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Notes

Preface

- 1 Middleton's parents went on to become millionaires by founding *Party Pieces* (1987), a mail order company that sells party supplies and decorations.
- 2 An important exception is the work of Stuart Ewen (1996). Ewen was one of the first critical academics to take the public relations industry seriously.

Chapter 1

- 1 There is some dispute about the extent of the decline of organized religion. Much depends upon the definition. If 'organized religion' means regular churchgoing, there is no doubt that there has been dramatic post-war decline. However, if it refers to a belief in God and an afterlife, the situation is more equivocal. Either way, the force of organized Christian religion in Western society is less prominent than it was in 1945.
- 2 Tom Payne (2009) has made a heroic effort to demonstrate consistency between the ancient gods and goddesses and modern celebrities. But I find his treatment is rather laboured. The central issue in celebrity culture is that contemporary celebrities follow in the footsteps of the ancient gods and goddesses. Rather it is that both ancient myths and modern celebrity culture addresses the human need for transcendence.
- 3 Leadership seems to be a human universal. No societies have persisted based on the principle of egalitarianism. Advanced industrial societies require leaders to counteract the anonymity and specialization of everyday life. Celebrity culture plays an important role today in providing role models and informal life-coaching.
- 4 The doctrine of divine rule held that the monarch was the appointed delegate of God to bring the grace of God to the people. In traditional society the monarch was the primary achieved celebrity. The fact that monarchs were understood to be God's representatives provided a certain force and confidence in their dealings with society and culture.
- 5 Jade Goody was a British *Big Brother* contestant who became a national figure and leading celestoid until her death in 2009. William Hung is a Chinese-American singer who initially gained fame for his dubious rendition of Ricky Martin's song 'She Bangs' on *American Idol* (2004).
- 6 The 7:10 figure comes from Blyton and Jenkins (2007). If service work requires people skills, it clearly places celebrities in an important position in the labour market. Celebrity people skills – the power of celebrities to persuade and attract – is what ultimately accounts for their economic and social rewards. If celebrities are the top in people skills, it follows that they constitute a significant resource in popular pedagogy. In short, the people-skills literacy of celebrities provides psychological and social materials that can be transferred to ordinary people in the job market and in primary relationships. In this sense, celebrities can be described as informal life coaches in contemporary society, providing ordinary people with pedagogy as well as transcendence.

Chapter 2

- 1 Andy Warhol's prediction has passed into popular culture (along with much else that he invented). The recorded origins of the statement seem to be a catalogue reference to Warhol in an exhibition of his works at the *Moderna Museet* in Stockholm (1968).
- 2 Rebooting celestoids is by no means an indefinite process. In fact it is subject to the law of diminishing returns. Long-life celestoids usually depend on a human-interest element to prolong their impact with the public. For example, the diagnosis of Jade Goody with terminal cancer both extended her impact and redefined it. From being a vulgar *Big Brother* also-ran, she was redefined as a courageous mother and national heroine.
- 3 The perspective that casts audiences as puppets is most powerfully expressed in the work of the Frankfurt School. In particular, the interest of Adorno (1991) in Hollywood forms of mass communication led him to hypothesize that the desires and opinions of the audience in mass society is governed by the culture industry. By and large, the notion of the passive audience is rejected in contemporary audience studies. Instead the emphasis is upon the active interpretive capacities of audiences. New digital technologies enable audiences to influence intellectual property, especially in the form of recorded music, on their laptops.

Chapter 3

- 1 The late Christopher Lasch (1980) deserves credit for being one of the first critical intellectuals to take celebrity seriously. His work makes clear connections between the cult of celebrity and the proliferation of traits of narcissism in society at large. He identifies the media as the key to this process:

The mass media, with their cult of celebrity, and their attempt to surround it with glamour and excitement, have made Americans a nation of fans, moviegoers. The media give substance to and thus intensify narcissistic dreams of fame and glory, encourage the common man to identify himself with the stars and hate the 'herd'. (Lasch, 1980: 21)

We would now need to add the role of public relations staff to that of the media in making celebrities modern cultural skyscrapers. However, we would not depart from Lasch's conclusion that the preoccupation with 'personality' and 'reward' in celebrity culture produces social malaise:

Thriving on the adulation of the masses, celebrities set the tone of public life and of private life as well, since the machinery of celebrity recognizes no boundaries between the public and the private realm. The beautiful people – to use this revealing expression to include not merely wealthy globetrotters but all those who bask, however briefly, in the full glare of cameras – live out the fantasy of narcissistic success, which consists of nothing more substantial than a wish to be vastly admired, not for one's accomplishments but simply for oneself, and without reservation. (Lasch, 1980: 321–2)

- 2 While the term 'the mirror effect' has become recently famous through the work of Pinsky and Young (2009), it originates in the writings of Daniel Boorstin. Boorstin writes:

One of the deepest and least remarked features of the Age of Contrivance is what I would call the mirror effect. Nearly everything we do to enlarge our world, to make life more interesting, more varied, more exciting, more vivid, more 'fabulous', more promising, in the long run has an opposite effect. In the extravagance of our expectations and in our ever increasing power, we transform elusive dreams into graspable images within which each of us can fit. By doing so we mark the boundaries of our world with a wall of mirrors. (Boorstin 1962: 255)

- 3 *Frontierism* is a term introduced here to refer to the ideological and spatial zone occupied by celebrities, which is on the edge of society. Characteristics of frontierism include wealth, access to financial, government and media power, licence for sexual experimentation, drug use and temper tantrums. The frontier is the place where the rules of everyday life have thin existence.
- 4 The timidity of modern men and women to grasp the nettle and get the most out of life is a long-standing theme in Western philosophy. Friederich Nietzsche's discussion of 'the superman' can be read partly as a criticism of the shallowness of everyday culture.
- 5 In describing the mirror effect, Pinsky and Young (2009) seem unaware of Veblen's (1899) work on leisure and emulation. The parallels are inescapable. Veblen maintains that the leisure class (consisting of the super-wealthy) cultivates various practices of conspicuous consumption to signify their freedom from the need to engage in paid employment. This is a matter of status distinction since wage labour is regarded as bound to a life of necessity and burdensome obligation. However, for Veblen, the practice of conspicuous consumption sets the bar for the behaviour of the majority employed in wage labour. Wasteful consumption trickles down the system as a mark of social distinction. The behavioural pattern of the mirror effect follows the same general course. The narcissistic behaviour of the star is emulated by the stargazer. Waste and dangerous risk-taking, which should be concentrated in the frontier zone, seizes popular dominion.
- 6 Superstars often complain of extreme isolation. In part, this reflects the security risks that celebrity brings. Superstars may command the adulation of sizeable sections of the public, but they are insulated from contact with others by bodyguards and live in gated communities. Superstars also see themselves as isolated from ordinary people by virtue of their talent. This is another nuance of frontierism. Talent isolates. It provides justification for prima donna-ism and the urge to save mankind rather than show respect and tolerance to ordinary people.
- 7 Ideation is a medical term for suicidal thoughts.

Chapter 4

- 1 Max Weber describes charisma as 'a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities' (Weber, 1968: 241). He goes on to note that the powers of charisma are not accessible to an ordinary person and are regarded to be 'divine'. Charisma is an entirely personal relationship based on the devotion of a charismatic community to the calling of a leader. There are no 'officials' or constitution of rules. The genuine charismatic leader demands obligations by virtue of revelation, oracle, and inspiration of the power of his own will.
- 2 Adolf Hitler was a charismatic leader. To refer to Kershaw:

Hitler's power was of an extraordinary kind. He did not base his claims to power (except in a most formal sense) on his position as party leader or on any functional position. He derived it from what he saw as his historic mission to save Germany. His power, in other words, was 'charismatic', not institutional. It depended upon the readiness of others to see 'heroic' qualities in him. (Kershaw, 1998: xxvi)
- 3 The main benefits of celanthropy are fundraising, brand-building, access and insight. Celanthropy works on what Bono calls 'conscious consumerism'. That is an awareness of the power of consumerism to be used responsibly (Bishop and Williams, 2008: 201, 209).

Chapter 5

- 1 The shallowness of celestoid culture and the onslaught of celebrity gossip contribute to the perception of celebrity culture as trivial.
- 2 The nude photos in question were taken by Martin Schreiber in February 1979. Four were published in *Playboy* Magazine in 1985.
- 3 This line of thinking reproduces the culture industry thesis that the audience is passive, and is open to the objections already made (see Chapter 2).
- 4 A problem in managing intellectual property is that the digital age has not produced an effective method of policing. This complicates the gatekeeper function of exposure managers.
- 5 As a general principle, frank disclosure is the best policy. If celebrities are exposed as dissemblers they face an uphill struggle in re-engineering trust relationships with the public.
- 6 Cognitive dissonance refers to the tension between the expectations and experience of someone occupying a specific status or role.

Chapter 6

- 1 *E! Online* is one of the main Web sources dedicated to celebrity issues and gossip.
- 2 Achieved celebrity presupposes a degree of intimacy between the star and the stargazer. This follows from the emergence of achieved celebrities from the ranks of the unprivileged. Photo shoots and interviews milked this to enhance trust relations between the audience and stars.
- 3 Social Darwinism is the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. It is inherently problematic in celebrity studies, since the idea of natural fitness is invalidated by the practices of cultural intermediaries.
- 4 Stallen *et al.* (2010) claim to have identified a link between neural patterns in women and celebrity endorsement. The Dutch researchers scanned the brains of twenty-four women as they looked at photographs of celebrities and non-celebrities wearing certain brands of shoe. The team documented increased activity in the medial orbitofrontal cortex. They conclude they this activity is produced by 'the persuasiveness' of fame itself.

Chapter 7

- 1 Emotional deficit is common in societies based upon high levels of social and geographical mobility. Where people are required to move around a lot to find work, celebrity culture may function as a stabilizer. It gives mobile individuals a sense of continuity and stability.
- 2 Ascribed celebrity is based on fixed status and a prescribed role. This gives little room for manoeuvre. Celebrities have a defined role to play from a clear status position. If they step out of role or change status, it affects their traditional impact.
- 3 The main charities associated with Princess Diana are: The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund (now disbanded); The British Red Cross Anti-Personnel Landmines Campaign; Centrepoint Soho; English National Ballet; The Leprosy Mission; National AIDS Trust; Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust; and American Red Cross.
- 4 These two Revolutions dramatically exposed the obsolescence of systems of status and privilege organized around ascribed celebrity. Thereafter, achieved celebrity gradually expanded and consolidated its influence over society.

- 5 Thomas Rainsborough was a Colonel in the New Model Army who participated in the Putney Debates. In the course of the debates he famously declared: 'For really I think that the poorest he that in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he.' This was an important statement of English radicalism.
- 6 The term 'bus class' is used by the nouveau riche in South Africa. It is a useful phrase to adopt in celebrity studies because fame is so closely associated with mobility. The term bus class indicates that large sections of society simply do not have a ticket to acquire the status of fame.
- 7 Sheen's 'My Violent Torpedo of Truth/Defeat is Not An Option Show' (2011) was widely seen as erratic. The *Hollywood Reporter* review of the Detroit performance captured the issues well:

What the audience got was egomania gone wild ... Sheen's haphazard act was neither standup nor confessional memoir, despite repeated promises that he was going to dig deep and dish secrets. It was closer to a motivational statement, but one in which the speaker was also the key beneficiary ... There's a certain trainwreck fascination in watching a meltdown in progress, but this anthropological study of the *homo loco* species wore very thin very fast. (Rooney, 2011)

Chapter 8

- 1 Modernity is a multi-faceted concept. At its heart is an approach to society and social relations in a state of flux, motion and 'ceaseless movement' (Frisby, 1985: 13).
- 2 The pattern here confirms McCutcheon *et al.*'s (2004) Absorption-Addiction Model.
- 3 The terms 'dominant', 'emergent' and 'residual' elites come from Raymond Williams (1958).
- 4 Johnny Cash's support for prisoner's rights was exemplary in this regard. He regularly played concerts to prisoners. The first was in 1958 at San Quentin State Prison.

Chapter 9

- 1 Celebrities are vulnerable to the charge of being absentee managers. This is because their key status derives from participation in the entertainment sector. For this reason, other activities are liable to be regarded by the media and the public as subsidiary.
- 2 This is tantamount to acting as an unappointed ombudsman for the public. Again, Cruise emphasizes the heroic aspect of celebrity advocacy: the lone star against the pharmaceutical companies.
- 3 Cruise is right to say that psychiatry does not have an unblemished record. The use of electroshock therapy and drugs to pacify behaviour has attracted an enormous *ad hominem* attack that portrays psychiatry as witchcraft. The attack comes across as unbalanced and hot-headed. Hence, the damage done to Cruise's public image, which hitherto had been seen as moderate and humane.

Chapter 11

- 1 The phrase was used as a title of a wartime novel by Howard Spring (1940).