Merseyside

Merseyside:
Culture and Place

Edited by

Mike Benbough-Jackson and Sam Davies

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This book is dedicated to the memory of
François Poirier
(1947–2010)

François delivered a paper to the November 2008 conference from which this collection is derived. His stimulating and provocative paper, entitled "Urban legends of Liverpool", would have been included in this book if not for his untimely passing away. François was Professor of British History at the University of Paris XIII. He had also been a Visiting Research Professor at Liverpool John Moores University earlier in 2008. His fine scholarship, erudition and intellect were appreciated by all. He was also a charming, lively and amusing companion, and he will be sorely missed.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book had its origins in a conference entitled *Culture and Merseyside* held at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) on 13–14 November 2008. The conference was organised by the Centre for Liverpool and Merseyside Studies (CLAMS), and was one contribution to the many events that took place in Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture. CLAMS is based within the Faculty of Media, Arts and Social Science at LJMU. Two of the original aims of CLAMS were "to initiate, encourage and develop research of international significance and standing into the history, culture and society of Liverpool and its surrounding area of Merseyside", and to "disseminate the results of research into the locality within both the academic community and the wider public by means of publications, web-based resources and programmes of seminars, conferences and exhibitions". In previous years these aims had been achieved in a series of conferences, and in two publications that flowed from them.[1] The 2008 conference and this resultant publication continue this process.

Not all the papers presented at the conference have been developed into chapters for this book, for various reasons.[2] Our first acknowledgements, therefore, are to those participants who helped to make the conference such an enjoyable and stimulating event, but whose research is not represented in this collection. These include Stephen Done, Don Kehne, Don MacRaild, Ros Merkin, Pamela Monaco, Jon Murden, Ron Noon, the late François Poirier, Paula Pope and Matt Tucker. We also thank all the other people who attended and helped to make up a lively and critical, but also constructive, audience. Thanks also to Drama students from LJMU who presented "Performing the city: Liverpool through the eyes of the *Everyman*" at the conference.

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[1] Brown, A., (ed.), *Historical Perspectives on Social Identities*, (Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006); Haggerty, S., Webster, T., and White, N.J., (eds), *The Empire in One City?: Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2008).

[2] The full programme of the 2008 conference can be found at: http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/SOC/SOC_docs/CLAMS_2008_Papers.pdf

For assistance with the organisation of the 2008 conference, we must thank Denise Glinister, Jennifer Ramsey and Nikki Heaton (LJMU Conference and Event Services), and also Nicola Ronan for additional administrative assistance.

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—Mike Benbough-Jackson and Sam Davies
Liverpool
April 2011

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: MERSEYSIDE AND CULTURE

MIKE BENBOUGH-JACKSON

In a recent article, Philip Boland examined some views about Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture, also known as Liverpool08, and discovered that the official narrative was accompanied by other, less congratulatory, judgements. Boland argued that these numerous unofficial views of Liverpool08 deserve to be taken as seriously as the official verdict.[1] In recent years academics have tended to emphasise diversity instead of uniformity, the fluid over the fixed. Few, if any, scholars believe that there can be a single, satisfactory reading of any event, object or idea; neither do many recognise commonly accepted divides.[2] Such scepticism is healthy; it fosters an analytical approach and enables us to appreciate the variegated nature of the social world. After all, if the Beatles are allowed to dominate the history of Merseybeat then little justice is being done to any other artists and, indeed, the "fab four" themselves.[3] Nonetheless, prioritising ambiguity and complexity means that certainty and simplicity are set aside. If culture is everything and everywhere, then what is it? Similarly, if localities, regions, and nations are open to a multiplicity of interpretations, is it possible to derive a workable definition of anywhere at all?

Both Merseyside and culture are, in their own ways, problematic concepts; their contents and boundaries are unclear. It is therefore tempting to try to pin them down, to define them. In doing so, however, something valuable may be overshadowed, because indeterminacy, and reactions to it,

[1] Boland, "Capital of Culture", p. 640.
[2] Stam and Shohat, "Transnationalizing comparison", p. 474.
[3] Brocken, *Other Voices.*

is in itself worthy of study. Strong perceptions and values often form when groups or individuals are confronted by something which cannot be easily categorised. As Hayden White has argued, perplexity has its uses. A lack of definite, clear parameters provides an opportunity to observe and engage with attempts to establish meaning. Looking at what people imagine places or things to be is more informative than trying to say what they are. White expressed a preference for "more imagination" when we explore the past, and thought it best to avoid attempting to establish what amounts to "false clarity". Eric Hobsbawm took issue with White and called for "more rationality". Hobsbawm's reminder should not be jettisoned as if it were some methodological relic; for one thing, such a dismissive attitude would simply serve to replace one dominant method with another. Yet some facets of human experience are, at best, loosely tied to "rationality".[4]

This introduction sets the topics discussed in the following chapters in the context of Merseyside and in relation to the term "culture". Although this introduction is intended to be an appetizer, it does offer some substantial food for thought. Before each chapter is surveyed and contextualised, the concepts of culture and Merseyside will be examined. Readers are invited to identify links between these concepts and the following chapters based on their own reading and experiences of Merseyside and culture.

Defining culture is no easy task. Still, it is usually possible to carve out a definition suited to a particular line of enquiry or topic. For the purposes of this study, the focus will be on cultural forms and how an examination of these forms allows us to mediate a path between two common interpretations of culture. For some, culture is a social adhesive, for others it perpetuates or generates difference. Matthew Arnold's elitist definition of culture as "the best which has been thought and said" is an example of the latter, although it needs to be stressed that the definition of a high culture is only one way in which exclusivity can be established.[5] More inclusive readings of culture follow the definitions which have been offered by anthropologists since the late nineteenth century. Soon after Arnold offered his definition, Edward B. Tylor explained how culture was a "complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".[6]

[4] White, "The aim of interpretation", p. 75.
[5] Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, p. viii.
[6] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, p. 1.

These different definitions of culture echo the opinions of those who think society is founded on consensus, a view embodied by Emile Durkheim, and those, notably Karl Marx, for whom society is primarily a site of conflict.[7] If the emphasis is placed on consensus then there is a risk that differences will be overlooked. A stress on conflict is equally myopic because it often overemphasizes social control while underplaying shared interests and sentiments. Neither of these general interpretations are, however, mutually exclusive. For example, the theory of cultural hegemony, or rule by persuasion, interprets the consensual aspects of culture, the taken for granted values, as being a means to maintain differences within a society. Culture can divide and unite; it can arm and disarm. Like Antonio Gramsci's "one contradictory consciousness" of the "active man-in-the-mass", who lives as a worker but whose thoughts put other interests above those of his class, culture cuts both ways. [8]

All the same, when a culture is defined in terms of shared values it is more than likely to be seen as benign rather than hegemonic. Nations, for instance, are assumed to have their own distinctive culture. There is something comforting about this clarity, even though some aspects of another culture may be disagreeable. A study of the predispositions of airline pilots suggested that the deference bestowed upon elders and superiors by certain nationalities may result in accidents.[9] While another investigation has proposed that national cultures influence the ways in which engineers adopt the technology used in space travel.[10] It appears, therefore, that even seemingly practical, mechanical operations are filtered through culture. By identifying a national culture, or national character, we are able to categorise and explain what we see, hear and feel, from culinary tastes to engineering.

The identification of conflicting or contrasting cultures also helps people make sense of a complicated world because such distinctions refine our understanding. That said, seductive concepts like "culture wars", *kulturkampf*, or "the clash of civilisations", promote binary oppositions that are hardly more sophisticated than sweeping statements about the similarity of cultures.[11] There are distinctions within the distinctions and we can always refine the categories people employ. Often, difference does

[7] Burke, *History and Social Theory*, p. 28.
[8] Gramci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 333.
[9] Gladwell, *Outliers*, pp. 177–223.
[10] Ryan, "Role of national culture".
[11] Hunter, *Culture Wars*; Gross, *The War against Catholicism*; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*.

not result in conflict but leads to accommodation, avoidance, or the cultivation of specific cultural niches. An oppositional culture often finds its *raison d'être* in that which it opposes.

By focusing on cultural forms and taking them, along with the uses to which they are put, as the starting point for investigation, some of the issues about whether culture is founded on consensus or conflict can be obviated, while not denying the importance of either.[12] Quite often, as the examples of "culture wars", *kulterkampf* and "the clash of civilizations" show, the struggle is one of politics and religion, realms where divides appear relatively clear cut. However, the forms contained within each of these cultural struggles, such as Hollywood movies, religious weddings, or the burqa, are open to various interpretations. The study of culture, particularly from the last quarter of the twentieth century, has made "the analysis of the production of meaning within culture more complex".[13] To some extent this can soften our understanding of the present and the past. For although those holding strong opinions view cultural forms as being essentially negative or positive, other perspectives see various shades of grey. By turning our attention to meaning, we are able to hear the opinions of people who are silenced by the clamorous voices of those who simplify; although it must be conceded that these dominant views are themselves worthy of study.

When cultural forms are produced, ideas are minted into a currency. This currency may gain in value, be adopted, rejected or appropriated by others who may not have played any part in minting it. Cultural forms may be high or low, material or imagined; they may be omnipresent or whispered. Just because only a few people could own or are able to "appreciate" an item of high art does not mean that its influence cannot be felt among others. When the notion of culture, in the Arnoldian sense, is disseminated it takes on additional meanings and thus becomes, in some respects, popular culture. Non-elite cultures can gape at, ape or grate against elite cultural forms. What is more, just because beliefs are invisible does not mean that they cannot shape the social world. Similarly, secret, abandoned or aborted forms are able to inform us about the creation and rejection of meaning. What each individual, group or age represses tells us as much, or indeed more, about its character than those things which it boasts about.

This book does not compartmentalize varieties of culture. That explains why the subtitle refers to "culture" rather than "popular culture". The

[12] Jelavich, "Method? What method?", p. 78.
[13] Ashplant and Smyth, "Schools, methods, disciplines, influences", p. 6.

cultural forms considered in this book range from the reputation of parts of Liverpool (Chinatown and sailortown), images of both sides of the Mersey sketched by J. M. W. Turner, and a theatre in Early Modern Prescot. Each of the studies illustrates how cultural forms are patterned by perspective, time and production. When examining particular forms of cultural expression, it is especially important to take changes over time into account alongside the contemporary context. One of the criticisms of Clifford's Geertz's well-known analysis of a cultural form, the Balinese cockfight, has been that despite paying attention to the possible meanings of the form, Geertz did not integrate either the contemporary or historical context into his otherwise thorough study.[14]

Cultural forms are nodes, points which connect feelings and actions. These meeting points are also borders between different people, places and times. Each cultural form is a border, they enclose and separate, are a point of meeting and departure. Paradoxes aside, cultural forms demand an interpretation. These interpretations, their purpose and foundation, shed light on the world of the interpreters.

This volume is based on a conference held by the Centre for Liverpool and Merseyside Studies (CLAMS) during 2008. It would be fair to say that we are making an assumption about the validity of the term "Merseyside"; and not merely because it helps create a vivid acronym (although clams end up in chowder, not scouse). All the same, questioning the validity and nature of Merseyside is a potentially rewarding exercise. Slippery concepts are slippery for a reason: people cannot agree on their usefulness or relevance to the world they see around them. These concerns about Merseyside deserve more sustained attention than it is possible to provide in this introduction. Still, some interpretations of, and reactions to, the concept of Merseyside will now be considered.

Merseyside does not easily lend itself to a narrative. A story entertains, instructs, defines and clarifies a complicated world; it takes into account changes over time and the subject of the narrative's passage in relation to these changes. Narratives allow for many different readings and slight changes are likely to have significant consequences. There are possibilities with narrative, though dominant tales may impose limitations. In its most common form, a narrative has an easily recognisable character.

Whereas a city, or any other settlement for that matter, can stand for a person who features in a plot, the history of a region or even a county is less easy to narrate. This problem is not, however, shared by nations. It appears that the personification which lends itself to narrative is easier to

[14] Rosebery, "Balinese cockfights".

form at either end of the geographical scale. A village can have its story as can a nation, but in between the "character" is less easy to identify. For many, Merseyside seems too diverse to merit a narrative, although there have been efforts to write the region's story in the late 1960s, at a time when discourses informed by economic planning gave the term an added currency.[15] Liverpool does not share this problem; it has experienced hardship, moments of good fortune, defiance and shame.

It is possible to define Merseyside as being, literally, both banks of the river. What should be a relatively unproblematic geographical designation has, however, been complicated by human activity. Some settlements are defined by commercial activities, while heavy industry predominated elsewhere.[16] In addition, there are places in Merseyside which are not *on* it, such as those settlements on the banks of the Dee. Some parts of Merseyside have a Chester or Preston postcode but neither of these towns is in, let alone on, Merseyside. Of course, Merseyside is, primarily, an administrative construct, and a controversial one at that. Once borders are drawn around a designated place, there are bound to be objections, especially when these new areas supersede older divisions. In 1974, two years after the passing of the Local Government Act, the administrative area known as Merseyside came into being. Along with other less enduring "artificial constructs", such as Avon and Dyfed, the new territory was not welcomed by all. The description of Southport as a "strange coastal extrusion of the Metropolitan county of Merseyside" captures the sense of bewilderment caused soon after the county was carved out.[17] Thirty-six years later, Merseyside, whose county council was disbanded in 1985, is still one of the most ambiguous regions, or sub-regions, of England. Indeed, the north-west of England as a whole has been deemed to be the most fragmented region of England, and Merseyside contributes to the numerous economic and geographical clefts that run through the north-west.[18] As internet forums and letters to the press show, Merseyside provokes some strong reactions.[19] The tensions raised by the name also provide material for comedians. Lee Mack, a Blackburn-born comic who

[15] Bagley, *The Story of Merseyside* (2 vols).
[16] Walton, *Lancashire*, p. 354.
[17] Parry, *Resorts of the Lancashire Coast*, p. 33.
[18] Giordano, "England's North-West".
[19] http://www.southportforums.com/forums/printthread.php?t=50380761; http://forums.liverpooldailypost.co.uk/viewtopic.php?f=36&t=22327&start=15; *Wirral Globe*, 21 Jan 2009 (I am grateful to my colleague Dr Nick White for this reference).

lives in Southport, expressed a playful aversion to the name before an audience at the Liverpool Philharmonic: "That's right, I'm from Southport-Lancashire, not Southport-Merseyside Thankyouverymuch".[20]

This ambiguity is to be expected, but the fact that an artificial county has been superimposed onto historic administrative divisions is not the sole reason for this lack of clarity. Like many other rivers, the Mersey–from the Saxon "Merche" (thought to mean "border-land")–forms a boundary. What was once a political boundary, between the kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria, may now be considered a boundary between the north and the midlands. Even if the official county of Merseyside did not exist, many links between Liverpool and its hinterland would have been stronger than, say, the links between Southampton and Preston or West Kirby and Chester. A study of female suffrage campaigns during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has cited the links between activists in Liverpool, Wirral, Southport and St Helens as evidence of "how Merseyside is/was more than a collection of communities with little in common as the local authority of Merseyside has been called recently".[21] There is, then, a kind of "fuzzy logic" to Merseyside.

"There appear to be not one but many 'Merseysides'".[22] The "many 'Merseysides'" identified by Sheila Marriner in 1982 were the result of various organisations, like the Merseyside Passenger Transport Agency, adopting the term. There have been as many, if not more, Merseysides of the mind which have informed both "soft" and "hard" definitions of Merseyside. These include Mirthyside, Merseybeat, and Miseryside. Even those who question the validity of the "ill-defined sub-region" and "political construction" know as Merseyside, help establish its presence by generating discourse about the area.[23] The ability of Merseyside to carry meaning is illustrated by a Toxteth resident, cited in John Phillips' and Jan Brown's chapter, who explained how, after the riots of 1981, Merseyside became a by-word for distress. She remembers suggesting that those who hailed from Toxteth should say that they came from Lancashire–an act of disassociation which, ironically, was also carried out by some more well-heeled residents of Southport. Positive events could also prompt efforts to move away from Merseyside. After gaining the title of European Capital of

[20] http://www.clickliverpool.com/culture/reviews/1211467-lee-mack-coming-out-live-@-liverpool-philharmonic.html
[21] Van Helmond, *Votes for Women*, p. 15.
[22] Marriner, *The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside*, p. 3.
[23] Belchem, "A city apart", p. 219.

Culture, it was suggested that Liverpool would now at last be able to divest itself of a name associated with economic crisis and social disturbance.[24]

In more neutral definitions, the river and the sea define Merseyside.[25] The rhythm of the sea and the products which arrive from abroad often feature in accounts of Liverpool.[26] Estuaries and the coastline have also influenced the lives of those living in nearby settlements, from the wreckers of the Wirral peninsula to the dockworkers of Ellesmere Port. It is frequently said that the trade carried out between this part of England and the Americas encouraged its inhabitants to look outward and made Liverpool the most international of provincial cities. The late François Poirier has questioned this sense of difference, or "Liverpool exceptionalism", in a paper delivered at the CLAMS conference in 2008. The greater visibility of some features of Liverpool's past, such as the dockworkers, have, Poirier contended, obscured some equally, if not more, prevalent aspects of the port such as the high proportion of white-collar workers.[27] From another perspective, it could be argued that the terms "cosmopolitan" and "outward looking" are a slight on what is perceived to be an introspective and parochial Lancashire, and that their use is not dissimilar from the kind of condescension bestowed on the provinces by some Londoners. This is not, however, to deny the importance of the sea as a kind of border with Ireland, Wales and the wider world, if only because it has the power to generate this sense of self-importance.

Commercial activity and immigration brings this maritime "border" to life. In 1953, the geographer Wilfred Smith declared that "Merseyside is built and founded on commerce. Without the port there would be no Merseyside".[28] This is not hyperbole. Liverpool is the core of Merseyside, it ties together "distinctive areas", such as St Helens, Southport, and the Wirral peninsula, to form a "coherent whole".[29] Although some may question the extent to which Merseyside is a "coherent whole", few would deny Liverpool's importance; indeed Liverpool and Merseyside are commonly taken as being synonymous.[30]

Yet the importance of Liverpool, whether as workplace, international port, or as place of ill-repute, has long been complemented by other parts

[24] http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2003/aug/02/communities.uknews
[25] Coles, *Both Sides of the River*, pp. viii–ix.
[26] Higginson and Wailey, *Edgy Cities*; Lane, *Liverpool*, p. 38.
[27] Poirier, "Urban legends".
[28] Smith, *A Scientific Survey of Merseyside*, p. 1.
[29] Gresswell and Lawton, *Merseyside*, p. 3.
[30] Anger, *Other Worlds*, p. 159.

of Merseyside. Southport and parts of Wirral became dormitories where suburban identities were, and are, fashioned.[31] People from other parts of the region invested in Wirral. During the 1840s, Prescot Street in New Brighton was named by William Rowson after the town of his birth.[32] In the latter part of the sixteenth century the building that became known as Leasowe Castle was built by the fifth Earl of Derby, Ferdinando Stanley.[33] In the popular imagination, retirement and leisure, signified by numerous golf courses, are often related to Wirral and the Crosby coast. Conversely, the seaside resorts of Southport and New Brighton could also be places of excitement and vivid sensations; in the 1950s a room in Fort Perch Rock, the subject of one of Turner's sketches discussed by Lee Kendall in this volume, was "home to a grizzly museum and an entire room was devoted to pictorial representations of Hitler's concentration camps. Mock ovens were built into the walls and animal bones were scattered into them to make the scene more realistic".[34]

Retirement, investment, leisure and excitement are not the only activities and emotions readily connected to Liverpool's hinterland. As with many other suburban areas, a number of criticisms have been levelled at the areas to the north, south and west of Liverpool. Nicky Allt and Dave Kirby's play *Brick up the Mersey Tunnels* (2006) and its sequel, *Brick up: The Wirral Strikes Back*, written by Allt, feature stuck-up characters from Heswall in west Wirral, who play golf or sport blue-rinses. Other criticisms go further. A restaurant review in the *Guardian* referred to "the statistically unusual number of paedos in the area".[35] Merseyside may lack clear boundaries, but it contains a crucial, though often overlooked, constituent of identity: internal tensions accompanied by geographical diversity. If they are to have any effect, slights and insults have to be understood. In fact, a shared glossary of stereotypes could play as much a part in defining Merseyside as trains bearing an "M" for Merseytravel, the distribution of Superlambanas or football.

Any effort to define, refine or deny Merseyside demonstrates the importance of culture, taken as the making of meaning, in the way people see the world around them, and reminds us that the terms which are accepted in some quarters may be opposed, ignored or unknown in others.

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[31] C. G. Pooley and S. Pooley, "Constructing a suburban identity".
[32] Miller, *The Inviting Shore*, p. 73.
[33] Randall, *The Search for Old Wirral*, pp. 44–5.
[34] Ruiz, *Beachcombers, Buttercreams and Smuggler's Caves*, p. 27.
[35] http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2010/nov/13/da-piero-irby-restaurant-review

Few events have brought out as many preconceptions, definitions and restrictions of "culture" than Liverpool's status in 2008 as European Capital of Culture. This collection is an implicit response to the incompatible definitions, raised eyebrows and categorisations which came from academics and the public at large in the run-up, year and aftermath of Liverpool08.

"Wherever I walk on the Wirral, my mind / Is dominated by Liverpool,/ A huge black cube on the mental map,/ Even the small cool flowers of the marshland/Tremble in the invisible shadow of Liverpool."[36] The first cultural form to be examined in this book is the image of Liverpool. Urban areas often colour or, as the poet Idris Davies suggested, cast a "shadow" over the surrounding area. In the opening chapter, John Belchem adds colour to Davies' "huge black cube". Belchem highlights the port's adaptability and how culture, in various guises, has contributed to its changing profile. In addition to showing how the port's reputation altered during the modern era, the chapter indicates how simple, though powerful, images often conceal struggles and interests, notably between those who place value on humanitarianism or improving the port's infrastructure and those who prioritise display and financial gain. Alongside these internal tensions there are the standards of the day, such as early twenty-first century multiculturalism or the anti-slavery movement during the early nineteenth century, against which the port is judged. From these various assessments of Liverpool, it is possible to discern the interests of those who sought to promote the port. Each city has its own biographies composed by those who seek to reformulate the city's image in one way or another. While each city's experience is unique, often the efforts to effect changes in the city's image are analogous: there was a desire to deck Liverpool with culture in the "noughties" and civic leaders sought to "wrest Manchester's image away from the chaotic city of industry and towards the image of a civic city" during the first half of the nineteenth century.[37]

The rivalry between Manchester and Liverpool has often been reduced to economic competition.[38] Even if the primacy of economics in history is conceded, some attention needs to be paid to the symbolic struggles which accompany these economic contests. One example of the competition between the two north-western cities is the Chinese arch in Liverpool, the

[36] Davies, *Collected Poems*, p. 155.
[37] Crinson, "Manchester and the hypocritical plan", p. 196.
[38] "A Tale of Two Rival Cities: Liverpool and Manchester", BBC 1 (first broadcast, 5 Apr 2010).

largest Chinese arch in Europe–a record previously held by the arch in Manchester's Chinatown. Ian G. Cook and Phil G. Cubbin set Liverpool's Chinatown in a global context. This comparative approach highlights the distinctive features of Liverpool's Chinatown as well as paying attention to those aspects it shares with Chinatowns elsewhere. Cook and Cubbin chart changes in the image of Liverpool's Chinatown, paying attention to the part government legislation, personal perspectives and politics played in establishing its reputation. The chapter demonstrates how the oriental "other within" went from being seen as a problem to proof of Liverpool's status as a global city. In some respects it could be argued that the host population has appropriated the image of the Liverpool Chinese as evidence that Liverpool is not as far from the multicultural ideal as some have suggested. The fact that Liverpool had its own Chinatown doubtlessly facilitated the twinning of Liverpool and Shanghai in 1999. In 2010, Liverpool was the only British city represented at the Shanghai World Expo. Even so, there are some on Merseyside who are frustrated by the lack of Chinese investment in the area, especially when the Chinese are investing in other parts of the north-west.[39] Like Liverpool's Chinatown, the World Expo is a place where cultures meet, and present themselves; though on this occasion it is Liverpool which is particularly conscious of its reputation.

Although it undoubtedly contributed to the port's character, Chinatown never dominated the image of Liverpool, let alone Merseyside. During the late nineteenth century, however, alcohol and the city were often conflated. At this time, three positions contributed to the discourse of drink: a drink culture, founded on homosociality, profit and pleasure; a culture of policing and control; and the temperance and teetotal movements. The relationship between the first and second cultures is scrutinised by David Beckingham. By paying particular attention to the ways in which policing cultures contributed towards Liverpool's unenviable status as the "drink capital of England and Wales", Beckingham demonstrates that this reputation was founded on figures and maps, both of which simplified what was taking place in the port. Maps enabled easy, though inaccurate, comparisons to be made between places without informing those who look at the map that the local authorities in these places policed drunkenness in very different ways. This chapter offers a case study of how these local practices intersected with national moral geographies. As a result, it supplements James Nicholls' point that "ideas about drink provide an

[39] http://blogs.liverpooldailypost.co.uk/businessbeat/2010/05/liverpool-was-twinned-with-sha.html

insight into the wider culture".[40] Manchester had a far lower rate of convictions for drunkenness than Liverpool. Work has been carried out on the differences in the kinds of drinking establishments which existed in the two cities–Manchester's establishments were generally smaller than Liverpool's.[41] Yet focusing on the moral geography of drink adds another dimension to the history of Liverpool's relationship with alcohol, one that draws the port into a field of comparisons and representations. This was neither the first nor the last time that Liverpool and Merseyside would become a black spot on the moral geography of Britain.

Graeme Milne concentrates on a black spot in Liverpool itself: the port's sailortown. All sailortowns formed borders where outsiders entered and left, sought comfort and pleasure, and brought their languages and beliefs to the port. It is easy to see how sailortowns "with their exotic and at times dangerous appearances" have contributed "to the public imagination of maritime culture" in ports all over the world.[42] Despite its enduring reputation, Liverpool's sailortown was relatively short lived; it was largely the consequence of the era of the sail ship during the second half of the nineteenth century. Drawing on government reports, local papers and sailor's memoirs, Milne outlines the origins of sailortown before turning to the influence exerted by this part of Liverpool. The social and cultural repercussions of sailortown were long-felt. Indeed, for some Liverpool *was* sailortown because that was what made the port so distinctive in the north-west–Manchester may have a Chinatown, but it does not possess a sailortown. With its sympathetic description of the perils faced by the seaman ashore in Liverpool, Charles Dickens' "Poor mercantile Jack", published in *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1875), undoubtedly contributed to sailortown's reputation. Milne's concluding points address the danger that one-dimensional images of heritage, a product of what he terms "historical ambivalence", overlook the suffering and exclusivity, both contemporary and historical, which lies behind the image. If such issues are not addressed, or even acknowledged, twenty-first century sailortowns are unlikely to contribute much to the wider city, a view Milne shares with Jörn Weinhold who has written about Hamburg's modern sailortown.[43]

Pleasure and entertainment are readily converted into distinctive cultural forms. Areas or activities associated with transgression, temporary licence or controlled hedonism are liminal and set aside–sometimes

[40] Nichols, *The Politics of Alcohol*, pp. 2–3.
[41] Mutch, "Manchester and Liverpool public houses".
[42] Weinhold, "Port culture", p.186.
[43] Weinhold, "Port culture", p. 201.

geographically as well as mentally, as sailortowns were–from the labour or tedium of everyday life. In their examination of the Elizabethan Prescot playhouse, Elspeth Graham and Rosemary Tyler turn our attention to the overlooked eastern part of Merseyside. Graham and Tyler are interested in the production of cultural forms and in questioning the assumptions made about places. For many Prescot was, and still is, a place of little import. Such perceptions may be countered by an anthropological interpretation of culture, by stressing how culture exists wherever there are people. But there are other ways to respond to these assumptions about the unimportance of places which involves illustrating how such "places on the margin", to borrow Rob Shield's term, are able to support cultural forms vaunted by and more readily associated with London itself.[44] This chapter reinforces the argument, put forward by Alan Somerset, that those who study Early Modern theatre have all too often dismissed what may have been taking place in the provinces.[45] However, this study goes beyond a correction of long-standing biases because Graham and Tyler reconstruct the "cultural environment" surrounding the playhouse. Scholars of Early Modern Britain, and those interested in popular culture in general, need to undertake considerable detective work and read between the lines of the evidence.

In the following chapter Lee R. Kendall examines a hitherto unexamined moment in J.M.W. Turner's life when he passed through Merseyside during 1831 and made sketches of both sides of the Mersey. As the investigation of the Prescot theatre showed, contextual material is a useful way to help us understand the significance and relationship between cultural forms. Using a variety of sources, including contemporary images by other artists, Kendall traces the paths that may have been taken by Turner during his brief stay in Liverpool. The artist did not leave any record of his visit beyond the sketches which Kendall, who is himself an artist, examines. It is possible to discern Turner's ideas from his choice of subject, the nature of the sketches and what we know about Liverpool and the Wirral peninsula at that time. Turner focused on the bustling Mersey during his visit. As well as being an impressive natural feature, the river was a trading artery, "the place of discharge for the productions of the Western world".[46] But it was more than the Mersey, progeny of the Goyt and Tame, which struck Turner; it was the way in which both banks of the river related divides in time as well as place. On the Liverpool side of the river, where steam and sail mingled, Turner discerned the present and the

[44] Shields, *Places on the Margin*.
[45] Somerset, "How Chances it they Travel?".
[46] Webster, *The Port and Docks of Birkenhead*, p. v.

future. On the other side stood Birkenhead, some sixteen years before the establishment of the Morpeth and Egerton docks. To the north of Birkenhead, the coast and tales of smugglers offered a reminder of the past. Merseyside was, in a sense, a border, not so much between counties as between times. To some degree, Kendall's work considers the psychogeography–the effects of geography on the emotions of individuals–of Turner's Merseyside, just as Mark Goodall has examined the psychogeography of Malcolm Lowry's Wirral.[47]

Whereas Turner's sketches of Merseyside have for the most part remained hidden from public view and interpretation, the sculpture of Merseyside has been visible and open to public interpretation. Memorials to those who may be seen as having been extraordinary ordinary people are relatively new historical phenomena. Jonathan Black surveys some of the most distinctive examples of early twentieth-century sculpture on Merseyside which portrayed the worker as a hero. By paying close attention to the gestures and apparel of the figures, Black conveys the emotive qualities of the statues. A disaster, such as the sinking of the *Titanic* or a major war invites commemoration. The sculptor, however, is able to direct this sense of magnitude in a specific way. In this chapter, the making and presentation of collective forms of meaning are laid bare. Positive depictions of the working man, albeit in exceptional circumstances, were ways of coming to terms with an enlarged electorate and of rendering a potential challenge as something which complemented the status quo. Economic realities may well have stimulated reconsiderations of the working classes but the forms these took and the ways they were interpreted were not constrained by specific economic, social or political concerns. As Black points out, the strikes of the Edwardian era probably contributed to the ways these sculptures were understood, and interwar unemployment almost certainly lent an added poignancy to the noble statues. All the same, the ways the sculptures signified capability, tenderness and resolve fostered different imaginings the working classes. In some ways these positive depictions of the workers prefigure later idealisations of the urban working class community as "an archetype of idealized existence equivalent to the nineteenth-century idealization of rural or village life".[48]

The contrast between the sculptural "noble titans" and the "'host' of the jobless" drawn by Black is followed by a chapter about two authors who wrote, in their fictional works, about the poor and unemployed of the

[47] Goodall, "Lowrytrek".
[48] Nenadic, "English towns in the creative imagination", p. 330.

interwar years. Like other aesthetic judgments, literary canons are there to be questioned and Frank Boyce contends that the work of George Garrett and James Hanley has been overlooked for too long. He makes the important point that not only have these authors been disregarded but that they have also been over-theorised. This may be seen to be the fate of many cultural forms and either fate does not help works reach a wider audience where they may be reinterpreted afresh and intersect with other understandings of the world. Boyce's chapter goes some way towards making the works and worlds of Garrett and Hanley more accessible and understandable. Both men were of Irish decent, and their work is a reminder of the contribution made by the Irish to the city's literary history. Having lived on the "border" between Ireland and England, they were aware of how the lives of individuals could be transformed by movement. Accordingly, Garrett and Hanley noted how the sea offered opportunities for people to transfer themselves and transform their lives. A close reading of Garrett's short story "Apostate" and Hanley's novel *Boy* brings to light the divides which cut through Liverpool. Garrett was concerned with Catholicism and the option of escape presented by the sea. Boyce demonstrates how it was possible for poverty to be compounded by an oppressive institution. Hanley's *Boy*, with its account of a thirteen-year old boy being raped by sailors, was a controversial work. The fate of this boy who ran away to sea reveals how attempts to escape were fraught with risks. Hanley, who also offered a description of Transport Workers' strike of 1911 in Liverpool, and Garrett take us to a place where religion meets politics, Catholicism meets Protestantism and youth meets adulthood.

The next two chapters draw on interviews for their source material. Despite the undeniable difficulties involved in collecting and interpreting oral testimonies, both offer insights into the values of individuals and groups which would otherwise remain unrecorded. John Phillips and Jan Brown's innovative study sets the notion of branding against the sense of place held by their interviewees. The chapter shows how there are other voices, other cultures within a short distance of the middle of Liverpool. As Boland has shown, it is important to balance the especially resonant narratives developed before and during Liverpool08. The interviewees are women, aged between 64 and 97, and hail from the L8 postcode area. They are not the kinds of people seen in adverts for Liverpool One. Despite being close to the heart of the city, these individuals could not have been further from the images associated with the centre of Liverpool. Yet, as Phillips and Brown suggest, the views of the elderly women of L8 are rooted in lived experience, in lives where ideals rub against socio-

economic factors. In a similar way to Milne, Phillips and Brown acknowledge the tensions between the concerns of the present and those of the past. This chapter also brings home the importance of the river to local identities. The Mersey has been "read" in many ways over the years and its influence cannot be summed up by a single individual or a group–the views of the women in this chapter are very different from those of the Edwardian Walter Dixon Scott who, in 1907, wrote that the Mersey "interweaves class with class", provides a "common unifying interest" and "sets a crisp brine-tang in the heart of every inhalation".[49] Still, both Walter, the former banker and professional writer, and Sylvia, the black Toxteth resident, saw the river as a tangible emblem of the port and region.

Stephen Kelly's study of the predominantly male and white followers of Liverpool football club focuses on a different, though no less representative, kind of Scouser than the subjects of the previous chapter. Using a rich mine of oral testimony gathered from fans who had followed the club at various times from 1910 to the 1990s enables Kelly to assess the culture of fandom and account for its transformation. While rugby league holds sway in St Helens, football is Merseyside's sport of choice. The importance placed on football in the area has been rendered all the more distinctive by football journalists.[50] Fandom is a cultural form that changes over time, without losing its particular resonance. Kelly's chapter considers an era when most fans stood to watch the game, and he pays particular attention to those less affluent fans that stood in the legendary stand christened the Kop. In addition to examining the rites of passage and customs of the Kop, Kelly pays attention to the interaction between football fandom and other cultural forms, notably popular music, humour and clothing. For all its distinctiveness, the Kop contained a variety of people who experienced fandom in different ways. Thus Kelly's chapter provides a diachronic and synchronic assessment of fandom during the twentieth century. The fan of the 1950s was different from the fan of the 1970s, but at any single point in time there were distinctions between fans too.

The final chapter of this volume also pays attention to the ways in which a cultural form is cross-hatched both by changes over time and different experiences at any one time. In this chapter I examine St David's Day celebrations on Merseyside during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. The chapter contributes to the study of national celebrations, an area of academic interest which has been gaining ground

[49] Scott, *Liverpool 1907*, pp. 14–15.
[50] Crolley and Hand, *Football, Europe and the Press*, pp. 36–7.