted in Hill, 2016, p.148).

“Haight-Ashbury diehards scoffed at the song’s vapidity and simple-minded idealism” (Chapman, 2015, p.143) but its simple message, that San Francisco as an idyllic place populated by gentle people enjoying love-ins, proved popular both nationally and internationally: the song peaked at number four of the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States and reached number one on national charts in ten countries around the world, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, New Zealand and Norway. The reduction of the hippies to these essential images was aided by the fact that “1960s media America was wild enough and strange enough and large

enough to accommodate almost anything" (Chapman, 2015, p.570), offering not only news reports and current affairs TV specials but also appearances of garage bands on primetime sitcoms and characters based on Acid Test attendees in cop shows (Chapman, 2015). A key example of this is in a 1967 episode of *Batman*, entitled "Louie, the Lilac," where the eponymous villain intends to defeat the 'flower generation' by first kidnapping the organiser of the upcoming 'flower-in,' Princess Primrose, and then unleashing giant man-eating flowers. After jumping into action in a flower-adorned Batmobile, the Dynamic Duo save the day and Batman concludes of the 'flower children' that "in their own way, they're doing what they can to correct the world's woes with love and flowers" ("Louie, the Lilac," 1967).

This mediascape (Appadurai, 1990), with "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)" (Phillips, 1967) as its anthem, lead to a "desire for acquisition" (p.299) of the artefacts, the 'style,' of the hippie counterculture, and to the "movement" (Ibid.) of thousands of people from across the country to San Francisco. However, the "counterculture that existed in the Haight-Ashbury district from late 1965 through mid-1967 dissolved and spread out" (Zimmerman, 2008, p.157), many of those involved in the creation of a countercultural scene had left, and the community that remained in the area was not equipped to deal with the influx of thousands of new hippies on their pilgrimage to San Francisco (Zimmerman, 2008; Hill, 2016). Already by 1967, Hill argues, the Haight had been transformed into an "urban mythscape" which "existed to the exclusion of its reality" (Hill, 2016, p. 302).

"San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)" (Phillips, 1967) reveals "how the Haight, San Francisco, the counterculture, and 'peace, love, and flowers' were becoming collapsed together to signal a loosely defined style, quality or 'vibration'" (Zimmerman, 2008,

p.168), however, the performance of “San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)” (Phillips, 1967) at Monterey effectively legitimised it as a part of the unfolding events. The Mamas and the Papas, having already established themselves as spokespersons for California with “California Dreamin’” (Phillips and Phillips, 1965), lent a sense of authority, if not authenticity, to the song for those outside of the community that inspired it. Indications of this authority often appear in journalistic summaries of the song’s legacy as “the unofficial anthem of the counterculture movement of the 1960s, including the Hippie, Anti-Vietnam War and Flower power movements” (*Telegraph*, 2012). At the same time, the performance of the Mamas and the Papas, the Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and Simon and Garfunkel at Monterey strengthened the association of images of gentle, unconventionally dressed hippies of California with the commercially successful folk-rock style.

Before 1967 ended, another ode to the hippie atmosphere written and performed by outsiders, “San Franciscan Nights” (Burdon, Briggs, et al., 1967) by British group Eric Burdon and the Animals, would second the rallying cry to visit San Francisco. The song was a hit on both sides of the Atlantic, reaching number 9 in the United States and number 7 in the United Kingdom. The recording starts with a spoken introduction encouraging European listeners to fly to San Francisco so they could experience it for themselves and better understand the message. With inexplicit references to psychedelic light shows, Hell’s Angels, and confrontations with police, the lyrics offer only a marginally more nuanced view of San Francisco’s “vibe” than “San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)” (Phillips, 1967).

7.4. Conflict

Otis Redding began writing the lyrics for "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" (Redding & Cropper, 1968) while sitting on a houseboat in Sausalito, California in August of 1967 (Miller, 2017). Sausalito is situated on a coastal hillside near the northern end of the Golden Gate Bridge. Redding stayed on the houseboat for a few weeks during his West Coast tour, which followed his performance at the Monterey International Pop Festival. With help from guitarist and producer Steve Cropper, the lyrics were completed in Memphis, Tennessee in November of the same year. Sarah Hill, writing about Redding's performance at the Monterey festival, described "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" as a "gentle song, a wistful masterpiece," which "is above all a love letter to a time and a place, and an enduring testament to the brief hope of the summer of 1967" (Hill, 2006, p.38).

While the song as we know it was recorded across two sessions in November and December 1967, it is believed that the final version of the track remains unfinished as, just days after the second recording session, Otis Redding died in a plane crash. Steve Cropper completed the mix at Stax studios, adding the sounds of seagulls and waves crashing on the shore, and the song was released in March 1967. The song reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100 in March 1968, a week after U.S. President Johnson made the decision to deploy an additional 30,000 American troops to South Vietnam. A vast majority of men and women from the United States who served in Vietnam either left from, or returned home through, a California military base. Between 1965 and 1968, almost a quarter of a million soldiers passed through the Oakland Army Base alone (Eymann, 2004). "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" was played on heavy rotation on U.S. Army radio stations broadcasting in Vietnam and became a hit with service men and women on tours of duty in Vietnam (Eymann, 2004), many of whom would have listened to the song's

melancholy lyric and longed to be back home in the United States and to sit on the dock of San Francisco Bay, “watching the tide roll away” (Redding & Cropper, 1968).

Often discussed as an element of 1960s and 70s history, U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War began in 1954, stemming from conflicts between the north and south regions. Ho Chi Minh formed the Viet Minh to fight for independence, while the French backed Emperor Bao Dai to regain control. Both sides wanted to unify Vietnam under different ideologies; communism or Western alliances. The U.S. increased its military support for South Vietnam in the 1960s, driven by the fear of the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. President Kennedy increased aid but held off on full-scale intervention. President Johnson later increased U.S. military and economic support in Vietnam, and Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving Johnson broad war-making powers. California was at the forefront of military spending and anti-communist politics, while also being a hub of anti-war and countercultural activity (Hastings, 2018). California, by the mid-sixties, had already seen many protests in the name of civil rights (Brilliant, 2010) and free speech (Cohen and Zelnick, 2002). It was no real surprise when, by 1965, the climate fostered a burgeoning anti-war movement, beginning with the Vietnam Day Committee protests in the Bay Area cities of Berkeley and Oakland in August. In that same month, the Watts riots, an uprising of marginalised black people in the Watts area of Los Angeles, broke out, standing as a precursor to further riots across the country. One year later, in Northern California, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton founded the Black Panther Party. A number of the party’s members were Vietnam veterans and the anti-war sentiment stood strong beside their civil rights interests. A major argument in opposition to the conflict was that civilian victims of the conflict appeared to outnumber enemy casualties.

By the end of the conflict, more than half of the dead were Vietnamese civilians. This led to anti-war protests, including the largest anti-war demonstration in American history. American military deserters numbered in the tens of thousands during the conflict and hundreds of thousands more young men intentionally avoided the draft. Even active military personnel joined in the anti-war sentiment; soldiers on active duty on ships leaving California for Vietnam staged anti-war protests. The 'Stop Our Ship' movement involved a minority of the crews onboard US Navy aircraft carriers, including the USS Kitty Hawk and the USS Coral Sea (VVAW, 1971).

The conflict in Vietnam was the first to have journalists and film crews cover the war from areas close to active combat. The harsh realities of combat were seen by millions in the United States and around the world. Realistic coverage of the day-to-day activities of the armed forces in Vietnam began to turn the people back home against the war. As is often the case in times of war, many songs were written which made reference to the conflict itself or to aspects of the social upheaval which it caused. The fact that the images of the conflict were being broadcast into the living rooms of millions of Americans did not go without mention: The Doors' "Unknown Soldier" (Morrison, et al., 1968) takes this topic head on. The lyrics depict a scene where life at home in the United States is lived alongside explicit coverage of the conflict, where a typical morning might mean eating "breakfast where the news is read/Television children fed/Unborn living, living, dead/Bullet strikes the helmet's head." These lines conjure images of families around the breakfast table, watching the morning news for coverage of the conflict, while fathers and sons are absent, away at war. The release of the single was accompanied by a promotional video which featured actual footage of the conflict as well as a scene where the band's singer, Jim Morrison, is

shot and killed by a firing squad (*Unknown Soldier (promo video)*, 1968). This scene was often replicated on stage when the band played the song as a finale to their live performances.

Another reference to how the conflict affected life back home in the United States is "Fortunate Son" (Fogerty, 1969), written by John Fogerty and performed by Creedence Clearwater Revival. In his memoir, songwriter John Fogerty said that the song was about the 'fortunate sons' of politicians who escaped combat: "You'd hear about the son of this senator or that congressman who was given a deferment from the military or a choice position in the military. They seemed privileged and whether they liked it or not, these people were symbolic in the sense that they weren't being touched by what their parents were doing. They weren't being affected like the rest of us" (Fogerty & McDonough, 2015, p.190). Released just as widespread dissatisfaction with the U.S. government's handling of the Vietnam conflict came to a head, the song quickly rose to popularity and peaked at number 3 on the Billboard Hot 100 in December of 1969. A month earlier, President Richard Nixon (elected in 1968) had delivered a speech declaring, in defiance of the anti-war sentiment, that in the United States there existed a "great silent majority" of American citizens which supported the war. The song was critical of the draft during the Vietnam war, labouring the idea that there is a chasm between the 'fortunate' and 'unfortunate' in America. The fortunate sons are "born silver spoon in hand" and life is easy; their class privilege insulates them from the human consequences of war. Many perceived the draft system, also known as the Selective Service System, as unfairly weighted against minority and working class young men. Affluent or well-connected young men were more easily able to obtain deferments to the draft for medical reasons or for education. It can be inferred from the lyrics that the fathers of the fortunate sons are responsible for getting America involved in the conflict, yet the 'unfortunate sons', by

contrast, were more likely to be drafted: “I ain't no millionaire's son/[…]/Yeah, some folks inherit star-spangled eyes/They send you down to war” (Fogerty, 1969)

“Fortunate Son” (Fogerty, 1969) is sometimes misunderstood as a simple patriotic anthem, in similar fashion to interpretations of Bruce Springsteen's “Born in the U.S.A.” (Springsteen, 1984). Just as many listeners hear Springsteen's chorus as a patriotic chant, here, too, many miss the anti-establishment message in the song and tune out after the opening lines: “Some folks are born made to wave the flag/They're red, white and blue.” In a fine example of exactly that misunderstanding, John Fogerty recently objected to the use of his song “Fortunate Son” being used at campaign rallies for Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump. Fogerty issued a cease and desist order and stated on Twitter that “as a veteran, I was disgusted that some people were allowed to be excluded from serving our country because they had access to political and financial privilege. I also wrote about wealthy people not paying their fair share of taxes. Mr. Trump is a prime example of both of these issues” (Fogerty, tweet Oct 16, 2020).

Some songwriters were purposefully conspicuous with their anti-war sentiment. No example stands better than Phil Ochs’ 1965 song “I Ain’t Marching Anymore” (Ochs, 1965). The song, performed from the perspective of a fatigued soldier who has fought at every American war since the Nineteenth century, criticises the history of American military activity. Similarly to “Fortunate Son,” here Ochs raises the issue that it is often the old policy makers who push for war but they are rarely the ones to risk their lives: “It’s always the old to lead us to war/It’s always the young to fall.” The soldier eventually reaches the Second World War and he flies “the final mission in the Japanese sky/Set off the mighty mushroom roar.” This, he thinks, is a step too far; “When I saw the cities burning/I knew that I was learning/That I ain't marchin' anymore.”

One of the most brazen anti-war songs ever recorded was composed in response to the Vietnam conflict. Going on to become one of the most popular and recognisable protest songs of all time, the song's refrain raises a straightforward question: "War […] what is it good for?" The answer, of course: "Absolutely nothing!" (Whitfield & Strong, 1970a). Initially written for and performed by the Temptations, the record label, Gordy, a subsidiary of Motown, chose not to release this original version as a single to avoid alienating the Temptations' more conservative fans. Instead, the song was re-recorded for single release by Edwin Starr and, in its new intense and fiery guise, entered the Billboard chart at number one, where it stayed for three weeks. "War" went on to be established as Starr's signature song, his biggest hit, and was quickly followed in the same year by the similarly themed "Stop the War Now" (Whitfield & Strong, 1970b). Not a Californian offering, the popularity of "War" at the time, as well as its legacy as an anti-war anthem, demonstrates the pervasiveness of the anti-war sentiment across the United States.

This view of the anti-war sentiment is further supported by calls for understanding and compassion which ring through American popular music more widely in the late sixties and early seventies. Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On* (Gaye, 1971) is a prime example of this. Informed and affected by his own experiences as a Black citizen of the United States as well as his brother's experiences as a Vietnam veteran, Gaye's acclaimed concept album, or song cycle, takes in themes of suffering and injustice, both at home and away at war. Much of the anti-war sentiment on the album is bold and unconcealed, most evident in direct lyrics such as "War is hell, when will it end?" (Gaye & Nyx, 1971) or, as in the title track "What's Going On", "Father, father/We don't need to escalate/You see, war is not the answer/For only love can conquer hate" (Gaye, Cleveland & Benson, 1971). The idea that only love, compassion and understanding can help to solve the

injustices and suffering faced by many at the time is best summarised in the lyrics of "Right On", from side two of *What's Going On*: "Some of us were born with money to spend/Some of us were born for races to win/Some of us are aware that it's good for us to care/Some of us feel the icy wind of poverty blowin' in the air/[…]/Ah true love can conquer hate every time" (Gaye & DeRouen, 1971).

Like "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay," some popular songs just happened to resonate with those involved in the conflict because they drew on themes of heartache or resignation. A song which, while not originally written with the war in mind, was adopted as an anthem for the Vietnam conflict is Peter, Paul and Mary's version of the John Denver-penned "Leaving on a Jet Plane" (Denver, 1969). Released as a single in 1969, the song became the group's only number one hit. The lyrics, about going to visit a loved one to say goodbye before leaving "on a jet plane", rang true for many young men who were drafted and forced to leave wives and girlfriends behind. Another example is "Green, Green Grass of Home" (Putman, 1965), recorded by Porter Wagoner in 1965. Those songs all featured in the book *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* (Bradley & Werner, 2015), which documents a research project aiming to discover how popular music embedded itself into the lives of military servicemen in the Vietnam conflict. Each of the songs, all three of which deal with themes of loneliness or homesickness, holds special meaning for many of the people who were involved in the Vietnam war.

The Vietnam war was an extremely divisive conflict. While some were openly protesting the war, 'dodging' the draft, or even deserting the military, other Americans saw the act of opposing the government as unpatriotic at best, treasonous at worst. The Americans that President Richard Nixon dubbed "the silent majority," who supported the war and were angered

by the ‘unpatriotic’ protests, actually constituted a huge portion of the population. This kind of one-sidedness ignores staunchly apolitical music, as well as songs which actually endeavoured to support the military. Merle Haggard wrote his hit song “Okie From Muskogee” (Haggard & Burris, 1969) to support U.S. soldiers fighting in the conflict and as an obvious insult to protesters. The lyrics give some insight to the resentment felt by many towards the unpatriotic, draft dodging young people protesting the war: “We don't burn our draft cards down on Main Street/We like livin' right, and bein' free/We don't make a party out of lovin'/We like holdin' hands and pitchin' woo/We don't let our hair grow long and shaggy/Like the hippies out in San Francisco do.”

The Spokesmen’s pro-war ballad “Dawn of Correction” (Medora, et al., 1965) insisted that “The western world has a common dedication/To keep free people from Red domination.” The song implores young men to be prepared to fight for their country; “And maybe you can't vote, boy, but man your battle stations/Or there'll be no need for votin' in future generations.” In a direct conservative response to Barry McGuire’s “Eve of Destruction” (Phillips, 1965), even delivered in similar style, the song references the necessity of nuclear defences during the Cold War: “There are buttons to push in two mighty nations/But who's crazy enough to risk annihilation?/The buttons are there to ensure negotiation/So don't be afraid, boy, it's our only salvation.” The fact that these songs were popular demonstrates that there is another side to the most common images of the war in Vietnam. The conflict was wrapped up in a culture war back home in the United States. A battle raged to decide who got to define the nation’s culture and understanding the Vietnam War era in relation to its popular music requires exploration of a variety of perspectives. It is interesting that casual internet searches for popular music from the Vietnam era, or music related to the Vietnam war, bring up only the protest music or music which was

adopted as part of the protest message. This demonstrates the powerful legacy of the anti-war sentiment from this period.

Because the Vietnam war was experienced so readily across the entire nation, there is little to suggest a discrete Californian experience or representation of the conflict. Duncan Light (2008) stresses the importance of difference in the creation of place-myths. Discussing Transylvania as the setting of Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897), Light suggests that in order for Transylvania to be the "sinister, terrifying place where the supernatural reigns supreme" (2008, p.10), there needed to be both familiarity and a sense of otherness: It "had to be just recognisable enough to be European, but located far from the 'civilised' West" (pp.10-1). The experience of the Vietnam conflict, primarily through news broadcasts on television and coverage in newspapers, was similar across the United States. While there are many examples of music from California which took opposition to the conflict or included anti-war sentiment, there are also many more examples from elsewhere across the United States. As a result, the Vietnam war lends very little at all to a specifically Californian place-myth: in order for specific place-images and image-themes to be accepted as part of a wider place-myth they have to mark out points of difference. However, as exemplified in Otis Redding's "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" (Redding and Cropper, 1968) at the beginning of this section, California continued to serve as a mythical place where one could escape to a leisurely existence and while away the hours, whistling on the dock of the bay.

7.5. Conclusion

Laurel Canyon, the wild and rural oasis on the edge of "the noise and neon of the Sunset Strip" (Walker, 2006, p.xiii), had many notable residents in the latter half of the 1960s,

including Joni Mitchell, Carole King, Frank Zappa, John Mayall, Chris Hillman and Roger McGuinn of the Byrds, and many more besides. Over the decade or so of Laurel Canyon's golden period, many of these artists scored hits both nationally and internationally. The members of the Mamas and the Papas, all of whom were Laurel Canyon residents in the sixties, were responsible for the most significant of those hits, "California Dreamin'" (Phillips & Phillips, 1965). The song reflects the dominant California place-myth in the middle of the decade; a California of eternal summers and sunshine, an optimistic and harmonious place in which to escape the cold.

The clubs of the Sunset Strip played host to Los Angeles' rock bands, and it was here that the scene gained attention in national media. The crowds of kids pouring out onto the street after bands finished playing caused the city administration to introduce a strict 10pm curfew and new loitering laws. The aggressive enforcement of the curfew caused tension and led to a huge demonstration on the Sunset Strip, at which many arrests were made. Coverage of the demonstrations in the national press and its representation in other popular media, such as the feature film *Riot on the Sunset Strip* (1967), highlighted the fear and trepidation about hippiedom and drug culture.

I describe significant developments in the San Francisco counterculture, such as the emergence of the audio-visual aesthetics of psychedelic music, the widespread use of psychedelic drugs, and the hippie's desire to withdraw "from the commonplace routines of their generation" (1968, p.8), in order to establish key points of difference between the San Francisco scene and the more commercial music from Los Angeles, both of which have been referred to as 'hippie' more broadly. I go on to argue that the common image-myth of California's hippies comes from a

superficial mediascape, endorsed and co-opted in Southern California, which relies on only the most basic hippie symbols and gestures.

The looming presence of the war in Vietnam throughout this period is addressed through a collection of songs about the conflict. I present songs which render both pro- and anti-war sentiment to demonstrate that popular music was used to illuminate both sides of the argument. While there are many examples of popular music from California which take an anti-war stance, and while the conflict certainly had a huge impact across the state, I argue that in order for specific place-images and image-themes to be accepted as part of a wider place-myth they have to mark out points of difference.

8. The End of the 1960s

In this chapter I discuss the establishment of complex and nuanced negative place-myths of California, which are influenced by the challenges and contradictions faced by those who migrated to the state in search of a better life. I discuss the Manson Family, highlighting Charles Manson's own songs, and the Tate-LaBianca murders as a key example of the 'dark side' of California. I argue that the duality of California place-myths, the presence of both the light and dark, is essential to the mythic construction of California. Leading the discussion into the concluding chapter of the thesis, I argue that, despite the challenges at the end of the decade, positive place-myths from earlier in the decade remain in tact and available for further circulation and transformation.

8.1. Broken Dreams

In the first half of the sixties, the proponents of the California sound, along with their beach movie counterparts, had attracted the world's attention with images of the good life in California. The music of the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, other proponents of the California sound, as well as the Beach Party films, provided popular images about California lifestyles which had helped to form dominant California place-myths. By the middle of the decade, however, Jan and Dean moved on from the saccharine portrayal of the California lifestyle in 1965 with the release of their album *Folk n' Roll*, which featured a cover version of Barry McGuire's song "Eve of Destruction" (Sloan, 1965). By choosing this cover song, Jan and Dean acknowledged the social issues which had manifested in California; the duo that, only a few years prior, had touted idyllic

California's Surf City and Drag City were now concerned with the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and the associated armed forces draft, as well as the turmoil in the Middle East and the threat of nuclear war.

The Beach Boys, similarly, began to disconnect from their earlier advertisements for the dream California lifestyle. *Beach Boys Party!* (1965), the group's last album of 1965, featured a selection of acoustic covers. Amongst these were three Beatles songs and, most notably, a recording of Bob Dylan's "The Times they are a-Changin'" (Dylan, 1964). The Beach Boys' 1966 album *Pet Sounds* did away with surfboards and cars and saw the music develop under the control of Brian Wilson, who produced, arranged, and almost entirely composed the album. At the time, the result was met with a lukewarm response in comparison to the group's earlier music.

Pet Sounds is not typically considered a California album because it differs from the sunny and carefree image that is often associated with California and the Beach Boys' earlier work. The album explores more introspective and complex themes such as self-doubt, insecurity, and the search for meaning in life. The instrumentation and arrangements are also more sophisticated and experimental, incorporating instruments and sounds not typically associated with rock or pop music prior to the mid-1960s, such as the harpsichord and bicycle bells. Thus, *Pet Sounds* is often considered as more of a transitional album that, inspired by other recordings such as the Beatles' *Rubber Soul* (1965), helped to pave the way for the psychedelic and experimental sounds of the later 1960s.

In the latter half of the decade, after the upheaval of the Watts Riots, the sentiment of failed dreams in the state, especially in Los Angeles and wider southern California, became a

common theme. The contrasting experiences of success and failure were not necessarily mutually exclusive; one newly settled resident of California could be successful while his neighbour was not. Nor were those experiences unique to the Golden State; residents of any other state could equally be successful or unsuccessful. The element that sets California apart is the expectation that the move to California will be rewarded. This idea is a long-standing element of California place-myths. There is a parallel here to the songs of the California Gold Rush. While the popular myth of the Gold Rush was that of brave pioneers who got rich quickly from hard work mining for gold, songs of the time told stories of the harsh realities of a mining life in California.

8.2. The Manson Family

Charles Manson, a convicted murderer and cult leader, is infamous for the brutal murders committed by his followers, known as the Manson Family, in the late 1960s. These murders were a shocking and violent reminder that there were darker, more sinister forces at work in the state and called into question the dominant place-myths. Manson arrived in Los Angeles in 1968, a man in his mid-thirties who had spent over half of his life in juvenile detention and prison. By this time he had married and divorced twice, fathered two sons, and had been convicted of grand theft auto, armed robberies, and facilitating prostitution or pimping. At the time of his thirtieth birthday in 1964 he was residing at Terminal Island prison in San Pedro, California, four years into a ten-year sentence for cashing a stolen cheque. Being incarcerated didn't stop Manson from hearing the Beatles as they began to gain popularity in the United States and he became obsessed with the band and their music (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1980). He taught himself to play guitar and began to experiment with songs of his own (Watkins and Soledad, 1979). He was released

from prison on parole in 1967, after his request to remain in prison was denied, ultimately serving seven of the ten years of his sentence. Moving to San Francisco, he joined the Haight-Ashbury scene, where he began to assemble a group of followers known as the Manson Family. Paul Watkins, a member of the Manson Family, later remembered that

> from the beginning, Charlie believed the Beatles' music carried an important message – to us [the Family…]. He said their album, *The Magical Mystery Tour*, expressed the essence of his own philosophy. Basically, Charlie's trip was to program us all to submit: to give up our egos, which, in a spiritual sense, is a lofty aspiration. As rebels within a materialistic, decadent culture, we could dig it" (Watkins and Soledad, 1979, p.40).

First came the harem of young, impressionable women that he collected. Women made up a significant portion of Manson's followers, most drawn in by his charismatic personality and ability to offer a sense of community and belonging (Dawson, 2022). The promise of sexual liberation may also have been particularly appealing to young women who felt isolated or disconnected from mainstream society. Manson's psychological manipulation and physical violence was especially effective on vulnerable individuals who were looking for guidance and direction in their lives.

The Family regularly engaged in minor theft, and would often rearrange the furniture in the houses they stole from, a practice known as "creepy crawling" where the aim was disruption and creating unease (Melnick, 2018). Manson attracted new members to the Family with free love and group sex, LSD and other 'experiences,' and, as is often overlooked in accounts of the Manson Family, his music. By the time Manson emerged as a charismatic cult leader, he had already become a prolific songwriter. Neil Young, for one, thought that he was "great […] unreal," and told the head of Warner Bros. Records that all Manson needed was a "band like Dylan had on "Subterranean Homesick Blues"" (Young, quoted in Melnick, 2018, p.75).

In 1968, Manson moved his Family to L.A. He now had a small catalogue of original songs and hoped that he would be able to get a record contract in the city which had become known as the pop music capital of the world. “He fit in so seamlessly at the parties and clubs that many were later shocked to realize they’d unwittingly shared a joint with him or listened to him deliver one of his ponderous raps” (Walker, 2006, p.121). Unfortunately for Manson, and despite his network including the likes of Neil Young and Beach Boy Dennis Wilson, he never found success. He made tapes of his songs, which were passed to a variety of record labels, large and small, around Los Angeles but were universally rejected.

By 1969 Manson had moved the Family out of Los Angeles and into the Santa Susana Mountains, around thirty miles north-west of the city. They resided at the Spahn Movie Ranch, a sprawling and lifeless property which had been used by Hollywood studios to shoot Westerns in the 1950s. It was at the ranch that Manson began to solidify his ideology and promote his fantasy vision of the forthcoming race war.

After the release of the album *The Beatles* (1968), better known as the *White Album*, a member of the Manson Family, Brooks Poston, remembers Manson asking, “are you hep to what the Beatles are saying? Helter Skelter is coming down. The Beatles are telling it like it is” (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1980, p.330). Paul Watkins agrees, saying that around this time “helter skelter” began to be used by Manson to describe his vision of an impending race war; “and what it meant was the Negros [*sic*] were going to come down and rip the cities all apart. […]. Before Helter Skelter came along, all Charlie cared about was orgies” (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1980, pp.330-1). Manson believed that the Beatles had written the song “Helter Skelter” (Lennon & McCartney, 1968) as a personal message to him, confirming his fantasy of the approaching apocalypse. He believed that once the

uprising, or Helter Skelter, began, the black population would rise up against the whites and eradicate them. His fantasy did not come true and so Manson began instructing his followers that they must take the matter into their own hands (Melnick, 2018). Paul Watkins is recorded as saying that in late May or early June of 1969, Manson took Watkins aside at Spahn Ranch and said "the only thing blackie knows is what whitey has told him." He then added, "I'm going to have to show him how to do it" (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1980, p.335). Manson and the core members of the Manson Family intended to bring about the race war themselves.

After dark on August 8, 1969, four members of the Manson Family drove to 10050 Cielo Drive in Benedict Canyon and murdered the five people they found there. The most prominent victim was the actress Sharon Tate, wife of director Roman Polanski, who at the time was pregnant and almost at full term. Her blood was used to write "PIG" on the front door of the house. Manson took the same four members of the Family, Patricia Krenwinkle, Tex Watson, Linda Kasabian, and Susan Atkins, with him to another house in the early hours of the following morning, where two more people fell victim to the Family's violence. "Healter Skelter" [sic] and "Death to Pigs" were written in blood at the scene where Rosemary LaBianca had been stabbed more than forty times, and her husband Leno's body had the word "WAR" carved into the skin.

Only months later when Susan Atkins, in prison on car theft charges, bragged to her cellmate about the Family's involvement in the killings were Charles Manson and members of the Family finally charged with the murders. Those directly responsible for the killings were sentenced to death, with the exception of Linda Kasabian, who was granted immunity for testifying against the others. When California abolished capital punishment in 1972, Manson and the other

members of the Family, along with Robert Kennedy's assassin Sirhan Sirhan, had their sentences commuted to life in prison.

The murders changed the atmosphere in greater Los Angeles. New fears were brought forth by the events of that fateful night, and people began to question the relative safety of a lifestyle defined by communal living and free love. Graham Nash recalls the extent to which attitudes changed at the time: "up until then everybody's door was open, nobody gave a shit […] then all of a sudden it was like: I gotta lock my car. I gotta lock my door. It was the beginning of the end, I think" (Nash, quoted in Walker, 2006, p.125). The idea that Charles Manson and the Manson Family tainted, even ended, a dream of peace-and-love has become cultural shorthand, a myth in itself. "Many people I know in Los Angeles believe that the Sixties ended abruptly on August 9, 1969," says Joan Didion, in an often-quoted line from her essay "The White Album" (Didion, 1979, p.27).

The main texts available on Manson, the Family and the infamous killings focus very little on Manson's music directly. Ed Sanders, leader of New York-based proto-punk folk-rock band the Fugs, wrote *The Family* in 1971. In the book he says very little about the appeal of Manson's music, offering some insight when he says that, given the right kind of studio treatment, a Manson song could leave other folk-rock groups of the time "eating gravel" (p.99). Sanders' aim in the book is to put distance between the real counterculture and the Family; it isn't surprising that he glossed over the appeal of Manson's music, despite being a songwriter himself. The same can be said of the recent books *Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA, and the Secret History of the Sixties* (O'Neill and Piepenbring, 2019) and *Creepy Crawling* (Melnick, 2018). While the music itself is not given much space at all, many of Manson's connections in the world of music are

documented, including Manson's friendship with Dennis Wilson of the Beach Boys, and Terry Melcher, a prominent music producer. Melcher recorded some of the biggest hits by the Byrds, most notably their first two albums, and it is reported that he auditioned Manson for Columbia Records after an introduction from Dennis Wilson (O'Neill and Piepenbring, 2019). Between 1966 and early 1969, Melcher had lived, with his girlfriend, the actress Candice Bergen, in the house at 10050 Cielo Drive where the Family killed Sharon Tate.

Dennis Wilson, who had found the Family on his search for drugs and girls, was fascinated by Manson, who he called "the Wizard" (Hoskyns, 2005, p.95), and eventually let him and the Family move from Topanga to Wilson's own property in Rustic Canyon. Aided by Melcher and, in some accounts, his brother Brian Wilson, Dennis arranged to record some of Manson's songs. As the Beach Boys, they covered one of Manson's songs; "Cease to Exist" (Manson, c.1965). Renamed "Never Learn Not to Love" (Wilson, D., 1968), it was released as the B-side of the "Bluebirds over the Mountain" single in 1968 and appeared credited to Dennis Wilson, not to Charles Manson, on the Beach Boys' *20/20* (1969) album the following year. Melnick's *Creepy Crawling* (2018) suggests that Manson's rejection by the West Coast music industry triggered the anger which fueled the 1969 killings. Manson had spent time in prison with another music-industry figure, Phil Kaufman, who managed Gram Parsons and worked as a roadie for the Rolling Stones, Emmylou Harris, Frank Zappa, and others. Thirteen acoustic demos of Manson's songs, recorded by Kaufman, were compiled on the independently released album *Lie: The Love and Terror Cult* (1970). While there are no obvious confessions or clues about his crimes directly, Manson's lyrics paint a particular picture of his outlook socially and politically. The ominously-titled "People Say I'm No Good" (Manson, 1970a), for example, is about society's double standards (a theme that is

echoed on “Mechanical Man” (Manson, 1970b) and “Garbage Dump” (Manson, 1970c), which criticises food waste and advocates freeganism). “Think you're loving baby, but all you're doing is crying […] Are those feelings real?” he sings on “Look At Your Game Girl” (Manson, 1970d), which hints at the type of psychological manipulation he engaged in with his followers.

The recordings which are currently available are demo tracks featuring Manson singing and accompanying himself on an acoustic guitar. While accompanied by the Family in various ways on multiple recordings, the focus on Manson’s voice is generally maintained, as is usual for singer-songwriter style performances, and this conveys a sense of intimacy. Additionally, acoustic performances like these often feature a softer or more subdued performance style, with less emphasis on showmanship. This can make the performer appear more vulnerable, as they are presenting themselves in an unguarded way, and in turn may heighten the sense of intimacy for the listener as they witness something which appears to be personal. The fact that the music is only available in this acoustic performance style is interesting because any experience of Charles Manson as a musician which is available to us is necessarily coloured by a sense of intimacy. This closeness, which may ordinarily be one of warmth and familiarity, can suddenly appear eerie or sinister when the listener is aware of Manson’s crimes.

While more recordings of these, and other, songs are reported to exist, including a collection of tracks recorded by Carl and Brian Wilson at the Beach Boys’ own studio (Manson, 1994) and an album of acoustic songs completed in 1984 while Manson was incarcerated (Michaels, 2010b), all remain unreleased. The fact that there are accounts of other recordings being made but never released (Manson, 1994; Hoskyns, 2005; Melnick, 2018) is worthy of note, especially considering that popular interest in Charles Manson and the Manson Family has

remained high since the events of the late sixties. This can be seen in the multiple documentaries which have been produced, focusing on various aspects of Manson's life and influence, as well as in Quentin Tarantino's reworking of the Manson Family story for the film *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) less than two years after Manson's death.

While Tarantino's narrative takes its cues from real events, in the movie's most extreme twist of fiction, the protagonists Rick Dalton and Cliff Booth, who are both fictional characters, end up confronting and defeating the Manson Family members in a violent fight. *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* highlights the duality in place-myths of California at the time. California is primarily presented as a place of opportunity, creativity, and possibility, with a strong emphasis on the glamour and optimism of Hollywood. It celebrates the film industry and the iconic figures of Hollywood in a golden age. The film also portrays the counterculture of the late 1960s, with scenes of free-spirited hippies hanging out in parks and on the streets. However, the film acknowledges some of the darker aspects of California's history and culture, taking place against the backdrop of the Manson Family murders and also touching on issues of class and race, with characters from different socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities interacting in complex and sometimes fraught ways. Overall, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* presents a complex and nuanced portrait of California at the end of the nineteen sixties, highlighting both its optimism and its darkness. Along with the place-myth of broken dreams discussed in the previous section, the darkness of California, or its underbelly (a term often used to describe the urban settings of noir fiction), is also present in place-myths of the state.

8.3. Outsiders and Detractors

Neil Young moved to California from Ontario, making him an ‘immigrant voice’. He continued to be an outsider throughout much of his career, never really finding the connections he sought. “Heart of Gold” (Young, 1972) is shown to illustrate his search for love or a home in California; the line “been to Hollywood, been to Redwood” shows that he has explored both the constructed, man-made California and the natural California and still has not found what he is looking for. “It's these expressions I never give” demonstrates a reflection on himself - he suspects that he might be the problem, the reason he can’t find the ‘heart of gold’. He’s “been in [his] mind”, overthinking, and it’s “such a fine line” between continuing the search and giving up. In this song, Young himself is the miner, travelling to California from Ontario in his search for love or a home in California - a journey which never finds an end. In 1977, in the liner notes for the compilation album *Decade*, Young reflected on the popularity of “Heart of Gold” and wrote; “This song put me in the middle of the road. Travelling there soon became a bore so I headed for the ditch. A rougher ride but I saw more interesting people there” (Young, 1977).

Young lived in Topanga Canyon, in the Santa Monica mountains. More distant from the city of Los Angeles than Laurel Canyon, and closer to the Pacific Ocean, Topanga was a “paradise” in the country “for the hardcore hippie” (Hoskyns, 2005, p.78). Charles Manson resided at Spahn Ranch, also in Topanga Canyon, in the late 1960s. By the time we reach the album *On the Beach* (1974), Young has ceased his search for a “heart of gold” (Young, 1972) and reached a point of acceptance about his own outsider status. The title track from the album paints a lonely picture. The world in which he lives is changing fast, so fast he is afraid he wont recognise it

anymore: “The world is turnin', I hope it don't turn away.” There is less and less chance of him making the connections he worked so hard to find. His duties as a performing commercial musician are shown to be a heavy burden; he needs a “crowd of people”, his audience, but he “can’t face them day to day;” he finds himself alienated at a radio interview, even though we can assume the topic is his own life and work. He doesn’t recognise the ‘popular’ version of himself that the radio DJ is speaking to. As a result, he wants out of the city, to “get out of town”, so he heads “for the sticks with [his] bus and friends.” Seeking refuge in nature, he ends up living out on the beach. As the album cover and the melancholic tone of the song tell us, the beach is not a crowded tourist beach, but rather a lonely, stark place. This is likely to be the Californian coast, a look west towards the sunset, towards the end of the world. Even here he can’t find a connection: “Now I'm livin' out here on the beach, but those seagulls are still out of reach.”

The narrative of expectations of California not being met appears again more strongly in the lore of the state after the mid-1960s. The Dionne Warwick song “Do You Know the Way to San Jose” (Bacharach and David, 1968) tells the story of a young woman from San José who has set her mind on returning home after failing to make it in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles. For Warwick’s character in this song, the initial draw to move to California, and more specifically Los Angeles, is to work hard and ‘make it’ in Hollywood. According to Hallett (2013), women flocked to Hollywood in the early twentieth century. As both industry pioneers and consumers, Hallett suggests it was the allure and magic of the cinema that appealed to a uniquely feminine desire. Widespread interest in the film industry and in the celebrity culture of Hollywood helped to boost the appeal of migrating to California. Despite the hard work, Warwick’s protagonist is not rewarded. Understanding this event as a revelation that the reality

does not match the expectation speaks to the power of this particular California place-myth. This is an example of the kind of duality present in California place-myths; stories of hardships or broken dreams inform diverging myths of the state. This alternate perspective, mythologising California as harsh and hopeless, surfaces as a strong theme in the late sixties and contrasts with long-standing images of California as a land of success. The title of Albert Hammond's "It Never Rains in Southern California" (Hammond and Hazlewood, 1972) plays on the idea of the myth versus the reality. Taking a similar perspective to Dionne Warwick's "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," our protagonist is down on his luck, searching for opportunities in California. We find him "out of work" and he begs us to "tell the folks back home I nearly made it." In his experience, in Southern California it never rains but "it pours, man, it pours" (Hammond and Hazlewood, 1972).

Even in the face of more pessimistic attitudes about California, and particularly Southern California, at the end of the decade, new music continued to appear. As the sixties drew to a close, a new style of California country music started to emerge. An early pioneer of the Californian country rock style was Ricky Nelson. Beginning his career as a TV teen idol, (incidentally, the term 'teen idol' was first coined to describe Nelson) Ricky Nelson became known as a rock and roll star in the early sixties with singles such as his version of "Hello Mary Lou" (Pitney & Mangiaracina, 1961). With the backing group the Stone Canyon Band, he reinvented himself as a country rock singer. Influenced by Bob Dylan's country album *Nashville Skyline*, released in April 1969, Nelson recruited Buck Owens' former sideman Tom Brumley as his pedal-steel player and by doing so established a clear link between the L.A. canyons and the already well-established Bakersfield country scene. His 1969 live album *In Concert* was recorded at West

Hollywood's Troubadour club, something of a headquarters for L.A.'s developing country rock scene.

Equally influential was Gram Parsons, who, after a short stint in the Byrds, formed the Flying Burrito Brothers with original Byrds bassist Chris Hillman. With their album *The Gilded Palace of Sin*, released in 1969, the Burritos made Californian country-rock hugely popular and influenced many other acts. The most enthusiastic followers of the Burritos were the Eagles, who crafted the new country rock sound into multi-million selling hits such as "Lyin' Eyes" (Henley & Frey, 1975) and "New Kid in Town" (Henley, Frey & Souther, 1976), the latter of which features on the album *Hotel California* (1976), one of the biggest-selling records of all time. Amongst the themes present on the album, Don Henley listed "the perils of fame, of excess; exploration of the dark underbelly of the American dream, … illusion versus reality, … [and] the fading away of the sixties dream of peace, love and understanding" (Henley, quoted in Browne, 2016). Themes of the unreality of established California place-myths reached a peak at the end of the 1960s and established a widespread influence throughout subsequent decades. However, idealistic representations of California still continue to thrive in popular music.

8.4. Conclusion

The sentiment of broken dreams, the unreality of the dominant place-myth, can be seen as a challenge to, questioning of, or outright denial of the dominant, positive place-myths. However, the idea that expectations of California have not been met supposes that there were clear expectations to begin with and, as such, the more voraciously these topics are broached, the more power they lend to the positive place-myths. The murders committed by the Manson Family demonstrated that there were sinister forces at work in the state and Charles Manson, the infamous cult leader, represented the darker side of southern California during the 1960s. In common portrayals of these events, Manson's failure to find success in Los Angeles' music industry led to the murders. This suggests that Manson's expectations of Los Angeles, based on place-myths, were closely aligned to expectations placed on Hollywood by the protagonist of "Do You Know the Way to San Jose." Neil Young's search for love and a home in California, as portrayed in "Heart of Gold," reflects the disappointment and sense of alienation experienced by many who migrated to the state seeking a better life. The title track from Young's album *On the Beach* further emphasises this sense of isolation and the difficulty of making meaningful connections in a rapidly changing world. The place-image of the beach, for Neil Young, is far distant from the image-myth of southern California's fun and carefree beaches. Albert Hammond encountered the myths from a similar perspective, with the protagonist of "It Never Rains in Southern California" struggling to make a living and achieve his dreams in the land of opportunity. The duality of these California place-myths, highlighting both the highs and lows of chasing the California dream, has been an enduring part of the state's identity since the Gold Rush.

9. Cadenza

In this chapter I discuss the prevalence of California place-myths in popular music since the nineteen sixties. Looking at the resurgence of early sixties cultural icons in the late nineteen eighties, I explore the relationship of myth and nostalgia in consumer culture. Moving to the topic of Ronald Reagan's presidency during the same period, I widen the discussion of nostalgia and myth to politics. I argue that one outcome of this type of nostalgia is that the exclusion or subjugation of particular elements is at risk of becoming ever stronger through repetition.

In the second section, I present a case study of a 2011 EP from Norwegian electronic rock band Datarock in order to demonstrate how existing California place-myths can be engaged with, adapted and transformed in popular music. This leads into the discussion in the final section, where I explore how references to earlier popular music can help to efficiently deliver to a viewer or listener a collection of relevant California place-images. This highlights the duality of light and dark in California place-myths, suggesting that, because California is so entrenched in mythic constructions, representations of the state can be shaped to serve any purpose. I conclude the section by drawing attention to the use of the music of the early 1960s in other forms of media to efficiently refer to the values of and nostalgia for California during that period.

9.1. Beyond the 1960s

As we have seen, in popular narratives of the 1960s in California, the period is portrayed as having innocent beginnings and evolving through radical ideas and great countercultural changes. The countercultural experience is often seen as the most important aspect of the decade, but the celebration of comforting and conforming images for the decade's more conservative beginnings endures. For instance, films produced in more recent years for a nostalgic baby boomer audience largely ignore the more troubling images of the late 1960s. These images continued to survive far beyond the 1960s, still influencing memories of the past and visions of the present. The film *American Graffiti* (1973) appeared in the early 1970s and attempted to depict the early-sixties period of cruising and teen dances in California's central valley. "American Graffiti celebrates an America of the early 1960s, where teenagers cruise the streets in hot rods and rock and roll tops the music charts" (LucasFilm, n.d.). This uncritical 'celebration' helps to propagate the place-myths of the golden age of the early 1960s.

The 1980s saw a huge revival of early sixties pop icons. The stars of the Beach Party films, Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon, returned to sea and sand in the Paramount film *Back to the Beach* (1987). Gidget also returned to screens, first in the made-for-television film *Gidget's Summer Reunion* (1985) and shortly after in a reboot of the television sitcom, now called *The New Gidget* (1986-8). In the middle of the decade, the Monkees' TV show saw a revival of interest and, while the Monkees officially broke up in 1970, the resurgence of popularity led to a series of official reunion tours, a television special, and four new full-length records (Hickey, 2018). In 1988, the Beach Boys unexpectedly claimed their first U.S. number one single in 22

years with “Kokomo” (Phillips, et al., 1988), which topped the chart for one week. Capturing the sentiments of fun-in-the-sun all over again, the song appeared in the movie *Cocktail* (1988) and soon became the band's largest selling single of all time. Shortly after, they released the album *Still Cruisin'* (The Beach Boys, 1989), which went platinum in the US.

Ronald Reagan served as President of the United States between 1981 and 1989. Before becoming President, Ronald Reagan had already made a career in Hollywood as a film star through the 1940s to 1960s as well as having served as Governor of California from 1967 to 1975. Having no prior experience in politics before his run for Governor, Reagan was coached into the role by a skilled campaign team and his successful gubernatorial campaign in 1966 owes no small part to his well crafted image (De Groot, 1997). A key battleground for Reagan’s 1966 campaign was the unrest of students at the University of California. The Free Speech Movement’s reliance on civil disobedience as a form of protest caused the media, both conservative and liberal, to demonise the students, making a spectacle of the events on campus rather than addressing the issues being raised (Cohen, 2002). This, in turn, prompted Reagan to declare his intention to “clean up the mess at Berkeley” (Rorabaugh, 1992, p.156) during his campaign, which brought support from the large majority of Californians who disapproved of the disruptive student activities (Cohen, 2002). De Groot (1997) argues that Reagan’s treatment of the unrest as a simple division of “an alien, loud-mouthed 'them' on the campuses (who benefitted from the state's largesse) from a normal, law-abiding and long-suffering 'us' (who paid taxes) in the real world” (p.435) allowed Reagan to align himself as a man of the people, freeing the hard working Californians from the threat of student radicals.

His campaigning in both the 1980 and 1984 (as incumbent) elections promised a bright future for young people. Upon accepting the Republican nomination for the presidency in 1980, Reagan espoused the values of "family, work, neighbourhood, peace, and freedom" (Reagan, 1980). He evoked the images of the California dream and, in some measure through his well-publicised appreciation of the Beach Boys' music, the particular brand of youthful innocence and security of the early 1960s. Following the indirect banning of the Beach Boys from the White House Fourth of July concert in 1983, "it came out that first lady Nancy Reagan was [also] a Beach Boys fan" (*Reading Eagle*, 1983).

Reagan also ran on a platform of smaller government, espousing the benefit of freedom that came with it. Reagan "deemed freedom to be the highest political value" (Byrne, 2018, p.xiv) and a key example of this can be found in his strong opposition of the Briggs Initiative in 1978. The Briggs Initiative, or California Proposition 6, sought to ban homosexuals from working in public schools. Reagan's opposition to the proposition was based not on support for gay rights, rather his main reasoning was in opposition to the greater legislative oversight which would be required by the enforcement of such a law. This is shown most clearly in an essay penned by Reagan (1978) outlining his thoughts on the proposition, where he uses the same reasoning of "enforcement problems" (para. 3) to argue against two propositions at the same time; one is the Briggs Initiative, a dire threat to gay rights, and the other would ban smoking in public places. The conflation of these two issues under the same line of reasoning shows that Reagan was keen to uphold personal freedom.

During the presidency of Ronald Reagan, restorative nostalgia, a term which implies a drive to reclaim and reinstate a particular imagined past, played a significant role in

shaping both political agenda and rhetoric. Reagan's presidency is often associated with a conservative political and economic agenda that emphasised individualism, free markets, and American exceptionalism. This agenda was driven in part by a sense of restorative nostalgia for an earlier era of American greatness, one that was characterised by traditional values, strong leadership, and a booming economy. Reagan evoked this sense of nostalgia in his speeches and public appearances, harkening back to a time when America was the undisputed leader of the world and when the values of hard work, self-reliance, and patriotism were widely shared. This sentiment appealed to voters who felt a sense of displacement or dislocation in the rapidly changing political and economic landscape of the 1980s (Perlstein, 2021). This focus on restoring past greatness is exemplified in this quote from Reagan's 1980 presidential acceptance speech: "For those who've abandoned hope, we'll restore hope and we'll welcome them into a great national crusade to make America great again" (Reagan, 1980). Reagan's restorative nostalgia was also reflected in his policies, which were aimed at restoring America's economic and military power and rolling back the gains of the New Deal and the Great Society programs of the previous decades. Reagan's tax cuts, deregulation, and emphasis on free-market principles were intended to restore a sense of individualism and self-reliance, while his support for military intervention and anti-communist policies were intended to restore America's status as a world leader. His appeal to a sense of nostalgia for an earlier era of American greatness was a key factor in his electoral success.

In some ways, these nostalgic images of a more pristine and optimistic America have helped to sustain conservatism by condemning the disruptive forces that began to emerge as part of the counterculture in the latter half of the 1960s, instead evoking the undisrupted utopia of

the earlier half. Myths are built on previous signs and necessarily, although sometimes unintentionally, propagate and strengthen the ideas and values of the original semiological system.

A common tendency when dealing with objects from the past is to consider those objects as historical truths. Recollections of past times, personal accounts of events, and so on can be easily questioned and doubted, as we know that our recollections are subjective. Objects such as photographs and recordings, however, are more surely considered to depict the real world exactly as it is (or was). "Just as 'the word is not the thing' […] nor is a photograph or television news footage that which it depicts. Yet in the common-sense attitude of everyday life we routinely treat high modality signifiers in this way" (Chandler, 2002, p.77). This results in the problematic assumption that any biased power relations represented are natural. Myth does not require absolute truth and, further, "we can say that the fundamental character of the mythical concept is to be appropriated" (Barthes, 1972, p.118). As a result, the exclusion or subjugation (or, conversely, the inclusion or liberation) of elements is at risk of becoming ever stronger through repetition.

The prevalence of myths of California in popular music is not confined to the United States, nor does it end in the 1960s. From the 1960s onwards, there is a marked increase in music, both nationally and internationally, which is about California and makes reference, to a greater or lesser degree, to the place-myths embedded in the popular music which the main chapters of this thesis are based on.

9.2. Datarock

One example that stands out from this collection is an EP from Datarock, a Norwegian electronic rock band. Their 2011 album *California* presents the state as a dream destination. A song of the same name was first released in 2010 within another of the band's releases, the *Catcher in the Rye* EP. Echoing J.D. Salinger's coming-of-age novel of the same name, the four tracks of *Catcher in the Rye* lay out the protagonist's sense of disillusionment in his current situation. Repeatedly the same question arises - whether to stay or go? Locations are not mentioned in this portion of the release, thus the conflict remains more widely relatable. While the location of 'stay' remains vague, and therefore universal, the destination is finally revealed to be the Golden State when the song "California" appears as a bonus fifth and final track: "We need to get out of here/Not just saying anywhere/Gotta go where the sky is blue/That is what we're gonna do/We're going to California." The tracks up to this point are downbeat, melancholic and thoughtful, by comparison to the rest of the band's output. It is this track, "California," which returns to the usual upbeat, major key rock which had defined the band's sound until this point. While this in one sense represents a return to the norm, it also represents an arrival in California and subsequent return to glory.

Writing about the dust-bowl migration at the start of this thesis, I stated that while the initial motivation for the migration can be explained by the conditions back home, the fact is that the migrants were attracted to California almost exclusively. Other locations may have offered agricultural opportunities for the migrants, yet no other location had as potent a place-myth as California. Echoing those sentiments, albeit exalting the sunshine rather than agricultural opportunity, California is the obvious destination for Datarock's protagonist. So the protagonist

has arrived in California, the event is a triumph. But why does he decide to go specifically to California (and not, for instance, Florida, Cancun, or Rio) in the first place?

The migrants of the dust bowl were attracted to California by the boosters' hawking of the state as the land of opportunity. Datarock's protagonist was lured there by popular music and wider popular culture. Not only does the EP share a name with a famous novel which features the theme of migration to California, this song goes on to quote directly from the lyrics of "California Dreamin'" by the Mamas and the Papas; "When all the leaves are brown/And the sky is grey." In this section, the lines aren't sung. Instead, punctuated by the sound of marching snare rolls, the words are spoken like a call to arms. The echo and reverb effects on the voice imitate the echo heard in recordings of large-scale public speeches, which lends a sense of authority. The section continues with the lines "We won't just dream the Californian dream/We'll live the Californian way," demonstrating a belief in a particular way of life in California, which is somehow better than life elsewhere.

9.3. The Myths Survive

Themes of California lifestyles, dreams of ‘making it’ in California, or ideas about the place as a cure-all for depression and anxiety continue to appear in popular music from the 1960s right through to the present day. Some of these examples, like Brooke White’s single “California Song” (Foster, et al., 2009), Randy Newman’s “I Love L.A.” (Newman, 1983), or the Datarock example in the previous section, directly reference the earlier music which was instrumental in myth-making. White’s offering is an upbeat country song from 2009 which brings the topic of California songs to the fore. California, for White, is a place where life is lived just like it is in songs and movies: “The weather on the Golden Gate/And the sun sets on the Palisades/And the Beach Boys are looking at me/And I'm bought in to that perfect scene/That the Mamas and the Papas sing/I was dreaming, I was dreaming/And it's so funny how everybody lives/Like they are living in the movies/Like they're so cool.” For Randy Newman, Los Angeles is only fully experienced with the right soundtrack: “Roll down the window, put down the top/Crank up the Beach Boys, baby, don't let the music stop/ […] /Everybody's very happy, 'cause the sun is shining all the time/Looks like another perfect day/I love L.A.” (Newman, 1983).

These songs which make reference to the earlier music do so primarily as an efficient way to evoke some further feelings about California from their listeners. However, each example can also be said to use those references to different effect. In the Datarock example, for instance, the use of the quotes from, and allusions to, both popular music and literature appear to suggest a demonstration of Datarock’s education through popular media. Datarock, presented with the question of where to go, uses the Mamas and the Papas and John Steinbeck to show its working

out in response. In a sense, these references are the components of a California literature review. Brooke White uses similar references to similar effect, demonstrating that, for her, 'California' means the same as it did in the songs of the Beach Boys and the Mamas and the Papas.

Randy Newman's reference to the Beach Boys suggests that the idealised representations of California, and Los Angeles in particular, only exist in popular media. While listening to the Beach Boys he sees mostly the sunshine and happiness of L.A, though he knows not to "let the music stop." There is more to this neat, superficial picture of Los Angeles and other images begin to creep into the frame: "Look at that mountain/Look at those trees/Look at that bum over there, man/He's down on his knees." The peak of Newman's sardonic humour is reached when, in the music video, the 'bum' in question is featured wearing rags and on his knees, yet still accompanied by his very own California Girl. The following line in the song is "Look at these women/There ain't nothing like 'em nowhere." Essentially, Newman's protagonist is using the music of the Beach Boys to gloss over the darker or more negative perceptions of Los Angeles.

Each of these examples directly demonstrate the strong connection between popular music and place-myth; what California is, for Datarock, Brooke White, Randy Newman, and countless other listeners, is established in the lyrics of the Beach Boys, the Mamas and the Papas, and more myth-making music about the state. In turn, these songs inform the image of California for their listeners and continue to propagate the popular, and usually positive, myths of the place. Not all examples are quite so emphatic about their musical influences, but the themes of uniquely Californian lifestyles and the idea that life is somehow better in California underpins a large proportion of popular music about California from the past six decades. Some songs take a different perspective, bemoaning the unreality of positive place-myths of California. However, as

David Rieff points out, “even talk about the unreality of the California dream was, itself, a form of homage to its authority” (Rieff, 1991, p.62). Even examples which take a contrary view of California, for instance highlighting the false promises of dream California lifestyles, speak to the power and ubiquity of these California place-myths.

The period can be referred to by using the music of the time and place. For instance, The Beach Boys’ song “Surfin’ USA” (Berry & Wilson, 1963) is used in the TV adaptation of the Philip K. Dick novel *The Man in the High Castle* (2019). The scene opens on a suburban home with white picket fence and the stars-and-stripes flying high. “Surfin’ USA” is paired with these images to efficiently evoke a collection of the place-images of the Beach Boys’ California - sunny suburban idyll. The music of the Beach Boys is used to similar effect in the film *Three Kings* (1999), where the sound of “I Get Around” is used to score the soldiers heading out across the desert in a Jeep. The sun, sea and sand of California is displaced to the sun and sand of the Afghan desert. The song, used as a satirical device, becomes a symbol of conservative democracy. The line “Bad guys know us and they leave us alone” seems particularly poignant.

Over the decades since, the Beach Boys' music has been used extensively in advertising and marketing campaigns to evoke the positive place-myths of California in the 1960s. Advertisers have used the band's songs to promote a variety of products, such as cars, clothes, and food. For example, in 1980, the soft drink company Sunkist used a version of the song “Good Vibrations” in a TV commercial which featured windsurfers and spectators on the beach. The use of the Beach Boys' music in the ad supports the fun-in-the-sun style of the visual element (Sunkist, 1980).

Fig. 11. Sunkist: Good Vibrations! TV commercial branding, 1980.

Earlier in this thesis I discussed Umberto Eco's comments on the hyperreality of Disneyland, where he explains that the disappointment of not seeing alligators while travelling on the real Mississippi makes one yearn for Disneyland. By presenting the imaginary as more real than reality itself, Disneyland was able to promote escapism and happiness through simulation. In 2001, as tribute to its west-coast beginnings and to its success as 'the Happiest Place on Earth,' Disneyland launched Disney's California Adventure. The California Adventure theme park greets visitors with the music of the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, and the Mamas and the Papas, amongst others, plus a three-metre high, gold-adorned sign reading, simply, "California." Using the popular music of southern California, the park transports guests to the carefree, leisurely existence of the southern California place-myth in the early sixties.

Jean Baudrillard argues that in contemporary society, many signs have lost their original meaning and have become emptied of any real content or substance. Instead, these signs become symbols that refer only to themselves and are endlessly reproduced and consumed in a cycle of simulation (1983). Baudrillard argued that Disneyland "is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation" (Baudrillard, 1983, p.22). As California's place-myths are encountered separately from the real California we can say that the mythic construction 'California' lacks a referent and can be considered an empty sign. One excellent demonstration of this desire for connection to the place is the availability of California T-shirts in UK clothing stores. Each year, as the clothing for the summer season arrives in the shops, the name California, supported by the names of California locales such as Santa Monica, Los Angeles and Palm Beach, begins to appear everywhere. California place-images of beaches, waves, surfboards and palm trees abound, and the graphics are often in vintage or 'worn' style. California is a popular travel destination, attracting millions of visitors each year. Many tourists purchase California T-shirts as a souvenir of their trip, as they represent, and stand as a reminder of, their experience. These T-shirts, though, sold in high street clothing stores and supermarkets in the UK, are removed from any real experience or understanding of the place, making a primary example of California as an empty sign. However, the multifaceted and apparently contradictory nature of California place-myths suggests that it may be more useful to consider California as an overfilled sign. An empty sign acquires meaning in relation to other signs and its meaning is established by the conventions and expectations of the culture in which it is used. An overfilled sign is one which contains more meaning than it needs to convey its intended message. An

overfilled sign may be overloaded with symbolic or cultural meanings that are not strictly necessary for its intended purpose. The name ‘California’, as one might use it to refer to the location, not only represents the state but also carries a multiplicity of meanings that are beyond what would be necessary for identifying that particular space.

Popular music from the past few decades demonstrates that place-images of southern California’s beaches, palm trees, and, importantly, an idealised vision of a laid-back, sun-drenched lifestyle endure in California’s place-myths. There are many examples of this, ranging from Everclear’s desire to visit California because they “wanna see some palm trees” and “live beside the ocean” in the song “Santa Monica” (1995), to OneRepublic’s “West Coast” (2022), in which the protagonist dreams of travelling to California because he “could really use a dose of some paradise.” The state has become a symbol of a particular lifestyle, culture, and aesthetic that is reproduced and consumed around the world. However, when California is encountered in different contexts, such as in the lyrics of a Guns N’ Roses song or the pages of a noir novel, the place can also stand for danger, fear, and excess.

All of these representations of California are divorced from the reality of life in the state for the majority of people. California in this sense is a utopia. For David Plath, utopia refers to an ideal or imagined society that is better than the existing society (1977). Utopia is not necessarily a static condition, but rather a dynamic and evolving vision that reflects the changing aspirations and values of society (Nozick, 1971). Plath argues that utopian visions can inspire and motivate people to work towards a better future (Plath, 1977). The ubiquity of positive California place-myths puts pressure on those who live there, to some extent defining their lives by relation, to play into the hype. Even those who set out to pull back the curtain of myth can find themselves

hawking the state in other ways: “the real California is not quite as magical as it’s made out to be,” (Holland, 2018, para. 5) but “believe the Myth. It doesn’t hurt. Let yourself be drawn in by images of carefree beaches and sunny weather, but stay for the friendly people and rich culture” (Ibid., para. 10).

9.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I demonstrated that the positive place-myth themes of the early 1960s continue to propagate in popular representations of California. The 1980s revival of cultural icons from the Californian early 1960s brought the beach party back to television screens, cinemas and music venues across the nation. The resurgence of popularity of these icons, and their repackaging, helped to reinforce a nostalgic view of the period as a golden age of Californian exceptionalism. I argued that Ronald Reagan evoked a similar sense of nostalgia in his speeches and public appearances in the late 1970s and 1980s, particularly during his presidential campaign which relied on a drive towards restoring the past greatness of America. Through his policies, focussed on freedom, individualism and self-reliance, Reagan enacted restorative nostalgia.

Datarock’s *Catcher in the Rye* EP is used to demonstrate engagement with existing place-myths through direct referencing of the media they originated in. This echoes my arguments about individual place-images and image-myths in the California Girls section of chapter four, but here the example more clearly refers to a wider place-myth. Using examples which directly reference the 1960s music which was instrumental in the myth-making, I demonstrated the strong connection between popular music and place-myth. California, for many, is constructed in the

musical myth-making about the state. These songs inform the image of California for their listeners and continue to propagate the popular myths of the place.

10. Conclusion

The concept that has been my focus throughout this thesis is place-myth, a term which refers to the ways in which people construct and understand places through narratives and myths. Place-myths are the stories we tell that give meaning to particular places and shape how people perceive and relate to those places (Shields, 1991; Light, 2008). My research has demonstrated that place-myth is a valuable line of enquiry when considering relationships of popular music and place because it encourages a focus on the place as a sign. In many disciplines in humanities, the convention is to describe space as the physical dimension in which things exist and place as a meaningful location *within* space (Cresswell, 2004). Place in this sense is the meaning and significance that is attributed to a particular space by people who experience it. This is useful for investigating such concepts as the sonic identities of places or the "musicking" (Small, 1998) which happens in a space. When instead taken as a myth, a place can be understood as removed from its physical space. As such, the concept of place-myth is valuable when considering the construction of place in the absence of a real experience of the physical space. This perspective has been extremely useful in my investigation of the construction of California in popular music because my focus is the representation of California to people outside of the state. These audiences encounter and interact with the place, or place-myth, without necessarily having experience of the physical space. This is the primary characteristic which separates the work in this thesis from that of much other scholarship on the topic of music and place (Whiteley, 2004; Connell & Gibson, 2003; Maloney & Schofield, eds., 2021).

The state of California played a central role in the formation of an American ideology in the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Powerful images were created of an American future,

conditioning the nation to see life in the state's sunny suburbs as better than life elsewhere. Suburban housing and automotive freedom played a central role in the vision of America's future at the time. On TV screens and in the pages of popular magazines, southern California was cast as a dream location for healthful living and unconstrained recreation. Generally, Californians themselves were featured in advertising campaigns, popular music, films and television shows as almost exclusively young, white, middle-class people enjoying consumer opportunities in suburbia.

Offered to an audience eager to see the celebrated California life for themselves, these place-images were based on limited aspects of reality and did not represent the full scope of the state's diverse population and culture. It is from this exclusivity, the narrow focus, that myths are borne. Place-images function similarly to the 'elements' described by Appadurai (1990) in his concept of mediascapes. These elements, when arranged together, form scripts which "help to constitute narratives of the 'other'" (1990, p.299).

From the late fifties to early sixties, images of teen life in the media evolved from stories of delinquency, like *Rebel Without a Cause*, to more tolerable and gentle representations, like those seen during the early career of the Beach Boys. When the surfing craze hit the mainstream media, it allowed for a demonstration of teenage life based on leisure and, thanks to the car, mobility. The Beach Boys, in their lyrics, album covers, TV appearances, posters and interviews, promised a dream life for teenagers in California, lived primarily in suburbia and on the beach. The vocal harmonies which help define this surfing music style suggest that in California one is never alone and the accessible progressions and structures of the music reinforce the feelings of carefree fun.

Hollywood studios made films celebrating the beach and California's music invited listeners to join them on the beach and out in the surf. These representations offered models of leisure for teenage moviegoers to enjoy; a welcoming community of teenagers on the beach. The music of the Beach Boys and the California sound, along with *Gidget,* the *Beach Party* films, and other representations of California youth, helped establish a California place-myth for teenagers. The more wholesome version of teenage life was far easier for parents to accept than the rebels and delinquents of the nineteen fifties.

California's young people in the early sixties were not the delinquents of 1950s' fears, but instead were spirited and heartening icons of teenage life, created, packaged, and most importantly, bought into. These representations were not simply passive reflections of reality. Rather, they were actively constructed and sold to the public, and young people themselves eagerly embraced and identified with these images. This concept of "buying in" (Walker, 2010) is indicative of consumerism and can also be seen as a form of cultural conformity, where individuals seek to fit in with and emulate the dominant cultural trends and values of their time.

"California Dreamin'" (Phillips & Phillips, 1965) evokes the place-myth of California's eternal summer, but with a different tone from that of the California sound. Sung from the perspective of someone over two and a half thousand miles away, "California Dreamin'" has a more thoughtful, even mournful, sentiment. While the music of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dead in the early 1960s celebrated the idyllic image of California as a place of endless sunshine, surf, and youth culture, with clear reference to particulr place-images, "California Dreamin'" instead offers little to elaborate on what California is to them, allowing established place-myths inform the "essential spirit" (2002, p.98) of the music, bringing with them further ideas about

freedom, leisure and sunshine. A soft and harmonious image-myth of northern California's hippies is apparent in Scott McKenzie's "San Francisco," where they are framed as "gentle people with flowers in their hair" (Phillips, 1967). However, this myth comes from a superficial mediascape, endorsed and co-opted in Southern California, which relies on only the most basic hippie symbols and gestures.

The duality of California is an essential part of its mythic potential. Both the positive and negative characterisations of the state, California's light and dark, fuel its myths and have become established as pervasive representations of the state. I have revealed through my investigation in this thesis that popular music has contributed to place-myths of California which appear on either side, or indeed on both sides concurrently, of this duality. My findings agree with Polan's conclusion about Hollywood film, discussed in my literature review, that there is not one representation of California which is sufficient to summarise the complex history of the state's portrayal (2000, p.149). This is the case, too, in popular music.

As a result of these fragmented place-myths, it is easy to shape California and repurpose it for new musical genres. For instance, Los Angeles' Sunset Strip played host, in the late 1980s and 1990s, to a new style of rock music which appropriated the place-myths of freedom, leisure, and California girls. Coupling those myths with both the popular image of the excess of Hollywood and the danger of the city as it had been portrayed in noir fiction and represented in media coverage of events from the Manson Family murders to the Sunset Strip riot, they negotiated a new place-myth in which danger became a desirable quality and the source of excitement.

Guns N' Roses and Mötley Crüe, referenced earlier for the treatment of California girls in their lyrics, both wrote songs that describe California locations in these dual terms. Guns N' Roses' most famous song about California is arguably “Welcome to the Jungle”. The lyrics describe a person who is new to the city and quickly becomes overwhelmed by the chaos and violence of their surroundings. The “jungle” is a metaphor for the city, which is portrayed as a wild, dangerous place where only the strongest survive: “You're gonna die in the jungle, baby.” However, in a reworking of the place-myths of abundance and opportunity, the jungle is also a place where everything is available, and one’s wildest desires can be indulged, albeit for a price: “We are the people that can find whatever you may need/If you got the money, honey, we got your disease.” In the same year, Mötley Crüe dispatched with metaphors and invited listeners to “take a ride on” the “Wild Side” (1987). The song is about a lifestyle of excess and indulgence in Los Angeles and demonstrates a similar sentiment to “Welcome to the Jungle;” listeners are invited to join in only if they can handle it. Excess, danger, and the seedy underbelly of California’s cities have become just as much a part of the state's myths as beautiful beaches and sunshine.

Throughout the thesis I have demonstrated that many dominant place-myths of California in the 1960s are rooted in much older California place-myths. These place-myths are reshaped by their changing context, but the main theme remains largely the same. The California that was shared with the world through the music of the Beach Boys in the early sixties built upon and negotiated with the existing place-myths of California. The associated laid-back, fun lifestyle, which the Beach Boys’ image typified, built upon established themes offered in marketing for the state throughout the early 20th century and, in turn, reshaped the place-myth of California as a land of opportunity.

This type of negotiation and development of place-myth is a result of its communication value; place-myths are not fixed narratives and do not lie dormant after their initial conception and reception. Considering myths as stories that we tell to help us to understand something about the world explains why myths don't simply die out. These stories become part of a culture's collective memory and often serve as a means of teaching people about their history or as common points of reference in a discursive community. Even if some elements of a myth are questioned or proven false, the underlying message or meaning may still hold significance. One example of this is demonstrated by tracing the place-myth of California as a land of opportunity back to key events in its early history. The primary catalyst for the prevalence of this myth was the discovery of gold in California. Many people were lured to California by the promise of abundant riches, of shovelfuls of gold, but, almost as quickly as it began, the Gold Rush burned out. For the majority of people who made the trip, the promises remained unfulfilled. Popular songs of the time highlight the unexpected challenges of mining life in California and underscoring a theme of broken dreams. The myth had been proven false. However, the significance of California to American ideology in the 19th century, largely as a destination for westward expansion, meant that the myth would be negotiated and would ultimately endure.

Myths can be adapted and reinterpreted to fit changing cultural contexts. As societies evolve and change, their myths may take on new meanings or be reimagined to reflect contemporary concerns and values. The place-myth of California as a land of opportunity is about, more broadly, a sense of California representing a promise or a reward. The particular promise might be that of handfuls of gold for the forty niners, of abundant farmland for the Dust Bowl migrants, or of a laid-back life by the beach, but each is a negotiation of the same place-myth. In

turn, this is an offshoot of the broader American Dream. The American Dream is the idea that through hard work, determination, and a little bit of luck, anyone can achieve success, upward mobility, and prosperity in the United States.

My research has also highlighted a need for place-myths to be both specific to the place in question, or non-transferable, and unique enough that they stand out from other comparable experiences. For a particular image to appear in the popular consciousness as a place-image of California *and* as a place-image of, for instance, Florida is to be somewhat expected. In this particular example they each have a coastal geography with miles of beaches and each is home to a Disney resort. Both the beach and Disney could stand as place-images for either state. However, this transferable nature is not true of place-myths. This characteristic of place-myths became apparent in my research on the Vietnam conflict: despite California's strong military-industrial economy and its location as departure point for many armed forces personnel heading to war, the experience of the conflict in California was similar to the experience across the United States. While there were popular anti-war songs which appeared out of California at this time, such as "Fortunate Son" (Fogerty, 1969) and "I Ain't Marching Anymore" (Ochs, 1965), there were also many from across the rest of the nation. The prime example, Edwin Starr's brazen anti-war anthem "War" (Whitfield & Strong, 1970a), demonstrates the similar impact that the conflict had more widely across the United States. During the height of the conflict in Vietnam, Otis Redding's reference to a restful, albeit lonely, San Francisco Bay in "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" (Redding and Cropper, 1968) cast California as a place of refuge and resonated with a population that had already come to know California as a healthful paradise.

Place-myths of California in the postwar period had been based on select realities of the California lifestyle, including the image-theme of the suburban good life, with its time-saving gadgets and economic opportunity, which brought consumer freedom on the open road and leisure time at the beach. Images of California lifestyles that focused on youth culture captured the imagination of songwriters and musicians, as well as filmmakers, journalists and other creators and curators of popular culture. These images, while tied into core mainstream values and ideas which helped define a generation, were elusive as actual realities. In this way, myth functions by reducing the complexity of the phenomenon to a few distinctive traits which come to stand in for, and define, the presumed whole. For Jean Baudrillard, this is not something which disguises itself as the real, but rather something which displaces or eliminates the 'real' (1983). Issues of exclusion arose when the California 'good life' came to be viewed as the whole reality, encouraging an ignorance of anything beyond the concerns of white, suburban, middle-class lifestyles. This construct dismissed the state's complex multiethnic realities.

In the introduction to this thesis I explained that I had focussed my research around the themes present in a selection of commercially successful popular music. While applying focus in this way has been useful for the development of particular ideas in the thesis, and my decision was motivated by a number of factors outlined in the introduction section, my reduction of focus has necessarily made this exclusion more obvious. Having spread my focus much wider in the formative stages of this research project I understand that place-myths, both Californian and not, are multifaceted and fragmented and I have become aware of many areas that could benefit from further investigation of place-myth.

I refer tangentially to the Spanish music of California which existed before the Americanisation of the state in the 19th century. It could be fruitful to investigate Spanish, Mexican and Mexican-American contributions to California place-myths. This would not be limited to the early Spanish music of Alta California; instead it would illuminate a rich and active Mexican culture in California which possesses its own unique drives and desires. For instance, at around the same time in the early sixties that the Beach Boys were putting away their surfboards in favour of cruising in hot rods, Chicano rock, a fusion of rock and roll and traditional Mexican music, had established audiences in Mexican-American communities in East Los Angeles and across California (Macías, 2008). Lyrics were often sung in Spanish and English and the music was influenced by the broader Chicano movement, which sought to celebrate and promote Mexican-American culture and identity. The lyrics often dealt with issues of identity, pride, and cultural heritage, as well as social and political concerns facing the Chicano community (Reyes & Waldman, 2009). Chicano rock remains an important part of the musical and cultural heritage of Mexican-Americans and other Latino communities in the United States.

A focus on the most commercially successful music of the sixties has also excluded entire styles of music from my investigation. Sixties California was home to a huge diversity of jazz music, for instance, with the Central Avenue area of Los Angeles having already become, in the 1920s and 30s, "one of the most famous settings for the exchange of musical ideas and the establishment of new trends" (DjeDje and Meadows, 1998; 11). West Coast jazz emerged in the 1950s and continued to be popular in California during the 1960s. Characterised by its relaxed, cool sound, West Coast jazz was popularised by musicians like Chet Baker and Dave Brubeck. Hard bop, a continuation of bebop which emphasised blues and gospel influences, was popularised

by musicians like Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, who were based in San Francisco during the 1960s. The experimental free jazz of musicians such as Ornette Coleman in the early sixties, along with the jazz fusion styles of Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea in the late sixties, secured California's reputation for musical innovation. The theme of innovation is part of wider place-myths of California, often in relation to the tech industries which have become established in the state. Exploring the image-theme of innovation in representations of musical activity in the state could be a worthwhile direction for further research.

Throughout the thesis I focus on southern California most broadly, though I do move to San Francisco and other locales to demonstrate their similarities and differences. This suggests that place-myths can become established in relation to places of any shape or size. Hollywood itself is the subject of many place-myths and the location of Hollywood in southern California helps in some cases to amplify the power of wider Californian place-myths. Another example is Silicon Valley, which is seen as a place of innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological progress. The region's history of developing game-changing technologies like personal computers, the internet, and social media has contributed to its mythic status as a place where innovation is commonplace and anything is possible. A particularly music-rich California locale which has its own vibrant mythology is Compton, a city in Los Angeles County. Compton is often associated with the rise of gangsta rap in the 1990s and the area has become synonymous with gang culture. The city is often depicted in popular culture as a violent and dangerous place. This mythology has been perpetuated by music from artists such as N.W.A. and Kendrick Lamar has perpetuated this mythology and has contributed to the city's reputation as a place of struggle and triumph.

Compton is often associated with poverty and economic hardship and has a long history of tension between the police and the community, and this has contributed to a place-myth of injustice. The 1992 Los Angeles riots, sparked by the acquittal of police officers in the Rodney King beating case, also contributed to this mythology. The Compton place-myth is clearly complex and multifaceted and an investigation into the construction and dissemination of these myths in hip hop music and culture would doubtless be valuable.

The places of interest in studies of place-myth need not be states, cities or localities at all. For instance, while I discuss beaches in their function as a place-image of California, the beach, both in relation to and removed from physical space, is itself a densely mythologised place. As I noted earlier in the thesis, Southern California's beaches are the location of the Beach Boys' fun-in-the-sun and also the location of Neil Young's loneliness. The way the beach is presented as a location in and of itself would be a valuable line of further inquiry.

In this thesis I have discovered that popular music, as a whole, does convey a sense of California's duality, in agreement with the findings of Polan (2000) in Hollywood film and Fine (2000) in Californian literature. The place-myth of California as a land of opportunity, for instance, has existed from the earliest history of American California (see sections 2.1. and 2.2.) and appears in popular culture throughout the twentieth century (sections 2.3., 4.5., 5.1, 10.1, and 11.2.). However, for as long as California has been a symbol of hope and possibility, it has simultaneously been a place of broken dreams, and disappointment (sections 2.1, 2.3., and chapter 8). California is a place of contradictions and complexity. The state has a rich and diverse history, with many different cultures and communities coexisting alongside each other. More than simply a duality, I have revealed that place-myths of California in popular music are multifaceted, dynamic and

malleable; they can be shaped to fit different purposes at different times. This malleability extends to individual place-images, as was discussed most directly in section 6.2., “The California Girl.”

This thesis demonstrates value in investigating the ways in which place-myths are constructed and negotiated in popular music. I reveal that place-myths of California are established and interpreted through engagement with, and circulation of, place-images embodied in popular music and a variety of other media. Myths play a vital role in shaping our understanding of the world and our experiences within it, and, while myths are commonly characterised as veils obscuring the realities which lie beneath, I instead argue that myths directly are important, as they become available for reinterpretation, adaptation, or transformation in new textual forms to suit contemporary contexts or to convey new messages.

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Appendix 1: List of singles included in the chart presented as Fig. 1.

Title	Artist	Year	Chart Position
26 Miles (Santa Catalina)	Four Preps	1958	57
Surfin' Safari	Beach Boys	1962	100
Surf City	Jan and Dean	1963	28
Dead Man's Curve	Jan and Dean	1964	28
The Little Old Lady (from Pasadena)	Jan and Dean	1964	40
California Girls	Beach Boys	1965	49
California Dreamin'	Mamas and the Papas	1966	10
San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)	Scott McKenzie	1967	48
California Nights	Lesley Gore	1967	61
(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay	Otis Redding	1968	4
Do You Know the Way to San Jose	Dionne Warwick	1968	88
Heart of Gold	Neil Young	1972	17
It Never Rains in Southern California	Albert Hammond	1973	98
Hollywood Swingin'	Kool and the Gang	1974	59
Country Boy (You got Your Feet in L.A.)	Glen Campbell	1976	100
Hotel California	Eagles	1977	19
Hollywood Nights	Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band	1978	99

Appendix 2: Table of musical examples outlined in my introduction

			Chart position		
Title	Artist	Year	US	UK	Songwriter(s)
Surfin' U.S.A.	Beach Boys	1963	3	34	Berry and Wilson
Surf City	Jan and Dean	1963	1	26	Wilson and Berry
Little Old Lady from Pasadena	Jan and Dean	1964	3	DNC*	Altfeld, Berry and Christian
California Sun	Rivieras	1964	5	DNC	Glover
California Girls	Beach Boys	1965	3	26	Wilson and Love
California Dreamin'	Mamas and the Papas	1965	4	23	Phillips and Phillips
San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)	Scott McKenzie	1967	4	1	Phillips
San Franciscan Nights	Eric Burdon and the Animals	1967	9	7	Burdon, Briggs, et al.
(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay	Otis Redding	1968	1	3	Redding and Cropper
Do You Know the Way to San Jose	Dionne Warwick	1968	10	8	Bacharach and David
Heart of Gold	Neil Young	1972	1	10	Young
It Never Rains in Southern California	Albert Hammond	1972	5	DNC	Hammond and Hazlewood

*Did not chart