

**“We are the Mods’: A Transnational History of a Youth Culture”**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2009

Mod youth culture began in the postwar era as way for young people to reconfigure modernity after the chaos of World War II. Through archival research, oral history interviews, and participant observation, this work traces Mod’s origins from dimly lit clubs of London’s Soho and street corners of the city’s East End in the early sixties, to contemporary, country-specific expressions today. By specifically examining Germany, Japan, and the U.S., alongside the U.K., I show how Mod played out in countries that both lost and won the War. The Mods’ process of refashioning modernity—inclusive of its gadgetry and unapologetic consumerism—contrasts with the more technologically skeptical and avowedly less materialistic Hippie culture of the later sixties. Each chapter, which unfolds chronologically, begins with a contemporary portrait of the Mod scene in a particular country, followed by an overview stretching back to its nineteenth-century conceptions of modernity and a section that describes Mod’s initial impact there during the 1960s. They each conclude with a section highlighting the way in which Mod is celebrated by those who never experienced its initial 1960s manifestation. I position British Mod as a youthful response to Victorian modernity that was linked to industrialization, social classes, and colonialism and also to the destruction of WWII. Mod’s beginnings in Germany are depicted as a cosmopolitan solution to the problematic nationalist past. The presence of U.K. musical groups there excited the country’s youth into reconfiguring their identities while hoping to diminish their own associations with the previous generation’s Nazism. The 1964 musical “British

Invasion” of the U.S. encouraged male and female teenagers to re-imagine gender roles outside middle-class conventions. In looking at Japan, I focus on Mod’s visual language and its translation into a non-western, yet, arguably “westernized” Asian culture. This dissertation examines the adoption and adaptation of this style across geographic space and also maps its various interpretations over time: from the early 1960s to the present. In sum, this study emphasizes Mod’s transnationalism, which is evident in the culture’s fashion, music, iconography, and gender aesthetics.

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## PREFACE

The completion of this dissertation could not have been possible, to quote Lennon and McCartney, without “a little help from my friends.” Though some may not normally categorize professional guidance and sponsorship as a kind of friendship, this experience has left me confident in being able to describe it as such.

First and foremost, this project could not have been possible but for the encouragement, unequivocal support, and painstakingly detailed feedback given me by my advisor, Dr. Ronald J. Zboray, as well as Mary Saracino Zboray. Their enthusiasm for the topic was evident from day one and has been unwavering throughout this lengthy endeavor. Without their wise and, often calming, words, I do not think the process would have been half as enjoyable, or the results as good.

My committee members have also often risen above and beyond the call of duty in attending to this project. I would especially like to thank Akiko Hashimoto and Sabine von Dirke for their help during the application process for a Fulbright fellowship to Germany for the 2006-2007 year. Thanks also to Dr. Peter Simonson, Dr. Lester Olson, and Dr. William Fusfield for their help during this application process.

Since this dissertation required on-the-ground research in Germany, Japan, and the U.K., funding for time abroad was necessary. I am ever-grateful to the German-American Fulbright

Association for generously supporting my year abroad at the University of Hamburg. While in Germany, I was greatly helped by historian Axel Schildt, Director of the *Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte* (FZH) at the University of Hamburg, and local beat music historian Ulf Krüger, who is also the owner of the archive and store K&K Center-of-Beat. For my research in Japan, I am thankful to the University of Pittsburgh's Nationality Room summer scholarships. As the recipient of the 2004 Solis Horwitz grant, I was able to do research on the Japanese Mod scene in June and July of that year. Special thanks go out to Pittsburgh alumnus Dr. Junya Morooka and current University of Pittsburgh Communication Ph.D. candidate Takuzo Konishi for their help with Japanese-to-English translation. Though I was able to gather many excellent primary sources through the University of Pittsburgh's Hillman and Carnegie Mellon University's Hunt libraries, I would like to thank the Popular Culture Association for awarding me with the Marshall Fishwick Popular Culture Collections Travel Grant. This allowed me to look at many more sixties-era magazines and ephemera housed in the Popular Culture and Music libraries at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. I would like to thank the helpful librarians there, as well as the equally accommodating staff members at the Colindale and St. Pancras branches of the British Library, the central branch of the Liverpool Public Library, the *Archiv der deutsche Jugendbewegung* (Burg Ludwigstein, Witzenhausen), the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen* (Berlin), the *Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky* and the *FZH Bibliothek* (Hamburg), the *Deutsche Bücherei* (Leipzig), and the library of the *Institut für Volkskunde/Europäische Ethnologie at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität*, Munich.

Since this work relies so heavily on Mod voices to help tell their cultural history, I am forever indebted to the sixty-plus scene participants from these three countries—and the U.S.—who took the time to share their experiences and insights with me. Many did indeed become

friends. Many of those whom I met and interviewed also allowed me access to their private collections of fanzines, photos, hard-to-find 60s-era films and TV episodes, and ephemera. For this one-of-a-kind information, I sincerely thank Alain Ayadi, Thomas Czerlach, Jani Egloff, Dieter Haarcke, Ulf Krüger, Carina Marrder, Olaf Ott, Eddie Piller, and Thomas Schmidt.

Finally, I would like to thank my dear family and friends—near and far. Most especially, thanks go to my late mother, Simone Hannelore Feldman (1931-2006). Though she was a child of war, she never lost faith that people are inherently good—a key principle I learned from her. Though she is no longer here to read this dissertation, I think she would be pleased with both the substance and spirit of what is found within these pages.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

“Are you a Mod or a Rocker?” When Ringo Starr responded to this question in a famous scene from the Beatles’ 1964 feature *A Hard Day’s Night*, his both silly and charming answer was that he was a “Mocker.” While the line drew laughs in English-speaking countries, it is questionable how many audience members outside of Britain knew what either a “Mod” or “Rocker” really was. Flash forward to 1979: The film *Quadrophenia*, which is set in 1964 and was produced by British rock group the Who, depicts the conflict between these two youth “gangs” in England during that year. Halfway through the film, moments before the two groups are about to rumble, the Mods march towards the Rockers chanting “We are the Mods! We are the Mods! We are, we are, we are the Mods!” Though this serves as a war cry in the film, it is also a bold affirmation of both individual and collective identity. In the latter half of 1964 these two subcultures of teens and young adults fought each other on the beaches of Brighton, Hastings, and Clacton en masse. While a new generation of Mods had already begun appearing in the shadow of punk by 1977, the 1979 debut of *Quadrophenia* drew even more would-be participants to this youth culture riot. The question then remains: “Why?”<sup>1</sup>

The Mods, dressed in dapper attire and riding Vespas, believed they were truly *modern*—that they alone personified the future and change. Originally they were mostly working-class youths who wanted “out” of their social “caste’s” trappings. They also thought the Rockers—

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<sup>1</sup> *Quadrophenia*, directed by Franc Roddam, DVD (1979; Los Angeles: Rhino, 2001).

dressed in leather and riding motorcycles—symbolized the past. Rockers embodied all the uncouth ignorance and urban grit of working-class life that the Mods wanted to escape. As we shall see, this story of identity moves well beyond southern British beaches and the stereotypical Mods depicted in *Quadrophenia*. This dissertation hopes to answer not only the question “*Who* are the Mods?” but also “*What* is Mod?” and “*Where* is Mod?” Most importantly, though, it answers “*What does Mod mean* for those who embrace the lifestyle?” In doing so, the chant “We are the Mods!” grows in volume over time and space and, as it does, more nuances surface. Suddenly, this metaphorical queue of young people extends farther back than the eye can see. In distant, but distinct, voices one hears shouts in accents and languages from countries around the globe. Is that a Japanese Mod back there? Did I hear some German slip in? Are there dissonant voices that refuse to fight?—those who see Mod as a more celebratory identity than one that requires desperate acts of violence? While this youth culture eventually spread to locations as disparate as Brasilia and Baghdad during its initial 1960s incarnation, this dissertation will look at the adoption and adaptation of Mod in Germany, the United States, and Japan from the sixties onward.<sup>2</sup> While the Mod scenes chronicled here do not usually resemble those shown in *Quadrophenia* (not even in Britain) these four country-specific visions of Mod culture do mirror the meaning of Pete Townshend’s neologism “Quadrophenia.” Quadrophenia, according to Townshend, is a personality disorder (for my analysis, I prefer the term “state of mind”) which allows four distinct identities to emerge—personalities he based on the four very different band members of the Who.<sup>3</sup> The film’s Mod protagonist is said to suffer from this supposed affliction, but it is also the key to his identity. Here, through the lenses of British, German,

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<sup>2</sup> Caetano Veloso and Christopher Dunn, “The Tropicalista Rebellion,” *Transition* 70 (1996): 121. Robin Denselow, “Straight Outta Baghdad,” *The Guardian* (UK), June 11, 2004 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2004/jun/11/iraq.popandrock> (accessed Nov. 16, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> *Quadrophenia*, 1979.



American, and Japanese history and culture, four different “personalities of Mod” do indeed come to life. As we will see, this international quadrophenia is the key to Mod identity.

In May 2007, while researching texts on Mod culture at the *Deutsche Bucherei* (National Library) in Leipzig, I came across a book from 1964 written by a German woman living in England. In her book, *Die Beatles: Fabelwesen unserer Zeit? (The Beatles: Mythical Figures of our Time?)*, Christiane Ehrhardt devotes a whole chapter to the British youth subcultures of Mods and Rockers. About the Mods Ehrhardt writes, “This ‘movement’ is remarkable—someone should study it.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, more than forty years since Mod culture first emerged in the United Kingdom and traveled on to countries such as Germany, the United States, and Japan, this dissertation attempts to explain how yesterday’s coolest version of modernity has remained both an attractive lifestyle and aesthetic for so long.

This study unashamedly crosses disciplinary boundaries. It is a cultural history of a highly mediated youth phenomenon, which owes its longevity to rebroadcast and recycled images from the early-to-mid sixties. It is also a history told in large part through an assembly of “Mod voices.” Those who have participated in or closely observed Mod culture help unravel and clarify this untold story. For instance, German artist and musician Klaus Voormann (b.1938) recounted to me that he was first acquainted with the word “Mod” through the Beatles, whom he befriended during the band’s musical tenure in Hamburg. “I heard this because they were saying ‘Mods and Rockers’ and we [in Germany] were saying ‘Exis and Rockers.’” Before hopping on her Vespa at a Tokyo scooter run, Japanese Mod Kae Doi (b. 1970) told me: “I am a Modernist, so I like modern music... Mod music is past music. So I am interested in techno... more technology.” At a Bank Holiday Weekender in Brighton, Londoner Sasha Hopkinson (b. 1988)

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<sup>4</sup> Christiane Ehrhardt, *Die Beatles: Fabelwesen unserer Zeit?* (Diessen: Tucher, 1965), 102-103.

guiltily admits of the classic Mod movie, “The minute I saw *Quadrophenia*—I don’t like to say it—but it did influence me in a way and a lot of people don’t like saying that.” San Francisco musician Paul Bertolino (b. 1969) believes the Beatles, who were not originally considered Mod in the U.K., epitomized the culture to U.S. audiences in the sixties. “I don’t think your average American kid in 1965 was hip to the full-on British scooter Mods.”<sup>5</sup> As this international collection of voices illustrates, defining the term Mod is complex. Thus, this originally British sensibility has captivated the imagination of young people around the world since the early 1960s and has evolved while doing so.

While numerous books offer detailed descriptions of the fashions and music of the Mod sixties period, this dissertation hopes to display all the grandeur, playfulness, and uniqueness of this effervescent era by couching youth within the utopian thinking attributed to generational change and “modernization,” or “progress” established in the industrial era. In trying to understand why Mod appeared in the moment it did, I will jump back in time to analyze youth culture movements prior to WWI and during the interwar years to see what utopian impulses within these movements laid the seeds for Mods’ arrival later in the century.

The following sections will introduce the other core theme of the dissertation which ties the past to the present: the concept of globalization. Starting in the mid-sixties, Mod spread to many other developed nations’ youth. I am concerned with how the utopian aspect of Mod allowed it to translate in a way that is less imperialistic and more idealistic. This is where the history of communication and cultural theories enter into the dialogue of Mod’s dissemination around the world. The postwar theories of Mass Society, the Frankfurt School, Media Ecology,

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<sup>5</sup> Klaus Voormann, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Tutzing, Germany, Mar. 5, 2007, on file in the DCUP; Kae Doi, oral history interview with author, analog recording transferred to digital, “French Blue” Scooter Rally, Tokyo, June 24, 2004; Sasha Hopkinson, oral history interview with author, digital recording, *NUTS* Weekender, Brighton, Aug. 26, 2007, DCUP; Paul Bertolino, Email to author, Jan. 13, 2003.

and Existentialism are those that I would like to discuss as most salient or reflective of Mod's historical emergence during this time.

The balancing act that I am attempting to perform in this dissertation requires an interdisciplinary vision and method. Mod is not easily defined. In fact, this dissertation hopes to create a broader definition than exists in the current literature. Mod is not just specific to people or material objects—or even to one time or one geographic space—but is an amalgam of all it was in the mid-sixties and all that it is imagined to be today, in light of its past. Since Mod is made up of people who identify with a certain lifestyle the literature and methods of sociology and anthropology are useful to interpreting this culture. Because this youth culture has deep roots in the past (the postwar period, more specifically the mid-sixties), a historicist perspective and historical methods are needed to look at how it circulated and how its meaning was renegotiated in different times and places. Mod was also part of the “everyday” life in the early-to-mid sixties and was transmitted via various media, popular music, fashion, and technology.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the environmental look of Mod—the modernist furniture, pop art, and minimalist or “futuristic” architectural housing designs—requires some knowledge of mid-century art and design. In order to see how Mod exists in the present, one must examine the confluence of all these qualities that originally formed the Mod milieu.

Mod culture's merging of technology, playful consumerism, and a desire for a unified “world youth culture,” created a map for youth culture styles to follow. However, despite the emergence of youth cultures like Hippie, Glam Rock, Punk, Goth, Rave, and Hip Hop, Mod culture and its various local “scenes” remain active and visible in many parts of the world. In May 2004, young people from Great Britain, Europe, Japan, and North America attended the

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<sup>6</sup> See Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Everyday Ideas: Socio-Literary Experience Among Antebellum New Englanders* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005).

“Modstock” festival in London to celebrate forty years of Mod culture. Another way a new generation of Mods are educated about the culture is through websites such as *Mod Culture* and the *Uppers Organization*, which also allow them to connect via new media.<sup>7</sup> In this dissertation, I maintain that twentieth-century visions of technological progress positioned sixties youth as inheritors of an ultimate modern world. Young people who embrace Mod today, whether conscious of it or not, are incorporating this past dream of idealized modernity into their lives and use it as a form of rebellion against current youth culture trends that appear more pessimistic or cynical.

In this sense, the playful interpretation of technology espoused by the Mod generation via fashion, music, design, and consumerism emerged as a result of the crises engendered by the fallout of World War II and the developing Cold War division between East and West. I agree with Jon Savage’s assessment that, “The A-bomb’s apocalyptic revelation precipitated a new kind of global consciousness and a new kind of psychology. Faced with the prospect of instant vaporization, many human beings began to focus on the present, if not the instant.”<sup>8</sup> Mod first appeared approximately twenty years after the War ended and was conceived by a generation who had been born during economic crisis in the United Kingdom, occupation and reconstruction of former Axis nations Germany and Japan, and the increasing affluence and influence attributed to the United States as the premiere Western power of the emerging Cold War period. In its initial appearance as a youth culture, Mod replaced despair with hope.

The unique cultural positions of these nations following World War II set the groundwork for Mod cultures to flourish. As the birthplace of Mod culture, Great Britain is my

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<sup>7</sup> For Modstock, see Dan Syge, “The Mod Squad Goes Global,” *Financial Times*, Sept. 18, 2004, 7. For *Mod Culture* see <http://modculture.co.uk/> and for the *Uppers Organization* see <http://www.uppers.org/>.

<sup>8</sup> Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2007), 464.

natural starting point. By the end of World War II, Britain was indebted to the United States for more than three billion pounds and much of its infrastructure needed massive rebuilding. The genesis of this youth style there occurred during the late fifties, a time when its citizens were slowly emerging from economic devastation into a period of heightened consumerism. Given this cultural milieu, it is not surprising then that the British baby boomers were eager to leave this collapsed version of England behind and welcome a newly conceived modern age.

While Great Britain's postwar problems appeared primarily economic and structural, the aftermath of the War left Germany with similar problems coupled with a crisis of ideology and identity. Germany's National Socialists relied heavily on the enthusiasm of youthful participants, whether as soldiers or as "Hitler Youth." This dependence on the young was not an anomaly of the Nazi period, but stems from a longer standing view in German culture that youth hold the key to cultural change.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the discovery of Nazi brutality, as exemplified by the Holocaust, created a postwar climate where German youth were disillusioned by the older generation and looked elsewhere for inspiration.

Japan found itself in a similar position as that of Germany, although the end of the War brought a different version of cruelty and disillusionment in the form of the firebombing of Tokyo and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Due to this end, the disappointment was with both the Japanese government and the Americans alike. Quickly occupied by American forces, postwar Japanese were thrust into a situation where they had to take direction from their occupiers in order to form a new government and way of life. This was especially difficult in one respect in that the Americans had razed many of its cities.

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<sup>9</sup>See Philip Lee Utley, "Radical Youth: Generational Conflict in the Anfang Movement, 1912-January 1914," *History of Education Quarterly* 19 (Summer 1979): 207-228, and Katherine Larson Roper, "Images of German Youth in Weimar Novels," *Journal of Contemporary History* 13 (July 1978): 499-516.

Finally, as the country to suffer least physical and psychological devastation on its native soil, the United States emerged economically and politically powerful from the ashes of the War. However, the seemingly comfortable climate of the immediate postwar years in the United States was also made up of nefarious policies such as racial segregation, tightly-policed gender roles, an atmosphere of social conformity, and the paranoid actions of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) lead by Senator Joseph McCarthy.

The extreme and unprecedented events that occurred within WWII, such as discovery of the German death camps and the atomic bombings of Japan, set the tone for a postwar climate that, despite the emergence of the Cold War, looked for ways to prevent a third world war. With the term “Mutually Assured Destruction” ominously hovering between East and West, international understanding was nevertheless the wished for atmosphere of this new world. Given the governmental responses after the War to foster salutary foreign relations, particularly the advent of global organizations such the U.N. and UNESCO, or American exchange programs such as Fulbright, the Council for International Educational Exchange (C.I.E.E.), and the American Field Service (A.F.S.), it is easier to glean how Mod’s international mindedness, on a micro-level, was part of the larger cultural climate of the times.<sup>10</sup>

In its global outlook upon Mod culture, the dissertation builds on and modifies a key body of earlier scholarship with narrower, Britain-specific concerns that emerged at the University of Birmingham’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) during the

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<sup>10</sup> Alfred J. Hotz, “The United Nations Since 1945: An Appraisal,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 336 (Jul. 1961): 136. Hotz quotes Kennedy as describing the United Nations as “our best and perhaps only hope for world peace.” There is speculation that some American students and anthropologists were used to gather “intelligence” for the C.I.A. See: George Marcus and Michael J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 35. Marcus describes “Project Camelot,” an “abortive effort in the 1960s to tempt social scientists with grants in return for research useful in Latin American counterinsurgency and the Thai Affair ...[where] ethnographic research in northern Thailand was [to be] employed by counterinsurgency efforts against groups associated with communist forces in Indochina.”

1970s. As illustrated in 1975's anthology *Resistance Through Rituals*, scholars such as Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige, and John Clarke defined Mod as specific to mostly male, working-class, British teenagers of the early 1960s. In this narrative, the original Mods' goal was to look more elegant than those in the upper class. Accordingly, Mods were often low-level white-collar workers with no more than a secondary school education. This narrative, however, ignores that British lower-to-middle-class Jewish teenagers developed the first wave of Mod in the late fifties and earliest years of the 1960s.<sup>11</sup> In any case, the Mod's cosmopolitan fashion was meant to replace bourgeois refinement gained through higher education and international travel.<sup>12</sup> True, within this subculture, "looking the part" while not fitting the part created a seemingly contrary rebellion. However, as Mods spent vigorously on chic, international products to rebel against a society that did not see them fit for such fine things, they were simultaneously greasing the wheels of capitalism, the system that continued to reaffirm their class position. Dick Hebdige and John Clarke maintain that subcultures are ultimately appropriated and translated into mainstream, commercial culture. It seems that in the Birmingham School model, subcultures are worthy cultural experiments only when they are sites of resistance. As is the case with Mod, these subcultures are seen as less important once they have been "diffused" into and normalized by mass culture.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the Birmingham School saw that Mod culture was not only co-opted by

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Barnes, *Mods!* (London: Plexus, 1991), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Bourdieu's notion of distinct cultural practices among various classes of people is also worthy of note: Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984). The following work documents the Mods as a specifically British youth subculture of the 1960s. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1975); Dick Hebdige, *Subculture, the Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1979).

<sup>13</sup> "The whole mid-1960's explosion of 'Swinging London' was based on the massive commercial diffusion of what were originally essentially Mod styles, mediated through such networks, and finally into a 'mass' cultural and commercial phenomenon. The Beatles era is one of the most dramatic examples of the way what was in origin a sub-cultural style became transformed, through increasingly commercial organization and fashionable expropriation, into a pure 'market' or 'consumer' style" (John Clarke, "Style," in Hall and Jefferson, *Resistance Through Rituals*, 187); "By 1966, the mod 'movement,' subject to the concerted pressures of the media, market forces, and the

mainstream society, but ultimately those young people participating in the community delighted in and bolstered capitalist and consumer practices, albeit in a style constructed by the Mods themselves. However, this postmortem was premature, as Mod's existence has transcended 1960s Britain.

The genesis of Mod's international diffusion is often linked to the first wave of "British Invasion" bands, most notably the Beatles, who captured the attention of American youth with their arrival in New York on February 7, 1964, and who would soon become unofficial messengers for Mod style outside Great Britain.<sup>14</sup> Because the Birmingham School scholars are mournful of mainstream co-optation, they do not take into account how this diffusion into mass culture liberalized Mod in several ways. In its later phase, Mod style became more fun-loving and less regulatory, global versus regional, and open to young women as well as men. It is in this progressive spirit that Mod became historicized as a radically ebullient cultural phenomenon. Due to this transformation, the word *Mod* became synonymous with the youth culture impulse of the times. What started as a sartorial rebellion by predominantly male, working-class teenagers in London during the early sixties had transformed mid-decade into an international youth movement of streamlined style and forward-thinking idealism.

By the early 1960s, Mod culture's pictorial language included British symbols like the Union Jack and the Royal Air Force target symbol, dandified male fashion and girlish female clothing, Modernist-cum-futuristic design, and hip forms of transport such as Italian scooters and

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familiar set of internal contradictions...was beginning to break down into a number of scenes" (Hebdige, *Subculture*, 54).

<sup>14</sup> For detailed information on the Beatles' arrival in the U.S., see: "Fab Four: 40 Years and Counting," *CBS News*, Feb. 7, 2004 at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/02/07/entertainment/main598617.shtml> (accessed 21 April 2004); Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs, "Beatlemania: Girls Just Want to Have Fun," in *The Audience Studies Reader*, Will Brooker and Deborah Jermyn, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2003); Larry Kane, *Ticket to Ride* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2003); and Bruce Spizer and Walter Cronkite, *The Beatles are Coming: The Birth of Beatlemania in America* (New York: Four Ninety-Eight Productions, 2003).



Cooper “Mini” cars. Images of Mod style, as well as its accompanying commodities, traveled the globe with a soundtrack comprised of bands such as the Beatles, the Who, the Kinks, and the Rolling Stones. To borrow a bumper sticker phrase, if the first Mods had “acted locally,” by the mid-sixties these new Mods were “thinking globally.” Within this cosmopolitan movement, Great Britain, the United States, Germany, and Japan are among the developed nations continually mixing past and present concepts of Mod into reconfigured notions of the style and culture.<sup>15</sup>

This project expands upon the historical locus of Mod and charts a temporal, conceptual, and geographic cartography of this youth culture phenomenon beyond the confines of the 1960’s “Mod Years.” With the tightening technological connections that have brought terms such as “globalization” into vogue since the 1960s, the cosmopolitan yearnings of the original Mods are manifested today in a plethora of new media options supported by a wider swath of contemporary youth culture. The ubiquity of personal computers, portable laptops, and the Internet, for instance, coupled with the continuation of exchange programs championed in the postwar era, influence how Mod is continued, redefined, and celebrated by youth in different corners of the planet. According to geographer and Birmingham School alumnus Anoop Nayak, the vastness of globalization’s effects must nonetheless be examined on a local level to understand the depth of its influences. Of course, this dissertation will look at larger socio-historical circumstances that set the stage for Mod to be interpreted in varying ways. Here, Victorian modernity in Great Britain, the national unification of Germany, World War I, the rise of nationalism in Germany and Japan, World War II, and the Cold War all play a role. Mod culture is examined here as the ultimate youth culture on the cusp between the peak of late

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<sup>15</sup> Synge, “The Mod Squad Goes Global,” 7.

industrial society and the rise of post-industrial society. However, instead of telling the story of the twentieth-century's quest for a better world via technology, international contact, and youth identity formation solely through the eyes of adults, this project seeks to discover the multi-faceted nature of Mod culture as created, transmitted, and ritualized *for* and *by* a slice of the world's youth since 1964. In sum, the origin of Mod's odyssey is contingent on the agency felt and individual choices made by young people in the 1960s and beyond. Thus, the dissertation will take a textured approach via the examination of how this agency played and continues to play out in the U.K., the U.S., Germany, and Japan.

Due to its scope and method, my work on Mod will be complementary to, yet different from, prevailing youth culture scholarship. Some of this difference arises from the methodology employed. This project will combine archival methods and oral history, with participant observation completed in the United States, Germany, England, and Japan. Theories of youth culture past and present, emanating from communication studies, anthropology, sociology, and history will anchor this research.

Within the context of the British Birmingham School, Mod was studied from a socially critical perspective and seen primarily as merely one subcultural youth movement among many disavowing mainstream society. In these landmark studies, Mod was also perceived as specific to the one time period (the mid-sixties), one location (Great Britain, if not East London), and one gender (male). Additionally, most American scholars have ignored Mod's wide, global impact during the early 1960s in favor of the more politically charged late sixties. Books such as Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* or Charles Kaiser's *1968 in America* surmise

that radical social changes and lifestyle shifts came into fruition later in the decade.<sup>16</sup> Due to the dearth of American scholarly work regarding Mod as an influential, transnational current from the 1960s onward, it appears that a valuable cultural development in the twentieth-century is being overlooked. My dissertation research on Mod moves from a national, class-based subculture to one that crosses class divisions and national borders. I contend that the counterculture of the late sixties is indebted to Mod style for its challenging notions of modernity, nationalism, and gender. In sum, my project's framework moves beyond a narrow conception to a more inclusive and broadly defined vision of Mod. Since I am looking at Mod style's current, transnational appeal, with specific focus on the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, and Japan, I want to uncover what has made Mod so popular during the sixties in cities such as Manchester, New York, Cologne, and Nagoya.

To examine thoroughly the genesis of this cultural phenomenon, and to inform my dissertation, I have consulted primary source documents from between 1960 and 1967 such as popular and small press newspapers and magazines (Appendix A).<sup>17</sup> This archival and visual communication analysis has allowed me a close reading of original images, texts, and typography that defined Mod style and culture during these years. This methodology provides insights not found in strictly theoretical texts or secondary sources. Reviewing articles and advertisements from the period allows for a direct glimpse into the cultural milieu of the period.

An important conceptual strand that serves as subtext for my dissertation on Mod culture is the idea of Mod as a recurring, but ever-varying, youth culture style. Fredric Jameson's

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<sup>16</sup> These are merely two of many books addressing the American late sixties counterculture: Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993) and Charles Kaiser, *1968 in America: Music, Politics, Chaos, Counterculture, and the Shaping of a Generation* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988).

<sup>17</sup> Though the peak of Mod culture's original manifestation is arguably between 1964 and 1967, when the American born Hippie aesthetic began being the dominant youth culture trend (Peter Braunstein cites the "Mod Years" as from 1964 to 1966, 244), both the roots of Mod and its antecedents will be gleaned from earlier texts.

theories suggest that postmodernism provides an ever-recycled contemporary culture referencing the modern period. Since Mod emerged during a time sometimes considered a “high modernist” period, postmodernist theory, such as outlined by Fredric Jameson’s *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, influenced my own theory that Mod is based, in part, on what I call “retro-forward” logic.<sup>18</sup> Retro-forward logic is defined as the dialectic of tradition and futuristic aspirations operating within Mod fashion and music. Mods of the 1960s simultaneously embraced fashions of past eras (The Kinks’ Edwardian hunting jackets, female fashions that alluded to the 1920s) with those of imagined futures (“space age fashions” for women, an endless parade of gadgetry, and modernist architecture and minimalist interior design). Today’s Mods incorporate and reinvent this retro-forward sensibility by emulating the music, fashion, and design of the 1960s, while also incorporating new technologies for the twenty-first century (the sixties’ “future”) version of this forward-thinking youth style.

One difference between looking at Mod culture retro-forwardly versus a solely postmodern view is that my perspective of cultural recycling is more optimistic in its specific linkage between the utopian element within youth culture and the idealism of generational change. Instead of a postmodern situation where nothing in the contemporary moment seems culturally innovative or unique anymore, I see this recreation of Mod style as a way for young people to tap into the best of what has gone before and use it for positive steps towards the future. In doing so, Mods today stay true to one of the key themes of the culture, while also creating something new and current in, ironically, mimicking the old.<sup>19</sup> In this sense my theory

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<sup>18</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).

<sup>19</sup> Homi K. Bhabha describes colonized people’s “mimicry” as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.” Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 86.

and method more closely resemble the new historicism rather than the purer expression of postmodernism. As new historicist Louis Montrose writes, this methodology delves into “an inexhaustible collection of stories of which curiosities may be culled and cleverly retold.” In this passage Montrose neatly summarizes the aesthetic appeal and mission of new historicism: Ideology is not the end result desired, rather history is an end in and of itself. If young people today are using symbols of the past, it should not merely be read as a rejection of the present, but a celebratory collage of those past moments that may still have relevance today for numerous reasons.<sup>20</sup> Here, my telling of the Mod story is an intervention in the prevailing youth culture discourse because it offers a new mix of scholarly perspectives and methods to understand such phenomena.

Ethnographic research greatly contributes to my methodology because it allows me to be as inclusive as possible of contemporary Mods’ views of their culture. Ethnographic fieldwork, which complemented my archival research, was necessary to understand how Mod was initially, and continues to be, received. This fieldwork was comprised of both oral history interviews and participant observation. Oral histories provided autobiographical information to supplement archival data, while participant observation allowed me a close reading of the contemporary Mod scene in the four countries included in this study.

Oral history (Appendix B) has often been used to document cultures or stories not necessarily included in “official histories,” and it is a methodology that is beginning to be of service to popular or youth culture studies.<sup>21</sup> There are two reasons why this is the case, and why

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<sup>20</sup> Louis Montrose, “Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture,” *The New Historicism*, H. Aram Veaser, ed. (London: Routledge, 1989), 19.

<sup>21</sup> Trevor Lummis, *Listening to History* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 20. See also Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 2005); William

this became my preferred method of ethnographic research. Since youth culture and its activities have only recently been deemed worthy of careful examination, primary sources about Mod culture, like British Mod fanzines from the 1980s, which add first-person, contemporaneous observations were not systematically collected and are therefore scarce. For instance, even at a vast archive such as the British Library, one may only find a few issues of the many Mod fanzines that have existed. According to historian Paul Thompson, youth cultures like Mod are comprised of leisure activities that “rarely leave many records.” Because of this dimension in studying Mod, I agree with his opinion that cultures such as these “cannot be seriously examined without oral evidence.” Even when primary source material in the form of magazine articles or documentary footage about Mod culture appears, it has limitations similar to those of the CCCS method of youth culture study, because it does not emphasize the voices of those involved.<sup>22</sup>

According to Kathleen and Billie DeWalt’s book *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, this method is one where “the researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their routines and culture.” For instance, during my year in Germany I was able to observe “explicit” aspects of German Mod culture—such as how many Mod girls at the Aachen “Casino Royale” weekender had shoes, coats, and purses that were color-coordinated (with a different color-choice each night). The Mods I spent time with at this event, even while in “daytime casual wear,” still looked more dressed-up than the non-Mod people surrounding them. However, it is even more the “tacit” aspects that inform this study in a way that no other methodology can. For instance, participant observation allowed me to recognize the barely

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Freedman, *More Than a Pastime: An Oral History of Baseball Fans* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 108.

hidden look of contempt given to me by a DJ—one I had already befriended—for requesting a Yardbirds song (which, given the music at other events I had visited, was clearly “too-mainstream-sixties” to be played). Moreover, my frustration at putting together just the right outfits to blend in with the women at events, proved more time-consuming and, sometimes more frustrating, than I could have ever imagined. It made me really understand the “work” (not to mention the expense) involved in this lifestyle. Thus, inserting myself into German Mod culture for the year allowed me to get to know it as an “Insider.” Though I was often told as a younger student that it is easier to write about subject matter from an objective distance, I truly believe that my use of this method, coupled with an already strong interest in the 1960s, is ultimately much more helpful than harmful in telling a holistic and true-to-life story of what contemporary Mod culture is about.<sup>23</sup>

This opinion was also relayed to me by Munich Mod Harry Vogel (b. 1963) at the June 2007 “Biff! Bang! Pow!” event in Hamburg. As a television crew entered the *Prinzenbar* to film, presumably, a TV report on “who the Hamburg Mods are and what they do,” Harry told me he hated when mass media try and explain what Mod is because they always seem to get it “wrong.” While it is contestable whether mass media reports of Mod are always off-target or not, I can verify that since I was “undercover” that night, doing my best to look 60s-ish in green mini-dress and a beehive, the NDR (*Norddeutsche Rundfunk*) camera crew shot a lot of footage of me (an American and not self-identified as a Mod) and my acquaintance Bettina Peter (from Cologne) as “Hamburg Mods” for their June 24, 2007 episode of *Rund um den Michel (Around the Michel)*—

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<sup>23</sup> See Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 1, 8. For participant observation used to research subcultures see James Lull, “Thrashing in the Pit: An Ethnography of San Francisco Punk Subculture,” in *Natural Audiences: Qualitative Research on Media Uses and Effects*, ed. Thomas Lindlof (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1986), 225-252; Kathryn Joan Fox, “Real Punks and Pretenders: The Social Organization of a Counterculture,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 16:3 (1987): 344-370; Rob Drew, *Karaoke Nights: An Ethnographic Rhapsody* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 2001).

a nationally broadcast show about life and culture in the city.<sup>24</sup> By visually associating Bettina and me with “Mod,” or the current Hamburg Mod scene, the television crew was definitely, albeit inadvertently, doing their part in misinforming the German public on the topic. One could argue that these media accounts are helpful in assessing how Mod may come across to, and hence, change via the mainstream public. However, these texts are often based, like the Birmingham School essays, on highly-informed imaginings and “guess-timations” of what a particular group may be about.

While participant observation privileges the researcher with a simultaneous insider-outsider position, oral history interviews summon the voices of actual participants, foregrounding memories of lived experiences, so that their stories create a lively and comprehensive composite image of cultural phenomena. In my study it is not primarily celebrity voices who, for instance, discuss the role of the Beatles in Germany, but ordinary folks who were vital in making Hamburg the *Beatmusik* capital of their country. Certainly, no single methodology is perfect, but oral history does have the potential to bring a wider palate of experiences and insights into the work of cultural history. The tools of qualitative and historical analysis are championed by both communication and cultural studies, which has made researching and writing a dissertation about Mod both a fruitful and engaging one. The questions that are raised regarding geographic, temporal, and gender identities through the study of Mod remain crucial even forty years after the seemingly faddish style emerged from Great Britain.

Despite Mod style’s continuing existence both in commercial and subcultural forms, an obvious gap still exists between scholarship on its origins and its subsequent manifestations. The

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<sup>24</sup> NDR, *Rund um den Michel*, “Hamburg-Große Wildstadt (Back to the Sixties: Hamburger Mod-Szene),” original airdate, June 24, 2007.



study of Mod stands to benefit from my close scrutiny of the historically contingent processes of production, dissemination, and reception with the new historicism in cultural analysis.<sup>25</sup> My study should be a welcome addition to a broader scholarship on late-twentieth-century international youth culture.

The Mod youth culture of the mid-1960s emerged from what British historian Arthur Marwick describes as a “unique era.” The decade’s significance is bound to distinct and rapid cultural transformations. Key changes included more ubiquitous use of technology such as color television and affordable jet travel, new concepts of identity formation via fashion, and, most importantly, the growing cultural influence of young people.<sup>26</sup> More so than youth of previous decades, Mods consciously and deftly galvanized the quickly accelerating communication technologies to transmit their style around the world. Between 1964 and 1967 a transnational flow of youth-oriented television shows, films, print media, and commodities such as records and clothes globally united young people. Mod’s innovative and androgynous fashion sense raised questions about gender aesthetics and sexuality, while the style’s global reach expressed a desire for international openness among youths. Fueled by the marriage of expansive media technologies and Utopian, generation-specific impulses, Mod’s international impact on youth during the mid-sixties was unprecedented and foreshadowed the international sweep of the late sixties counterculture. While the original wave of Mod peaked for just a few years (1964 to mid-1967), its adoption by youth in succeeding generations suggests an enduring cultural journey.

In order to elucidate the prior scholarship that informs this dissertation, it is necessary to look at the marriage of youth culture studies; media history, theory, and criticism; and

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<sup>25</sup> Much communication scholarship today tends toward the theoretical or critical, though there is a move being made by some scholars in this field to approach media studies with more of an eye towards “history as theory.”

<sup>26</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Transformation in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-c. 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 16.

globalization within the spectrum of communication scholarship. A fusion of these areas of study contributes to the overarching theme of the dissertation which positions Mod culture as a utopian and international youth culture with lasting resonance. Historically, to be sure, youth culture scholarship is not simply under the rubric of communication studies. However, the ongoing ritualistic use of communication technologies by successive generations of young people gives media scholars a unique lens through which to examine various forms and aspects of youth culture. It is my intention that this cultural history of Mod further contributes to this angle of youth culture scholarship.

In desiring an intention to combine youth culture studies with globalization issues, I should note that the emergence of youth culture studies was international from its very beginnings. According to American studies scholar Neil Campbell (editor of *American Youth Cultures*) and geographer Anoop Nayak (author of *Race, Place, and Globalization*) a nexus of theoretical movements from the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom form the basis for many studies of youth culture that have surfaced.<sup>27</sup>

Both Campbell and Nayak attribute the beginning of this area of study to the department of sociology at the University of Chicago. Founded in 1892, and commonly referred to as “The Chicago School,” the sociologists there were interested in examining the urban world that surrounded them. While not focused on youth from the very beginning, their earlier ethnographic explorations focused on “deviant” subgroups such as bootleggers, gangs, and various criminal types. As it turned out, a fair percentage of the participants in these activities were in fact young men, and, therefore, some of their later work—especially after WWII—

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<sup>27</sup> See Neil Campbell, “Introduction: On Youth Culture Studies,” *American Youth Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2004) and Anoop Nayak, *Race, Place and Globalization: Youth Cultures in a Changing World* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

(Campbell cites the scholars Howard S. Becker and William Foote Whyte) would focus more specifically on urban youth culture. Outside of sociology, but running on a parallel track in his interest in education and child development, is psychologist G. Stanley Hall. Of particular importance is his 1904 book *Adolescence*, which identified the teen years as crucial to human development.<sup>28</sup>

Turning to theories of media and culture, Nayak and Graeme Turner (author of *British Cultural Studies*) cites the Frankfurt School as influential on cultural studies scholars who would later focus on youth more specifically.<sup>29</sup> Founded at the University of Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany in 1923, scholars from fields such as sociology, political science, psychology, and economics came together to form the *Institut für Socialforschung* (Institute of Social Research) whereby a main point of focus become the relationship between mass cultural forms (film and radio, for instance) and their audiences. The bent to their theory was distinctly Marxist, but unlike previous Marxist theory, they wanted to examine how Marx's ideas of culture may be applied to contemporary life. Scholars including Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse would continue, even while exiled in the U.S. during the Nazi period, to explore the usually negative effects that mass media had on individuals. In the postwar period, Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) would become a key text among student protesters in the U.S.'s New Left movement, thereby attaching itself to an enclave of young people. In sum, the work asked its readers to question how technology and popular culture potentially evoked a false consciousness. As related to postwar youth culture, was the colorful and exciting world of youth and youthful commodities simply another means for young people to imagine all was well with the world?

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<sup>28</sup> Campbell, "Introduction," *American Youth Cultures*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003).

Meanwhile, in Britain's postwar era, scholars from various disciplines would form the aforementioned Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham by 1963. The work of two British, working-class literary scholars named Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart would lay the theoretical groundwork for the center. Not dismissing their roots, and despite then Prime Minister Harold Macmillian's proclamations that the British public had "never had it so good," both Williams and Hoggart began looking at the culture of the working class and moved more and more to the left in their use of Marxist theory to substantiate their work. By focusing on class, the "Birmingham School," was to make its mark as a distinctively British brand of cultural studies that nonetheless impacted the work of many future scholars of youth culture. The CCCS was also influenced by the work of scholars such as Louis Althusser and Roland Barthes. Barthes's appropriation of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's work influenced a strand of semiotic scholarship. In this way, examining culture as a language or text would prove fruitful in further discussions of youth culture fashions and practices. The Birmingham School's work on youth cultures by scholars such as Stuart Hall (who was the director of the CCCS from 1968 to 1979), Dick Hebdige, Paul Willis, John Clarke, Tony Jefferson, and Angela McRobbie, just to name a few, remains influential. Their work is a mix of textual, semiotic, historical, and ethnographic studies with a focus on postwar British subcultures such as Teddy Boys, Mods, Hippies, and Punks. References to their work recur in much contemporary youth culture scholarship, whether or not the articles or books explicitly examine class or utilize Marxist theory or critique.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Articles and books that reference the Birmingham School include: Campbell, "Introduction," *American Youth Cultures*, 4; John Muncie, "The Beatles and the Spectacle of Youth," *The Beatles, Popular Music, and Society: A Thousand Voices*, ed. Ian Inglis (New York: St. Martin's, 2000) 35-52; David Muggleton, *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl, eds., *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

The study of youth cultures remains an interdisciplinary subfield in the already heterogeneous communication field. The scholarship exemplifies the diverse range of scholarly disciplines within the humanities and social sciences: literature, history, American studies, geography, communication, and sociology, for instance. Born out of an international fusion of theories, youth culture studies continue to be an international project with studies focused on (and emerging from) various countries around the globe. Given the speed-up of technology and scholarly discussions of globalization for some time now, it is no wonder that current scholars are turning to discussions of a global or international youth culture. Even if this may seem something pertaining only to the current era, it is actually a theme that can be traced back to the postwar period. Arthur Marwick, British historian and author of *The Sixties*, finds the connection of youth culture and technology as the locus for discussions of globalized culture today. According to him, technologies such as television, transistor radios, modernized telephone systems, expanded jet travel, long playing records, and the pill all contributed to shaping the youth culture of the 1960s. In his list of reasons why the 1960s were important, his culminating reason is that this period aspired to an “ideal of a multicultural future world.” As a geographer, Anoop Nayak sees the importance of technology’s connection to youth vis à vis the definition of globalization, whereby the “world is crystallized into one space.” In this compression of space, various nationalities of youth potentially can communicate ideas and styles more effectively. Nonetheless, Nayak’s study of global effects in Newcastle, England asserts that global influence can only be measured within local space. No matter how “small” it may feel, it might be more useful to see how global influences play out “on the ground” one community at a time. Communication scholar Charles R. Acland, whose essay “Fresh Contacts: Global Culture and the Concept of Generation” appears in the Campbell anthology, describes

today's youth as that of the "global teen." In his estimation, "cultural forms and practices have created a transnational and cosmopolitan youth sphere."<sup>31</sup> He notes that this is particularly evident in the exchange of ideas via new technologies. *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, edited by David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl is comprised of essays that describe contemporary youth culture as no longer bounded (à la the Birmingham School) by national borders. According to the authors, technology's erosion of nation-specific youth culture discourse requires a global perspective in all forthcoming scholarship.<sup>32</sup>

Several key themes circulate in youth culture studies. First, there is a sense from the readings that youth allows experimentation with *identity formation*. Identity formation usually manifests itself via youth styles that are influenced by both friends in one's generational cohort and by exposure to various media imagery. Communication scholar Susan J. Douglas's book, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female With the Mass Media*, describes how an entire generation of women, the baby boomers, was socialized not only by their parents, but also by their television sets. In viewing such shows as *Gidget* or the *Patty Duke Show*, girls suddenly found themselves relating to or *wanting* to relate to these girls designed to represent them.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, throughout Birmingham School scholar Dick Hebdige's *Subculture, the Meaning of Style*, Hebdige illustrates how a variety of subcultures—whether describing Punks, Mods, Rastafarians, or Skinheads—utilized fashion markers to designate their teenage alliances. Certain color "braces" (suspenders) or a type of suit suddenly crafted a distinct image that became the basis for one's identity. Not to be forgotten is the relationship between genres of

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<sup>31</sup> Charles R. Acland, "Fresh Contacts: Global Culture and the Concept of Generation," *American Youth Cultures*, ed. Neil Campbell (New York: Routledge, 2004), 44.

<sup>32</sup> Muggleton and Weinzierl, *The Post-Subcultures Reader*.

<sup>33</sup> Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1994), 13.

music and subcultures: the Teddy Boys (later known as “Rockers”) idolized Elvis and early rock and roll while the Mods listened to American Rhythm and Blues and Soul, for instance. Images of these bands and performers on record covers, promotional materials, and in magazines thus also shaped the identities of various subcultures.<sup>34</sup>

A second theme is the connection between youth and technology. According to Franco Mingnati’s piece on music in postwar Italy, found in the Fehrenbach and Poiger anthology, *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations*, the Italian Futurist movement of the early twentieth century equated youth with a “machinic” quality. Youth and speed were fused as one—ever progressing and regenerating ideas in an almost automated manner.<sup>35</sup> Though this seems a little extreme to me, the analogy nonetheless captures the twentieth-century notion that youth and technology have a special kind of relationship. When examining the “Beatlemania” phenomenon of the early 60s one can see this relationship: recording technology allowed their records to be made, radio broadcast fostered the transmission their music, photographic reproductions circulated throughout the world via the press made their faces familiar, and their television appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* captured the moment that cemented their fame. Beatlemania is a truly modern phenomenon in this way. Furthermore, the notion of “youth” is arguably a modern phenomenon, linking both communication technologies and “youth” as ideas that could not have been perceived in the same way prior to the modern period.

The role and influence of technology has many dimensions. Another observation of technology’s ability to transmit ideas cross-culturally is found in cultural anthropologist Ian Condry’s work on Japanese Rap and Hip Hop. The author discusses how the dissemination of

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<sup>34</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture, the Meaning of Style*.

<sup>35</sup> Franco Mingnati, “Jukebox Boys: Postwar Italian Music and the Culture of Covering,” in *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan*, ed. Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 150.

African American imagery through CDs and other media have allowed Japanese mimicry of this musical and youth-oriented style. It is a kind of mimicry, which Homi K. Bhabha defines in *The Location of Culture*, as “the performative aspect of cultural communication.” Of importance is anthropologist Condry’s notion that what is ultimately conveyed through this technology and genre of popular culture are idioms. Stretching this metaphor, popular culture texts are not directly translatable because diverse cultural *vocabularies* determine the way they are *expressed*. This notion softens the idea of cultural imperialism, whereby the spread of culture by technologies does not export a whole culture, but an idiom that is transformed and made comprehensible through the import country’s own “language.”<sup>36</sup>

A third key theme in youth culture studies is the embrace of “otherness.” In Rolf Meyersohn and Elihu Katz’s 1957 study on fads, the authors discuss how bohemian and minority enclaves become safe spaces for cultural experimentation. Whether or not some of these “experiments” go mainstream, these enclaves are nonetheless places where many unusual ideas may come to a boil. Edward Said, in his book *Orientalism*, discusses the fascination with the “Other” that is constructed by members of dominant groups. However, the ways in which people imagine those different from them is a mixture of fascination and racism. Historian and American studies professor George Lipsitz describes how teens (especially white teens) are often attracted to styles outside their culture as a way to break away from the world they know. In any case, as studies on alienation also suggest, the fascination with the “Other” finds its place in youth culture studies, whereby young people often feel like outsiders from adult society.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ian Condry, “The Social Production of Difference,” *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations*, 166-186; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 228.

<sup>37</sup> Rolf Meyersohn and Elihu Katz, “Notes on a Natural History of Fads,” *Mass Communication and American Social Thought*, ed. John Durham Peters and Peter Simonson (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 413; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 117; and George Lipsitz, *Time Passages:*



The following studies show more distinctly how race, class, gender, and sexuality have been linked to youth culture. In his book *Time Passages* Lipsitz discusses the adoption of the Zoot Suit by some white youth in the 1930s and 40s. The Zoot Suit emerged from Chicano and black culture and was complemented by “bop talk” slang. This imitation of minority (specifically African American) culture resurfaced with the British Invasion bands of the 1960s such as the Beatles. According to James L. Baughman, Brian Epstein, the Beatles manager, recommended that the soon-to-be-dubbed “Fab Four” wear matching suits in homage to the Motown groups of the era and other bands followed their lead. In terms of class issues, Birmingham scholar John Clarke’s piece “Style,” discusses the notions of “diffusion” and “defusion” of subcultural styles into the mainstream. In his article, the original subcultural Mods were working class, while the Mods on TV shows like *Ready, Steady, Go* merely looked the part. In Clarke’s estimation class experience was muted when Mod style was adopted by mainstream youth culture.<sup>38</sup>

Addressing gender and sexuality, historian Uta G. Poiger’s book *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels* discusses how American rock and roll was gendered as feminine during the mid-fifties. Despite today’s more macho readings of celebrities like Marlon Brando or the sexually charged energy of Elvis, Germans (especially those of the older generation) during those years saw these American stars as part of a culture feminized by overly aggressive women, emasculated men, and heightened consumerism, which was also coded as feminine. Meyersohn and Katz see fashion

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*Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 120. On the topic of “alienated youth” see Kenneth Kenniston, *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society* (New York: Dell, 1965); William C. Martin, Vern L. Bengston, and Alan C. Acock, “Alienation and Age: A Context-Specific Approach,” *Social Forces* 53 (Dec. 1974): 266-274.

<sup>38</sup> Lipsitz, *Time Passages*, 120-121; James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1992), 211; John Clarke, “Style,” 188.

trends either coming from either women or men part of “deviant cultures” (read: gay).<sup>39</sup> The connection between homosexuality and Mod culture appears in British scholar Bill Osgerby’s book on postwar subcultures. It is also found in Barry Curtis’s essay in the companion book to the “Art and the 60s” exhibit at London’s Tate Britain Museum.<sup>40</sup>

The topic of rebellion is an oft-mentioned theme in youth culture studies. The following examples show how this rebellion has been expressed differently on either side of the Atlantic. In the immediate postwar period, both the Biker and the Beat became symbolic of an emerging attitudinal rift between generations. In the infamous line from the 1953 film, *The Wild One*, Marlon Brando’s character is asked, “What are you rebelling against?” His reply is, “What have you got?” Due in part to the success of the film, the lawless Biker and his gang became iconic of American youths who chose to live outside the margins of society.<sup>41</sup> The Beat subculture figures as another rebellious group in the early chronology of American postwar culture, but was soon given the derogatory nickname of “beatnik” and lampooned via the dopey caricature of Maynard G. Krebs on TV show *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* (1959).<sup>42</sup> The Beat subculture is described by sociologist John Muncie in his piece “The Beatles and the Spectacle of Youth” as made up of middle class youths who wanted to drop out of what they saw as the banal trappings of middle class life.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 171-173; Rolf Meyersohn and Elihu Katz, “Notes on a Natural History of Fads,” *Mass Communication*, 411.

<sup>40</sup> Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain Since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 43; Barry Curtis, “A Highly Mobile and Plastic Environ,” in *Art & the 60s*, ed. Chris Stephens and Katherine Stout. (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 57.

<sup>41</sup> See Gary Charles, *Bikers: Legend, Legacy, and Life* (Shropshire, Eng.: Independent Music Press, 2003); Paul Garson, *Born to be Wild: A History of the American Biker and Bikes, 1947-2002* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> Within Cold War culture the term “Beatnik” suggested Soviet or communist connotations, as in “Sputnik,” or “Bolshevik.”

<sup>43</sup> For this reference to Maynard Krebs on *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, see John Leland, *Hip: The History* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004) 296; John Muncie, “The Beatles and the Spectacle of Youth,” in *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2000), 46.

Rebellion comes up again in discussions of British postwar youth cultures, particularly with reference to the seaside battles of the Mods and Rockers in England in the early 1960s. The Birmingham school scholars discuss the notion of subcultures rebelling against one's parent culture while still being a part of it. The "parent culture" described is not generational, but based yet again on class. British scholar Stanley Cohen proposed these clashes caused "moral panics" among adults. Finally, while not convincing on first glance, the phenomenon of Beatlemania, according to Susan Douglas, inspired girls to rebel against the rigid social demarcation of postwar femininity. The Beatles' "blurring of gender lines" through their style is noted as important in this rebellion. For this alone, Douglas writes, girls "screamed in gratitude."<sup>44</sup>

As suggested by my earlier mention of the Meyersohn and Katz piece, youth culture became a target for market forces. With the massive baby boom population entering their teenage years by the mid-to-late 1950s, Arthur Marwick notes that researchers such as American Eugene Gilbert and Briton Mark Abrams found this market worthy of deeper examination. Their books, *Marketing and Advertising to Young People* (1957) and *The Teenage Consumer* (1959) respectively, made this clear. But as the "Mod Generation" would emerge, it became clear that young people were just as involved with the profitability of this market as were the older generations. Marwick and Clarke cite the "boutique culture" and pro-capitalist stance that Mods took in formulating their scene. While larger corporations would later mass market the Mod look, Carnaby Street, for instance, would constitute per Clarke's words, "Young entrepreneurs in touch with their markets." In Russ Meyer's camp classic, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970), girl rocker Kelly MacNamara sums up this pro-capitalist attitude. Still very Mod in look (it was considered stylistically passé upon its release), Kelly asserts—after being accused of being a

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<sup>44</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2002 (originally published in 1972); Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 118.

hippie—“I’m a capitalist, baby! I work for my living.” This ethic has continued on in Mod today as well as some non-Mod youth cultures.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1960s it was tempting to look at youth culture as a monolithic entity. Perhaps this came from the “us-versus-them” rhetoric leveled by both young and old. Clearly, lines were drawn. Sociologist Herbert Gans’s original edition of *Popular Culture and High Culture* looks at youth culture in exactly this way. Coming out of the 1960s, he describes it as very one-dimensional and of the moment—with no projections into the future. Nonetheless, he makes up for it with his 1999 postscript, in which he realizes that youth culture has become more varied. Still, he looks at it monolithically in the sense that youth has permeated much of popular culture today. A more heterogeneous view is brought via the Birmingham school, with its examination of various subcultures, as well as Muncie’s article. Muncie uses the Beatles as the premiere icons of the 1960s, whose changing style throughout the decade reflects the fluidity of youth culture. According to Muncie, the Beatles were stylistic chameleons who were influenced by Rocker, Mod, and Hippie styles at various points of their career. In a similar fashion, young people could also transition from one subcultural style to the next.<sup>46</sup>

Also of intrinsic importance to the discussion of youth culture is how one defines youth. Some authors take pains to differentiate between biological age and attitude, as “youth versus youthfulness” is a recurrent topic. While Kerry Mallan and Sharyn Pearce describe youth as between the ages of thirteen and twenty-two, it is hard to pinpoint where youth today begins and ends. Marwick, von Dirke, and Nayak see it as encompassing post-secondary school age: sixteen to twenty-two—depending on the country. Nonetheless, the 1960s ushered in an

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<sup>45</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties*, 45; Clarke, “Style,” *Resistance*, 187; *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, directed by Russ Meyer, DVD (1970; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2006).

<sup>46</sup> Muncie, “The Beatles and the Spectacle of Youth,” *The Beatles*, 50.

ambiguity between biological age and “youthfulness.” Marwick describes how it was suddenly okay for people of older ages to adapt youthful styles in the 1960s, where this would have been inappropriate just a little while earlier. Historian Peter Braunstein sees the whole Mod Era as one of “rejuvenation,” in the sense that Mod style and culture made everyone more aware of youth and instilled the desire to “stay young”—sometimes to the point of obsession.<sup>47</sup>

Another matter taken up within youth culture literature is the idea that youth is a liminal and transient phase of life. Karen Brooks’s essay “Nothing Sells Like Teen Spirit” discusses how quick changing fads appeal to young people because they are, themselves, in a “space in between.” She notes how they struggle between the dichotomies of “childhood/adulthood,” “power/powerlessness” and “innocence/experience.” Olick and Robbins’s piece on collective memory cites Karl Mannheim’s view that not only is youth a short-lived phase in the life course, but also it is the time where the deepest impressions are carved out. These experiences determine an individual’s and a generation’s biographical trajectory.<sup>48</sup>

The response of local youth communities in light of globalization is emerging as a theme in youth culture scholarship. Anoop Nayak’s study of Newcastle (“the whitest part of England”) discusses how the influence of African American hip hop has divided Yorkshire youth between “True Geordies,” who celebrate culture perceived as indigenous to the region (British music and Mod style, soccer, pub culture) and “Wiggers” or “Wannabees” who try to emulate black culture from the States (hip hop fashions, tanning their skin darker). These are usually white kids, but

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<sup>47</sup> Kerry Mallan and Sharyn Pearce, “Introduction: Tales of Youth in Postmodern Culture,” *Youth cultures: Texts, Images, and Identities* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), xii; Marwick, 17; Sabine von Dirke, *All Power to the Imagination!: The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 11, 24; Nayak, 3; Braunstein, “Insurgent Youth,” 244.

<sup>48</sup> Karen Brooks, “Nothing Sells like Teen Spirit: The Commodification of Youth Culture,” *Youth cultures: Texts, Images, and Identities*, ed. Kerry Mallan and Sharyn Pearce (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 2; Jeffrey K. Olick, Jeffrey K. and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998), 105.

sometimes include south Asian kids who feel an affinity for African American culture due to their own minority status in the U.K. Uta G. Poiger looks at postwar German youth (already divided by East and West) as hardly identical to youth in the U.S. By looking at Berlin in particular, with the rise of the Wall, Poiger discusses how riots and rebellions often had more to do with local political conditions and divisions than a top-down influence of Americanization. In her words, “Germans brought their own baggage to their encounters with the United States.”<sup>49</sup>

As outlined above, this study of Mod connects to many of the intellectual themes within youth culture studies from the early part of the twentieth-century to the present. With this project I am most interested in how twentieth-century technological advancement and utopian narratives attached to it, correlate to the perception of youthful embodiment of historical progress and cultural change. Furthermore, since Mod fully emerged on the world stage in 1964, I want to connect the views of two influential books pertaining to technology and cultural change that were published in this year; two books that also remain influential within the communication field: Marshall McLuhan’s *Understanding Media* and Herbert Marcuse’s *One-Dimensional Man*. In their opposing, yet complementary views, McLuhan and Marcuse establish a dialectic regarding the nature of human fulfillment in an age of accelerating technologies, or in McLuhan’s words, an age of “speed up.” Since Mod youth, from 1964 to the present, have used technologies to network and establish their microcosmic utopian scenes, the work of these two scholars will prove invaluable to establishing the historical atmosphere within which Mod first developed.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Nayak, *Race*, 9-10; Poiger, *Jazz*, 11.

<sup>50</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet, 1964); Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

As it plays now, the interdisciplinary nature of youth culture studies fits well into the heterogeneous field of communication. While previous work on youth has come from disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and history, my focus as a communication scholar will be, to paraphrase James W. Carey, to elaborate upon the “transmission” and “ritual” aspects of Mod youth culture as an international phenomenon.<sup>51</sup> More generally, the blossoming subfield of youth culture studies within communication studies will no doubt benefit from generational turnover, which offers an endless progression of unfolding narratives to be told and analyzed by this scholarly community. I believe that this dissertation will contribute specifically to this subfield of communication by addressing the lingering cultural impact made by asserting a connection between utopian visions of technology and utopian visions of youth during the twentieth-century.

This work critically engages past and present conceptualizations of modernity through “Mod culture.” My dissertation’s primary argument is that Mod’s forward-thinking sensibility allowed young people in the 1960s and since to reevaluate the personal meaning of being “modern.” The primary question that drives the argument is: What is it about Mod culture and its aesthetics that still bespeaks a contemporaneity despite its being a more than forty-year-old style and way of life? Beyond grounding the discussion in Mod’s initial emergence in the 1960s, the book broadens the cultural history of Mod by asking current participants—in four different cultural contexts—how they have come to understand and/or re-conceptualize Mod’s original 1960s view of “modernity.”

In sum, the ordering of the chapters underscores the actual chronology of the culture’s temporal and geographic movement. The first chapter starts in Britain, because this is where

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<sup>51</sup> James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

Mod started. The second chapter looks at Germany as one of the first countries to be exposed to this sensibility through the Beatles and ‘beat’ bands from England. The next chapter is about Mod-influenced gender aesthetics in the United States, since the 1964 “British Invasion” brought this style there. Finally, Japan is both the furthest geographical point from Britain and, also, where Mod did not fully take root until 1966. Thus, the structure of the book parallels the historical trajectory of Mod culture.

In my first chapter, “Whose Modern World?: British Mod Culture,” I analyze the historical origins of Mod culture. Every cultural phenomenon has its start somewhere, and Mod began in Britain. Why Britain? This chapter focuses on depicting a bustling youth culture scene centered in the once working-class neighborhoods of London’s East End—home to many of the first Mods. The economic and structural changes apparent in this part of the city make it a microcosm of how Mod culture has indeed left its mark, not just on that city, but on Great Britain as a whole. In order to understand why Mod began not just in London’s East End, but in Great Britain, requires a longer look back into late modern history there. Paralleling images of a gritty, Dickensian, mid-nineteenth century modernity with those of the ultra-“smart” [read: stylish] Mods one hundred years later, this chapter opens with the concept that subjects of the first industrialized nation had a problematic relationship with modernity. If industry and urbanization, for instance, made life for the working classes miserable in the 1860s, how would the same resources create a new, more jubilant lifestyle in the 1960s? Through the individual voices of British Mods past and present, I analyze how 1960s aspirations for a “new and improved” modernity—initially something beyond the confines of industry and warfare—have influenced different facets of current enthusiasts’ lives and what the particularly British legacy of this youth culture is.



While scholarship on postwar youth cultures has often focused on the threat of “Americanization” to European and other cultures worldwide, this chapter turns that notion on its head by acknowledging the impact of the Mod-influenced “British Invasion” of the mid-sixties and its enduring aftermath. Mod did start in Britain for a reason, and this chapter explores the key issues as to why it did. I suggest that the British Mod identity arises not only from the eradication of National Service (hence, giving more leisure time to youth) or the influence of American music such as Modern Jazz and Rhythm and Blues, but from the country’s specific struggle to define itself as a modern nation after World War II. With the decline of the British Empire, decolonization, and a lingering and uniquely problematic preoccupation with “class,” young Britons were in a position to challenge these increasingly outmoded connotations of what “Modern Britain” or “the Briton” had evolved into since the Industrial Revolution. In utilizing fashion and music culled from diverse social actors—whether British or foreign—and a historical context in which the country’s Prime Minister Harold Wilson would call upon British youth to be a part of the “white heat” of a new, technological age, I situate Mod’s initial emergence within this era.<sup>52</sup> In this cultural moment, Mods granted themselves the agency to run as fast as they could from dour Dickensian or Imperial stereotypes of modernity to something more positive, fresh, and democratic. In rethinking distinctly British narratives of modernity during the 1960s, these original British Mods set the tone.

In chapter two, entitled “The Young Idea: Youth, Generation, and Mod-ernity in Germany,” I look at socio-historical circumstances that may have laid the groundwork for Mod there. Long before Mod fashion and music were adopted by young people in 1960s Germany, the

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<sup>52</sup> This idea of a “white heat” emanating from a technological revolution in Britain comes from a speech made by Harold Wilson in 1960, four years before he became Prime Minister. See M.W. Kirby, “Blackett in the ‘White Heat’ of the Scientific Revolution: Industrial Modernisation under the Labour Governments, 1964-1970,” *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 50: 10 (Oct. 1999): 987.

concept of “youth” as fostering the progress of modernity had been established in that country’s culture. By examining both mainstream and alternative German youth movements from between 1900 and the late 1950s such as the *Wandervogel*, Hitler Youth, Dadaism, the Edelweiss Pirates, and “Swingkids,” I position Mod’s appearance in the 1960s within an ongoing national debate about the role of youth. Mod’s appearance in post-World War II Germany was imbued with meaning specific to that time. Just as Mods in the U.K. wanted to define themselves against and contrary to the old visions of British Modernity based on Empire and class, young Germans in the early 1960s were still struggling with the legacy of National Socialism and the horrors it left in its wake. If young people in Germany could not respect the parent generation and its heavily varnished fascist past, youths sought models from outside their cultural frame of reference. With British and American military forces’ presence still palpable at this time, young Germans were exposed to the emergent Mod culture of England through interpersonal and mediated communications such as the Beatles and other British bands’ tenures in German nightclubs, Anglo-American rock and pop music on the British Forces Broadcasting Service and, by 1966, the American Forces Network’s TV show *Beat, Beat, Beat*. Teen magazines such as *Bravo*, *Ok*, and *Music Parade* also reinforced this blossoming German youth culture.

The first half of this chapter concerns itself with the aforementioned socio-historical contexts in Germany that enabled Mod to take hold there as it did in the 1960s. The oral history accounts at the chapter’s conclusion, from Mods within the current scene, show how the subsequent generations of Mods—separated as they are by one or two generations from the National Socialist period—understand the cosmopolitan aspect of this youth culture within the current realities of the European Union. Does today’s Mod scene mirror this initially attractive element of internationalism that it held for German youth of the mid-sixties?

In the third chapter, “Mop-Tops, Miniskirts, and Other Misdemeanors: Mod Fashion and Gender Trouble in the U.S.A.,” the story of Mod in the U.S. starts with the Beatles “Invasion” of America in February 1964. Just as their initial live shows in Hamburg had won over German youth, the band’s televised appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* (as well as initial concerts in New York and Washington, D.C.) triggered a heightened youthful enthusiasm for all things British that lasted until approximately mid-1967. Beyond the Beatles’ style—which was partially influenced by the original Mods—and their music, young Americans were eventually introduced to such things as Mary Quant and Carnaby Street fashions, a myriad of quintessentially British spy genre movies and TV shows (e.g., Michael Caine’s Harry Palmer movies, *The Avengers*), “Mod versus Rocker” seaside battles in Britain, pop and op art by artists such as Peter Blake and Bridget Riley, Merseybeat bands like Gerry and the Pacemakers and the Searchers, as well as London-based Rhythm and Blues groups like the Rolling Stones and the Who—all of which were conceptualized as “Mod.”

While acknowledging all these aspects of Mod in the United States, the chapter particularly focuses on how male Mod fashions were stigmatized there and what historical context influenced this reception. As with the previous chapters, this one traces gender issues back to the modernity of the nineteenth century. I examine what I call “gender aesthetics,” or how gender “types” among middle-class Americans were determined through prescribed fashion and appearance. I look at how these gender aesthetics evolved and, in many respects, how they determined the U.S. mainstream attitude toward Mod by the time of the Beatles’ arrival. Mod male fashions were read as effete by the adult mainstream in the United States, while the girlish, and sometimes androgynous, Mod female fashions, caused a similarly disquieting response within the U.S. At this time, young American males with “long hair” were being suspended from

classes, or in extreme cases, expelled from school. Mod girls were often chastised for wearing short skirts, or seen as in a state of prolonged immaturity for wearing “Mary Jane” shoes and baby-doll dresses. Or, if Mod girls played instruments in all-girl garage bands, they were sometimes accused of being “masculine” and suspected of lesbianism. These responses are closely tracked through American media texts of the period, especially general interest and teen periodicals published between 1964 and 1967. As much of the American trade and academic literature available on Mod focuses on the sensibility as a fashion of the 1960s, I examine, through oral history and personal correspondence with American Mods, how this relationship between gender identity formation, fashion, and mediated images of 1960s Mod influence contemporary Mods’ understanding and celebration of the lifestyle.

Following the three main chapters of the dissertation, the epilogue, “Japan’s ‘Cult of Mod,’” suggests that Japan is—though the most far-removed country from Mod’s British origins—in some ways, the most Mod: in modern urban spaces, consumer practices, and the Mod scene itself. In trying to answer why this may be so, I first examine the idea of a lengthy history of mimetic cultural practices, such as the adoption of Chinese ideographs in the sixth century and American baseball in the nineteenth. Second, I look at the rebuilding of postwar Japan in trying to understand how Mod designs are part of the country’s cityscapes. Finally, I examine the arrival and adoption of the already hybrid culture of Mod from the 1960s onward.

Because this is the epilogue, with the story of Mod in Japan set more in the recent past than in the previous chapters, I use the earlier themes of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and gender to examine how the only non-Western (if westernized) country in this study has become, ostensibly, the premiere “Mod nation” of the new millennium. The Mod phenomenon was and is a forward-thinking one—one that embraced different strands of modernity. In analyzing the

“look” and visual language of Mod, in anything from fashion to graphics to architecture, the study of Mod visuals in Japan is especially provocative.

The conclusion of ““We are the Mods”” reaffirms the key argument of the dissertation—that the adoption of this self-reflexively “modern” youth culture has cultivated identities of young people in the U.K., Germany, the U.S., and Japan who are concerned with living in a more active, progressive, and self-aware way apart from mainstream culture. This principle was true in the 1960s and remains true for Mods today. Thus, whether discussing changing perspectives of youth, gender, or visual spaces, nation-specific reconceptualizations of “modernity” in these various aspects of culture can be historically attributed to the Mod phenomenon. The conclusion will do the comparative and analytical work required to take a last look at who Mods are and what the culture has become in four nations examined here. It is my sincerest hope that readers will, by the end of the dissertation, have an “Aha-Moment” and be able to say to themselves, “So, *these* are the Mods. Now I know what all the fuss is about!”

## 2.0 WHOSE MODERN WORLD? MOD CULTURE IN BRITAIN

Yes it's all or nothing  
Oh yeah, all or nothing  
You'll hear my children say, all or nothing, for me.

–“All or Nothing,” The Small Faces (1966)<sup>53</sup>

I am not a number. I am a free man.

– *The Prisoner* TV show, 1967<sup>54</sup>

After spending most of the day reading through all manner of publications about English Mod culture in the King's Cross branch of the British Library, I am off to meet Eddie Piller. I will be interviewing him at an East End pub called the Owl and the Pussycat, which is near his Acid Jazz music label offices (Fig. 1). I am especially pleased that Piller has agreed to an interview, because I came across issues of his former fanzine, *Extraordinary Sensations*, at the library. Before meeting with Eddie, I found out a little bit about him from various sources. He was part of the London Mod Revival scene of 1979, his mother ran the Small Faces Fanclub in the mid-

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<sup>53</sup> Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane, comp., *All or Nothing / Understanding*, the Small Faces, Decca 12470, 45 rpm.

<sup>54</sup> George Markstein and David Tomblin, “The Arrival,” directed by Don Chaffey, *The Prisoner* (1967; New York: A&E Home Video, 2006).

sixties, he has DJed in many parts of the world, and now occasionally DJs on the BBC.<sup>55</sup> He also happens to have a *Myspace* page, which easily led me to him.



**Figure 1** Eddie Piller, August 2007. Photo by author.

In order to get to the interview location, I had to get off the Tube at Liverpool Street and walked several blocks. The buildings surrounding the station’s front entrance are of the typical steel-and-glass variety and reminded me of skyscrapers Patrick McGoochan as *The Prisoner* (ITV, UK, 1967-1968) glimpses prior to passing out and landing mysteriously in “The Village.”

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<sup>55</sup> Eddie Piller’s name had come in interviews with German Mods prior to my trip to England. His longtime involvement in Mod was also confirmed in Graham Lentz, *The Influential Factor* (London: Gel, 2002), 75. For information of Fran Piller’s running of the Small Faces Fanclub, see Lentz, *Influential*, 75 and Paolo Hewitt and John Hellier, *Steve Marriott: All Too Beautiful* (London: Helter Skelter, 2004), 100. For information on Eddie Piller’s Acid Jazz label and his past and current DJing, see <http://www.acidjazz.co.uk/pages/acidjazz.htm>; “An Interview with Eddie Piller,” *Modculture* (accessed 14 Aug 2007); and <http://www.myspace.com/eddiepiller>.

I looked behind me and see “the Gherkin”—one of the most recognizable new buildings to reconfigure the East End cityscape.<sup>56</sup> Even the color of the glass makes it look like a pickle. Typical chain shops were strewn throughout the block and, if anything, were it not for the red double-decker buses, this part of the East End could easily be the downtown of nearly any American city. As I followed Shoreditch Road a few more blocks, and passed Bethnal Green Road, the skyscrapers gave way to the reddish brick row buildings and quaint shops I had expected to see. It was certainly not as sanitized for tourists as, say, Carnaby Street/Oxford Street or the Piccadilly Circus areas of London. Although there was trash lying about and some of the buildings had their share of graffiti, I also found chic and hip boutiques, restaurants, and bars. I turned right and walked down the small street where the pub was and went inside. It was a typical pub—but it was still quiet, as it was only four o’clock. I recognized Eddie from his *Myspace* pictures the moment he entered. He greeted the barman and they chatted. He seemed like a regular patron here, which made sense since his office was nearby. I introduced myself and we sat at a corner booth and talked for over an hour about “Mod and the world.” During the interview, he philosophized about several topics: what his parents did or did not tell him about Mod, the violence between Mods and skinheads in the late seventies, and the difference between “Mod” and the “Mod Scene.”

As he spoke, his distinctive, gravely voice and Cockney accent expressed varying emotions. At one point, his voice crescendoed while deriding what he saw as near-fascistic attitudes in the current British Mod scene. He touched my hand reassuringly and said, “Anyway, I’ve lost me temper,” and then continued. Involved with Mod—one way or another—since he was fifteen years old, this was clearly a topic Eddie has often thought about and commented on. I

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<sup>56</sup>This is actually the Swiss Re building at 30 St. Mary Axe, but is popularly known as “the Gherkin” due its shape and color. See Jonathan Jones, “A Fine Pickle,” *Guardian*, Oct. 18, 2004.



finally came to the question that I had dreaded asking all British Mods: If Mod was initially about working-class kids in London trying to be cool and searching for something better than their everyday lives, why has the word Mod also become attached to the Beatles and the ‘Swinging London’ phenomenon? The reason I feared this question, was because some Mods I had already interviewed vehemently separated the two phenomena from each other: the Beatles and Swinging London is ‘60s Pop’ and the Rhythm and Blues/Soul working-class underground is ‘Mod.’ However, Eddie’s not so black-and-white answer surprised me.

The first thing was the Jazz thing in London, where these guys were living the life all night long—wearing great clothes—into be-bop. Then kids...15, 14 years old saw them and thought, ‘Fuck me, they’re cool. I aspire to that.’ These kids were the first to be influenced by things like advertising, right. American concepts in advertising sales or in the concepts of advertising development were affecting these kids. These kids saw Mod as a way out of their boring, hum-drum working-class lives, and they grasped the elements of Mod that [were] attractive... so they looked at the old Jazzers, or the youngish Jazzers. They got into that and they looked at the boss at work and thought, ‘You know, I don’t want to work in a factory. I want to work in an advertising agency and places like that.’<sup>57</sup>

Eddie emphasized several important points. The influence of Jazz and advertising were linked to Americanization. In their attraction to both this music genre and American advertising, working-class kids seemed to find both figurative (the free sounding rhythms of Jazz) and literal (a new kind of work) means of escape.

And all these things led to the creation and the concept of two men: Andrew Loog Oldham and Peter Meaden, who collectively and separately arrived at the concept of youth culture as commodity. Youth culture as art as commodity—i.e., ‘I’m gonna sell this.’ And, in order to increase its selling it has to come overground. It’s been underground, but these kids have distilled it—they’ve taken the old jazz thing and improved it. They’ve set new rules, new kinds of concepts as to what it is to be a Mod and then they’d gone and thought, ‘Right. I wanna sell this to people. To do that, I’m gonna get the Rolling Stones and and I’m gonna get the High Numbers [the Who’s earlier name] and on the back of that I’m gonna get John Stephen and Carnaby Street and I’m

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<sup>57</sup> Eddie Piller, oral history interview by the author, digital recording, The Owl and the Pussycat public house, Bethnal Green, London, Aug. 16, 2007, on file in the department of Communication, University of Pittsburgh (hereafter “DCUP”).

gonna make Mary Quant the Mod shop. And I'm gonna charge for my services to do this, because I want everyone in the world to think like I do. And so, for the first time ever you have the concept of youth culture sold as commodity.

As Eddie continued to answer this question, I was intrigued by his story of how Mod evolved from an underground scene to a full-blown, media-saturated phenomenon that did include bands like the Rolling Stones and the Who (managed initially by Oldham and Meaden respectively) and designers Mary Quant and John Stephen. It suggests that an essential part of Mod, even if not present from day one, was a sense of entrepreneurship. Since working-class kids were trying to find a way “out” of factory jobs, why not “sell” what they knew best and had the most fun with? In doing so, young men like Andrew Loog Oldham and Peter Meaden were able to reconfigure a working life that was creative and fulfilling in both financial and personal terms.

Now, by the time it gets away from its roots of Soho—you're in America—it's a target t-shirt, it's a Mary Quant—Mary Quant's logo was a fuckin' target with a flower around it, for God's sake. You're left with the bite-size elements of commodity. And maybe it's divorced from the elements of the actual culture that went behind it, but that doesn't mean it's any less Mod. The British Invasion, the Remains [an American garage band]...were no less Mod than Herbie Goins and the Night-Timers. And the Who were copying Wilson Pickett, you know? The whole thing is mixed up and stirred. We ripped-off your music and sold it back to you. You sold it back to us.... I mean, you can't say 'the first bit's not cool, the second bit is.' We can mix old and new and create these scenes and we do it *very fuckin' well*. We're the best at the world at doing it. But it all comes down to 1960 and that decision between Andrew Loog Oldham and Peter Meaden to sell the Mod.

The last part of Eddie's answer is what surprised me most. He was not making a typical “authenticity argument”—that *true* Mod culture was tainted and, eventually, killed-off by commercialization. Rather, for him, the whole concept of Mod has been a continual remixing of Anglo-American sensibilities, of which marketing and selling are integral parts. Here, it was Englishmen Oldham and Meaden, not Americans, who wanted to market Mod.

Though he mentioned the Rolling Stones and Mary Quant in this broader definition of Mod, he still did not name the Beatles. I asked him again about their role in the Mod story. He smiled and responded with: “Are you a Mod or a Rocker? I’m a Mocker.” That’s a good answer if you don’t want to... you don’t wanna get caught” having to choose sides. He continued, “Some things John Lennon would say—totally Mod—political things... serious political issues. Ringo wasn’t necessarily Mod, but he was a very funny guy. George Harrison—king of the fuckin’ Mods—I mean, come on!” As he says this I laugh and suddenly imagine the scene in *A Hard Day’s Night* in which George Harrison dismisses a TV executive and tells him he will not be a teen rep for what he deems grotesque clothes (what he calls “grotty.”).<sup>58</sup> “So, the irrelevant thing... to me [is] people drawing boundaries saying: Lennon: no, McCartney: yes. Harrison: yes, Ringo Starr: no.” In this part of the interview Eddie continually referred to Mod as a “broad church,” that has woven together at least “fifteen different strands” of Modernist ideas.

Trying to visualize what “strands” he might have meant—I summoned a wide mélange of images. It is not just the Who’s Pete Townshend sporting a Union Jack jacket while smashing his Rickenbacker guitar or Parka-clad teenagers on Italian Vespas cruising through London streets. I picture everything from curvilinear white furniture made in Scandinavia and boxy-looking buildings designed by continental New Brutalists to British op-art mini dresses and the installation of helium-filled silver balloons at the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. These varied images and artifacts are not solely of one nation, but all belong to a vision of “the modern” that came to fruition in the sixties. Since Britain is geographically positioned between continental Europe and the Americas, it became a key space where ideas from both places comingled and produced something new. Postwar British youth embraced a new cultural hybridity: with music

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<sup>58</sup> *A Hard Day’s Night*, DVD, directed by Richard Lester (1964; New York: Miramax Entertainment, 2002).

from the United States and the Caribbean, designs from Italy and Scandinavia, and films from France. Thus, it has been Britain's shaking, stirring, and mixing of diversely modern ideas from various parts of the western world that has defined and sustained Mod culture. Though Mod is the child of mixed parentage, its birth was on British soil, which made Eddie Piller's claim that the British "invented it" legitimate.

It is perhaps no coincidence that Mod began in Britain, for it was the first industrialized, and arguably, "Modern" nation. But, as we will see in the next section, it was also very uneasy about playing this vanguard role. Driven by industrialization and a strong navy, British imperial growth worldwide coincided with unique social predicaments at home. Victorian modernity created extreme economic disparity between social classes and poverty for many. The two World Wars further underscored the dark side of this "progress." The first Mods of the postwar period reconfigured the way in which life had been lived under the rubric of "modern." Though the end of the Second World War meant a decline in world power for Britain, an economic upswing by the mid-fifties allowed the working-class more participation in economic and social life than ever before. This enabled self-identified Mods of different classes to reconceptualize modernity. This new vision emphasized leisure over work and youth over class. Mod culture also found ways to add beauty and color to too often ugly and monotonous urban space and technology. If London's working-class neighborhoods were especially unattractive—blackened first by industry and World War II, they would be micro-gentrified by the Mods through their aesthetic choices of clothing, transportation, and collectables. In the shadows of technology as life-destroying in factories and on battlefields, Mods' use of scooters, electric guitars, records, stereos systems, and transistor radios emphasized technology as life-enhancing. This chapter looks at key factors that created and continue to foster Mod culture and style, which transformed a grey, postwar world

into a colorful one. In order to do so, I begin with an overview of the first wave of British modernity that accompanied the industrial revolution. This section looks at the significance of social class and “Empire,” as well as the struggle that British society had in accepting modernity itself. Leaping forward in time to the late fifties, the next section examines the influence and effects that World War II had on Britons—and how the dissolution of the British Empire led to a breakdown of suddenly “outmoded” forms of modernity linked to class, technology, and national identity. The aforementioned themes pertain to the culture’s blossoming in the 1960s, but Mod has continued to flourish, in one guise or another, since then, as a touchstone for an idealized form of modernity. Therefore, the Northern Soul scene of the mid-seventies as well as the London-based Mod Revival of the same period will be discussed in the following section. The last two parts bring the Mod story up to date, as I elaborate on the issue of mediated memory in “Generation X Mods” of the late eighties onward—whether during the Britpop phase of the mid-nineties, or the Inter(net)connected world of the “New Millennium Mods.”

## 2.1 BRITISH MODERNITY IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

The very fact that Mods chose the moniker they did implies a connection with or, even, an affinity for modernity, but was *that* what they were actually thinking about? In the September 1964 issue of the *Mod’s Monthly* a short column asks, “What is a Mod?” The unnamed author continues her query: “Does a Mod have long hair, short hair—or what?” In her attempt to define the Mod, she gives some general guidelines: “Theoretically Mods run in an age group between 14 and 22. They are the top of the teenagers. Their dress and styles are original, different, unusual, and usually so successful that, especially in London, there are shops that cater only for

the Mods and no other set.” This sketch suggests that Mods were primarily London-based teens dictating the latest fashions. No matter how well-meaning the author’s explanation is of this new group of young people, there is more to Mod than just specific clothes and hairdos. These external expressions were simply the most obvious attributes of deeper changes afoot. Young people who identified as Mods or with Mod culture were redefining what it meant to be “modern.” Since Mod culture was, and still is, a primarily urban phenomenon, it can be identified as an extension and outgrowth of class-based city culture that was established more than a century earlier. Therefore, no discussion of modernity or Mods can begin without understanding the social conditions established in the aftermath of industrialization or the attitudes towards that change. In order to gain clearer insight into what these youths were reacting to, we need to identify how modernity itself was first conceptualized in Britain.

Historians posit that modernity or the “modern age” resulted from cultural transformations linked to industrialization, technology, and capitalism.<sup>59</sup> These changes became pronounced by the mid-nineteenth century with the rise of factories, the growth of cities, and a system of working life that starkly divided powerful industrialists from their workers. Since the industrial revolution began on British soil at the end of the eighteenth century, the country was the first to experience fully both the positive and negative repercussions of such changes. Newly wealthy capitalists found prestige through economic prowess, but still did not gain full access into the social world of the upper-class aristocracy. Meanwhile, a full shift from agricultural to industrial production did little to better the quality of life for workers. It was a world in which the working class truly spent nearly their whole lives working. The quality of life for most Britons

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<sup>59</sup> See Thomas J. Misa, “The Compelling Tangle of Modernity and Technology,” *Modernity and Technology* ed. Thomas J. Misa, Philip Brey, and Andrew Feenberg (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2003), 5; and Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 14-15.

did not seem to fit with most connotations of the word “progress,” and even elites—living under much better conditions—longed for a pre-industrial “green and pleasant” England.<sup>60</sup> Cramped, urban spaces, inadequate living conditions, and a new kind of class stratification came into focus by the mid-nineteenth century, which was also when “Britannia ruled the waves” under Queen Victoria’s sixty-four-year reign (1837-1901). Thus it was not only class and the ironic nostalgia for the pre-industrial nation that defined this initial British modernity, but colonization in the name of and ever-expanding and ever-mightier Empire that did so. Mapping-out this initial modernity in Britain requires a closer examination of how class, urbanization, and Empire influenced national identity there.

The early Victorian period left a legacy of Dickensian images of incivility and barbarity emerging from industry and the British class system, which yet remained a reference point in the Mod sixties, as seen in the 1968 film of Lionel Bart’s musical adaptation of the Dickens classic, *Oliver Twist* (1838).<sup>61</sup> The musical debuted in London theatres on June 30, 1960. In this story, the orphaned Oliver escapes his miserable life in a boys’ workhouse to seek freedom and fortune in London. Neither worldly nor wise, the waif soon finds himself on the mean streets of the city’s East End where he encounters a bevy of slightly suspect characters including a charming, young pickpocket named the Artful Dodger and Dodger’s “mentor,” the unscrupulous Fagin. Oliver’s entry into a life a crime is luckily over before it has begun. Falsely charged of a theft actually committed by Dodger, Oliver’s accuser—a wealthy Londoner—pities the child and invites Oliver to live with him at his stately home.

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<sup>60</sup> Jeremy Burchardt, *Paradise Lost: Rural Idyll and Social Change in England Since 1800* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 8, 16-17, 19, 21, 26; F.M.L. Thompson, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, Volume 1: *Regions and Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15, 33, 34; H. Cunningham, “Work and Leisure,” in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, Volume 2: *People and Their Environment*: (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 280-1; England as “green and pleasant” quoted from William Blake, “Jerusalem,” in *Blake: The Complete Poems*, W.H. Stevenson, ed. (Harlow, Eng.: Pearson Longman), 841.

<sup>61</sup> *Oliver!*, VHS, directed by Carol Reed (1968; Burbank, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1998).

The next morning Oliver awakens not only in a luxurious bedroom, but to a new world as well. Gazing out the window, the morning sun stretching across the park square and the rows of Georgian townhouses, Oliver's look of wonderment suggests he has never seen anything so beautiful. Soon, the sweet voice of the female flower sellers in the square, singing "Who Will Buy?" underscores Oliver's epiphany. Unlike his life so far, which has been on the outside looking in, in this moment he sees an inviting world that he may finally be able to join. Here, people are buying, selling, exchanging pleasantries, and expressing themselves freely. This "auditory community," made up of street merchants was important to Victorian life, and, thus, imbued with meaning for Oliver. According to historian David Garrioch, the street sellers' lyrical cries helped people "locate themselves in time and space" and facilitated in constructing their identities within this environment.<sup>62</sup> No wonder that the climax of the song contains the lyrics—sung by Oliver and the street merchants—"Who will buy this wonderful feeling? / I'm so high, I swear I could fly. / Me, oh my! / I don't want to lose it so what am I to do/ to keep the sky so blue? /there must be someone who will buy." Indeed, this is a world Oliver longs to belong to and a world that also somehow seems too good to be true. Interestingly, Bart himself was a "working-class lad" from the East End and was, for a time, a Communist party member before becoming famous for penning a string of pop hits. It is little wonder, then, that he chose Dickens's tale of a street urchin's salvation as the subject matter for his musical.<sup>63</sup> Bart's portrayal of Oliver's transformation in this particular song and scene reflect a consumption-

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<sup>62</sup> David Garrioch, "Sounds of the City," *Urban History* 30:1 (2003), 5-25.

<sup>63</sup> Lionel Bart, comp., "Who Will Buy?" on *Oliver!*, by the Original Cast, Decca LK4359, 33 1/3 rpm. For reference to Bart's leftist views see David Roper, *Bart! The Unauthorized Life and Times, Ins and Outs, Ups and Downs of Lionel Bart* (London: Pavilion, 1994), 12-13. "Who Will Buy" was also recorded and released by the beat band The Gamblers as the b-side of their 1966 "Cry Me a River" single on Decca. See, Terry Rawlings, *Then, Now and Rare British Beat: 1960-1969* (London: Omnibus, 2002), 88.



minded England in the 1960s “looking over its shoulder,” at the Dickensian past, as part of its self-definition in the postwar world.

Examining this portion of modern British history offers a richer and more nuanced cultural explanation of why Mod culture first arose there and why its appearance suggests a kind of national self-reflexivity. Although Britain was the first nation to modernize, the cultural climate there was one of severe discomfort with the changes that accompanied this transformation. Historians and cultural critics suggest that British society has been torn between modernity, symbolized by the “workshop,” and tradition, represented by the “garden,” ever since this time. In idealizing the southern countryside over the northern cityscape, the ruling British society, based in London, was at odds with one of its greatest historical achievements: industrialization.<sup>64</sup>

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the circulation of Mod culture and style happened through an adoption of mercantile or entrepreneurial values. Historians attribute these values not to the upper class, but to the middle class. The industrial revolution not only made the divisions between rich and poor more extreme, but established the capitalist class of often wealthy merchants, whose livelihoods were dependent on the production and selling of goods en masse. Though a merchant class existed in centuries previous, and the development of professionals such as lawyers, doctors, or professors expanded during the second half of the nineteenth century, the middle class’s role in British culture was upstaged by the more severe stratification between the upper and working classes. The middle class in Victorian England was

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<sup>64</sup> Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 7, 46, 51. For a more extensive discussion, see also Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

increasingly made up of educated professionals, but also included petit-bourgeois shopkeepers, and industrialists who had financially, at least, advanced from the lower classes.<sup>65</sup>

The growing British middle class of this period were either terrified of being associated with the working class—and aped the aristocracy in as many ways as possible—or were considered “radical” for wanting to improve the lot of the poor. These altruistic intensions may have stemmed from either liberal educational values or charitable views espoused in churches. For some middle-class people, these attitudes may have formed in response to the mercilessly punitive Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which illogically punished the poor for their day-to-day circumstances. Some middle-class people participated in the Chartist movement (1838-1848), which raised political class consciousness among the working class.<sup>66</sup> The group sought a “People’s Charter” that would not solely equate land ownership with voting rights or political representation. Despite thousands of signatures, the Charter was never officially approved, and thus, more liberal or radically-minded members of Parliament (MPs) remained the political voices of the working-class.<sup>67</sup> As we will see with many of the entrepreneurs who helped Mod working-class musicians achieve fame, fortune, and, most importantly, a “voice,” during the sixties—this was not the last time that progressive middle-class Britons helped those born into less fortunate socio-economic circumstances.

The upper class, although disdainful of the traditional mercantile middle class, because they worked for their money, nevertheless wanted them on their side, rather than on that of the

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<sup>65</sup> Ian Bradley, *The English Middle Classes are Alive and Kicking* (London: Collins, 1982), 29-32.

<sup>66</sup> This was certainly not the first time such awareness was present among the British middle and working classes, but it is important to the history of the period. For examples of previous political consciousness-raising in Britain, see Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1972) and E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1964).

<sup>67</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 91-92; Andrew August, *The British Working Class 1832-1940* (Harlow, Eng.: Pearson Longman, 2007), 75, 78-9.

workers. The promotion of quality education among the middle class was seen as an effective way of doing this. Middle-class professionals also were keen to see their children do just as well, if not better, as they had done. Both of these attitudes led to more middle class students in public schools. That being true, the rise of the aforementioned professions relates to the push of the merchant class to send its progeny to the elite public school system—formerly the terrain of only aristocrats and those of “old money.”<sup>68</sup> A newly intensified stratification, as we will see, between the very upper and lower strata of society, was colored by the elites’ fear of “mob rule” that was still lingering as a result of the 1789 French Revolution. The control and repression of mobility—through lack of formal education, for instance—among the working-classes was connected to a fear that the more working people knew about the world, the less they would be content with their often very small piece of it.<sup>69</sup>

Given the caution with which elite Britons regarded the world created by industry, and the grey life that industrialization brought about for many, it is perhaps easy to understand why nostalgia for an older Britain persisted. The joyless houses, streets, and people made palpable by Dickens were reflections of the cultural changes that happened during his lifetime. Even those lucky to rise above unpleasant or miserable conditions, were nonetheless unhappily aware that such realities existed on their soil and that they possibly helped to create such monstrous situations. Dickens’s prose creates a starkly inverse image from that of Jane Austen’s early

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<sup>68</sup> Bradley, *The English Middle Classes*, 83-4 and Wiener, *English Culture*, 20-21

<sup>69</sup> Alan Palmer, *The East End: Four Centuries of London Life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 74-75; Andrew Goodwin, “Introduction,” in Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (New Brunswick, NJ.: Transaction, 1992), xxv-xxvi.

nineteenth-century novels. Her stories of handsome estates and charming cottages owned by aristocrats and landed gentry have little to do with poverty or the working class.<sup>70</sup>

Just as Jane Austen's words reflected the predominantly rural, pre-industrialized "England as garden" reality, Dickens's provided accurate depictions of "England as workshop." Mid-nineteenth century London was the world's most populous city and the newer northwestern city of Manchester was the largest industrial one.<sup>71</sup> As massive cotton, coal, and steel factories began dominating the skylines of northern cities like Manchester, Newcastle, and Sheffield, stark social divisions became more markedly apparent in Britain between what German philosopher Karl Marx would eventually describe as "haves" and "have-nots," or the empowered and the disempowered. It is not surprising then, that Marx's future co-author and fellow countryman Friedrich Engels, on spending several years observing working-class life in England, believed a unique result of the industrial revolution was "the English proletariat."<sup>72</sup> Clearly, processes of industrialization were not limited to England, but since the industrial revolution started there, its affiliated social practices became the template for the dynamics between industrialists and their workers worldwide. This new being, the industrial proletariat, was wedded to "production" in factories. Worse still, compensation for this sacrifice was mealy inadequate. As one Manchester historian writes, "Merchants and mill-owners became millionaires on the back of the working poor."<sup>73</sup> Unlike artisans who creatively pursued their craft prior to the ascent of factories,

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<sup>70</sup> Originally published in 1814, *Mansfield Park* can be seen as the exception to the rule, since this novel does deal more explicitly with Fanny Price and her family's economic circumstances and also addresses the issue of colonialism and the slave trade via her adopted family's plantations in Antigua. Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1989).

<sup>71</sup> "A Brief History of London," *The Victorian Web* at <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/hist4.html> (accessed on Feb. 21, 2008) and Gary S. Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian Age: The Half-Known City* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

<sup>72</sup> Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/ch04.htm> (accessed December 4, 2007).

<sup>73</sup> Dave Haslam, *Manchester: The Story of a Pop Cult City* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), xii.

workers simply would repeat one particular task throughout the day. Factory hands were so specialized they were effectively bound to these jobs for life due to a lack of any transferable skills.

Because of the long hours required of them, workers lived to work, rather than worked to live. They suffered in all aspects of life, not merely at the workplace. Nowhere is this better seen than in the book which resulted from Friedrich Engels's observations: *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. It rivals Charles Dickens's literature in its haunting visions of this era's places and inhabitants. Engels describes a dismal uniformity to working-class neighborhoods from Manchester to London where badly built buildings are accompanied by "foul courts, lanes, and back alleys, reeking of coal smoke, and especially dingy from the originally bright red brick, turned black with time."<sup>74</sup> They often even had to pawn their good, "Sunday clothes" (if they had them) every Monday and collect them from the pawnbrokers the following Friday—their payday. In factory neighborhoods like Ancoats in Manchester, where "people were left to live like pigs," death rates from various infectious diseases were higher than elsewhere the city.<sup>75</sup> Here, large families were crowded into grimy cellar dwellings with little or no furnishings— sometimes with not even one bed between them. Men spent most of their day working, and yet, their wages could often not provide healthy living conditions for themselves and their family. Thus, it was not just horrific housing or back-breaking work that belittled the workers' lives, but also the lack of agency in how they could visually present themselves to the world. While the story of Mod culture is not necessarily a "rags-to-riches" story, the desire and ability of working-class teenagers to dress flashier, and more stylishly, is an essential facet of

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<sup>74</sup> Engels, *Condition*. See also Oz Frankel, *States of Inquiry: Social Investigation and Print Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 138-203.

<sup>75</sup> Haslam, *Manchester*, xii. See also Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*, 16-19.

Mod's renewed vision of modernity. In this sense, it becomes clearer as to how descendents of the raggedy street urchins of the 1830s eventually became the impeccably groomed Mods of the very same East End London streets by the 1960s. If clothes "make the man," then clothes also "made the Mod."

This industrialized world of the Victorian era hardened social stratification so that the notion of "class" became a stereotypically British problem, and, even, a "national obsession."<sup>76</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels lived in British exile starting in 1849 and their observations of inhospitable housing, people in tattered clothing, and inhumane working conditions among the English working class makes it easier to understand why the founders of Communism based their theories on much of what they witnessed in the U.K.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps this is why, even as late as post-World War II Britain, preoccupation with class and/or a proposed "classless society," continued. A testament to this long-standing cultural "institution" is historian George L. Bernstein's claim that "there is a unique consciousness of class in defining personal identity, with relatively little social mobility...The upper class is entrenched and benefits from a privileged position, while those below it, particularly the working class, are resentful and hostile. All of this is taken to be a problem of Britain."<sup>78</sup> So, although social divisions exist in many different cultures, Britons' experiences of them are coupled with an intense self-awareness. Unsurprisingly, it is interesting to note that a comparable social system in its immobility, at least, was to be found in the caste system of Britain's then-colony, India.<sup>79</sup> Unlike in the U.S., for instance, where the dream of

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<sup>76</sup> Bradley, *British Middle Classes*, 7.

<sup>77</sup> Morton H. Cowdon, "Early Marxist Views on British Labor, 1837-1917," *Western Political Quarterly* 16:1 (Mar. 1963), 34-52.

<sup>78</sup> George L. Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline: The Rise of Britain Since 1945* (London: Pimlico, 2004), 338. For a thorough study of the British working-class, see Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).

<sup>79</sup> Melitta Waligora, "What is your 'Caste'? The Classification of Indian Society as Part of the British Civilizing Mission," in *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India*, ed. Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann (London: Wimbeldon, 2004), 160.

upward mobility through “hard work” was cultivated, if not actually achieved, in the U.K. it was the nightmare of social immobility from which Britons, it seemed, could not awake.<sup>80</sup>

With India as the “Jewel in the Crown” of its Empire, Britain ruled an area so vast that the sun would never set on all of it at once.<sup>81</sup> As the Kinks would sing (much later) in their 1969 song “Victoria,” this empire spanned the extremes of geographic and social space: “from west to east/ from the rich to poor.”<sup>82</sup> Thus, with the manufacture of so many goods and the governance of so many people and places, Britain had a built-in market for its cotton, coal, and steel. While colonials were expected to purchase these products, the use of these goods would aid in the modernization of that locale. In return, British consumers could partake of inexpensive colonial imports like Indian tea and West Indian sugar as well as commonwealth products such as Canadian wheat.<sup>83</sup> While the immensity of the British Empire underscored its position of power on the world stage, “imperial Englishness tended to subsume national, ethnic, or regional particularisms,” ironically creating a kind of transnational or international culture in spite of itself. Inasmuch the British Empire placed English subjects together with people from far flung corners of the world, it was de facto multinational and multicultural.<sup>84</sup>

While the nineteenth-century effects of industrialization in Great Britain magnified the differences between rich in poor in an unprecedented way, the country’s expanding empire also

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<sup>80</sup> Calvin C. Jillson, *Pursuing the American Dream: Opportunity and Exclusion over Four Centuries* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

<sup>81</sup> India, as the most geographically vast of the colonies, was referred to as the “Jewel in the Crown” of the British Empire. Paul Scott, *The Jewel in the Crown: A Novel* (London: Heinemann, 1966).

<sup>82</sup> See, Roderick Cavaliero, *Strangers in the Land: The Rise and Decline of the British Indian Empire* (London: IB Tauris, 2002). For the Kinks reference, see Ray Davies, comp., “Victoria,” on *Arthur: Or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, performed by the Kinks, Reprise NR RS 6366, 33rpm.

<sup>83</sup> Andrew S. Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back: The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), 44.

<sup>84</sup> This point is convincingly argued in Jed Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 34-5. See also Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

created a new set of imperial subjects, most of whom would never set foot on British shores. No matter if these subjects lived in India, Kenya, Hong Kong, or Trinidad, they were all required to follow the laws and social mores established by the British elite. The British colonizers' attitude was that they were "bringing civilization" to those countries they ruled.<sup>85</sup> This view of superiority included racial discrimination against the colonized. British colonizers were not alone in thinking their race superior, but their empire was the largest, and thus, affected a greater swath of the global populace. Just as the climate of the factory dehumanized Britons through their work, colonization marked non-white members of the empire as inferior simply due the color of their skin. In this sense, the modernizing projects of industrialization and colonization in Britain aided in branding negatively both the white, working poor *and* non-white colonial subjects abroad.<sup>86</sup> Thus, class stratification and colonization limited the mobility of both the working class in Britain and people of color within the Empire.

It is strange to think that the first "modern Britain," that of the Victorian class system and Empire, is one so unappealing and repellent to the current *modern* eye, given the current connotations of the word "modern." Generally defined as meaning "new" and "up-to-date" in contemporary usage, it has generally positive or, at least, benign connotations. Though poverty and prejudice are by no means things of the past, it is important to remember that in this period in nineteenth-century British history, the products of modernization—factories, quickly expanding urban spaces, and colonization, as well as all the benefits and misfortunes that accompanied them—were unprecedented in their manifestations. Today, crime in urban areas has become a sad cliché, while an even sadder one is the way in which urban crime is usually

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<sup>85</sup> Thompson, *Empire Strikes Back*, 4; Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (Harlow, Eng.: Pearson Longman, 2007), 100, 102-103.

<sup>86</sup> Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2007), 21.



attributed to minorities or to the poor. While urban crime had certainly existed prior to the mid-nineteenth century, these issues were starting to become more noticeable and difficult to ignore during the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>87</sup>

Another effect of this process of modernization was how young people, especially those in the working class, were affected by new conditions such as factory work and urban blight. Given the horrible living conditions that many of the urban poor found themselves in, it is not surprising that there should have been real *Oliver Twists* and *Artful Dodgers* who wanted to escape this world. While the divisions between the British social classes created “Two Nations” within one country, and colonized peoples unfairly suffered prejudice on *their* native soil, many young people suffered more than they benefited from modernization.<sup>88</sup> As many a Dickens tale illuminates, young people were especially powerless because of Victorian attitudes towards them, often regardless of class. Minors were beholden to a society that looked upon them either as “little adults” or to those who saw them as easily manipulated creatures.<sup>89</sup>

While upper-class youths may have lived in healthier, more luxurious surroundings, they were still part of a “powerless minority.” Corporal punishment was not unusual for any class and fathers often took on an authoritative role—even towards their wives.<sup>90</sup> While lack of money

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<sup>87</sup> Fergus Linnane, *The Encyclopedia of London Crime and Vice* (Stroud: Eng.: Sutton, 2005); Fergus Linnane, *London's Underworld: Three Centuries of Vice and Crime* (London: Robson, 2003); Donald Serrell Thomas, *The Victorian Underworld* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

<sup>88</sup> E. Spencer Wellhofer, “‘Two Nations’: Class and Periphery in Late Victorian Britain, 1885-1910,” *The American Political Science Review* 79 (Dec.1985): 977-993; Dave Halsam, *Manchester*, xii-xiii.

<sup>89</sup> Aside from the already discussed *Oliver Twist*, see also Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (1850; New York: Dodd, Mead, 1943). See also William Chambers, “Children’s Troubles,” *Chambers’s Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* 14:680 (Jan. 1877): 13-15;

<sup>90</sup> Edward Jordan, *Victorian Childhood: Themes and Variations* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), xiii, 67; Martin J. Wiener, *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness, and Criminal Justice in Victorian England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Troy Boone, *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of the Victorian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 43-64; Elizabeth Foyster, “Creating a Veil of Silence? Politeness and Marital Violence in the English Household,” *Transactions of the RHS* 12 (2002): 395-415; Susan Hamilton, “Making History with Frances Power Cobbe: Victorian Feminism, Domestic Violence, and the Language of Imperialism,” *Victorian Studies* 43:3 (Spring 2001): 437-460.

and prospects bound the male children of the British working class to a fairly certain present and future in factory life, upper-class boys were being put through another kind of mill: the public school system. The British public schools—despite using the word “public”—required tuition payments and, thus, were not open to all. According to Jon Savage, the ideology of these schools was crafted in the 1830s and influenced by the imperial attitudes of the times. The schools were meant to inculcate “religious and moral principle... gentlemanly conduct... and intellectual ability,” so that these young men could eventually take the reins as “enforcers of imperial order.”<sup>91</sup> Further dividing the haves and have-nots was the fact that education was not usually an option for working-class children. While “the aristocracy assumed that it was civilized,” it also viewed the masses as “barbaric.” Thus, “it would be dangerous to educate the masses, who might become dissatisfied with their station in life.”<sup>92</sup> In this sense, Victorian-era PM Benjamin Disraeli’s idea of “Two Nations” within England was firmly established with the youngest of its subjects. For the working class or working poor, as the example of Oliver’s life at the workhouse shows, the idea of child labor laws was a dream yet to materialize. No wonder some children of the working class were willing to take to the streets and try their luck there. For the Victorian street urchins, stealing and sleeping on the streets may have seemed a step up from starving and sleeping in a damp cellar. At least these youths had some freedom, albeit bitterly won, and a lackluster victory at that.<sup>93</sup>

Since this Dickensian reading of Britain’s first modern period seems to suggest that there was barely room in working-class life for anything outside of work and/or survival, it attests to

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<sup>91</sup> Savage, *Teenage*, 18-19.

<sup>92</sup> This historian characterizes the way the class system in England has and, arguably, still does function. See Bernstein, *Decline*, 348.

<sup>93</sup> Images of these children and their difficult lot in life was immortalized by the drawings of Henry Mayhew. See Boone, *Heart of Darkest England*, 19-42.

the tenacity of the people living in these circumstances that somehow a British working-class culture was born. While the modernization process created an unforgiving cultural milieu of class and race discrimination, the silver lining to this dark cloud was the spaces for the subjugated to create and define their own culture. This effect is what Marshall Berman has called the “modernity of the streets,” where this great cultural change “organizes experiences and orchestrates conflicting structures of feeling.”<sup>94</sup> Though perhaps the very poorest of the working-classes were unable to participate, or participate often, those who could, cultivated what became staple leisure spaces for this population: the corner public house (“pub”) and the music hall.

The corner pub, like the corner shop, reflected the limited mobility of the working class. Since workers usually walked to and from their places of employment, they might stop at a pub along the way home. Once inside, the Victorian-era public house was either made up of, “little secret sparkling private bars, big public bars with deal-lined walls and sawdust on the floors, or saloon bars rich with ferns, carpets, mirrors, a glowing fire and a view through to the billiard room.”<sup>95</sup> Neighborhoods like Bethnal Green and Whitechapel in London’s East End, or Bolton and Preston in greater Manchester, were relatively far-removed from the city centers and the more genteel parts of town. Thus the less-than-adequate living conditions of this population were also out-of-sight and out-of-mind for the more affluent. Housing areas in which the working class lived were cheek-to-jowl with the factories where they worked and, certainly, their limited monetary resources prevented their use of what public transport was available at that time. Therefore, the working class stayed put in their quadrants of the city. The result of this separation was a “new urban, industrial culture based on music and nightlife, street life, singing

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<sup>94</sup> Qtd. in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters, *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1999), 9.

<sup>95</sup> Mark Girouard, *Victorian Pubs* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 2.

and drinking.”<sup>96</sup> While the corner pub was already established between the 1830 and 40s, the music hall became a more entrenched part of working-class culture by the 1850s.<sup>97</sup>

The music hall was one of the first substantial spaces where working-class performers could entertain and make meaning out of their everyday experiences. Functioning often as satirists, music hall performers could poke fun at their betters while also legitimizing street slang and bawdy language among the working class through its repetitive use in their skits and songs. Eric James Abbey describes music halls as “raucous gathering spots to release troubles of the workday.” The music itself was constructed from simple chords and invited singing along.<sup>98</sup> Music hall entertainment remained a solid force in working-class culture until the rise of new media for entertainment, such as cinema and, later, television. It was also in the music hall, this homegrown “folk” culture of the British working-class, that some of the musical and intellectual roots of 1960s Mod culture were to be laid.<sup>99</sup>

This culture of working-class, urban neighborhoods was created by both native Britons and new immigrants. The cities, because of their industrial dimensions, attracted the world’s poor—who somehow, not knowing from experience—envisioned more possibilities on England’s shores. “The Irish and Russo-Polish Jews and Chinese, the Somalis, the West Africans and the Indians, the Spanish, the German and the Italians, the Dutch and the Pakistanis, along with indigenous Londoners, make up the fabric of [the East End’s] history,” according to one view. “The true Eastender comes in many colors.”<sup>100</sup> Certainly some, like the Jewish immigrants

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<sup>96</sup> Haslam, *Manchester*, xiii.

<sup>97</sup> See also Peter Haydon, *The English Pub: A History* (London: Robert Hale, 1994).

<sup>98</sup> Eric James Abbey, “Dedicated Follower of A Well Respected Man: Music Hall and Irony in the Kinks” (paper presented at the annual meeting for the Popular Culture Association, Atlanta, USA, Apr. 14, 2006). See also J.S. Bratton, *Music Hall: Performance and Style* (Milton Keynes, Eng.: Open University Press, 1986) and Dagmar Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>99</sup> Hewitt and Hellier, *Steve Marriott*, 48.

<sup>100</sup> Hewitt and Hellier, *Steve Marriott*, 23.

who arrived from Eastern Europe by the late 1800s, saw Britain, like the United States, as a safe haven away from continual persecution. Though some colonial subjects came to live in England during this time, the mass immigration from such places did not escalate until much later, in the period of decolonization following World War II. Port cities such as Liverpool and Newcastle, as well as the docklands in London, became points of entry for a new wave of future Britons—and ones who would eventually play influential roles in the cultural revolution of the 1960s.<sup>101</sup>

## 2.2 MODERNISM: FIN DE SIECLE TO WORLD WAR II

While Britain's modernity was bound primarily to economic domination via their Empire, the production of cultural "Modernism" seemed thin-on-the-ground compared to other western countries. Modernism was and is used to describe literature, visual art, music, and architecture that responded, questioned, and struggled with the cultural changes brought about through industrialization. Modernism was a "rejection of the past and an embrace of aesthetic innovation" that was continually searching for new forms of expression.<sup>102</sup> While European nations were, by the 1890s, producing avant-garde visual art by the 1890s onward (from French Impressionism to Italian Futurism), literature (from French Symbolism to Switzerland's Dada), architecture (from German *Jugendstil* to Soviet Constructivism), and music (from Russia's Stravinsky to France's Satie), England seemed stuck in its stodgy imperial culture.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> For immigration of Jewish immigration in the 1800s, see Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1650-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2002), 127. For postwar immigration of former Colonial subjects, see Peter Leese, *Britian Since 1945: Aspects of Identity* (Houndsmills, Eng.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 32-34.

<sup>102</sup> Mary Ann Gilles and Aurelea Mahood, *Modernist Literature: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>103</sup> See Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

“Modernism” in this more formal sense to Britain is primarily confined to the literary movement (roughly 1880-1930), which included English writers such as E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf, Irishman James Joyce, and the American expatriates T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. As literary theorist Jed Esty also points out, the aesthetic of the English Modernists were ensconced in a culture that was mourning the passing of traditional community while living through a “high metropolitan phase.” This paradoxical situation made for what he calls an “abbreviated avant-garde episode [that] makes English artistic life seem remarkably unmodern.” Despite attempts by these literary Modernists to kick against the grain of Victoriana, their prose and poetry problematized, rather than reconfigured, the uneasy relationship that British culture had with modernity.<sup>104</sup> Interestingly, the only other visual aesthetic in England to become widely known for wrestling with modernity during this period was that of William Morris’s Arts and Crafts movement. It called for a return to natural (often floral) forms in design and a handmade process of production to combat the industrialization of art. While the organic imagery mirrored that of the French *Art Nouveau* and German *Jugendstil*, the emphasis on returning to the artisanal shed was as British as William Blake’s view of England as a “green and pleasant land.”<sup>105</sup>

While one might think the Modernists’ complex reading of contemporary life would appeal to a culture that had questioned modernity since its very beginnings, it appeared that even the critiques themselves were unpalatable, because they emphasized that people were indeed living in a changing world they could not escape. Beyond the organic visions espoused on the Continent by Art Nouveau, visual manifestations of Modernism there more often exposed the

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<sup>104</sup> Wiener, *English Culture*, 5-6 and Conekin, Mort, and Waters, *Moments of Modernity*, 9.

<sup>105</sup> Jennifer Wicke, “Coterie Consumption: Bloomsbury, Keynes, and Modernism,” in *Marketing Modernism: Self-Promotion Canonization, Rereading*, ed. Kevin J.H. Dettmar and Stephen Watt (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 112, 123.

technical side of life. According to Nigel Whiteley, the “characteristics of modern design were standardization, simplicity, and impersonality: characteristics that referred back to mechanical efficiency and machine production.” Therefore, as Modernism observed and wrestled with modernity, it also nonetheless created something that was born of it and reflected it. Because of this, it was unattractive to those who feared change and “the new.” In this sense, refusing the visual aesthetics of Modernism, that which seemed to have all the warmth of factory equipment, Britons were again choosing the “garden” over the “workshop” as the space in which they truly identified.

Clearly, the vision of “England as workshop” created this urban and working-class existence in mid-nineteenth century that seemed slow to change until well after World War II. Though there were some slight improvements, working and living conditions remained mostly unchanged until the early 1960s.<sup>106</sup> Upward mobility was also thwarted by the lack of formal education for working-class youths. It was only by 1880 that British working-class children between the ages of five and ten were required to attend schools. If anything, schools functioned as structuring mechanisms in that they produced compliant future workers. It was not until 1918, after the end of World War I, with the passing of the “The Fisher Act,” that the school “leaving age” was raised to fourteen. Nonetheless, these state schools were still ranked as inferior to the public schools attended by children of the elites, and did not do much to change the children’s destiny in the workplace. Noticeably, this act was passed after World Wars I. This is not

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<sup>106</sup> Palmer, *The East End*, 153. See also *East is East*, dir. by Damien O’Donnell (Los Angeles: Miramax, 2000), which documents this in the living situation of a working-class Anglo-Pakistani family in Salford, Manchester as late as 1971.

coincidental as the war required the sweat and sacrifice of young Britons from all classes. The horrible experiences of combat on foreign soil thus functioned as a kind of social leveler.<sup>107</sup>

Reform in education starting after World War I was also coupled by a growing fear of “Americanization,” that had already begun filtering in around the turn-of-the century. As allies with one another in the then-called Great War, a wider social spectrum of young British and Americans encountered one another for perhaps the very first time.<sup>108</sup> Would American values make an impact on young Britons? This fear was particularly connected to the growing influence of Hollywood-produced films. Ideals of the United States’ meritocratic democracy were said to be presented in these films and, thus, potentially threatening to the English way of life. Just as the elites had feared education would prompt dissatisfaction and revolt among the masses—it is not unlikely that they saw this as a dangerous kind of transnational contact and “education.”<sup>109</sup> In fighting this potential threat, the British elites tried to promote an idealized national past—one that even sentimentalized working-class neighborhoods.<sup>110</sup> While a British working-class pride developed—one that arguably still exists to this day—the influence of American culture could not be kept at bay forever. In this turn towards American culture after World War I—a culture that Britain had long seen as inferior to its own—a new process of modernization was taking place. It was not only American-made films that appealed to young people of many British social classes by the 1920s, but the American-born genre of Jazz music. Both black and white Jazz

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<sup>107</sup> On a history of an educational system in Britain, see Stephen J. Ball, *Education Policy and Social Class: The Selected Works of Stephen J. Ball* (London: Routledge, 2006); Ludger Woessmann and Paul E. Peterson, eds. *Schools and the Equal Opportunity Problem* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007). On the “social-leveling” aspect of the war, see Alan Sinfield, *Literature, Politics, and Culture in Postwar Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 14-15; Harold L. Smith, *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); and Peter Lewis, *A People’s War* (London: Thames Methuen, 1986), 243.

<sup>108</sup> Savage, *Teenage*, 176.

<sup>109</sup> Goodwin, “Introduction,” *Uses of Literacy*, xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>110</sup> Bernstein, *Decline*, 398.



musicians first toured Europe in 1919.<sup>111</sup> However, the genre's Afro-American roots and therefore, its perceived exoticism by young and progressive Britons, made it a welcome antidote to more "old fashioned" and homegrown music associated with an adult and/or traditional culture.<sup>112</sup> Like music hall, Jazz also expressed freedom against the conventional tastes of the upper classes. Instead of focusing on lyrical satire, Jazz's "social critique" was in the air of freedom made palpable through its lack of tight musical structures. Rather than inciting sing-alongs like music hall songs, Jazz was a musical genre that begged listeners to dance. Since Jazz was created by black Americans, working-class Britons believed they had a cultural position within the British Empire parallel to them. Thus this was a music that could speak directly to and for them.<sup>113</sup>

Though the brutality of WWI greatly contributed to creating a "lost generation" of young bohemians in the participating countries, the nature and level of destruction of World War II was unprecedented. The atomic bomb could not only destroy nations, but the world itself, and the Holocaust showed how millions of dead bodies could be the end-result of extreme prejudice and discrimination combined with an efficient, "production-line" mentality. On the ground in Britain, there were barely any cities that totally escaped the German Luftwaffe's Blitzkrieg. Despite ruined cities and huge financial debts owed to their American allies, Britons nonetheless hoped to make a fresh start and rebuild their country better than before. Amid the rubble, a new period of forward-thinking and modernization was about to appear in Great Britain.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> George McKay, *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 101.

<sup>112</sup> Catherine Parsonage, "Fascination and Fear: Responses to Early Jazz in Britain," in *Cross the Water Blues: African American Music in Europe*, ed. Neil A. Wynn (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 92.

<sup>113</sup> McKay, *Circular Breathing*, 53-4.

<sup>114</sup> Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2002), 39-60.

World War II proved an exceptionally strong catalyst in people's desire for creating a modernity that reevaluated the importance of industry, social class, and Empire. The destruction of the war itself had disillusioned the populace. World War II was and is "The War" for Britain. In its aftermath there was bankruptcy and a greatly downsized Empire. Simply put, Great Britain was no longer a superpower. It was also a war in which a large percentage of the civilian population was affected. During WWII it was not only the British forces at Dunkirk and the myriad of other battles on land, sea, and air who had suffered and died, but the mothers and children who met their end in subway tunnels and makeshift shelters trying to survive German bombings.<sup>115</sup> With the reality of the atomic bomb unleashed in 1945 and the organized efficiency of murder orchestrated at factory-like German death camps revealed, these outcomes of modernization—though orchestrated by other powers—were frightening, indeed. The atomic bombings and the Holocaust were not only beyond-horrific for their victims and survivors, but psychologically affected citizens around the world.<sup>116</sup> The dehumanizing attributes of industry and technology had reached new lows. Was it possible for the modern world to show a more humane face after this had happened?

### 2.3 MAKING BRITAIN "MOD"

By the end of World War II unrecognizable bombed cities gave many Britons an overall sense of disorientation. If this was the outcome of "progress," why should anyone desire it? Yet it also gave the British a sense that their country faced a fresh start in which anything might be

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<sup>115</sup> Marina MacKay, *Modernism and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5-6.

<sup>116</sup> Savage, *Teenage*, 464.

possible—even through something as unlikely as Mod culture—like a brilliantly-colored flower growing out of the rubble. Documentary films about British Mod bands the Who (*Amazing Journey: The Story of the Who*, 2007) and the Beatles (*The Beatles Anthology*, 1995) begin with the air-raid sirens of the Blitz and film footage of people making their way through devastated cityscapes. Since many of the young people who created Mod culture in the fifties and sixties were literally “war babies,” the aftermath of this war influenced their earliest sensibilities. Referring to the impact of the War on his generation’s childhood, the Who’s Pete Townshend remarks, “Practically everyone I knew that I grew up with... if they were wild and crazy and weird or in a band... they had some weird shit happen to them when they were kids.” Chris Stamp, who managed the Who with Kit Lambert between 1964 and 1975, describes it this way: “If you think about it, the wound of all these working-class war kids is that we didn’t have a voice.”<sup>117</sup> A literal cultural collapse required rebuilding with new design plans and “architects,” which also enabled young people to find their voice.

A ruined economic state in the immediate postwar years seemingly stripped Britain of its former “world power status” in one blow. Given this atmosphere, the immediate postwar period would show that even British elites were trying to find new paths in coming to terms with modernity—to the extent of ushering in an era of socialist-leaning government, with its “welfare capitalism” meant to raise the living standards of lower-class Britons. The 1945-elected government under Prime Minister Clement Attlee was the first Labour administration since the party’s founding in 1901. The party’s winning campaign slogan was “Let Us Face the Future,” and this was perhaps the very first time in “Modern Britain” that a focus on a modern identity—one with more of the future than past in mind—was given a positive reception by political

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<sup>117</sup> *Beatles Anthology*, DVD, directed by Geoff Wonfor and Bob Smeaton (London: Apple Corp, 1996); *Amazing Journey: The Story of the Who*, DVD, directed by Murray Lerner (Universal City, CA.: Universal Pictures, 2007).

leaders. The Attlee government wanted to establish “a Socialist commonwealth of Great Britain—free, democratic, efficient, progressive, public-spirited, its material resources organized in the service of the British people.”<sup>118</sup> Though the Attlee government implemented important reforms including the nationalization of key industries and services from health to transportation that benefited more Britons than ever before, the government was not to be reelected. The government’s promises of progress on all fronts were still intangible in light of most people’s day-to-day lives. Even some rationing remained in effect. The British still refer to this period as glum and austere. Mod-era fashion designer Barbara Hulanicki describes her arrival to London in 1948 this way: “It was a dark and smoggy day and there were rows and rows of little grey houses. They seemed to go on for ever, miles and miles of them. Everything was barren, cold, and grey. There weren’t any people about.” While a better future had been promised—even displayed in the Labour Party’s “last Hurrah,” the 1951 Festival of Britain—it had still not yet arrived.<sup>119</sup>

Despite the Attlee administration’s defeat in 1951, continuing discussions of “change” and “the future” created a climate that was ripe for the emergence of what Arthur Marwick describes as “new actors” on the cultural scene.<sup>120</sup> Those members of the community who had not had much of a voice were suddenly being heard—and seen. The coronation of the twenty-seven-year-old (Queen) Elizabeth in June 1953, the end of nationwide rationing by 1954, and overall economic growth by the mid-fifties spawned a new consumer-driven age, not to mention the birth of the “teenager” as a new market, produced a new level of participation by the working

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<sup>118</sup> Nigel Whiteley, “Pop, Consumerism, and the Design Shift,” *Design Issues* 2 (Autumn 1985), 31; See also Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society, and Politics* (Harlow, Eng.: Pearson-Longman, 2005), 17; Sinfield, *Post-War Britain*, 15-16.

<sup>119</sup> Barbara Hulanicki, *From A to Biba: The Autobiography of Barbara Hulanicki* (London: V&A, 2007), 22 and Christopher Booker, *The Neophiliacs* (London: Collins, 1969), 35; Becky Conekin, “*The Autobiography of a Nation*”: *The 1951 Festival of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

<sup>120</sup> Marwick, *Sixties*, 41.

class.<sup>121</sup> Decolonization, meanwhile, brought new immigrant groups from south Asia and the West Indies into Britain during this time who would share the benefits of war recovery.

The cultural context of these changing attitudes starting in 1945 made it possible for the Mod to come into being. According to Kevin Davey, Britain's earlier "marginalization" of a forward-thinking Modernism paradoxically created a more vigorous embrace of such concepts in the postwar period. The construction of new public housing environments, which began more and more to consist of futuristic-looking modernist high-rise blocks, followers of Mod culture would formulate a complementary sleek, yet street-smart, Modernism that had never really flourished in Britain before.<sup>122</sup> This, then, prompts a more specific answer to the question: What is Mod culture?

## 2.4 THE BIRTH OF MOD

If one were able to travel back to the streets London, Liverpool, or Manchester, for instance, circa 1956, one would arrive at a decisive transformative moment not only for Britain, but especially the nation's young. This was the year of the Suez Crisis, when Britain would reticently see the sun set on its Empire. The British army's attempted invasion of Egypt in order to regain control of the Suez Canal had been squelched by the U.S. government. Not only had the U.S. (along with the Soviet Union) emerged as a superpower by this time, but it had also been *the* country to help Britain out of its postwar economic slump. The British government had

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<sup>121</sup> For the birth of British teen marketing in the postwar period, see Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, *An Affluent Society? Britain's Postwar "Golden Age" Revisited* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 187-189.

<sup>122</sup> David Punter, *Modernity* (Houndsmills, Eng.: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 18; Davey, *English Imaginaries: Six Studies in Anglo-British Modernity* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), 3.

no choice but to comply.<sup>123</sup> It was clear that the once-mighty Britannia's sphere of influence was shrinking in tandem with its Empire. While Prime Minister Anthony Eden resigned after the debacle, and older Britons realized the consequence of an American-forced retreat from Suez, I am hard-pressed to believe that most British teenagers mourned the death knell of Empire. They were likely more concerned with their records, deciding what clothes to wear, and looking for new hang-outs.

The reason one must look back as far as 1956, even though Mod was originally a sixties phenomenon, is that what eventually became known as “Mod,” stems from an amalgam of styles and ideas that circulated and were adopted by the young during this earlier period. Starting in 1956, teenagers around Britain started experimenting with different identities. As pointed out by several noted youth culture scholars such as Britons Dick Hebdige and John Clarke, postwar British youth were searching for identities that challenged notions of cultural “belonging” to a particular social class or even to the nation.<sup>124</sup> This creation of a revised modernity also incorporated a new relationship with media—often related to music—records, radio, musical instruments, TV programs, niche publications, and so on. All the strands of popular music that came together to make-up Mod culture, save one, were American. With the exception of Caribbean Ska (then known as “Bluebeat”), Modern Jazz, Blues, Rhythm and Blues (R&B), Soul, Rock and Roll, and Skiffle, all came from the United States. Though these genres were not all necessarily modern in the sense of “new,” their perceived exoticism seemed to transport listeners out of their immediate surroundings. Whether with their American or Afro-Caribbean roots, these sounds could be incorporated into visions for a more cosmopolitan Britain to come.

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<sup>123</sup> William Roger Lewis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez, and Decolonization—Collected Essays* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 57 and Booker, *Neophiliacs*, 113.

<sup>124</sup> See the essay collection by Hebdige, Clarke, and others in *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1975).

As one British music historian describes it, by “going to a club to see a group of Manchester musicians playing Chicago blues,” you could “be part of another experience” without leaving England.<sup>125</sup>

In searching for youth spaces—both figurative and literal—young people could only create their lifestyles based on what was available to them at this point in time. Thus, understanding Mod culture entails not just an examination of internal impulses and desires of these young people coming to the surface, but of how larger cultural changes bore down upon them and informed both abstract and concrete needs. A more affluent economy by the mid-fifties allowed youths of varying social classes a more participatory role in consumer culture. For instance, the most notoriously fashionable men of nineteenth century Britain—such as Beau Brummell or Oscar Wilde—had been men of comfortable means.<sup>126</sup> While they were not aristocrats, they were middle to upper class with enough spare income to look the part. As we have already encountered through Friedrich Engel’s dismal nineteenth-century portraits of working-class life, it is unlikely that sartorial savoir faire was of great concern to the huddled masses.

However, the postwar economic boom allowed urban working-class young people to consider such things as how their clothing could be part of an overall cultural trend the emphasized the “new.” As buildings, fashions, and so on changed from top-down, some young people were influenced by this atmosphere.<sup>127</sup> Since the mid-fifties Tory governments did not entirely quell construction of the futuristic-looking structures promoted by Attlee, Modernist

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<sup>125</sup> Halsam, *Manchester*, 97.

<sup>126</sup> Regarding Beau Brummell, see Rodney Bennett-England, *Dress Optional: The Revolution in Menswear* (London: Peter Owen, 1967), 20. For Oscar Wilde’s upper-middle-class social status, see Jonathan Fryer, *Wilde* (London: Haus, 2005), 5-11; 16-23.

<sup>127</sup> As we see, this trend began in the fifties, but reached a point of fruition in the Mod period of the sixties. The visible changes were noticeable in art, architecture, clothing, hardware, interior design, graphics, and music. See Cawthorne, *Sixties Source*.

architecture remained an integral aspect to the country's new cityscapes. Couched within the ongoing national tension between tradition and innovation, housing towers made of "concrete, exposed pipes, [and] steel and glass," arrived in the U.K. for the first time and with mixed reviews. Some working-class urbanites found that these dwellings inhibited traditional neighborly attitudes. Nonetheless, these towering "sky flats," which cropped-up in working-class neighborhoods, were just as startling, "new," and—at times—disquieting as the fashions adopted by the young people who lived there.<sup>128</sup> These are just two examples of how the expanding possibilities of "who and how to be" among the mid-fifties youths connected to macro-level changes such as economic upswing and postwar urban planning. With extra shillings in hand, postwar youths walked jauntily through their neighborhoods with an air of freshly gained confidence. We can imagine them stopping to take in all that laid before them as they gazed at these modern constructions rising above Victorian tenements, while perhaps hoping that their futures could similarly ascend above and beyond conventional expectations.

#### **2.4.1 Setting the Youth Scene: 1956-1960**

1956 was not just pivotal in British culture because of the Suez Crisis, but because this was when the various seeds of Mod culture began to be planted, primarily in defining the importance of youth-specific music, fashion, and spaces. As the previous section describes, young people who imagined themselves modern and "above and beyond" cultural conventions, facilitated this process. However, as we shall see, this creative visualization on the part of British teenagers was

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<sup>128</sup> Iain Chambers, *Popular Culture: The Metropolitan Experience* (London: Methuen, 1986), 45; Simon Sadler, "British Architecture in the Sixties," in *Art and the Sixties: This Was Tomorrow*, ed. Chris Stephens and Katharine Stout (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 117-120; and Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).



furthered by entrepreneurs who hoped to profit from the young's optimistic prophesies. As British youths yearned to be all dressed-up with places to go, slightly older adults willingly rose to the challenge with their own postwar aspirations by opening youth-oriented shops and cafes, or eventually, managing young entertainers. By 1956 designer Mary Quant—who would less than a decade later become known as the “mother of the miniskirt”—had already opened her flagship boutique, Bazaar, on London's King's Road. The same year, Larry Parnes who would go on to manage teen rock and roll singers with rambunctious-sounding stage names like Marty Wilde and Duffy Power, discovered his first star Tommy Steele, (nee Hicks), at a Soho coffee bar.<sup>129</sup>

In mid-fifties Britain, like in America and on the continent, too, youthful desire for “something more” from life was often interpreted by adults as teenage rebellion. Certainly, rebellion was a part of the story. As a panorama of limited life choices stretched before them, often coupled with parents' lack of encouragement of ambition, it is little wonder that a great deal of kicking, screaming and rioting, even, took place among less-moneyed youths. Richard Hoggart's 1957 book on working-class British life, *The Uses of Literacy* describes how many people of this social class even frowned upon those—in this case the young—who tried to move up and out of their tightly-knit communities. That being said, working-class youths who aspired towards more in any way they could were not necessarily supported by their families and/or communities and marked as oddballs or troublemakers because they craved individual rather than group identity.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> “Mary Quant: A New Approach Chelsea 1955–1967,” *Victoria and Albert Museum* at <http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/fashion/1960s/exhibition/quant/index.html> (accessed Feb. 11, 2008). For Larry Parnes, see Paul DuNoyer, *Liverpool: Wondrous Place* (London: Virgin Books, 2002), 11 and Roper, *Bart!*, 18-20.

<sup>130</sup> Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, 70-72.

Due in great part to this social immobility, most of these youths were working full time by their late teens. However, they also had more income to spend on leisure pursuits and were also unencumbered by the responsibilities that would have come with university coursework. This point is important since working-class teens made up the majority of those who fully participated and created postwar British youth culture. This began with the sweep of Rock and Roll. For instance, showings of the film *Rock Around The Clock* (1956) starring Bill Haley and His Comets incited such an enthusiastic reception by its young British audiences, that some cinemas were vandalized as a result.<sup>131</sup> The appropriation of American Rock and Roll by some teens ran parallel to a nationwide “Skiffle” music craze initiated by Glasgow native Lonnie Donegan. Moreover, Jazz, which had been the first “modern” transatlantic import, continued to attract young people in either the Traditional (i.e., “Trad”) “Dixieland” or the Modern postwar be-bop variety (“Mod”). 1956 was also the year of the first important British Pop Art exhibition, “This is Tomorrow.” Pop Art blurred the lines between art and commerce, often utilizing product and advertising images. As we will see later in this chapter, it would become a key ingredient in the look of Mod culture. From the Scottish highlands to the southern coast, young fans of these various genres were often distinguishable by their differentiated hairstyles and clothing, but the point for all these youths was to, in the words of earlier Modernist writer Ezra Pound, “Make it New!”<sup>132</sup>

Oddly enough, Rock and Roll and Skiffle became pronounced interests among young Britons at approximately the same time. In 1956, American Rock pioneers Bill Haley and Elvis Presley impressed youths with energetic songs like “Rock Around the Clock” and “That’s Alright Mama,” just as Donegan’s reworking of blues legend Leadbelly’s “Rock Island Line”

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<sup>131</sup> Marwick, *Sixties*, 67.

<sup>132</sup> Gay, *Modernism*, 4.

inspired a nationwide “Skiffle craze.” This genre was especially popular with British teenagers because it had the pacing of Rock and Roll, but had a do-it-yourself style to it. Skiffle was a merging of American Blues and Folk and its instruments included household items such as tea chests and washboards alongside stand-up bass and acoustic guitars. Unlike the expenses that would come with buying electric guitars, drum kits, or amplifiers, Skiffle made making music affordable and accessible to young people who had little money—which included a great number of British teens. Musicians who would later be members of Manchester’s Hollies and a Yardbirds’ guitarist, Jimmy Page, started in Skiffle groups. John Lennon’s proto-Beatles group was also a Skiffle combo called the Quarrymen who formed in late 1956.<sup>133</sup>

The Skiffle “look” was not dissimilar from that of Rock and Rollers. Many of the early British fans of Rock and Roll (“Rockers”) were initially “Teddy Boys” or “Teds.” What distinguished Teds from other youths was their long “drape jackets” (popularized in the Edwardian period, 1901-1910), pointy crepe sole shoes (known as “Winklepickers”), skinny or bolo ties, and “quiff” (a.k.a. pompadour) hairdos. Since this tended to be a male-centric scene, “Teddy Girls” also wore drape jackets, though often over skirts. They also often wore espadrille shoes and their hair in a ponytail. As more Rock and Roll fashions came from the U.S., Teddy Boys would adopt blue jeans and leather jackets, while girls would wear toreador or bicycle pants, circle skirts.<sup>134</sup>

Variations of the Teddy Boy and Rocker looks spilled over to some Skiffle-playing teens. A 1958 photograph of “The Quarrymen” show them in sporting long, white dress jackets, long

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<sup>133</sup> Bob Groom, “Whose Rock Island Line?” in *Cross the Water Blues: African American Music in Europe*, Neil A. Wynn, ed. (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2007), 167-182. See also Michael Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>134</sup> Amy De La Haye and Cathie Dingwall, *Surfers, Soulies Skinheads & Skaters: Subcultural Style for the Forties to the Nineties* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook, 1996), 15, 38.

skinny ties that are actually ribbons forming a bow at their collars, and wearing their hair in pompadour style. Some, however, took on a different kind of bohemian look. According on one historian, it was not uncommon for Skiffle girls to wear “black jumpers [sweaters], black stockings and loose hair,” while boys had “fringe beards and open-necked check shirts.”<sup>135</sup>

Although there was stylistic overlap between the Teds, Rockers, and Skiffle fans, the Teds and/or Rockers tended to be a minimally-educated working-class group, while Skiffle united youths from various classes and levels of education. Tales of Ted or Rocker-induced violence would linger for years to come, while one was not likely to hear of “punch-ups” among Skiffle fans or bands. Unlike Skiffle followers, the Teds and the Rockers seemed to embody the term “Angry Young Men,” which had appeared in 1956 as a result of youthful playwright John Osborne’s play *Look Back in Anger*.<sup>136</sup>

Parallel to the Rock and Skiffle-oriented youth scenes in Britain, some young people were turning to Jazz as their music of choice. Trad jazz was beloved by British youth in the 1920s and made a comeback during the fifties. Like Skiffle, there were a great number of U.K. Trad bands founded and playing throughout the country by the mid-fifties. To name a few, there was the Mike Peters’ Jazz Band (1957), Acker Bilk and His Paramount Jazz Band (1958), and most famously, the Ken Colyer Jazzmen (1955) and the Chris Barber Band (1954).<sup>137</sup> Trad was just that, “traditional,” especially in that it adhered to familiar musical structures within the New Orleans-based Jazz idiom. Strangely, the look of Trad’s young followers did not reflect this adherence to “rules,” but in fact, ran just the opposite. More a forerunner to the hippie aesthetic of the late-sixties, Trad youths (both boys and girls) usually looked disheveled and often wore

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<sup>135</sup> Leese, *Britain Since 1945*, 51.

<sup>136</sup> John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger: A Play in Three Acts* (London: Evans Brothers, 1957).

<sup>137</sup> David Boulton, *Jazz in Britain* (London: W.H. Allen, 1959), 145-161.

jeans and whatever shirts were at hand, but were often from middle-class families. For instance it is during this time that musician Spencer Davis remembered wearing an oversized sweater that went down to his knees.<sup>138</sup>

Though Rock and Roll, Skiffle, and Trad Jazz offered teenagers fresh audioscapes to adopt as their own, Modern Jazz—with its name alone implying a breakaway from the old ways—more directly stimulated youths to reconsider what being modern meant. It is no wonder that “Mod” would remain the moniker for the progressive youth style of the mid-sixties. The followers of this music, the “Modernists,” embraced the esoteric “bop” sounds of Modern Jazz musicians like trumpeter Miles Davis, saxophonist John Coltrane, pianist Thelonius Monk as their own. The music’s complexity was bound to the chaotic-sounding improvisation that dominated the style. The fact that the music was difficult to follow, let alone understand, created a distance between musicians and their audience and alienated some. This sonic separation was coupled by an aloof attitude—more commonly known as “cool.” Author John Leland’s suggests that in establishing distance between musician and audience, these primarily African-American performers—many of whom also had musical residencies in Britain from WWII onward—were intentionally demonstrating their “autonomy and dignity” in spite of prejudices leveled at them. As highly visible cultural outsiders, black musicians adopted all types of “cool,” whether musical or attitudinal. These served as kinds of analgesics to ongoing social ills. Thus, as a challenge, musicians like Davis and Coltrane wanted their sound to be “smarter, harder, colder, purer.”<sup>139</sup>

Additionally, the whole visual aesthetic surrounding Modern Jazz—from album covers to the musicians’ clothing—underscored the “newness” of it. The American Jazz label Blue Note,

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<sup>138</sup> For the middle-class status of many Trad fans, see Booker, *Neophiliacs*, 37. Spencer Davis, commentary, *The Ghost Goes Gear*, directed by Hugh Gladwish, DVD, (1966; Troy, MI: Anchor Bay, 2000).

<sup>139</sup> John Leland, *Hip: The History* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), 11, 112.

for instance, created a quintessentially up-to-date look in order to match the artists' pioneering music. The label's in-house graphic designer starting in 1956—Reid Miles—intended to show “what lay in store for the listener,” by often using an “abstract design hinting at innovations... the symbolic implications [and connection] of typefaces and tones.” Geometric shapes, an emphasis on primary colors, and use of the sans serif font conveyed a modernism complementary to the albums' sounds.<sup>140</sup> On stage, Modern Jazzers cut dashing figures: whether John Coltrane in a finely cut suit, Miles Davis in a preppy button-down shirt, or Thelonius Monk in his beret. As working-class teenagers attempted to formulate their own aura of cool as a way to distance themselves from their traditional communities, they not only copied the hip-looking outfits of these performers, but nascent Modernists tried to interpret more generally the feel of the music through their clothing. According to a member of scene, Graham Hughes, “We felt [this music] was always a bit more stylish and we responded to that.”<sup>141</sup> In adopting this super-stylized music, look, and attitude—cultivating being more “in-tune” than the rest of society—it appeared that Modernists hoped to also out-do established forms of good taste and prestige. After all, a transformed postwar world required new models of such things and who was to say that British elites all had good taste?

What also set the Modernist scene apart from those of the Teds, Rockers, Trads, or “Skifflers,” were the people who made-up this scene. Unlike the British-born, mostly white Trad bands, Modern Jazz musicians were by and large African-Americans who came originally to play for G.I.s stationed in England. There was also a sizeable portion of Jewish Modernists,

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<sup>140</sup> According to John Paul Jones's memories of the London Modern Jazz scene, Blue Note label artists such as Miles Davis and John Coltrane were favorites of that scene's followers. Qtd. in Andrew Loog Oldham, *Stoned* (London: Secker and Warburg, 2000), 79. “Design Icon: Blue Note,” Computer Arts [http://www.computerarts.co.uk/in\\_depth/features/m\\_design\\_icon\\_blue\\_note](http://www.computerarts.co.uk/in_depth/features/m_design_icon_blue_note) (accessed Feb. 12, 2008) and Monica Racic, “Miles Ahead: The Art of Reid Miles,” *d/Visible Magazine* [d/Visible Magazine dvisible.com/?p=282](http://dvisible.com/?p=282) (accessed Feb. 12, 2008). See also Graham Marsh and Glyn Callingham, *Blue Note Album Cover Art: The ultimate Collection* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002).

<sup>141</sup> Qtd. in Rawlings, *Mod*, 11.

many of whom had parents who were tailors—making a chic, turned-out appearance easier to come by. The Jewish community also produced its own bop star, Ronnie Scott. Many newly immigrated West Indians joined the crowd, feeling some solidarity with the black Americans onstage. The most frequented Modernist nightclubs in London happened to be in Soho, the same neighborhood that supported the then-underground queer culture. It was not uncommon, then, to have performers or audiences who were not strictly heterosexual.<sup>142</sup> As early as the late thirties, Soho had already established a reputation as a place for “writers, artists, musicians, prostitutes, drug addicts, and adolescent runaways.”<sup>143</sup> Soho was the district where West Indians, by the 1950s, had settled en masse, and certain parts of it, like Old Compton Street was “one of the capitol’s foremost gay hangouts.”<sup>144</sup> The Soho of the late 1950s to mid-60s had the kind of bohemian reputation that Paris’s Left Bank had enjoyed in the 1920s. It was a place where everybody and anybody were welcome to “join the party,” and in doing so, created new kinds of parties. While Jazz had historically symbolized the “New World” of the United States, this modern variation, full of improvisation and experimentation, seemingly summoned for a “new human being....a sophisticated world citizen who simply did not fit into old racial [or other established] patterns.”<sup>145</sup> Despite the cool veneer of the Modernists, joining their scene implied a common bond through lifestyle-based interests rather than race, religion, or class. Only people too pedestrian or mainstream to “get” what this scene was about interpreted *cool* as the proverbial cold shoulder.

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<sup>142</sup> Jonathan Green, *All Dressed-Up: The Sixties and the Counter-Culture* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1998), 41; Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain Since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell), 43; Matt Houlbrook and Chris Waters, “The Heart in Exile: Detachment and Desire in 1950s London,” *History Workshop Journal* 62 (2006): 142-165; Max Woodbridge, *Rock ‘n’ Roll London* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2002), 14.

<sup>143</sup> Savage, *Teenage*, 419.

<sup>144</sup> Woodbridge, *Rock ‘n’ Roll London*, 20; Curtis, “Mobile and Plastic,” 57.

<sup>145</sup> McKay, *Circular Breathing*, 116.

The working-class Modernists—who had left school at the age of fifteen when compulsory secondary education finished—cultivated an image that suggested upward mobility. The males’ Italian-cut mohair suits—complete with narrow jackets and tight-fitting trousers, pointed shoes or boots, “French Crew” (shaggier crew cuts) hairstyles, and sometimes an overall American “Ivy League Look”—was meant to mimic a kind of refinement traditionally coupled with middle-class intellectuals or the wealthy “Jet Set.”<sup>146</sup> Their cosmopolitan style was underscored by their choice of transport—either Vespas or Lambretta-brand Italian scooters. Eddie Piller described his father as having been a Modernist: “He had a Lambretta and... he was very smart, but he didn’t like the music that came after ’64. He wasn’t into soul, he was into Jazz.” While the boys in this scene cut a dashing figure, Modernist girls were more modest in appearance, though their excessively short haircuts may have been an updated homage to the flapper “Moderns” of the 1920s.<sup>147</sup> They usually wore simple outfits in blacks, whites, or grays, and often wore pants. A former London scene member described most Mod girls as “fairly unattractive,” and suggests it “was a relief for them not to be feminine or painted up.”<sup>148</sup> They were androgynous creatures, and like peahens, were not nearly as beautiful as their male counterparts. In sum, what was most consequential about the Modernists in their choice of music, look, and attitude as compared to the other contemporary youth “sects,” was a drive to look and act in a way that mirrored the Modernism that had long evolved elsewhere, but never quite made it big in Britain.

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<sup>146</sup> Descriptions of these Mod male fashions are found in Barnes, *Mods!*, 1979, 8-9; Rawlings, *Mod*, 50, 53, 59. See also Charles Hamblett and Jane Deverson, *Generation X* (Greenwich, CT: Gold Medal Books, 1964), 11.

<sup>147</sup> For the bob as a quintessentially “modern” female hairstyle, see Steven Zdatny, *Hairstyles and Fashion: A Hairdresser’s History of Paris, 1910-1920* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 24-26, 33; Victoria Bowen, “The Three Basics to Female Mod Style,” *Uppers Organization*, Feb. 2, 1997 at <http://www.uppers.org/showArticle.asp?article=9> (accessed Dec. 3, 2008).

<sup>148</sup> Barnes, *Mods!*, 15.



According to John Simon, who became a Modernist in the fifties, “What we were doing was exactly the same as Picasso and the Cubists. It was the same as the architects when they moved away from Art Nouveau to what Le Corbusier did when he moved to purity of line. The difference was that we could hardly read or write... but we were doing exactly the same thing and I believe it is of great importance... we were transposing what the original Modernists had done.”<sup>149</sup> However, unlike European Modernists of the earlier 1900s, 1950s British Modernists would not consider walking into futuristic-looking buildings and spaces wearing the same old outfits. Whereas an upper-class French woman circa 1915 may have hung Cubist paintings on the walls of her box-shaped house while still wearing a corset under an ankle-length dress, postwar Modernists would seek a personal aesthetic that matched their surroundings.

While these different youth “sects” sought spaces that were distinctively their own, there was inevitably some overlap. Italian-style coffee houses, often with authentic flown-in-from-Rome espresso machines, opened up en masse between 1956 and 1959 and attracted a wide array of young people. Serving coffee rather than alcohol, teenagers could frequent haunts such as the 2Is in London’s Soho district, Manchester’s 700 Club, or Liverpool’s Casbah. While sipping their cappuccinos, early rock and roll fans had the opportunity to see Tommy Steele or Cliff Richard perform at the 2Is, for instance, while young Liverpool natives (“Liverpudlians” or “Scousers”) would have been able to catch a “Silver Beatles” gig at the Casbah.<sup>150</sup> At the same time, there were many Jazz “cellars” and clubs opening up at this time. While London’s Flamingo (also in Soho) had already opened in 1952 (as “Jazz at the Mapleton”), the neighborhood would soon have two more well-attended venues: the Marquee (1958) and Ronnie

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<sup>149</sup> Lentz, *Influential*, i.

<sup>150</sup> Wooldridge, *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, 20-21; Halsam, *Manchester*, 86; Roag Best with Pete and Rory Best, *The Beatles: True Beginnings* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003), 59, 107.

Scott's (1959). The club that would later become synonymous with the Beatles—Liverpool's Cavern Club—opened as a Jazz venue in 1957.<sup>151</sup> As only pubs were licensed to serve alcohol at this time, coffee bars and Jazz clubs were also teen-friendly. However, this did not mean that some teenagers were not experimenting with drugs before or while going out. The youths who did imbibe, did so within their sub-group's style. The Teds and Rockers tended to drink excessively, Trad Jazz fans (in keeping with the Hippie comparison) usually smoked marijuana, while Modernists like the amped-up feeling of amphetamines (i.e., "Speed").<sup>152</sup>

Trying to hear Rock and Roll or Jazz outside of a coffeehouse or nightclub was not always easy. Before the days of international distribution of records, or even many "import" record shops, teens relied on a more direct method of access: American servicemen and, for residents of port cities like Liverpool and Newcastle, what might be found at the docks.<sup>153</sup> Gibson Kemp (b. 1945) who drummed with Liverpool rock and roll group King Size Taylor and the Dominoes and later replaced Ringo Starr in Rory Storm and the Hurricanes, related memories of this phenomenon to me:

I think, the resounding musical influence was the fact that [Liverpool] was a port and lots of people went to sea—particularly a guy in the next road whose name escapes me—his father was a captain on a ship and used to like music and he brought, like, all the rock and roll records back before anyone else had imported them, so every time a ship came into port, we'd roll 'round to his house to listen to them. And I remember that being quite a...and it wasn't just me-- that was happening all over the place.<sup>154</sup>

Because young people were craving the new sounds of their choice, and the state-controlled BBC radio stations were still catering primarily to adult tastes, the only possibility for hearing something like Rock and Roll, Skiffle, Trad, or Modern Jazz, was either through the American

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<sup>151</sup> Lentz, *Influential*, 3; Wooldridge, *Rock 'n' Roll*, 16, 25, 60; DuNoyer, *Liverpool*, 18-19.

<sup>152</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture, The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1979), 44, 51-53

<sup>153</sup> See Halsam, *Manchester*, 85; DuNoyer, *Liverpool*, 53-54.

<sup>154</sup> Gibson Kemp, oral history interview by author, digital recording, Apr. 17, 2007, Kemp's English Pub, Hamburg, DCUP.

Forces Network (AFN) or the commercial, continentally broadcast Radio Luxembourg (1933-1992).<sup>155</sup>

Since its earliest programming mission, the BBC was to “inform, educate, and entertain,” with more focus seemingly on the first two goals. Even as the station began airing youth-oriented popular music, fifteen minute slots at odd times of day hardly sufficed. As one writer notes, even those programs aimed at young listeners, “ignored music emanating from the emergent, culturally active Afro-Caribbean communities in west and south London.” Furthermore, “to reinforce the perception that it remained separate from the music and those craving it, the on-air presenters on both ‘Saturday Club’ and ‘Easybeat’ spoke in aloof, detached, BBC-approved accents emphasizing the corporation’s anthropological approach to youth culture.”<sup>156</sup> Due to BBC’s conservative programming, AFN and Radio Luxembourg easily captured an enthusiastic youth following—so much so that today these once youthful listeners fondly recall the station’s impact on them by posting comments on a website devoted to “Luxy.” In the mid-fifties, for instance, West Midlands native Richard Green related: “I was born... in 1942 into a very poor family. So in 1955 I was 13 yrs old... and saved up my money from my newspaper round to buy a ‘Crystal Set’ Kit which you assembled yourself c/w headphones!! On this I would tune in to R.Lx. I used to listen in to the Top Twenty every week.” Myra Rowe of Coventry maintained that perusing this website takes her back to the “days of coffee bars, feeding the juke box with what loose change we had... the memories that have come flooding back are irreplaceable thank you. These were the days when music was music.” Several other comments on the website

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<sup>155</sup> Laura E. Cooper and B. Lee Cooper, “The Pendulum of Cultural Imperialism: Popular Music Interchanges Between the United States and Britain, 1943-1967,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 27:3 (Winter 1993), 61-78; Stephen Barnard, *On the Radio* (Milton Keynes, Eng.: Open University Press, 1989), 32-49; Halsam, *Manchester*, 83; McKay, *Circular Breathing*, 39; Bernstein, *Decline*, 400.

<sup>156</sup> John Dougan, *The Who Sell Out* (New York: Continuum, 2006).

describe adolescents and teens huddling under their bedcovers listening to the station on transistor radios after bedtime, since most rock programs began at 10 p.m.<sup>157</sup>

As we have seen, during this period some of Britain's young embraced American-born music styles and sought a matching wardrobe to create identities that sometimes superseded their class position. Meanwhile they underscored individual or niche interests over those of the mainstream. In this sense, these various youth expressions that either preceded or eventually informed Mod culture suggested that interest-based allegiances might become just as strong, or stronger, than traditional ones connected to "class, job, family, or neighborhood."<sup>158</sup> Though members of various youth cliques attempted to "micro-gentrify" British cities with a new fashions, music, and spaces, the lifestyle of the Modernists would prove the most influential for the country's teenagers. By the mid-sixties, Cathy McGowan hostess of the popular British music TV show *Ready, Steady, Go!* (1963-1966) would declare that "the Mods [had] won," the hearts and minds of young people across the country.<sup>159</sup> A vivid description of this transitional period—from various style tribes to emergent Mod culture—appears in Colin MacInnes's 1959 novel *Absolute Beginners*. Though published in the fifties, it would become a favorite among the Mod set in the early sixties.

Though a fictional account, it aptly chronicled both the blossoming of teenage culture in Britain and the transition from Modernists as just one of many youth cliques to the emergence of Mod culture. The unnamed narrator and protagonist of the story is a Soho-frequenting photographer ("Of all London quarters, I think [Soho] is the most authentic.") who lives in the

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<sup>157</sup> Richard Green, "Guestbook," *This is Radio Luxembourg: Your Station of the Stars* at <http://www.offringa.nl/radioLuxembourg.htm> Sept. 11, 2005 (accessed Feb. 11, 2008) and Myra Rowe, "Guestbook," July 13, 2005 (accessed Feb. 11, 2008).

<sup>158</sup> Jonathan Gould, *Can't Buy Me Love: The Beatles, Britain, and America* (New York: Harmony, 2007), 133.

<sup>159</sup> Qtd. in Piri Halasz, "You Can Walk Across it on the Grass," *Time*, Apr. 15, 1966, 30.

diversely populated (fictional) Italian-sounding neighborhood of “Napoli.”<sup>160</sup> In the book, teenage riots between Modern versus Trad Jazz fans and between the Modernists and the Rock-and-Roll-loving, pompadour-coifed “Teddy Boys” take place. The narrator’s friends, acquaintances, and neighbors are a cast of characters that seem to foreshadow the diverse makeup of the movers and shakers within Mod Culture. “Hoplite” is gay, “Big Jill” is lesbian, “Mr. Cool” is black, and “Mannie the Cockney” is Jewish. The narrator also describes himself as part-Jewish and stresses the spirited influence of Jewish culture on the city: “Jewish families love life... they’re living. It’s all a great noisy, boasting, arguing, complaining mess all right, but they’re alive!... I love London all right, as I’ve explained. But when the Jewish population have all made enough loot to take off for America, or Israel, then I’m leaving too. It would be turning out the light.”<sup>161</sup> MacInnes, primarily a journalist, was often brought in to comment on the state of British youth culture after the success of the book. An article from the *Evening Standard* summed-up many a postwar teenager’s attitude well: “This is what you and your city and your civilization you have made there look like to an articulate teenager. It’s not very pretty, if you want to know.”<sup>162</sup> In underscoring young people’s search for cosmopolitanism, it appeared that the old model of British modernity was beginning to be questioned.

By 1960 several key events would further make it possible for Mod culture to come into its own. National [military] Service was discontinued, thus allowing young men to partake fully in youth culture without a two-year government-required interruption. The year also saw the national ban on D.H. Lawrence’s 1928 novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* repealed, albeit through a highly publicized court case. The outrage the explicit language of the book’s love scenes elicited

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<sup>160</sup> Colin MacInnes, *The London Novels: City of Spades, Absolute Beginners, Mr. Love and Justice* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1969), 307.

<sup>161</sup> MacInnes, *London Novels*, 327.

<sup>162</sup> Qtd. in Marwick, *Sixties*, 63.

was only surpassed only by the fact that the novel's upper-class protagonist was having sex with a working-class man—a tribute to Mod's ethic of classlessness.<sup>163</sup> Finally, returning to our friend *Oliver Twist*, June 30, 1960 saw the London debut of Lionel Bart's musical version of the Dickens classic. Just like Oliver who had peered out into a dawning day of possibility accompanied by strains of "Who Will Buy?"—the "lad" who had spent his youth in the working-class community of London's East End was suddenly allowed entrée into an exciting new world that he had only heard tales of. Not long after the musical's triumph, one British newspaper described Bart as "a small, dark, ex-slum dweller with a chip on his shoulder, three cars in the garage and an income of something like £50,000 a year."<sup>164</sup> Though Bart started his musical career in the R&B and Roll scene, his greatest success came from a musical, which was a more conventional than cutting-edge vehicle. However, his creative and financial success is indicative of how Mod culture allowed young people of all social classes—but especially the working class—more opportunity to participate in the modern world on their terms.

#### **2.4.2 Modernist Tenets Take Hold: 1961-1963**

1961 was called the upside down year. Not since 1881 could a year be read the same way right side up and upside down. In 1647, the song "World Turned Upside Down" protested dour puritan Oliver Cromwell's shunning of Christmas celebrations, and one would assume, joviality in general.<sup>165</sup> In 1961, driven by British young peoples' lust for life, certain events would lead to further turning the British world on its head. While the Soviet Union and the United States

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<sup>163</sup> Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, 35, 117.

<sup>164</sup> Roper, *Bart!*, 44.

<sup>165</sup> Leo Chamberlain, "What Happened in 1961?" *Peabody Journal of Education* 39 (Jan. 1962): 211; Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1972).

successfully launched men into space this year, the U.K.'s changes from 1961 forward were earthbound, yet no less consequential. The films *A Taste of Honey* and *Victim* showcased northern working-class accents, interracial romance, unplanned pregnancy, and homosexual characters. These films' "Kitchen Sink Realism," as the genre was eventually dubbed, brought "marginal" social actors into the public eye. Meanwhile, Chubby Checker's song "The Twist," with its now iconic hip-swiveling dance arrived in Britain that year.<sup>166</sup> Having removed "Silver" from their moniker the previous year, 1961 also saw the Beatles debut at Liverpool's subterranean former Jazz club, the Cavern. Back in London, a group called Blues Incorporated ignited what would become an important musical component of Mod culture: "British Rhythm and Blues."<sup>167</sup> Finally, though art schools had been a longstanding educational option in English culture, it was also during the early sixties that many working-class youths who were, or became, part of the Mod scene (often as musicians) began increasingly to see the world as an artist would through this education. If British culture was not yet sufficiently turned upside down for youth of the early sixties, it certainly presented them with various canvases onto which they could express their imaginings. In this sense, just as 1956 might be seen as the year that marked the decline of the British Empire—or a British identity imposed from the upper echelons of society—1961 was when a new kind of kingdom began construction in earnest from the ground up.

One aspect of the "Old Britain" that was being challenged during 1961 and the years that followed was the socio-economic dominance of London and the southern part of the country.

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<sup>166</sup> For information on "Kitchen Sink Realism" as a British film genre of this period, see John Hill, *Sex, Class, and Realism: British Cinema, 1956-1963* (London: British Film Institute, 1986). Regarding the "Twist," both the song and dancing style, entering the U.K. see, Tony Jasper, Ed. *The Top Twenty Book: The Official British Record Charts, 1955-1983* (Poole, Eng.: Blandford, 1984), 64. This book gets its chart information from *Record Mirror* in conjunction with *Music Week*.

<sup>167</sup> For the Beatles at the Cavern, see DuNoyer, *Liverpool*, 18-19; for Blues Incorporated's seminal role in the London R&B scene of the early sixties, see Rupert Till, "The Blues in the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Led Zeppelin," in *Cross the Water Blues: African American Music in Europe*, ed. Neil Wynn (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 188-89.

The split between “industrial north” (i.e., rough-edged and poor) and “pastoral south” (read: genteel and moneyed) that had been created in the nineteenth century fostered a cultural divide between northerners and southerners that continued to well into the beginning of the sixties—and some would argue—still exists. As Manchester native (“Mancunian”) Graham Nash (who became famous with his 1960s band the Hollies) explains, “There was kind of a... an invisible line that went from just north of London to the rest of England. It wasn’t until the Beatles broke through and became very successful that that changed all that geographically.”<sup>168</sup>

Though Londoners thought of Liverpool as a “backwater” town, with hip youth culture as only really possible in the capital, the city’s residents thought of themselves as uniquely linked to diverse corners of the globe, and thus, worldly. During the middle of the nineteenth century, through the trade that happened via the city’s port on the Mersey River, Liverpudlians thought of themselves as the hub of the British Empire and, thus, looked outward across the seas rather than inward to the nation’s capital. According to the city’s biographer, Paul DuNoyer, to many a seafaring Scouser, “Sierra Leone was a fact but London was only a rumour.” This history was a source of pride even during periods of economic decline. Nonetheless, like Engels’s depressing Manchester, neighboring Liverpool could not escape the more negative effect of industrialization and urbanization. Some of its houses and streets were described by a nineteenth-century observer as “sooty and begrimed” having a “Sodom-like and murderous look,” in which “sailors disappear forever,” and where “life expectancy was seventeen.”<sup>169</sup> A century later, by the mid-fifties,

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<sup>168</sup> *History of Rock and Roll*, 1995.

<sup>169</sup> DuNoyer, *Liverpool*, 4-5; see also Devin McKinney, *Magic Circles: The Beatles in Dream and History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 12-13; and Bob Spitz, *The Beatles: The Biography* (New York: Little and Brown, 2005), 15-18.



Liverpool was still trying to rebuild itself after the War and many of its streets were considered uninhabitable.<sup>170</sup>

We have seen now how Rock and Roll, Skiffle, and Jazz had all been of interest to young Liverpudlians since the mid-fifties. As fledgling musicians came together to play, their sometimes diverse musical interests overlapped. Though many bands, like the Beatles, ascended from the remains of Skiffle groups, the influence of Jazz could be heard in a group like Derry and the Seniors. The Merseybeat sound and scene (named, in part, after Liverpool's Mersey River and also the local music paper *The Mersey Beat*) coalesced in the early sixties (roughly between 1960-1963) as a result of experimenting and mixing these different popular music styles together. More generally, "Beat music," as the genre came to be known, constructed its rhythms in a 4/4 pattern with an emphasis on the second and fourth beat—the off- or backbeat—most noticeable in the groups' drum sounds.<sup>171</sup> At the height of the Merseybeat boom, it was reported that at least three hundred bands were performing throughout the Liverpool area. While several groups and singers went on to be nationally and/or internationally successful, most notably the Beatles, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Searchers, and Cilla Black, the fame of the Clayton Squares or The Dennisons remained local.<sup>172</sup>

By the time the Beatles were playing the Cavern (where they would play over two hundred and fifty times by 1963) the group was covering a wide variety of black American hits such as: "Kansas City" (Little Willie Littlefield, 1952), "Money" (Barrett Strong, 1959), and "Boys" (The Shirelles, 1960). This was reflective of general musical trends among British

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<sup>170</sup> John Barron Mays, *Growing Up in the City: A Study of Juvenile Delinquency in an Urban Neighborhood* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964), 34.

<sup>171</sup> Dick Bradley, *Understanding Rock and Roll: Popular Music in Britain 1955-1964* (Buckingham, Eng.: Open University Press, 1992), 113.

<sup>172</sup> For chart success of Merseybeat groups, which really took off in 1963, see Jasper, *Top Twenty*, 83-92. For information on more locally popular groups in early sixties Liverpool, see *Merseybeat Nostalgia* at <http://www.merseybeatnostalgia.co.uk/> (accessed Feb. 15, 2008).

young people at this time. Though youths had already been enamored with African-American-based music like Jazz, Skiffle, and Rock and Roll, these cover song selections point to the growing importance of R&B and Soul genres on British artists. At this time, R&B was a style of music still made predominantly by black performers. The Chicago Chess label issued singles by performers such as Willie Dixon, John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf, and Muddy Waters that made their way to British ears between the late fifties and early sixties. Memphis's Stax label was responsible for producing Booker T and the MGs (famous for their instrumental track "Green Onions") and also the distinctive voices of Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding.

Soul can be described as "a blend of blues, gospel, and R&B" that was emotionally raw, and to some, spiritually-charged. Soul can be exemplified by Ray Charles's and James Brown's emphatic performances and also by the sleek pop sounds of artists such as the Miracles and Mary Wells, who were on Detroit's Motown record label. With many working-class youth embracing R&B and Soul music by the early sixties, the role of the "outsider" (in this case, that of both the black and white working-classes) was both visible and valorized. Young fans of the music believed it was free from artifice and true to "the immediacy of lived experience."<sup>173</sup> In this way, being on the outside-looking-in was deemed a more authentic experience of living, since being on the "inside" connoted a capitulation to authority and conformity rather than offering freedom and individuality.<sup>174</sup>

That seemingly unaesthetic Liverpool became the "swinging city" before London was dubbed as such a few years later, attests once again to the nationwide desire that British youths

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<sup>173</sup> Bob Merlis and Davin Seay, *Heart and Soul: A Celebration of Black Music Style in America 1930-1975* (New York: Steart, Tabori & Chang, 1997), 50-51; David Nowell, *Too Darn Soulful: The Story of Northern Soul* (London: Robson, 1999), 18; Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text* (Buckingham, Eng.: Open University, 1993), 65.

<sup>174</sup> Anthony Marks, "Young, Gifted and Black: Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean Music in Britain, 1963-88," in *Black Music in Britain: Essays on the Afro-Asian Contribution to Popular Music*, ed. Paul Oliver (Milton Keynes, Eng.: Open University Press, 1990), 103-104; Leland, *Hip*, 135.

had to overturn outmoded notions of identity and place. Though Liverpool was formerly considered by previous generations as dismal and impoverished, in the early sixties young people there would figuratively rebuild their environment as best they could—via music and music-related activities and spaces—to be joyful and enriching. Luckily, there were some adults who would also help along the way.

Aside from the many bands and their same-aged fans, a key player in eventually making Merseybeat a household word outside of Liverpool was young Bill Harry. Harry attended the Liverpool College of Art in the mid-to-late fifties and began his journalistic endeavors in 1958, when he was still a student there. A Jazz aficionado, Harry first published a magazine simply called *Jazz*, but was soon aware of the burgeoning music scene in his hometown primarily through his friend and art school classmate, John Lennon. Seeing an opportunity to promote this growing local phenomenon, as well as publicize his friend's band, 5,000 copies of the first issue of *Mersey Beat* arrived at twenty-eight local shops on July 6, 1961. Writing many of the stories himself, Harry's title actually came from comparing his traversing of the Liverpool scene to that of a policeman's "beat." Previews of music events, reviews of up and coming bands (including attention to all-female bands), the results of local music polls, tour success stories of Liverpool bands in Hamburg, advertisements for shows at the Cavern, the Iron Door, and many other venues, as well as for tailored stage costumes ("gear") made up much of *Mersey Beat's* content.<sup>175</sup> The weekly ran until 1964. During its run, the newspaper eventually circulated throughout the northwest of the U.K. and inspired similar publications for young audiences like

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<sup>175</sup> The Iron Door was featured in a 1963 TV documentary and discussed in Bill Harry, "Mersey Beatle: The Mersey Sound," *Mersey Beat*, Oct. 24-Nov. 7, 1963, 7. For examples of these kinds of articles in *Mersey Beat*, see "Newsbeat," *Mersey Beat*, Sept. 12, 1963 and "Girl Group for Star Club," Dec. 19-Jan. 2, 1964 which are both about the all-girl band the Liverbirds and also about girl groups: "Meet the Girls," Dec. 19-Jan. 2, 1964; Bill Harry, "The Giants: The Hamburg Scene, Part Two," *Mersey Beat*, Oct. 24-Nov. 7, 1963. For an idea of the paper's lay-out, design, and advertising, see Bill Harry, *Mersey Beat: The Beginnings of the Beatles* (New York: Quick Fox,) 1977.

the *Western Scene*, *Midlands Beat*, and *Scottish Beat*. Reflecting on the newspaper's achievement in the early sixties, Harry believes *Mersey Beat*'s attention to Liverpool talent helped challenge London's entertainment industry hegemony. "Looking back, at a time when Rock music is so firmly established, it is hard for many people to realize how difficult it really was for a group from the British provinces to become successful and maintain their success. The music scene was firmly controlled by a few moguls in London and Pop was manufactured music. The Beatles not only gave their music to the World, they broke down barriers and opened the floodgates to those who were to follow."<sup>176</sup> Before the Beatles and other Liverpool groups received national media attention, it was through the grass roots efforts of *Mersey Beat* that this youth-and-music phenomenon became more widely known.<sup>177</sup>

While Bill Harry wrote much of the paper's content, it was not uncommon for band members (including a few Beatles) to contribute short articles. Harry also received writing from Brian Epstein, manager of his family's North End Music Stores (NEMS). Born in 1934 to an upper-middle-class Jewish family, Epstein was several years older than the Beat musicians who made up Liverpool's scene, and was not particularly a Rock music fan. However, as a businessman, Epstein could not help but notice the enthusiasm of his young clientele for this new, locally-produced music through their in-store purchases. It was in November 1961 that Brian Epstein first saw the Beatles play at the Cavern. As Epstein pondered managing the group, he was struck by their catchy melodies, "beat...and personal charm," but was concerned about their onstage appearance. Though the Beatles' leather outfits may have titillated him personally (a closeted gay, the "tough guy" was rumored to be Epstein's type), it was not the kind of style

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<sup>176</sup> Harry, *Mersey Beat: The Beginnings*, 15.

<sup>177</sup> See also Bradley, *Understanding Rock and Roll*, 12, 73, 92.

he perceived as being commercially viable.<sup>178</sup> When Epstein did take managerial control of the band's look, it evolved from Rocker to more Mod-ish. Jonathan Gould astutely describes this marketing move: "It wasn't as if Brian Epstein meant to fit [the Beatles] out as a collection of singing stockbrokers. He was fashion-conscious, boy-conscious observer who had been spending... time in London. While making the rounds of the record companies in the winter of 1962, Brian glimpsed the future, and seen that it was Mod." As Larry Parnes before him, Epstein became the latest entrepreneur to help bring a micro-economy of youth culture up from the underground into the mass market. Though not initially successful at landing a recording contract for his group, Epstein eventually managed to get the Beatles signed to EMI in 1962. The Beatles' first nationwide single "Love Me Do," was released in December 1962, eventually making it to #17 on the British charts later that month, paving the way for higher charting hits in 1963 and beyond.<sup>179</sup> Soon teenagers from Edinburgh to Southampton were dancing to sounds shaped on the "provincial" banks of the River Mersey.<sup>180</sup> And, while it seemed that only the young musicians and their fans truly benefited for this new atmosphere, the still youthful—or young spirited—entrepreneurs like Bill Harry and Brian Epstein succeeded in creating a new careers for themselves that would eventually take them far and beyond the confines of their hometown. Other important players in this youth-oriented micro-economy that would give the name Liverpool new polish were Mona Best, the mother of original Beatles drummer Pete Best and owner of the Casbah club where many bands got their start; Alan Williams, who ran the Jacaranda coffee bar and was the Beatles' first manager; and Bob Wooler, who was in charge of

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<sup>178</sup> Paul DuNoyer, "Mr. Brian Epstein," *Q*, Special Edition, *The Beatles, Band of the Century*, Dec. 1999, 24-25; Shawn Levy, *Ready, Steady, Go! The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 70.

<sup>179</sup> Their next single, "Please Please Me," would reach #2 in March 1963 while "From Me to You," stayed at #1 from May 4 to June 15th. See Jasper, *Top Twenty*, 85-88.

<sup>180</sup> Gould, *Can't Buy Me Love*, 128; Bradley, *Understanding Rock*, 12, 71, 73, 92.

booking at the Cavern and also DJed with a fine collection of hard-to-find American R&B records.<sup>181</sup>

The emerging zeitgeist that prompted young Liverpudlians to find more possibilities within their supposedly “limited” lives, manifested in London, too, albeit a little differently. Concurrent with the rise of Beat phenomenon in Liverpool, the Rhythm and Blues (R&B) scene was developing at great speed starting in 1961 with its most vocal practitioners and adherents in and around London. While the Merseybeat sound proudly touted outsider status in that “provincials” were performing a blend of originally African-American music, London R&B musicians and fans wanted to inhabit the near-mythical identity of the African-American blues musician as best they could. According to an interview with the Who’s lead singer, Roger Daltrey, the music was appealing because it “emanated from struggle and the English working-class totally identified with black America. The blues had that element of rage from the underground.”<sup>182</sup> The two founding musicians of this scene were guitarist Alexis Korner and harmonica player Cyril Davies, who had previously been part of Chris Barber’s Jazz band, but established the group Blues Incorporated in 1961, which was the first band to play an amplified version of the Blues in the U.K. Korner and Davis had already begun playing together as a duo in the mid-fifties and opened the London Blues and Barrelhouse Club soon thereafter. Their performances and jam sessions here, as well as at their weekly R&B night at the Ealing Jazz

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<sup>181</sup> For Allan Williams and Bob Wooler’s roles, see Gould, *Can’t Buy Me Love*, 74, 109; For Mona Best and the Casbah, see Best and Best, *The Beatles: The True Beginnings*, 22.

<sup>182</sup> “My Generation: The Birth of Rock,” *Seven Ages of Rock*, 17 Dec. 2007, Narr. Dennis Hopper. Prod. William Naylor, VH1.

Club starting in 1962 attracted many young, aspiring musicians—several of whom would go on to play in bands such as the Rolling Stones and the Yardbirds.<sup>183</sup>

This electrified Blues offered an aural and attitudinal environment that almost directly countered that of the Modern Jazz scene. Unlike the complex sounds and hipper-than-thou posturing established in the be-bop scene, Blues connected musicians and listeners through accessible, repetitive rhythms (the twelve-bar blues) accompanied by emotionally-engaging lyrics that often laid bare the gritty realities of life. According to Eric Burdon, who was lead singer of Newcastle group the Animals in the early-to-mid-sixties, Blues was a kind of music “anybody [could] play. It has the magical structure of three chords which you can tie into earth, sun, moon, man, woman, God.”<sup>184</sup> While young Brits in the early 1960s may not have understood some of the lyrical content that had been written by African-American Blues players in the early 1900s (“A hoochie-coochie man?” “Mojo?”), they understood that it was a music that could express a wide array of emotions such as anger, desire, melancholy, and redemption. From 1961 to 1963 there seemed to be a shifting of allegiances from Modern Jazz to electrified Blues (“Chicago Blues” or “Rhythm and Blues”) among the young. Although Dick Heckstall-Smith, a Jazz saxophonist who became a member of Blues Incorporated, was already nearing thirty, he sheds light on why this shift may have occurred for both younger and older adherents. “I began to feel that audiences and musicians alike had somehow got on the wrong road, and somehow been browbeaten into believing that it wasn’t quite right to enjoy themselves too

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<sup>183</sup> Jane Wilson, “Young London,” in *Len Deighton’s London Dossier*, ed. Len Deighton (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966) 23-25; Wooldrige, *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, 134-36; and Lentz, *Influential*, 15-16.

<sup>184</sup> “Red, White, and Blues,” *Martin Scorsese Presents The Blues* directed by Mike Figgis (New York: Columbia Music Video, 2003).

openly... I began to feel there was altogether too much good taste in the British Jazz scene.”<sup>185</sup> For working-class teens who gravitated to Blues clubs in the early sixties, it was a way to temper “being cool” with allowing them to speak their truth. For audiences, it meant getting up and unapologetically moving to the music, rather than affecting a look that suggested one would rather be somewhere else. The R&B scene created another kind of Modernism. It is more akin to what Marshall Berman would later write. “To be modern is to experience personal and social life as a maelstrom,” he says. “To be a modernist,” he continues, is “to make oneself somehow at home in the maelstrom, to make its rhythms one’s own, to move within its currents in search of the forms of reality, of beauty, of freedom, of justice, that its fervid and perilous flow allows.”<sup>186</sup> This music prompted the recognition that while the modern world was not always good or just, pockets of freedom and joy could be discovered or created nonetheless.

These developments in youth culture—that wedded an earnest desire for “more” with marketing aspirations—was also educational. As we shall see in the next chapter, the Beatles often referred to their time spent in Hamburg, Germany (1960-1962) playing nightclubs as an invaluable “apprenticeship” that allowed them to hone their musical style as well as their showmanship. Similarly, those youthful followers who frequented the R&B nights hosted by Blues Incorporated learned new musical techniques and often had opportunities to sing or play on the spot. The Rolling Stones’ Mick Jagger, for instance, remembers all aspiring singers doing a version of Muddy Waters’s “I’ve Got My Mojo Working” at many of these R&B nights. While not all participants of this scene were working class (Jagger was studying at the London School of Economics at the time, for instance), crafting musical talent offered a non-traditional

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<sup>185</sup> Dick Heckstall-Smith, *The Safest Place in the World: A Personal History of British Rhythm and Blues* (London: Quartet, 1989), 32.

<sup>186</sup> Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air* (New York: Viking, 1988), 345.



kind of educational venue and allowed a potential for escape from the more mundane career possibilities of every social class. It demonstrated that the lines between work and leisure could be blurred—that one could just maybe earn money by doing what previous generations may only have viewed as a hobby.<sup>187</sup>

There were several clubs in Soho that became key venues for youthful activity. The Flamingo club, in many ways, exemplified the turn towards Rhythm and Blues in the early to mid sixties, and also symbolized the hybrid roots of Mod culture—with black-American, Jewish, and Caribbean influences part of the club’s make-up and atmosphere. The Flamingo, which started as a Jewish social club, and then became a Jazz club, was housed in the basement of the Whiskey A-Go-Go (a.k.a. the WAG) on lower Wardour Street. It was an early favorite of G.I.s and was to become “the place” for R& B fans to dance the night away. Famous for their “All-Nighters” that ran from midnight to six a.m., the venue housed local R’n’B favorite Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames as well as Zoot Money, and the Big Roll Band.<sup>188</sup> Future Rolling Stone manager Andrew Loog Oldham remembered the venue as “playing music all night and giving itself up to black R’n’B, Atlantic and early Stax-type fare,” while John Paul Jones (Led Zeppelin’s bassist) thought that the musicians who played there such as Georgie Fame, Brian Auger (later of Steampacket and the Brian Auger Trinity), and Alexis Korner were all actually “Jazzers who played R’n’B... that there was a big Jazz scene that ran hand in hand with the R’n’B scene.”<sup>189</sup> The Flamingo was also a club with substantial West Indian presence—a place

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<sup>187</sup> Simon Frith and Howard Horne, *Art into Pop* (London: Methuen, 1987), 35.

<sup>188</sup> Hewitt, *Soul Stylists*, 25, 34; Rawlings, *Mod*, 11, David Nowell, *Too Darn Soulful*, 15; Dave Davies, *Kink: An Autobiography* (New York: Hyperion, 1996), 46; and Marianne Faithfull with Dave Dalton, *Faithfull: An Autobiography* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1994); 16.

<sup>189</sup> Qtd. in Oldham, *Stoned*, 78-79.

where East End Mods saw, perhaps for the first time, Caribbean men wearing their short brimmed, pork-pie hats—finding yet another accessory to add to their growing mix of styles.<sup>190</sup>

Another nontraditional educational venue for the working classes during the early sixties, and one which, as we shall see, overlapped with the previously outlined musical developments, was attending art school. Like the Vespas that the earlier Jazz Modernists had started riding around London, and the espressos that were heartily consumed at coffee bars around the country, the term “Art School” also smacked of continental élan in a way that factory work or a trade apprenticeship never could. While older generations of the working class saw “artists” as indulgent do-nothings, many of their progeny saw art school—like playing music—as a way to escape unrewarding work.<sup>191</sup> No matter if they studied commercial rather than fine art, this experience was not seen in the same way as training to be an electrician or baker, for instance. It also fostered the same mix of personal expression and entrepreneurial know-how that was appearing as an important aspect to the youth-oriented music of the early sixties. Not only had the flagship institution, the Royal College of Art, been founded in 1837 to improve the aesthetic quality of British-made products of all varieties, but, by the early sixties, art education could not help but be influenced by the sudden prominence of British and American Pop Art—which gleefully merged mass culture imagery (consumer products of all stripes—from soup cans to comic books) with learned painterly execution. Pop’s mixing of “high” and “low” (or popular) art reflected those changes surrounding social class during the early sixties. Pop Art was also highly colorful—showcasing unusual, and often bright, color combinations and strong, geometric shapes. Op Art emerged in tandem with Pop Art. It is most well-known through Bridget Riley’s early 1960s work and was composed of geometric, kinetic black-and-white

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<sup>190</sup> Barnes, *Mods!*, 13.

<sup>191</sup> For this traditional or “majority” view of the working-classes towards art and artists, see Hoggart, *Literacy*, 196.

patterns that played optical tricks. In the same way that the brightness of Pop Art would be translated to Mod fashions a few years later, Riley-esque patterns would soon appear on trendy fashions of the mid-sixties.<sup>192</sup>

Like Pop Art's use of mass-produced imagery and objects, other aspects of postwar modernity were made palpable in the work discussed or created in the British art schools. The Kinks' lead singer Ray Davies describes how sketches at London's Horney College of Art increasingly reflected the anonymity and loneliness of urban life.<sup>193</sup> He was not enamored with pop art's "bright colors and crazy angles." He writes that his drawings were often "full of empty motorways with lost people walking around the perimeter. Human beings scrambled around unable to find a place to live in a concrete postwar world of high-rise dwellings and second-rate luxury.... There were no expressions on the faces of the people in my pictures because my people, the people I cared about, were being given the curse-end of the universe. Art was supposed to hold a mirror up to the world."<sup>194</sup> It is not surprising, then, that although Davies and his band would, a few years later, revolutionize guitar playing with deafening distorted fuzz that echoed urban or industrial noises, but also would depict nostalgic images of pastoral Britain and traditional working-class communities in their lyrics.

As Davies mused over the "lonely crowd," Pete Townshend was listening to lectures by Gustav Metzger and Malcom Cecil at the Ealing College of Art. Metzger suggested art should

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<sup>192</sup> Regarding this aspect of the founding the Royal College of Art, see Frith and Horne, *Art into Pop*, 30. For pop art, see Nigel Cawthorne, *Sixties Source Book* (Seacuaus, NJ: Quarto, 1989), 42-55; Barry Curtis, "A Highly Mobile and Plastic Environ," in *This Was Tomorrow: Art in the 60s* (London: Tate, 2004), 46-63; and Gay, *Modernism*, 478.

<sup>193</sup> Other musicians who would contribute to Mod culture and attended London area art colleges were: the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards and Charlie Watts (Sidcup and Harrow art colleges); the Yardbirds' Keith Relf, Eric Clapton, and Jeff Beck (Kingston and Wimbeldon); and the Kinks' Pete Quaife (Hornsey). As formerly mentioned, John Lennon attended art college in Liverpool. Given the discussion of *Oliver!* in this chapter, it is also interesting to note that Lionel Bart also attended art college (St.Martin's) before embarking on his musical career. See Frith and Horne, *Art into Pop*, 73 and Roper, *Bart!*, 11.

<sup>194</sup> Ray Davies, *X-Ray* (London: Viking, 1994), 79.

reflect the world's destructive tendencies (i.e., nuclear threat, war, and so on). Metzger created performance pieces in which art or everyday objects were destroyed. Cecil's lecture showed what "could be done in music" by cutting into a bass guitar with a saw. Townshend has acknowledged that encountering these ideas led to his infamous guitar-smashing antics with the Who just a few years later. Unlike Davies, though, Townshend was impressed with Pop Art, too. Instead of merely viewing this genre as vivid and amusing, it made him recognize the aesthetic possibilities of ordinary, day-to-day life. Suddenly banal things like letter fonts in an advertisement, directional arrows on street signs, or the keys of a typewriter could be recognized as beautiful. Potentially no small detail of life could be deemed unaesthetic. Like Oscar Wilde had suggested decades earlier, life could be lived as a work of art, and this generation of Britons finally seemed to hear his call en masse.<sup>195</sup>

Starting in 1961, British culture was truly being reconceptualized as modern. At the helm of this renovation process were young people. They corralled their interests and energies in musical and visual expression and hoped that these efforts might transport them out of an older established order that valued back-breaking labor over more intellectual and sensual forms of work. The Merseybeat scene challenged London's cultural hegemony, the informal "education" of the burgeoning Rhythm and Blues scene, and eye-opening experiences of art colleges during the Pop Art boom, all allowed the postwar generation to navigate differently through the world. For working-class youths in particular, these non-traditional spaces and opportunities paved the way for a new kind of culture.

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<sup>195</sup> For Wilde's view of art as the model for life, see Curtis, "Mobile and Plastic," 52. The Victorian "aesthetic missionaries" also sought to bring beauty to London slums. However, this was a movement of outsiders bringing their tastes to the lower classes, not working-class people creating their own aesthetics. See Diana Maltz, *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870-1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3.

### 2.4.3 5-4-3-2-1: Mod Takes Off, 1963-1964

1963 and 1964 are incredibly important years in the development of Mod culture. In fact, one could say that what happened this year is at the core of everything else that has developed since. 1963 was the year that the Merseybeat artists really “made it” onto the national charts and the year that the public was greeted with the intense, shadowy cool of Robert Freeman’s now-iconic cover of the “Fab Four’s” *With The Beatles* LP. By January 1964 that same image would begin circulating widely through the United States, with the group’s “invasion” of America one month later.<sup>196</sup> The Beatles’ stateside success was also the beginning of international recognition of the British-born Mod culture. The U.S. version of the LP entitled *Meet the Beatles* did not only introduce Americans to the group, but showed them—and Britons as well—that British Rock musicians were trying to move away from imitating U.S. groups. Eleven of the twelve songs on the U.S. album were originals.<sup>197</sup> No wonder London’s fortieth anniversary festival of Mod culture, “Modstock,” took place in 2004. The planners wanted to recognize and celebrate this pivotal year in Mod’s history.<sup>198</sup> However, while 1964 was the beginning of Mod’s transnational dissemination, 1963 was significant on a national level. Bill Harry’s December 19<sup>th</sup> *Mersey Beat* editorial describes the year’s importance quite perfectly: “1963 is the memorable year in which Merseyside groups revolutionized the British pop scene. They crushed the American domination of the British charts; created new disc records; paved the way for Beat groups throughout

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<sup>196</sup> Spitz, *Beatles*, 457-485; “Display Ad 31: ‘Rock to the Sounds of the Beatles,’” *New York Times*, Jan. 12, 1964.

<sup>197</sup> The Beatles, *Meet the Beatles!* (1964) Capitol NR ST2047-LP, 33 1/3.

<sup>198</sup> Daniel Syngé, “The Mod Squad Goes Global,” *Financial Times*, Sept. 18, 2004, 7.

Britain; brought acknowledgement to such U.S. R&B artistes as Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley—all in the most hectic and exciting 12 months the pop world has ever witnessed.”<sup>199</sup>

As we have already seen, in the years leading up to 1963 many British youths were exposed to a wider range of images, ideas, sounds, and spaces that dovetailed with the political and socio-economic changes of the country. It was both in 1963 and 1964 that the various components of preceding cultural experiences came together to make Mod *the* youth culture of the period. This Mod culture blended the continental style and “cool” attitudes of bebop-loving Modernists, the showmanship of American Rock and Roll and Soul performers, the expressive energies of Rhythm and Blues, petit-bourgeois business practices, and the art school-influenced aesthetization of everyday life. As these various elements came together, many young people started calling themselves “Mods.” Even if some youths did not specifically adopt this moniker, they nonetheless participated in Mod culture because it became *the* youth style between 1963 and 1964. In carving-out spaces where they could be who they wanted, whether in coffee bars, clubs, or art colleges, young people sought a total sensory experience that was an overhaul of how one should or could live life. Their modern-world-in-the-making was made-up of energetic music, eye-catching spaces, experiments in fashion, and their own slang-filled patois. Besides using the word Mod itself, scene members may have called the Beatles “fab” (fabulous), while leading Mods were “Faces” and those who followed these trendsetters were either called “Tickets” or “Numbers.”<sup>200</sup> As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, George Harrison used the term “grotty” (grotesque) in the film *A Hard Day’s Night*. Hence, no lifestyle detail was too minute to be “mod-ified.” Thus, Mod culture not only had its own sound and look, but also, its own argot.

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<sup>199</sup> Bill Harry, “Editorial,” *Mersey Beat*, Dec. 19, 1963-Jan. 2, 1964, 2.

<sup>200</sup> For usage of “fab” circa 1963-64 see, John Ayto, *Movers and Shakers: A Chronology of Words that Shaped Our Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 144; Max the Mod (no last name given), “Mods,” *The Who London 1965* at <http://www.westminsterinc.com/who1965/index.html> (accessed Mar. 26, 2008).

Influenced by television even the typography used on book covers and magazines looked just a little bit more unusually stylish than before.<sup>201</sup> In August 1963, the music showcase *Ready, Steady, Go!* debuted on non-BBC channel, ITV. It would run for another three years. With the show's infectious theme song "5-4-3-2-1" by the up-and-coming London band Manfred Mann, the program's opening byline "the weekend starts here," suggested the importance of leisure-filled days over those devoted to work. However, the show's look, sound, and marketing also symbolized an overall cultural shift in terms of how young people perceived of themselves, for they would identify increasingly as Mods.<sup>202</sup>

Before she was Britain's "Face of 1966," and an internationally-renowned model, fourteen-year-old Leslie Hornby ("Twiggy") remembered the excitement she felt discovering the Mod scene of London circa 1963. Commuting from her suburban home into the city, London's West End radiated a teenage-driven energy she had not yet encountered. Saturday afternoons, with either the science fiction TV program *Dr. Who* or a Rock record blaring in the background, she and her girlfriends would labor over what to wear in order to go into the city. Even if they never made it into a music club, and just wandered around, being in this Mod epicenter offered entrée into a sparkling, new world. She remembers thinking that an important aspect of this time was thinking "anything modern was wonderful, and anything old was terrible... everything up to date, up to the minute, brand new and streamlined and contemporary—that's what everything [had] to be—houses, home décor, ornaments, clothes!" Prior to gracing countless magazine

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<sup>201</sup> Cawthorne, *Sixties*, 124-129.

<sup>202</sup> Marwick, *Sixties*, 73; Levy, *Ready, Steady, Go!*, 111-113.

covers and even having her own teen magazine (*Twiggy: Her Mod, Mod Teen World*) issued, Hornby's first media appearance was as Mod dancer on *Ready, Steady, Go!*<sup>203</sup>

While Mod culture blossomed in 1963, John Profumo, a conservative member of the government was caught cavorting with showgirl Christine Keeler, Harold Wilson was the first Prime Minister elected who spoke in his local accent, and the Beatles were suddenly performing for the royal family.<sup>204</sup> With the licentious behavior of an upper-class statesman exposed, a liberal Northerner challenging the south's political hegemony, and lower-class Liverpudlians playing for the most elite of audiences, a democratization of society appeared to be in progress.

In 1963 Granada Television had decided to produce a documentary where seven-year-old children from all strata of British life were to be interviewed. The result, *Seven Up*, aired on British television in early 1964. The program was to ascertain whether the long-established British class system was really in the process of changing—or not. Using the old Jesuit adage, “Give me a child by the time he is seven and I will show you the man,” as the project's guiding theory, the documentarians behind the program wanted to see if the attitudes and outlook of seven-year-old children of the upper or lower class were indicative of how they would likely end-up later in life. The question driving the film was: “Are these childrens' lives predestined due to their social class?” In asking about future careers, for instance, the three public school boys interviewed recited a laundry list of schools they would attend in the future—all ending with their arrival at Oxford or Cambridge colleges. Meanwhile, the working-class children did not have much of a plan for their lives. The only black and working-class child interviewed said

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<sup>203</sup> Twiggy, *Twiggy: An Autobiography* (London: Hart-Davis MacGibbon, 1975), 12, 14, 19; *Twiggy: Her Mod, Teen World*, 1967.

<sup>204</sup> Bernstein, *Decline*, 147-153 and Marwick, *Sixties*, 457.



he would simply “look around and see what [he] could find” when working became an eventuality.

In an interview with film critic Roger Ebert, director Michael Apted discussed how the concept behind the project was very much a sign of the times. Ebert comments that the East End of London in the 1950s could have, in many respects, still have been the East End of a hundred years earlier, and yet, by 1963 things seemed to be changing. He quotes British Phillip Larkin’s famous poem “Annus Mirabilis:” “Sexual intercourse began in/nineteen-sixty-three (which was rather late for me)/Between the end of the Chatterley Ban/and the Beatles first LP,” which he sees an apt description of how society there was transforming. In response to Ebert, Apted states that he and the producers behind *Seven Up* wondered if, in fact, “English society [was] changing” or if this “was...cosmetic?” Apted says, “I think that’s what the impulse [was]... everybody in England was waking, we were hoping, from a big sleep. You know, the war was finally over and people were ‘having sexual intercourse’ and all this kind of thing. And this documentary just simply came out of this feeling—that maybe there was a brave, new world out there.”<sup>205</sup> Maybe the Beatles could do it, but was it still just a limited phenomenon for a lucky few? If class barriers were really breaking down, the question, then, is how did Mod culture’s adherents conduct their own cultural make-over and start, in whichever way they could, anew?

With the population of fifteen to nineteen-year-olds making up eight percent of the British population between 1963 and 1964, media inspired by or directed at youth were ubiquitous—whether in niche publications (*The Mod’s Monthly* which became *The Mod*) mainstream teen magazines (*Honey*, *Petticoat*, *Fabulous*, *Rave*, and *Boyfriend*), radio (Radio Luxembourg and soon, the off-shore “Pirate stations,” Radio Caroline and Radio London) or

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<sup>205</sup> Roger Ebert interview with Michael Apted , *49 Up* [DVD Extra Feature], (New York: First Run Features) Jun. 1, 2006. The reference to ‘sexual intercourse’ in Apted’s answer has to do with Roger Ebert citing part of Phillip Larkin’s poem

television—like *Ready, Steady, Go!*, *Beat Room* (1964-1965), and *Top of the Pops* (1964-2006).<sup>206</sup> While it may appear superficial that so much attention was paid to things like what clothing one was wearing or what places one went to, it was actually a more user-friendly way to challenge the “us-versus-them” mentality that was part and parcel of the British class society.<sup>207</sup> Unlike previous generations, working-class teens, especially, started believing that there was no place they would not be welcome—especially given their snappy dressing. Though youths around the world have may have felt disempowered due to their transitional child-to-adult status, British youth felt a varying lack of agency depending on their social class. Thus, if they did not feel that they had the ability to change the world, they at least believed that things could be controlled on an immediate, local level. The changes attributed to Mod culture can, thus, be examined through chosen fashion, music, spaces, and attitudes.

Male fashions during this time continued to focus on sharply-designed, Italian-style suits like what the Modernists had worn. In London, for instance, a myriad of boutiques just for men had opened in Soho’s Carnaby Street by this time, such as John Stephen’s Mod Male. According to him, “There [was] no longer a class thing any more about clothes. In a pub or a dance hall you can’t tell what strata of society people belong to by the way they dress.” He also believed that his ideas were homegrown and influenced by what he saw around him. “I didn’t go out of Britain until 1963. I am not at all influenced by what other people feel. I hate Paris...There was little creative thinking or individuality in their merchandise.”<sup>208</sup> If there was not always innovative

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<sup>206</sup> Youth population percentage qtd. in Whiteley, “Design Shift,” 39. Regarding niche and mainstream teen magazines, see Rawlings, *Mod*, 64-65, 91 and Cawthorne, *Sixties*, 142-143; for Pirate Radio see, Robert Chapman, “The 1960s Pirates: A Comparative Analysis of Radio London and Radio Caroline,” *Popular Music* 9 (Apr. 1990): 165-178; for mention of magazines and these youth-oriented music TV programs, see Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, 82.

<sup>207</sup> Richard Hoggart constantly refers to this “Us against Them” mentality within the working class that had created a self-regulating, self-imposed segregation from anyone outside this social class. Though references to this are strewn throughout his book, see Hoggart, *Literacy*, 86-87.

<sup>208</sup> Bennett-England, *Dress Optional*, 80; Maureen Green, “The £1,000,000 Mod: Subtitle: John Stephen: The Man

thinking involved on the designer scene, many Mods—whether money was an issue or not—often had a hand in fashioning their own “gear.” Manchester native Steve Plant (b. 1948) remembered this period as one where he and his friends were constantly “creating and inventing” various aspects of themselves—whether in “discovering” black American music as a result of the Merseybeat—or in showing up at the Cona coffee bar in a new outfit every week. Similarly, when I asked Liverpudlian Gibson Kemp about why he thought the “Look” of this period is still so recognizable, he told me:

Fashion was something you created [then]. You had to create it yourself—so putting a holey, long sweater on you were instantly recognizable... I used to take my school trousers on a Friday and sew them, turn them inside-out and sew up the seam and then iron them again so they were really, really slim... I’m sure I wasn’t allowed to...like lots of kids, and they all tried to make some sort of fashion statement without having the money to do it with. It was like mini-industry in creating fashion. Even when I was married to Astrid [Kirchherr] we used to get ordinary stuff and embellish it with stuff. Add different buttons or take a bit in, or... ‘cause she created those trousers by accident, probably. You know the ones very tight, zip... Hipsters, I suppose they’re called. I’d buy normal jeans and sew up the seam just like that and that’s how I guess you had hipsters.

For Kemp, then, it was the inventive, do-it-yourself aspect of Mod style that made it look so distinctive.

Though the way that Mod has been described by several authors can be deemed homosocial, and a parallel to or influence of British gay male culture is also usually accepted, there is also a curiously defensive, near homophobic, aspect to this literature. Richard Barnes (*Mods!*, 1979) writes: “The boys were effeminate and used to fuss about and preen in front of the mirror, but they weren’t homosexual.” A Mod named Ken Browne interviewed for Terry Rawlings’s book, *Mod: A Very British Phenomenon* (2000) states, “I never knew any gay Mods.

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Who Tells You What To Wear,” Nov. 8, 1964, *Observer Colour Supplement*, 32; Maria Costantino, *Men’s Fashions in the Twentieth Century: From Fock Coats to Intelligent Fibres* (New York: Quite Specific, 1997), 94-98.

Every single one I met was very heterosexual, even though they weren't that interested in girls." Only a Mod interviewed by David Nowell for his book on the Northern Soul scene (1999) admits that "his circle of friends [in the sixties] included a number of homosexuals," but that "it was really a hush-hush thing then. Nobody talked about being gay." Normally, these chroniclers of early British culture have chalked-up a male dominant scene, and hence the homosocial component, to the fact that male Mods did either not have extra money to spend on dates, or did not want to, so that they had more money for their clothes and accessories. In her essay "Young London" included in Len Deighton's *London Dossier* (1966), Jane Wilson, observes an androgynous element in the Mod scene, described the Scene club's crowd circa 1964 as composed mostly of rowdy boys who "wore eye make up which they carried around in small, plain purses and who danced together in groups."<sup>209</sup> Overall, given the new choices of male style and behavior, Mod culture relaxed gendered boundaries, instead of starkly separating between an underground "gay" subculture and (an assumed) heterosexual youth culture.

Female fashions that appeared in both trendy boutiques like Mary Quant's Bazaar and Barbara Hulanicki's Biba—as well as more mainstream stores like Marks and Spencers and C&A—were increasingly reflective of pop art colors and op art patterns and also took on a more girlish look.<sup>210</sup> Anne Tambakis's increasingly innovative and vibrant wardrobe circa 1963 was indicative of the times: "I worked for a theatrical agency in Soho in 1963. I often wore a mini kilt, I adored this fashion. I owned three kilts, one a pale lilac tweed, a black cashmere and wool mix and a black watch tartan. The black kilt was my favorite for evenings out at the discos, I teamed it with various glamorous tops mostly bought at Biba, together with pull-on stretchy

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<sup>209</sup> Barnes, *Modes!*, 13; Browne qtd in Rawlings, *Mod*, 50; Qtd. in Nowell, *Too Darn Soulful*, 17. Hewitt, *Soul Stylists*, 30, 35; Wilson, "Young London," 26;

<sup>210</sup> Twiggy mentions shopping at C&A. See Twiggy, *Twiggy*, 12. For more on this phenomenon, see Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, 23.

white or black boots. Mary Quant cosmetics created the pale lipped, panda eyes look, plus a geometric hairstyle.”<sup>211</sup> What was it, actually, that these clothes were saying? What did they say about sexuality in this period?

It has been for more than a decade now that published autobiographies and biographies of Mod performers from this era have attested to a more fluid aspect of sexuality during the mid-sixties. Given the *Lady Chatterley* trial and the recent arrival of the pill, British society was just starting to discuss heterosexuality more openly. It is not altogether surprising, then, that any discussions of alternative sexualities were ignored for the most part.<sup>212</sup> Therefore, it is only somewhat recently that these stories have surfaced. Marianne Faithfull’s *Faithfull* (1994) recounts several lesbian affairs during her Mod-era relationship with Mick Jagger, who she describes as bisexual. Despite her knowledge about Jagger’s inclinations, Faithfull kept her own bisexuality from him at that time. To the public, Faithfull was in many ways the epitome of Mod femininity: girlish, lithe, and consumed with fashion. She trembled as she sang, adding an extra layer of virginal innocence to her style. Needless to say, her image clearly countered the primarily “butch” or femme fatale stereotypes of women who slept with other women.<sup>213</sup> Though her public relationships were with men, Faithfull has called these affairs “part of my great experiment” and clearly of enough import to share in her book. In *Kink* (1998), Dave Davies openly discusses his affairs with men—including Steampacket’s Long John Baldry—during his time as an eminent mid-sixties guitar hero.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> “Your Sixties Memories,” *Victoria and Albert Museum* at <http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/fashion/1960s/memories/index.html> (accessed Feb. 16, 2008).

<sup>212</sup> “BBC On This Day, 1961: Birth Control Pill ‘Available to All,’” *BBC* at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/4/newsid\\_3228000/3228207.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/4/newsid_3228000/3228207.stm) (accessed Apr. 17, 2008).

<sup>213</sup> See for instance, pulp fiction depictions of lesbians in the 1950s. Katherine V. Forrest, ed. *Lesbian Pulp Fiction: The Sexually Intrepid World of Lesbian Paperback Novels, 1950-1965* (San Francisco: Cleis, 2005).

<sup>214</sup> For Faithfull’s lesbian affairs in the sixties, see Faithfull, *Faithfull*, 26, 84 and for her take on Jagger’s inclinations, 75. For Dave Davies’s sexuality see, Davies, *Kink*, 52-3.

Both these accounts testify that in Mod's revamping of modern culture, countering or challenging "norms" in all aspects of life was par for the course. While fashions sought to redefine what being a man or woman could mean, there was also more blurring in all aspects of relationships between men and women. Just as Mod clothing softened harsh demarcation between "masculine" and "feminine," Mod culture also allowed some movement away from traditional separations between heterosexual and homosexual. In Davies's own words, "While I enjoyed experimenting sexually, I never really considered myself gay. It was fashionable at the time, especially in show-business, to be adventurous and try different things, and there was never any stigma attached to my interest in other young men. I've always felt that if you have a genuine respect and love for another person, who give a shit if the partner is a boy or a girl?"<sup>215</sup> Thus, sixties Mod culture predates and heralds the queer theory and politics of the later twentieth century, which sought to move beyond a seemingly inflexible straight/gay or inside/outside subject position.<sup>216</sup> In this sense, the look of Mod could be deceiving—or not. Marianne Faithfull's clothing choices did in no way hint to any affiliation with a lesbian underground, while Dave Davies's may have been called a "queer" (in a derogatory sense) just because of the clothes he wore and the derider would have been, in part, on the mark (in a positive sense).

The boutiques which catered to this new flexibility also showcased the entrepreneurial aspect of Mod. This was embodied in the youthful, sometimes androgynous, managers and teenage staff in trendy clothing boutiques as well as the publicists and managers who promoted bands to a young constituency. There was also a commercial reciprocity between music, media,

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<sup>215</sup> Davies, *Kink*, 52-53.

<sup>216</sup> Ki Namaste, "The Politics of Inside/Outside: Queer Theory, Poststructuralism, and a Sociological Approach to Sexuality," *Sociological Theory* 12:2 (July 1994), 225. For more on queer theory, see Joshua Gamson, "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma," *Social Problems* 42:3 (Aug. 1995): 390-407; Adam Isaiah Green, "Gay but not Queer: Toward a Post-Queer Study of Sexuality," *Theory and Society* 31:4 (Aug. 2002): 521-545.

and fashion. Barbara Hulanicki remembers often playing her Beatles LP as customers shopped in her Biba boutique assisted by young, leggy sales girls with “round dolly eyes.” In John Stephen’s Mod Male young and hip managers would “smoke and lean against the wall and put records on,” with an atmosphere described as being “like a club.” The “walls [were] pasted with pop stars, and on the record player the Stones roll[ed] on.” Bands would inevitably appear on record covers, in magazine spreads, or on *Ready, Steady, Go!* wearing clothes sold in these boutiques. As a result, teenagers, who also yearned to embody a creative approach to life that these similarly-aged media personalities embodied for to them, sought out the boutiques where these clothes came from.<sup>217</sup>

The music played by both nationally and locally successful British bands of the period—was a varying *mélange* of Beat, Blues, Soul, and even Modern Jazz. As mentioned earlier, with the Beatles’ increasing songwriting abilities, this mix of influences helped create a British-born style of popular music. Two other important bands to emerge in 1963 and 1964 were the Rolling Stones and the Kinks. The Rolling Stones were shaggy-haired blues fans that looked more Beatnik than Mod, and had named themselves after a lyric from a Muddy Waters song.<sup>218</sup> It is not just a coincidence that these bands are now part of a “Classic Rock” canon. Since Mods were the “principle consumers” of this music—music that would form a substantial part of youth culture for decades to come—the Mods can then be held “responsible” in part, at least, for “the progress of pop music.”<sup>219</sup>

The Rolling Stones were suburban Londoners who started their career in April 1963 as the recurring act at the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond which is in the southwest of greater

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<sup>217</sup> Barbara Hulanicki, *From A to Biba*, 77, 81; “ARESGEE! Ready Steady Go!,” *Boyfriend*, Nov. 7, 1964; Green, “The £1,000,000 Mod,” 32; and Rawlings, *Mod*, 59.

<sup>218</sup> Rawlings, *Mod*, 89.

<sup>219</sup> Wilson, “Young London,” 23.

London. After gaining a substantial following—with many Mods in attendance due to their R&B style—the Rolling Stones had their first number one hit in 1964 with a cover of Chicago Bluesman Willie Dixon’s “Little Red Rooster.” Their first album, *12 X 5* released that year, contained mainly covers. However, their young manager, Andrew Loog Oldham, encouraged vocalist Mick Jagger and guitarist Keith Richards to write originals like the Beatles had started doing. Oldham saw the financial benefit that songwriting could bring the group. It was not until 1965’s “The Last Time” (1965), however, that they would chart with an original song.<sup>220</sup>

As Eddie Piller discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Oldham was an adventurous and wily manager who was determined to see “the Stones” marketed as leading members of the increasingly popular Mod phenomenon. A few days after interviewing Piller in London, while leafing through 1964 issues of teen magazine *Boyfriend*, at the Colindale branch of the British Library, I saw that Oldham had definitely done what he could to make this happen. For instance, starting in the February 29, 1964 issue of the magazine, a weekly feature called “It’s a Mod, Mod World... *Boyfriend*’s New Column Written by Five Top Mods (the Stones!) For You,” appeared. Lead singer Mick Jagger introduced the new feature by writing, “Each week we’re going to take turns to tell you all about the mod world, what’s happening, what we’re buying, saying and thinking.”<sup>221</sup> Whether the column was “hosted” by Jagger, Richards, Brian Jones, Bill Wyman, or Charlie Watts, the content remained invariably about the new clothes they or other band members had recently purchased or waxing philosophical about their “long hair.” Only one column (April 11, 1964) referred to their recording studio experiences. For instance, in the May

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<sup>220</sup> Rolling Stones, *12 X 5*, London NR PS402, 33 1/3 rpm; Britain Invades, America Fights Back, *The History of Rock and Roll*, 1995. Narr. Gary Busey. Prod. Andrew Solt, Time-Life and Warner Brothers; George Perry, *London in the Sixties* (London: Pavillion, 2001), 7; Wooldrige, *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, 162; Jasper, *Top Twenty*, 101, 107.

<sup>221</sup> “It’s a Mod, Mod World... *Boyfriend*’s New Column Written by Five Top Mods (The Stones!) for You,” *Boyfriend*, Nov. 29, 1964, 5.



16 issue, Charlie Watts reported that Keith Richards had gone “real mad... and got one of the new mod rages of the moment—a blue and yellow T-shirt, with a large red satin circle in the middle.” In a June issue, Jagger wrote, “Remember how odd everybody thought we were at first? [...] Our long hair isn’t half as unusual these days. Of course, the Beatles first made it fashionable, but we have been wearing our hair this way for years and years and there’s no real likelihood of us changing it.”<sup>222</sup> Further promoting the Stones’ Mod-ness, Oldham was also a semi-regular contributor to the niche publication *Mod’s Monthly*. As a magazine “for Mods, by Mods,” first appearing in March 1964, Oldham’s presence certainly may have contributed to comments like, “Mods assure me... their current heart-throbs... are the Rolling Stones,” and “The Mods decided that the Beatles were becoming too popular, and so discarded them for another group—the Rolling Stones.”<sup>223</sup> Interestingly, despite their deep desire to be the British, working-class faces of African-American Blues, members of the Rolling Stones were primarily middle class.

The Kinks were also from London—but from a northern part of the city called Muswell Hill—and they *were* working class. The band initially found commercial success in 1964 with their top ten hit “You Really Got Me.” The Kinks had been taken under the wing of American producer Shel Talmy, who helped produce the group’s gritty pop sound. They, too, had started playing covers of R&B and Soul numbers before Ray Davies began what turned into a prolific songwriting career. More so than any other group at the time, the Kinks toyed with images of England’s imperial past by wearing red velvet hunting jackets atop of white, ruffled shirts. As

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<sup>222</sup> The Stones’ “It’s a Mod, Mod World” articles appear in issues of *Boyfriend* from Mar. 7–Dec. 19, 1964. For the Jagger quote, see June, 6, 1964.

<sup>223</sup> For an example of Oldham’s contributions to *The Mod’s Monthly/Mod*, see “Mods Around the World,” *Mod’s Monthly*, Mar. 1964, 10. For more specific links between Mod culture and the Stones, see Rhona Ravel, “Coming Mod Trends,” *Mod’s Monthly*, Mar. 1964, 10; “The Rolling Stones: Mod or Not?” *The Mod*, Oct. 1964, 1. The Stones are also featured (as Christmas ornaments) on the December 1964 issue of the magazine.

Ray Davies remembers, “During the [first 1964] tour we had started to get a reputation as Dickensian-type characters. [Mick] Avory [their drummer] was called Bill Sikes, Dave [Davies] was the Artful Dodger, I was Smike from Nicholas Nicholby [sic., Nickelby] and [Pete] Quaife [the bassist] insisted on being Pip from *Great Expectations*, even though his manner suggested that he was more like Mr. Micawber.”<sup>224</sup> Hence, in the case of the Kinks, Victorian modernity was blatantly something to be pilfered and reinvented.

Though the band’s onstage look mimicked that of nineteenth-century England, their music mirrored instead the urban, emotive, and animated energy of the contemporary moment. Unlike the deserted and silent cityscapes Ray Davies had sketched in art school, the early Kinks’ songs conjured up the whirling sounds of England’s motorways. “You Really Got Me” and “All Day and All of the Night” were punctuated by Dave Davies’s feedback-drenched fuzzy guitar. Davies had experimented with various amplifiers, but achieved this clang by slicing-into the back of his El Pico amp that functioned as a pre-amp and then ran to his Vox AC 30 amplifier.<sup>225</sup> Beyond their first two commercial hits, lyrics of later songs such as “Dead End Street” and “A Well Respected Man” (both 1966 releases) reflected their working-class backgrounds and often poked fun at upper-class pretensions. However, their lyrics and melodies in songs such like “Dandy,” (1966) or “Waterloo Sunset” and “Afternoon Tea” (1967) also evoked nostalgia and images of English traditions. As one critic has astutely suggested, the Kinks “embody the contradictions, or love-hate, relationship of this generation with their country’s past.”<sup>226</sup> In this

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<sup>224</sup> Davies, *X-Ray*, 120.

<sup>225</sup> Ray Davies, comp., *You Really Got Me / It’s Alright*, the Kinks, Pye 7N 15673, 45 rpm; Ray Davies, comp., *All Day and All of the Night / I Gotta Move*, the Kinks, Pye 7N 15714, 45rpm; Davies, *Kink*, 1-2; Dave Hunter, “Voxes, Vees and Razorblades,” *Guitar Magazine*, Jan. 1999, [http://www.davedavies.com/articles/tgm\\_0199-01.htm](http://www.davedavies.com/articles/tgm_0199-01.htm) (accessed Apr. 17, 2008); *History of Rock*, 1995; *Seven Ages of Rock*, 2007.

<sup>226</sup> Ray Davies, comp., *Dead End Street / Big Black Smoke*, the Kinks, Pye 7N 17222, 45 rpm; Ray Davies, comp., *A Well Respected Man / Milk Cow Blues*, the Kinks, Pye 7N 17100, 45 rpm; Ray Davies, comp., “Dandy” on *Face to Face*, by the Kinks, Pye NPL 18149, 33 rpm; Ray Davies, comp., *Waterloo Sunset / Act Nice and Gentle*, the Kinks,

sense, of all the English bands from this period, the Kinks showcased most openly the classic British struggle between tradition and innovation within modernity.

Since music was an important aspect of Mod culture, youths continued to search for venues where they could listen and dance to music. Though many popular Mod clubs in London remained in the Soho district, clubs like the Crawdaddy in Richmond, or the Goldhawk Social Club in Shepherd's Bush, also became hubs.<sup>227</sup> As one Mod said of the Crawdaddy in 1964, "This Richmond club is the gathering place for the most way-out Mods in South England and the queues [lines] outside the club every Sunday night are nothing short of mammoth."<sup>228</sup> Though the Beatles had moved to London by 1963 and were no longer playing at the Cavern, the center of activity in Liverpool remained there. Lunchtime shows, allowing working teens and twentysomethings to grab a soda and a bite to eat while grooving to live music, continued during this time. The Blue Angel and the Iron Door were also popular venues. Similar cellars of sound cropped-up all over Britain.<sup>229</sup>

Often the content of letters to the *Mod Monthly's* editor, young people from cities large and small were keen to brag that cool Mod clubs existed outside of London. With Liverpool's Merseybeat phenomenon momentarily upsetting London's pop culture dominance, local pride was suddenly amped-up among Mods outside the capital. Rosemary Fearon of Banbury described "The Gaff" as a "real gear club" and wanted readers across the country to know so.

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Pye 7N 1732; 45 rpm; Ray Davies, comp., "Afternoon Tea" on *Something Else by the Kinks*, by the Kinks, Pye NPL 18193, 33 rpm; This theme was explored more vigorously in their 1968 album *The Kinks are the Village Green Preservation Society*. See Andy Miller, *The Kinks are the Village Green Preservation Society* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 5. See also Nick Baxter-Moore, "This is Where I Belong: Identity, Social Class, and the Nostalgic Englishness of Ray Davies and the Kinks," *Popular Music and Society* 29 (May 2006), 145-166.

<sup>227</sup> These three neighborhoods are described as areas with a concentration of Mod activity in Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, 38. See also Wooldridge, *Rock 'n' Roll*, 134, 162-163.

<sup>228</sup> "Mod Mailbag: Really Jumping," *Mod's Monthly*, Apr. 1964, 16.

<sup>229</sup> The Blue Angel still exists today. See "Night Club Listings: The Blue Angel," *Liverpool.com* <http://www.liverpool.com/listings/the-blue-angel.html> (accessed Mar. 30, 2008).

Sheffield's Chris Gretorex wrote about the city's Mojo Club and that they, too, had "some fab groups" that played there. Similar letters from diverse locales like Nottingham, Farnborough, Rushden, and Slough, were printed in subsequent issues.<sup>230</sup>

While snobbish Londoners were probably the intended targets of such letters, one 1963 letter to the *Mersey Beat* suggested that Liverpool's "fame" had gone to its head. Christine Adams of Sheffield wrote, "Each week I read your paper and enjoy it immensely, but I am annoyed at the growing attitude of Liverpoolians to other cities. We in Sheffield have many talented groups. I believe The Beatles themselves tell you about our brilliant R & B singer Dave Berry and his Rocking backing group- The Cruisers. We even have a club identical to the Cavern Club called Club 60, but it had to be closed down due to demolition. However, a more classic warehouse in the centre of town opened called 'The Esquire' and it is one of the best clubs in the North." Though not all clubs were literally underground, the fact that many were, offered a kind of cultural rebuttal to the way the British working-class had traditionally lived or moved through such spaces. Even if the actual overall aesthetics of these clubs were not wholly improved upon since their darkest days as working-class, Victorian dwellings (Brian Epstein described the Cavern as "black as a deep grave, dank and damp and smelly"), these spaces became locations of leisure rather than dreaded, destinations.<sup>231</sup>

A typical night out for a Mod in London may be described in the following way: Before heading to the Flamingo club's "All-Nighter," Mods would turn up in Soho, often on their Vespas or Lambrettas, and imbibe a cappuccino at a "Caff" like the 2Is. As much as the espresso they drank, having *Italian* scooters was important. In creating a scene with a cosmopolitan feel,

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<sup>230</sup> Issues of the *Mod's Monthly* scanned March to December 1964. For quotes, see Rosemary Fearon, "Mod Mailbag: Real Gear Club," *Mod's Monthly*, Apr. 1964, 16.

<sup>231</sup> Brian Epstein, *A Cellarful of Noise* (1964; New York: Pocket, 1998), 97.

Mods fantasized about countries like Italy as somehow being more democratic than England. If stylish vehicles like Vespas were available to even Italian workers (“the common people”), then it appeared to young Brits that style was a way to negate stereotypes of the lower classes. It occurred to the Mods that if they could imitate the upper classes and the perceived sophistication of continental Europeans, then they could outwardly project a newly modeled self that far exceeded class expectations or limits. In this sense style, as embodied by the Vespa, was used as a way to *move* beyond class structure. It could be said that during this time Mods *modified* the Vespa’s original marketing slogan in their own minds: No longer did the Vespa just imply “freedom through mobility” but “freedom through (hoped-for) *upward* mobility.”<sup>232</sup>

Either on or off their Vespas, Mods made their way to a myriad of clubs in Soho such as the Scene, the Marquee, Tiles, and the 100 Club. As alcohol was associated with the out-of-date “Teddy Boys” or “Rockers,” or worse, still, their parents’ generation, and since most clubs did not have liquor licenses at this time, if Mods did do drugs, their drugs of choice were amphetamines. The drug, also known as “speed,” quite literally enabled Mods to dance all-night—extending their leisure hours to the utmost limit.<sup>233</sup> Many a Mod would have gone to a large subterranean club called the Scene. The Scene was a “loud, smoky haven for the disenfranchised working class” that seemed as exciting as it was deafening.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Marcel Berlins, “Happy Birthday to the Vespa, Star of the Street and of Screen,” *New Statesman*, July 12, 1996, 37.

<sup>233</sup> Though drug trafficking by unauthorized persons was illegal, sales of speed by youthful dealers may have been eclipsed by police attention to cannabis and opiate use. The access to amphetamines was also made easier by lax restrictions on the amount of legally, doctor-prescribed pills until 1968. See Richard Card, “Aspects of British Drug Legislation,” *University of Toronto Law Journal* 20:1 (1970): 94-95; See also, Trevor Bennett, “The British Experience with Heroin Regulation,” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 51:1 (1988): 299-314; “Resources: Brief History,” *C.O.C.A.* at <http://www.coca.org.uk/resourcedetail.asp?resourceID=34> (accessed Mar. 27, 2008) and “Amphetamines,” *Drugscope* at <http://www.drugscope.org.uk/resources/drugsearch/drugsearchpages/amphetamines.htm> (accessed Mar. 27, 2008).

<sup>234</sup> Wooldrige, *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, 35; Oldham, *Stoned*, 77; Hewitt, *Soul Stylists*, 30.

The Mods' search for new, updated environments was similar to that of the Modernist architects.<sup>235</sup> It was also reflective of an interest in interior spaces. Though the dank, but exciting, Rock cellar was more of a "spiritual" make-over of a once maligned space, industrial furniture and interior designers were creating fun home objects that also gave living spaces a little lift. Certainly, it was the case that the latest European designs, such as Finnish designer Eero Aarnio's famous Ball Chair (1963) were not affordable to younger people, but features of such items in magazines, for instance, would have given them a glimpse of the new environmental possibilities. However, surveying a teenager's room in 1964, one may have surely come across a portable record player or transistor radio ("tranny") and, just perhaps, one of British designer Peter Murdoch's "paper chairs." In Pop or Op art designs, they sold for only thirty shillings (approximately £ 1.50) at the time.<sup>236</sup>

Aside from the palpable aspects of Mod culture that recalibrated ideas of Modernity in the 1960s, there was also a philosophical side to Mod that was sometimes voiced through various media outlets. As Twiggy recounts above, being modern meant having every aspect of oneself and surroundings designed in a way that was up-to-date. Beyond fashion, music, and space, this also had to do with how Mods interacted with each other and those outside of the Mod youth communities. It had to do with how they thought about moving through the world. In sum: their attitude.

Steve Plant recounted that aspects of Mod culture opened up new perspectives for him. He saw this as a time when working-class teenagers were "not only listening to music, but... started to read. They not only started to read, but they started to look at art. We started to see

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<sup>235</sup> For the connection between modernist architecture and progressive fashion and lifestyle choices, see Leila W. Kinney, "Fashion and Fabrication in Modern Architecture," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58:3 (Sept. 1999): 472-481.

<sup>236</sup> Cawthorne, *Sixties*, 84, 108.

ourselves not only dressing smart, listening to great music, but we saw ourselves... we viewed ourselves as being intellectual.” When I asked him how he first became aware of Mod, this is what he told me:

At the age of fifteen the Beatles... the whole Merseybeat-thing had just started. And it developed from that. I remember being at school and the first time we actually saw the Beatles was on a northwest evening news program and they played ‘Love me Do,’ and we went to school the next day and this was a revelation. We’d never seen anything like this...it was an epiphany, really. We knew then that this was ours....And this...*this* was going to be our world.<sup>237</sup>

Here, it appears that the Beatles first self-penned hit was symbolic of the transition from an imitative youth culture to one created in Britain for the British—“our world” in Plant’s words.

Steve grew up in postwar-built council estates in the Wythenshawe area of Manchester and remembered being somewhat surprised that Mod culture existed outside of his hometown.

We just thought [Mod] was Mancunian, as far as we were concerned. I mean, you know...we started to be aware of clubs in London like the Marquee and stuff like that. You were aware...from the very beginning you were aware—but we thought *we* were doing it and *we* were doing our own thing. That this was happening simultaneously in London and Manchester—why that is—I’ve never been able to figure out.

Steve’s involvement in the sixties Mod scene Manchester supports the notion that this culture had taken hold of working-class youths throughout the country—not just in England’s metropolis. Also from Manchester, and Jewish, Phil Saxe (b. 1951) recalled encountering Mod style and believing it might be a way for him, an outsider in some respects, to reinvent and expand his social world.

1964 was probably the first time I heard [“Mod”]. I was probably twelve. Um, and then, I don’t know, it’s a strange thing. I had a bit of an epiphany when I became a Mod. I’m Jewish, right... but I grew up in a non-Jewish area: Stretford. So I always felt a little bit odd and I was always a little bit ungainly. I was about the size I am now when I was twelve. I wore National Health glasses and all that sort of stuff. And, I don’t know...I used to get dragged to the center of Manchester to youth clubs and stuff, Jewish youth clubs, by my parents, you know? And we were in this non-Jewish area, so I always felt a

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<sup>237</sup> Steve Plant, oral history interview by the author, digital recording, Rampant Lion Pub, Manchester, Sept. 1, 2007, DCUP.

little bit odd. Two things stick in my mind. One is... I must have been just fourteen—no, maybe thirteen, almost fourteen—in the summer. It must have been '64... '65 and I went into Manchester and I went to the Jewish youth club and I walked a girl to a bus station, in McKeesgate, Manchester, called Victoria Station—bus station. And I saw these two lads come out of the public toilets and they looked completely different from everybody else. They had short hair, they had, like, what we used to call 'parallels'—wider sort of trousers... mohair, braces, polo shirts on... and I thought, 'Wow!' I was really impressed and I wanted to be like them. And at the same time someone used to walk past my house quite a lot and he must have been about 16...17... and he had a suit and everything and looked really great and I used to want to be like him.<sup>238</sup>

In Phil's account, the distinctive look of the Mods he first encountered seemed to him as a means to identify beyond being Jewish. As it turns out, a good number of early Mods in Britain were Jewish. Steve Plant remembered, for instance, looking at what the Jewish teens were wearing because he assumed they had more money and, therefore, better clothes.

Not only was Mod seen as a way to transcend ethnic identity for something broader, but it appeared that young women sensed that this youth culture offered them something other than the mainstream, female progression from student to worker to wife. In the February 22, 1964 issue of *Boyfriend*, two teenage girls debated whether being a Mod was a positive identity to cling to. Connie, who identified as a Mod, saw the culture as imbued with a philosophy that allowed one to think beyond mainstream expectations of young women:

I've been called a mod. I'm supposed to dress like a mod. It's another label in a world full of labels. I'm not really interested in wearing a 'uniform' and belonging to a group in that sense. But there is something I agree with the mods about, and that is—what is all the excitement about life? I find it all pretty cool so far. And that takes in about 18 years. Some girls have one long ball in life:

1. Getting all excited about weddings and dressing up like fruit cakes to be bridesmaids, etc.
2. Talking breathlessly about so-and-so getting engaged and crying out in wonderment when the ring is produced.

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<sup>238</sup> Phil Saxe, oral history interview by author, digital recording, Rampant Lion Pub, Manchester, Sept. 1, 2007, DCUP.



3. Getting dressed up like a painting on the front of a chocolate box to go to some dance with an chinless wonder who spills drinks all over you!
4. Preparing for birthdays and Christmas in the same way year after year.
5. Saving up and going with the rest of the girls to see a London show. Goody goody gumdrops! Something snappy like Gilbert and Sullivan!
6. Mummy. All they talk about is Mummy. It's Mummy this and Mummy that. Ugh!

These are the highlights of their dull little lives. They stagger breathlessly from one peak of enjoyment (someone's engagement) to the next (an actual marriage!) and their eyes become all shiny as they tell you about it. What amuses me is that we Mods are supposed to dress in a way-out fashion! WE are odd. Well, I consider the grand old English twin-set pretty way-out, too. So far out that I hope it never comes back again. What are we looking for? I wish I knew. Something really exciting. Something really thrilling. We'll know when it comes. Right now will someone please tell me—what is there to get excited about?<sup>239</sup>

Connie's analysis of why being a mainstream-type girl circa 1964 was a great, big bore illustrates perhaps why she chose to identify as a Mod. Even if the Mod way of life was not yet offering "something really exciting" to counteract her youthful cynicism, at least it was giving her a way to detach from a life where the most thrilling experience one might have is "getting all excited about weddings and dressing up like fruit cakes to be bridesmaids."

By having slightly older, female celebrity role models who had somehow escaped the straight line into marriage for a glamorous career—like *Ready, Steady, Go!*'s host Cathy ("Queen of the Mods") McGowan—Mod girls like Connie thought, just perhaps, something different could be experienced by being part of this scene. As Twiggy recalls, she and her girlfriends idolized Cathy McGowan because "she was one of us."<sup>240</sup> In an August 1964 report about Mods in the *Sunday Times Colour Supplement*, a girl named Louise shared, "'My dad's

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<sup>239</sup> "What is There to Get Excited About?" *Boyfriend*, Feb. 22, 1964, 27.

<sup>240</sup> Twiggy, *Twiggy*, 12.

trying to get me to join the Young Conservatives... but I like this set. They're nice, and they say what they mean." In Louise's case, involving herself in the Mod scene may not have only offered more alternatives to her, but was also a more progressive replacement for affiliation with traditional attitudes via Tory politics.<sup>241</sup>

As Mod became the rallying point for many British youths between 1963 and 1964, it should not be surprising that it became a multidimensional, multifaceted phenomenon. Thus, as there were many self-identified Mods, there were also just as many different ways of experiencing and thinking about the culture. Some Mods started calling themselves "Individualists," suggesting that those who adopted this ethos were more apt to be daring and try new things—whether or not their friends aped them the very next day. Some loved the Beatles while others refused to acknowledge them as part of Mod culture. As much as there was a youthful optimism that drove the scene, there were also those who would have been pessimistic no matter what they wore or what they listened to. There were Mods who popped pills and others who did not have a taste for drugs or alcohol. Some Mods were very rule-oriented and constantly felt the need to strictly demarcate what Mod *should* be.<sup>242</sup> Thanks to a seemingly inherent need by the press for sensationalism, the most famous of these various Mod "factions" in 1964 were those who chose to riot in the streets of British coastal resorts, punch-up "Rocker" rivals, and smash storefront windows. Soon, "Mods and Rockers" became synonymous with moral panics.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Kathleen Halton, "Changing Faces," *Sunday Times Colour Magazine*, Aug. 2, 1964, 12-20.

<sup>242</sup> For descriptions of these various kinds of Mods, see "Did it Really Happen? 'Mockers' Anyone?" *Spirit of 59* at [http://the59club.com/public\\_html/mockers.html](http://the59club.com/public_html/mockers.html) (accessed Feb. 19, 2008).

<sup>243</sup> For sensationalized accounts, see Barnes, *Mods!*, 110-114, 116. For Mods and Rockers causing "moral panics," see Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers* (1972; London: Routledge, 2004).

The 1964 book *Generation X* was published soon after a series of Mod and Roker riots that took place in seaside resort towns of Clacton, Margate, Brighton, and Hastings. British sociologists Charles Hamblett and Jane Deverson sought to find answers to the question: “What’s behind the rebellious anger of Britain’s untamed youth?” Given the question, the book starts out, appropriately enough, with the more belligerent opinions of eighteen-year-old John Braden, a London mechanic. “Yes, I am a Mod and I was at Margate,” he says. “I’m not ashamed of it—I wasn’t the only one. I joined in a few fights. It was a laugh... I haven’t enjoyed myself so much in a long time... the beach was like a battlefield. It was like we were taking over the country.” Although the researchers also do describe his opinions as “an extreme case” to add to the journalistic interest of their book, the idea of Mods as being one of two hooligan tribes left a strong impression.<sup>244</sup>

The situation was so sensationalized in the press, in fact, that the *Times* [of London] reported that the Pope, in addressing a large group of Italian Boy Scouts, said that the Mods and Rockers were not only delinquents, but were groups “eager to enjoy life as an experience without sense.”<sup>245</sup> Media attention to these conflicts was so heavy-handed that since 1964 the phrase “Mods and Rockers,” has seeped into the British vernacular—referencing any kind of bipartisan conflict in that country. Many Mods in the scene were mournful of this association with violent behavior. Their refined image had been tarnished with the old stereotype of the working classes as an unruly mob. According to a Mod named Johnny Moke, this kind of Mod “wasn’t Modernism anymore... it was more towards being a member of a gang and that’s now what we were about. We were about style, fashion and lifestyle and the next thing.” Another named Paul Stag opined, “They weren’t Mods as we knew Mods... no real Mod wanted to roll about in the

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<sup>244</sup> Hamblett and Deverson, *Generation X*, 7-8.

<sup>245</sup> “Pope on ‘Mods’ and ‘Rockers,” *The Times*, Aug. 18, 1964, 8.

dirt, sand, pebbles or anything else for that matter. The clothes were still the most important factor, not fighting.”<sup>246</sup> While references to “Mods and Rockers” remain, this was only one, albeit negative and highly publicized, way in which the term Mod circulated and how the culture was expressed.

As already mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is little wonder, then, that the Beatles’ 1964 film *A Hard Day’s Night*, which was released not long after the Mod versus Rocker conflicts, should contain the line “Are You a Mod or a Rocker?” Ringo’s answer: “I’m a Mocker,” may have not only inadvertently expressed the Beatles’ bemused take on the subject, but also reflected the fact that the majority of young people who identified in one way or another with the spirit of the times may have had a more jovial approach towards life.

#### **2.4.4 All Over Now? Heyday and ‘Decline,’ 1965-1967**

The period from 1963 to 1964 was a period of self-definition, bringing together disparate progressive styles and ideas to create the foundation of Mod culture. One of the Who’s biographers, Dave Marsh, describes the London Mod scene by 1965 as “about to burst” into something bigger. “You could smell it in the very air of the west London clubs, in the larger crowds at the gigs, in the Carnaby Street clothing shops just a bit more crowded each Saturday,” he writes. By 1966, England (with London, rather than Liverpool, now as its centerpiece) had become the international hub of a hip youth universe. By this time, through media reports and successful tours of British bands, other countries had become well aware of the word “Mod” and its attachment to what was happening in England. By mid-1967, however, the fully formed

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<sup>246</sup> Qtd. in Rawlings, *Mod*, 74, 77.

phenomenon seemed to be eclipsed by the American-born “hippie” or countercultural aesthetic.<sup>247</sup> Nonetheless, as subsequent sections of the chapter show, various incarnations of Mod continued to exist from the late sixties to the present, even if it did not remain the *only* youth culture.

Starting in 1965, young people identifying with Mod, regardless of the fights between Mods and Rockers, seemed to recognize that they were creating something unique. Also by this year, the flow of Mod-themed imagery escalated. Suddenly Mod was everywhere. 1965 to mid-1967 were the years when the culture seemed to infiltrate every aspect of British society—from Mods to non-Mods. As an outsider to the Mod scene, London-based journalist Christopher Booker observed the city scene in the summer of 1965:

Men in shoulder-length hair, girls, in skirts for the first time eye-catchingly shorter than even the shortest skirts worn in the nineteen-Twenties, clad from top to toe in the shiny surfaces and violent colours of plastic PVC or the dazzling blacks and whites of Op Art... Down Carnaby Street and the King’s Road the first of a flood of foreign tourists had already been drawn to gaze in awe at this thing which had happened to Old England—picking their bemused way past the little ‘boutiques’ which were springing up almost day to day, with names like 430 and Avant Garde and Count Down and Donis and Domino Male, with their weird décor of garish paintings, cardboard Gothic arches, huge photographic blow-ups of pin up girls and space rockets—and everywhere the omnipresent blare of pop music.<sup>248</sup>

It seemed, almost, that wherever one turned, people, places, and things were “going Mod.”

Seemingly contrary at first, a 1965 editorial in *The Mod* (formerly the *Mod’s Monthly*) asked “Where Have All the Mod Gone?” What editor Mark Burns probably meant was that Mod had

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<sup>247</sup> For the transition from Mod to Psychedelia and the counterculture, see Simon Rycroft, “The Geographies of Swinging London,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 28 (2002): 580 and James Henke, “Introduction,” in *I Want to Take You Higher: The Psychedelic Era, 1965-1969*, ed. James Henke with Peter Puterbaugh (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1997), 10-11; Mablen Jones, *Getting it On: The Clothing of Rock and Roll* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 85-6; Dave Marsh, “The Who Sell Out” liner notes, *The Who Sell Out*, MCA 11268, compact disc. For transition of some Mods to Skinheads, see Anthony Marks, “Young, Gifted, and Black,” *Black Music in Britain: Essays on the Afro-Asian Contribution to Popular Music*, ed. Paul Oliver (Milton Keynes, Eng.: Open University Press, 1990), 108; Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, 39; and Lentz, *Influential*, 53.

<sup>248</sup> Booker, *Neophiliacs*, 20.

become so incorporated into the mainstream, that it was hard to know exactly who was *really* Mod and who was not. “We see... young executives in big corporations with hair styles that would have got them shown the door but a year or two ago... company directors... asking their Savile Row tailors to make them their next suit just like the one the Beatles wore.” While this created a very vibrant overall environment, not all teenage Mods were happy seeing “women in their fifties wearing the latest ‘Mod’ gear.”<sup>249</sup>

Not only were Mod clothes becoming more accessible, but images circulated that allowed people, if they had not already, to get a glimpse of Mod culture. In terms of specifically youth-oriented films, *A Hard Day's Night* had paved the way for a nearly endless stream of movies starring the latest British music stars between 1965 and 1966: *Ferry Across the Mersey* (1965, starring Gerry and the Pacemakers); *Having a Wild Weekend* (1965, the Dave Clark Five); *Seaside Swingers* (1965, Freddie and the Dreamers), *Gonks Go Beat* (1965, Lulu and the Luvvers, the Graham Bond Organization, and the Nashville Teens); *Pop Gear* (the Animals, Billy J. Kramer, and the Spencer Davis Group); *Hold On!* (1966, Herman's Hermits); *The Ghost Goes Gear* (1966, the Spencer Davis Group); and *Dateline Diamonds* (1966, the Small Faces).<sup>250</sup> However, there were also many other movies that showcased Mod fashions or the changing attitudes that Mod embodied. The latest hip fashions were easily glimpsed in British films such as Richard Lester's *The Knack... And How to Get It* (1965), Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), and the Michael Caine-vehicle *Alfie* (1966). John Schlesinger's *Darling* (1965) for which Julie Christie won an Academy Award that year, and *Georgy Girl* (1966) both showcased

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<sup>249</sup> Mark Burns, “Editorial: Where Have All the Mods Gone?” *The Mod*, Sept. 1965, 1.

<sup>250</sup> *Ferry Across the Mersey*, DVD, directed by Jeremy Summers (1965; Newcastle: Total Home Entertainment, 2007); *Having a Wild Weekend* a.k.a. *Catch Us If You Can*, DVD, directed by John Boorman (1965; London: Optimum Home Entertainment, 2007); *Seaside Swingers* a.k.a. *Every Day's a Holiday*, VHS, directed by James Hill (1965; Los Angeles: Charter Entertainment, 1987); *Gonks Go Beat*, DVD, directed by Robert Hartford-Davis (1965; London: Optimum Home Entertainment, 2007); *Dateline Diamonds*, DVD, directed by Jeremy Summers (1965; Tarvin, Eng.: Dd Home Entertainment, 2003); *Hold On!*, Film, directed by Arthur Lubin (1966; New York: MGM), 1966; *Ghost Goes Gear*, DVD, 2000.

female protagonists struggling to find what made life exciting: whether they thought it was found through a career, sexual freedom, wealth or marriage and family.<sup>251</sup>

TV shows not necessarily directed toward teenagers, like the espionage series *The Avengers*, also starred a very fashionable and up-to-date female spy by the name of Emma Peel (Diana Rigg) starting in 1965. Peel fought villains in form-fitting cat-suits, black leather knee-length boots, and other Mod fashions. She karate-chopped villains with aplomb and sped through the English countryside in her sleek Lotus Elan convertible when not doing so. Meanwhile her more “traditionally English” partner Steed wore bowler hats and carried umbrellas that were cleverly disguised crime-fighting weapons. Like BBC’s science fiction show *Dr. Who*, *The Thunderbirds* (1965-1966) was intended as a children’s program, but young adults watched it as well.<sup>252</sup> The show’s use of puppets (“supermarionation”) combined with colorful mini-sets, an espionage theme (ala James Bond) complete with high-tech gadgetry, as well as taking place in the twenty-first century, the program had a Mod look and feel. The show’s characters also used the aforementioned “F.A.B.” as their radio communication codeword.

Since visual aesthetics and one’s “Look” were such important aspects of Mod culture, photographers also became celebrities alongside pop stars. Just like playing in a band, the photographer was doing creative work that was both commercial and artistic. Many of these star photographers, such as David Bailey, also had East End, working-class roots.<sup>253</sup> Filmed in

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<sup>251</sup> *The Knack... And How to Get It*, DVD, directed by Richard Lester (1965; Los Angeles: MGM, 2004); *Alfie*, DVD, directed by Lewis Gilbert II (1965; Los Angeles: Paramount Home Entertainment, 2002); *Blow-Up*, VHS, directed by Michelangelo Antonioni (1966; Culver City, Ca.: MGM Home Video, 1991); *Darling*, DVD, directed by John Schlesinger (1965; London: Optimum Home Entertainment, 2007); *Georgy Girl*, DVD, directed by Silvio Narizzano (1966; Los Angeles: Sony, 2005).

<sup>252</sup> Moya Luckett, “Sensuous Women and Single Girls: Reclaiming the Female Body on 1960s Television,” in *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s*, ed. Hilary Radner and Moya Luckett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 277-300; *Dr. Who: The Beginning Collection* (1963), DVD, (New York: BBC-Warner, 2006); *Thunderbirds 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Collector’s Edition* (New York: A&E, 2002).

<sup>253</sup> Levy, *Ready*, 14.

London, Michelangelo Antonioni's 1966 film *Blow-Up* captured the Mod moment at the pinnacle of its appeal. Though the film chronicles the plight of a photographer, modeled after Bailey, who finds himself in the thick of a murder mystery, the film also features Mod fashions and a foray into a rock club featuring British R&B group The Yardbirds. According to the film's press release, the movie was to showcase the contemporary moment as one "where teenage pop singing groups have their records sold in shops owned by people their own age, and photographers who have barely started showing drive Rolls Royces with radio telephones."<sup>254</sup> By experiencing the film through the photographer-protagonist, the film underscores the period's fascination with trying to document the Mod phenomenon.

Though later books on the subject would decry this rampant commercialization of the culture, believing that the term Mod, in one author's words, "had lost all meaning and relevance," it was, in fact, the intended outcome dreamt by top "Mod publicist," Pete Meaden. According to Pete Townshend's words, Meaden had hoped that Mod become "the new ethos, the new art form, the new everything."<sup>255</sup> Similarly, as Eddie Piller suggested at the beginning of this chapter, Meaden's work as rock music publicist was because he wanted everyone else to think like he did. By 1965 his dream appeared to have come true. The mass production of Mod-styled products had an effect of democratizing the culture. For instance, inexpensive clothing available at chain stores was a way for more young people (and interested adults) to participate in the utopian-minded, ultra-aesthetic modern world that the first Mods envisioned. Despite the stepped-up affluence of the times, it was still not possible for all youths to afford many tailored suits or all boutique-quality clothes. June Blaxall remembers "enjoying the atmosphere" at the

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<sup>254</sup> Qtd. in Peter Lev, "Blow-Up, Swinging London, and the Film Generation," *Literature Film Quarterly* 17 (1989): 135.

<sup>255</sup> Regarding this disdain of the commercialization of Mod culture see, for example, Lentz, *Influential*, 32; *Who: Amazing Journey*, 2007.



Bus Stop or Biba boutiques, but “buying copies of what we had seen in the local C&A or Martin Ford [stores].” Gina J. “could never afford the major boutique prices, but hunted the look down wherever I could.” Cate Phillips bought a Mary Quant for “the enormous sum of fifteen guineas,” but wore it until it literally fell apart.<sup>256</sup>

While male fashions remained important, Mod female fashions became more interesting between 1965 and 1966. In his book about the Mod teens he observed in 1964, *The Teenage Revolution* (1965), journalist Peter Laurie describes Mod girls as drab and intentionally unglamorous in their look—with their use of white lipstick symbolizing their wish to blend into the background. He says, “They got their [nick-] name, Tickets, because they look as if some machine made them at six pence a time.”<sup>257</sup> By 1965, though, playfulness entered into the female fashions. Though there were many, many boutiques opening both inside and outside London in these two years, Mary Quant’s name remained a leading one in boutique couture. While the earlier Mod look for females had been somewhat plain, Quant’s fashions celebrated ultra-feminine girlishness. She used lots of bright hues, atypical color combinations, and unusual materials, while the skirts she designed became increasingly shorter. Quant’s dresses were worn with “Mary Janes,” which were rounded-toe, low-heeled shoes, with one strap of varying width going across the instep. Quant’s style suggested a Peter Pan-like desire to never grow old. According to Quant, “Adult appearance was very unattractive... it was something I knew I didn’t want to grow into. I saw no reason why childhood could not last forever.”<sup>258</sup> Her attitude suggests that womanhood was no longer desirable in the way it had been presented up to that

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<sup>256</sup> “Your 1960s Fashion Memories,” *Victoria and Albert Museum* at <http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/fashion/1960s/memories/index.html> (accessed Jan. 25, 2008).

<sup>257</sup> Peter Laurie, *The Teenage Revolution* (London: Blond, 1965), 7, 27.

<sup>258</sup> Qtd. in Juliet Gardiner, *From the Bomb to the Beatles: The Changing Face of Post-war Britain* (London: Collins and Brown: 1999), 133.

moment in history. This point was also observed by Peter Laurie. He writes, “Whatever she [the female Mod] is going to be, she is not going to be a woman in the traditional sense... to me, she seems the face of the teenage revolution.”<sup>259</sup> In this respect, this new wave of Mod female fashions visually symbolized an alternative kind of female adulthood—one that saw slim, mobile bodies as liberatory. After all, they were not equipped with “childbearing hips” to weigh them down. Just as this new womanly figure evoked streamlined machinery (again fitting in with the aesthetic of Modernist design), female allure fused technology with the female body. As the space race really took off between the United States and the Soviet Union, designers such as André Courrèges and Pierre Cardin created clothing of new materials, like PVC (polyvinyl chloride) “to evoke an ethereal, androgynous future of moon missions and space stations.”<sup>260</sup> The “futuristic” or “space age look” of silver, white, and transparent plastic in clothing appeared en masse alongside kinetic op and pop art dresses. A then twenty-three-year-old designer named Michael English created “superman capes over transparent PVC shortie coats, emblazoned with supersonic motifs worn over mono cat-suits [with] headgear [that was] helmeted, sometimes with transistor radios set in,” for instance. In describing why he designed women’s clothes in this way, English told *Honey* magazine, “Ten years ago we laughed at the science-fiction writers, but now everything they foresaw is coming true! So why don’t we live up to these scientific facts in the fashion world? I’m sick of looking backwards.”<sup>261</sup> These otherworldly vestments signified yet another way for Mods to reconceptualize modernity—with females playing a starring role.

This fantastical pop aesthetic that began populating the Mod world of women’s fashions also influenced the male scene between 1965 and 1966. This was most noticeable in the look,

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<sup>259</sup> Laurie, *Teenage Revolution*, 7.

<sup>260</sup> Stephen Fenichell, *Plastic: The Making of a Synthetic Century* (New York: Harper Business, 1986), 297.

<sup>261</sup> “Informers: Everybody is Going to the Moon,” *Honey*, Nov. 1965, 83.

sound, and presence of London band, the Who. A famous promotional photo of the group from this period shows them posed in front of a wall-size Union Jack. Guitarist and songwriter Pete Townshend is seated wearing a jacket made out of the British flag. His arms are crossed in front of him while his luminous blue eyes stare defiantly at the camera. Behind him stand drummer Keith Moon, bassist John Entwistle, and Roger Daltrey also outfitted in “Mod gear.” Moon is wearing a white t-shirt with an op art design on it, Entwistle a diamond pattern jacket, and Daltrey is clad in a powder blue and white striped shirt with a long, pointy collar. Townshend’s art college training had encouraged him to see the spectacular in the most mundane or commercial objects or experiences. In his words, people would come to “see the group because of various things people in the group wear such as John’s jacket and medals and my jacket made out of flags and Keith—who sort of wears fab gear: pop art t-shirts made out of targets and hearts and things like this. Because a group is a fairly simple form of pop art, we get a lot of audience this way.” After the Who, Mod culture began vigorously embracing, rather than shying away from, conventional British imagery such as the Union Jack and the Royal Air Force’s (R.A.F.) target symbol.

Like the Kinks’ lyrical content that included ever-increasing references to Englishness, this was a way to tie Britain’s imperialistic past to its present, the new modernity of Mod culture. In terms of its first appearances within the Mod subculture—as logo patches of the British flag and Air Force targets affixed to Mods’ parka jackets (taken from American G.I.s) and scooters—these traditional British symbols implied a love/hate dialectic between Mod and its parent culture.<sup>262</sup> The Union Jack’s multiple crosses represent the coming together of England, Scotland, and Wales. Though the flag existed in its current form by the 1801, it came into official

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<sup>262</sup> Dick Hebdige sees the revised use of symbols as a kind of cultural “refusal” of or resistance. See Dick Hebdige, *Subculture*, 1-4, 124.

and popular use by the late nineteenth century—the high point of Empire. Unlike the flag’s original meaning—which meant to homogenize three disparate countries and cultures within a new empire—the Mods used the symbol as a way to unite individuals who did not necessarily feel patriotic in the usual sense. Similarly, the Royal Air Force’s red, white, and blue target, which first appeared on British planes during World War I, became a fashionable pop art symbol worn by Mods. The use of these symbols implied a longing for a “different” England—one where working-class youth felt included rather than excluded. In adopting these symbols, the Mods declared, “Your England is *my* England, too—but *my* England is more fun!”<sup>263</sup>

However, the Who’s Pop Art sensibility went beyond what they literally wore on their backs. The Who garnered commercial success in early 1965 with their hit “Can’t Explain,” and soon appeared on British music TV shows.<sup>264</sup> Prior to chart success, the Who already had a fairly big local following in west London a year previous, playing first the Goldhawk Social Club in their own neighborhood of Shepherd’s Bush and, eventually, the Marquee in Soho. Their first publicist and quasi-manager, Pete Meaden temporarily changed their name to the “High Numbers” in 1964 in order to transform and market them as *the* Mod band of London. As already mentioned, but an important point to restate, fast-talking Meaden (pepped-up from pills) was convinced that Mod was, in Townshend’s words, “the new ethos,” and that the High Numbers would be on the forefront of it.<sup>265</sup> The band, with some knowledge of the Mod scene already, began studying the crowd and tried to blend in with their audiences. Only one single,

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<sup>263</sup> Alison Goodrum, *National Fabric: Fashion, Britishness, Globalization* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 208; “United Kingdom, flag of the,” Encyclopedia Britannica Online at <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9074268> (retrieved Mar. 26, 2008); “MoD’s Battle Over RAF Symbol,” *BBC News*, Nov. 20, 2003 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk-news/england/32222616.stm> (accessed Mar. 26, 2008); Jack Malvern, “MoD Takes Aim at Mods in Battle for Target Symbol,” *Times Online* at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1019561.ece>. (accessed Mar. 26, 2008).

<sup>264</sup> *The Kids are Alright*, DVD, directed by Jeff Stein (1979; Long Beach, CA: Pioneer, 2003).

<sup>265</sup> Like the Rolling Stones’ Oldham, *Boyfriend* ran obviously Meaden-crafted stories on “the High Numbers” as early as 1964. See for instance “Undiscovered British Groups: They’re Part of the new wave in raves!” *Boyfriend*, Aug. 8, 1964, 17.

“I’m the Face,” written by Meaden, was released under this name with this mission of Mod in mind. Though the High Numbers switched their name back to the Who under the management of Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp, the band’s Mod image stayed in tact through 1967.<sup>266</sup>

Guitarist Pete Townshend, was impressed by the rougher-edged sound of the Kinks and “Can’t Explain,” reflects this. Drummer Keith Moon doubled-up a standard R&B tempo (Daltrey described it as like the sound of a “jet engine taking off”), which required Townshend to pick up the pace of his playing.<sup>267</sup> This combination of elements created a faster, more forceful-sounding music. However, it was not only their music that was uniquely modern in sound, but the way in which they executed their performances. Their onstage presence featured a gangster-tough, near-Mafioso posing Daltrey, windmilling arms and smashed guitars by Townshend, and, eventually, a kicked-over drum kit courtesy of Moon. Seemingly unaffected by the fray was bassist Entwistle. Though the Who was initially billed as a pop art band, and their stage shows could be read as a pop art “happening,” I instead view the band members’ individual performances as much more emblematic of various visual forms of modernism. Former sheet-metal worker Daltrey’s macho bravado seemed to be cut of the same Italian cloth as the Futurists, whose Manifesto included the statement, “We want to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and rashness.”<sup>268</sup> Townshend’s destruction of guitars may have been the direct result of Gustav Metzger’s lecture on “Autodestructive Art” at his art college, but it also embodied the aggressive, yet playful, exercises of the Dadaists. Keith Moon’s unwieldy, ecstatic drumming, which had him seemingly moving in all directions at once, was like Cubism. Meanwhile, John

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<sup>266</sup> *The Who: Amazing Journey*, 2007; Davey, *English Imaginaries*, 88; Dave Marsh, *Before I Get Old: The Story of the Who* (London: Plexus, 1983), 74-5.

<sup>267</sup> *Who: Amazing Journey*, 2007.

<sup>268</sup> F.T. Marinetti, “The Futurist Manifesto,” 1909 at <http://www.cscs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/T4PM/futurist-manifesto.html> (accessed on Feb. 20, 2008).

Entwistle's unwavering, solid cool amidst the chaos whirling around him, evoked the monolithic strength of brutalist architecture. Their look, sound, and performative energies captured the essence of British mod-ernity for mid-sixties youth. Appropriately enough, their biggest hit became "My Generation," which peaked at #2 on the charts.<sup>269</sup>

Similarly, East End London band the Small Faces embodied another kind of (*Oliver*) *twist* on modernity. The band was led by Steve Marriott who had actually played various roles in West End productions of Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* and had also sung all of the Artful Dodger's songs on the official recording of the musical. By 1965, the eighteen-year-old had traded in his Cockney vocal stylings for soulful wailings reminiscent of Sam Cooke. The Small Faces' sound circa 1965 (Ronnie Lane, bass; Ian McClagan, keyboards, and Kenney Jones, drums) had the raw pop energy of the Who crossed with the rhythmic cool of Booker T and the MGs. The teenage group came together in June 1965 and had their first national hit ("Whatcha Gonna Do About It?") that August under the management of Don Arden. In 1966 they would have a string of hits in Britain, including their first #1, "All or Nothing" (September 17, 1966). The Marriott-Lane composition seemed to lay bare the attitudes of working-class kids with ambition.<sup>270</sup> As Paolo Hewitt and John Hellier describe it, in relation to the Small Faces, "You are eighteen years old. You are a Mod and you are in band. You have just done something many of your schoolmates never will: you have escaped the factory line."<sup>271</sup> Though this escape through musical talent was only available for the lucky few, the Mod kids who could not avoid working in factories or in a drab office setting still lived their lives as if they were celebrities. By placing more importance on *who they were* rather than *what they did*, they were able to, as Dick Hebdige points out in his

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<sup>269</sup> Jasper, *Top Twenty*, 112.

<sup>270</sup> *Small Faces Under Review* (Quincey, Ill.: Video Music World, 2005); Jasper, *Top Twenty*, 118, 122, 124.

<sup>271</sup> Hewitt and Hellier, *Steve Marriott*, 91.

landmark work on British subcultures, “break from the unnatural of the mainstream: a world that devalues individual fulfillment or happiness in exchange for mass thinking, conformity, and routine.”<sup>272</sup> The music of the Small Faces was truly created by East Enders searching for new rhythms to accompany their upward mobility in this brave, modern world.

Venues around Soho, especially the Marquee, continued to be where London Mods would gather to see bands like the Who and the Small Faces. After the Rolling Stones’ ascent into the charts, another R&B band, the Yardbirds, would become the Crawdaddy club’s house band and have a string of hits in 1965 and 1966 such as “For Your Love” and “Heart Full of Soul.” Bands such as the Action and the Creation also garnered a following. The Action played as the Who’s opening band and played the Marquee twenty-five times. The band was so popular with the Mods that they even received a scooter “escort” every time they played in central London.<sup>273</sup> The Creation’s two 1966 singles “Making Time” and “Painter Man,” were both produced by Shel Talmy, who had had great success with both the Kinks and the Who. However, the Creation may have just been so Mod that they were ahead of their time. Indeed, guitarist Eddie Phillips often played his guitar with a violin bow and singer Kenney Pickett would take to decorating canvases on stage while singing “Painter Man.”<sup>274</sup>

Though the chart success of the Who, the Small Faces, and the Yardbirds points to how accepted Mod culture was by this time, and also how London, rather than Liverpool, appeared to be the center of Mod activity. Nonetheless, Mod scenes continued to exist elsewhere with their

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<sup>272</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture, The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1979), 91-92.

<sup>273</sup> Wilson, “Young London,” 23-25; Alan Clayson, *The Yardbirds* (San Francisco: Backbeat, 2002), 13; and Rawlings, *Mod*, 22-23.

<sup>274</sup> Richie Unterberger, *Unknown Legends of Rock and Roll* (San Francisco: Miller Freeman, 1998), 33-34.

own boutiques, clubs, and bands.<sup>275</sup> There were also bands in these cities that, like the Action and Creation, had more of a cult versus commercial following, like Manchester's St. Louis Union or Birmingham's Catch 22.<sup>276</sup> In February 1965, an article in *Honey* called "No Quiet on the Northern Front," described an experience in Leeds:

[There were] a few grumbles about lack of facilities for the young—some people said they had to go to Liverpool or Manchester for entertainment. But if you get in with the university crowd there's lots going on in term time. We struck lucky at once—bumped into a group of students at Schofields who dragged us off to the art college rave...and it was! A huge rather bleak hall, overflowing with noisy colourful students... and they're having a ball. Many of the girls look terrific in way-out gear they'd knocked up themselves – could be some trend-setters here.<sup>277</sup>

This "report" also illustrated that Mod gathering spaces were not just about seeing live bands, but also had much to do with dancing.

The French "discotheque" certainly had its British versions. There was even a club called La Discotheque in London. These destinations found Mods being as inventive with their dances as with their fashions. At Manchester's Twisted Wheel—where all-night parties were hosted initially by DJ Roger Eagle—girls with geometric hairstyles and long-haired boys probably were shaking their "mops" via dances called the "Hitchhiker," "Huggy Bug," "Hully Gully," or "Swim."<sup>278</sup> Unlike seeing live bands, the music played by Eagle and other DJs around the country, like London's Guy Stevens (The Scene), was often mostly comprised of older and contemporary R&B and Soul singles. No matter how "black" Steve Marriott or Stevie Winwood (the Spencer Davis Group)'s vocal delivery sounded, some Mods still wanted to hear the genuine

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<sup>275</sup> See, for instance, "Clothes Shops," and "Venues," *Manchester Beat* at [http://www.manchesterbeat.com/shops\\_other.php](http://www.manchesterbeat.com/shops_other.php) and <http://www.manchesterbeat.com/venues.php> (accessed Mar. 30, 2008); "Venues," *Brightonbeat*, <http://www.brightonbeat.com/home.htm> (accessed Mar. 30, 2008); "Your Letters," *Brumbeat*, <http://www.brumbeat.net/letters.htm> (accessed Mar. 30, 2008).

<sup>276</sup> For more information on these and other British "cult bands," see "Catch 22," *Brum Beat* at <http://www.brumbeat.net/catch22.htm> (accessed Feb. 20, 2008) and "St. Louis Union," *Manchester Beat* at <http://www.manchesterbeat.com/bands/stlouisunion/stlouisunion.php> (accessed Feb. 20, 2008).

<sup>277</sup> Margaret Goodman, "No Quiet on the Northern Front," *Honey*, Feb. 1965, 26.

<sup>278</sup> Mary Cartmell, *Dances for Mods and Rockers* (London: Hamilton, 1964), 1.



article. According to Eagle, “There was always plenty of records from the Stax label in the [club’s] top ten and also there was quite a lot of Tamla-Motown floating around in there as well.”<sup>279</sup> Though some Mods had come to the scene through the music of Merseybeat or British R&B bands, the songs heard while dancing at clubs led these adherents to a new appreciation of these British bands’ true musical roots. At every turn, Mods were finding ways to express the uniqueness of their “now” moment.

The celebratory expression of Mod culture from 1965 to 1966 has often been pinned to the moniker “Swinging London,” a tag created by American journalist Piri Halasz. A now infamous April 1966 *Time* magazine article about the city called “You Can Walk Across it on the Grass,” alerted anyone who may not have known it already, that something special was happening there. As Wales native and longtime Birmingham resident Spencer Davis described it, “London was the known center of the universe as far as the sixties were concerned. I don’t mean that in a conceited manner at all. It’s where the fashion was emanating from [and] politics were unfolding.”<sup>280</sup> Though young people enjoyed their local scenes in Newcastle, Halifax, or Exeter, curiosity as to what Mod London was all about incited many a youth to take the train or bus into the city center. The 1967 film *Smashing Time*, starring Lynn Redgrave and Rita Tushingham, satirizes this phenomenon—where two naïve, northern, working-class girls land in Soho hoping to find fame, fortune, and, of course, some groovy gear.<sup>281</sup> Young people from far-flung London suburbs also descended onto Carnaby Street en masse in hopes of catching a flutter of what the excitement was all about. As artist and author Alan Aldridge puts it, “Carnaby Street was—for

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<sup>279</sup> Paul Welsby and The New Breed, “Spotlight on a DJ: Roger Eagle (originally printed in a 1985 fanzine, *The Cat*),” Found under “Blog Archive 2007,” *Jack the Cat that was Clean* at <http://jackthatcatwasclean.blogspot.com> (accessed Feb. 20, 2008).

<sup>280</sup> Halasz, “You Can Walk Across it,” 30; *History of Rock and Roll*, 1995.

<sup>281</sup> *Smashing Time*, VHS, directed by Desmond Davis (1967; Troy, MI: Anchor Bay Entertainment, 1998).

the kids coming in on the tube—to think they were buying what Londoners were buying. If Eric Clapton [The Yardbirds, Cream] wore wide lapels, like a Georgian suit, it quickly appeared in Carnaby Street.” Shopping in Soho was usually followed by “raving” at the clubs all night long. As not all Mods had scooters, the all-nighter seemed a near-necessity given the lack of public transportation back to the suburbs after 11pm. Journalist Peter Laurie documented encountering Mods hanging-out around the Eros fountain at Piccadilly Circus awaiting the morning trains.<sup>282</sup> In the sweep of “Swinging London,” the former stereotypical images of England and London—Dickens’s grimy street urchins or humorless middle-aged men in bowler hats—were being replaced by a robust, cheerful atmosphere of witty young men in pin-striped hipster pants and pudding-bowl haircuts. Amidst the hubbub of twenty-four hour action of Soho, it appeared working-class Mods had “won” by creating a world where yesteryear’s servants were the contemporary moment’s pop cultural aristocracy. After all, one of the hippest boutiques to open during this time was called “I Was Lord Kitchener’s Valet.”<sup>283</sup>

It was between late 1966 and mid-1967 that Mod culture began to change. For one, the key ideal that had been imbued in this youth culture, being “modern” in every sense of the word and by any means necessary was being questioned—and this had much to do with American presence in Vietnam. By 1966 there was a massive escalation of U.S. troops there. The death toll of both Americans and Vietnamese was deeply upsetting to those on both sides of the Atlantic who opposed the war.<sup>284</sup> Unlike the reactions after the end of World War II, where young people sought to disarm technology from its more nefarious connotations, the era of psychedelia and “flower power” relinquished this ideal. Historian Arthur Marwick read the

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<sup>282</sup> Lack of public transportation after midnight cited in Henke and Puterbaugh, eds., *I Want to Take You Higher*, 28. For Laurie’s description, see Laurie, *Teenage Revolution*, 57.

<sup>283</sup> Sadler, “British Architecture,” 133.

<sup>284</sup> Derek Taylor, *It Was Twenty Years Ago Today* (New York: Fireside, 1987), 211; Lentz, *Influential*, 50-51.

situation this way: “Flowers expressed the beautiful essence of nature and the exact opposite of the plastic. ‘Flower power’ was the elemental power of nature, against that represented by police truncheons and mace, and by napalm and all the horrid weaponry of the Vietnam War.”<sup>285</sup> Given this change, it appeared young people were moving away from attempts to reconceptualize modernity, perhaps questioning their efforts. Instead, they sought escape. Since the fast-paced world of Mod culture was reliant on a cycle of renewal and obsolescence whether couched within a micro or *the* macro economy, young people started searching beyond the confines of the materialism. Given the world situation, was it not a near-crime to just be concerned about clothes and bands? Even teen magazines presented articles that seemed to ask: “but what does it *all* mean?” or an Oliver Twist-like “May I have some more, please?” For instance, one such article called “Pop Thinks,” observed,

Something s happened to pop these days: pop singers are thinking. Yes, especially those getting to the top of the hit parade. They’re talking about war, draggy suburban life, news on radio. Television and in the newspapers, manners, the superficiality of conversation. And even when they’re talking about the most ordinary things, somewhere in the song there’ll be a thought to get hold of... Perhaps the pop world is becoming less adolescent, and growing up? Or is it becoming intellectual?<sup>286</sup>

As this passage suggests, young people started pondering if they had not taken things a bit too lightly.

As already suggested above, the Hippie aesthetic was usurping that of Mod and it was decidedly anti-modern in its outlook. The American scene emanating from San Francisco seemed to prefer a softer, more organic sensibility that was visually represented by velvet, flared trousers, Indian print clothing, and the Folk-influenced musical style of the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane. These Bay Area hipsters were soon called “Hippies” and took everything

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<sup>285</sup> Marwick, *Sixties*, 483.

<sup>286</sup> Lucy Abelson, “Pop Thinks,” *Honey*, Mar. 1967, 71.

very easy. Despite these American origins, the aesthetic was soon visible in the U.K. and elsewhere in the world. The “Hippie Trail,” encouraged likeminded youths to travel to destinations like Morocco and Nepal—inevitably familiarizing locals of these further-flung locations with the style. The drugs now predominantly used were deemed relaxing or offered hallucinogenic “trips.” They were not, like amphetamines, meant to inspire a fast-paced interaction with the world.<sup>287</sup> Instead of dancing in clubs all night, Hippies “crashed” on soft, paisley pillows and sought to “expand their minds.” Drug experimentation with the clique was all about smoking marijuana and taking LSD. Unlike the Mods in England, the last thing a Hippie would want to do is “speed up” on amphetamines. To Hippies, this would be nearly as obnoxious as joining the corporate world and becoming part of the hectic rat race.

Mods in England tried to wrap their minds around this new aesthetic. Would they be willing to give up their artfully crafted white and silver plastic furniture for floppy, beanbag chairs or listen to songs about going to San Francisco rather than ferries across the Mersey or dedicated followers of [Carnaby Street] fashions? The author of a 1967 *Honey* article tried, to paraphrase Michael Caine’s Alfie, understand what this new movement was all about and how some Mods were responding:

Psychedelic! Wot’s that? It’s the new kind of music. When you hear it, you’re meant to ‘Freak Out’ and that means have a spontaneous reaction, only we aren’t quite sure what. Still, ‘Freak Out’ parties are held, but we can’t say exactly what happens because it all depends how the ‘Freak Out people’ react to Psychedelic music. Although the idea came from America, three British groups are currently playing psychedelic music: the Yardbirds, John’s Children and the Fingers.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Henke and Puterbaugh, *Take You Higher*, 85, 103. Theodore Rozsak, *The Making of the Counterculture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 145, 160, 161-170; Roy McLean, *Magic Bus: On the Hippie Trail from Istanbul to India* (New York: Viking, 2006).

<sup>288</sup> “Informers: Psychedelic!” *Honey*, Feb. 1967, 46.

Given this sea change, it appeared that even those groups who had been influenced by or part of Mod were adopting this new aesthetic and attitude. The Beatles' new style, accompanying the release in June 1967 of their album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heartsclub Band*, found them with moustaches, thicker sideburns, and in faux military Satin suits. John Lennon looked especially changed—now even donning a pair of National Service eyeglasses.<sup>289</sup>

The Yardbirds had certainly already achieved national (and international) fame for their snappy R&B-influenced songs, but by 1967 they started experimenting with “trippy” lyrical content, as evident on some tracks for their *Little Games* album. Meanwhile, John's Children, featuring former teenage Mod and future glam rocker (with band T-Rex) Marc Bolan on guitar, created a rambling, disjointed sound in songs like “Smashed! Blocked!”—a style that Pink Floyd would soon popularize.<sup>290</sup> Even Mod stalwarts Small Faces had gotten into the Hippie act. In their biggest 1967 hit (and the only song that charted in the United States), Steve Marriott sings about “getting high” in the single's titular “Itchycoo Park.”<sup>291</sup> Some Mods did become Hippies, while others began searching-out rare soul and R&B records to listen and dance to as part of the still embryonic “Northern Soul” scene. Phil Saxe, for instance, became a DJ at Manchester's Twisted Wheel in the late sixties. He remembers that “we began playing faster and faster music and that became ‘Northern Soul.’ But when it [The Twisted Wheel] shut down in '71 I gave up and started getting into the Velvet Underground and indie music...or what became indie music.”

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<sup>289</sup> John Muncie, “The Beatles and the Spectacle of Youth,” in *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices*, ed. Ian Inglis (Houndsmills, Eng.: Palgrave, 2000), 48; Henke and Puterbaugh *Take You Higher*, 103; Jones, *Getting it On*, 85-6.

<sup>290</sup> Clayson, Yardbirds, 110-121; Unterberger, *Unknown Legends*, 37-43, *Small Faces*, 2005.

<sup>291</sup> *Small Faces Under Review*, 2005.

To a certain extent, the Who's 1967 album *The Who Sell Out*, is a kind of requiem for Mod's cultural heyday from 1963 to 1967 as well as signaling the band's own aesthetic and musical departure from the style that had propelled them into fame. Visually, the cover celebrates the marketing ethos that had been integral to Mod's sensibility. The cover photos of band members promoting fictional and real products like "Odorono" deodorant and Heinz's baked beans illustrate Pop Art's appropriation of advertising, as well as Mod's appropriation of Pop Art. The art-as-commerce and commerce-as-art aesthetic is also sonically apparent. The LP tracks are bound together by commercials and announcements that mimic those that had been broadcast on pirate station Radio London. The pirate stations, which were so popular starting in 1964, were shut down in 1967 because they were seen as a threat to the State's BBC. According to Townshend, the project idea came to him not only because the band had already recorded a Coca-Cola jingle, but because of what he had learned from Pete Meaden. "Pete Meaden taught me to look at the audience, watch what they're wearing, bring it on stage, and then the audience think you're the ones leading them... and it's actually the other way around," he says. "It's a cheap trick and it worked for us for a while."<sup>292</sup> Here, Townshend saw the trendy aspect inherent to the Mod scene and toyed with this idea for a critical aestheticization of commercial culture.

It is at this point where the story of Mod truly shatters into many more little factions of sub-, sub- groups. If Mod was to no longer be the mainstream form of modern youth culture, smaller cliques of self-identified Mods would continue experimenting and creating what Mod meant. Though trendsetting music sounded different, and the culture itself faded into the background, other aspects of Mod's style remained through the late sixties and early seventies.

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<sup>292</sup> *Amazing Journey*, 2007. See also, John Dougan, *The Who Sell Out* (New York: Continuum, 2006); and Chapman, "The 1960s Pirates," 165-178.

Much clothing and design (whether for furniture, graphics, or interiors) created during the mid-sixties could still be seen in various aspects of popular culture. For instance, the science fiction TV program *UFO* (ITV, 1970) featured female characters in miniskirts who sported bobbed, albeit “futuristic” purple, hair, while the male leads wore mid-sixties Mod styles, too. Mod(ernist) furniture and fashion design also appeared in another depiction of a space-age future, Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).<sup>293</sup> However, added to Mod style was the up-and-coming trend of psychedelia. As far as Mod culture and self-definition were concerned, people would continue to haggle over what Mod was, is, and should be. Nonetheless, as this culture evolved into various youth phenomena through the late sixties, into the seventies, and beyond, various attractive elements could be found and adopted by anyone who was desirous of carrying on Mod’s dream of idealized modernity.

## 2.5 RE(MOD)ELING MOD IN THE 1970S AND 80S

By the late sixties Mod was no longer the dominant youth culture style. The Hippie counterculture, couched within opposition to the Vietnam War—even in the U.K.—proved a more fitting foil to world events. The cheerful optimism of the early to mid-sixties that had fueled Mod culture was no longer palpable. Somehow, the style no longer fully fit the tenor of the times. Certainly there were Mods who would always be Mods, whether it was a “trend” or not. However, since Mod was no longer at the center of youth culture, those who continued on had to be even more creative in carving out spaces and ideas in which they could move forward.

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<sup>293</sup> Chris Bentley, *The Complete Book of Gerry Anderson’s UFO* (Richmond, Eng.: Reynolds and Hearn, 2003); *2001: A Space Odyssey*, DVD, directed by Stanley Kubrick (1968; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007).

With no one vision to guide them, it appears that from mid-1967 onward individuals who had been participants in that culture started following divergent paths. Some became Hippies. Others started the Ska-oriented Skinhead culture. Many youths in northern England ignored live bands and focused instead on dancing to rare Soul records at discos. These subgroups of Mod carried on for nearly a decade. Suddenly, in 1976, Punk Rock—with its unruly, riotous music and fashions made up of safety pins, ripped t-shirts, and bondage gear—became England’s latest young idea to grab onto. Its edgy, brash sound did end up influencing a new generation of Mod bands. Amidst mass inflation and unemployment in Britain, this “Revolution of the Uglies,” made it difficult to remember a time when the progressive, forward-thinking idealism of Mod culture had been possible.<sup>294</sup> The economic prosperity that Britain had felt from the mid-fifties to mid-sixties was on a downward spiral from the late sixties to the mid-seventies. In 1976, the same year that the Sex Pistols debuted, the British Pound was quickly losing value, causing a national economic crisis. However, perhaps this is why the so-called “Mod Revival” *needed* to happen by the late seventies. In order to create a more positive-minded modern moment against the contemporary punk ethos of “No Future,” these first “post-Mods” ironically needed to tap into the ideals of the original Mods.<sup>295</sup> As we shall see, this section of the chapter discusses how Mod evolved from the late sixties to the early eighties due to these cultural changes.

Interestingly, it was also during the mid-to-late seventies that intellectual work about youth cultures of the postwar period, including essays about Mod culture, began appearing.

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<sup>294</sup> Punk is described this way by British concert promoter Harvey Goldsmith in *Who: Amazing Journey*, 2007.

<sup>295</sup> Kathleen Burk and Alec Cairncross, *Good-Bye, Great Britain: The 1976 IMF Crisis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992) and Kevin Hickson, *The IMF Crisis of 1976 and British Politics* (London: Tauris Academic, 2005); and Michael Nevin, *The Age of Illusions: The Political Economy of Britain, 1968-1982* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1983). “No Future” is a phrase from the Sex Pistols’ song “God Save the Queen,” which was banned from radio airplay on BBC for its anti-government lyrics. For this overview, see Jones, *Getting it On*, 137, 139; For Punk’s attitude to the socio-economic situation in Britain at this time, see David P. Szatmary, *Rockin’ in Time: A Social History of Rock-and-Roll* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 226-229.



Although the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was already established at the University of Birmingham by 1963, 1975 saw the publication of the landmark British youth studies text, *Resistance Through Rituals*. The book is an anthology of essays about Teddy Boys, Mods, Hippies by scholars such as Stuart Hall (who was the director of the CCCS from 1968 to 1979), Dick Hebdige, Paul Willis, John Clarke, Tony Jefferson, and Angela McRobbie. The work of these scholars is a mix of textual, semiotic, historical, and even some ethnographic studies of these groups.

In observing and analyzing music and fashion choices of predominantly working-class participants, these essays have emphasized the importance of social class in the formation of British youth cultures. Since these scholars focused on class issues, their readings of such groups was inspired by the work of Karl Marx. Given the Marxist slant to these analyses of youth culture, the reading of Mod culture, for instance, was seen as one whereby working-class youths try to usurp the ruling classes through style, only to be “tamed” through mainstream appropriation or commercialization—nixing the possibility for any true cultural change. John Clarke, for instance, sees the popularity of the Beatles and “Swinging London” as the death of Mod culture. If this was how all Mods felt about their history, the culture would have been a short-lived one indeed.

Utilizing very little actual information from former or current Mods themselves, these scholars tended to read youth cultures as a text to fit their arguments about social class in Britain. CCCS was also influenced by the work of Structuralist scholars such as Roland Barthes, whose appropriation of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure’s work, influenced the scholarship of Dick Hebdige—particularly his work *Subculture, The Meaning of Style* (1979). In his writing, Hebdige examines both the communicative power of both visuals and music—providing more

fruitful discussions of what these practices mean to an outsider looking into the Mod world of the 1970s. When I first read these texts, I was more than thrilled that scholars had taken time to think deeply about youth cultures may say about society. However, I was also disappointed that the voices of participants were drowned out in favor of theoretical analysis. How do Mods themselves “analyze” their culture—particularly now that the heyday of it has passed into history? How do they assert their modernity by being part of what some might call a “retro” culture? As we will see, their responses are varied, indeed.

In 2007, when I asked current British Mods to recall what their initial associations with the word “Mod” were, I discovered that there were often just as many references to the late 1970s—this period of the “Mod Revival—as to the original mid-1960s era of Mod culture. This kind of recall that happens in oral history research raises issues surrounding selective, collective, historical, or generational memory.<sup>296</sup> Certainly this has to do with the fact that many of today’s Mods were born in the 1960s or later. However, like the Mods of the sixties, today’s adherents do not have a unified view of what Mod is either, but rather, pick and choose what aspects of the culture appeal to them. Though it would be easy to describe the contemporary fascination with Mod culture as only a way to “relive the mid-sixties,” it too is a reconceptualization of modernity in the contemporary moment, albeit with mediated examples of the original Mod aesthetic. This especially holds true for those Mods who, like Eddie Piller, were in their early teens by the time the Mod Revival had full momentum: 1978.

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<sup>296</sup> See for instance, Susan A. Crane, “Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory.” *American Historical Review* 102:5 (Dec. 1997): 1372-1385; Jeffrey K Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: from ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-140.

Colin Fribbens (b. 1964, fig. 2) who grew up in the southeast of England, and now lives outside of Exeter, told me this when I asked him what initial associations he had with the term “Mod”:

Well, the Mod-thing was brand new in 1978 in England, ok? There were bands called, like, the Pleasers and the Boyfriends and I really liked the Beatles at the time. I was, like, fourteen or something and, uh, the Pleasers looked like the Beatles. They had suits and ties on and I thought, ‘Wow, they look really good.’ They were really good, ok? Um, I was at school and the Mod—there used to be a television program on called, um, *The London Weekend Show*... and they said, that “Mods are back” and they had pictures of Carnaby Street and Mods with scooters and parkas on—wearing parkas and everything—and I thought, “That’s me. That’s me, that.”<sup>297</sup>



**Figure 2 Colin Fribbens, Brighton, August 2007. Photo by author.**

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<sup>297</sup> Colin Fribbens, oral history interview by author, digital recording, *NUTS Weekender*, Brighton, Aug. 25, 2007, DCUP.

What I find so interesting in what Colin told me was his statement that “the Mod-thing was brand new in 1978.” This is true in the sense that for him and all those Mods born too late to experience the culture in the sixties, this phenomenon was “new” to *them*. He also associated the Beatles—musically and stylistically with Mod and how the Pleasers’ look links back to this image. Finally, his interest in the Mod scene that was happening in “real time” circa 1978 ran concurrently with media images of the mid-sixties as presented through televised images of Carnaby street and “Mods with scooters and parkas on.” It was thus a combination of mediated past and lived present that allowed the possibility of Colin becoming a Mod in the first place—to facilitate being a Mod in the contemporary.

Something aesthetically resonated for Colin when he saw these images (“That’s me, that.”) If others, like the band the Pleasers, can run around looking like the Mod-era Beatles, he could, too. He continued:

So, I went out and bought a parka. All me mates went out and bought parkas and we were all in the same year in school and that was the start of the Mod scene here. What is very interesting is that when the Rude Boy-thing come on... Madness, Specials, Bodysnatchers, etc. The Beat. We were all walking along with our parkas on... and we said, ‘Rude Boys? Who wants to be called that?’ You know, ‘That’s not gonna work. We’re Mods.’ And we liked, at the time, the Jam, Secret Affair, Purple Hearts... you know? And we thought the Rude Boy-thing would be rubbish and wouldn’t last five minutes. And we all know it took over—it took over completely. So, when I went to see Madness, which I did in 1981, it was full of Skinheads and Mods in parkas.

Here Colin’s story showed in a little more detail how Mod changed from the sixties original during the Revival period. He cited a more visible presence of Skinheads and Mods who may not have been so super-stylish and just wore parkas to signify their Mod pretenses. Colin and his friends heard that the “Rude Boy-thing” was all the rage, but did not necessarily want that as part of *their version* of Mod.

Dick Hebdige describes rude boys as Caribbean immigrants who had a gangster-like “flashy, urban, ‘rough and tough’” image. Rude boys also listened to Jamaican-born music which was called “Bluebeat.” This music genre had already been introduced in sixties Britain by artists like Prince Buster and Desmond Dekker, but became a much more prominent aspect of Mod culture during this period.<sup>298</sup> The bands Colin mentioned in conjunction with this influence—particularly Madness, the Specials, and the Beat—wrote songs that were particularly indebted to these Caribbean sounds. With the exception of the mid-sixties bands the Equals and the Foundations, the Specials and the Beat, made-up of both black and white Englishmen, was something relatively new within Mod culture.<sup>299</sup> The record label that put out records by the Specials and the Beat was appropriately enough called *2Tone*, and also, symbolically, had record covers that only were in black and white.<sup>300</sup> When Colin described this music as “taking over,” he is referring to the fact that this development in seventies’ Mod culture became incredibly popular in the scene. These bands were also, by 1979, very commercially successful, and would remain so until 1982.<sup>301</sup>

On the other side of the musical coin, the Jam, the Secret Affair, and the Purple Hearts—those groups who were actually categorized as “Mod Revival” bands—affected a look more in line with the British R&B bands of the sixties, were not biracial in their line-up, and had a musical style that combined the contemporary sounds of Punk with that of the British Rock and

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<sup>298</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture*, 145.

<sup>299</sup> John Bush, “Biography: The Equals,” *Allmusic.com* at <http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:dmd0yl6jxpbb~T1> (accessed Apr. 17, 2008); Bruce Eder, “Biography: The Foundations,” *Allmusic.com* at <http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:h9frxqy5ldse> (accessed Apr. 17, 2008).

<sup>300</sup> “Brief History of Ska Music and Star Ska Interviews,” *BBC* at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/coventry/features/stories/west\\_indian/history-of-ska-music-the-specials.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/coventry/features/stories/west_indian/history-of-ska-music-the-specials.shtml) (accessed Feb. 22, 2008). See also Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, 47.

<sup>301</sup> The Specials first made it into the top ten with their #6 hit “Gangsters” in September 1979 and had a #1 hit by February 1980 with “Too Much, Too Young.” Their last big hit, “Ghost Town,” was #1 in July 1981. Madness had top ten hits throughout 1979 and 1980, but had seven top ten hits between February 1981 and December 1982, with “House of Fun” their only #1 in May 1982. The Beat, meanwhile, had their biggest hit with their cover of Smokey Robinson’s Motown hit “Tears of a Clown,” which reached #6 in January 1980. Jasper, *Top Twenty*, 277-319.

Soul of the original Mod years.<sup>302</sup> Finally, Colin mentioned the Skinhead presence at these events. The word “Skinhead” is so laden with rightwing and racist connotations today that it is hard to believe that this group would have anything to do with something progressive like Mod culture.<sup>303</sup>

Some Mods, however, did become Skinheads as San Francisco-based psychedelia became increasingly popular by late 1967. Those who did not either joined in with the folk/country/pop Hippie aesthetic (Steve Plant: “I think everyone called themselves ‘heads’ at the time.”) or became “Soulies” in what was soon known as the Northern Soul scene. If Mod by the late seventies had branched-out in these three different directions, what did these subgroups contribute to the evolution of this youth culture?

### 2.5.1 Skinheads

In the late sixties Skinheads emerged from the Mod scene, but had a distinct flair that countered the majority of Mods’ super-stylish and refined appearance. Before they were known as Skinheads (or “Skins”), this group was known as “Hard Mods,” implying that their look was edgier and less intentionally refined than the Mods.<sup>304</sup> The name “Skinhead” alone implied little or no hair, so unlike the long, foppish manes worn by quite a few male Mods by 1965, Skinheads either had hair buzzed very short to their scalp, or, more so later on, completely shaved their

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<sup>302</sup> David Lines, *The Modfather: My Life With Paul Weller* (London: William Heinemann, 2006), 40; Lentz, *Influential*, 78; Rawlings, *Mod*, 164.

<sup>303</sup> For associations of racism with Skinheads, see Nabeel Zuberry, “‘The Last Truly British People You Will Ever Know:’ Skinheads, Pakis, and Morrissey,” in *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture*, ed. Henry Jenkins (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 539-555 and Jack B. Moore, *Skinheads Shaved for Battle: A Cultural History of American Skinheads* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993).

<sup>304</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture*, 55; John Waters, “Hard Mods,” *Mod Culture* at <http://www.modculture.co.uk/interviews/interview.php?id=1> (accessed Feb. 23, 2008).

heads. In this way, it was a direct response to how “effeminate” the Mods had become. The Skins considered the Hippies’ “fashion crimes,” even worse in this respect. Ridding themselves of suits and ties, Skinheads went for a more casual style that celebrated what was thought to be a hyper-masculine working man’s look. In this way, they suggested that a working-class man should not aspire to an upper-class look, as the Mods had done, but dress in a way that proudly showed one’s true background. Skinheads exchanged suits for jeans or plain-looking pants with button-up shirts and “braces” (suspenders) and work or army boots. Nonetheless, since Skinheads were still concerned about cultivating a specific “look,” they could thus be described as proletarian dandies. This was a much more predominantly male scene as compared to that of the Mods. Nonetheless, the girls who did participate also wore their hair very short, but sometimes with a longer fringe in front and went back to a “drab” casual wear sported by the earliest Mod girls.<sup>305</sup>

Before any racist connotations were associated with Skinheads, it was actually this group that most enthusiastically embraced Jamaican Ska and Reggae music by black artists. By the late seventies many of them would also become staunch fans of *2Tone* bands like the Specials and the Beat. However, despite their musical allegiance, and given England’s lackluster economy by this time, some Skins were lured into the hateful political rhetoric of ultra-right wing politicians such as MP Enoch Powell or the radical political group the British National Front. Powell openly spoke in racist terms, believing that the continued influx of black immigrants, most all from former British Colonies, would lead to something like the fall of Rome and the death of

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<sup>305</sup> Timothy S. Brown, “Subcultures, Pop Music, and Politics: Skinheads and ‘Nazi Rock’ in England and Germany,” *Journal of Social History* 38:1 (2004): 157-178; Nick Knight, *Skinhead* (London: Omnibus, 1982), 26-36; and Lentz, *Influential*, 53-4.

pure British culture.<sup>306</sup> The National Front took an even more openly racist stance and believed that the country's growing multiculturalism equaled greater unemployment among the working classes. Like Mods, many Skinheads were of the lower classes and this fear-laden rhetoric was aimed at the less-educated working class. Unfortunately this racist position did find some receptive ears among the Skins. From this time forward there would always remain a distinction between Skinheads and "Nazi Skinheads," which explains why black Skinheads could exist at all.<sup>307</sup> As I have witnessed, there are still male Mods in England (and some women) who cultivate a casual, skinhead look in their clothing and hairstyles and are peaceful, rather than aggressive, members of the scene. However the late seventies' scene was different—even regarding the non-Nazi Skinheads. It was unfortunately the case in the 1970s that the latest model of "Mod and Rocker" rumbles was between Mods and Skinheads. Eddie Piller related his understanding of how conflict between these "subcultural cousins" came to be:

We had a fight...in the South End in August 1979 and after that it was war. It was complete war. Up 'till then it was Punks, Mods, Skins, everyone apart from Teddy Boys were part of the same alternative lifestyle. Then, the split started coming this summer and then by August we had fights with them. The South End, I think it was. And then, from then, it was just mass, gang warfare. They used to beat-up Mod kids all the time. Cause Mod kids were like fourteen, fifteen, sixteen. Skinheads were seventeen, eighteen, nineteen... And we grew to hate them...

Given this disparity in age and, probably, physical strength, between these Mods and Skinheads, Piller told me how he set up a "self protection group" that functioned in a very gang-like way.

There'd be twenty of them and four of us and they'd really beat us. And we were just little kids, you know. When we became mature men—seventeen, eighteen—for example, the Bow Street Runners, which was a Mod club I was in, set up as a self-protection group, where to join you had to be proposed by two members and then you had to go and do something...in public where you could be judged on how you did. So our favorite thing would be we'd go to a skinhead pub in Shepherd's Bush and we'd go, "Right, your turn" and the kid would have to go and fuckin' find four skinheads and beat 'em up. If he

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<sup>306</sup> Bernstein, *Decline*, 622-624.

<sup>307</sup> Lentz, *Influential*, 55. See also *This is England*, DVD, directed by Shane Meadows (New York: Ifc, 2007).



didn't do that, he couldn't be in the fuckin' gang. And by the time the gang reached its peak of about fifty people, we were fuckin' hot.

Whether racist or not, the aggressive actions of the late-seventies Skinheads prompted an equally violent retaliation among Revival-era Mods. Piller added, "People forget about the violence." Unfortunately this late-seventies generation of Skinheads crafted an image of alcohol-induced aggression that had little to do with the original Mod ethos. Luckily, violent clashes are no longer part and parcel of the contemporary British Mod scene.

### **2.5.2 Northern Soul**

Parallel to the transition of Hard Mods into Skinheads, clubs in northern cities, like Manchester's Twisted Wheel, which had already held all-night dance parties to R&B, Soul, and Beat music, began playing more and more rare Soul music. This scene was another option for Mods who were not interested in the Hippie aesthetic and who gravitated to obscure recordings by American Soul artists. In trying to reconceive Mod this way, "Soulies" seemed to be tapping into the exclusivity of the bebop-influenced Modernists. Like the Modernists, Soulies were of the mind that no one in the mainstream should "get" what they were up to and that what they listened to was just a little too complex or obscure for the general public to understand or appreciate.<sup>308</sup> Not satisfied with just listening to the more well-known hits of Tamla Motown or Stax, DJs like Phil Saxe began searching for lesser-known past and present American Soul recordings that had never gotten much play in Britain. Longtime Northern Soul fan and author David Nowell believes this was only possible due to "the arrival of [more] imports in 1969. Now the DJs and collectors had access to many brightly coloured and fascinating American labels"

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<sup>308</sup> Leland, *Hip*, 6, 134-5.

that had never been available in Britain before. The reason the phenomenon became known as “Northern Soul,” not only had to do with the fact that events were held at clubs in cities like Manchester (The Wheel, Wigan Casino), Blackpool (Mecca’s Highland Room), and Stoke-on-Trent (The Torch) but also because the Soul artists played at these all-night dances were predominantly from the northern U.S. cities such as Detroit and Chicago.<sup>309</sup>

Many of the more contemporary Soul singles played in this scene also upped the musical tempo. Spinning records at the Wheel from 1969 to 1971, Saxe remembered this shift, and would describe it more as an offshoot of Mod: “We began playing faster and faster music and that became Northern Soul... [but] the Northern Soul scene was not a Mod scene. The dress code was different. I didn’t like that: the tattoos and the badges and all that stuff. It wasn’t me.” What Phil was referring to in the dress was the fact that, like much of seventies fashion, it did not retain the tailored look of sixties Mod. Like the Skinheads, Soulies wore more casual clothing like wider flared pants and vests with a myriad of pins and iron-on badges on them. Of all the Northern Soul clubs, the Wigan Casino outside of Manchester acquired cult status as “the most illustrious soul club in the world.” A BBC webpage honoring the venue allowed former habitués of the club to post their memories of the venue’s culture. A couple who identified themselves as Tom and Judith from South Africa wrote that they “really wish we had a time machine and could re-visit the wonderful Casino. The dancing, atmosphere, smell, and heat.” Meanwhile, Dawn and Martin commented that the Wigan “was in a league of its own. All the DJs played to the

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<sup>309</sup> Nowell, *Darn Soulful*, 37, 24; Lentz, *Influential*, 57; De La Haye and Dingwall, *Surfers, Soulies Skinheads & Skaters: Subcultural Style for the Forties to the Nineties* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook, 1996), 13.

dancers who had a big input into the success of a New Spin. Great dance floor, DJs and music.”<sup>310</sup>

While the original Jazz-loving Modernists probably would not have been caught dead dancing, and Mods held “Mod Balls” and attended “All-Nighters,” these descendents of Mod culture showed-off near-acrobatic dancing that seem like the natural forerunners to breakdancing a decade later. In creating the Northern Soul scene, the one thing that very much stands out, though, as a contrast to the original Mod culture is the focus on collecting and playing hard-to-find singles rather than chart hits. Rarity became valorized in Northern Soul to such an extent that DJs would often cover their singles’ labels while playing them, so that other DJs were unable to find and spin the same songs. This seventies offshoot of Mod clearly was a break from live shows and “Soul-y” focused on playing recorded music. DJs such as Ian Levine, Roger Eagle, and Russ Winstanley became the scene’s celebrities. The height of Northern Soul’s popularity as a subculture peaked in the mid-to-late seventies, but the scene’s music and its obsession with collecting rare recordings have remained recognizable elements within Mod culture.<sup>311</sup>

### **2.5.3 The Mod Revival**

While Soulies were creating new dance moves and Skinheads were listening to Ska records, the Mod Revival scene of the late seventies Britain brought attention back to experiencing live music

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<sup>310</sup> “Heart and Soul of Northern Soul,” *BBC Lancashire* at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/lancashire/content/image\\_galleries/russ\\_gallery.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/lancashire/content/image_galleries/russ_gallery.shtml) (accessed Feb. 21, 2008).

<sup>311</sup> Nowell, *Darn Soulful*, 40; Lentz, *Influential*, 57. Regarding DJ culture and rarity in this scene see also, Barry Doyle, “‘More than a dance hall, more a way of life:’ Northern Soul, Masculinity and Working-Class Culture in 1970s Britain,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, ed. Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 313-332.

and, also, the fashion of the mid-sixties. Influenced by the speedy sound and aggressive stage antics of Punk bands like the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and the Damned, these bands nonetheless wore clothes that alluded to missing photo sessions of suit-clad bands like the Beatles or Kinks. This asked the question: What images, ideas, sounds would one draw upon as a Mod circa 1977? Did one refer to the cut and color of the clothing? Did one study-up on the attitude of the Jazz Modernists or the mid-sixties Mods? Was riding a scooter important or not? Did one listen to sixties' British Rhythm and Blues, Beat, or Soul, or did a seventies-era Mod prefer contemporary bands that mimicked older groups? The simple answer is that what could have been appealing to one Mod Revivalist was not necessarily so to the next. By this time, Mod already had such a rich history to draw from that it largely depended on what a potential enthusiast were exposed to. However, regardless of how they first came upon Mod—usually through a mix of mediated and personal encounters—there were two key things that definitely hold this period of re(mod)eling together: the debut of the Who-produced film about Mods circa 1964, *Quadrophenia* (1979) and the influence of Paul Weller and his band the Jam.

The Revivalists, as their name suggests, sought to get back to what they perceived as Mod's roots. In doing so, a kind of "storytelling culture" evolved—whereby current Mods began seeking out any kind of information on what Mod had been in the sixties. Sometimes, if their parents had been involved in Mod, they also heard stories about the original scene from them. Inevitably, though, this search for a perceived authenticity showcased how differently Mod could be interpreted, for it could not be without influence from current youth culture trends. For instance, the wearing of white socks became big in the Mod Revival because it was a trend the *2Tone* bands had started. Paul Lyons remembered his dad thinking this style was ridiculous. According to Lyons:

It's funny remembering my dad telling my mum not to buy me any more white socks as he felt the whole thing was getting out of hand... He sat down with me one time, attempting the matey 'father to son' chat about the dreaded foot attire that I wore and even went as far as going into detail about the 60s mod scene that he was part of. 'We never looked like that' he said. He picked up my Richard Barnes book that I had only recently purchased from Carnaby St's Rockafellas [shop] and said: 'Paul, you show me one group of Mods, in there that wore what you have on your feet.'<sup>312</sup>

Images from the sixties circulated, yet communication technologies were not such as they are in the new millennium and a young Mod circa 1977 grabbed stylistic influences where he or she could—whether from the odd sixties film or TV show repeats on television or from album covers. 1977 was not only pre-Internet, but it was also predominantly pre-VCR. Stuart Whitman (b. 1965, Ipswich, Kent, fig. 3), who cites sixties band the Small Faces as his favorites, Mod images came from exposure to parental stories and photos, sixties' LPs, and also the influence of the Mod Revival through the Jam:

I'd seen old pictures of my mother when she was younger with her beehive haircut and stuff. Um, my dad actually met Dusty Springfield on two occasions when she played in Ipswich in the sixties.... I first really became interested in... I heard, obviously, the Beatles and the Stones and groups like that, you know, when I was sort of really young and growing up... but when, when the Jam come out of the punk thing in the late 70s... I quite liked it at the time. I was young, but, you know, it was the new thing at the time... And the Jam come out of that in away—out of that period—and um, when I heard Paul Weller sayin' what groups... he was influenced by when he was a child, you know? And, um I sort of started to dig deeper and get involved with these bands the he liked when he was younger and it sort of springboarded from there, really, you know?<sup>313</sup>

Though Stuart has a family history that was “touched by the hand of Mod,”<sup>314</sup> TV encounters also played a role in his interest in Mod: “When I was younger I was into the sixties

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<sup>312</sup> Qtd. in Enamel Verguren, *This is a Modern Life: The 1980s London Mod Scene, Mod Chronicles, Vol. 1* (London: Helter Skelter, 2004), 15.

<sup>313</sup> Stuart Whitman, Interview by author, digital recording, Aug. 26, 2007, NUTS Weekender, Brighton, DCUP.

<sup>314</sup> This phrase is a play on the song title “Touched by the Hand of God,” by eighties band New Order and appears regularly in articles about Mod today. See New Order, *Touched By the Hand of God / Touched By the Hand of Dub*, by New Order, Factory FAC-193-7, 45 rpm; Rob Sheffield, “The Jam,” *Rolling Stone* <http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/thejam/biography> (accessed Feb. 26, 2008); “Mod Stories,” *Mod Revival* [www.modrevival.net/Modstories.html](http://www.modrevival.net/Modstories.html) (Accessed Feb. 26, 2008).

TV programmes stuff like *The Prisoner*... and you know, stuff like that. And I love all them sixties cult things....”



Figure 3 Stuart Whitman, Brighton, 2007. Photo by author.

Nottingham area native Peter “Speed” Wild (b. 1965), who now runs the Circle record label and still regularly spins sixties Beat and R&B for *New Untouchables (NUTS)* Mod weekenders in the U.K.—and sometimes also in Europe and Japan—gave me a similar account: “I... used to see on the TV like, um, on documentaries and things like that like with, uh, the Mods and Rockers fighting in Brighton or things like that and I used to be fascinated with them. That would have been in the early 70s or something, when I was about seven or eight, or something like that.”<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Peter “Speed” Wilde, Interview by author, digital recording, Aug. 25, 2007 NUTS Weekender, Brighton, DCUP.

However, as “Speed” told me more about how mediated images played a role in his becoming a Mod by the late seventies, it was clear that screening the Who-produced film *Quadrophenia* (1979)<sup>316</sup> was an incredibly formative experience:

It was around that time that *Quadrophenia* came out, nearly everybody at your school or friends of yours, they were all—they all felt a bit the same. They got excited by the Mod image and the film itself and everything to do with it and rediscovered the Who, of course, through that, first and foremost. The Jam were about... who were a band that was very much like a very Mod-type-of-thing through Paul Weller anyway...and more or less had been since 1977. So we liked them already. And, uh, it was like a mass popular thing. It became a big craze amongst youngsters, so it wasn't hard to meet people who liked it, because you'd all gotten excited about it at the same time and all wanted to hear it. So there were a lot of Mod people about.

Given that a Mod Revival was already underway by 1977, *Quadrophenia* came out at the perfect time. Current participants in the scene even participated as extras in various scenes of the film—including the climactic riot scene in Brighton. As Des Mannay has recalled, the film was largely responsible for the growth of the Mod Revival scene:

It completely exploded then. You were virtually on your own at the beginning of the year; maybe you would bump into somebody who had similar taste, but you didn't hang around in a group or anything. By the end of the year it completely changed. It's difficult when you look back at it, the late 70s early-80s Mods; it's like looking back at the 60s in reverse, because as soon as *Quadrophenia* came along you had the gang-Mod image, which was the main image: Sta-Prest and Fred Perry top, hanging around in a big gang and going to the seaside. But when the 80s progressed, it went further back into its original roots.<sup>317</sup>

As Mannay's comments show, the Mods who were exposed to the film first encountered a thuggish, “gang-like” image, but chose to investigate other aspects of the culture after this first impression. According to the film's director, he wanted to show that the rebellious aspect of this culture without necessarily passing judgment on it. According to Roddam, “People say that

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<sup>316</sup> *Quadrophenia*, DVD, directed by Franc Roddam (1979; Los Angeles: Rhino/Wea, 2001).

<sup>317</sup> Qtd. in Vergruen, *Modern Life*, 12.

*Quadrophenia* still plays all over the world. It's still got a big following... it still opens in cinemas. And, I think, you know, I think it's because of this drug-taking, this fighting... this search for sexual adventure. It happens to every generation... it's obviously frowned upon by society as a whole, but it's inevitable that people are going to do that."<sup>318</sup> Certainly, the "sex, drugs, and Rock and Roll" stereotype of rebellious teenagers is what Roddam is tapping into. However, as the Mod scene today attests to, where there are also many people in their late-twenties to early forties present, "teenage rebellion," has not remained a potent aspect of the culture. Nonetheless, *Quadrophenia's* influence was important then and it remains important now.

Another aspect of the film's influence in Britain was that, like many films since, it spawned a synergistic amount of "Mod product," not unlike the way Mod was mass-marketed in the mid-sixties: "With *Quadrophenia*, it [Mod] became the look of the year; you had *Quadrophenia* labeled suits and shirts. This was a line of clothing produced by Satchi and backed by the Who. It wasn't just the badge! In some ways it was good for people who couldn't find the right clothes. Eventually that stuff appeared in shops like Burton's by the early 1980s."<sup>319</sup> However, while some found these packaged Mod clothes a good deal, a lot of teenagers instead searched for second-hand bargains to capture the look they saw on film: "Saturdays would be spent trawling the second hand shops for clothing, shirts, ties...from Oxfam my first suit for I think £8.00. Yes I was getting there. By the end of '79 I had my suit, Parka, my first pair of Loafers, I was feeling the business but in early '80 everything would change. By the end of '79 there were around 20 Mods in my school."<sup>320</sup> In a way both similar and different to

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<sup>318</sup> Franc Roddam, *Quadrophenia*, DVD commentary, 2001.

<sup>319</sup> Des Mannay qtd. in Verguen, *Modern Life*, 12.

<sup>320</sup> Minty, "Mod Stories," *Mod Revival* at <http://www.modrevival.net/Modstories.html> (Accessed Feb. 26, 2008).



the Mods of the mid-sixties, late-seventies Mods tried to be inventive in creating their distinct look.

What is fascinating here, is that without probably being familiar with the Birmingham School scholars' ideas of commercial co-optation of underground subcultures, some late-seventies Mods seemed to fear that followers were being drawn to the culture via *Quadrophenia* for all the wrong reasons. For instance, by August 1979, journalist Gary Bushnell was clear as to his worries about the growing commercialization of Mod:

Just six months on from the happy hectic birth of New Mod as a bona fide movement and we've got a different animal on our hands... Mod fills the London clubs, all the major groups have singles in the pipeline, Lyndall Hobbs imports poseurs for her 'mod documentary,' the first official Mod single 'You Need Wheels' is appalling and has undeservedly charted, David Essex records a single called 'M.O.D' to the delight of ugly, jealous, chinless has-beens everywhere, powerpop phonies and session men start donning parkas, the price of clothes sky-rocket, little kids at Merton Parkas gigs have never heard of The Purple Hearts, *Quadrophenia* approaches with the promise of thousands of Quad-mods...The Mod Renewal is at a crossroads in its short existence.<sup>321</sup>

Dismay over Mod's commercialization due to the film aside, *Quadrophenia* is a stirring portrait of teen angst and a search for identity through the eyes of a Mod named Jimmy Cooper. The sets, costumes, accessories, and soundtrack do, also, give an impression of what the London scene at the time may have been like. The film opens with Jimmy meeting his friends at the Goldhawk Social Club—where the Who had first played. Jimmy and his friends wear smart suits and ties, ride Lambrettas and Vespas, while period-appropriate music is played in the background—whether James Brown or Booker T. and the MGs.

Jimmy feels misunderstood by most of the people around him— certainly first and foremost by his parents and his boss. However, he feels increasingly misunderstood by his cohort

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<sup>321</sup> Gary Bushnell, "Mod Squad," (originally printed in *Sounds* magazine, August 1979), Gary Bushnell website at <http://www.garry-bushnell.co.uk/mod/index.asp> (accessed Feb. 29, 2008).

of Mod friends, too, who see him as a volatile personality. The film, however, focuses on those Mods who were eager to fight Rockers at seaside resorts like Brighton. As we have seen, this is only *one* kind of sixties-era Mod. Thus, under Franc Roddam's script and direction, *Quadrophenia* circulates a seemingly boisterous, delinquent image of Mod culture overall. Nonetheless, given the fact that there was not as much access to specifically "Mod" images in 1977 as compared to today, the movie became a generational touchstone. As "Speed" further attests: "When *Quadrophenia* came out with the Mod Revival of course, a lot of groups were playing Mod music, dressing that way, and what have you. And young kids were like, 'Yeah, we'll buy their records.' Like the Purple Hearts, the Chords, and people like that. And also we listened to a bit of the sixties music when it came out on the *Quadrophenia* soundtrack album. There was like a whole disc of like sixties originals on there... it was a double album."

According to the director, since he was going for a "realist" style in his filmmaking, he did not want only Who songs to be featured on the reissuing of the 1973 *Quadrophenia* album. After all, though the Who were a beloved band by this group, Mods listened to other artists as well. Since the director made this choice, and the Who agreed to it, would-be Mods who saw the film and bought the soundtrack were exposed to tracks such as James Brown's "Night Train," Booker T. and the MGs' "Green Onions," and the Crystals "Da Doo Ron Ron."<sup>322</sup> As "Speed" explained, this was an educational soundtrack for him:

...And we kind of took inspiration from there. A lot of us started collecting the originals... the Kinks and the Who, uh, a bit of soul, a bit of Atlantic and Motown, and what have you. So even in the places we used to go... the youth club-type of places and what have you in the Midlands, and even in some of the pubs, they were playing soul and those sort of things—things that fitted with the Mod thing anyway, because, uh, it was very much loved in my area, and still is. So, it was easy to hear things that you liked that you could associate with Mod.

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<sup>322</sup> *Quadrophenia: Original Soundtrack*, Various Artists, Polydor 2625 037, 33 1/3 rpm.

As Speed's account shows, becoming a Mod after its original heyday required some (pop) cultural "archeology." Once he had heard these tracks on the *Quadrophenia* soundtrack, he was anxious to hear more of the original mid-sixties artists. This was very much a sign of the times. Even late seventies, British artists who were not part of the Mod Revival paid tribute to their musical childhood influences.

Elvis Costello, whose debut album *My Aim is True* came out in 1977, recalls that "the bands from me that meant a lot were the Beatles, without question above all [and] the Kinks and the Small Faces... and somewhere behind them, other groups like the Spencer Davis Group." Music scholar Allan F. Moore believes that this reverence for sixties groups in the seventies had to do with reclaiming sonic and lyrical subject matter "originally associated primarily with the Kinks, but also with the Beatles and the Who, namely the apparent reporting of slices of English life," which in the wake of punk were read as "ironic" or "bleak."<sup>323</sup> However, I also believe that in a period of economic decline and cultural nihilism, young people looked to a recent past of which they could be proud. After all, Mod culture's international popularity in the mid-sixties served as a kind of benign cultural imperialism—a friendlier way for Britain to make its mark on the world. It had reconceptualized "British Empire," for the youthful masses. If one looks at it in this way, no wonder some young people and younger musicians wanted to sample from this period's style.

Out of the Mod Revival bands, the Jam became the most beloved by Mods from this period up to the present day. The look and sound of the group was and still is a way for scene participants born in the 1960s and beyond to learn about Mod. This is so much the case that David Lines wrote a book in 2006 called *The Modfather: My Life With Paul Weller*, which

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<sup>323</sup> Elvis Costello qtd. in the *History of Rock and Roll*, 1995; Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text* (Buckingham, Eng.: Open University, 1993), 122.

chronicles how Paul Weller and the Jam shaped his life from adolescence onward. He writes that from the first time he saw Mods sporting “The Jam” on their parkas, “all I cared about was becoming part of that gang of mods. What I didn’t know then was that it wasn’t a gang—it was a way of life.”<sup>324</sup> Though other Revival bands such as Secret Affair, the Purple Hearts, the Merton Parkas, and the Lambrettas affected a similar style and sound, and had some national top twenty hits between them, they would not rival the commercial success or cultural resonance that the Jam would have in Britain.<sup>325</sup> Nonetheless, as David Lines’s experience illustrates, The Jam and the period of the Mod Revival opened doors into a new world of youth culture for another generation of British youth.

The Jam’s quoting of Mod style is evident from their first album, *In the City* (1977). It features a black and white cover of the three band members, Paul Weller, Bruce Foxton, and Rick Buckler, in suits and ties peering arrogantly out at the world (Buckler behind “shades”) while “the Jam” is spray-painted in black behind them on a white tiled wall. The LP’s title song and the band’s first single was a fast-paced pop song with snarling and sassy vocals with lyrics nonetheless reminiscent of the Mod sixties: “In the city there’s a thousand faces all shining bright / And those golden faces are under 25 / They wanna say, they gonna tell ya / About the young idea / You better listen now you’ve said your bit.”<sup>326</sup> Their next album, *This is the Modern World* (1977), features a color photograph on its cover. The shot poses the group in what looks like a highway underpass—with postwar “Tower Block” architecture looming in the background. Wearing Ivy League-type casual wear, Weller’s sweater is emblazoned with pop art

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<sup>324</sup> Lines, *The Modfather*, 24-26.

<sup>325</sup> Only the Jam became a well-known name nationally and, then, internationally. The Purple Hearts and Secret Affair continue to be virtually unknown in the United States, whereas Paul Weller still tours the U.S. as a solo artist. For charting of Mod Revival bands, see Jasper, *Top Twenty*, 278, 287, 289. For Paul Weller’s continued stateside popularity, see Marc Hirsch, “For Energetic Weller, There’s No Room for Nostalgia,” *Boston Globe*, Sept. 11, 2008, B8; Mac Randall, “No Longer Competing with his Younger Self,” *New York Times*, Feb. 2, 2003, 27.

<sup>326</sup> Paul Weller, comp., “In the City,” on *In the City*, by the Jam, Polydor 1-6110, 33 1/3 rpm.

arrows going up and down.<sup>327</sup> Much like the Kinks before them, the Jam's lyrical content was often quintessentially "English." Lyricist Paul Weller's song texts often referred to Anglo- or London-centric subjects such as Eton (public school), art school, Wormwood Scrubs (a London prison), the tube, and Soho's Wardour Street. The band also paid homage to Mod culture more generally by covering the Kinks song "David Watts," (1967) the Beatles' "And Your Bird Can Sing," (1966) and with a song called "Absolute Beginners" (1981).<sup>328</sup>

Mod Revivalists, just like the original Mods, sought spaces to see and hear their bands play—whether to see "stars" like the Jam—or their more underground compatriots. Since reconceptualizing space continued to be important within Mod culture, Mod, like Punk, sought to counter the now corporate atmosphere of rock culture, with its large scale, decadent arena rock scene (see Cameron Crowe's retrospective 2000 film *Almost Famous* as an example of this). The Mod Revival events took place in more intimate venues—like those in the original Mod period. According to an October 1979 *Los Angeles Times* article, reporting on this British scene, "the hangout for the neo-Mods and the post-punkers is a nightclub called Blitz, where every Tuesday is '60s night and the getups range from boys wearing makeup and big pompadours to girls in tight, short dresses and high heels." Punk had already challenged the by-then established Rock hierarchy of bands like Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, and, by now, even the Who, who played impersonal concerts to thousands of people at a time. Now the Revival scene followed suit. Like the Mod scene of the sixties, Punk and Revival concerts took place in clubs.<sup>329</sup> Barring the massive success that the Mod Revival band, the Jam, would have between 1979 and 1982,

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<sup>327</sup> Paul Weller, comp., *This is the Modern World*, by the Jam, Polydor 1-6129, 33 1/3 rpm.

<sup>328</sup> Paul Weller, "Art School," "Eton Rifles," "Down in the Tube Station at Midnight," "'A' Bomb in Wardour Street," *The Jam* at <http://www.thejam.org.uk/jamlyr1.html#JAM1.3> (accessed Feb. 29, 2008).

<sup>329</sup> Marylou Luther, "A Peek at Uprisings on London Streets," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 23, 1979, F1; "Punk," *100 Club* at <http://www.the100club.co.uk/history.asp#punk> (accessed Feb. 23, 2008).

requiring them to play somewhat bigger venues, Revival concerts were more intimate settings than what arenas offered.

As Colin Fribbens's comments regarding the Mod Revival at the beginning of this section exemplify, there are still members of today's British Mod community who came to the culture through the Revival of the late 70s.<sup>330</sup> "Speed" Wild also recalled how the Revival flew in the face of conventional music in the later seventies, and, therefore, was attractive to him. It was not only arena rock, but the disco craze, that was offensive to him at the time. In this way Mod had more in common with the rebelliousness of Punk:

It was escaping the seventies. You know, we... there was something more vital, more sharp, and what have you, than what was happening at the time. Nowadays, ironically, I appreciate what was happening in the seventies and probably dress more like that... probably... But, at the time, it was square. You hated it. You hated flare trousers, you hated big lapels, you hated shoulder-length hair, because it just seemed like fashion had lost its way and culture had lost its way. I think the punks started that where they looked at what was happening in the 70s...full of hippies and people...very drab...very boring in a lot of ways. Glam rock was the only exciting spark that was happening then and that soon died. And by about '75, that sort of time, it was a sort of nowhere-land. British culture was like...seemed to have lost its way, and I think, the people who got punk together understood that. They took a lot of sixties influences and so did we several years later. We thought, 'Yeah, we agree,' cause we were on the tail-end of when punk happened and bands like Buzzcocks and what have you. They, to us, were quite next-door to Mod.

When Speed said culture had "lost its way," he is probably referring to what youth culture offerings were available at that time. As opposed to constant, quick-paced innovations of Mod culture, the early-to-mid seventies became a period of complacency. Rock-oriented youth culture becomes "business as usual," and Punk seemed to shatter that. According to him, various factors led him to believe that the revival of Mod was the next level of rebellion against this cultural vacuum:

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<sup>330</sup> See also a comment about the Mod Revival's influence on today's scene: David Walker, "Five Must-Buy Books on Mod," *Mod Culture* at <http://www.modculture.co.uk/culture/culture.php?id=46> (accessed Feb. 29, 2008).

We liked bands like that ‘cause they were different. They had shorter hair, they had fast songs, quick songs and things, and that was the way ahead that we developed on. There were things that those bands were doing that all my people of my era were a bit too young to be punks, but the next best thing was to smarten the punk stuff up and grab onto it in the way of the Mod Revival and some of your favorite bands that we liked from the punk era that were cheerful and what have you fit together nicely, but it was all to escape the seventies, really...to not be some long-haired guy in drape coat carrying a Yes album or something... going to a festival smoking dope, or whatever.

Speed’s point is once again well taken. Some of Britain’s 1977 chart-topping groups included Abba, the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, and Boney M—all groups with ultra-slick sounds—seemingly produced with the intention to *be* chart-toppers. Both Punk and the Mod Revival wanted to challenge this perceived stagnation.<sup>331</sup>

Overall, the Revival made such a big impact on current conceptions of Mod, in fact, that even younger members of current Mod culture, those born in the later sixties and beyond, cite the Jam and/or Paul Weller as much as those who experienced it in the late seventies. Alan “Chalky” Smith (b. 1969, Manchester/Leeds) got into the Jam through some Mod acquaintances: “was just those one or two people who were into the Jam. I mean, I got heavily into them. It was the same year that the Jam split—it was late ’82 when the Jam split—December ’82 and it was early ’83 that I actually got into them, so I just missed out... started listening to the Jam, started listening to other people—got in with people... who were a year ahead of me in school. They were all wearing parkas.”<sup>332</sup> Chalky’s friend Neil Lee (b. 1978) who is originally from Liverpool, but now lives in Leeds, came to Mod through the a Jam video on MTV.

[The] first image of Mod that I had was on an MTV program called *Greatest Hits* where they played the Jam ‘A Town Called Malice.’ Eh...and just when I heard that record I was like...I heard, I knew that I was an indie kid. I was into Blur—those kinds of bands...Menswear...and then just seeing that image of Paul Weller in a suit, pink collar shirt, and I realized...[it] clicked into my head what Mods was. From then on, I was like,

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<sup>331</sup> Jasper, *Top Twenty*, 257.

<sup>332</sup> Alan “Chalky” Smith, Oral history Interview by author, digital recording, Sept. 1, 2007, Rampant Lion Pub, Manchester, DCUP.

‘That’s what I want to be. That’s what I want to be into. That’s what I like.’ And then, from there, I just sort of discovered the other aspects of Mod.<sup>333</sup>

Current Liverpool resident Michelle Gibson (b. 1969) told me that she was part of another aspect of Mod Revival during the late seventies. As a ten-year-old she and childhood friends attended Mod-themed dances Sunday afternoons in her hometown of Glasgow. She was not sure who was behind organizing these events, but as we chatted, she realized it must have been put together by young adults who were then part of the Mod Revival:

Every Sunday we went to the Whiteinch Community Centre in the afternoons. There would be a disco and our disco would be Mod music... I remember dancing to, um, ‘Tainted Love’ [the original by Gloria Jones, 1964]...and then, uh, ‘Green Onions’ by Booker T. and the MGs and there was a dance to that we did...basically it was just the Mashed Potato one and it was, like intricate and you kept changing it...The whole week was geared towards what you were going to wear to that disco. And all my little boyfriends were dressed like Mods. [They wore] parkas and Sta-Prest trousers and...you took it really, really seriously.<sup>334</sup>

As the seventies turned into the eighties, and in order to help cement the community, mainstream music papers like *New Musical Express* (NME) or *Melody Maker* took a second tier to fanzines. Mainstream media were seen as representative of Mod culture’s outside observers, rather than of Mods themselves. Instead, “fanzines” gave Mods voice to talk about their own culture and connect with other Mods. Fanzines of this period were of varying quality, but were usually very low-tech, homemade mini-magazines. Fanzines were stapled together by hand and employed everything from Letraset letters and type to any kind of writing in pen or marker. Eddie Piller told me, “I suppose my fanzine [*Extraordinary Sensations*]’s rise coincided with the decline of Mod’s popularity in the music industry because of the backlash caused by the massiveness of Mod at the time.” As this was not a high-returns commercial venture, with

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<sup>333</sup> Neil Lee, Oral history interview by author, digital recording, Sept. 1, 2007, Rampant Lion Pub, Manchester, DCUP.

<sup>334</sup> Michelle Gibson, oral history interview by author, digital recording, Breakbread Café, Liverpool, Aug. 30, 2007, DCUP.



limited editions and each issue selling for usually less than a Pound, fanzine producers ignored copyright and lifted appropriately Mod images whenever they liked. These handmade publications were produced nationwide—from Cardiff, Wales to the Channel Islands. Eddie Piller’s *Extraordinary Sensations* was a popular fanzine in England at the time, as was *007*, *Maximum Speed*, and *Born in the Sixties: the Fanzine for Mods*, and *In the Crowd*. This was yet another way to circulate Mod style to a new generation—and the fanzine’s popularity continued up until the advent of the Internet’s accessibility in the mid-nineties.<sup>335</sup>

The look and feel of these publications ranged from poor grammar (“may of not” on page 1 of *007*, for instance) and a low-tech look (there is a lot of handwriting in *Born in the Sixties*) to a more stylized, self-consciousness in later publications (*Extraordinary Sensations* #13 or 1990’s fanzine *All Our Yesterdays*).<sup>336</sup> As was typical of such scene-centered micro-media, there was more focus on local events, clubs, bands, and so on. However there was some interest shown in what Mod activities might be happening beyond England’s shores, especially in Europe. Prior to the Internet and social networking websites like *Friendster*, *My Space*, or *Facebook* in the 2000s, fanzines did their best, even if at a slower pace, to “spread the word” that there were others with a similar interest, fascination, or obsession with Mod culture. For instance, in the Christmas 1982 issues of *Extraordinary Sensations*, Eddie Piller writes, “recent investigations have revealed loads and loads of MOD bands all over the world... who would have believed that what started as a handful of kids following the Jam about and going up West Ham in parkas in 1978 would result in something as widespread as it is now.” A 1985 issue of *007* featured a letter from a reader in Canada (Montreal) who wanted to connect with British Mods and an article from Mod

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<sup>335</sup> Lentz, *Influential*, 111. To get a feel for fanzines of this period, I looked at several issues available at the British Library, St. Pancras, London. *Extraordinary Sensations* (Christmas ’82 issue, issues #12, #13); *007* (#2), circa 1985; *In the Crowd* (#6), circa 1980s; *Born in the Sixties* (#1), circa 1985; and *Maximum Speed* (#3), circa 1979.

<sup>336</sup> *All Our Yesterdays*, vol. 6-7, circa 1995.

girls in the U.S. (Georgia) who told the editors about their *International Mod Monthly* fanzine. Generally, the fanzines served educational purposes within the expanding community—often profiling artists from the sixties or the Revival (Mary Wells, the Purple Hearts, Makin’ Time, the Jam, of course) and printing editorial or reader “playlists” that functioned as a foil to commercial charts that mixed 60s artists such as the Small Faces with Revival bands such as Secret Affair, Squire, and the Merton Parkas.<sup>337</sup>

By the time of the Mod Revival it had become clear that Mod had already become a kind of unofficial national institution that the British should be proud of and preserve, like pubs, afternoon tea, and the works of Charles Dickens. Interviewing London-based DJ Rob Bailey (b. 1970) at a Berlin Mod event in September 2006 (fig. 4) I asked him how he thought of Mod was “British,” despite the fact that it is also a transnational phenomenon. He told me,

The unique thing about the U.K. is that even if you’ve never been a Mod, ordinary people in the street know what a Mod is. There are certain things they will always associate with it. Whereas if you’re in Italy or Spain or somewhere else, you ask someone in the street what Mod is, they would look at you like you’re from outer-space. So, this is the thing that makes the U.K. unique. It’s [Mod] part of our...very much a part of our culture and heritage. Yeah, like everyone knows what a punk is, don’t they? So it’s the same thing. Bar kind of rock and roll, Mod was the first...first scene to do all these things, I mean, taking pills and staying up all night dancing, you know? Which Rave/Dance culture nicked twenty years later on. The Mods were the first people to do this, you know? They had their own clubs, transport, their own talk, their own walk...the first young independent people.

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<sup>337</sup> 007, 1985.

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Figure 4 Rob Bailey DJed at this Mod event in Berlin, September 2006

Ironically, by this point in time, Mod culture's innovation has become so celebrated that even though it stemmed from the recent past of the 1960s, it has appeared more modern than most of the cultural offerings of the contemporary moment. Or, at least, it has become a way to infuse the present with something more dynamic. From the 1990s into the present, thanks primarily to the Britpop phenomenon and the Internet, Mod culture has achieved the transnationalism that the original culture of the sixties aspired to.

## 2.6 COOL BRITANNIA: “MOD EMPIRE” IN THE 1990S

Much in the same way that *Time* magazine’s 1966 article praised the hip and happening London of the first Mod period, *Vanity Fair*’s 1997 cover story, “London Swings! Again!” attested to the fact that Mod culture had not lost its currency. In fact, the images and ideas that had been presented in the mid-sixties seemed just as exciting as they had been then. Journalist David Kamp writes:

Any mental images we have of a ‘swinging’ London, of a city in glorious thrall to a thriving youth culture, are indelibly 60s ones: dolly birds in miniskirts; Paul McCartney walking out with Jane Asher; the designer Mary Quant and her geometric Vidal Sassoon haircut; Terence Stamp hand in hand with Jean Shrimpton; the photographer David Bailey in his canary-yellow Rolls-Royce; the actor David Hemmings pretending to be David Bailey in Antonioni’s *Blow-Up*. But suddenly a whole new set of tableaux has arisen, and London finds itself cast once again as the Futura 2000 of cities, the place to which we must all look to learn how to act, think, and dress.<sup>338</sup>

The cover of this issue featured actress Patsy Kensit (who, coincidentally, starred in the 1986 film version of *Absolute Beginners*) and Liam Gallagher, lead singer of the then enormously popular Manchester band, Oasis, lying on a bed with a Union Jack comforter draped over them and matching pillows.

Not only does the use of the Union Jack reference its ubiquitous use within Mod culture, but the whole idea behind the imagery and the article suggested that for Britain to return to some sort of pop cultural renaissance required a revisiting and retooling of Mod. As the title of John Harris’s book *The Last Party: Britpop, Blair, and the Demise of English Rock* demonstrates, the emergence of mid-sixties-sounding and looking “Britpop” bands such as Oasis (and Blur, Pulp, Suede, the Verve, the Las, the Boo Radleys, the Stone Roses, and so on) were, according to the

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<sup>338</sup> David Kamp, “London Swings! Again!” *Vanity Fair*, Mar. 1997 at <http://www.vanityfair.com/magazine/archive/1997/03/london199703> (accessed Feb. 29, 2008).

author, the “last stand” of Mod culture in a truly British sense. Harris clearly makes a connection between the return of Labour government (albeit the more middle-of-the-road “New Labour”) and a newly hip neo-Mod culture. Like Harold Wilson’s election in 1964, the then forty-three-year-old Prime Minister Tony Blair was expected to reset the British clock to run at a more youthful speed.<sup>339</sup> What became known as “Cool Britannia,” by this time both in and outside of Britain was another way of connecting to Mod culture—and often led a new generation of Mods, like those in the late seventies and eighties, to find out more about the 1960s. An increasingly popular way to do this was through a new medium—the Internet.

Like Mod culture itself, the Internet was not really new in 1997, but also originally a product of the 1960s. It was initially developed in 1967 as an alternative way for U.S. military personnel to communicate in case of (nuclear)war-related damage. However, by the mid-nineties more people had access to both personal computers and Internet technology and this new way to communicate across borders proved a powerful medium for various communities. This was not lost on Mod enthusiasts. *Mod Culture: The Mod Scene Online* ([www.modculture.co.uk](http://www.modculture.co.uk)), one of the leading sites for Mods in Britain and around the world, was founded in the mid-nineties by David Walker, who was then living in Sheffield. Websites such as this one have been important in how a medium can convey and, again, educate, Mods through visuals and text. Many images presented or referenced are taken from famous films and books about Mod culture such as *Quadrophenia* and Richard Barnes’s *Mods!*

By virtue of encountering these images throughout their media-saturated lives, Post-Mods become self-proclaimed authorities to write about this style, even as “second generation”

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<sup>339</sup> See John Harris, *The Last Party: Britpop, Blair, and the Demise of English Rock* (London: Fourth Estate, 2003). See also Wendy Fonarow. *Empire of Dirt: The Aesthetics and Rituals of British Indie Music* (Middeltown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), 41.

consumers of it. These Internet sources continue combining texts in an endless spin cycle of Mod reconstructions. In sections such as “News,” “Events,” “Clubbing,” “Books,” or “Art Design,” veterans and newcomers are able to read about such things as where to go for a Mod night out in Brighton, Bristol, or Birmingham to sixties-themed art exhibitions, clothing, furniture, or magazines. In February 2008, for instance, the website had an article about (John) Lennon’s “Magic Eye” mosaic, which will be on display that the Beatles Story Museum in Liverpool, a review of the “Leeds in the Sixties” photo exhibit, European tour dates from Mavis Staples and Brian Wilson, and a week’s worth of “retro TV” offerings on British television for the coming week. Contributor Barry Murphy picked out such things as reruns of sixties television programs such as *Batman* (1966), Gerry Anderson’s *UFO* (1969), as well as movies such from the eighties and nineties with Mod content such as *The Krays* (about the sixties-era East End gangsters the Brothers Kray) and *Backbeat* (about the Beatles in Hamburg circa 1960).<sup>340</sup>

*Mod Culture* has published articles such as “The Real *Quadrophenia*,” a Mod’s remembrance of a trip to a Mod rally in Southport, England, and another piece written by a thirtysomething Mod woman who wonders if she is “Too Old to Be a Mod?”<sup>341</sup> This is an interesting and pertinent question in that most of today’s Mods are no longer teenagers or “young” in the typical sense. Many, in fact, came into the scene through the Mod Revival and now are in their early forties. As Phil Saxe (fig. 5) and Steve Plant (fig. 6) also illustrate, there are even Mods from the sixties who still like to take part in this form of “youth culture.”

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<sup>340</sup> “Film and TV,” *Mod Culture* at <http://www.modculture.co.uk/films/featurefilms.php> (accessed Feb. 29, 2008).

<sup>341</sup> Harry Ward, “The Real *Quadrophenia*,” *Mod Culture* at <http://www.modculture.co.uk/culture/culture.php?id=21> (accessed March 6, 2003); Claudia Elliott, “Too Old to Be a Mod?” *Mod Culture* at <http://www.modculture.co.uk/culture/culture.php?id=4> (accessed Mar. 6, 2003).

Phil: it was only in 1999, a guy named Ian Levine was making a film about Northern Soul called *The Strange World of Northern Soul* and contacted me and my friend Brian (who's here now) and we were the DJs at the Wheel and he contacted us about this Northern Soul-thing. So, I went along, did the interview, and got invited to a night and thought, 'I can't believe it's still going on. There's old people here—still dancing, taking drugs, and stuff.' ...So when I found out about that and the Hideaway, [and] met Big Steve, that was it really: became a Mod again.

Steve: It's the only genre I know where you can get a club as you can tonight where there's a dance floor with guys who are fifty-eight and people at twenty years of age dancing on the dance floor and there's no nastiness... Everyone's nice.



**Figure 5 Phil Saxe, Manchester, September 2007. Photo by author.**



**Figure 6 Steve Plant and girlfriend Sue, September 2007. Photo by author.**

This was definitely the case of the event I visit in Manchester in September 2007. I interviewed the youngest Mod there—Anthony Doggett (b. 1987). I asked him how he got interested in Mod and also if he thought he was part of a “retro” movement:

Well—I got into—when I was younger, I was into, like, Indie bands—the Strokes and, um, the Libertines, and that kind of, like, you know, indie stuff. And then I liked the Jam and then it just kind of led on from there. And then I started going out to things like Mod ‘dos and then just got more into it, got into more, like say, ‘Mod music’—like music that’s to do with the Mod scene.

...From speaking to...other Mods like Steve Plant, who’s one of the original ones, you can see that it’s a lot different and, you know... it still seems quite fresh and...quite lively, so I wouldn’t say it’s a ‘retro-thing,’ cause that makes it sound really, like, dated and...But I think, I can’t really describe it. I think you have to come to it...You have to be a certain type of person to appreciate it, as well. I think, I just...I suppose in answer to your question, I suppose it is, like, it is looking back, but it’s looking forward as well.

This generational aspect of Mod culture is certainly not lost on those creating Mod websites. A former feature of the *Mod Culture* website circa 2003 showed an interest in tracking



where and when contemporary Mods first got involved in this subculture. At the time, the website's homepage featured a poll with the caption: "I entered the Mod scene in..." It gave the user the options of the 1960s, the Mod Revival era, early 90's Britpop, or the last few years. In March 2003 the results of this poll had 53.5% saying the Mod revival, 21.3% early 90's Britpop, 16.9% in the last few years, and 8.3% in the 1960's.<sup>342</sup> *Mod Culture* also acknowledges all aspects of Mod's history with content that varyingly focuses on merchandising, collecting, music, fashion, or lifestyle. It is not uncommon to see photos of angry "*Quad*-Mods," in parkas juxtaposed with more colorful images of Italian design on this site. While many of its sections offer brief, historical glimpses into Mod's past—whether under the "Scootering" or actual "Mod Culture" sections—there are still many commercial references. If one is looking to buy a Small Faces CD, new, made-to-order Mod fashions, or mid-century furniture, *Mod Culture* offers links to commercial sites that offer consumption of Mod style in the most *modern* way possible—through the Internet.<sup>343</sup>

The Internet has been and still is important to those searching for Mod culture today. By clicking on websites such as *Mod Culture*, which includes a "chat" forum where Mods can discuss any and all topics under sections such as "Mod in the Media," "Rallies and Events," "Gigs," or "Scootering," or specific social networking sites like *Myspace* or *Facebook*, where Mods can hear about events through their virtual "Mod friends," new worlds begin to open-up—not just within Britain but worldwide. For instance, I was able to send emails to self-identified Mods on *Myspace* to set-up interviews in Brighton and Manchester prior to my arrival in the U.K. It was also how I found out about the events in both those cities. This was what some Mods had to say about the Internet as a networking tool within the scene:

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<sup>342</sup> "Homepage," *Mod Culture* at <http://www.modculture.co.uk/index.php> (accessed on Mar. 29, 2003).

<sup>343</sup> "Shopping," *Mod Culture* at <http://www.modculture.co.uk/shopping/> (accessed Aug. 12, 2008).

Mark Perryman (b. 1980, Sussex County, Fig. 7): The Internet is such a powerful thing—that you can buy stuff and get stuff you want without really leaving your house. So it wasn't too bad and obviously there's the few odd shops. There's one here in Brighton. Again, it was really just stuff like search on the Internet for "Mod" or "Mod suit" and anything like that and see what came up. You slowly start to collect a little bit of stuff and you can still pick up the few odd few things on the High Street for the kind of look that you want. So, I found that that was quite easy to sort of move into and get the sort of look that I wanted.

While Mark saw the Internet as the best resource to start collecting Mod "gear," Alan in Manchester praised Internet radio:

As a Mod growing up and listening to music and going out to the clubs and all that, you kind of think...you never get your own music played on the radio. I mean, if you ignore, I'm talking before the Internet. If you listen to radio one, radio two and that's all you had. You had four or five radio stations—medium wave, long wave and that sort of thing—and you'd get Radio Luxembourg and stuff like that. Apart from that, you never used to get any of your—any of the music that you really loved—get played on the radio. I remember hearing "Soul Bossanova" on the radio in about 1989 and thinking, 'Wow! What are they doing playing this? That's fantastic!' And apart from that, that was it. You know, you kind of wished you had your own radio station where you could just tune in and just listen to your own stuff. With the Internet you can do that which is absolutely fantastic.



Figure 7 Mark Perryman, Brighton, August 2007. Photo by author.

Alan was so taken with the possibility of Mod-oriented music being played on the Internet, that he now hosts a program on *Mod Radio UK*. Jonathan Marsden (b. 1979, Leeds) believed that websites are the heir apparent to the fanzines of the eighties: “There are a lot of Internet Mods, if you will. People you never knew, but spoke to, online...It’s created a whole new way of introducing people to the Mod scene via the Internet. In the past, in the 80s, it was all fanzines....and they might all be several weeks, several months behind...Someone says they’re putting on a ‘do that very same day...the whole world, even, can know.’” In this sense, the Mod scene from the mid-nineties onward has been, without a choice, more international in scope. As we shall see in the coming chapters, Mod has existed elsewhere in the world since the 1960s, but the speed-up in communication through the Internet as well as cheaper travel (especially within Europe), has underscored the transnational aspect of the culture that was always there, but, perhaps, not as robust as it has become in the 2000s.<sup>344</sup>

## 2.7 NEW MILLENNIUM MODS: WHOSE MODERN WORLD?

It was the *New Untouchables*’ (a.k.a. *NUTS*) August Bank Holiday Weekender and everyone who could make it for the event to Brighton is there. This was an event planned primarily by Rob Bailey (fig. 8), who I had already met in Berlin almost a year before. Bailey DJs all over the world now—but more often than not on the European continent. Alongside his *NUTS* events, he DJs the monthly “Mousetrap” event in London and puts out a digital and print version of a

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<sup>344</sup> “Superbrands Case Study: Easy Jet,” *Brand Republic*, June 4, 2004 at <http://www.brandrepublic.com/Industry/Travel/News/213006/Superbrands-case-studies-EasyJet/> (accessed Mar. 30, 2008).

fanzine called *Beat Bespoké*—which is also the name of a series of CDs he has put out on “Speed” Wild’s Circle Records label.<sup>345</sup>



**Figure 8 Rob Bailey, Brighton, August 2007. Photo by author.**

This particular weekender lasted from Friday evening until Monday morning. Saturday afternoon I met two friendly Greek girls who had taken vacation to come to the event. For some reason, one of the girls told me in an unsolicited aside: “Some of my Greek friends asked me if this was a gay thing. I do think a lot of the Mods are gay.” This struck me as rather funny, as I had already found the level of flirting between men and women here much more noticeably

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<sup>345</sup> Rob Bailey and Sid James, *Beat Bespoké*, winter issue 2007; (Compiled by) Rob Bailey, *The New Untouchables Presents Le Beat Bespoké: 25 Tailor Made Cuts, Volume Two*, Circle CPW C107, CD. Volume One was actual released by London’s Sanctuary Records Group.

rampant than what I had witnessed in other Mod communities. The other Greek girl was busily photographing the scene around her. Through them I met several other people including a spirited nineteen-year-old Londoner named Sasha Hopkinson (b. 1988) and her then-boyfriend Sam Waller (b. 1981, fig. 9).



**Figure 9 Sam Waller and Sasha Hopkinson, Brighton, August 2007. Photo by author.**

Sasha was the youngest Mod I had met so far, though the next afternoon I was to run into a group of twelve and thirteen-year-olds boys—including one who bore a striking resemblance to a young Pete Townshend—who told me why they loved Mod (fig. 10).



**Figure 10 Preteen Mods, Brighton, August 2007. Photo by author.**

Talking with Sasha I was curious to ask how she would have become interested in this lifestyle. First she told me that she was from the Shepherd’s Bush neighborhood, “a proper Mod little sort of hang-out.” As a student at the London College of Fashion, Mod had been influential in some of her recent clothing designs. Her dad made her watch *Quadrophenia* and told me about her first impressions of Mod:

I don’t like to admit it, but the thing with like the whole target—I’d seen it before—and Oasis, Paul Weller, —it’s very much into, um, very much into the Jam—like, um, sort of punk and things like that. But, I never really got onboard, but the minute I saw *Quadrophenia*—I don’t like to say it, but it did influence me in a way and a lot of people don’t like saying that. A lot of people don’t like admitting are like, ‘No, *Quadrophenia*’s shit—blah, blah, blah,’ but yeah, we took influence from that film. D’ya know what I mean? And it’s not—to be honest—it’s not the purist Mod, it’s more the Revival...<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Sasha Hopkinson, Interview with author, digital recording, Aug. 26, 2007, *NUTS Weekender*, Brighton, DCUP.

For her, the Internet had been important, too, for personal and scholarly reasons. For a school project she found the Mod Culture website helpful:

I went onto *Mod Culture*... and I started getting into what actually, you know, what a Mod would listen to. And I thought, 'Shit, this is good music.' So I read books. I read *Soul Stylists*. Um, I read one called *The Ben Sherman Book*, the *Mods!* I read Terry Rawlings, uh I read, you know, quite a few little books...

I also sort of started downloading stuff—other music myself. I mean, ahm...I sort of went onto *Mod Culture* and sites and started, you know, 'What's this? what's that?' And I thought.... what the fuckin' hell? What is that tune? Little Willie Jones's 'Shakin', – oh, my Days! You know, 'I've got to get that.'

While speaking with Sasha, she told me that her boyfriend's parents were Mods in the sixties and used to see the Who play in Shepherd's Bush. Naturally, I had to ask Sam what his parents think about his being a Mod in the 2000s:

Christine: Were your parents excited that you were interested in [Mod]—or were they sort of neutral about it?

Sam: My dad more than my mum. My mum didn't really understand it, at first, why I wanted to get into it, you know? And she is still convinced now that I'll probably grow out of it... that it's just a phase, you know? My dad more so, kind of obviously understood where I was coming from: that I was into smart clothes and music. Um, even before I got into the Mod scene, I was playing guitar and I was listening to a lot of blues anyway— a lot of blues and soul music, And then I suddenly realized that what I as listening to was, like, proper Mod music, anyway, you know. And, um, I just took it from there, really. I started listening to the usual stuff: the Jam, Paul Weller, The Who, Small Faces, and then I started getting back into the proper roots of Mod music—R&B, soul, ska, jazz, you know, and that was like ten years ago.<sup>347</sup>

Sam DJed that afternoon and did something I noticed many Mod DJs do—which goes back to the days of Northern Soul—he played many ultra-rare singles. So, even though the musical genre was familiar (he favors late-fifties to early-sixties rhythm and blues), the songs often were not. I was interested to know why he thought playing rare tracks was done much more than playing

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<sup>347</sup> Sam Waller, Interview with author, digital recording, Aug. 26, 2007, *NUTS Weekender*, Brighton, DCUP.

Mod “chart hits” of the sixties. I asked him this within the context of Mod-as-retro-culture and wondered if this is a way to create a new “version” of sixties Mod:

As far as the records go, I think that’s moving on—because, well, my dad was quite surprised that the records we listen to now were not the stuff they listened to in the sixties: a lot of the R&B tunes and not the Motown Sound and stuff like that. The whole thing about the modern soul scene now is that it’s seeking out new tunes, but obviously, tunes that fit in with the whole Mod philosophy—the R&B and soul—the stuff I played earlier. Not a big hit of the sixties, ‘cause nobody knew anything about it. Nobody knew half the labels existed... They’d probably get about a hundred copies sold. The artist probably never did another hit in his life, you know? And the whole thing is seeking out these tunes that you don’t know. That’s moving-on.

Christine: Yeah, and that’s what’s moving-on...because you’re sort of creating new club hits, as it were, that are from that ...

Sam: Club hits for today’s Mods, yeah.

I found this very interesting, since this creates a ‘sonic sixties’ that could have happened, but did not. Thus, it has become possible to make an envisioned, imagined sixties appear in a way it could not back then. Since current DJs are collectors who have been looking for the unique, the rare, “their sixties,” is no longer about commercial top twenty chart hits, but about their favorite, personal playlist.

On Saturday night, at the Komedia Club in Gardner Street—near the North Lanes area and not far from the city’s famous Pavillion—there is a huge crowd of colorfully-dressed female Mods and suited-up male Mods milling about outside the theater. Further down the street, and around the corner, people are gathered for pre-party drinks at the Hart and Hands. Due to the no-smoking laws that are now in effect, many people stand outside smoking while drinking their pints. Some people I met earlier that afternoon are there. In the small, “Mod world” that is the European scene, I should not have been surprised that I run into Matthias from Berlin (who looks a bit like a young Mick Jagger). I met him in Bad Breisig, Germany at the “Men from Linz” Weekender in May. Seconds before, I saw him and a blond friend rush into the pub and I



followed them in to say “*Hallo.*” He is not totally surprised to see me. I guess he knew more than I did how small Europe can be for the travel-happy Mods. We spoke a mix of German and English and he said, “Yeah, I wondered who I might run into here...” He then introduced me to his friend, Roman. Roman spoke excellent English as he had lived both in the U.S., and currently, in London. Matthias had just visited him there and then they found out that this event was going on in Brighton. “We are living our teenage *Quadrophenia* fantasies,” said Matthias, as they had no hotel room and planned to be up all night and then head back to London in the morning. They make jokes about strolling along (or sleeping on!) the beach all night. I ended up heading over with them to Komedia where they still managed to get tickets to the nearly sold-out event.

Once inside, there was the usual queuing up and crowding at the bar for beers and other drinks prior to the band Little Barrie playing. I circulated around the crowd looking for familiar faces. The venue was a rather large theater space with a low, flat stage at the front and, certainly, for tonight’s purposes, it took on the feel of more of discotheque than either a theater or a run-of-the-mill nightclub. The music was already blaring as I then saw a DJ playing records stage rights. It was quite dark as I squinted through the crowd to see if I recognized anyone from earlier in the day. Despite the extremely low lighting of the club, I soon noticed several Mods I ran into earlier that day. The daytime activities had taken place at the Volks pub by Brighton pier. Entrepreneurial Mods were selling vintage clothes, rare 45s, and various Union Jack-emblazoned trinkets, while the rest of the crowd relaxed with a few pints in the rare and welcomed sunshine. Parked Vespas and Lambrettas were clearly visible surrounding the whole outdoor café area. It had been one of the coldest and rainiest summers—with flooding to boot—in recent memory, I had been told. Here in the Komedia, I soon saw a tall, lanky fellow by the name of Paul, who in

our conversation, told me he grew up on London's East End and studied fine arts, but was now a carpenter. His parents were both art teachers. He looked and sounded like a young Michael Caine with a modified Prince-Valiant-by-way-of George Harrison hairdo and was wearing a sharp, charcoal-grey suit with a silver paisley tie. Paul is a friend of Stuart (Whitman), who was looking every inch a Small Faces fan with his sharp outfit and perfectly aped Steve Marriott-esque hairstyle. They had come from the Sussex Arts Center where another Mod-themed event ("Mojo2Gogo") began earlier in the evening.

I then see a group of four Mods from Southampton, whom I had met the night before. We talked informally about all manner of things. They asked me about the States and then: "Are you here alone?" As a female participant-observer, I had already become used to this question.<sup>348</sup> Still, as I looked around, it did appear that most women in attendance were in groups of friends or with boyfriends. Despite the twenty-first century, it appeared that most women in this Mod scene did not go to events alone. We eventually talked about work and I told them I was actually doing research and explained my project. They find it interesting that an American should be writing about Mod. (The next night, already feeling well-acquainted, two of the Southampton boys told me that they worked in construction.) We also eventually talked about the Beatles. As ever, I was curious what these British Mods would say. A few of the southern Mods told me that it is a bold-faced lie that Beatles would not have had anything to do with Mod culture. A suntanned and friendly brunette with a Paul Weller-esque slightly spiky mop of hair named Jeff

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<sup>348</sup> As a participant observer of any culture, one cannot detach parts of oneself from the experience and must deal with potentially uncomfortable situations. Female anthropologists have addressed their subject position in relation to sexuality in particular. See Esther Newton, "My Best Informant's Dress: The Erotic Equation in Fieldwork," *Cultural Anthropology* 8 (Feb.1993), 3-23; Amanda Coffey, "Sex in the Field: Intimacy and Intimidation," in *Ethical Dilemmas in Qualitative Research*, ed. Trevor Welland and Lesley Pugsley (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 66; and Maureen Giovannini, "Female Anthropologist and Male Informant: Gender Conflict in a Sicilian Town," in *Self, Sex, and Gender in Cross-Cultural Fieldwork*, ed. Tony Larry Whitehead and Mary Ellen Conaway (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 103-116.

(also from Southhampton) told me that, at the end of the day, you cannot exclude the Beatles in the story of how Mod style and music took over sixties youth culture. Earlier that evening, Paul had also said that without the success of the Beatles many other Mod favorites such as the Small Faces, the Spencer Davis Group, or even the Animals, would probably not have been as well known throughout England.

This chapter started with a look at the relationship between modernity and industrialized, urban centers in the nineteenth century, but ends with a visit to a weekend-long Mod event in the resort city of Brighton. Though London is, in many respects, Mod culture's "official" home, Brighton might be called its "spiritual" one. Though it was clearly linked to moral panic than anything else, the seaside clashes there between Mods and Rockers in the mid-sixties and immortalized in *Quadrophenia*, these images have nonetheless created a solid connection between the city and Mod itself. This connection between the Mod culture and Brighton—forged through both historical events and a media image—have continued to make the city a preferred location for weekend-long Mod events.<sup>349</sup>

While today's Mods continue to revisit the importance of the city, the Brighton Museum—which is on the same grounds as the city's famed Royal Pavillion—does not want to forget the Mods either. Soon after entering the museum, I was told there was a small area devoted to "Mods and Rockers." There, in a room entitled "Brighton Images," I saw that an elaborately decorated Vespa was in the far left corner of the room. Hanging above one of the premiere Mod symbols of mobility, youth, and speed were two large black and white photos depicting Mods and Rockers in Brighton circa 1964. I was later told by a friend who had lived in

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<sup>349</sup> The connection between Brighton and Mod culture can be glimpsed in the following: "Mods and Rockers," *Brighton and Hove Museums: The Royal Pavillion, Libraries and Museums Collections*, [http://www.virtualmuseum.info/collections/themes/images\\_gallery/html/mods\\_rockers.html](http://www.virtualmuseum.info/collections/themes/images_gallery/html/mods_rockers.html) (accessed Mar. 30, 2008); "Quadrophenia Walking Tour of Brighton," *Quadrophenia* at <http://www.quadrophenia.net/walkingtour/index.html> (accessed Mar. 30, 2008).

Brighton for several years that the city had also always had, long before the beachside classes of the Mods and Rockers, the distinction and history of being—much like the U.S.’s much younger Las Vegas—the “pleasure capital” of England. Since the Victorian era, Brighton was known to be where randy gentlemen would venture for the “dirty weekend” that ran counter to their staid and polished everyday lives. When one thinks that Victorian wives were told to think of sex as a duty to God and country—to in the infamously rumored words told Queen Victoria, “lie back and think of England”—it is no wonder that there was a place where philandering husbands of the era came looking for “a bit of fun.”<sup>350</sup>

Given this history of Brighton—and its proximity to London—it is easy to see why the location became beloved by the Mods. It is sensual in a way that London is not: what with the way the sunlight can hit the multitude of whitewashed houses and turn them a delectable gold or with the sneaky, snaky lanes and hidden alleys surely haunted by Victorian libertines. There is also a dandified elegance evident in the Georgian architecture—a refinement that is greatly reflected in its structures. Brighton’s Royal Pavillion serves as a great example of this. Built by the Prince Regent in 1815, the curvy structure with its minarets tries to embody the “other” and the “exotic” that was far beyond England’s shores. While the myths and legends of the “Orient” wooed both nobility and the common man of the nineteenth century, it was also then the “forbidden” rhythmic exoticism/eroticism of black American sounds would return to Brighton, first with Jazz, and then with R&B and soul by the early 1960s.

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<sup>350</sup> The origins of this phrase is unclear, but it is often attributed to stereotypical views of female sexuality during the Victorian period, i.e., sex is only for procreation and not enjoyable. The idea here was that if one thought about the perpetuation of English “race” for the Empire while having sex it may not be as unpleasant. See, Adrian Room, *Brewer’s Dictionary of Modern Phrase and Fable* (London: Cassell, 2002), 399. Fred Gray, *Designing the Seaside: Architecture, Society, and Nature* (London: Reaktion, 2006), 46, 56, 65, 80-82.

In this way, Brighton is the search for another England—that of fantasy and pleasure—away from the frantic pace of everyday life—whether in London or elsewhere. Brighton is and has been a locus of both departure and return. As a coastal city and resort is literally on “the edge” of England—allowing for cultural edginess.<sup>351</sup> Like the docks of London’s East End or Liverpool’s port, a seaside city like Brighton was yet another space for a confluence of different ideas and people. It is a place to cast away what is one’s normal routine and embrace another kind of persona. However, it is also an illusionary situation—the weekend eventually comes to an end and one must return to “real life.” In *Quadrophenia*, Jimmy’s illusion is shattered when he realizes the “Ace Face” of the Mod Weekender he has just been a part of is in fact “only a bellboy.” As a song on the soundtrack states, Jimmy—in all his mad Mod devotion—is a Mod because he is on a quest for who, to quote the song that starts the film, his “real me” is. The opening scene of the iconic film (which is really the ending) shows Jimmy walking away from a cliff as the sun goes down. It is not clear why, but at the end of the film, we learn he has thrown his Vespa over the cliff—walking away with his life and saying a symbolic final good-bye to his life as a Mod. Though fitting for a film about teenage angst cloaked in Mod gear, this chapter has shown that that the sun has not yet set on the Empire of Mod. It still inhabits live and mediated youth spaces that allow new generations to breathe life into it and, inevitably, change it, too. It is clear that today’s Mods embrace enthusiastically an idealized modernity conceptualized by their parents or grandparents’ generation, thus continuing to make it a vibrant one in the twenty-first-century. *Rule Mod-tannia!*

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<sup>351</sup> Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 7.

### 3.0 THE YOUNG IDEA: COSMOPOLITANISM, YOUTH, AND MOD-ERNITY IN GERMANY

In the city there's a thousand men in uniforms  
And I hope they never have the right to kill a man  
We wanna say, we gonna tell ya  
About the young idea  
And if it don't work, at least we said we've tried.  
- The Jam, "In the City" (1977).<sup>352</sup>

My fatherland has forced me to become a citizen of the world and now I have to remain one.  
There is no turning back. – Erich Maria Remarque, *A Night in Lisbon* (1962).<sup>353</sup>

It was March 2007 and as I sat in my train compartment headed for a small Bavarian town on the shores of Lake Starnberg, I felt an anticipation and nervousness I had not yet experienced in the six months I had conducted oral history research in Germany.<sup>354</sup> I was en route to interview Klaus Voormann—someone about whom I had read about since childhood— from the first time I paged through *The Beatles: An Illustrated Record* in 1978 when I was seven years old. It was then that I first understood the band's development was affected greatly by their time in Germany. Growing up in a bilingual, German-American household, I was intrigued by the fact that the most popular rock band in the world had played their first overseas shows in Hamburg.

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<sup>352</sup> Paul Weller, comp., "In the City," on *In the City*, by the Jam, Polydor NR 2383 447, 33 rpm.

<sup>353</sup> "Mein Vaterland hat mich wider meinen Willen zum Weltbürger gemacht. Nun muss ich es jetzt bleiben. Zurück kann ich nie." Erich Maria Remarque, *Die Nacht von Lissabon* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1962), 82.

<sup>354</sup> My year of oral history and archival research in Germany (2006-2007) was generously sponsored by a fellowship from the German-American Fulbright Commission.

At the time, this newfound knowledge made Germany seem exciting to me in a way it never had before. Before I learned of this, recognizing my German heritage had meant coming to terms with some very unpleasant truths. Throughout my childhood my mother talked openly about her family's flight from East Prussia [now Poland] in 1945 and the hardships of the War. In the same year, though, that I learned the Beatles had a substantial tie to my mother's native country I also saw the *Holocaust* miniseries on TV.<sup>355</sup> This chilling dramatized portrayal of Germany's final solution made me realize that had I been born in Europe during the thirties or forties, I could have been classified as a *Mischling* [half breed] and condemned to a concentration camp because my father was Jewish. Though I was raised Lutheran, and felt connected to my German heritage, it was the first time I realized fully that this self-identification would have meant nothing to the Nazis during the Third Reich.<sup>356</sup>

Not long after seeing the *Holocaust* mini-series I found out that our next-door neighbors were concentration camp survivors. They did not need to tell me. I saw the tattooed numbers on their arms. Though my mother was initially fearful of revealing her ethnicity, they eventually learned my mother was German, and remained just as friendly and kind to her as they had always been. They, on several occasions, invited our family over for Passover Seder—some of my first experiences of a Jewish holiday. At the age of seven I felt a profound sadness for my neighbors and the family they lost, but also for my mother and her family, who had lost any pride in their identity. Thus the Nazis continued to haunt subsequent generations of Germans. How could one live with that, I wondered? How could you live with the fact that parents, grandparents, or other

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<sup>355</sup> Roy Carr and Tony Tyler, *The Beatles: An Illustrated Record* (New York: Harmony, 1975). *Holocaust* first aired on NBC-TV from April 16-19, 1978. See Frank Rich, "Reliving the Nazi Nightmare," *Time*, Apr. 17, 1978; Harry F. Waters and Betsy Carter, "Holocaust Fallout," *Newsweek*, May 1, 1978.

<sup>356</sup> This is according to the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. See "The Nuremberg Laws," *Shoah Education Project* <http://www.shoaheducation.com/nuremberglaws.html> (accessed July 17, 2008).

family members had been fervent Nazis or actual perpetrators of war crimes? And even if one's family had not been fascist, many Germans still felt guilt by association. How would one wear a legacy that seemed so far removed from day-to-day life?

It is no wonder that at an early age, I was somewhat dumbfounded that the Beatles, as Britons, had been willing to spend time in Germany. Given my maternal grandmother's biting remarks about "The English," common among her generation, it was hard for me to comprehend how the Liverpool band could have felt comfortable in Germany only fifteen years after the War's end. After all, British cities, especially the Beatles' hometown, had suffered extensive bombing by the Luftwaffe and still showed signs of damage. Yet, my childhood encounter with the Beatles' story in Germany made me realize that the friendships formed between the band and a group of Hamburg art students overcame stereotypes each may have had of "the German" or "*der Engländer*."<sup>357</sup> Just as my neighbors embraced our family, these German and British youths embraced each other. I realized individual connections between people sometimes can transcend the politics of hatred. Without expecting it, these memories come flooding back as I traveled to interview one of those art students who befriended the Beatles so long ago.

Suddenly I heard the train conductor announcing "*Nächste Halte: Tutzing*" and am back in the present. As I walked out of the station, I recognized Klaus right away. He seemed friendly from the start and greeted people who passed his way. The town we met in was typically Bavarian: wooden-frame houses with flower boxes attached to each and every window. Klaus sported shoulder-length white hair and a beard, looking every inch the stereotypical artist or ex-rock star of a "certain age." His bright blue almond-shaped eyes and overall manner conveyed a boyish charm despite his nearly seventy years. We drove a short distance from the train station

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<sup>357</sup> For a thorough history of these attitudes, see Rainer Emig, ed., *Stereotypes in Contemporary Anglo-German Relations* (Houndsmills, Eng.: Macmillan, 2000).



to a park along the lake, where the interview took place. The interview was conducted in English, rather than his native German, which gave me the opportunity to hear traces of the British lilt that he acquired living in London during the sixties. He told me it has become more “German-sounding” in recent years.

The ultra-Bavarian, pastoral setting in which I interviewed Klaus strikes a stark contrast to the urban centers where he has lived for most of his life. Though originally from an upper-middle-class Berlin family, Voormann began art school in Hamburg in the late fifties and befriended the Beatles in 1960. In 1964 he moved to London and worked for a short time at an advertising agency. Soon thereafter, he married a British actress and designed the Grammy-winning album cover for the Beatles’ 1966 LP *Revolver*. After a short stint with the trio Paddy, Klaus, and Gibson, he began playing bass with the London group Manfred Mann (fig. 11), which dissolved in 1969.



**Figure 11 Manfred Mann. Klaus Voormann second to left. Photo courtesy K&K Center-of-Beat, Hamburg.**

He then recorded and toured (again on bass) with John Lennon and George Harrison respectively in the early-to-mid 1970s.<sup>358</sup> More recently, Voormann has designed the sleeves of the Beatles *Anthology* albums, which were released in the mid-1990s. Though I first heard of Klaus Voormann by reading about the Beatles, I was not interested in asking questions like: “Tell me, what was John Lennon *really* like?” I was much more interested in Voormann’s friendship with the Beatles as it symbolized the German postwar generation’s wish to move beyond the shadows of a Nazi past.

I asked Voormann about the early sixties in Hamburg—of the years that the blossoming British Mod culture was slowly filtering into West Germany. How did his identity as a German relate to his early interactions with English people and the English language? Somewhat to my surprise, Klaus told me that the Beatles were actually the first Englishmen he met. Did he have any preconceptions of what British people were like prior to meeting the young Liverpudlians? “I thought they all looked like Churchill! There was this gentleman-thing... and of course [I imagined] people like Sherlock Holmes.”<sup>359</sup> He explained that the difference between his preconceptions and reality had to do with the clientele and atmosphere in the Hamburg nightclubs as well as the fact that these musicians were not just British, but from Liverpool:

It’s a unique situation because we had the musicians... and those were kids who had wanted to be there and dance, so this was not the normal public. This was a very selective crowd of people and they got on really well with one another. The one thing that struck

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<sup>358</sup> Klaus Voormann played bass on John Lennon’s *Plastic Ono Band* (1970) and *Imagine* (1971) albums as well as George Harrison’s *All Things Must Pass* (1970). This and other information about Voormann’s life is chronicled in the currently German-only autobiography Klaus Voormann, *Warum spielst du Imagine nicht auf dem weissen Klavier, John’: Erinnerungen an die Beatles und viele andere Freunde* (Munich: Heyne, 2003).

<sup>359</sup> Klaus Voormann, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Tutzing, Germany, Mar. 5, 2007, on file in the DCUP.

me most was... about the bands from Liverpool was that they were so friendly, so funny. Ever since then I really, really love Liverpool people. They are a special breed of people. You don't find those anywhere in the world—I mean they have a little bit of Irish, Scottish, and it's all the way up north and it's a fantastic mix. I think that's the main reason that those people and those bands became so famous... because of this wit and their energy. When I first went to Liverpool it was like heaven to me.

The “wit and energy” that impressed and still enchanted Voormann about Liverpool bands and the city itself ran counter to feelings about his native land and his own identity. “I know what German qualities are, but I'm not typical. Maybe I'm not good for analyzing it and saying what German—how do you say—how it happens [that] they are the way they are starting with the Prussians. Berlin is the worst... terrible.” Here, Klaus implied stereotypically brusque behavior. “If you're in a supermarket or you're in a bar or standing in a row [or] trying to get on the bus it's such a hassle. It's getting better, but it's still there.” I cannot help but wonder if Voormann would have these negative—or at least, ambivalent—feelings about his Germany identity had he not had such positive experiences with foreigners at a young age. After all, he met the Beatles at the dawn of an era that promised increased *mobility* in almost every sense.

Though family life and new work possibilities (as a music producer) brought him back to Germany by 1979, his words showed that it was still difficult for Voormann to come to terms with living there. “This [German] stiffness has been in the way for a long, long time,” he told me. “It starts to loosen up a little now, but you see, somebody [I know] came back from holiday or something, and he said, ‘When I come back and I look at these faces in the subway or in the bus... they look like they're dying.’” For Voormann it was still frustrating to reconcile his cosmopolitan identity with stereotypical German “stiffness.” The tension of existing both in and outside of his culture has not been Voormann's alone. In fact, as we will see in this chapter, his words encapsulate others' sentiments and relate to changing generational attitudes of national

identity. Mod culture in particular has played an important role in new perceptions of self in Germany since the postwar period.

However, the German adoption of Mod culture has not been only intricately tied to the postwar generation's desire to belong to an international youth community. It also has been couched within a longer-standing debate about youth, nationhood, and modernity there. This discourse extends back to the late nineteenth century, not many years after the founding of Germany. Since the turn-of-the-last-century especially, historical documentation has pointed to generations of adults expecting each new German cohort to embody the national future. Not surprisingly, perhaps, each youth generation has not necessarily fulfilled that promise, and sometimes, has even rebelled actively against adult expectations. In the case of Mod's postwar arrival, then, the stage was set for German youth to react against the Nazi past and to think in global terms. The brutal and extreme form of nationalism that the Nazi Party practiced pushed many young, postwar Germans to embrace heartily all things foreign. Starting as early as immediately after the War, but continuing on into the initial Mod years of 1964 to 1967, German teenagers sought to restructure or escape their fascist-tainted national identity. Many contemporary German Mods have described participation in this culture as a gateway to cosmopolitanism, or, as a way in which to reconfigure their identities more holistically as Europeans.

As the first chapter has shown, the birth and evolution of Mod culture in Great Britain was bound to historical circumstances that created a desire for some postwar youths to reconceptualize what being modern meant. Factors such as early industrialization, a tightly structured social class system, and a vast colonial Empire, laid the groundwork for something like Mod to originate in Britain rather than elsewhere. The voices of some of my British

narrators, as well as most books on Mod written by British authors, seemed to promote the notion that Mod was and remains a “truly British phenomenon.”<sup>360</sup> However, as this and the two following chapters will show, Mod’s idealized visions of modernity have traversed geographic spaces and served nation-specific needs of young people outside of Britain in the forty-plus years of the culture’s existence.

In Germany, Mod’s arrival at the beginning of the sixties coincided with a need for that country’s young not only to reassess what being “modern” could mean, but also what being “German” could mean after the horrors of the Third Reich were laid bare. What would Mod’s “young idea” mean for their quest? As the following pages will show, Mod’s adoption into German culture emerged from questions about national, European, and global identity, as well as the desire to be included in a community of like-minded young people around the world. With German Mod events attended by other Europeans since the mid-eighties, as well as continental weekenders attracting German and other European Mods, it appears that contemporary Mods have fulfilled the wish that the postwar generation aspired to.

Though Susan Stanford Friedman writes the following about modernity, it could just as easily be true of Mod. In her words, the “chain of prepositions in generational succession challenges the relational assumption of freedom from history. The (self) consciousness of modernity—the sense of radical rupture from the immediate past—refuses the principles of historical continuity and evolution in its insistence on origin, newness, and revolution.”<sup>361</sup> Though this intergenerational dynamic can surely be applied more globally, the phenomenon of

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<sup>360</sup> Terry Rawlings, *Mod: A Truly British Phenomenon* (London: Omnibus, 2000).

<sup>361</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, “Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism,” *Modernism/Modernity* 8 (2001): 504.

this is especially ripe for analysis in Germany, since the country experienced extremely frequent socio-political shifts throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The interrelations between generation and modernity in Germany are especially important when placed within the context of both World Wars. Germany, a defeated nation twice over, saw the results of both wars contributing greatly to a dynamic process whereby vibrantly progressive and “youthful” periods clearly follow each conflict. This pattern helps explain the initial adoption of the British-born Mod youth style in postwar Germany as the perfect antidote for a generation coping with the specter of their parents’ National Socialist (NS) past. Finally, given this historiography of youth and Mod culture in Germany, it is important to consider the cultural significance that the later adoption and transformation of this youth culture has had beyond the original British-led “Mod Moment” of the 1960s. The resurgence of Mod from the late seventies to the present is here contextualized within a generation’s disappointment with the previous one’s loss of super-stylish and idealistic Mod sensibility, as well as the continued desire to be seen as “European” versus “German.”<sup>362</sup>

In each section of this chapter I will map how Mod in Germany has developed as a quintessentially international and cosmopolitan youth culture. In order to lay the proper historical groundwork for Mod’s introduction to Germany circa 1960, I will first give a brief overview of Germany’s initial unification in the late nineteenth century. Then I will address a longstanding cultural discourse in this country which has linked youth to national identity and, hence, “progress.” I will illustrate this through historical examples of generational rebellion, or, how subsequent cohorts reacted against cultural choices of the previous generation. Given this

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<sup>362</sup> On the topic of intergenerational reactions and conflict specifically in Germany, see Mark Roseman, ed., *Generations of Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany, 1770-1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

framework, the next section will look at how Mod manifested initially in Germany—in great part due to the postwar generation’s need to reinvent its identity based on foreign rather than national resources and to distance itself from the recent Nazi past. In doing so, I will examine the environment of post-World War II Germany, and what young people did or did not know about their parents and grandparents’ involvement in the Nazism, and how that may have played a part in their adoption of the cosmopolitan Mod culture. Here, it is also important to explain how the adoption of “Britishness” and “Anglo-Saxon” culture required a swift attitudinal transformation among young Germans. The victorious Allied powers now had to be seen as a source of liberation. Finally, the last two portions of the chapter examine German Mod culture in the 1970s to 1980s and the 1990s to 2000s respectively. By chapter’s end, I hope to have illuminated how international-mindedness has continued to be a key factor in Germany’s contemporary and youthful Mod scene.

### **3.1 NATIONAL UNIFICATION AND IDENTITY**

Despite the ludicrous extremes of National Socialism, Germany was still a relatively young country at the time of Hitler’s ascent to power. First unified in 1871, the lands that became Germany had been a checkered terrain of Saxons, Bavarians, Thuringians, Franks, and Alemannen for hundreds of years. Only loosely controlled through the Holy Roman Empire (until 1806) and the German Confederation (until 1871), these groups who lived in small fiefdoms, dukedoms, or principalities often considered neighboring “tribes” as foreign as the French or British. Napoleon’s sweep through much of the Germanic lands in the early nineteenth

century further diversified the culture there with Gallicism that received mixed reactions.<sup>363</sup> Though one might think a common language bound these people together, regional dialects such as the southern Bavarian or northwestern Friesian were so different from one another that they might as well have been different languages. In this sense, as Stefan Berger points out, the project of building the German nation, required unification not only in terms of a standardized language and centralized government, but an embracing of internal “otherness.”<sup>364</sup> The rhetoric used in uniting these populations differentiated by region, language and religion was (the north was mostly protestant, while the south primarily Catholic), was “strength in numbers” through a united Germany. If one of the initial cultural tensions which later helped produce Mod in Britain was the struggle between pastoral and urban ideals of the nation, then for Germany it was the tension between regional and national identities, provincialism and statehood. But, if Germany had to look inward to unite, how could it ever look outward? In order to assert a cohesive identity, all “otherness” had to be subsumed into the nation.

As early as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, German thinkers such as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) respectively preoccupied themselves with the ideas of the German *Volk* (People or Nation) and the *Volkgeist* (spirit of the people). Both philosophers foresaw a German nation coming together out of many disparate individuals’ energies—in Herder’s view, the collective good of a national project had to begin with each person’s unique contribution (i.e., their “spirit). In this sense, Herder, especially, focused on individualism. Some scholars believe that he never advocated the

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<sup>363</sup> Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 7-8.

<sup>364</sup> Stefan Berger, *Inventing the Nation: Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1, 6, 15; Oded Heilbrunner, “From Antisemitic Peripheries to Antisemitic Centres: The Place of Antisemitism in Modern German History,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 34:4 (Oct. 2000): 559.



nation state as a means to an end, but rather a greater step towards more developed humanism. Interestingly, in some early writings of Hegel, who is considered the father of German nationalism, pro-French sentiments abound, as does a lack of enthusiasm for German unification. Thus, even some of the most prominent early voices to ruminate on the possibilities of a German nation-state were conflicted about its importance.<sup>365</sup>

Alongside key ideas arising at this time such as *Volk* and *Volksgeist*, is the term *Heimat*. *Heimat*, which on a very basic level can be translated as meaning homeland, connotes much more. At the time when this old-fashioned word was “rediscovered” by writers in the early nineteenth century, it conjured images of a cozy provincial hometown, a place where one really felt at home, and a sense of belonging. Initially, the term was primarily linked to peoples’ localities, not to a unified nation. However, the word was soon used as a galvanizing term by those seeking to unify the German lands. Those pundits who promoted the idea of a national homeland that could have all the familiarity and comforts of *Heimat* were eventually successful. By World War I, not so very long after unification, soldiers were fighting for their *Heimat*, just as Englishmen fought for the *home front*.<sup>366</sup>

Finally, the *Kulturkampf* [culture struggle] that arose due to the Prussian leadership in the German unification sought to promote a German high culture that favored Protestant over Catholic views. The idea of lessening Rome’s influence on the burgeoning German nation was couched in language that thinly disguised anti-Catholic views. It seemed nationalist (Protestant) proponents of this formation of elevated Germanic culture found Catholic-German culture backwards, superstitious, and somehow kitschy, while the Protestant side of the culture was more

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<sup>365</sup> Royal J. Schimdt, “Cultural Nationalism in Herder,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 17:3 (June 1956): 409, 413, 417; Schlmo Avineri, “Hegel and Nationalism,” *Review of Politics* 24:4 (Oct. 1962): 462-465; 468.

<sup>366</sup> Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, 4, 7, 8-9, 11; Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002), 48.

heavily influenced by the Enlightenment, and therefore, more rational and forward-thinking. It was a time of “lexicographers, folklorists, philologists, historians, men of letters—who not only propagated, but also imparted shape and form to a collective sense of what it was to be German.” As with most projects of nation-building, this was yet another situation in which elites determined what was “best” for German culture.<sup>367</sup>

Given the circumstances and discussions surrounding nationalism in the nineteenth century, modern German history has often been described as having traveled a *Sonderweg*: a unique path. The *Sonderweg* suggests that the late unification and formation of the nation—as compared to other European countries—prompted extreme nationalism among many German subjects.<sup>368</sup> This often-contested theory suggests that Germany’s late “modernization” furthered such a strong quest and desire for national identity that something as extreme as National Socialism was inevitable. An examination of this historical situation in light of (cosmopolitan) Mod’s adoption and adaptation in postwar Germany and beyond, involves a closer examination of youth’s role in this development, embrace, and eventual discarding of a nationalistic view of modernity.

In the almost century and a half since Otto von Bismarck united Germany, the political landscape has shifted dramatically. The socio-political changes from 1871 to the present have included the *Kaiserreich*, the Weimar Republic, National Socialism (NS), postwar Allied occupation, Cold War division between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and, finally, the reunification of East and West as one democratic

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<sup>367</sup> Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 20-21.

<sup>368</sup> Jürgen Kocka, “German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German *Sonderweg*,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 23 (1988): 3-16; Helga Grebing, *Der "deutsche Sonderweg" in Europa 1806-1945: Eine Kritik* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1986).

nation. From the mid-1880s to the early 1900s, German's on-going project of building a national identity connected to identifying what was "traditionally German." This project not only affected Germans as a whole, but also placed a specific responsibility (if not a burden) on young people. Germans believed at this time that youth, imbued with openness and idealism, symbolized the future and, thus, had the ability to sort out the tensions that, on some level, were more difficult for older folks to contend with.<sup>369</sup> Against this tumultuous backdrop, Germans who wanted to "become modern" also had to, like Great Britain, deal with the rapid spread of new technologies, increasing urbanization, and quickening secularization.<sup>370</sup> Many older Germans felt it was youth who would lead the way to modernity.

As this chapter will show, the original Mod Sixties period in Germany with its *Beatmusik* and rock clubs, its *Minirocke* and *Pilzköpfe* (mini-skirts and "mushroom heads," a.k.a. mop-tops), as well as its later reconfigurations from the late 1970s to today, appear within a recurrent pattern of generational tensions specific to Germany's struggle between a national and cosmopolitan identity evident since the country's founding. Were it not for this earlier national uncertainty, particularly its influence on youth culture and modernity, Mod culture could not have emerged as it did in postwar Germany.<sup>371</sup> In this sense, though Mod appeared and *was* a

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<sup>369</sup> Examples of the triangular relationship between modernity, youth, and generation is found in: Frank Trommler, "Mission ohne Ziel: Über den Kult der Jugend im modernen Deutschland," in *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit: Der Mythos Jugend*, ed. Thomas Köbner, Janz Rolf-Peter, and Frank Trommler (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 14-49; Peter Ulrich Hein, "Kunst, Hedonismus und Jugendbewegung: Zum Sinnlichkeitspostulat eines jugendbewegten Kunsterlebens," in *Das Jahrbuch des Archivs der deutschen Jugendbewegung* 14 (1982-1983): 117-140; and Gustav Wyneken, "Was ist Jugendkultur?": *Öffentlicher Vortrag, gehalten am 30. October 1913 in der Pädagogischen Abteilung der Münchner Freien Studentenschaft* (Munich: George G. Steinide Verlage, 1919), 6-7.

<sup>370</sup> For this definition of modernization as the process of becoming culturally "up-to-date" through these social changes, see Friedman, "Definitional Excursions," 498-503.

<sup>371</sup> *Modernity* is defined here in the classic sense of a linear progression of cultural development that is strongly supported by the industrial revolution and technological advancements thereafter. It implies a belief, sometimes to a utopian extreme, that that which is new is intrinsically better than what has come before. For this definition, see: Thomas J. Misa, "The Compelling Tangle of Modernity and Technology," *Modernity and Technology*, ed. Thomas J. Misa, Philip Brey, and Andrew Feenberg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 5; Andreas Huyssen, "Present

new sensibility in 1960s Germany, its reception, adoption, and adaptation were influenced by the nation's trajectory since the late nineteenth century.

### 3.2 YOUTH, MODERNITY, AND GENERATION, 1900-1960

The emergence of Mod as a pop culture phenomenon that has appealed to German youth from the 1960s onward is not just the story of one generation, but also of many that have thought about the relationship between modernity and youth—whether regional, national, or international in outlook: the *Wandervogel* of the first decade of the twentieth-century, the Weimar Jazz babies of the 1920s, the rock and roll *Halbstarke* of the 1950s, the original Mods of the 1960s, as well as their Generation X and Y progeny. The procession of youth-driven cultural responses to the previous (parent) generation is essential for comprehending the changing aesthetics and beliefs of twentieth-century youth culture in Germany. However, to understand how the trinity of youth, modernity, and generation fit together conceptually, we need to look at the connotations and associations attributed to each concept by early twentieth century German thinkers and theorists of German culture.

While some contemporary U.K. Mods may argue that the culture is a traditionally British one, my last chapter emphasized that it has also been a thoroughly *modern* phenomenon that, as we will see, has been able to transcend geographic roots. The concepts of youth and youth culture as we understand them today are also both tied to the processes of urbanization and industrialization that came to the fore of cultural consciousness during the turn-of-the-last-

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Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia,” *Public Culture* 12 (Winter 2000), 36; and Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 14-15.

century. Just as in the U.K., albeit a little later, these issues were also important in Germany. In his 1903 essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” German sociologist Georg Simmel suggested that the confounding circumstances of modern city life cause new modes of identification to develop among its denizens. He described the “deepest problems of modern life [as]... the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming external forces of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life.”<sup>372</sup> Not only was a new kind of adult emerging as a result of this urban milieu, but young people were “discovered” as a phenomenon as well. Soon more sociologists, notably those at the University of Chicago, with their work on youth deviance, began considering how youth existed and interacted within these urban spaces.<sup>373</sup>

During the same period, analyzing “youth” preoccupied scholars on both sides of the Atlantic: notably American psychologist G. Stanley Hall, and German educator Gustav Wyneken, who was to become especially relevant to discussions of youth culture in Germany. Intriguingly, Hall’s landmark 1904 work *Adolescence* refers back to German culture in adopting the romantic German expression *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) in order to describe the emotional challenges of youth.<sup>374</sup> While this term evokes sentiments found in Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (first published in 1774), Hall defined what teenage angst meant within a new century’s social context. Similarly, Wyneken dedicated much effort to studying

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<sup>372</sup> Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (1903; New York: Free Press, 1950), 409.

<sup>373</sup> See Ken Gelder, *Subcultures: Cultural Histories and Social Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 27-46; and Neil Campbell, ed. *American Youth Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 5.

<sup>374</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1914); Gerhard Linne, *Jugend in Deutschland: Vom Sturm und Drang zur APO* (Güttersloh: Bertelsmann, 1970), 10.

For a recent analysis of Hall’s indelible mark on youth culture studies in the twentieth-century, see Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (New York: Viking, 2007), 63-73.

German youth.<sup>375</sup> He focused not only on the current generation's struggles during the period between childhood and adulthood, but also specifically on the dismay that modernization processes elicited from that particular cohort. For German audiences, Wyneken described a newly developing "youth culture," in which it was only young people, and not adult leaders, who determined what activities were important for them. More specifically, Wyneken directly links this concept to the then-popular *Wandervogel* (migratory birds) group—famous at the time for their rejection of urban spaces and hiking through the German countryside in outfits that paid homage to the Germanic Middle Ages. As a point of departure for this generation of youth and generations to come, Wyneken wrote at the time: "Youth has been seen, up until the present, solely as an appendage of the older generation. Youths have been excluded from many aspects of life and given a passive role in society, but are now beginning to take a look at their situation. They are trying to break free from the demands of convention and create their own lives. They are striving towards a way of life that speaks to their youthful way of being that also allows them to take themselves and their activities seriously. They are recognizing themselves as a significant part of cultural life."<sup>376</sup> Particularly given the strong authoritarian strain imbedded in Wilhelminian German culture, the movement of (at first, mostly male) adolescents away from the confines of a strict, patriarchal household and into the wide-open spaces of the countryside would have been liberating indeed.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Gustav Wyneken is also an important, if controversial, figure in gay history. See Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris, 1919-1939*, 2 vols. (New York: Algora, 2006), 2: 235-6.

<sup>376</sup> "Die Jugend, bisher nur ein 'Anhängsel der aelteren Generation, aus dem öffentlichen Leben ausgeschaltet und auf eine passive Rolle angewiesen, beginnt, sich auf sich selbst zu besinnen. Sie versucht unabhängig von den Geboten der Konvention sich selbst ihr Leben zu gestalten. Sie strebt nach einer Lebensführung, die jugendlichem Wesen entspricht, die es ihr aber zugleich auch ermöglicht, sich selbst und ihr Tun ernst zu nehmen und sich als einen besonderen Faktor in die allgemeine Kulturarbeit einzugliedern." Wyneken, *Was ist Jugendkultur?*, 3. See also Peter D. Stachura, *The German Youth Movement 1900-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 2.

<sup>377</sup> The term Wilhelminian (or "Wilhelmine") is used to describe the period of German King Wilhelm's reign from 1888 to 1918 and carries similar connotations to the Anglo-American term Victorian. The idea that patriarchal

With the club's origins in the Stieglitz suburb of Berlin, the *Wandervogel* equated urban space with a strict home life and adulthood. In German forests, ruined castles, and in the playing of Ur-German folksongs on antique instruments, young men of the early twentieth-century sought refuge—a space of their own design. In this sense, they were rejecting the modernity handed to them and sought an alternative path for living out the present. The search for the “blue flower” (*die blaue Blume*), which can be pictured as a blue rose, was a phrase the German Romantics used to express longing and the search for the eternal. This also came to represent the *Wandervogel*'s ideological bent, in which the “search for the blue flower” was the yearning for a utopian world untainted by the contemporary currents of culture.<sup>378</sup> The *Wandervogel* saw this idealism as “normal,” while the lackluster monotony of working life in the city was a deviation as to how life should really be lived.<sup>379</sup> While these turn-of-the-century youths sought solace in German Romanticism, the adult world adopted another kind of romanticism in its reading of this new generation. Unlike the more familiar contemporary visions of “troubled youth” that would surface by the mid-twentieth-century, the word “youth” itself became synonymous in Germany with hopeful visions of the future. At a time when continued change fostered feelings of insecurity, “Youth, youthfulness, and simply ‘being young’ became ‘in’ terms linked to dynamism and forward-thinking and ran counter to connotations of age, decadence, and

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authority was a defining feature of German culture from this period onward is astutely analyzed in Max Horkheimer, “Authority and the Family,” *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), 47-128. See also Hans Dieter Schäfer, “Bekenntnisse zur Neuen Welt: USA-Kult vor dem 2. Weltkrieg,” *Schock und Schöpfung. Jugendästhetik im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Willi Bucher, Klaus Pohl, and Michael Andritzky (Stuttgart: Deutscher Werkbund und Württembergischer Kunstverein, 1986), 388.

<sup>378</sup> Werner Helwig, *Die Blaue Blume des Wandervogels* (1960; Baunach: Deutscher Spurbuchverlag, 1998).

<sup>379</sup> “The whole development of the German youth movement was shaped by the impact of romantic philosophy, by a glorification of the past fraught with misgivings for the future.” Walter Laqueur, “Introduction,” *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1962), 6. The basic history of the *Wandervogel* is richly documented in several texts, both in German and English such as Gerhard Ziemer and Hans Wolf, *Wandervogel Bildatlas* (Bad Godesberg: Voggenreiter, 1963); Florian Malzacher and Matthias Dänschel, *Jugendbewegung für Anfänger* (Witzenhausen: Südmarkverlag, 1993); Christoph Conti, *Abschied vom Bürgertum: alternative Bewegungen in Deutschland von 1890 bis Heute* (Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1984); and Peter D. Stachura, *The German Youth Movement*.

decay.”<sup>380</sup> Even Art Nouveau was called *Jugendstil* (“the young style”) in Germany—the only country to include “youth” in the name of this Fin de Siècle art movement. This connection between youth and dynamism was certainly not invented by turn-of-the-century Germans, but the intensity of the feelings at the time reflected those, as Maurice Halbwachs may have viewed it, of ancient Greek philosophers who “put the golden age not at the end of the world, but at its beginnings.” Thus, with new life, new attitudes and possibilities could emerge as well.<sup>381</sup>

Unfortunately, as the adult world—especially those adults with keen political ambitions—became more interested in what youth were up to, factions of the new German Youth Movement came to reflect certain ideological viewpoints, whether on the Left or Right. Unlike the Anglo-American scouting tradition, the German Youth Movement was originally begun and managed by youth for youth. There was initially no equivalent to the Scouts’ adult founder Robert Baden-Powell. Thus, by the time the First World War broke out, the political influences of the adult world seemed to have corrupted the originally idealistic bands of *Wandervogel* and their splinter groups. Encouraged by *Hurrapatriotismus* (jingoism), late-Wilhelminian politics created a climate in which youth were eager to serve their country on the front lines. It was only afterwards that some disillusioned former members of the various clubs

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<sup>380</sup> “*Jugend, Jugendlichkeit und Jungsein wurden zum Inbegriff von Dynamik und Zukunftsorientiertheit und damit zu ‘Bannworten’ gegenüber Alter, Dekadenz, und Zerfall.*” Barbara Stambolis, “Mythen und Heilserwartungen mit politischen Wirkungen zwischen Jahrhundertwende und Dritten Reich: Morgenlandfahrer und andere Sinnsucher,” *Jahrbuch des Archivs der deutschen Jugendbewegung* 20 (2002-2003), 77. Anthropological work by Margaret Mead proposes that adolescence can be an exciting rather than troubling time. See Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (1928; New York: Morrow, 1961).

<sup>381</sup> For documentation of this idealization of and projection onto youth during this era, see Barbara Stambolis, *Mythos Jugend: Leitbild und Krisensymptom* (Schwalbach: Wochen Schau Verlag, 2003); Linda Koreska-Hartmann, *Jugendstil—Stil der ‘Jugend’: Auf den Spuren eines alten, neuen Stil- und Lebensgefuehls* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1969), 18-19; and Wilifried Ferchhoff, “Jugendkulturkonzepte aus der bürgerlichen Jugendbewegung und ihre Wirkungen in der Gegenwart,” *Jugend, Jugend 1900-1970* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990), 127-129. Quote from Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 48.



realized that they had been duped into serving a world ruled by adult power plays that were not really in their self-interest.<sup>382</sup>

Germany's post-WWI Weimar period (1919-1933) brought new perspectives. Despite the economic hardships introduced to the country by way of the Treaty of Versailles, the country still managed to experience—as in Britain and elsewhere—a so-called “Golden Twenties.”<sup>383</sup> This was a period in which the “new Woman” with her pageboy haircut and a more sexually permissive attitude emerged, and Hollywood films and American Jazz were embraced. In this sense, this was the first generation of young people in the twentieth-century to accept rather than reject modernity's change in values and technological offerings. Unlike the escape-to-nature ethos of the German Youth Movement, post-WWI youth watched films and danced to live and recorded Jazz music. Unlike the quaint images of the *Wandervogel* hiking through the hills of Hesse or Thuringia in their medieval attire, the pictures most associated with post-WWI youth are those of cheeky Berliners dancing and doing their best to look fashionable and up-to-date amid high inflation and the devaluation of the German Mark. This was also a period of rebirth in the arts. German Expressionism and Dada art found young audiences and the country had a burgeoning film industry all its own with auteurs by the names of F. W. Murnau, Fritz Lang, and G.W. Pabst.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> For use of the word *Hurratriotismus* in the context of young soldiers in WWI, see Malzacher and Dänschel, *Jugendbewegung fuer Anfänger*, 11; on the history of scouting, see Tammy M. Proctor, “*On My Honour*”: *Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Association, 2002); Troy Boone, *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 107-132.

<sup>383</sup> From the German viewpoint, The Treaty of Versailles blamed Germany for World War I and left the country to fend for itself. Unlike after World War II, the war's victors did not help Germany rebuild after its losses. Though contested, some scholars believe this created enough bitterness among some Germans and was used by Adolf Hitler as a way to rally anti-European sentiment. See Manfred F. Boemeke, Gerald D. Feldman, and Elizabeth Glaser, “Introduction,” in *The Treaty of Versailles, A Reassessment after 75 Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2-3.

<sup>384</sup> Texts that depict the Weimar era thusly include Gay, *Weimar Culture*; Wolf von Eckardt and Sander L. Gilman, *Bertolt Brecht's Berlin: A Scrapbook of the Twenties* (Garden City, NJ: Anchor, 1974); Schäfer, “Bekenntnisse zur

While the *Wandervogel* romanticized a past ideal of “old Germany,” the Jazz babies of the 1920s looked to the present and the “New World” of American culture and were also sometimes described as “*die neue Jugend* [the new youth].” In the 1920s America became the pinnacle of modernity to progressive-thinking Germans. The United States, historically older than the newly-formed Germany, was still nonetheless wed to notions of “youth” and “modernization” in the minds of many Europeans. Most everything, then, that came from American culture was read by many young Germans as imbued with an innate youthfulness that “Old World” could not have.<sup>385</sup> A German scholar sees the situation similarly: “American mass culture, with its easy-listening music, its comics, and Hollywood films, which embodied a modern, technological world, greatly resonated in Germany. This helps account for the ascendancy of America and American mass culture as ‘the epitome of the modern’ and the important role it played in Germany as early as the the nineteen-twenties.”<sup>386</sup> While looking to American culture for inspiration, Germans linked modernity and youth to cosmopolitanism and city life. In connecting youth and modernity to that which is urban, new, and up-to-date, Germans during the Weimar period first experienced high modernity, which can be described as

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Neuen Welt: USA-Kult vor dem 2. Weltkrieg;” 383-385; Irene Lusk, ed., *Die Wilden Zwanziger: Weimar und die Welt 1919-1933* (Berlin: Elefanten, 1986). For excellent images of art and life in Weimar-era Berlin, see Rainer Metzger, *Berlin: The Twenties* (New York: Abrams, 2006). For more on attitudes towards sexuality in 1920s Berlin, as well as an interesting account of the emergent film industry, see Savage, *Teenage*, 238-9; Barry Paris, *Louise Brooks* (New York: Anchor, 1989), 4-5, 281-305; Louise Brooks, *Lulu in Hollywood* (New York: Limelight, 1982), 93-106. Interestingly, Murnau and Lang contributed to what became known in the U.S. as the “international style.” See Edward Dimendberg and Anton Kaes, “Competing Modernities: Film in Germany and the United States,” Paper as part of the German Historical Institute’s *Competing Modernities* project <http://www.ghi-dc.org/competingmodernities/internal/workshopdc/film.pdf> (accessed July 18, 2008). See also Thomas Elsaesser, “Germany: The Weimar Years,” in *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, ed., Geoffrey Nolan-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 136-150.

<sup>385</sup> Winfried Speitkamp, *Jugend in die Neuzeit: Deutschland vom 16. bis 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1998), 170; Mary Nolan, “America and the German Imagination,” *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan*, ed., Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 3-25. According to Neil Campbell, “America has a special hold on the concept of youth because it is the ‘New World’ that broke away from the stifling ‘Old World’ of Europe” (*American Youth Cultures*, 2).

<sup>386</sup> Gabriele Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland 1945-1949* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997), 48.

identifiable due to its “trust in progress and development, its celebration of the new as utopian.”<sup>387</sup>

Addressing the ideals of youth is necessary and unavoidable when surveying the history of German youth culture. Though there is an ocean of difference separating the progressive and internationalist bent of the Weimar era and that of the reactionary and nationalist stance of the Third Reich (1933-1945), it would be wrong to say that the Nazis shunned modernity. Indeed, their use of media for propaganda and state-of-the-art engineering for warfare and the death-camps around Germany underscores the fact that they actively utilized technology to advance their totalitarian regime. At least one scholar has described this as “reactionary modernism,” in that what the National Socialists espoused is the result from its leaders’ rejection of Enlightenment rationality in exchange for “means-ends rationality, that is, modern technology.”<sup>388</sup> In this respect, youths were also seen as a means to an end in perpetuating an NS kingdom that was to last a thousand years. Often conned into service by older teenagers (who had been, in turn, indoctrinated by older members of the Party), young Germans, who may or may not have already been members of a right-leaning youth group like the *Jugenddeutschlandbund*, were soon involved in the *Hitler Jugend (HJ)* during the early days of the Third Reich.<sup>389</sup> Soon, membership in the *HJ* was required by law and caused massive problems to the children and their parents who refused to play their part. My mother Simone Feldman (née Zimmermann, 1931-2006) reveals in her memoirs of growing-up in the Third

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<sup>387</sup> Huyssen, “Present Pasts,” 36.

<sup>388</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1. For a comprehensive look at the much-studied Nazi-era propaganda machine, see Aristotle A. Kallis, ed., *Nazi Propaganda*; Horst J.P. Bermeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); and Robert Edwin Herzstein, *The War That Hitler Won: The Most Infamous Propaganda Campaign in History* (New York: Putnam, 1978).

<sup>389</sup> Savage, *Teenage*, 139.

Reich, an incident surrounding her avoidance of Hitler Youth meetings. Since her *Vater* Hans Zimmermann was not a Party Member, she spent her Saturday afternoons in dance classes, rather than attending the meetings. She eventually found herself confronted by a classmate's zealous Nazi parent, who asked gruffly if her father was a criminal. On the same day officials from the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (Band of German Young Women) threatened to cancel her family's food ration stamps if she did not sign an official document testifying to her future attendance to Hitler Youth meetings.<sup>390</sup> Though my mother's story may sound unusual to some, and though it is true that many German young people gladly participated in Hitler Youth, not all youths at the time, as further examples in this chapter will show, were eager to march to the beat of the *HJ* drummers.

Since the years of Hitler's regime would aim to crush and replace progressive Modernist leanings with totalitarianism, German youth would have to wait for another opportunity and another generation to embrace the modernization that soon became linked with "Americanization" in the post-WWII years.<sup>391</sup> While the *Hitler Jugend* was the sanctioned youth club of the State, it is important to acknowledge that there were small bands of youth who rebelled against both the club and the government, more generally. Unlike the most well-known youth resisters, university students Sophie and Hans Scholl, who lead the idealistic group *Die Weiße Rose* (the White Rose) until their executions in 1943, the lesser-known *Edelweiß Piraten* (The Edelweiss Pirates) were an anarchistic group of mostly working-class youths. While not always in opposition to Nazi ideology per se, they often participated in acts of vandalism as a way to show their resentment against the government. They recognized that privileges were

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<sup>390</sup> Simone Feldman, *Excerpts from Voices from a Vanished Past: Memories of a Christian Childhood in Hitler's Germany* (Honolulu: Wisdom Foundation Publishing, 2006), 178-182.

<sup>391</sup> This view of the *Hitler Jugend* is found in the many English-language books on the topic. See Michael H. Kater, *Hitler Youth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Henry Metelmann, *A Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Germany in the 1930s* (London: Caliban, 1997); and H.W. Koch, *The Hitler Youth: Origins and Development 1922-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1975).

bestowed upon more educated, middle-class Nazi “elites,” and that the political system “denied them mechanisms for social advancement.” Besides the young martyrs of the White Rose, the other anti-Nazi youth group most well known in the Anglo-American world is the coterie of “Swing Kids” who created a culture around the so-called “decadent” sounds of American Swing music. Arguably the ancestors of the 1950s *Halbstarcken* (Rockers) and the 1960s Beat fans, the Swing Kids also found their mode of resistance through embracing foreign pop culture.<sup>392</sup>

After the surrender of the National Socialist regime to Allied Forces, the “Rubble Youth”<sup>393</sup> did their best to come to terms with the tragedies that they had outlived and the ruined cities and towns that lay at their feet. The Allied Occupational Forces, but particularly the United States and Britain (France was financially devastated after the War and the U.S.S.R. focused on Soviet-occupied, i.e. eastern Germany) took the reigns of the denazification process and reeducation of the German people in what would become the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. Even prior to the War’s end, politicians and educators realized the importance of “reprogramming” those youth who had been ardent supporters of Nazi ideology. As one such educator opined as early as 1943, “For no matter how much the youth of the Fascisti may be affected by war from now on, the past years of Fascist indoctrination will have left almost indelible marks. Deep, lasting damage has been done to the morals, the minds, the entire thought processes of Fascist youth. If those vicious marks are ever to be erased, we shall have to get busy—very busy.” Depending on which occupational zone Germans lived in, they were exposed to varying degrees of information regarding Germany’s role in the War and, most importantly,

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<sup>392</sup> Savage, *Teenage*, 422-440; Wilfried Breyvogel, ed., *Piraten, Swings und Junge Garde. Jugendwiderstand im Nationalsozialismus* (Bonn: Dietz, 1991); and Michael Balfour, *Withstanding Hitler in Germany, 1933-1945* (New York: Routledge, 1988). The quote about the Edelweiss Pirates comes from Kater, *Hitler Youth*, 139. Regarding Swing in Nazi Germany, see Savage, *Teenage*, 375-383.

<sup>393</sup> See Jaimey Fisher, *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction after the Second World War* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007); and Doris Foitzik, *Jugend ohne Schwung? Jugendkultur und Jugendpolitik in Hamburg 1945 – 1949* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse, 2002).

the truth about the concentration camps through film footage of their liberation.<sup>394</sup> The 1948 U.S.-devised and enacted Marshall Plan—named after then Secretary of State George C. Marshall—promised aid to European people in rebuilding their countries—and rebuilding the German nation as a democratic one. Unfortunately, division of the country into occupational zones set in motion the eventual split of eastern and western Germany into near-polar-opposite cultural trajectories. Because the U.S.S.R had been on the side of the Allies, and despite the onset of Cold War animosity, the Marshall Plan was offered to the Soviet Occupational Zone, but was declined. Today, the Marshall Plan’s aid of the future West Germany is read by some as the U.S.’s most effective tool in containing the spread of Communism.<sup>395</sup>

Having learned lessons from the dire repercussions of the Treaty of Versailles, Marshall and others in the American government agreed that rehabilitation, rather than punishment, of the German people would create new allies rather than reestablishing old enemies.<sup>396</sup> But, with the founding of the Communist German Democratic Republic (GDR or East Germany) in 1949, *some* Germans remained “enemies” by association during the Cold War. As in the post-WWI era, but with more on-the-ground international influences via the Occupation, young people sought refuge—if possible—in ideas and styles stemming from abroad. Due to the Cold War’s severing of Germany into two different countries for nearly half a century, the development of a

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<sup>394</sup> Gregor Ziemer, “Rehabilitating Fascist Youth,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 7 (Winter 1943): 583-4; Information on the difference between British and American reeducation is discussed in Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik*, 183, 187-8. For more information on denazification in the American zone, see James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982). For reeducation of those Germans living in the Soviet zone, see Benita Blessing, *The Antifascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Timothy R. Vogt, *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany: Brandenburg, 1945-1948* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>395</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 33-34; Marc Trachtenberg, “The Marshall Plan as Tragedy,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7:1 (Winter 2005): 135-140. Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York: Basic, 1997), 53-55.

<sup>396</sup> Susan Stern, “Marshall Plan: 1947-1997: A German View,” *German Embassy*, <http://www.germany.info/relaunch/culture/history/marshall.html> (accessed June 29, 2008).

Mod youth culture in the U.S.-U.K.-allied West Germany was much more robust than that in Soviet-lead Democratic Republic, where, by 1965, British beat music was outlawed.<sup>397</sup> Though 1950s Rock-n-Roll and Beat were both enthusiastically embraced in east and west, Mod's ties to British entrepreneurialism and individualism made it difficult to flourish under GDR Communism and collectivism. Thus, the story of Mod's initial reception in Germany during the 1960s is told here primarily through its circulation within the Federal Republic.<sup>398</sup>

In the immediate post-WWII years, as the once-stately, but now devastated, cities of Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich, as well as the industrial heartland of the Ruhr Valley underwent massive reconstruction, the young people of the mid-40s to early 50s sought solace in cultural offerings from British, French, or American occupying forces. In this way, the immediate postwar teenagers began looking outward for models of how life could be lived in a better and more inspiring way. One way young Germans may have gained insight into the attitudes of the Allied Forces (or, even, found out how their peers may have been thinking) was through reading youth-oriented niche publications. Though economic hardship could limit easy access to media, these inexpensive magazines were available in many parts of Germany almost immediately after the War. Appearing with various levels of quality—from mostly cheap pulp editions to some slicker, glossy-covered formats—young people who had survived the hardships of War tried to

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<sup>397</sup> For the regulations put upon beat music in the GDR in late 1965, see Annette Leo, "Beatle-Aufstand in Leipzig," in *Jugend in Deutschland: Opposition, Krisen und Radikalismus zwischen die Generationen*, ed. Ute and Wolfgang Benz (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982), 72-82; Ingo Grabowsky, "'Wie John, Paul, George, und Ringo': die Beat-Ära," in *Rock! Jugend und Musik in Deutschland*, ed., Barbara Hammerschmitt and Bernd Lindner (Leipzig: Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2005), 48-49; Stefan Kloos, *Pop 2000: 50 Jahre Popmusik und Jugendkultur in Deutschland* (Hamburg: Ideal, 1999), 38-40. It is also worth noting that out of the thirty-eight Germans I interviewed between September 2006 and 2007, only two were born and experienced part of their childhoods in East Germany: Susanne Reimann, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Einen Sommer in August café, Berlin, Nov. 10, 2006, DCUP; Stephanie Hempel, oral history interview with author, digital interview, Hempel residence, Hamburg, Aug. 12, 2007, DCUP.

<sup>398</sup> Certainly I am not implying that there is not an interesting story to be told in analyzing youth culture in East Germany during the 1960s. I, however, want to emphasize, that the focus of this story of Mod, especially in this early period, is one that could have only developed as it did, due in large part, to capitalism.

come to terms with the horrors behind them and their hopes for the future in these magazines' pages. Recurring themes in many volumes of these magazines, perhaps unsurprisingly, are the struggles for young people to understand their identity given the emerging information about Nazism's realities, and how one must then cope with being "German Youth" in a period of uncertainty and a disquieting national situation. For instance, in several 1946 issues of *Das Junge Wort* (*The Young Word*) a string of letters to the magazine's editor raised the question: "Are We Nazis?" In these oft-troubled letters, readers wondered if their sometimes forced participation in Hitler Youth made them accountable for everything attached to Nazism itself.<sup>399</sup>

The editors of these youth magazines tried their best to invigorate a generation who had, in many ways, grown old before their time. In a 1946 issue of the British Sector magazine *Jugend* (*Youth*), editor Ernst Mueller writes, "If I may speak openly, I know that despite your young years that you have witnessed more human suffering and worry than all German generations that have gone before you. Like a gloomy nightmare, [these experiences] were also the years that spanned your childhood." Given this situation, the desire to return to the idea of "youthfulness" (not just biologically, but attitudinally) was key to unlocking a better form of modernity. In this view, the majority of adults had stilted views of the world, and these were the same conformist attitudes that had eventually allowed the National Socialists to gain control of the German State. Only through the ideas of the young and youthful-minded could a new and better Germany exist at all. Editors of these magazines (clearly adults themselves) looked to "the young idea" for a kind of cultural healing necessary to move forward. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this attitude echoed the same values that had appeared in youth magazines after WWI. For

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<sup>399</sup> These letters were printed in issues of *Das Junge Wort* from April 15 to June 15, 1946. I was able to access this publication and others from the immediate postwar years at the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung* (The German Youth Movement Archive) at Burg Ludwigstein, near Witzenhausen, Hesse, Germany.



instance, in a 1920 issue of *Junge Menschen* (*Young People*), the editors write, “We envision our readership as youths between the ages of 14 and 20 years old, but also all those who, despite their years, still have a youthful disposition.”<sup>400</sup>

The Rubble Youth’s immediate questioning of themselves as well as the actions of their parents’ generation would become more pronounced among those in the next generation. The later reactions of the baby-boomers are similar to prior German generational and cultural changes, where youthful reactions are born of current cultural circumstances. Just as the pro-nature *Wandervogel* participants sought refuge in Germany’s forests and mountains to escape the new and cold realities of factory-dominated cityscapes and the expansion of urbanization of the turn-of-the last century, or as the Moderns of the 1920s Weimar Republic sought refuge in new means of creativity and foreign art forms (Jazz, for instance) amid the economic disaster of post-WWI Germany, the postwar generation had to somehow escape—or come to terms with—the legacy that the previous generation’s youth had left them.

Germans who became teenagers in the mid-fifties found a more robust youth culture awaiting them. This time, images of what a young person could be were based primarily on the American Rock-and-Roller, or “Greaser.” Prior to the rise of Mod and Beat culture in Germany, the Rock and Roll image of youth stars like Elvis Presley (above all), Gene Vincent, and Eddie Cochran, was emulated and copied both in the U.K. and in Europe. Starting in 1953 with the German release of the movie *The Wild One* (*Der Wilder*), those who wanted to be part of this seemingly rebellious underground style mimicked the dress and hairstyle donned by star Marlon Brando (and co-stars) as the leader and members of a motorcycle gang. This look consisted of leather jackets, tight-fitting jeans, and greased hair. Key scenes in the film depict the gang

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<sup>400</sup> This quote comes from the magazine’s first issue: Ernst Müller, “Untitled,” *Jugend*, July 1946, 5; Knud Ahlborn and Walter Hammer, “Untitled,” *Junge Menschen* 3, Feb. 1, 1920, 16.

arriving in a small town and wreaking havoc—starting, of course, with the group changing the music played on a jukebox in the local bar. In a way not all that different from the Third Reich’s anarchistic *Edelweiss Piraten*, the German Greasers/Rockers of the early to mid-fifties were initially an unruly bunch. Like their British “Rocker” cousins, this contingent, known *die Halbstarcken* (literally, the semi-strong), also rioted when the first real Rock-n-Roll movie, *Rock Around the Clock*, screened in Germany in 1955. By 1956, Germans had a locally-produced movie which reflected this new youth culture. *Die Halbstarcken* starred up-and-coming actor Horst Buchholz, who was given the nickname the “German James Dean.” Though this fifties youth culture was one imported primarily from the United States, and was one, like Mod culture, that had international currency, it tended to foster rebellion for rebellion’s sake. While Mod can also be coded as an anti-mainstream youth culture, it, as we shall see, moved beyond simple youthful defiance—both in Germany and elsewhere. There is no definitive answer as to exactly why this was so, though I would like to suggest a few possible reasons why.<sup>401</sup>

First, the increased accessibility to both international and national media formats that allowed the looks and sounds of Mod to transmit and circulate so extensively was not available until after the peak of the *Halbstarcken*. As suggested by Arthur Marwick’s tome *The Sixties*, more access to accelerating media technologies such as television, long-play (LP) records, transistor radios, and advanced phone systems starting circa 1958 would have allowed for more accessibility of Mod-affiliated images and products in continental Europe.<sup>402</sup> For instance, while the German youth magazine *Bravo* debuted in 1956 and featured rock and roll artists, it remained

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<sup>401</sup> For descriptions of the mid-fifties *Halbstarcken*, see Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 31-70; Sabine von Dirke, *‘All Power to the Imagination!’ The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 22, 24.

<sup>402</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17.

the only one of its kind until almost ten years later with the debuts of *Musikparade* and *OK* in 1964. As we will see later in this chapter, by the mid-sixties there was a far richer variety of national and international teen magazines marketing Mod culture in Germany.

Second, though Mod was a non-conformist youth culture, it did not automatically imply aggressive behavior as the *Halbstarken* image often did. If anything, longhaired Mod boys would be coded as effeminate or untidy, rather than dangerous.<sup>403</sup> This allowed for Mod culture to be a culture that “hid in plain sight.”<sup>404</sup> Mod’s playful fashion was also a more overt stylistic break from the Nazi past, whereas the Rockers’ leather gear, chains, and imposing motorcycles might still imply a somewhat fascistic look and overall thuggish manner to some.

Young people’s search for a clear break from the past, which the Roker lifestyle attempted to achieve, often went hand-in-hand with a myriad of questions and awkward silences between the older and younger generation in the postwar period that no amount of information about the NS-Period and the Holocaust could fully answer. Instead, then, in seeking answers to questions that often would not be even addressed by the parent-generation, youth of the early to mid-sixties instead sought dreams, visions, and alternative views from elsewhere. As 1960s student activist Reiner Langhans would later articulate for a documentary on rock music in Germany, this particular generation had incredibly heavy cultural baggage to carry: “Why were they [the preceding generation] murderers? How could this have happened? Since it was clear to us that this was to be our inheritance, we didn’t just want to accept it the way it was handed to

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<sup>403</sup> For Mod style coded as effeminate, see Karsten Peters, “Ein ganz neues Beatle-Gefühl,” *Deutsche Jugend* 8 (Aug. 1964): 374; “Kommt der Zopf wieder?” *Twen*, Oct. 10, 1965, 62-65; “Jürgen will wie Uschi sein,” *Twen*, Nov. 11, 1966, 55-59.

<sup>404</sup> See Dick Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (New York: Comedia, 1988), 17-36.

us—with silence, with a sense of helplessness—or pretending as if nothing had happened.”<sup>405</sup> While not everyone had been enthusiastic members of the Nazi Party or *Hitler Jugend*, postwar youth could not help but believe that their parents’ generation had been pathologically socialized to valorize lifestyle qualities and perspectives that this generation did not wish to emulate in any way, shape, or form. As historian Axel Schildt writes, “[The generation] that could not remember the ‘awful times’ [of the War and] wanted to claim their own way of life without interference from adult authorities, parents, clergy, or teachers.” They believed that “even after the War, [the adults’] way of thinking was still influenced by the NS-period and could no longer be adhered to as an example of moral authority.”<sup>406</sup> Indeed, the baby boom generation’s critique of their parents’ generation would, in part, take the form of everything from mini-skirts, longer hair, and, by 1968, demonstrations on the streets of Berlin and university campuses across the country.<sup>407</sup>

More so than for previous generations, lifestyle choices and their foci had to switch dramatically from past to present—and even future. If the past could not be healed, then the present had to be every bit as different as possible from what had gone before. A bleak past necessitated that the future could only get better. In this way, although all the nations that participated in World War II had their own debts to settle, the German postwar generation proves a compelling example of the extreme shift in cultural perspective that the Mod period entailed.

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<sup>405</sup> *Pop 2000: 50 Jahre Popmusik und Jugendkultur in Deutschland*, WDR-Germany Folge 3: Das Ende der Unschuld, 1965-1968,” 1999. See also <http://www.wdr.de/tv/pop2000/> (accessed Aug. 1, 2008).

<sup>406</sup> “[die Generation] die die ‘schlechten Zeiten’ selbst nicht mehr buewust miterlebt hatte und für sich eine eigene Lebensweise, frei von der Einmischung durch erwachsenen Autoritäten, Eltern, Geistliche, Lehrer und Lehrherren forderte: Diese hätten ihre Denkmuster aus der NS-Zeit auch in der Nachkriegszeit nicht abgelegt und sein laengst keine moralische Instanz mehr.” Axel Schildt, *Rebellion and Reform: Die Bundesrepublik der Sechzigerjahre* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2005), 86.

<sup>407</sup> See Martin Klimke, “West Germany,” in *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977*, ed. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2008), 97-110; Reinhard Mohr, *Der diskrete Charme der Rebellion. Ein Leben mit den 68ern* (Berlin: WJS, 2008); Norbert Frei, *1968: Jugend Revolte und globaler Protest* (Munich: DtV, 2008).

### 3.3 MOD COMES TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, 1960-1967

Arguably, nowhere was it more important for young people to be considered *modern* than in postwar Germany. In examining the rise of Mod culture in Great Britain, I suggested that Mod was a youthful postwar solution to ongoing tension between the ideal of modernity as democratizing and the actual gritty verities of social class which were influenced by industrialization and urbanization. Similarly, Mod's initial arrival and development in Germany was also linked to nation-specific struggles. Adolf Hitler, during his twelve-year rule, sought to conquer Europe with an Aryan super-race, ignited World War II, and systematically killed more than six million Jews among other "traitors" to the German nation. Just as the War had changed forever the way many Britons thought about how one lives in the modern world, it also made postwar Germans rethink their identities in this same world. If Mod youths in the U.K. aspired to rise above the confines of class, then German Mods sought to transcend the nefarious reputation of their nation's recent past. Thus, as British youth helped define a new so-called "classless" society by the mid-sixties via Mod, young Germans adopted this culture as a cosmopolitan solution for a *nationalistic* problem. As was the case with Great Britain as well, the new "problem-solving" attitude that young German people had, which was influenced by the cataclysmic effects of WWII, also stemmed, as we have seen, from a longer-standing issue in German modernity.

Furthermore, since the Third Reich had already codified most American music as decadent (like Jazz and Swing) during the thirties and forties, the subsequent arrival, acceptance, and appreciation of Anglo-Saxon rock music in the postwar period clearly challenged and attacked, even, previous Nazi sensibilities. The Mod culture that emerged in Germany was also helped by ties established through Allied Occupation from the late forties onward. The British

Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) in northern Germany brought British accents and its accompanying culture of comedy and song to those who listened. The same was true for those in the south who tuned-in to the American Forces Network (AFN). Meanwhile, French savoir faire and existential “angst” was initially exported to Germans through the French sector of Berlin and the southwest of the country through Jean Cocteau films, the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, and the chansons of Edith Piaf, which were most likely heard over the French commercial station Europe no. 1. Just as the Third Reich tried forcing Germans to perceive their culture and identity as superior to others, the postwar occupation and founding of the Federal Republic of Germany (or, “West Germany”) in 1949, was a period where many young Germans saw their culture as inferior to those of the British, American, and French.<sup>408</sup>

Given that the National Socialists created a modern, technologically-advanced nation combined with a romantic attitude that celebrated an imagined home-grown Aryan authenticity, the postwar generation sought to invent a new identity based on foreign realities. While the National Socialists would have certainly viewed their ideology as “utopian,” the original Mod generation of the postwar years (as well as the subsequent generations of German Mods), strongly counteracted these ideas of Nazi modernity, or what Jeffrey Herf calls *reactionary modernism*, with something profoundly forward-thinking.<sup>409</sup> As was the case with the first attempts for a progressive, rather than reactive, modern vision— which Peter Gay and others locate in 1920s Weimar Germany— this period was cosmopolitan in its outlook and was greatly

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<sup>408</sup> Regarding the influence of the BFBS and AFN radios stations, see Detlef Siegfried, *Time is on My Side: Konsum und Politik in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 324-25. In my 2007 interview with Klaus Voormann, Klaus also told me that he often saw French films. Originally from Berlin, his neighborhood became part of the city’s French occupational zone.

<sup>409</sup> Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 2-3.

influenced and transformed by social outsiders.<sup>410</sup> For those who stigmatized Jazz in the late twenties and then through the racial agenda of the Third Reich, this music was maligned not only because it was performed mostly by African-Americans, but also was supposedly marketed by Jews.<sup>411</sup> As we have already seen, the origins of Mod culture in late-fifties Britain drew from the working-class, Jews, Caribbean immigrants, African-American musicians and GIs, beatnik artists, and homosexuals. Thus, those who adopted Mod styles in 1960s Germany were also, often unknowingly, reintroducing both a cosmopolitanism and internationalism that the Nazis linked primarily to the Jewish community they had been violently eliminating from the advent of the Third Reich until the end of World War II.<sup>412</sup>

Mod initially came to Germany in the form of Liverpool-born *Beat-Musik* through the port city of Hamburg. Like most other large cities across the country, Hamburg had been heavily bombed by the Allied Forces during World War II. The July 1943 Royal Air Force bombings alone were so devastating that they killed over 50,000 of the city's residents and left millions homeless. Nonetheless, by the time Beatles arrived in the city for the first time in 1960, the reconstruction of Hamburg was much more complete and impressive than that of their

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<sup>410</sup> See Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); David C. Durst, *Weimar Modernism: Philosophy, Politics, and Culture in Germany, 1918-1933* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2004); and Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>411</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 20.

<sup>412</sup> In the most basic reading of term, cosmopolitanism is a perspective that favors internationalism over nationalist loyalties. For reference to this definition, see Bruce Robbins, "Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 2. Inflammatory speeches given both Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels specifically connect the Jewish Diaspora to cosmopolitanism—a worldview or lifestyle that in its very nature is anti-nationalist. Thus, this people without "a state of their own" are seen as intrinsically harmful to the German State and its people. This sentiment is clearly stated in a speech which Hitler gave in the 1920s. He says, "Internationalism nowadays means nothing but Judaization... the undermining of the Germanic concept of individuality by means of catchwords started a long time ago. Democracy, majority, world-conscience, world-solidarity, world-peace, the international character of art, and the like, disintegrated our racial consciousness." Quoted in Gordon W. Prange, ed. *Hitler's Words: Two Decades of National Socialism, 1923-1943* (Washington, DC: American Council on Public Affairs, 1944), 76. For similar sentiments from Goebbels, see Aristotle Kallis, *Nazi Propaganda and the Second World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 93. In a celebratory rather than defamatory view, cosmopolitanism is equated to twentieth-century Jewish culture in Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

hometown. According to one Beatles biographer, after the group saw the city's lavish townhouses, elegant church spires, and glistening Lake Alster, "what was said [in their mini-bus] that August evening would be echoed many times afterward in varying tones of disbelief: Wasn't this the country that had *lost* the war?"<sup>413</sup>

While Hamburg's postwar condition proved impressive, it was the British who brought with them a dynamic spectrum of new sounds that would captivate local audiences. Hamburg nightclub impresarios such as Bruno Koschmider (the Indra, the Kaiserkeller), Manfred Weißleder (the Star-Club) and Horst Fascher (the Top Ten) booked British solo musicians and bands between 1960 and 1962 to play the bawdy clubs of the city's infamous red-light district, St. Pauli—which is often synonymous with its main thoroughfare—the *Reeperbahn*.<sup>414</sup> Not dissimilar to London's Soho, or the rougher Dock areas in Liverpool, St. Pauli already had a long tradition of housing all kinds of cultural outsiders. Aside from the *Reeperbahn*, the other main street in St. Pauli is *die Große Freiheit* (the Great Freedom) which was so named in the seventeenth century because of the area's religious tolerance and allowance of free trade. However, given the district's lengthy history of prostitution, connotations of the street's name have often been interpreted differently.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Regarding the bombing and reconstruction of German cities and Hamburg in particular, see Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3-17; Uwe Bahnsen and Kerstin von Stürmer, *Die Stadt, die Auferstand: Hamburgs Wiederaufbau 1948-1960* (Hamburg: Convent, 2005), 213-214; Alan Clayson, *Hamburg: The Cradle of British Rock* (London: Sanctuary, 1997), 81; Gould, *Can't Buy Me Love*, 79. The quote comes from Phillip Norman, *Shout!: The Beatles in Their Generation* (1981; New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 87.

<sup>414</sup> The important roles of both Weißleder and Fascher in bringing British beat music to Germany are documented in the following texts: Günter Zint, *Große Freiheit 39: Vom Beat zum Bums vom Starclub zum Salambo* (Munich: Heyne, 1987), 23-47; Hans-Jürgen Klitsch, *Shakin' All Over: Die Beat-Musik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1963-1967* (Frankfurt: Highcastle, 2000), 31-34; Ulf Krüger, "Mr. Beat—Manfred Weißleder and the Star-Club," in *The Hamburg Sound: Beatles, Beat, und Große Freiheit*, ed. Ulf Krüger und Utwin Pelc (Hamburg: Ellert and Richter, 2007), 50-55.

<sup>415</sup> For the history and misunderstandings of the name "Große Freiheit," see Ulf Krüger, *Beatles Guide Hamburg* (Hamburg: Europa, 2001), 15-16.



The city-state of Hamburg was always the most famous port city of Germany because of its role in forming the Hanseatic trading league in the thirteenth century.<sup>416</sup> As an entrepôt for hundreds of years, Hamburg enjoyed a reputation similar to that of Liverpool—which, not coincidentally, had much trade with the city by the 1800s.<sup>417</sup> By the early nineteenth century St. Pauli’s reputation as a pleasure district was firmly in place. After the 1961 building of the Berlin Wall divided the former capital, Hamburg also distinguished itself as the Federal Republic’s largest city.<sup>418</sup> Even in the 1960s, St. Pauli’s streets were often dominated by sailors looking for a good time while on leave. A parallel scene existed there similar to London’s Soho, where “intellectuals, artists, and bohemians were attracted to this district.” It was in this mostly seedy, but diverse district, that even by the early sixties, few “respectable” Hamburgers would walk its streets. While St. Pauli brothels continued to thrive, some neighborhood business owners sought other ways to profit from foreign and German pleasure-seekers. Enter British rock music.<sup>419</sup>

Tony Sheridan, who had already achieved minor success at the 2Is Coffee House in London and on the TV show *Oh Boy!* in the late fifties, was one of the first to perform there in 1960 and quickly became a local favorite. Through the band’s first manager Allan Williams’s German contacts, the Beatles began playing St. Pauli later that year. At first, the Beatles were merely one of several Liverpool bands such as The Searchers, Gerry and The Pacemakers, King Size Taylor & the Dominoes, or Cliff Bennett & the Rebel Rousers, who had musical stints in Hamburg during this time. An all-female outfit from Liverpool appropriately called the

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<sup>416</sup> For historical overviews of Hamburg’s important role in the Hanseatic league and the culture of the port see, Philippe Dollinger, *The German Hansa* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970); Edelgard Simon, *Hamburg: A Gateway for the World, 1189-1989* (London: Lloyd’s of London Press, 1989). See also Gould, *Can’t Buy Me Love*, 79-80 and Clayson, *Hamburg*, 19.

<sup>417</sup> Graeme J. Milne, *Trade and Traders in Mid-Victorian Liverpool* (Liverpool, Eng.: University of Liverpool Press, 2000), 44, 61.

<sup>418</sup> “Hamburg Stakes,” *Time*, Nov. 9, 1953 at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,819162,00.html> (accessed July 18, 2008).

<sup>419</sup> René Martens and Günter Zint, *St. Pauli: Kiez, Kult, Alltag* (Hamburg: Die Hanse, 2000), 11.

Liverbirds also attained more success in Germany than they ever had in England. Because of the group's Hamburg tenure, the Liverbirds acquired the management of Star-Club owner Manfred Weißleder and even toured Japan by 1966.<sup>420</sup> While the presence of these various British bands was important to young people in Germany, the Beatles' eventual fame made Mod culture clearly more visible—even to mainstream youth. The relationship between the Beatles and Hamburg was also a symbiotic one. As the Beatles' sound and style matured in Germany, so did Mod youth culture in their native Britain. The Beatles' rigorous performance schedule is often cited as a key component to their later success and the group's first single, "My Bonnie" (with Tony Sheridan)—the same one that would soon be all the buzz in Brian Epstein's music store in Liverpool—was recorded during this time. As John Lennon would say later, "I was born in Liverpool, but I grew up in Hamburg."<sup>421</sup>

The Beatles' first concerts took place at a rather small venue—a sometime-strip club called the Indra at the far-end of the *Große Freiheit* (fig. 12)

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<sup>420</sup> Because of the rarity of all-girl bands in the early-to-mid sixties—in Germany and elsewhere—the Liverbirds received a decent amount of publicity in various teen magazines during this period. Certainly due to management by Weißleder, the Liverbirds are on the March 1965 cover of the *Star-Club News*. See also "Beatles Mädchen," *Bravo*, Nov. 29- Dec. 5, 1964, 52; "Liverbirds: Wir lieben die Germans," *OK*, June 13, 1966, 30; "Bravo Stars von Heute: Die Liverbirds," *Bravo*, Nov. 8, 1966, 32-33. Reference to their tour in Japan is found in Brigitte Rohkohl, *Rock Frauen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1979), 31-32; Klitsch, *Shakin' All Over*, 120-121.

<sup>421</sup> For the recording of "My Bonnie" in Hamburg, see Rüdiger Articus, Gerhard Beier, Lothar Krüger, Ulf Krüger, Klaus-Christian Schulze-Schlichtegroll, *Die Beatles in Harburg* (Hamburg: Christians, 1996). John Lennon qtd. in Damien Nowicki, "Townes for Trying Out [Hamburg]," *Metro*, available at [http://www.metro.co.uk/travel/article.html?in\\_article\\_id=42791&in\\_page\\_id=5](http://www.metro.co.uk/travel/article.html?in_article_id=42791&in_page_id=5) (accessed Aug. 8, 2008).



Figure 12 The Indra Club today, Hamburg, 2007. Photo by author

Through three lengthy engagements between 1960 and 1962, the Beatles performed from 8 p.m to 3 a.m. every night. From the Indra they then moved to the larger Kaiserkeller, and, eventually, the more prestigious Top Ten Club, opened by Horst Fascher, which was right on the *Reeperbahn*. On April 13, 1962, Manfred Weißleder's Star-Club—which would become the most well-known German club during the course of the decade—opened with the Beatles on the bill as well.<sup>422</sup> The reasoning for the influx of British, rather than American musicians, at first

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<sup>422</sup> Ulf Krüger, "Hamburg Beat City," in *The Hamburg Sound: Beatles, Beat, und Große Freiheit*, ed. Ortwin Pelc and Ulf Krüger (Hamburg: Ellert and Richter, 2006), 18; Krüger, "Beatles Venues in Hamburg," in *The Hamburg Sound: Beatles, Beat, und Große Freiheit*, 27; Zint, *Große Freiheit* 39, 19-20.

was simply economic. As English clearly had become *the* language of the rock music genre, it was not so much a matter of where the musicians came from, but the fact that they could deliver the goods via the music's lingua franca.<sup>423</sup> Though American acts (and even Japanese band, the Tigers) would come to the Star-Club by the mid-sixties, the initial roster of performers spoke with a British lilt.

As alluded to in the last chapter, the roots of the Beatles' own Mod-tinged style of Pierre Cardin collarless suits and pudding-bowl haircuts circa 1963 are linked to the band's time spent in Hamburg (fig. 13).



**Figure 13** Cigarette ad, mid-sixties. Courtesy of the University of Hamburg library.

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<sup>423</sup> There are many contemporary accounts, later autobiographical writing, and cultural histories that address the presence and influence of English music and style on German youth during the early sixties. For contemporary accounts, see Max Scheler, "Beatles wie Sand am Meer," *Der Stern*, Apr. 26, 1964, 38-48; Karsten Peters, "Ein ganz neues Beatle-Gefuehl," *Deutsche Jugend* 12 (1964): 373-374; Peter Nimmermann, "Beat und Beatlokale in Berlin," *Deutsche Jugend* 14 (1966): 495-504; For later reflections, see Krüger and Pelc, *The Hamburg Sound*; Heinrich Groessel, "Die Beat-Musik: Versuch einer Analyse," *Neue Sammlung* 7 (1967): 240-253; Schildt, *Rebellion and Reform*, Achim Reichel, "Rolling home zum Rock-n-Roll," *Rock Session 1*, 125-151; Uschi Obermeier, *Das Wilde Leben* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe, 2000); Dieter Beckmann and Klaus Martens, *Star-Club* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1982); and Zimt, *Große Freiheit* 39.

The now-legendary and much-documented story of the Beatles' transition from Rocker-esque to Mod-ish style centers upon an encounter between some German art students and the then scruffy upstart Liverpool band. The upper-middle-class students named Astrid Kirchherr, Klaus Voormann, and Jürgen Vollmer, who befriended and influenced the Beatles during their German engagements, encapsulated all the continental flair and élan that British Mods wished for. Unbeknownst initially to John, Paul, George, Stuart, or Pete, Kirchherr, Voormann, and Vollmer were part of the *Exi* clique in Hamburg. The *Exis* (short for *Existentialisten*) were a subculture that touted existentialist leanings, watched French and other continental films, wore a lot of fitted, black clothing, frequented cafes, and favored Jazz. With many of the same interests, the Exis could be seen the stylistic German cousins of the British Modernists. Like the Modernists, they sought and mimicked the savoir faire of French and Italian culture alongside the free-flowing sounds of Modern Jazz. Paul McCartney saw them as bridging Mod and Rocker style. In the 1995 *Beatles Anthology* he says, "They weren't really Rockers or Mods—like we'd seen. They were something in the middle. They called themselves 'Exis' (Existentialists). They were art students, really."<sup>424</sup> While the British Modernists, and later, Mods, were attempting to flee a repressive class system, the German Exis were trying to escape a newly-tainted German identity as they created this new youth culture style. Hamburg native, former Beat musician and current television show host Kuno Dreysee (b. 1945), remembered thinking "Exi" was really the same thing as Mod, only the German version of it.

For me Mod was more... we called it 'Exi.' Existentialist: 'Exi...' and from Jazz... [and] 'Parka' was also a term. Parkas and a little bit...well, also short hair, actual, short hair, because there were actually already Rockers with their ducktails and pompadours... leatherjackets: primitive. Rockers were primitive and we, we were elite... we were secondary school students. We played Jazz. I don't think that this 'Mod and Rocker' expression... well, maybe [I had heard] Rod Stewart was a Mod, or something like that...

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<sup>424</sup> *Beatles Anthology*, DVD, directed by Geoff Wonfor and Bob Smeaton (London: Apple Corp, 1996).

someone who distinguished himself... but it was more 'Exi and Rocker.' I would equate [Exi] with the Mods.<sup>425</sup>

Thus, the high-brow Exis were foils to German Rockers, just as the Mods were to those in England.<sup>426</sup>

While this German Exi-clique of three—Kirchherr, Voormann, and Vollmer—became famous, in part, due to their formative roles in Beatles lore, countless other young Germans began frequenting St. Pauli clubs to see and interact with their favorite foreign bands. In diary excerpts from between 1965 and 1967 a young woman identified only as “Gesine” documents her struggle to break free from the confines of her provincial north German town and find something more in Hamburg. She describes her town as “population 8000, all confessions, fat women, workers, farmers, priests.” She continues that in order to escape via the train station you “have to run the gauntlets, passing gossips dressed in aprons. It’s the haircuts [that are bothersome]: too long. The skirts: too short.”<sup>427</sup> Gesine’s semi-regular jaunts to Hamburg seemed filled with experiences that were the exact opposite of what she was living back home: the city represented the new and exciting while her *Heimat* symbolized the everyday and humdrum.

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<sup>425</sup> Kuno Dreysee, oral history interview with author, digital recording, K&K Center-of-Beat, Hamburg, Mar. 20, 2007, DCUP.

<sup>426</sup> For reference to Kirchherr, Voormann, and Vollmer’s friendship with the Beatles, their “Exi” clique, and the style’s influence on the Beatles, see Klaus Voormann, *Warum spielst du Imagine nicht auf dem weissen Klavier, John’: Erinnerungen an die Beatles und viele andere Freunde* (Munich: Heyne, 2003), 35-43; Ulf Krüger, *Beatles in Hamburg: Ein kleines Lexikon* (Hamburg: Ellert & Richter, 2007), 38-9; Clayson, *Hamburg*, 144-6; Astrid Kirchherr, “The Last Word,” *Mojo*, Special Edition, *Days of Beatlemania* Oct. 2002, 146; Astrid Kirchherr, “Forward,” in *Read the Beatles* ed., June Skinner Sawyers (New York: Penguin, 2006), xv-xvi; Astrid Kirchherr, “Vorwort,” in *Beatles Guide Hamburg*, ed. Ulf Krüger (Hamburg: Europa Verlag, 2001), 7-8; Ulf Krüger, “Wie der Beatles-Haarschnitt entstand: Interview mit Astrid Kirchherr,” in *The Hamburg Sound: Beatles, Beat und Große Freiheit*, 62-4; Jürgen Vollmer, *The Beatles in Hamburg* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2004), 5-26; Mark Ellen, “Ein, Zwei, Drei, Vier!” *Mojo*, Special Edition, *Days of Beatlemania*, Oct. 2002, 15-17; Siegfried, *Time Is on My Side*, 219-220; Max Scheler und Hans Krammer, “Alle Beatles sind schon da,” *Der Stern*, Apr. 26, 1964, 42-44; “Beatles: Vier Liverpudler,” *Der Spiegel*, Feb. 26, 1964, 61.

<sup>427</sup> Burkhard and Gesine [only names given], *Aftermath: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen über die Musikclubszene auf St. Pauli* [English translation by Rainer E. Blöcker] (Hamburg: Pan-Foto, e.V. Bildarchiv, 1966), 5.

These sentiments come across in her diary as she describes seeing British and German bands playing in the St. Pauli district—bands like the Remo Four from Liverpool, the Kinks from London, and the Rattles from Hamburg. Like many of her British Mod counterparts, Gesine found excitement in the burgeoning youth-oriented nightlife of the mid-sixties, but there is something else, too. For the young German, listening to English-language music and spending time with British musicians were ways to differentiate oneself from a much maligned nationalistic past. To align oneself with the “British,” or to identify as “continental” or “European,” rather than solely as German was presumably quite attractive. As contemporary historian Axel Schildt astutely observes, “There was perhaps no other Western European country [in the postwar period] in which school children and students were as enthusiastic about Europe as in Germany.”<sup>428</sup> For youths not yet able to travel outside of Germany, larger cities like Hamburg became gateways to a greater European and cosmopolitan experiences.

Gesine continues, “I hated the white table-clothes [sp.], all the sweet talk of my folks, filled with good intensions. I hated the school and everything connected with it. Jumping-off the bridge would have brought something new, but fear and the hope of experiencing ‘something new’ still in my life prevented me from doing so, and I wasn’t mis[led] by this hope... it came true in the streets of St. Pauli.”<sup>429</sup> By the mid-sixties, she and many other young people walked willingly past painted ladies and peep show windows just to find a little respite of liberation and international flair. It was here that they might be able to free themselves of the current German society which was made up of lace-curtained rooms, mid-day coffee klatsches, and uncomfortable silences they could not wish away.

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<sup>428</sup> Axel Schildt, “Across the Border: West German Youth Travel to Western Europe” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, ed. Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 150.

<sup>429</sup> Burkhard and Gesine, *Aftermath*, 3.

These diary entries mirror a greater trend among German young people of the postwar period to want to distance themselves from a previous generation that they saw as not only stuffy, provincial, or conservative due to their upbringing and age, but also as a group suspiciously eyed given the recent NS past. Was this not the generation who had either supported Adolf Hitler's anti-Semitism, militarism, genocide, and aspirations of "*Deutschland über Alles*" in young adulthood, or marched proudly as part of Hitler Youth? Thus, youth rebellion in Germany took on an added layer of intergenerational complexity not found in other western nations during the postwar period. In their efforts to be, as much as possible, direct opposites of their parents, postwar German youths felt that they had to look actively outside of their country for an antithesis to the future.

In his broken English, a young dockworker named Harald Mau (Hamburg, b.1945) would try enthusiastically to make contact with these ultra-cool, near other-worldly Britons. At the Star-Club he saw performers such as the Remo Four, the Liverbirds, and his particular favorite Beryl Marsden—a singer whose vocal style was akin to the soon-to-be-more-famous Lulu ("To Sir with Love"). In encountering young Brits, Harald told me how they broke every stereotype he heard from his older work colleagues:

I tried not to bring politics up at work with my colleagues, because I had to work with them tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. I was a bit careful there. But they really spoke very snidely about the English—the older people—the younger ones did not. That was for us... it was a departure. Everything was new to us... you can't forget that. One didn't see the English necessarily as friends, but you just accepted them. Because I think we said, even then, that we don't have anything to do with the past. Maybe one thought about it, maybe one didn't worry about it at all and just took it as a given. They're there and they're making nice music, so they're nice people. It doesn't interest us what their parents did. I want to have fun here and now and hear good music, right?<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> "Ich habe zum Möglichkeit versucht das Thema Politik überhaupt nicht anzureisen mit den Kollegen den ich musste schon Morgen und Übermorgen auch mit meine Kollegen arbeiten. Da habe ich schon ein bisschen aufgepasst. Aber die haben sehr abfällig—insbesondere ja über die Engländer gesprochen—die elteren—die jüngeren sowieso nicht. Das war für uns, wir waren im Aufbruch auch. Alles war neu für uns—dass war Alles neu..."



Though Harald interacted with scores of *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) from Greece, Italy, and Yugoslavia on the docks, his first leisure-time encounters with foreigners were with British musicians at Hamburg clubs. These friendly, casual meetings between young Germans and Britons did more than these youths knew in establishing an amicable relationship between people from countries that, just one generation before, had been at war. In describing this new dynamic, German historian Gerhard Linne suggests that “The most joyful characteristic of the German postwar [youth]... is their self-evident internationalism. After twelve years of isolation within a swastika cage they finally had contact again with the outside world. It was like an epiphany. There were ‘others,’ and they were people like them. From a critical and sober point of view they knew that there is no such thing as conflict-free togetherness. But, there is the possibility of getting a little bit closer and... making the world a better place.”<sup>431</sup> A similar sentiment comes across in photographer Astrid Kirchherr’s (Hamburg, b. 1938) memories of first getting to know the members of the Beatles. In retrospect, she now understands the nature of her interactions with the young Liverpoolians in broader, historical terms:

Because it was a relatively short time after the end of the Second World War and because we were citizens of two nations that had recently been enemies, we faced each other at first with a few prejudices and misconceptions. John, Paul, George, Stu, and Pete, for example, would have been more likely to expect a strapping, red-cheeked maiden with straw-blond braids and a dirndl dress than me—a self-assured, short-haired young photographer wearing a leather suit and driving my own convertible. We, on the other hand, remembered the ‘Tommies’—British soldiers—who had occupied Hamburg in 1945. These prejudices soon evaporated and led to a give-and-take that was as intense as

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dass darf man nicht vergessen. Man hat die Engländer nicht als Freunde gesehen aber sie hat sie einfach akzeptiert. Denn ich denke wir haben damals schon gesagt, was haben wir mit der Vergangenheit zu tun? Vielleicht hat man dass gedacht, vielleicht hat man überhaupt keine Gedanken gemacht und dass einfach so als gegeben genommen. Die sind da und die machen doch schöne Musik, also sind dass nette Menschen. Und was deren Eltern gemacht haben, dass interessiert mich nicht. Ich will hier und heute Spaß haben und gute Musik hören, ne?” Harald Mau, oral history interview by author, digital recording, Mau residence, Hamburg, Germany, Mar. 22, 2007, DCUP.

<sup>431</sup> Linne, *Jugend in Deutschland*, 197.

it gets. We had so many common interests—music, literature, film, and art; we talked heatedly about God and the world.<sup>432</sup>

Kirchherr, who was engaged to “fifth Beatle” Stu Sutcliffe before his untimely death from a brain hemorrhage in 1962, subsequently married Hamburg-based beat drummer and Liverpudlian Gibson Kemp in 1967. Though divorced from Kemp, the two are still close friends and her connection to the British community in Hamburg remains strong to this day. Kirchherr often helps Kemp and his wife Tina at their English pub in the Rotherbaum neighborhood—a favorite haunt of British expatriates living in Hamburg (fig. 14).



**Figure 14 Gibson Kemp and Astrid Kirchherr, Hamburg, 2007**

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<sup>432</sup> Kirchherr, “Forward,” xv.

Kirchherr's pivotal part in emergent Mod culture both in the U.K. (via the Beatles newly developed style) and in Germany has long been a story mostly only known to people familiar with Beatles history. In 1994, however, a wider audience became familiar with her influential role through Iain Softley's film *Backbeat*.<sup>433</sup>

Kirchherr's relationships with Sutcliffe, and later with Kemp, were not the only British-German romances to blossom. It seems inevitable—given musicians' long-term residencies in Hamburg—that at least a few friendships between British musicians and German women ended-up this way (for instance, British musicians Tony Sheridan and Ted “Kingsize” Taylor also married Germans). It was another point in which generational attitudes proved different. As Gibson Kemp (Liverpool/Hamburg, b. 1945) told me, “When I rang up and said I'm getting married to a German [my grandmother] pulled a bit of the ‘Don't you remember the War?’ sort of thing.”<sup>434</sup> The significance of these cross-cultural interactions was not lost on Star-Club impresario Manfred Weißleder, who saw an even greater importance in them.<sup>435</sup> Writing most of the *Star-Club News* articles himself, he touts in the August 1964 issue that his upcoming international rock festival hopes to foster even more understanding among young people. He writes:

Through [this festival] our intended result is that young people from different countries get to know each other, become friends, and keep in contact. Music is the ideal

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<sup>433</sup> *Backbeat*, DVD, directed by Iain Softley (1994; New York: Polygram, 2005).

<sup>434</sup> Gibson Kemp, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Apr. 17, Kemp's English Pub, Hamburg; on file in DCUP.

<sup>435</sup> While Astrid Kirchherr politely declined to give me an interview for this project, I often saw her when I visited Kemp's English Pub in Hamburg between April and September 2007. She happened to be there the night of my going-away party on September 6, 2007 and kindly wished me well for the project and for my future endeavors as a professor. For more documentation on her relationship to The Beatles, Stuart Sutcliffe, and Gibson Kemp, see Spitz, *The Beatles*, 222; “Bravo Musik: Beat-Hochzeit in Hamburg,” *Bravo*, Mar. 6, 1967, 24; “Astrid weinte vor Freude,” *Musikparade*, June 6, 1966, 1. Regarding other long-term relationships and marriages between German and British people during this period, see “Wie angle ich mir einen englischen Beatboy?” *OK*, Feb. 7, 1966. The bassist of the Liverbirds, Mary McGlory, also married the second lead singer of the Rattles, Frank Dostal, see “Biographie Frank Dostal,” *Gema* at <http://www.gema.de/der-verein-gema/organisation/aufsichtsrat/biografiefrankdostal/> (accessed June 30, 2008); Rohkohl, *Rock Frauen*, 32-33.

prerequisite for such efforts. Proof of this claim was the Hamburg visit of the Liverpool Cavern Club and the plan to follow with a trip to Liverpool. Since then, there has been a spirited letter-exchange between young people in England and their Hamburg penpals, which is dutifully being tended to. Liverpool is a city that was nearly destroyed by the German Luftwaffe in the last war. That's why it is noteworthy and satisfying to us that Liverpool's Lord Mayor said, at a reception in our honor, that this kind of acquaintance has been more effective than professional diplomacy. It is because this kind of acquaintance happens person to person and does not come about through professional obligations.<sup>436</sup>

As his words declare so idealistically, Weißleder saw the diplomatic potential possible through the seemingly apolitical world of popular youth culture. Through a common interest in music and fashion, the first transmissions of Mod culture filtered into sixties Germany.

Just as the Beatles and other British groups learned about the *Exi* clique and other aspects of German culture by spending time there, German youths began to hear about what was going on in England from the bands from there. Klaus Voormann told me the first time he heard the word "Mod:" "Yes, I heard this [in Hamburg] because they [the Beatles] were saying 'Mods and Rockers' and we were saying 'Exis and Rockers.' I think the Germans were always more orientated toward France."<sup>437</sup> Voormann's claim is based on initial experiences as part of Hamburg's French-loving Exis and also as someone who grew up in Berlin's French occupational zone. However, at this time, a shifting orientation towards British pop culture was soon clear in many facets of German youth culture. By 1964, with the Beatles' success in both the U.K. and the United States, "Mod" became the word to describe the new youth styles in music and dress. In Germany, however, the word "beat" was used instead. For instance, in Hans-Jürgen Klitsch's book on Beat called *Shakin' All Over: Die Beatmusik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1963-67*, the exact items that the author describes as "Beat fashion," such as

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<sup>436</sup> Manfred Weißleder, "International Rock-Band-Festival," *Star-Club News*, Aug. 1964, 2. In 1966, a similar festival welcomed acts from Yugoslavia, the U.S., Belgium, and Poland. See "Wilkommen in Hamburg: zum Internationalen Folk- und Beat-Festival," *OK*, June 30, 1966, 23.

<sup>437</sup> Voormann, Interview.

*Beatstiefel* [Cuban-heeled, Chelsea boots] and *Pilzkopfrisur* [mop-top] for men—and “*charlestonähnliche Kittel*“ [1920s style fashions] and “*weiße Lederstiefelchen*” [white leather go-go boots] for women—would have been labeled *Mod* in Britain (and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the United States).<sup>438</sup> The success of the Beatles and Beat paved the way for the German marketing of the Mod lifestyle that manifested itself in print, radio, television, and film.

In print, magazines *Ok*, *Musik Parade*, *Twen*, and to a lesser degree, the more mainstream *Bravo*, provided information on emergent Mod culture.<sup>439</sup> Generally when the word Mod was mentioned in German print media (mainstream and youth magazines or books) in the mid-sixties, it was most often in connection with youths and fashion in Britain—marking it as somewhat separate from the current youth phenomenon in the Federal Republic. One such example is a May 1964 *Spiegel* article that focuses on the “Mods and Rockers” in England and features it under its “*Ausland*” (overseas) section.<sup>440</sup> An August 1965 *Star-Club-News* reader-written “Scene Report” of London describes a *mélange* of youth cultures—primarily focusing on the Mods and Rockers. Mods are depicted as “Mods: shortened from Modern-Boys. They are youths that separate themselves from Rockers and Jazz fans through their choice of playful, romantic, super-modern, or old-fashioned clothing, their preference of music, group mentality, etc... Mods are truly the most unusual of the British youth cliques.”<sup>441</sup> Fashion articles in *Bravo* between 1965 and 1966—the first featured the Rolling Stones—also mention Mod in

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<sup>438</sup> Klitsch, *Shakin' All Over*, 89-91. This is also evident in a myriad of magazine articles and advertisements found in both teen and mainstream magazines such as *Der Spiegel* and *Der Stern* starting in 1964 that feature other trademark Mod fashions such as mini-skirts, pop and op art, and space-age fashions. Examples of these can be found in “The Young London-Look: Die Fahnen hoch,” [Carnaby Street fashions], *OK*, Jan. 20, 1966, 28-31; “Mini-Mode & Musik,” [mini skirts and dresses], *Bravo*, Mar. 13, 1967; 46-47; “Bravo-Modetip: Schwarz-weißer Chic,” [black and white geometric, op-art clothes], *Bravo*, May 10-16, 1964, 18-19; “Jetzt kommt die Op Zeit,” [op art fashions], *OK*, Apr. 4, 1966, 54-55; “Top Teen Mode,” [op art fashions], *OK*, Mar. 14, 1966, 43-44.

<sup>439</sup> Siegfried, *Time in on my Side*, 280-1.

<sup>440</sup> “England: Halbstarke-Gutes Gefühl,” *Der Spiegel* May 11, 1964, 113-114.

<sup>441</sup> “Leser-Report London: Mods, Rockers, Beatniks, Spießer!” *Star-Club News*, Aug. 1965, 25.

conjunction with British fashions. A 1965 book about the Beatles, written by a German expatriate living outside of London, devoted a whole chapter to Mods and Rockers. Interestingly, she describes Mods as people who think of themselves and the “*Menschen von Morgen*” (“the people of tomorrow”) who are actually middle-class teens with avant-garde aspirations.<sup>442</sup>

Even so, it was also by this time, and within the pages of these very same magazines, that some young people began describing themselves as Mods. In December 1965 and January 1966 issues of *OK* magazine’s “Ok Rendezvous” personals section, readers who described themselves as Mods looked for like-minded pen-pals. An article in the October 10, 1965 issue of *Twen* added to the now already ubiquitous debate about long hair on teenage boys. A nineteen-year-old student named Gundi explains why he wears long hair:

Last summer I let my hair grow long. I like it like that way. However, it’s not the Beatles that I emulate, but much more so the Mods. That’s why I try as much as possible to dress my best. I especially love jewelry. I always wear rings and bracelets. My school director is really against it and I often have to go see him. He calls me a total idiot and a Neanderthal. I personally think that long hair in our age is okay. Most girls like the long hair...I’d like to study architecture later. If my work requires that I cut my hair, of course I’ll cut it.<sup>443</sup>

The accompanying picture of Gundi shows him wearing Sta-Prest-type, light colored trousers, a white shirt without a tie, and a black blazer. Here he does differentiate his style from the Beatles, implying that some sixties self-identified Mods did not necessarily put Mod and Beat together in the same category. Although these few examples point to the fact that, for a short

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<sup>442</sup> “*Bravo* Modetip: Schicker Besuch bei den Stones,” *Bravo*, Dec. 6, 1965, 64-65; “*Bravo* Modetip: Chic von der Alster,” Aug. 29, 1966, 30; Christiane Ehrhardt, *Die Beatles: Fabelwesen unserer Zeit?* (Diessen: Tucher, 1965), 102-103.

<sup>443</sup> “Letzten Sommer in den Ferien habe ich meine Haare lang wachsen lassen, so gefallen sie mir. Es sind aber nicht die Beatles, denen ich nacheifere, sondern vielmehr die Mods. Deshalb versuch ich auch, mich so gut wie möglich anzuziehen. Meine besondere Liebe gilt dem Schmuck. Ich trage immer Ringe und Armkettchen... In der Schule ist nur der stellvertretende Direktor wirklich dagegen. Ich musste schon öfter zu ihm. Er nett mich ‘Vollidiot’ und ‘Steinzeitmensch’...Ich persönlich bin der Ansicht, lange Haar sind in unserem Alter okay. Den meisten Mädchen gefallen die langen Haare... Ich möchte Architektur studieren. Wenn ich im Beruf sehe, dass ich die Haare fallen lassen muss, dann fallen sie selbstverständlich.” “Kommt der Zopf wieder?“, 65.

time, some German youths in the sixties were in fact labeling themselves as Mods, some current Mods do not believe Mod, as they understand it, existed during this time. Dietmar (“Didi”) Haarcke (b. 1970, fig. 15), who discovered the Hamburg Mod scene in the mid-eighties and has DJed events and produced the *New Explosion* “modzine,” had this to say about the subject:

Naturally, one has to say that thanks to the Star-Club, or the Top Ten, or the Indra. Hamburg was the Beat Mecca from the beginning to the end of the sixties. One always hears how all the bands who played here in the sixties thought Hamburg was the best, the most interesting...the most super. There was naturally a fascination. But there was no Mod scene here in the sixties. I mean, my father, who was always in the Star-Club, he was a bit more of a Rock and Roller. Not a Rocker, per se, but he had a pompadour but no leather jacket...but looked more Rock and Roll-ish. And Mods... they didn't exist then. There were the *Exis* (the Existentialists) who thought everything was interesting and read books. My dad told me that that existed, but the people in the Star-Club... when you see photos today... when you look at the girls in the photos... they look great. The guys are all wearing suits, so that's like a Mod event, but that was just normal for youth back then.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> “Also, natürlich war die Beat-Musik, dank der Star-Clubs, oder Top Ten, oder Indra... also Anfang bis Ende der Sechziger war dass ja hier in Hamburg das Beat-Mekka, muss man sagen. Man hört immer auch alle Bands die hier in den Sechzigern gespielt haben... Hamburg war für die dass grösste, interessanteste, und tollste. Ich meine, eine Faszination war natürlich da. Aber, also es gab in den Sechzigern gab es eigentlich keine richtige Mod-Szene hier. Ich meine, mein Vater, der immer in Star-Club war, der war eintlich mehr, mehr so ein bisschen ein Rock ,n' Roller. Also, kein „Rocker,“ aber er hatte halt eine Tolle, keine Lederjacke... aber eher in einer rockigeren, Rock ,n' Rolligeren Ecke, und Mods, den... dass gab früher nicht. Da waren halt die *Exis* (die Existentialisten) die Alles so alles irgendwie sehr intessant sahen und eher mal Bücher gelesen haben. Das hat mir mein Vater erzählt dass es schon gab, aber dass waren...die waren Leute die waren nie im Star-Club. Also auch wenn man heutzutage die Bilder sieht... also man sieht, hey, die Mädels da im Star-Club in die Bilder...die sehen alle super aus. Und die Typen in Anzuge... dass ist so wie an einer Mod-Veranstaltung. Aber dass waren mehr so die normale Jugend, einfach.” Dietmar Haarcke, oral history interview by the author, digital recording, Haarcke residence, Hamburg, Germany, Oct. 19, 2006; on file in DCUP.



**Figure 15 Didi Haarcke and girlfriend Steffi, May 2008, Photo by author.**

In Didi's estimation, then, a proto-Mod community existed *de facto* because what he recognizes as Mod style *today* is present in images he has seen of the Star-Club crowds from the 1960s. However, he does not see this as a real Mod scene because he does not think most teenagers then specifically or intentionally identified themselves as Mods in a scene with that label. They were simply going along with the current fashion, which was—whether they called it that or not—indeed Mod.

As expressed in this chapter so far, direct contact between young Britons and Germans through Anglo-American rock music began primarily in Hamburg's St. Pauli. West Berlin also had some foreign influences on everyday life since the western part of the city remained divided into British, American, and French sectors during this time. Given foreign influences in these cities, how did the rest of West Germany fare in the face of the mid-sixties *mod-ification*? As it turns out, already as early as 1964, with the increasing commercialization of Mod youth culture both in and outside of England, no German town seemed too small or remote not to witness stylistic changes in its youth. Though "long-haired" male youths, in their attempts to follow Mod



fashion, were often the target of provincial small town attitudes, the influence of British beat music through live or mediated encounters, could not be held at bay. Nonetheless, chilling and extreme adult attitudes towards such youths could still be found in Germany. As reported as late as 1969, a disgruntled adult from the northern city of Braunschweig said of long hair: “That didn’t exist when Adolf was around!” In documentary footage from the mid-sixties, dowdily-attired, middle-aged Germans voice similar sentiments. One man even suggests that internment in a “camp” would do these wayward teenagers a world of good. Clearly, the denazification of *some* Germans during the Allied Occupation had never taken root.<sup>445</sup> These attitudes of some older Germans proves all the more why the adoption of this foreign-born style was not only an appealing, but necessary way for young Germans to distance themselves from the cultural legacy of National Socialism.

As shown by the impact of British bands in Hamburg, live encounters between British and German young people were an important aspect of transmitting Mod style and culture to this country. Eventually, both foreign and local beat bands played nearly every larger and smaller town in Germany, giving the chance, for instance, for teenagers in the medium-sized industrial towns of Recklinghausen or Krefeld to see bands like the Kinks, the Liverbirds, or the Boots (from Berlin).<sup>446</sup> According to one German Beat music chronicler, over six hundred youth-oriented music venues existed in Germany by 1966: from Danish-border-city Flensburg’s

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<sup>445</sup> Andrea Margarete, Hans Georg Buchholz, and Lutz Rössner, “Jugend in Beat-Lokalen,” *Deutsche Jugend* 17 (1969): 546; see also “Claudia Antwortet: Zum Thema ‘Lange Haare,’” *OK*, Dec. 27, 1965, 42-43.

<sup>446</sup> For a look at the beat scene in Berlin, see Erko Sturm, *...And the Beat Goes on..Die Berliner Musikszene in den sechziger Jahren* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2004), 50-59, 61, 73. For an extensive write-up on the first Kinks show and also performances of other British bands in Recklinghausen, see Horst D. Mannel and Rainer Obeling, *Beat Geschichte(n) im Revier* (Recklinghausen: Journal-Verlag, 1993), 49-54, 34 (the Leopards), 43-47 (the Liverbirds). For similar accounts in the Ruhr Valley city of Krefeld, see Wolfgang Helfeier, Waldo Kapenkiel, Ulrich Pudelko, and Hans Rommerskirchen, *Wer Beatet Mehr? Die Live-Beat-Szene der 60er Jahre in Krefeld* (Krefeld: Leporello, 2006), 8-9, 12-13. Like in the U.K., nostalgic websites about the sixties music scene have been created for German audiences. For example, *Cuxhaven '66* at [www.cuxhaven-beat.de](http://www.cuxhaven-beat.de) (accessed June 18, 2008).

“Starpalast” to the far-southern, Bavarian Garmisch-Partenkirchen’s “1900” to the hundreds of venues that lay between. Some of the venues’ names, like Duisburg-Ruhrort’s “Liverpool Club” or Fürth’s “Cavern Club,” clearly paid homage to music genre’s British origins. Others like Frankfurt’s “Havanna Bar,” Neuss’s “Roma,” and Weinheim’s “Capri,” suggested wanderlust and the lure of the exotic and distinctly non-German for youths perhaps not able to afford international travel.<sup>447</sup>

Accounts and descriptions of this period of German youth culture depict not only different fashions and music, but attitudes that underscore the postwar generation’s determination to inhabit a psychic space profoundly different from their recent predecessors. Barring the wild children of Weimar, the earliest German Mods wanted to make clear that they nothing in common with those adults who still either mourned the decline of Hitler’s Germany openly or secretly. Nor did they find any common ground with their seemingly-clueless contemporaries, who supported the 1964-established, neo-Fascist National Democratic Party (NPD).<sup>448</sup> If Germany once had the reputation of being the land of *Dichter und Denker* (poets and thinkers), postwar youth turned their thoughts to encompass the rhythmic and, in their minds, *poetic* language of Beat. Though the lyrics were English, it was felt that these words were meant to speak for young people around the world, no matter their native tongue, and that because they were Germans, maybe it felt especially important to join in.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> Klitsch, *Shakin’ All Over*, 95-97.

<sup>448</sup> Not all postwar youth were progressive. Some actively supported the NPD. 14 Letters written to *Der Spiegel* in 1966 expressed support, or at least defended the party after Spiegel ran a cover story of the opinion that the NPD was the NSDAP’s replacement in postwar Germany. See, “Briefe,” *Der Spiegel*, Apr. 4, 1966, 5-9.

<sup>449</sup> Due to the wealth of famous artists and philosophers to come from Germanic lands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, Kant, Marx, and so on, the country was often referred to as the land of “Poets and Thinkers.” It is often cited in books about German history. For one such example, see Fisher, *Disciplining Germany*, 17.

Mediated aspirations for cross-cultural contact had already been evident in *Bravo*, an entertainment magazine for youth published since 1956. With the first wave of Rock and Roll in the mid-fifties, Elvis Presley had often been featured. By 1960 write-ups about musicians and actors such as Cliff Richard (England), Louis Jordan and Françoise Arnoul (France), Die Trio San Jose (Spain), and Frank Sinatra and Russ Tamblyn (the U.S.) were found within the magazine's pages. Starting in 1964, with the Beatles' growing international success, there was suddenly more emphasis on British Beat and Rhythm and Blues groups in subsequent years. As also evident from the magazine, American bands (Beach Boys, the Byrds, Sonny and Cher) and French performers (Françoise Hardy, Jacques Du Tronc, France Gall) still remained popular alongside those that were British. With approximately 1.6 million readers by 1960, *Bravo* definitely made its mark on German postwar youth and continued to do so through the initial wave of Mod culture.<sup>450</sup>

This transition of content within the pages of Germany's most popular postwar youth magazine merely reflected what was now happening on that country's weekly record charts. One week before "I Want to Hold Your Hand" entered the German charts on February 22, 1964, the only British artist to appear on it was Cliff Richard. Notably, his chart success had to do with the fact that he was singing one of his English hits in German ("*Rote Lippen soll man küssen*").

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<sup>450</sup> For these references to 1960, see *Bravo*, Jan. 5-12, 1960, 8,9,12-15, 26-27, 34-35. For the first Beatles article in *Bravo*, see "Die Beatles als Filmstars," *Bravo*, Feb. 9-16, 1964, 44. For samples of subsequent articles about British bands and performers in *Bravo*, see "Beatles in Maß Anzugen," [the Dave Clark Five] *Bravo*, May 24-30 1964, 36-37; "Häßlichkeit verkauft sich gut," [Rolling Stones], Oct. 11-17 1964, 52-53; "Fünf mit einem Namen," [Manfred Mann], *Bravo*, Feb. 7-13 1965, 8-9; "Bravo Porträt: Nr. 1 nach fünf harten Jahren," [Georgie Fame], *Bravo*, Feb. 28-Mar.6 1965, 42; "Musik wie Dynamit," [The Who], *Bravo*, Jan. 10, 1966, 20-21. For the continuing coverage of American and French artists after the success of British groups, see "Hobby wirt zum Hit: die Beach Boys erfanden den Surf," [Beach Boys], *Bravo*, Feb. 28-Mar.6 1965, 4-5; "Alle Vöglein sind schon da!" [the Byrds], *Bravo*, Jan. 3, 1966, 4-5; "Jimi Hendrix: Besessen von Musik," [Jimi Hendrix], Apr. 3, 1967, 14-15; "Hallo Bravo," [Sylvie Vartan], *Bravo*, Mar. 29-Apr. 4, 1964, 6; "Mein Schwarm heist Mick Jagger: Françoise Hardy verriet *Bravo*, was ihrem Herzen nahe steht und was sie alles nicht mag," [Françoise Hardy], *Bravo*, May 23-29, 1965, 4-5; "Jacques Dutronc: Jetzt will ich mein Leben geniessen!" [Jacques Dutronc], *Bravo*, May 8, 1967, 16-19. "Alles erlogen!" [France Gall], *Bravo*, May 23-29, 1965, 14. See also, Kaspar Maase, *Bravo Amerika* (Hamburg: Junius, 1992), 104.

Almost exactly one year later, the German top ten looked much different, with nearly half of the hits in English by British artists. By February 18, 1967, English-language songs by the Monkees (“I’m a Believer”), Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick, and Tich (“Save Me”), David Garrick (his one hit, “Dear Mrs. Applebee”), The Who (“Happy Jack”), the Kinks (“Dead End Street”), Tom Jones (“Green, Green Grass of Home”), Herman’s Hermits (“No Milk Today”), and the Rolling Stones (“Let’s Spend the Night Together”) made up eight out of the top ten singles. Aside from the biggest and most globally successful groups of the period like the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Who, and the Kinks, several less commercially successful English Mod acts of the era, most notably the Creation and the Smoke, found greater chart success in Germany than anywhere else, including their native Britain.<sup>451</sup>

The commercial success of British bands in Germany was reflected in new, up-and-coming (yet short-lived) music-oriented teen magazines, such *The Star-Club-News* (1964-1965, as part of Weißleder’s pop empire), *OK*, and *Musikparade* (1965-1967), rather than *Bravo*.<sup>452</sup> *Star-Club-News* clearly promoted the bands that were regularly performing at Germany’s now most famous nightclub, but also supported Weißleder’s views that Beat music was the best and most practical conduit to also promote understanding between German and foreign youths. *OK* and *MP* were also more likely, than *Bravo*, for instance, to evoke youth’s turn from the past generation and equate Beat music and, hence, Mod culture, with cultural rebellion.

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<sup>451</sup> *Hit Bilanz: Deutsche Chart Singles, 1956-1980 Top Ten* (Hamburg: Taurus, 1990), 181, 204, 221, 239. For chart success of the Creation (“Painter Man”) and Smoke (“My Friend Jack”), see 243-44. This book’s charts were compiled from the trade paper *Musikmarkt* (Music Market) and the Taurus Press archive. For press on these bands, see “Bravo-Porträt: The Creation,” *Bravo*, May 8, 1967, 82; Bravo-Porträt: Ein Scherz wurde zum Hit,” [the Smoke], *Bravo*, May 15, 1967, 26. On the Creation’s success in Germany, see Richie Unterberger, *Unknown Legends of Rock ‘n’ Roll: Psychedelic Unknowns, Mad Geniuses, Punk Pioneers, Lo-Fi Mavericks and More* (San Francisco: Miller-Freeman, 1998), 35.

<sup>452</sup> This is based on my reading through all accessible issues of *Bravo*, *OK*, *Star-Club News*, and *Musikparade* from between 1964 and 1967 at the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen* (Archive of Youth Cultures) in Berlin, the *Deutsche Bücherei* (National Library) in Leipzig, and Ulf Krüger’s personal collection of the *Star-Club News*. This viewpoint is also shared by Siegfried, *Time is on my Side*, 230-23; Klitsch, *Shakin’ All Over*, 113.

A telling article in the December 1965 issue of *OK* features the successes of young band managers, actors, dancers, designers, and athletes from around the globe, such as Rolling Stones' manager Andrew Oldham, designer Mary Quant, and race car driver Jackie Stewart. The author then speculates why no Germans under thirty can be included in this listing: "Nationwide, half the German population [the young] comes second or third. We have wallowed through newspapers and have thought about this. We could not find one young person who is world famous—that has something to say—no one whom one listens to. It's only like this here. Elsewhere people between 20 and 30 have already made it to the top."<sup>453</sup> Though non-English-speaking celebrities like Spanish matador El Cordobez, Polish filmmaker Roman Polanski, and Russian dancer Rudolf Nureyev, were included, the majority of them *did* come from Britain or the United States. This attitude that there was something special going on in Britain or the U.S. (but especially Britain) that allowed for young people to succeed in a way not yet possible in Germany was compounded by comments such as this one from *Ready, Steady, Go!* host and celebrated "Mod Queen" Cathy McGowan: "I like England, because everyone who wants to gets a chance here. If you can do something, you can be successful. Doors are open here... You don't have to be old and have relationships. I know no other country where young people have become as powerful as here."<sup>454</sup> The fact that many British and American stars were the obvious focus of magazines like *OK* and *MP* during the mid-sixties parallels the ubiquitous use of English slang peppered throughout issues of these teen-oriented magazines. By 1966 *OK* even published a mini-dictionary translating hip, English terms into German for their readers, so young people using "fab," "mad," and "gear," actually could know what these words meant. In addition to the ubiquity of English in these German youth magazines, British ones like *New Musical Express*,

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<sup>453</sup> "Sei Jung und halt den Mund!," *OK*, Dec. 27, 1965, 3.

<sup>454</sup> "Bei Uns liebt jemand Cathy McGowan," *OK*, Feb. 7, 1966, 13.

*Disc Weekly*, *Fabulous*, and *Rave*, were sometimes available for purchase in larger metropolitan areas by the mid-sixties.<sup>455</sup>

Acquiring English skills through these teen magazines (lyrics of songs from favorite, British Beat bands were printed not just *OK*, but *Bravo* and *MP*, too), was not only a step towards potential communication with visiting bands, overseas pen-pals, or a way to write better lyrics of your own—if you happened to be a fledgling beat musician. For some, it meant traveling to one of the youth Meccas of Liverpool or London and being able to understand more fully what was going on there. The Star-Club's Manfred Weißleder had already taken a group of German Beat fans to Liverpool by 1964. Now readers of these magazines wrote in to tell of their experiences.<sup>456</sup> In the July 4, 1966 issue of *MP* a reader from Gevelsberg shared, "I have had two vacations staying with a pen-pal. She lives near Liverpool. I have spent hour upon thrilling hour in the Cavern. The atmosphere in there is really exciting. After pushing our way through the crowd and getting ourselves used to the dim lighting and deafening rhythms, bits of English suddenly caught my ear. 'Mods:' girls in unusual clothes and boys with long hair."<sup>457</sup> Letters such as this one complemented the many editorials and articles such as "From England: Beat-Time with Bobbie Shaw" (January 17, 1966), "Where London Teens and Twens Meet" (February 28, 1966), and "Summer-Sun Vacation Tips: London for Teenagers" (May 23, 1966) which "prepared" young readers who were able, for what a trip to London or Liverpool might be like.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> "Kleines OK Wörterbuch," *OK*, Apr. 18, 1966, 11; Dieter Baacke, "Being Involved. Internationale-Pop-Zeitschriften in der Bundesrepublik," *Deutsche Jugend* 16 (1968): 553.

<sup>456</sup> "Sabotage," *Star-Club News*, Aug. 1965, 22.

<sup>457</sup> "Von Euch für Euch," *Musikparade*, July 4, 1966, 32-33.

<sup>458</sup> "From England: Beat-Time with Bobbie Shaw," *Musikparade*, Jan. 17, 1966, 33; Don Wedge, "Wo Treffen sich Londons Teens und Twens?," *OK*, Feb. 28, 1966, 26-27; "Sommer-Sonne Ferien Tips: London für Teens," *OK*, May 23, 1966, 42-43.

Historian Axel Schildt, drawing from his own experience, writes “Any West German youth, who during the summer of 1966 had been to the south coast of England and had spent time in one of the beach resorts between Margate and Ramsgate to take part in language courses became immersed in a fascinating world of cinemas, gambling halls, ice cream parlors, and live concerts by bands like the Who, the Kinks, or the Small Faces. Moreover, they had gained a reliable preview of whatever would become a trend in their own country within the next half year after their return home.”<sup>459</sup> Even if not all German teens were fortunate enough to make it to their now-beloved Britain or other desired overseas destinations, Beat musicians once again modeled this ideal of international exchange. Teen magazines ran articles between 1965 and 1966 showing German bands like Cologne’s all-female Ruby Rats in London or, more exciting considering the Cold War, Berlin’s Lords on tour in Poland.<sup>460</sup> Thus, by the peak years of Mod culture in mid-sixties Germany, it may have still been British bands who led the way, but German groups adopted the best of what they had witnessed: including the desire to connect with young people outside their own country.

In magazines intended for broader audiences, such as *Der Spiegel* and *Der Stern*, many stories still focused specifically on trying to make sense—or at least trying to process—the aftermath of World War II. Articles between 1964 and 1967 covered topics such as the appropriate punishment for NS perpetrators, anti-German sentiments abroad, the continued presence of anti-Semitism in Germany, the history of the S.S., the rise of the NPD, the current Jewish population in Germany, and even excerpts of short stories dealing with the Nazi past. Though intended for an audience of various ages, many teens and “twens,” did, in fact, read

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<sup>459</sup> Schildt, “Across the Border,” 155-156.

<sup>460</sup> About the Ruby Rats in London, see “Von Euch für Euch: Kölner Beatbirds erobern London,” *Musikparade*, Aug. 29, 1966, 38; For the the Lords on tour in Poland, see “Liebegrüße aus Polen,” *Musikparade*, Oct. 24, 1966, 5-7.

these two popular magazines, thus exposing them to these issues even if they were still seldom spoken of in the family home.<sup>461</sup> Emotionally heavy as this content was, articles such as these were sometimes found cheek-to-jowl with those covering of the burgeoning youth scene: from The Beatles' first blush with international success to Mod fashions by Mary Quant, Emile Pucci, and Pierre Cardin.<sup>462</sup>

It was not just print media that sought to portray and document the new sensibilities of postwar German youth in a kind of bold defiance against the past, but films and TV programs as well. As mentioned in Chapter One, films catering to Mod youth in the U.K. really began with the premiere of the Beatles' first feature *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). This was true in Germany, too, where the movie was released in the summer of 1964 as *Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!* Notably, national promoters of the film hosted events to allow teenage interactivity. Beat band contests were held around the country where groups who sounded most like the Beatles won prizes, while young girls could enter "Miss Beatle" competitions at co-sponsoring department stores. The nationwide success of *A Hard Day's Night* inspired manager Manfred Weißleder eventually to create a film project for his group the Rattles. The only German beat-music film ever to be produced, *Hurra, Die Rattles kommen! (Hurray! The Rattles are Coming!)*, which debuted in February 1966, unfortunately never would receive many accolades. The film consisted of a thin

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<sup>461</sup> For popularity of these magazines with young readers in the 1960s, see Siegfried, *Time is on my Side*, 280-281. Articles dealing with the processing of Germany's recent past, see "NS-Verbrechen: Verjährung- Gesundes Volksempfinden," *Der Spiegel*, Mar. 3, 1965, 30-44; Richard West, "Goethe wurde genauso verdammt wie die SS: Der Deutschenhass der Briten," *Der Spiegel*, Sept. 15, 1965, 127-128; "Gesellschaft: Antisemitismus- Rechter Boden," *Der Spiegel*, Jul. 11, 1966, 36; Heinz Höhne, "Der Ordern unter dem Totenkopf: Die Geschichte der SS," *Der Spiegel*, Nov. 7, 1966, 94-107; "Rechts ab zum Vaterland," *Der Spiegel*, Apr. 17, 1967, 72-93; Stefan Olivier, "Die Zeit ist Reif: Ein Roman vom deutschen Schicksal," *Der Stern*, Mar. 23, 1964, 40-52; Stefan Moses, "Juden in Deutschland," *Der Stern*, Nov. 3, 1964, 82-93.

<sup>462</sup> For examples, see Wilfried Achterfeld, "Das Beatles-Wunder," *Der Stern*, Feb. 25, 1964, 18-23; Scheler and Krammer, "Alle Beatles sind schon da," 36-48; "Mode Journal: Geometrie und Romantik," *Der Stern*, Jan. 18, 1966, 48-9; "Kultur-Mode: Courrèges- Waden Weg," *Der Spiegel*, Mar. 3, 1965, 120; "Kultur-Mode: Cardin: Das Beste am Mann," *Der Spiegel*, Mar. 17, 1965, 139; "Die auffällige Jugend," *Der Spiegel*, Oct. 2, 1967, 166-167.



plot around a Rattles gig in Copenhagen and was marred by poor acting—made worse still by overdubbing the groups’ voices due to their supposedly thick Hamburg accents. Though these qualities sealed the film’s fate as a lackluster imitation of the Beatles original, it was nonetheless, at the time, another way in which German youth could glimpse the new culture developing around them. Additionally, many British films that had already done well with Mod teens in the U.K., such as *Ferry across the Mersey* (1965), the Beatles’ *Help!* (1965), and *Dateline Diamonds* (1966) also were dubbed into German and released in the country’s cinemas.<sup>463</sup>

Meanwhile, on the small screen, TV shows such as Radio Bremen’s *Beat-Club* (1965-1972) and the American Forces Network’s *Beat! Beat! Beat!* (1966-1969) demonstrated what being a hip and cosmopolitan German teenager could be. *Beat-Club*’s female host Uschi Nerke, whose style resembled that of *Ready, Steady, Go!*’s “Mod Queen” Cathy McGowan, was soon joined by British Radio Caroline DJ and Manchester native Dave Lee Travis. Her attempts to pronounce correctly English band names and their song titles were matched with Travis’s eager attempts to speak German—usually resulting in bilingual phrases such as, “*Ja, Guten Tag! We got things happening. Bitte anschnallen, es geht los! Groovin’!*” Ultimately, Travis’s announcements were predominantly made in his native English. Maybe it was decided that this sounded a bit more hip than his “Denglish.”<sup>464</sup> It was believed by producers that the addition of Travis and the inclusion of his native language brought cachet and a higher level of “quality” to

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<sup>463</sup> Jürgen Struck, *Rock Around the Cinema* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1985), 54-57; 70-71; *Hurra, die Rattles kommen!*, directed by Alexander Welbat (1966; Berlin: Interworld Film), 1966; “*Hurra, die Rattles kommen!*” *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 91, 1966; “*Hurra, die Rattles kommen,*” *Bravo*, 23-29 May 1965, 14-15; “3 Filme, 3 Geschichten,” *Bravo*, Feb. 7, 1966, 16.

<sup>464</sup> “*Bitte anschnallen, es geht los!*” [Fasten your seatbelts, it’s getting started!] The Quote is taken from *Beat-Club, Folge* [Episode] 24, Sept. 23, 1967 and was featured in a “best of” episode on the TV show *Beat-Club: Das Rock-Archiv* which was produced and aired originally on NDR in 1993. See “*Beat-Club,*” *Radio Bremen* at <http://www.radiobremen.de/tv/beatclub/information.html> (accessed Aug. 8, 2088).

the program.<sup>465</sup> The show also broadcast from “Swinging London” twice during the mid-sixties, with one show taped at the famous Marquee Club on Wardour Street. Similarly, *Beat! Beat! Beat!* hosted first by Mel Sondack and then Charlie Hicks, erstwhile DJs on AFN, both spoke German with American-English accents and introduced artists in both German and then English since their intended audience was a mixture of American GIs’ teenage children and German youth. Because the bands featured on the show played live versus with “playback,” the hosts tended to be more interactive with the British and American guests, thus necessitating the use of English more so than on *Beat-Club* where artists were simply introduced.

Another noteworthy aspect to the shows’ cosmopolitanism and openness was that both *Beat-Club* and *Beat! Beat! Beat!* not only presented white, British Mod bands such as the Small Faces, the Kinks, or the Who but also featured many artists of color such as Jimmy Cliff, former “Ikette” P.P. Arnold, the Isley Brothers, B.B. King, and the groundbreaking biracial British band the Equals. As the first of the two programs, *Beat-Club*, with its go-go dancers and cutting-edge graphic “scene breaks,” was an immediate success with young viewers. It only aired once a month for half an hour in the afternoon, but when it came on, music-hungry teens did anything and everything they could to watch it.<sup>466</sup> Thomas Schmidt (b. 1969) a Hamburg-area DJ and sixties-music fan who has studied *Beat-Club* and the phenomenon surrounding it while at university, shared with me the first time he saw the show in syndication and what fascinated him about it.

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<sup>465</sup> Siegfried, *Time is on my Side*, 346-347.

<sup>466</sup> For *Beat-Club*, see Rainer Jogschies, *Wer Zweimal mit der selbern pennt... Die befreiten Sechziger* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1991), 81; Ushi Nerke, *40 Jahre mein Beat-Club: Persönliche Erlebnisse und Erinnerungen* (Benitz: Kuhle, 2005); Thorsten Schmidt, *Beat-Club: alle Sendungen, alle Stars, alle Songs* (Bremen: Kultur Buch Bremen, 2005). For *Beat!, Beat!, Beat!*, see “*Beat! Beat! Beat!*” *TV.com* at <http://www.tv.com/beat!-beat!-beat!/show/31175/summary.html> (accessed April 14, 2008); B. Badurina, “*Beat! Beat! Beat!*” *Wunschliste.de* <http://www.wunschliste.de/links.pl?s=4131> (accessed May 5, 2007).

[I saw it first] in a documentary about the sixties. One episode was about *Beat-Club* and featured twenty or thirty minutes from the show. There were also Beat-Club video cassettes out by 1987... I saw how it was...with playback and announcements from Uschi Nerke and Dave Lee Travis. There were only three channels then [in the eighties]...but then, by the early 1990s there were more channels and more repeats of the show. [In the eighties] we were already in the MTV era...I knew that at the time that [*Beat-Club*] was the only thing happening for Beat fans in the sixties... once a month, thirty minutes or forty-five minutes...that was it. Young people may have had to fight for the TV in order to even see it.<sup>467</sup>

Though, as Thomas notices, *Beat-Club* was only on for a short, half-hour burst per month, young Germans were grateful to have a TV show to call their own.

Feverish interest in Anglo-American popular culture (German bands rarely appeared on these TV programs) may have had to do with the fact that it was seen as more open and free-spirited by young Germans. This love of English-language popular music or long hair and other “foreign” fashions, seemed a challenge to the national status quo which was linked to stereotypical German qualities such as “orderliness,” for instance. That youth gravitated toward British music and pop culture in the early to mid-sixties is not surprising given more general cultural stereotyping of Britons during this time. As with the popularity of the German-produced *Edgar Wallace* film cycle of this period, which followed the adventures of a Scotland Yard detective, there was a “preferred version of Britishness that cherishes its most idiosyncratic, irreverent, and non-conformist qualities,” that “stood in sharp contrast to the strait-laced norms and values of the Adenauerian work ethic of the postwar West German *Wirtschaftswunder*.”<sup>468</sup> I suggest that though many older Germans may have found such behavior amusing in films, they did not necessarily want to emulate it, while younger people may have seen it as a model of how

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<sup>467</sup> Thomas Schmidt, oral history interview by author, digital recording, Schmidt residence, Hamburg, Aug. 12, 2007, DCUP.

<sup>468</sup> Bergfelder, Tim, *International Adventures: German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 156. See also Hermann Bausinger, *Typisch Deutsch: Wie deutsch sind die Deutschen?* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2000); Burkhard Lauterbach, *Beatles, Sportclubs, Landschaftsparks: Britisch-deutscher Kulturtransfer* (Würzburg: Koenigshausen and Neumann, 2004).

to behave less “German.” Nonetheless, it is still sometimes hard to believe that listening and enjoying music by foreign and/or black artists or wearing different-looking hairstyles or clothes was a radical thing for young people to do, but indeed it was. As a letter from a former viewer to *Beat-Club* host Uschi Nerke attested:

We finally had a music for us, that was progressive and that expressed our mood. It was a music that really didn't have anything to do with our old culture. Even years after the end of World War II, the past was seldom discussed. There were big question marks that would never be answered. Nobody really knew what kinds of attitudes there were in one's family. A big silence encircled us, and that's why we wanted loudness, openness, and above all, everything new that came from us, that was completely different... something that had never existed before.<sup>469</sup>

For Mods and sixties enthusiasts today, the stylistic offenses that youth and their shows (like *Beat-Club*) supposedly committed remain perplexing aspects to the period. Youths were more than willing to fight for their aesthetic sensibilities and all that went with them. As longtime Mod, and current attorney, Christof Sonnenberg (b. 1968, fig. 16) of Kempton, Bavaria, tells me: “One tries to understand the feeling... of the youth culture that existed then... in England and also here. One tries to understand why were people... were people bothered by this. Why was there trouble... or riots, even? Or, why was it in the newspaper that ‘longhairs’ were running through the streets? Of course that interested me.. .this power that the youth movement had despite its not being aggressive. Nonetheless, [the youth culture] was offensive to the establishment and got trouble because of it.”<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Nerke, *40 Jahre mein Beat-Club*, 64.

<sup>470</sup> Christof Sonnenberg, Oral history interview by author, digital recording, Casino Royale Weekender, Aachen, Germany, Apr. 21, 2007, on file in DCUP.



**Figure 16 Christof Sonnenberg and Carina Marrder, Aachen, April 2007. Photo by author.**

This “affront” to adult society was evident from the first program of *Beat-Club* that was aired. It was introduced by way of apology to older viewers who may “accidentally” tune-in.<sup>471</sup>

This desire that the aforementioned *Beat-Club* viewer describes as a longing for “loudness, openness, and above all, everything new,” is also expressed by many German Beat musicians of the period. In his autobiography, Klaus Voormann describes the situation thusly: “Our protest wasn’t a vocal one, nor powerfully eloquent, but one that emerged through our own special style. It was a style that the adult world had little understanding for. ‘Hey, look at us. We don’t want to be like you!’ is what we wanted to express in this way.”<sup>472</sup> “Lord Ulli” Günther [from Berlin beat band, the Lords] attributes the band’s adoption of Prince Valiant haircuts to his

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<sup>471</sup> WDR TV Germany, *Pop 2000: 50 Jahre Popmusik und Jugendkultur in Deutschland*, “Folge 2: Beat! Beat! Beat! (1962-1965),” 1999.

<sup>472</sup> “Wir protestierten nicht lautstark und wortgewaltig, sondern in unserem ganz speziellen Stil, der in der Erwachsenenwelt wenig Verständnis fand. ‘Hey, schaut her. Wir wollen nicht so sein wie ihr!’, wollten wir damit ausdrücken.” Klaus Voormann, *Warum*, 35.

determination to bring back respect to attributes that were misused by the Nazis. According to him, “I was crazy about Prince Valiant [called *Prince Eisenherz*, or ‘Ironhearted’ in German]. These terms like bravery [and] honor, which were unfortunately robbed of their real meaning by the Nazis, made an incredible impact on me when I was a teenager.”<sup>473</sup> As lead singer of Hamburg band the Faces and then, by late 1966, the Rattles, Frank Dostal saw joining the already professional Rattles as a way to escape a route in higher education that he saw as tainted by the older generation that populated the educational system at that time:

[The offer to sing with the Rattles] was my great rescue, because I was in the 13<sup>th</sup> grade about to complete my *Abitur* [final exams] and move on to what followed. I knew, ‘You can’t do it!’—the bourgeois track. And I knew somehow I would not escape this familial trap. The only thing I envisioned was: ‘I won’t take the exam!’ And I was really fed up with school, with the disguised Nazis—sexually uptight types—who were supposed to preach to us about educational ideals which they themselves couldn’t live up to. Those were the ones who told us about the War as a period of great camaraderie, about their exceptional friendships where they and four hundred men bent railroad tracks in Siberia in order to make the tracks curve! It was already very clear to me then: Germany had attacked and stained the rest of the world.<sup>474</sup>

These accounts support the idea that his generation’s initial form of protest against older Germans in the early-to-mid sixties was expressed both through personal style, i.e., external factors of identity, as the career choice of becoming a musician, rather than going into a more conventional trade or profession.

In all the colorful spectacle of what Mod culture became in the mid-sixties Germany, with its frenetic beat music, playfully calculated fashion sense, and an overall joie de vive, it is sometimes hard to believe it emerged so quickly on the world stage following one of the most harrowing periods of the twentieth-century, if not western civilization, but as we have already

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<sup>473</sup> Qtd. in Hans-Jürgen Klitsch, *Lords: Singles, Hits & Raritäten*, [CD booklet] *Beat in Germany: Smash...! Boom...! Bang...! The Sixties Anthology*, Bear Family Records, BCD 16452.

<sup>474</sup> Hans-Jürgen Klitsch, “Die Rattles: Beat in Germany,” [CD booklet] *Smash! Boom! Bang!: The Sixties Anthology*, Bear Family Records, BCD 16456 AR.

witnessed in this chapter, Mod style and culture—with its non-German roots—was exactly what many sixties youth craved. For German youth, this struggle to come to terms with the recent past was inescapable—no matter how apolitical or indirectly political their immediate surroundings may have been.<sup>475</sup> The following statements from some of my baby-boom-era narrators attest to the tensions, silences, or indifference that was palpable in many a postwar household:

I was totally apolitical because I came from an apolitical household... actually my whole circle of friends was apolitical as well. (Kuno Dreysee, b. 1945)

The topic of politics didn't come up at all. Why? My mother, quite honestly—she worked in a laundry... she had a hard job—we were poor slob. Can I say that? We were poor slob. She worked 'round the clock and even took work home...at the time she must have been thirty-five or forty and she already had such fat, swollen legs where you could poke them and the indentation would remain...that's why she didn't have any interest in the past, or had intentionally repressed it. (Harald Mau, b. 1945)

Well I wouldn't say it [the War] was a taboo subject, but I know that whenever anything ever came up about the War my mother didn't want to see it because her son—my brother—was still missing in Russia. So, she knew about the cold and the terrible situation in Russia on the Front and that's why she was very—you can't show things in films. But she didn't even want to see the real film, what do you call that—[documentary, I tell him]—that had been taken there. She didn't want to see it. Well you see, when there was a film she didn't want to watch it, but she told us about her feelings, but we did not discuss it. She was on the road with five kids, one in a pram and it was just awful for her. It was terrible for all us. It was a hard time. (Klaus Voormann, b. 1938)

These comments from Dreysee, Mau, and, to a certain extent Voormann, show a more distanced reaction to the War and what followed. They also illustrate no real confrontation between

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<sup>475</sup> For instance, interviews taken in 2007 with Kuno Dreysee (b. 1945), Harald Mau (b. 1945), and Klaus Voormann (b. 1938) suggest that the War was a topic that, while not necessarily kept secretive, was one rarely—if at all—openly discussed at home. “Ich war total unpolitisch, weil ich aus ein total unpolitisches Haus kamm...in mein Umfeld—eigentlich mein Freundeskreis war unpolitisch;” (Kuno Dreysee, interview by author, digital recording, 20 Mar. 2007, K&K Center-of-Beat, Hamburg; “Das Thema Politik gab es ueberhaupt garnicht. Wieso? Warum? Meine Mutter ist, muss ich ganz ehrlich sagen, die hat—sie war Plaeterin in eine Waescherei... sie hat ein harten Job gehabt... wir waren arme Schweine. Darf ich daß so sagen? Wir waren arme Schweine. Sie hat gearbeitet rund um die Uhr...sie hat noch Heimarbeit genommen... damals war sie funfunddreisig, vierzig... und hatte so so dicke Beine gehabt—„Wasserbeine“ man konnte so reindrucken und dann blieb daß Loch da drinne... deswegen hatte sie auch keine Interesse an der Vergangenheit gehabt, oder hatte es bewusst verdrängt.” Harald Mau, Oral history interview by author, Digital recording, 22 Mar. 2007, the Mau residence, Hamburg, on file in DCUP; Voormann, Interview.

children and parents, but rather an understanding for what strenuous situations their parents may have been going through as a result of the war, and thus represents an acceptance of how their parents went about avoiding, whether fully conscious of it or not, direct discussions about life during the Third Reich and World War II.

Not all interviews with German postwar narrators, however, suggest this lack of confrontation between children and parents. The following comments from songwriter, musician, and music producer Ulf Krüger and filmmaker Hans-Peter Weymar (Hamburg, b. 1947) support the idea that questioning or critiquing the views or actions of the parent generation did come up in some families. Ulf talks about how his parents would sometimes go so far as calling music with African-American roots “Nigger Music.” He suggests that this racial-based criticism of rock music by parents at that time is one of the reasons it became so popular among young German people of his generation. He believes the music became a “weapon” used against Nazis past and (secretly) present. In my interview with him he relayed to me, “Even though I believe that my parents were very loving and good people, it [the Nazi past] was still a big problem for my whole generation. We rejected everything and we showed absolutely no understanding for circumstances or nuance.”<sup>476</sup> Throughout this interview and afterwards, Ulf talked lovingly about his father (who had, in fact, been a Nazi Party Member like many older Germans), but he was able to separate easily their personal relationship from his father’s Third Reich-era politics. Nonetheless, Krüger’s love of Skiffle and Rock music as a teenager functioned as a way—maybe not always self-consciously, though—as a way to challenge both his family and country’s political past (fig. 17).

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<sup>476</sup> “Obwohl meine Eltern ganz liebeswürdige und gute Menschen waren, trotzdem war es ein ganz grosses Problem dass meine Generation Alles abgeleitet hat und auch gar kein Verständnis gezeigt hat... für vielleicht Nuancen...nur Alles Nazis, alle Schweinehunde...auch die Eltern.” Ulf Krüger, oral history interview by the author, digital recording, Krüger Home, Hamburg, Feb. 12, 2007, on file in DCUP.





**Figure 17 Ulf Krüger, far left, and the Randalls, circa 1967. Photo courtesy Ulf Krüger.**

Hans-Peter Weymar, who co-produced a 2006 TV documentary about the Beatles' impact on Hamburg and German youth culture in the 1960s called *Beatles, Beat, und Grosse Freiheit: Der Sound von St.Pauli*, held a slightly different view of his parents' past.<sup>477</sup> He told me that he could not forgive his parents' lack of self-reflexivity in terms of their support of Nazism: "Even when I could somewhat think more broadly about things, I never said, 'You awful people, you went along with it back then.' Instead, I said, 'I don't blame you, but what I expect from you, what I wish, is that you would reflect upon what happened.' And they couldn't even do that... Instead... they...use this kind of 'poetry of justification' and that is so horrible... that is a situation that I just can't forgive. I'm not saying that they are really awful people, but

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<sup>477</sup> *Beatles, Beat, und Grosse Freiheit: Der Sound von St.Pauli*. NDR Germany, Prod. by Weymar, Wernich and Goerke. Original airdate Dec. 30, 2006.

that is something they should be dealing with.” Clearly, Weymar could not understand his parents’ unwillingness to reflect upon their past.

While it was undoubtedly difficult for many sixties youths to avoid asking themselves, “*What did my parents do during the War?*” their embrace of Mod—and hence, turning to the future for a different kind of life—was a more tacit way of reconciling with the realities of the recent past. By adopting Mod, young Germans created new facets of their identity. For instance, Kuno’s interest in Beat music inspired him to become the bassist for Hamburg’s Rivets. Ulf, aside from his musical accomplishments, later established Hamburg’s K&K photo archive and shop—specializing in Astrid Kirchherr’s prints—and has produced several Beatles-themed festivals. As already introduced, Harald Mau was a regular at the Star-Club, where his eyes and ears were opened to an internationally-minded youth culture.<sup>478</sup>

I met Harald in December 2006 at the Hamburg Museum while visiting an exhibit called *The Hamburg Sound: Beatles, Beat & Grosse Freiheit* (fig. 18)

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<sup>478</sup> Sturm, *Beat Goes on*, 32.



**Figure 18 The author with Harald Mau, Hamburg, December 2006.**

Co-coordinated by Ulf Krüger and historian, Utwin Pelc, the exhibit ran from June 2006 to January 2007. The show invited visitors to learn about the dynamic relationship that budded between British and German musicians and youths in the 1960s. Several events were held in conjunction with the exhibit, including an opening festival (with guests Klaus Voormann and Astrid Kirchherr) and a guitar show, where I happened to catch Spencer Davis playing “Norwegian Wood.” I met Harald while paging through the exhibit’s guestbook. I saw comments such as: “I am a big fan of the Beatles and the sixties. If I could, I would travel back to this time!” Another stated: “What a neat era... I especially liked the hairstyles!” The last entry read: “Before the Beatles there was nothing!” I suddenly heard a man’s voice behind me saying, “Exciting times!” We struck up a conversation and when I returned to looking through

the guestbook, I continued seeing a similar enthusiasm to Mau's reflected in the words of people—whether from Hamburg or elsewhere—who did not necessarily experience those “exciting times” themselves but let the exhibit *transport* them there.<sup>479</sup>

On another day at the *Hamburg Sound* I saw a young woman guiding a group around the exhibit. In August 2007 I again ran into her while she was giving a Beatles walking tour through St. Pauli. I soon learned that musician and longtime sixties fan Stephanie Hempel (Mecklenburg, b. 1977) gave Hamburg's official Beatles walking tour, which always ended with a sing-a-long at the Indra club. When I asked her what she most enjoyed about her part-time job, Stephanie told me it was encountering older people sharing stories about the “good old days.” She recalled:

that the Star-Club time totally made an impact on these people and at sixty they still look like old Rockers or so... or a lot of old Exis are also there. ‘We were Exis,’ and then others say ‘We were Rockers’ and there they are at over fifty, sixty: the old rivals together [on this tour]. And this is super exciting, because I will of course say, ‘Yes, I wasn't there, why don't you tell us something.’... That is the neatest thing for me—as someone who wasn't around then—as someone who grew up in the GDR—that I can offer these people a kind of trip back in time and then, often, I'll see them standing in the Indra with tears in their eyes singing along to the old songs.<sup>480</sup>

Clearly, images and stories from these times resonate nostalgically with the postwar generation.

I asked one of my younger generation narrators, Jani Egloff (Hamburg, b. 1967) why she thought the postwar generation would have been attracted to non-German popular culture:

Everything that was German was frightening, was horrid, was boring, war grim, was bombed, was destroyed, was bad...was, well, bad music and bad taste... and, um, very traditional and things from Italy were slim, sleek, crisp, fun...um, fast... mobile, and totally different. And it was this, “*Hurrah, wir leben noch*” [Hooray, we're still alive]

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<sup>479</sup> *The Hamburg Sound* [Guestbook]. Several Nostalgic, sixties-centric events took place between 2006 and 2007. For examples, see “45 Jahre Star-Club;” “Hamburger Oldie Night!”

<sup>480</sup> “die Star-Club Zeit hat diese Menschen total geprägt und die sehen mit Sechzig noch wie alte Rocker oderso... oder ganz viele alte Exis sind auch dabei. ‘Wir waren Exis’ und dann sagen andere, ‘Ja, wir waren Rocker’ und dann stehen die da mit ueber funfzig, sechzig und dann stehen die alte Fronten waehrend das Rundgangs gegenüber, aber natürlich nicht so wie damals. Und das ist super-spannend, weil ich sage gleich natürlich, ‘Ja, ich war nicht dabei, erzähle ihr jetzt mal.’...Das tollste für mich—als die die nicht dabei war—die auch überhaupt nicht...die in der DDR aufgewachsen ist... das ich für Leute so eine Zeitreise bescheren kann und dann da oft Leute im Indra stehen mit Tränen in den Augen und die alten Songs singen,” Hempel, Interview.

attitude. And this attitude, these were the kids that somehow remembered the war, even with only some years, but they remembered some of the War and these kids, I think, wanted to have fun. They wanted to live. They wanted to... they wanted to enjoy their life at all costs, and they *didn't* want to live like their parents. For example, my mother... the first thing she did with 19 [i.e., at 19] was that she married an artist. She married an actor because that was the life she wanted to live. It turned out to be crap anyway, but that was her intention at that time... in '52 and that was when the Beats and the *Exis*—my mother never was an Exi, she was too old then, but in '52 and then later on... in '59 these people wanted to live life to the max, to the full. They wanted to enjoy themselves and of course there was this “live now, pay later” attitude. There was this: “We’re living for today” and, uh, everything can only get better attitude, of course, which was true.

Here, Jani’s words reflect the fact that some younger parents (those who were still children or teenagers after the War) did, at the very least, discuss what their attitudes were like and how they tried to enjoy life despite the hardships they had experienced.

No matter what remained said or unsaid between the generations, media of the immediate postwar period played an important role in educating children and teens as to what had happened in the War. Even if family members or teachers refused to address the recent past or their involvement within the former regime, teenagers were nonetheless exposed and learned of Hitler’s Germany and the War through TV, film, and print media during the 1960s. The question here would be: “Why?” The answer is that the mass media was an easily depersonalized way to educate the new generation about the Nazi past—describing it on a national rather than local or personal context. For instance, many of the television documentaries of Hitler, the Holocaust, and WWII shown during the early 1960s were also depersonalized in the sense that the crimes of the Third Reich were blamed on a finite cast of now-dead villains. By constantly portraying Hitler, his inner circle, and SS officers, as the only guilty parties, the “ordinary German” in the guise of one’s father or grandfather was not necessarily a perpetrator of war crimes, but a victim

of ideological brainwashing.<sup>481</sup> In a similar vein, a 1966 *Der Spiegel* cover story entitled “What Hitler Means for Germans: From the Farmers’ Revolt to the Federal Republic,” tries historically to contextualize possible reasons for the rise of Nazism. The article’s author, Hungarian author and Marxist philosopher Georg Lukács, ponders if fascism was something that was *destined* to happen in Germany (or not) and later speaks a language that probably many young Germans at the time could have related to: “The collective responsibility of a nation for a chapter of its development is something so abstract and unseizable that it can often make little sense. However, a chapter like the Hitler era can only be viewed as over and done with in one’s own memory when the intellectual and moral attitude that complied to it and gave it momentum, direction, and shape is radically overturned. Only then will it be possible for other people of the world to trust this change, to truly experience the past as the past.”<sup>482</sup> This critique discusses the idea that cultural forward-movement would require not only changes in individuals’ attitudes who may or may not have played a role in Nazism’s initial ascent, but also a self-reflexivity regarding one’s past in general.

Obviously, a more detached recounting of Germany’s role in the war located Nazis, as much as possible, at safe distance away from one’s family or community. While American TV strangely found comedy in a German prisoner of war camp (*Hogan’s Heroes*, 1965-1971) with bumbling rather than menacing Nazis, German television tried to address the recent past via documentaries and TV docudramas. According to scholar Christoph Classen, “Individual

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<sup>481</sup> This issue of “ordinary” Germans’ as perpetrators of war crimes is the subject in Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). For 1960s documentaries of WWII, see Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics after Auschwitz* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 122-127. For the view that family members were victims rather than perpetrators within the Third Reich, see Welzer Harald, Sabine Moller, and Karoline Tschuggnall, *Opa war kein Nazi: Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2002).

<sup>482</sup> Georg Lukács, “Was Hitler den Deutschen Bedeutet: Vom Bauernkrieg zur Bundesrepublik,” *Der Spiegel*, Mar. 14, 1966, 68.

responsibility remained a central theme in TV shows during the 60s... it [often] had to do with the ‘brown skeleton in the closet’ despite the current period of economic prosperity...those who were able to hide behind a mask of a normal citizen... Frequently the theme was framed by generational conflict between the parents who were involved [former Nazis] and insistently questioning youth” who wanted more information about what had happened.<sup>483</sup> Given this lack, or minimal, discussion about the recent past, the tensions between the older and younger generation would mount during the 1960s.

Even the über-Mod-styled space-age TV romp—*Raumpatrouille* (*Space Patrol*) seemed to want wipe out any suggestion of *German-ness*. Though “the fantastic adventures of the spaceship Orion” aired only during the 1966 season, it was nonetheless extremely popular with young viewers. Set in the year 3000, the opening sequence’s narration states that the show is “a fairytale from the day after tomorrow. There are no nations anymore, only the human race.”<sup>484</sup> And yet, ironically, although all the show’s main characters (much like America’s contemporaneous *Star Trek*) have surnames that suggest certain national ancestry, there seems to be no room for a general Schmidt or an ensign Schröder. The spaceship’s commander is the very Anglo-sounding Allister McLane and even lieutenant *Helga Lagrelle*’s name sounds more Swiss than German.<sup>485</sup> In the universe of *Raumpatrouille* it seemed that much would have to change before those of German lineage deserved a place in the Mod, Mod, Mod world of tomorrow.

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<sup>483</sup> “...individuelle Verantwortung [ist] ein zentrales Thema des Fernsehspiels, aber die Perspektive war nun eine andere: Jetzt ging es eher um die ‘braunen Leichen im Keller’ der zeitgenössischen Wohlstandsgesellschaft. Im Mittelpunkt standen Täter, die es scheinbar geschafft hatten, die Spur ihrer Verbrechen zu verwischen und die sich nun hinter der Maske bürgerlicher Wohlanständigkeit... Nicht selten war das eigentliche Thema der sich abzeichnende Generationskonflikt zwischen den involvierten Eltern und einer insistierend nachfragenden Jugend.” Christoph Classen, *Bilder der Vergangenheit: Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus im Fernsehen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1955-1965* (Cologne: Boehlau, 1999), 156.

<sup>484</sup> “Hier ist ein Märchen von übermorgen: Es gibt keine Nationalstaaten mehr. Es gibt nur noch die Menschheit.”

<sup>485</sup> *Raumpatrouille* was the first science fiction program on German TV. It was aired on the ARD network (“Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”) also known,

While TV shows either intentionally or inadvertently dealt with German's NS-*Vergangenheit*, it seems that even magazines *Bravo* and *Twen* would address or confront the issue. *Twen*, anticipating a more mature and educated readership, did not shy away from issues such as American perceptions of contemporary Germany or even the Holocaust itself, and, in fact, printed incisive articles on these subjects. For instance, a *Twen* article from January 1965 reporting on a photography exhibit in New York called "Germans Today," printed some of the less-than-complementary excerpts from show's guestbook. One commenter, for instance, asserted, "Some [Germans] are o.k., but most are Nazis." Another entrant opined, "You forget to mention that the Germans are the only people in the world that have never heard of Nazism or Hitler." Finally, and one must remember that the intended audience of this magazine was "twentysomethings," another comment reads, "You are not showing the problems of young Germans. They are militaristic, undemocratic in their thinking, and not unlike their parents in their mentality." Needless to say, it is easy to imagine young German readers coming across such an article and asking themselves, "Will there ever be a time when we are not thought of as Nazis?"

As mentioned earlier, unlike *Twen*, *Bravo* was meant to be light reading entertainment for teenagers. Therefore, while it was provocative for *Twen* to run cover stories like "*Heiraten: Warum Denn?*" ("Marriage: Whatever For?," May 1965) or "*Warum manche Mädchen nur Mädchen Lieben*" ("Why Some Girls Love Only Girls," June 1966), it was quite another matter for thirteen-year-olds to read about the Rolling Stones' Brian Jones trying to buy a Nazi uniform

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if incorrectly, as *Das Erste* ("the First," network), starting on September 17, 1966. Popularity of the show, particularly among young viewers, is indicated in the following magazine articles: "Mit ,Orion auf Traumfahrt," *Musikparade*, Dec. 5, 1966, 16-17; "MP Music Pop Poll 66" *Musikparade*, Feb. 13, 1967, 4; and "Futurology: Die Freizeit wird das Grosse Seelische Problem: Wie der Bundesbürger im Jahre 1975 Leben Wird," *Der Spiegel*, Dec. 21, 1966, 75. See also Rainer Jogschies, *Wer Zweimal mit derselben pennt... Die befreiten Sechziger* (Ullstein: Frankfurt, 1991), 83; Bergfelder, *International Adventures*, 93.



for kicks while on tour in Munich, or to read that Spencer Davis, beloved for his fluent German, had supposedly said he would not play in front of “a bunch of Nazis” because the right-wing National Democratic Party had gained constituents in the previous elections.<sup>486</sup> While openly discussing changing sexual mores was exciting, realizing that your favorite pop stars may have creepy fetishes for Nazi uniforms, or that an English Beat musician could remind German fans of their country’s NS-past and the continued presence of some right-wing ideologues, would have surely been jarring to younger readers.

While there was no real escaping the legacy of the parent generation, the search for a new and modern Germany remained stronger than ever and was clearly linked to the question of identity. This longing among postwar youth to reconfigure the notion of what a “modern German person” could be in the still fairly new *Bundesrepublik* was most palpable in the rock music culture so intrinsic to this era. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, West German youth reacted to the British sounds that they encountered by enthusiastically forming Beat bands with such extremely un-Teutonic names such as the Rattles, the Rivets, the Lords, and, even, the *Mods*. The songs sung—whether covers of standards like “Money,” “Some Other Guy,” or “Gloria,” or originals such as the Rattles’ “Come on and Sing,” or the Lords’ “Poor Boy” (with the incorrectly worded line: “She learned me to say”) were always delivered in English. Even Hamburg’s Rattles, who were sometimes called “the German Beatles” due to their massive popularity nationally and, marginally, in England, wrote simple English language lyrics and easily avoided complex vocabulary in their top hits: “La La La,” (1965) and “Come on and

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<sup>486</sup> The *Twen* articles referred to here are: “Deutsche Heute: Gesehen von Amerika,” *Twen*, Jan. 1, 1965, 70-75; Ludwig Marcuse, “Literatur vom Gelben Stern,” *Twen*, Aug. 8, 1965, 8; Robert Neumann, Alphonse Silbermann, Ludwig Marcuse, and Hermann Kesten, “Deutsche Juden Heute,” *Twen*, Oct. 10, 1965 27-30. Regarding the articles about Brian Jones and Spencer Davis, see “Was tat Brian Jones in München wirklich?” *Bravo*, Dec. 12, 1966, 8-9; Wolfgang Kühn, “Spencer bittet um Verzeihung,” *Musikparade*, Jan. 16, 1967, 6-7; Clayton, *Hamburg*, 230-1.

Sing,” (1966). The latter song’s chorus was simply made up of the lyrics “Come on and Sing/Come on and Sing/La la la la la la la la.” with a chorus underscoring the fact that it wasn’t what they were singing in English that was important as long as it was or *sounded like* English. Very rarely, if at all, would German beat bands have band names *auf Deutsch* or sing in their native tongue. Probably the most popular German beat performer to sing in German was Drafi Deutscher. However, he was aware that singing in German was not totally “in” at the time. He has remarked that this period was one in which young Germans, and, hence, youthful musicians did not like their own language. It is probable that the manipulation of the language by Goebbels’s propaganda machine during the Third Reich, the long-standing stereotype by foreigners who do not speak German of it as an “aggressive language,” and the ever-growing assessment in the postwar period that English “was a symbol of globalism, of youth, [and] of progress and modernity” aided in this phenomenon.<sup>487</sup>

The need to model one’s identity based on Anglo-American youth styles was a nationwide phenomenon—from Bavaria’s capital city of Munich to the industrial towns of the Ruhr region to the hinterlands of Lower Saxony—and it was an identity with a distinct sound and vision. What teens wanted most was to be in a music group, grow their hair long, and irritate parents who simply did not understand them. Mod-styled boutiques cropped up around the country between 1964 and 1965 offering “Beat fashions” to this new and hungry market.<sup>488</sup> While Beat first entered the Federal Republic, even the German Democratic Republic (“East Germany”) tolerated their teens’ answer to the British Beat phenomenon until 1965 with bands like the Butlers and the Sputniks on the scene—that is until government officials decided that

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<sup>487</sup> Stefan Kloos, *Pop 2000*, 37-8; see Helen Kelly-Holmes, “German Language: Whose Language, Whose Culture?” in *Contemporary German Cultural Studies*, ed. Alison Phipps (London: Arnold, 2002), 47, 54, 57.

<sup>488</sup> For the trend of youth boutiques in Germany, see “Topteen Boutique,” *Musikparade*, Feb. 1966, 42-43; “Boutiquen Boom in Germany,” *Twen*, Oct. 1967, 74-75; Helsefer, et al., *Wer Beatet Mehr?*; 155-159.

this new sound may just perhaps incite capitalist sympathies, decadent fashion, and an interest in the *verboten* English language among its' "Free German Youth."<sup>489</sup>

In any case, Germany's Beat-inspired Mod period of the mid-sixties was a love affair with everything English, including the language. This new language—both the musical and lyrical—was again connected to the notion of the modern. The rock sounds from England were to become the soundtrack for not only today, but tomorrow. Mod bands the Who and the Yardbirds were even billed in *Bravo* as having the "Robot Sound." Apparently, this term was concocted by the German press to describe the bands' music as befitting the technological age in which motors, machines, and the whirl of electronic, robot-brains belong to daily life."<sup>490</sup> This terminology was used to describe the experimental nature of the bands and does not come across as social critique à la C. Wright Mills "cheerful robot."<sup>491</sup> Thus, the youth of the mid-sixties pictured themselves as more British than German, if only via a façade of natty clothing, the right guitars, and some ability to sing in pop's lingua franca. If Germany was weighed-down by the nationalism of the NS-past, then all things English lead not only to the future, but the great, wide world.

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<sup>489</sup> Evidence of Beat in the German Democratic Republic until 1965 is found in Kloos, *Pop 2000* and Ingo Grabowsky, "'Wie John, Paul, George, und Ringo': die Beat-Ära," 49-51. Clearly my documentation of Mod culture in sixties Germany focuses on the FRG. However, this aspect of beat in East Germany is important to include. This mention of "Free German Youth" is in reference to the former German Democratic Republic's *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (FDJ) organization. Like many aspects of East German life, one did not necessarily have the freedom to choose whether one was a member of this group or not.

<sup>490</sup> "Roboter Sound," *Bravo*, Feb. 7, 1966, 6-7; "Beattime with Bobby Shaw," *Musik Parade*, Mar. 16, 1966, 17.

<sup>491</sup> The "cheerful robot" was used to describe how modern social structures create people who are hyper-rational, accommodating, and primarily unemotional in their day to day lives. See C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (1959; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 171.

### 3.4 MOD DECLINE AND REAPPEARANCE, 1967-1989

As has been already established in the previous chapters, the story of Mod is one that does not stop with 1967's "Summer of Love," though even more so than in the U.K., the period from the late-sixties until the German Mod Revival in 1978 was a time of its decreased visibility in the FRG. More and more magazine articles started exploring topics such as LSD and focusing on the idea of youth as "counterculture" rather than subculture. Since Hamburg's Star-Club was, as we have seen, the space in which Mod culture (vis-à-vis beat music) initially came to the country, the symbolism of its closing after the New Year's Eve show on December 31, 1969 is more than clear (fig. 19)<sup>492</sup> By 1970, not only had the Beatles broken-up, but so had many of Germany's own Beat heroes, such as the Lords.



Figure 19 A commemorative Star-Club plaque, Hamburg, 2007. Photo by author.

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<sup>492</sup> Magazine articles on drugs and the emergent hippie counterculture in 1967 include: "Gesellschaft: Rauchgift: Sanfter laufen," *Der Spiegel*, July 24, 1967, 104-105; "Gesellschaft: LSD-Gefährliche Reise," *Der Spiegel*, Aug. 7, 1967, 48; "Gesellschaft: Hippies: Sommer der Liebe," *Der Spiegel*, Aug. 28, 1967, 88-89; "Junge Leute spielen verrückt," *Der Stern*, Sept. 9, 1967, 135-141; Zint, *Große Freiheit* 39, 90-93;

Before the decade came to a close, however, West Germany in the late sixties, much like in U.S., was a tumultuous place. Given the continued close relationship between the Federal Republic and the States, noticeable through the continued presence of American military in Germany during this time, many youths there protested the Vietnam War. Overall, an increased political activism among some middle-class university students throughout Germany influenced the attitudes of the era. Beyond their stance against the Vietnam War, these students also protested what they saw as an incredibly stiff educational experience still led, in part, by adults who had been willing NS-party members or worse. Furthermore, the idea that postwar Germany had seemingly seamlessly transitioned from Nazism to democracy (with help, primarily from the U.S., who sought a Cold War ally) with former Nazis still in the higher echelons of power, hit a raw nerve with student activists.<sup>493</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly, the word “fascist” became the primary insult used by these students against all adults whose views did not completely align with theirs. The mainstream press followed the activities of the young protestors, often members of the *Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund* (“SDS,” Socialist German Student Union) and their leader, Rudi Dutschke, to such a degree that, as we will see in the following chapter with the U.S., many Germans today remember “the Sixties” as centered-around the year 1968. This is so much the case that those young activists who continued into public life, such as recent German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, are often tagged with the label of “68-er.”<sup>494</sup>

By the early seventies, German youth culture was very much in a state of transition. The youth spaces that still existed (often clubs) were either discotheques playing proto-Funk and

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<sup>493</sup> For the origins of this relationship between the United States and West Germany in the immediate postwar and beginning of the Cold War, see Pells, *Not Like Us*, 43-44.

<sup>494</sup> Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior* (New York: Grove, 1975), xx; Heinz Bude, “The German *Kriegskinder*: Origins and Impact of the Generation of 1968,” in *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany 1770-1968*, Mark Roseman, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 290-305. For a detailed look at the German student youth movement circa 1967-1968, see Sabine von Dirke, “*All Power to the Imagination!*”, 29-66.

Disco or a few live-music clubs, like Onkel Pö in Hamburg, which featured mainly acoustic singer-songwriter acts or a new form of Skiffle. The English-language music that filtered into German radio was that of jam-oriented “progressive rock,” with groups like Yes and Genesis finding massive audiences. This also mirrored the move of German rock music at the time. More akin to experimental groups of the late 1960s like New York’s Velvet Underground or Canterbury, England’s Soft Machine, German groups like Tangerine Dream, Can, and Amon Düül created cacophonous sounds that were nearly the exact opposite of melodious Beat music. Edgar Froese of Tangerine Dream relates how he responded to critics who would comment on the strangeness of his band’s music in light of groups who had recently been so popular in Germany: “We don’t want to play like the English or the Americans. We play like *we* play.”<sup>495</sup> In this sense, though rock music became a “youth language” in the Mod sixties, there was also a desire on the part of German musicians to create and contribute something distinctive within the now ever-more-globalized youth culture.

Unlike the U.K., where Mod continued on in the forms of Northern Soul and Skinhead culture in late sixties to early seventies, both these branches of the culture would not make a splash in Germany until the arrival of Punk circa 1977. While Punk arrived in the U.K. amidst economic strain and a “no future” ideology espoused by a singer named Johnny Rotten, the arrival of this angry-sounding music arrived in Germany during a year of unprecedented violence. Several years earlier, a small minority of “68-ers,” with extremely radical views, branched-off to form what would become the infamous German terrorist group the *Rote Armee*

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<sup>495</sup> Jan Möller, “Onkel Pö und Fabrik: Die Hamburger Szene, 1969-1979,” in *Läden, Schuppen, Kaschmmen: Eine Hamburger Popkulturgeschichte*, Christoph Twickel, ed. (Hamburg: Nautilus, 2003), 11-12; On the popularity of both mainstream and “underground” prog-rock bands in Germany, see Michele Avantario, “Von Krawall bis Totenschiff: Punk, New Wave und Hardcore: 1977-1987” in *Läden, Schuppen, Kaschmmen: Eine Hamburger Popkulturgeschichte*, 44; WDR-TV Germany, *Pop 2000*, “Folge 4: Sex, Drugs, & Rebellion, 1968-1970,” 1999; and for reference specifically to the group Can, see Unterberger, *Unknown Legends*, 168-173.

*Fraktion* (RAF, Red Army Faction), sometimes known as The Baader-Meinhof Gang because of its leaders Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof. Dissatisfied with merely taking to the streets to protest the continued participation of former Nazis in high-ranking government positions, the group turned to violence. After a series of terrorist actions between 1968 and 1976, from torching a department store in Frankfurt to high-jacking a Lufthansa flight, the so-called “German Autumn” of terror climaxed with the kidnapping and murder of Hanns-Martin Schleyer in late 1977.<sup>496</sup>

Hanns-Martin Schleyer was an ideal target for the RAF. He was a former SS officer in WWII who had nonetheless found prestigious work in the early days of the Federal Republic and, by 1977, was president of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) and the Federation of German Industries (BDI). For the members of the RAF, Schleyer represented the unconscionable fact that many former Nazis still inhabited the corridors of power in West Germany. Unfortunately, kidnapping and, eventually murdering Schleyer, was an equally objectionable “solution” to what they saw as Germany’s continuing denial of its recent past. Extremist views, terrorist actions, and murder made the RAF a near-mirror image, albeit much smaller, of their “Nazi parents.” It was a classic instance of two wrongs not making a right, whereby these young people had tried so hard to be different from the previous generation that they actually wound up behaving in a similar way.<sup>497</sup> Unlike Mod culture in the extreme, this severe outlet of generational frustration had led back to a focus on national malaise and division

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<sup>496</sup> Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 196-253; von Dirke, *All Power to the Imagination!*, 70-74; Stefan Klein, “Der Deutscher Herbst 1977: Tage des Schreckens,” *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/deutschland/artikel/960/130732/> (accessed July 1, 2008).

<sup>497</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 197. See also Jillian Becker, *Hitler’s Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1977).

amongst the young, rather than joyful expressions of a more internationally-minded youth culture.

While the RAF's terrorist actions reminded Germans (in some of the worst ways possible) of their recent past, the German broadcast of the U.S. TV miniseries *Holocaust* (1979) created more debates and discussions among the young both in school classrooms and at home. It seems that the airing of this program produced unprecedented dialogue between Germans of three different generations: the War generation, their children, and their grandchildren. In an article from *Der Spiegel*, the author writes, "The debate that has now broken-out in nearly every other German home... more intensely than ever before... young people are requiring from the older ones how Auschwitz was possible in a world that, despite the conformity of a totalitarian regime, still protected forms of bourgeois, affluent society." More so than in the sixties, young people were attempting to ask honest questions about their grandparents' involvement in Nazism and their knowledge about their then-government's genocidal plans.<sup>498</sup> With the upbeat and economically stable mid-sixties a fading memory as well, critics and commentators looked at the current youth culture scene in Germany with greater caution and concern. Meanwhile, songs like Donna Summer's "Hot Stuff" and M's "Pop Music" benignly raced up the German pop charts.<sup>499</sup>

This, then, was the cultural climate in which British-born Punk came to Germany and brought a new version of Mod and, the now already separate Skinhead culture with it. While more of the era of Mod culture will be described below, some attention must be paid to the reception and evolution of Skinhead culture in Germany. One important difference between German and British Skinhead culture is that by the time of its arrival in the FRG, it already had associations with racism and hooliganism. Though some of the earliest German Skinheads

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<sup>498</sup> Kansteiner, *German Memory*, 6; "Auschwitz: Eine Generation fragt," *Der Spiegel*, Feb. 5, 1979, 30.

<sup>499</sup> "Gesellschaft: Irgendwo Kaputt," *Der Spiegel*, Jan. 8, 1979, 133-134; *Hit Bilanz*, 457.



understood the subculture's roots in Mod and non-racist attitudes, by the time a larger group of Skins existed there in the early eighties, many of them aligned themselves with right-wing rhetoric. They made punks their enemies and saw them as left-wing do-nothings. More intense hatred and acts of violence were directed, like in England, against foreigners. When, in 1985, two Hamburg Turks were killed by Skinheads, many Skins who were not racist left the subculture. Other participants who sought to return to the non-racist roots of British Skin culture and counter the overwhelmingly negative images of Skinheads in the German press, formed a group called SHARP (Skinheads against Racial Prejudice).<sup>500</sup> In the eighties, it was not uncommon to see Skinheads at Mod events. Today, however, and based on my observations of Germany's Mod scene between 2006 and 2007, there are still a few participants at Mod events who, aesthetically, can be described as Skins.

Today, these Mod-affiliated Skinheads are, however, thin-on-the-ground and tend to come to the small number of events that highlight Ska, Reggae, and Soul, versus the more ubiquitous ones that mix Soul with Beat, psychedelic Freakbeat, or Garage.<sup>501</sup> A Skinhead since 1984, due to a cousin's influence on him, and current attendee of many Mod events in the Ruhr Valley—Markus “Wodka” [Vodka] Schultz (Hesse/Düsseldorf, b. 1969, fig. 20) told me how he views politics within subcultures more generally and also how he has reacted to right-wing Skinheads he has encountered over the years:

Politics do not belong in subcultures. Naturally, politics try to worm their way in—whether left, right, or some other direction. I have always said that I'm neutral [about politics], but I would say if someone came to me... seventeen, with five Böhsen Onkelz

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<sup>500</sup> Klaus Farin, “Urban Rebels: Die Geschichte der Skinhead Bewegung,” in *Die Skins: Mythos und Realität*, Klaus Farin, ed. (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 1997), 45-46, 48-50, 53. See also Timothy Brown, “Subcultures, Pop Music, and Politics: Skinheads and ‘Nazi Rock’ in England and Germany,” *Journal of Social History* 38:1 (2004): 161, 164-167.

<sup>501</sup> For the mixing of Mods and Skinheads at some events in Hamburg during the 70s and 80s, see Avantario, “Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” 79. For current “crossover” Mod events that attract Skinheads, see for example “Kings and Queens,” [handbill advertisement], circa April 2007, Hamburg.

[a right-wing Skinhead band] albums, and in a bomber jacket...I would say, 'No, listen to this and this...Sham 69...and these other things. You will see that it has nothing to do with politics.' Unfortunately, politics always finds someone and I've run into enough people who have said to me, 'Hey, you listen to Ska. I like it too, but only white Ska.'...I've said, 'Ska and being right-wing have absolutely nothing to do with one another. Ska came from Reggae and Reggae is black [music]. There is only non-political or anti-Racist Reggae.'<sup>502</sup>



**Figure 20 "Wodka" Schultz, Cologne, July 2007. Photo by author.**

Wodka found that since Skins tend to be more tradition-oriented than Mods, older members of the community could help educate newcomers to the origins of it and maybe detach the right-wing associations that have, unfortunately, been a part of Germany's Skinhead culture nearly since the beginning.

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<sup>502</sup> Markus "Wodka" Schultz, oral history interview with author, digital recording, July 21, 2007, Apropos Bar, Cologne, DCUP.

While Skinhead culture came to Germany by the late-seventies, so did another wave of Mod brought from England through the “Mod Revival” discussed in Chapter One. Though I have argued that Mod culture—in its live and mediated visual expressions of music, fashions, and cosmopolitanism—was very much present in mid-sixties’ Germany—the “Revival” importation of it from England at this time laid the groundwork for the Mod culture that continues there to this day.<sup>503</sup> In a period during which it seemed, many youth “tribes” existed, being a self-identified “Mod” was an alternative to being an *Eco* (“Hippie”), a Punk, a Skinhead, or, simply, a preppy, proto-yuppie member of the German bourgeoisie. Unlike in the sixties, from the late seventies onward, many more young people consciously self-identified with the term Mod if they liked the look and sounds of early-to-mid sixties culture. As stated previously in this chapter, “Beat” was the word that was most used to articulate this sensibility in the sixties, whereas “Mod” only rarely showed up (and for a very short time) in the German press. However, instead of being Beat-music-fixated, as their parents’ generation had been, they drew from a much wider palate of musical influences: embracing Soul and Northern Soul, Mod Revival bands from England like the Jam and Secret Affair, and also the more Skinhead-favored Ska (through 2 *Tone* bands), and Reggae. Jani Egloff (fig. 21) who became a Mod in 1980, has often wondered why it was that Mod should have been one of many attractive youth cultures for young Germans to choose during this period. If Mods in the 1960s had turned to Mod as a cosmopolitan solution to a nationalistic past, what did this recurrence of Mod in the 1980s potentially signify?

One thing I’m asking myself is why, why was it possible after punk rock... or why was it after punk rock that there were so many subcultural tribes or so many subcultures re-evolving? Why did it happen in the 80s? What was the climate in the 80s that these things

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<sup>503</sup> This history is also supported by Heike Jenß, *Sixties-Dress Only: Mode und Konsum in der Retro-Szene der Mods* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2007), 170-171.

happened? Part was Punk was the first subculture and then there was the skins and then the Ska and Mod revival, even Ted revival—I don't know what other revival. I don't know... the 80s were pretty conservative. The 80s in Germany were conservative as well. We're getting even more conservative in the mid-80s and, uh, in the U.K. it was Thatcherism. So, perhaps that was the climate that was necessary to bring up these subcultures. And of course there were these '68... these people in Germany who were against everything from the past [esp. before the late sixties...the early sixties- I interject]—that was petit-bourgeois, that was *spiesig*. It was petty bourgeois to run around in a crisp suit. You were thought to be either a fascist or said to belong to a stupid sect or whatever—and they didn't, well they didn't—these people, these teachers, for example, they tried to dominate us, and they tried to tell us that it was “uncool” to wear suits and to wear dresses and to look like that because we looked like their... we looked like their older sisters or whatever. They wore their stupid wool sweaters and idiotic Birkenstocks...and they talked that that [mimics a very slow, mellowed tempo of speech] and they were ‘so intense... wow’ and I hated them. I hated these people and thought, ‘Na, you're not hip... you're lazy hippies.’



Figure 21 Jani Egloff, Hamburg, October 2006. Photo by author.

In Jani's analysis of why she thought a more self-conscious Mod style existed in eighties Germany, it was both the overtly conservative socio-political milieu in and outside of Germany and ironically the "68-er" hippie ethos that carried-over from the late sixties (and that her teachers embody) that the second wave of Mods were rebelling against. In a typical generation-against-generation rebellion documented earlier in this chapter, Jani's sentiments underscored the fact that the once "hip" late-sixties aesthetic was by then seen as passé, while the early sixties Mod style was far enough removed (or absent) from 1980s culture that it ironically seemed fresher and more rebellious. What her teachers saw as conservative, Jani and other Mods saw as the apex of radical, underground style at the time.

Jani's Hamburg as well as Düsseldorf were the first two hubs of Mod activity from the late-seventies onward.<sup>504</sup> While the cosmopolitan aspect of this culture was still present for the earliest group of second-wave German Mods in the eighties, there was much more emphasis on building-up local "scenes" that would attract Mods from around the country and, then, eventually, outside of Germany. Sarah Cohen describes how local interactions can generate excitement for a scene that eventually can take on global implications. She writes that local scenes "involve a regular circulation and exchange of: information, advice, and gossip; instruments, technical support, and additional services; music recordings, journals, and other products...through them, knowledge about music and the scene is generated, distinctions are made between being inside or outside the scene, and the boundaries of the scene are thus marked."<sup>505</sup> Once local participants have established preferred spaces and media for circulation, they become known to those outside initial geographic boundaries. As was the case in the U.K.

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<sup>504</sup> Ralf Niemczyk, "Mods in Deutschland," *Spex*, Jan. 1984, 30-34.

<sup>505</sup> Sarah Cohen, "Scenes," in *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, ed. Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999), 240-241.

at that time, specialized music and youth-oriented magazines like *Spex*, *Prinz*, *Wiener*, and *Tempo* occasionally reported on Mod and other scenes, while a fanzine such as *Hi Fab!*, directly catered to Mods, first in Hamburg, and then elsewhere.<sup>506</sup> By the early-eighties' Mod events began being organized at smaller clubs in the city like KIR, while scene participants also attended larger shows by British bands at the larger *Markthalle*.<sup>507</sup> At this point attendance for these events were mainly local—while later organized weekend-long events would prove to be more geographically diverse in the years to come. Unlike the 1960s, the St. Pauli district was not the hub of youth activities. In the early seventies, the neighborhood fell into a downward spiral, making it feel more seedy and dangerous than it had in a very long time.<sup>508</sup>

The 1980s version of Mod's "young idea" in Germany was, as already mentioned, heavily influenced by the U.K.'s "Mod Revival" with its bands the Jam, Secret Affair, and the Purple Hearts. As the examples given by the narrators below illustrate, the concept of Mod was again aided by its circulation in various media such as (the still available) *Bravo* magazine, the (still on-air) British Forces Broadcasting Service, and especially, as was also the case for Mods I interviewed in England, *Quadrophenia* (1979). Harry Vogel (Munich, b. 1963) distinctly remembered this period of discovery and the role of the film in his introduction to Mod.

It was either 1978 or 1979, around the time that *Quadrophenia* was playing at the cinema, that I heard [the word] Mod for the first time...and that's exactly what it meant to me: parkas and fights on the beach and the Who. But I have also have to say that my first or second record, that I had bought with my own money when I was around ten or so, was a *Best of the Who* and had "Can't Explain" and all the stuff from '65 to '67 on it and I thought it was extremely good. I didn't know, though, that this would ('cause I was way too young) would be described as Mod. I had already bought a Jam LP in '77 because I saw a centerfold of a bunch of guys in suits with Rickenbackers in this

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<sup>506</sup> For the influence of these music magazines in Hamburg, see Christoph Twickel, "Editorial," in Läden, Schuppen, Kaschemmen, 7.

<sup>507</sup> Avantario, "Von Krawall zum Totenschiff," 50-51, 79.

<sup>508</sup> Martens and Zint, *St. Pauli*, 19, 21; Möller, "Onkel Pö," 11.

magazine *Bravo* and thought they looked fantastic. “That is so super—that’s somehow exactly what I want,” but I didn’t know that that was Mod.<sup>509</sup>

Jani Egloff, Alan Ayadi (b. 1967), and Ralf Jürgens (b. 1966) grew up in the greater Hamburg area and became participants in the city’s Mod scene of the early eighties.

Jani: That was 1980 when I first heard about Mod and, of course, everything was in connection with the film *Quadrophenia*. *Quadrophenia* came into the cinemas in 1979 and, um, Germany was a bit slower and the movie came into, well, smaller cinemas and that was the first time I heard about it. I didn’t read anything about it, but I heard about it, and um, the first time was when I went on the underground and saw several Mods and asked them, because it was really a pack, and I asked them, ‘Well, who are you?’ because they looked different, to me they looked different—they were quite loud they were shouting ‘We are Mods,’ so I thought, ‘Oh yeah, they must be Mods, whatever that is,’ and they had parkas on, fishtail parkas on. Some had porkpie hats on and it was the time of ska revival as well, so this is how I got into contact with them and I asked them where they were going and they told me they were meeting at a café [she pronounces it as the British ‘caff’] in Hamburg...and I went there.<sup>510</sup>

Alain: I think I first heard it [Mod] in connection with the Jam. At the time I was already a music fan and would regularly listen to [the program] “John Peel’s Music,” because you were able to listen to it in Lower Saxony. You could hear John Peel’s Music” through reception of the British Forces Broadcasting Service and he played all kinds of new music and I’m sure he played the Jam and it was there that I heard for the first time that the Jam were Mods. I liked the music and it was also around this time that I became friends with an ex-Punk, or ex-Clash fan, who had become a Mod.<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>509</sup> „Ich habe [das Wort] Mod zum ersten Mal gehoert—daß musste...1978 oder 1979 gewesen sein als *Quadrophenia* ins Kinos kamm und genau daß hat dann Mod fuer mich bedeutet, also Parka und Pruegelen am Strand und the Who—aber ich muss dazu sagen daß meine erste oder zweite Platte die ich selber gekauft hat, da war ich vielleicht zehn, oder so, und daß war eine “Best of the Who und daß war nur so “Can’t Explain” und das ganze Zeug von 65 bis 67 und daß fand ich tierisch gut. Ich wusste aber nicht daß sowas als Mod oder so—ich war viel zu klein dazu—bezeichnet worde und ich hatte auch schon in 77 ein Jam LP gekauft, weil ich in so eine Magazin Bravo eine Doppelseite gesehen habe von diese Typen in Anzugen und Rickenbackers...und daß sah so genial aus. Daß ist so super—daß ist genau, daß will ich irgendwie...wusste ich nicht daß es Mod war.“ Harry Vogel, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Mar. 2, 2007, Vogel residence, Munich, DCUP.

<sup>510</sup> Christiane “Jani” Egloff, digital recording, interview by author, 20 Oct. 2007, Hamburg, DCUP. This interview was conducted in English.

<sup>511</sup> “Ich glaube ich habe daß zum ersten Mal gehoert im Zusammenhang mit the Jam. Ich war schon zu der Zeit Musik-Fan und hoerte regelmäßig *John Peel’s Music*, weil daß im Niedersachsen zu hoeren war. Also, ich wohnte im süden von Hamburg, aber schon in Niedersachsen. Man könnte *John Peel’s Music* durch den ‘British Forces Broadcasting Service’ empfangen und er spielte auch eben halt alle mögliche neue Musik und ich glaube er spielte auch the Jam und so habe ich zum ersten Mal gehoert daß the Jam Mods waren. Ich mochte die Musik und zu ungefähr die selbe Zeit habe ich eine Freundschaft an einem Ex-Punks gemacht, oder ein Ex-Clash-Fans der Mod geworden ist.” Alain Ayadi, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Nov. 13, 2006, Einen Sommer in August café, Berlin, DCUP.

Ralf: I think I [first] heard [about Mod] through the music of the late 70s, through the Jam, *Quadrophenia*, and so on...<sup>512</sup>

When Ralf remembered this time, he also recalled the vastness of the local Mods' gatherings in the city: "From the beginning [to] middle Eighties, the scene in Hamburg was actually quite big. There were regular meet-ups at the *Markthalle* every Friday, every Saturday... circa three, four hundred people would meet ... even if there was nothing going on there... and then we would go to parties afterwards."<sup>513</sup>

These narrators illustrate not only how *Quadrophenia* was influential, but also how it was a point of departure for them. As a result of these encounters, these Hamburg Mods all eventually took on varying participatory roles within the scene and also became interested in different branches of the ever-growing Mod family tree. Jani Egloff started singing in the 1960s-garage-influenced band Daisy Chain; Alain became an avid concert-goer supporting bands like Jani's and collecting masses of "Modzines" from Germany, England, the U.S., and Australia; Ralf eventually began playing rare Rhythm and Blues singles as a DJ (albeit much later).

Another key member of the Hamburg scene, Olaf Ott (b. 1964, fig. 22) created Fab Records—which had him doing everything from managing the label's bands and tours—to promoting them and all things Mod in his *Hi Fab!* zine. Though Fab artists tended to veer toward mid-sixties Beat and American garage sounds (the origins of which will be more comprehensively discussed in the upcoming chapter), Soul is Ott's favorite genre. In 1985 Olaf, with his friend Leif Nüske began Hamburg's "Soul Allnighter"—originally held at the

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<sup>512</sup> "...Denke Mal zuerst gehört über die Musik ende der siebziger Jahre über Jam oder *Quadrophenia* und so weiter..." Ralf Jürgens, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Apr. 29, 2007, Hamburg, DCUP.

<sup>513</sup> "Und hier zu der Zeit—anfang, mitte der Achziger war die Szene in Hamburg ziemlich gross gewesen, eintlich. Es gab regelmässig 'Treffe' an der Markthalle jeden Freitag, jeden Samstag... circa drei, vierhundert Leute haben getroffen und dann hinterher...und eigentlich auch wenn nichts los war, sind hinterher zu Feten gegangen." R. Jürgens, Interview.



aforementioned KIR nightclub which continues to be held at other locations every Easter Sunday and Christmas Eve (fig. 23).



Figure 22 Mods of the early 1980s. Olaf Ott seated far left. Courtesy Olaf Ott.



Figure 23 Flyer for one of Ott's Allnighters. Courtesy Alan Ayadi.

Interestingly, Olaf Ott's first brush with Mod culture came from a trip to London with his family in the summer of 1979, by way of record shops carrying *2 Tone* label LPs by groups like Madness. Not yet hearing the word Mod, though, in connection with the sounds he heard and the fashion sported on the album covers, he did not actually hear the word until his return to Hamburg:

The first time [I heard] Mod I didn't understand it. The first time I heard it was in the summer of '79 at the *Markthalle* at a Ska concert. I don't quite remember if it was Madness or the Specials...and there was the first little group in parkas and they sang, "We are the Mods! We are the Mods!" I think that was even before the first German screening of *Quadrophenia*. At that time I thought "Mods," if I correctly remember it, was short for the German word *motzen*...when one complains about something, one *motzes*.<sup>514</sup>

For Ott and the aforementioned narrators, Mod became an important aspect to their identity, not just on this participatory level, but sometimes also in the way they thought about themselves as Germans.

While German press in the 1960s had associated the word Mod with something English, or a subculture that truly only existed in England, the word and concept was now something that could be used more readily to describe German youth as well. Articles in both mainstream and youth-oriented niche magazines tried to understand what relevance or currency a 60s-oriented youth culture might have for the 1980s. *Der Stern's* 1984 article "Die Mods sind auferstanden," ("The Resurrection of the Mods"), which followed the scene that Jani, Alain, and Ralf were then participating in, and in which Jani is featured, aptly captures an aspect of the fascination:

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<sup>514</sup> "Ich habe es das Erste Mal nicht verstanden. Das erste Mal als ich gesehen habe war im Sommer...als ich gehört habe war im Sommer '79 in der Markthalle bei ein Ska concert. Ich weiss nicht genau ob es Madness oder Specials waren...und da waren das este Grüppchen die Parka an hatten und die haben halt "We are the Mods! We are the Mods!" gesungen...ich glaube dass muss noch vor den deutschen erst Auführung von *Quadrophenia* gewesen sein. "Mods," habe ich, glaube ich, wenn ich recht ensinne, habe ich es für die deutsche Abkürzung zum verstanden für motzen...wenn man meckert, motzt man." Olaf Ott, Oral History Interview by the author, digital recording, Ott Residence Hamburg, Germany, Aug. 8, 2007, DCUP.

“Flower Power, youth revolt, an optimistic view of the future: these times are over and have been replaced by ‘No Future,’ acid rain, missiles, environmental destruction, and unemployment. No wonder then, if unemployed ‘youth’ laugh at ‘dialogue’ with politicians and, instead, create another world with its own codes, symbols, and fetishes.” As one of the articles’ seventeen-year-old interview partners states, “Back then things were a lot more positive and not as broken-down as today. Those guys didn’t look backwards or forwards—they were only living for today.”<sup>515</sup> Interestingly, and not surprisingly, this 80s Hamburg Mod must not be thinking of his parents’ generation at all—who still had to work-out their feelings of guilt-by-association connected to World War II. It seems that the reference point here becomes the actual British Mod subculture of the early 60s rather than the broader Mod sensibility of the mid-sixties.

Two articles in youth-oriented magazines during this time, “*Dandies der Achziger*” (“Dandies of the Eighties”) and “*Mods in Deutschland*” (“Mods in Germany”) also ruminate on the issue at hand: how can youth be Mod or modern if they are “living in the past?” Both articles seem to answer the question by their mere existence: if Mods exist in the present, not only with a fetish for the 60s, but with an ever-expanding palette of their own events and happenings, and a new crop of bands, then it *is* something contemporary, if simultaneously retrospective. The project of the Mods continues to be one of identity formation that is established by seeking out the best of an exciting and dynamic period and redefining it for current consumption. As Jens Kraft writes in his “Dandies of the 80s” article, “The Mods of today are an elite and fashionable group, whose hobby it is to delve into and work through the 1960s. Their work is long from

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<sup>515</sup> “Flower-Power, Jugendrevolte, Zukunftsoptimismus: Die Zeiten sind vorbei, statt dessen ‘No Future’, saurer Regen, Raketen, Umwelt- und Arbeitsvernichtung. Kein wunder, wenn die Arbeitslose ‘Jugend’ auf den ‘Dialog’ mit den Politikern Pfeift und sich in eine Gegenwelt mit eingigen Codes, Symbolen und Fetischen absetzt” and “Damals, da war alles noch positiver und nicht so kaput wie heute. Die Typen haben nicht zurückgeblickt und nicht nach vorn, die haben nur Heute gesehen.” Sabine Bredy, “Die Mods sind auferstanden,” *Der Stern*, Hamburg Supplement, 15, 1984, 4.

being finished...but the Mods do not just live in the past. They do not ignore new bands, but there are only a few that suit their tastes...the Times, TV Personalities, the Style Council (recently the Jam).”<sup>516</sup> Meanwhile, Ralf Niemczyk’s “Mods in Deutschland” article recognizes the “young idea” that has resurfaced in the 80s version of Mod. A Düsseldorf Mod named Bodo Goliash tells Niemczyk, “‘Mod’ is something young. It is a complete self-abandonment. It is all about loving and savoring one’s youth...Mods detest the idea of growing older, and try to impede the process. They fight against it.”<sup>517</sup> Here, as in 1960s Germany, the concept of Mod becomes a space where notions of modernity and generation are united, and where an ideal of progress via youth is much sought after. If the right combination of this formula is not found in contemporary, mainstream culture (as it was during the original Mod period), then looking backward becomes the progressive option for living in the moment. This key component of Mod would continue with the next wave of its adherents in the 1990s and 2000s.

### 3.5 MOD YOUTH IN E.U. GERMANY, 1990-2008

To be a contemporary German Mod puts one in the position of potentially being labeled as *postmoderne*.<sup>518</sup> A magazine article from 1996 called “Mod Sei Dank” (“Thank Mod,” which is a play on “Gott sei Dank,” or “Thank God.”) described Mod in this way: “The nineties version is no authentic revival, but in typical postmodern fashion, a case where one helps oneself to various

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<sup>516</sup> Jens Kraft, “Dandies der Achziger: Mods,” *Tango*, Mar. 1984, 22.

<sup>517</sup> Niemczyk, “Mods in Deutschland,” 33.

<sup>518</sup> The popularity of postmodernism in academe during the 1980s and 1990s can be attributed to, among others, two influential texts: Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [translation from the French by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991). For the connection between popular culture and postmodernism, see Neil Nehring, *Popular Music, Gender, and Postmodernism: Anger is an Energy* (London: Sage, 1997), 3-20.

epochs and styles of pop culture: the twenties Dandy and the sixties Mod with a shot of eighties Glam and a dash of androgyny are celebrating a rebirth.”<sup>519</sup> The mid-nineties vision of Mod was, as in the U.K., colored by the popularity of contemporary Britpop bands like Oasis and Blur. As a recent German *Rolling Stone* cover story had it, the Jam’s Paul Weller and Oasis’s Noel Gallagher “fight about Mod and the world,” thus aligning “Mod heroes” of the 1970s and 1990s with the culture’s continued presence.<sup>520</sup> However, it is still easy for some to label Mod culture since the 1960s as postmodern—or as a failed attempt to “relive the sixties,” but this is not how the participants I interviewed saw their involvement in the German scene. Instead, it is, similar to those I spoke with in the U.K., a way to evoke the essence of the Mod sixties. Some current participants told me that they enjoy attending events where everyone is dressed in mid-sixties clothing, and where music from that time is being played on 45s, because it is, in a sense, like traveling back in time,

There was this ‘Men from Unkel’ Weekender and a friend from here in Hamburg was always telling me about it. And it was the case that whenever he told [me] something it was always highly exaggerated... He was always telling me about these parties and said to me, ‘You have to go there. It’s like a time machine...’ And then, in ‘98, I went there for the first time. And that’s when I thought, ‘Oops, he *was* telling the truth. He didn’t exaggerate a thing.’ And it was the absolute best. It was really a turning point for me when I walked in and no one looked as if it was the 90s. They were all completely styled [Mod] from head to toe. (Ben “Jones” Nickel, Hamburg, b. 1977, fig. 24)<sup>521</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Brigit Hamm, “Mod Sei Dank!” *Prinz*, Feb. 1996, 29.

<sup>520</sup> Jon Wilde, “Das Britpop-Duell: Weller & Gallagher streiten über Mod und die Welt,” *Rolling Stone* [Germany], Feb. 2007, 40-45.

<sup>521</sup> “Es gab diesen ‘Men from Unkel’ Weekender immer und ein Freund hier aus Hamburg der hat mir immer davon erzählt. Und es war halt so dass wenn er was erzählte war es immer so sehr viel Uebertreibung.... Und der hat mir immer von diese Parties erzählt und meinte ‘Du musst da mit hinkommen, und dass ist wie eine Zeitmaschine...und ahhh!’ Und dann bin ich irgendwann, bin in ‘98 zum ersten Mal mit ihm dahin gefahren. Da wars denn so wo ich dachte: ‘Oops, der hatte ja recht gehabt.’ Und er hatte es nicht untertrieben. Das war der Hammer, halt. Es war wirklich so wie ein Schlüsselerlebnis dass ich darein kam und da war niemand sah aus als wäre aus den 90ern—oder so, das waren alle komplett oben bis unten gesteuert.” Ben “Jones” Nickel, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Nickel residence, Hamburg, Oct. 25, 2006, DCUP.



**Figure 24 DJ Ben Nickel leafs through his collection of vintage 45s. Photo by author.**

If it [Mod] could only be tied to the sixties, then you couldn't live it out today. So, naturally you can project it into current times as a lifestyle, as a way to differentiate yourself from the masses and listen to music that is well-crafted... In any case, one can live it like this even with different [socio-] political circumstances. (Nicole Benesch, Hamburg, b. 1973)<sup>522</sup>

In this way, this “time travel,” also provided a more satisfying parallel to often mundane, *adult* life. Though Mod started as a youth culture, the German scene today—not unlike those in other countries—has become increasingly populated by people who think and act “youthfully,” even if they are no longer biologically young. *Gymnasium* German and Philosophy teacher Bettina Peter (Cologne, b. 1970, fig. 25) described it thusly:

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<sup>522</sup> “Wenn das [Mod] nur mit den Sechzigern Jahren verbunden wurde, dann konnte es man eigentlich heute nicht mehr leben. Also, man kann es natürlich in der jetzigen Zeit projektieren als eine Lebenseinstellung um sich halt abzugrenzen auch aus der Masse, und halt eine Musik zu hören die halt handgemacht ist... man kann es auf jeden Fall so leben auch mit einen anderen politischen Hintergrund.” Nicole Benesch, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Apr. 29, 2007, Hamburg, DCUP.

The music has everything: it has soul. It's snotty. It's ruckus. It is oppositional and rebellious... That's why when my students revolt or get upset about things... I think that's OK. That's how adolescents are and I think it's good when adults can be that way [sometimes] in their everyday lives, too... since everyday life can so often be merciless and unpleasant. It's the wish to cultivate things that people have rights to... even as adults. There are things which trap you. You have to work so that you can afford to buy clothes... that it's a necessary evil. Jimmy [from *Quadrophenia*] already showed us that. If you want to have fun on the weekends you have to set your nose to the grindstone and live with that. That's how it is. And recognizing that this is the way it is means that I can allow myself to go crazy on the weekends, because I'll still have to set my nose to the grindstone on Monday... Life is no joy ride, and when one understands that, one can establish a really nice kind of escape. I very much understand it. 'The Sixties?' I'm addicted to the Sixties,' because it speaks to me... the aesthetic... and much more. It's a flight from the everyday... It's a very endearing escape, too. I think it is, for instance, better than running around costumed as a dwarf at live [roll-playing] conventions [Laughs].<sup>523</sup>

For Bettina, the Mod "way of life" is not only an escape into an idealization of the 1960s, but what adult life *could* be, but seldom is not.

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<sup>523</sup> "Die [Musik] bedient Alles: die bedient die Seele, die bedient die Rotzigkeit. Die bedient Krawall. Die bedient Opposition, Auflehnung... eigentlich Dinge mit dem ich leben kann. Daswegen finde ich meine Schüler wenn sie sich auflehnen und sich aufregen... ich finde daß *okay*. So sind Jugendliche und Ich finde es gut wenn Erwachsene daß auch in ihren Alltag bekommen, daß oft gnadenlos und nicht schön ist. Das ist auch vielleicht der Wunsch dannach Dinge zu kultivieren die als Mensch recht hat—auch Erwachsene. Dinge in den... man gefangen ist. Man muss arbeiten um sich Klamotten leisten zu koennen...daß ist ein notwendiges Übel. Das hat uns Jimmy ja schon gezeigt... damit wir auch dicke Eier haben können am Wochenende....dicke Eier haben zu können müssen wir mal den Asch hinhalten und sofern von Leben...das ist so. Und dieses Anerkennen, was eben so ist wie es ist [und] dass ich am Wochenende wieder die Sau rauslassen darf. Weil sonst muss ich wieder Montag den Asch hinhalten... Leben ist kein 'Pony Ride' und kein Streichel und wenn ein dass klar ist, ist es auch eine wirklich schöne Ausgleich bildet. Ich kann es gut verstehen. 'The Sixties? 'I'm addicted to the Sixties,' weil es bedient mir so Dinge... meine Ästhetik...und noch vieles mehr. Auch Alltagsflucht... ein sehr liebenswerte Alltagsflucht halt auch. Ich finde es, zum Beispiel, besser als mit irgendwelchen Live-Konventions rumzulaufen und sich als Zwerf zu verkleiden." Bettina Peter, oral history interview with the author, digital recording, May 28, 2007, Hotel Vater Rhein restaurant, Bad Breisig, DCUP.



**Figure 25 Bettina Peter, center. Manuel Sureck, left. May 2008. Photo by author.**

After interviewing Bettina Peter in May 2007, she promised to introduce me to her hairdresser Arthur back in Cologne. Arthur was apparently not only highly knowledgeable when it came to giving local Mods the French crew and geometric cuts they desired, but had also observed closely subcultures in general. His clientele included not only Mods, but Punks, Goths, Rockabillys, but any other youth culture one could name. Similar to his client Bettina, Arthur believed that Mod is a style that did not just cater to teenagers, but could as easily to people in their twenties and thirties. Part of his opinion has to do with the actual stylishness of the Mod look as compared to those of other subcultures: It's a style "that doesn't have to be rude or severe. It can be something good where one recognizes oneself [within it], right? Where one says, 'Oh, I am rebelling through my appearance, but it doesn't have to be in a severe manner... [It can be] in a more graceful one.'" This may be one of the key reasons why Mod has lasted as long as it has. It opposes the conventional by *not* by embodying society's (supposedly) denied



“ugliness,” but instead, flaunts what the world could look like through rose-colored glasses. Mod is rebellion that uses elegance as defiance.<sup>524</sup>

As the above statements show, Mod culture can be a way for young people today to tap into an “authenticity” missing from mainstream, contemporary life.<sup>525</sup> Two of my narrators located this quality not just in the music and fashion of this period, but in the eventual political activism of the later sixties. One of these narrators, Susanne (“Susi”) Reimann, saw this as an intrinsic part (or, at least, an outgrowth) of what she understood as Mod culture:

I don't just like music from [the sixties], but everything. I think the Sixties was simply an incredibly exciting decade where a lot happened. There was recognition that this was a period of change. It was the next generation, the so-called postwar generation and it was through them that these [various] movements came to be... things like the student revolt and so on. It's impressive to me when people change things; when they mobilize themselves for things. The way it is now, I really think it's unfortunate somehow, because I don't have the feeling that people fight for their rights... I think it's time again for people to say, 'Hey, Hello... we are the people and you won't trivialize us again.' I think that people accept a lot of things [that they shouldn't] and that was not just shown in the student movement, but it affected everything [then]. It was mirrored in the music and fashion. Everything was very innovative. It was simply a great big, new direction (Berlin, b. 1980, fig. 26).<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> “[Stil] muss nicht was *rudes* sein... es brauch nicht was heftiges sein. Es kann auch was gutes sein... wo man sich erkennt, ne? Wo man sich wiedererkennt und wo man sagt, ‘Oh, ich habe eine Rebellion über des Aussere und es muss nicht... ein heftiges Auftreten sein, sondern über ein grazilleres Auftreten.’ Arthur Wynandz, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Cologne, July 19, 2007, DCUP. This idea of a “stealth” kind of rebellion was first observed by American author Tom Wolfe’s first brush with British Mod culture. See, Tom Wolfe, “The Noonday Underground” [from *The Pump House Gang*, 1968] in *The Sharper Word: A Mod Anthology*, ed. Paolo Hewitt (London: Helter Skelter, 1999), 62-72.

<sup>525</sup> Heike Jenß, “Dressed in History: Retro Styles and the Construction of Authenticity in Youth Culture,” *Fashion Theory* 8:4 (2004): 388. See also this view of retro-fashions that rails against, to quote the author, “post-modernist pessimism.” Paul Willis, *Common Culture: Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young* (Milton Keynes, Eng.: Open University Press, 1991), 26-27, 88, 149-150.

<sup>526</sup> “Ich mag halt nicht nur die Musik aus der Zeit, sondern dass ist so Alles in sich Einstimmig. Ich finde die Sechziger als ein Jahrzehnt wahnsinnig spannend. Da ist einfach ganz viel passiert. Das war so eine gewisse Aufbruchsstimmung. Es war die nächste Generation, sozusagen...also es war also diese nachkriegs-Generation und dadurch sind auch da eben diese Bewegungen zu Stände gekommen halt...eben Studenten Revolte...und diese Sachen. Das imponierte mich halt wenn Menschen was bewegen. Wenn sie sich halt wirklich fuer Dinge einsetzen. So wie es zur Zeit ist, finde ich es eintlich sehr Schade irgendwie... weil ich nicht wirklich das Gefühl habe dass Leute fuer ihre Rechte... eintreten. Also, dass die von Gebrauch machen...also eintlich ist es wieder mal Zeit wieder zu sagen, ‘Hey, Hallo. Wir sind immernoch das Volk, und so, und lange lassen wir uns nicht lächerlich machen. Also, ich finde die Leute schlucken viel zu sehr und dass hat sich nicht nur in der Studenten Bewegung sich gezeigt, sondern es spielt Alles mit einander zusammen, also, dass hat sich auch in der Musik wiedergespiegelt und in der



**Figure 26** Susanne Reimann, Berlin, September 2006. Photo by author.

Another narrator believes that music and fashion serve as portals to understanding deeper dimensions of the original Mod period, as well as the late sixties—which some Mods today do include within contemporary expressions of the culture.<sup>527</sup> She thought this was true for her generation as well as for “teens and twens” who entered the scene later:

They may think, ‘Oh, that dress is cool,’ and then they realize at some point, ‘Oh these fashions have existed back then [in the sixties]... and what was that time like?’ And I think it’s the same with music. If they know the Beatles, they might wonder, ‘What else was going on?’ Then they discover the Kinks... and *then* they realize there was even wilder stuff. And, for me, I think the late sixties had this political angle. I’m not sure how much of a role that plays [for young people] these days, but that was very important

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Mode. Alles war sehr...also, ja, sehr innovativ. Es war einfach ein ganz grosse...ganz, ganz neue, andere Richtung. Also ich finde es wahnsinnig spannend.” Reimann, Interview.

<sup>527</sup> This is based on my own observations, but also remarked upon in Jenß, *Sixties Dress Only*, 177.

to me... this idea that in those days people had reasons to take to the streets. These days people are happy when they have a video recorder or a CD player. People live for themselves. In those days people still fought to make society better. 'It isn't necessary anymore.' I think people today have great individual freedoms, so you can convince yourself that you are free. Today when you fight for things they seem abstract or far away... in other countries. Concerns like Global warming, for instance, are not as concrete as things back then. Back then one fought for women's rights and the civil rights for blacks in the U.S., which felt like more immediate concerns. (Dani Schwämmlein, Nuremburg/Berlin, b. 1972)<sup>528</sup>

In Dani's estimation, an affinity for late-sixties culture can also be a gateway for eventual participation in Mod culture.

However, not everyone I interviewed would have actually liked living in the 1960s as they were, not when they think about how the era *really* could have been:

I don't try to live in the Sixties. I don't want to live like they did back then. I'm not trying to travel back in time, but rather have a little bit of the feeling and style—the style of clothing and music [of then]. (Christoph Sonnenberg, Kempton, b. 1968)<sup>529</sup>

Honestly, I have to say that I wouldn't want to go back and live in the sixties, because I think that nowadays, especially as a woman, you can enjoy the benefits of what women in that era fought so hard for. [These things] are just understood as a given now... that I am unmarried at my age... [for example]. I really don't think I would have necessarily loved the sixties. (Anja Beckmann, Ruhr Valley/Bremen, b. 1973)<sup>530</sup>

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<sup>528</sup> “Dass sie sich denken, ‘Ach, das Kleid ist cool,’ und dann sehen sie vielleicht irgendwann Mal, ‘Ach es gab damals schon Mal und was war das damals fuer eine Zeit?’ oder so. Und so ähnliches sucht sich auch mit die Musik. Wenn sie, zum Beispiel, Beatles kennen oder so und dann sie Mal überlegen sich ‘Was gab es noch so?’ Und dann sie entdecken die Kinks, und dann kriegen sie mit dass da gabs... noch abgefahrene Sachen oder so. Ja, und vielleicht auch einfach so ein bißchen... da finde ich Mal die ende die Sechziger...dass war bei mir eben so die politische Aspekt... Ich weiss nicht wie viel das Heute eine Rolle spielt, aber dass war fuer mich wichtig—eben auch so das Gefühl damals gab noch Grunde auf die Strasse zu gehen. Heutzutage, die Gesellschaft ist zu frieden wenn sie sein Viderecorder oder sein CD-Player hat und lebt für sich selber. Und damals haben die Leute noch gekempft daß die Gesellschaft besser wird. Es ist heute nicht mehr so nötig. Ich denke heutzutage hat jeder in unsere Gesellschaft grosse individuelle Freiheit und man kann sich einreden, ja, Freiheit zu haben. Und die Sachen fuer die man heutzutage noch kempfen moechten sind sehr abstrakt oder weit weg—in anderen Ländern oder, ja so was wie klima-Schutz und dass ist nicht so handfest wie damals. Damals hat man für die Rechte die Frauen gekempft, in USA die Rechte der Schwarzen, etc. Und daß war viel nahe an die Leute dran.” Dani Schwämmlein, oral history interview with author, digital recording, July 5, 2007, Einen Sonntag in August café, Berlin, DCUP.

<sup>529</sup> “Ich versuche nicht zu sein wie in den 60s. Ich will nicht leben wie damals... ich versuche nicht mich in der Zeit zu transportieren, halt ein bischen von dem Gefuehl und den Stil—der Stil in der Kleidung und in der Musik.” Sonnenberg, Interview.

<sup>530</sup> “Ich ehrlich sagen muss ich möchte heutzutage nicht gerne in den Sechzigern leben, weil ich glaube heutzutage hat man, gerade als Frau, kann man da viel von was damals in den Sechzigern gekempft worde einfach als selbstverstaendlich betrachten...dass ich in mein Alter noch nicht verheiratet bin... [zum Beispiel] die Sechziger

...Old objects... an old record, old clothes... they have a history that you really cannot imagine. I find that very attractive. You 'see' in these things how other people lived... That is what I think is simply charming... [But] it was only for a very short time that I thought that I would have liked to have lived in that time... Sure, when I was fourteen I thought, "Man, I could have been living in my parents' generation." In 1969 my parents were eighteen, so they just barely experienced that [time]. I really don't want that, because today you have a lot more choices... and one can try out many different things. (Manuel Sureck, Düsseldorf/Trier, b. 1977, fig. 23)<sup>531</sup>

These three examples show that though one can adopt the best of Mod sixties style and culture into the contemporary moment, one does not necessarily want to live in the past. It is, instead, a gateway for aestheticization of everyday life. Furthermore, Cologne DJ Andi Schultz (one of the "Two Men from Linz" organizers) and owner of Mod-themed Hammond Bar, believed traditionally Mod sounds from the sixties could easily be mixed with newer Anglo-American pop music. He saw some of his events as important in this way:

At some point I began my event called 'Pop Vibrations,' and, at that time, there were Britpop and Indie scenes and there was a Sixties scene. And, to a certain degree, the music was super similar, but no one from these scenes managed to dance to the music of the other. Then, every now and then, I would mix the music together... simply to show that there are actually no big differences sometimes, and that you can have a good time together. And that's important for my events... that [people] realize that it's not limited to a certain time period, but rather that other genres count. And, in the meantime, a lot of Indie and Britpop people come to sixties parties... and visa versa that sixties people sometimes come to other parties.<sup>532</sup>

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wurde ich nicht unbedingt geliebt haben." Anja Beckmann, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Prinzen Bar, Hamburg, Oct. 28, 2006, DCUP.

<sup>531</sup> "Weil alte Gegenstände, eine alte Schallplatte, alte Klamotten—die haben eine Geschichte daß sie wirklich nicht vorstellen kann. Das finde ich sehr reizvoll. Man sieht in die Sachen wie die anderes gelebt haben. Die sind nicht mehr brandneu. Das finde ich einfach reizvoll... [aber es] war nur ganz kurz wo ich mir gedacht habe... daß ich gerne damals in der Zeit gelebt hätte. Also, klar als ich viezehn war habe ich gedacht "Mensch, ich hätte in der Generation meine Elterns gewesen. Meine Eltern waren 1969 achtzehn... also die haben es eigentlich gerade noch mitgekriegt. Das will ich nicht... weil man heutzutage die absolute Auswahl hat... und man ganz viele Sachen ausprobieren kann." Manuel Sureck, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Spilles youth center, Düsseldorf, July 23, 2007, DCUP.

<sup>532</sup> "...dann habe ich zum Beispiel irgendwann meine Veranstaltung angefangen die hiess 'Pop Vibrations,' und es gab damals eine Britpop und Indie-Szene und es gab eine Sixties-szene. Und Teilweise war die Musik super-ähnlich aber keine von beiden Szenen hat geschafft zu der Musik der andere Szene zu tanzen. Dann habe ich ab und zu mal die Musik zusammen gemixt... einfach zu vermitteln dass da eintlich nicht grosse Unterschiede da manchmal sind. Und dass man eintlich mit einander gut auskommen kann. Und dass ist auch bei meine Veranstaltungen wichtig... dass die merken dass es nicht nur auf ein Zeitraum begrenzt ist, sondern dass da weiter Fächer zählt und mittlerweile

In Andi's view, today's Mod scene can be more inclusive and expansive than some other participants are willing to acknowledge. The songs played at his events, then, do not have to be strictly "sixties only." As he mentioned this, I remembered my trip to his "Pop Vibrations" Halloween party where the Kinks' "She's Got Everything" was played in the same set as Pulp's mid-nineties hit "Common People."<sup>533</sup>

As illustrated in this chapter's sections on German Mod from the 1960s to the 1980s, the culture's presence and evolution is wed to socio-historic circumstances. The same remains true from the key year of 1989 onward. Since the country's split between East and West was the result of Germany's defeat, occupation, and the Cold War, when the Berlin Wall came tumbling down on November 11, 1989, so did the most symbolic vestige of Germany's postwar fate. Previous to its fall, the Wall and all it stood for had been more directly ominous to Generation X Germans than the remaining ghosts of the country's Nazi past. Though this past was certainly not forgotten by this cohort, it did not have the same kind of immediacy that it did to their parents: it was their grandparents, rather than their parents, who had potentially been "Party Members" or worse.<sup>534</sup> As one historian writes, "Germans born since the 1960s probably have no compelling psychological reason to engage with the legacy of the Third Reich in an intensive, sustained, and self-critical fashion." Thus, in terms of understanding "Gen X" German Mods' interest in the culture's cosmopolitan possibilities, this desire has more likely to do with newfound travel

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ist es auch dass viele Indie-pop und Britpop-Leute zum Sixties-Parties kommen auch... und anders rum gesehen, dass die Sixties-Leute mal auf die anderen Parties kommen." Andreas "Andi" Schultz, oral history interview with author, digital recording, May 29, 2007, Hammond Bar, Cologne, DCUP.

<sup>533</sup> Ray Davies, comp., "She's Got Everything," The Kinks, *Kinks Kronikles*, Reprise 6454, CD; Jarvis Cocker, comp., "Common People," Pulp, *Different Class*, Island 524165, CD.

<sup>534</sup> Moller, and Tschuggnall, *Opa war kein Nazi*.

possibilities afforded by the European Union and the end of the Cold War, rather than a wish for one's actions to counteract the Nazi past.<sup>535</sup>

The reunification of Germany in 1990 also raised old issues dating back to the original unification of 1871. Namely, how does one integrate and unify *different* kinds of Germans? Palpable feelings of fraternity between West and East Germans were immediately evident, but disintegrated quickly. Similar to the original unification of Germany in 1871, the coming together of East and West—which can be argued was the West merely incorporating the “failed” East—required a subsuming of another (i.e., less desirable) kind of Germanness. By 1989, at least two generations of East Germans had come of age in this Communist State, and though a pre-1945 past and common language connected the Democratic and Federal Republics of Germany, the two countries were as different as could be by 1990. Unfortunately, as “Wessis” and “Ossis” (slang for westerners and easterners) sized one another up, they sometimes did not really like what they saw.<sup>536</sup> Reunification was situated also within the new Republic of Germany's participation in the European Union—even trading-in *Deutschmarks* for Euros. Though many Germans were initially upset about the change in currency, the currently strong Euro has made it easier than ever for young people to be even more mobile than in decades past—if they want to. However, not all German youths necessarily have taken advantage of this benefit of E.U. status by traveling or working outside of Germany, nor do they necessarily identify as “Europeans” instead of Germans. Though Germans were initially considered the most enthusiastic E.U. participants (at least through the voice of their government) and called “the most European of Europeans,” many citizens tend to feel disconnected from the principles of the

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<sup>535</sup> Kansteiner, *Germany Memory*, 8-9.

<sup>536</sup> John Borneman, “Uniting the German Nation: Law, Narrative, and Historicity,” *American Ethnologist* 20:2 (May 1993): 288-289.

E.U. In this way, Mods are different. Given the history I have outlined here, as well as the culture's continued attitudes of cosmopolitanism, I suggest that today's Mods are "the most European of Germans."<sup>537</sup>

Though travel has been something that appeals to more than just Mod youth, it was striking how many Mods found the scene's internationally-visited events as *essential* to its appeal and what has kept them involved even as adults.

[Travel and the international aspect of Mod] are super important. Because... well, I know it from two different perspectives. Earlier, when I was relatively young, I didn't have the money or opportunities to somehow travel outside the country. I stayed pretty close to my hometown of Münster and around there. Later, when I went to my first foreign weekender...I think it was in France...that was fabulous. [It was] 1993? 1994? The lovely thing is that you get to know people. When you get along with people, it's like 'Hey, come to Stockholm!' 'Ok, I'll come to Stockholm!'...And that is what's so lovely... just getting to know a lot of new people and realizing your own the same wavelength... even if you don't see one another so often...maybe only two, three times a year or even if you just write emails [to each other]. When you see each other at the next weekender, then it's... simply lovely. And that's exactly the attraction of it...getting to know lots of people all around Europe. (Carina Marrder, Munich/Munster, b. 1974)<sup>538</sup>

It's fun. Most Mods speak a little bit of English... or you find a translator. You usually chat with the people you already know... more with other Germans or Brits. There are always national cliques... but you are together. There are always people who approach each other [from various countries]... or things you have to sort out. It's a change; it's a vacation... you do get to know a few people. (Achim Jürgens, Hamburg, b. 1969)<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> For reference to the switch from Deutschmarks to Euros as well as the perspective of most Germans on the E.U., see Sanna Inthorn, *German Media and National Identity* (Youngstown, NY: Cambria, 2007), 35, 41. For "the most European of Europeans," see James Spierling, "German Foreign Policy after Unification: The End of Cheque Book Diplomacy?" *West European Politics* 17:1 (1994), 81.

<sup>538</sup> [Das Mod international ist, ist] super wichtig. Also weil... also ich kenne es aus zwei verschiedene Perspektiven. Früher als ich relativ jung war hatte ich nicht das Geld und auch nicht die Gelegenheit irgendwie ins Ausland zu fahren. Ich war relativ...immer auf...meine Heimat Muenster und halt das Umland begrenzt... und spaeter, dann, als ich auf mein ersten Weekender in Ausland war...ich glaub dass war... in Frankreich...das war toll. (1993? 1994?)...das Schoene ist man lernt Leute kennen... wenn man sich mit die Leute gut verstehst hoerst Du halt, 'Hey, komme nach Stockholm.' 'Ok! Ich komme nach Stockholm!' 'Eh, super... wenn ihr kommen wollt. Alles klar.' und das ist halt das Schöne...einfach super-viele neue Leute kennen lernst und merkst dass man ist irgendwie, auf einen Wellenlänger,' auch wenn man sich nicht oft sieht...vielleicht nur irgendwie zwei, drei Mal im Jahr oder auch nur Emails schreibt. Wenn man sich auf den nächsten Weekender sieht, dann 'Super. Hey,' und es ist einfach schön... das ist gerade auch der Reiz das davon ausgeht...viele Leute Europa-weit kennenlernt." Carina Marrder, Interview with author, digital recording, Casino Royale Weekender, Aachen, April 21, 2007, DCUP.

<sup>539</sup> Achim Jürgens, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Berliner Betrüger Café, Hamburg, Aug. 11, 2007, DCUP.

I think the scene is definitely cosmopolitan. Especially a lot of English, Italians, and Spaniards came to Unkel [an annual Ruhr Valley Mod weekender which celebrated its sixteenth year in 2008]. A few from France, Belgian, Poland, and even the USA showed up. German Mods who can afford it travel to international weekenders like the ones in Rimini [Italy], Gijon [Spain], Great Britain, etc. The quality of the weekenders is also measured by their internationalism. Mods who travel internationally are greatly respected. (Anja Marx, b. 1969, Bonn)<sup>540</sup>

In Carina's estimation, meeting Mods from other countries allows potential new travel possibilities to open up through cross-cultural friendships established at events. Achim's comments belied the fact that though there are some nation-specific cliques at Mod weekenders, part of the fun was knowing that you are likely to strike-up a conversation with someone from another country. Finally, in Anja's view, the caliber of an event was directly related to the ratio of its international guests. Clearly, if someone has taken the time to travel great distances to an event, the event *must* be good.

As with Mod culture from the sixties to nineties, most events still take place in larger urban areas. However, some of the contemporary scene's participants came to the culture despite growing up in smaller towns. Hans Eiglsperger (b. 1972) who eventually moved to Munich for university, was proud of the fact that his small Bavarian hometown of Pfarrkirchen—with approximately 10,000 inhabitants—boasted a large subcultural youth scene when he was a teenager. Though he was one of less-than-a-handfull of Mods at the time, he would hang out with Punks, Skins, Rockabillys, and other kids who dressed alternatively. With so much going on locally, he did not meet a lot of other Mods until much later. “We actually didn't know much of

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<sup>540</sup> “Für weltoffen halte ich die Szene hier auf jeden Fall. Insbesondere nach Unkel kamen hauptsächlich Engländer/innen, Italiener und Spanier/innen. Vereinzelt tauchten Mods aus Frankreich, Belgien, Polen und sogar USA auf. Die deutschen Mods, die es sich leisten können, fahren auf die internationalen Weekender wie Rimini, Gijon, GB, etc. Die Qualität eines Weekenders wird auch an seiner Internationalität gemessen. Mods, die international unterwegs sind, werden entsprechend dafür angesehen.” Anja Marx, Email to author, June 24, 2007.



what there was elsewhere... or maybe one knew, of course, that [Mod] was in England. But we did not have any idea that it was in Germany. Years later we got to know people from [another town] that started around the same time as we did. We had done the same thing for ten years and didn't know each other." Another southern German who lived in Munich at the time of this interview, though originally from the state of Baden-Württemberg, Michael Süß (b.1969, Tuttingen) remembered traveling relatively far the first time he met people who had similar interests. "Actually, where you met other people, in the summer of course, was when you took drives [like] over the weekend down to Lake Constance." Here, Michael said, he and a few friends from his town would not necessarily meet stereotypical Mods, but what he called "Scooter Gangsters,"— a kind of cruder Mod-ish type obsessed with scooters.<sup>541</sup> Scooters were an attractive point of entry from some male Mods I talked to. Despite growing-up in a bigger city (Cologne) than Michael did, Volker von Reth (b. 1972, fig. 27) nonetheless felt the scooter component of Mod culture offered something different from other subcultures. "On your scooter, you were often on-the-go. You could really get away from home. So, with your scooter you went to England or God-knows-where-else... and that did not exist in other subcultures. They just went to discos or clubs and that was it."<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>541</sup> "Wir wussten eigentlich nicht viel darüber was ausserhalb gibt, oder...man wusste vielleicht schon das es natürlich was gibt in England. Aber das es in Deutschland gibt, wir wussten da Garnichts von. Wir haben erst viele Jahre später, zum Beispiel, Leute aus [not clear on tape—but another town] kennengelernt die eigentlich gleichzeitig wie wir angefangen haben. Wir haben dann zehn Jahre lang das selbe gemacht, aber wir kannten uns nicht." Hans Eiglsperger, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Jun. 17, 2007, Café Cord, Munich, DCUP; "Wo man andere Leute im Grunde kennengelernt hat waren, natürlich im Sommer, wenn man Ausfahrten gemacht hat... über das Wochenende zum Bodensee runter gefahren." Michael Süß, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Jun. 17, 2007, Café Cord, Munich, DCUP.

<sup>542</sup> "Du bist auch viel unterwegs gewesen mit dem Roller. Du kannst damit wirklich von zu Hause weg. Also, mit dem Roller Du bist nach England oder weiss Gott wohin gefahren...Und es gab es in andere Subkulturen nicht. Die sind nur ins Disco gegangen oder Clubs, und es war es." Volker von Reth, oral history interview with author, digital recording, Jul. 24, 2007, Hammond Bar, Cologne, DCUP.



**Figure 27 Volker von Reth, right. Bad Breisig, May 2008. Photo by author.**

As in the U.K., scooters are still very much part of the culture, though not everyone rides them. As symbols of mobility, sleek design, and internationalism, the Italian-made Vespas and Lambrettas are easily spotted at German events.

The means by which young people can find like-minded others has certainly expanded through the Internet. This was also another way to identify cosmopolitanism in the German scene. Many German-specific websites and fanzines have created networks of friendships and acquaintanceships from Hamburg to Munich and the rural hinterlands in between. Journalist and member of Hamburg's *Biff! Bang! Pow!* DJ collective, Gregor Kessler (b. 1971, Saarbrücken/Hamburg) had these thoughts about the subject:

I am convinced that without the Internet, Mod would be pretty much dead in Germany. The sixties scene has reached such a small level that you cannot get in touch with it by coincidence if you live in a smaller city or in the countryside. In the 80s you found one or two Mods in most German schools, these days you'd be hard pressed to find one in all of Hamburg's schools. That means even if you have a faint interest in sixties culture you'd feel extremely isolated and probably give up your passion to focus on more socially-accepted preferences. However with the Internet it's easy to find out even about the most specialized sub-scenes. It allows you to exchange opinions with sixties-fans from another city, learn about upcoming gigs and nighters, see photos of past events—and by doing this you develop the sense of being part of a national or even international scene. I am sure that without this feeling a lot of people would have lost interest long ago.<sup>543</sup>

Though the aforementioned Harry Vogel has been involved in the Munich and national scene since the late-seventies, he has continued to be an active member of the community and does not turn his nose up at the Internet's role in it. Now a *Gymnasium* teacher of English, Politics, and *Informatik* (basic computer science), he has come to trust in the way this technology aids the scene—its internationalism again at the heart of the issue.

I think I almost have to say that the Mod scene wouldn't exist anymore without the Internet. In the end, the Mod scene only can function because it *is* international. If I were to talk about the German Mod scene, I could just as easily talk about my group of friends. There are about thirty or forty people and I know them all personally. This international scene stays together through the Internet, because everything is spread through the Internet. There is a forum and so on... email contact with people regardless where they are. I think that without the Internet [the Mod scene] would not be possible.<sup>544</sup>

Many other Mods I spoke with held similar attitudes towards the Internet at its role in globalizing effects on both their local—whether Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Berlin—and national scene. Here the Internet once again played a role that it has been so good at: that of “glocalization,” or

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<sup>543</sup> Gregor Kessler, Email to author, Dec. 28, 2006.

<sup>544</sup> Ich glaube ich darf glaube ich fast sagen dass ohne das Internet die Mods-Szene garnicht mehr existieren wurde. Den letzten Endes ist es so dass die Mod-Szene nur deswegen funktioniert weil sie international ist. Wenn ich von die deutsche Mods-Szene reden wurde da konnte ich genau so gut von mein Freudeskreis reden. Das sind dann vielleicht dreisig, vierzig Leute die kenne ich alle persönlich. International hält diese Szene zusammen über das Internet. Dann Alles wird ueber das Internet verbreitet. Es gibt das Forum und so weiter, der Email Kontakt mit Leuten egal wo sie sind--- ohne Internet, unmöglich heute, glaub ich. Vogel, interview.

merging the immediate experiences with those that are distant or worldwide.<sup>545</sup> The metaphor of the computer screen as a window is certainly clichéd by now, but it is worth repeating that in discussions of global networking subcultures like the Mods, that it can and does function as a window opening to a greater world. It has allowed “the user... the illusion of navigating through virtual spaces, of being physically present somewhere else.”<sup>546</sup> In this way, the wish for cosmopolitanism already inherent in German Mod culture has been underscored in the possibilities of online communication with like-minded people worldwide.

This internationalist attitude and aesthetic was evident many of the websites created by Mods in Germany. Of the seven Mod websites that I initially discovered, almost all used English-language text—clearly inviting non-German speakers to join the fun.<sup>547</sup> This is especially true of those sites related to events, such as those for *The Hip Cat Club* and *Biff! Bang! Pow!*, which are both monthly Mod events in Hamburg. On *Hip Cat*'s homepage, the site's creator has this to say to the public: “Hey Swinger! Know where the action is? Come on in! Get along with the hippest cats and grooviest birds at Hamburg's monthly vintage-underground club-night! With resident and top international DJs and live acts playing high class 60s and early 70s sounds from real vinyl.” Meanwhile, the *Biff! Bang! Pow!* markets itself to both local and potential foreign guests this way: “With a broad selection of smart ‘n’ groovy dance tunes, Hamburg's 6T-Night-Club won't tell you what's Mod and what's not. We simply want you to enjoy yourself, have a few drinks and dance your socks off!” In the case of both websites, promoting these events in

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<sup>545</sup> For the concept of “glocalization,” in the context of youth cultures see Anoop Nayak, *Race, Place, and Globalization: Youth Cultures in a Changing World* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Geoff Stahl, “Tastefully Renovating Subcultural Theory: Making Space for a New Model,” in *The Post Subcultures Reader*, ed. David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl (Oxford: Berg, 2003) 28. See also Victor Roudometof, “Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization,” *Current Sociology* 53: 1 (2005): 113-135.

<sup>546</sup> Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 94.

<sup>547</sup> These websites include: *Sense-o-rama* at [www.sense-o-rama.org](http://www.sense-o-rama.org); *The Scene* at [www.thescene.de](http://www.thescene.de); *Inferno Beats* at [www.inferno-beats-64.de](http://www.inferno-beats-64.de); *Moz Big Step* at [www.moz.bigstep.com](http://www.moz.bigstep.com); and *Blow Up Club* at [www.blowupclub.de](http://www.blowupclub.de) (accessed Sept. 12, 2008).

English, rather than German, heightened the probability that Mods traveling from outside Germany to Hamburg would be able to read about these events and connect with this local scene.<sup>548</sup>

While *Hip Cat Club* opened its site mentioning the fact that international DJs frequenting spin at its events (for instance, a July 2006 event featured London DJ Rob Bailey, introduced in Chapter One), *Biff! Bang! Pow!* billed its stable of DJs as worldly jet-setters well-versed in Mod around the world. For instance, Jani Egloff's alter-ego "Dr. Mod" "oscillates between the Mod nightlife of Munich, Hamburg, New York City, and a lot in between." Ralf (Jürgens) "embraces the joys of the modernistic party-jet-set and chances are high you've met him along the way in Stockholm, London, or somewhere in between." Meanwhile, Alex Copasetic (a.k.a Giamlich) "when not spinning records on the 6Ts-Partys circuit between Paris, Berlin, Barcelona and Leipzig... runs the Copasetic mail order and Copasedisques label."<sup>549</sup> In these two examples of Mod websites, evoking international élan was important to those writing them and clearly sent the message that German Mods were well-connected to the sights, sounds, and scenes within its global community. Interestingly, when attending these Hamburg events, it was only rarely that I encountered other foreigners. Thus, it seemed to me that evoking cosmopolitanism and a well-traveled coterie of locals was important in and of itself—even if the Hamburg Mod scene was not necessarily international in its make up.

My year of fieldwork observing German Mods and their events between 2006 and 2007 also took me to Berlin, Cologne, Munich, and Aachen. The events ranged from those that were elaborately planned and weekend-long such as Aachen's "Casino Royale and "The Two Men

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<sup>548</sup> *Hip Cat Club: Swinging-Sixties Night Out* at [www.hipcatclub.de/index2.htm](http://www.hipcatclub.de/index2.htm) (accessed July 20, 2008); *Biff! Bang! Pow!* at <http://www.kiwianimal.com> (accessed July 20, 2008).

<sup>549</sup> *Biff! Bang! Pow!* DJ page, <http://www.kiwianimal.com/04DJs>, (accessed July 20, 2008).

From Linz,” held along the Rhine River outside of the Cologne/Bonn area—to casual gatherings and parties at people’s homes. Again and again, as I met and interviewed Mods, I was continually struck by this theme of international adventuring or the way in which traveling to other Mod scenes was integral to one’s experience in the scene. Dietmar “Didi” Haarcke told me, “There used to be a big [scooter] run in Sweden over Pentecost [weekend]. It was always Pentecost...that was extremely fun and Sweden is simply....how should I say it...simply a brilliant country. It was just fun and you also got to see a bit of the countryside.”<sup>550</sup> Jani Egloff said:

I always found it fascinating to look at how people from other countries identified with Mod and how they explained the concept to themselves and how they adopted Mod for themselves. For example, in Italy it’s different, you ... it was very funny when I was in Milan and talked to the Milano Mods because they were somehow separate and they were... and there were two... not tribes, but two threads, that didn’t like each other and one was apolitical and the other were socialists and thought Mod is a socialist thing. And I thought, ‘Aha, okay, Mod is socialist.’<sup>551</sup>

Meanwhile, Lena Dehnärt (Darmstadt/Cologne, b. 1981), whom I meet at the Men from Linz gathering in May 2007, explained to me that experiences outside of Germany are what first made her aware that Mod scenes actually existed.

Before I actually got to know the [Mod] scene...I had a boyfriend who, in retrospect, I now realize was a Mod [laughs] who, like I said, played soul music and is how I was able to travel all around Europe and meet lots of different people who played music. So it was already at that time that I arrived in Spain and there were people dressed in sixties-style clothes and I thought, ‘Wow! Hot! You’re here...but where are you in Germany?’ I had already met people in all possible countries who liked this music....through my ex-boyfriend...and through the tours and concerts and everything. But I didn’t know this

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<sup>550</sup> “Ich war...es gab frueher in Schweden... gabs immer ein grossen ‘Run,’ über, ich glaube, Pfingsten. Pfingsten war das immer... also extrem-viel Spaß gemacht. Und Schweden ist einfach sowieso... da muss ich auch sogar sagen, klasse Land...es hat einfach Spaß gemacht und da hat man auch sogar mal ein bisschen sich die Landschaft angeguckt.” Haarcke, Interview.

<sup>551</sup> Egloff, Interview.

scene at all. So when I did happen upon these people in Germany, that was the first time I thought, ‘Oh, the people back then were also Mods.’<sup>552</sup>

In Dietmar, Jani, and Lena’s comments, elements of difference and/or similarity as compared to Mod culture outside of Germany have played roles in understanding what the culture is about both locally and in a bigger-picture-sense through travel. Instead of focusing on the fact that Mod initially came from Great Britain, the voices of these German narrators suggest instead that *their* Mod culture is central to their experience as Europeans, rather than Germans. The narrators’ voices echo what I observed in Germany. There were many non-Germans in attendance at weekend events such as Aachen’s “Casino Royale” (2007) and “The Men from Linz” weekender (2007, 2008) just south of Bonn.

The events welcomed DJs and guests from Italy, Spain, Britain, Sweden, and Greece. Strewn on tables throughout the events’ locales were many pop art-style handbills advertising events in other countries such as Spain’s “10<sup>th</sup> Magic Soul Weekender” (Madrid) or Italy’s 15<sup>th</sup> Annual “All Saints Mod Holiday” (in Lavarone and featuring a photo of the Small Faces on it) or “Hot Mod Summer on the Lake” (in Perugia).<sup>553</sup> The creation and attendance of events and parties around Germany and Europe for those who identify with the culture’s sixties-influenced trademark style is a key component to the longevity and continuation of Mod there (fig. 28).

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<sup>552</sup> “Bevor ich die Szene eigentlich kennengelernt habe...ich ein Freund hatte der ja auch Mod war, wie ich jetzt in Nachhinein weiss. [lacht] und der aber auch wie gesagt Soul Musik gemacht hat und wodurch ich ja auch so gut rumgekommen bin in ganz Europa und habe verschiedene Leute kennengelernt Alle die Musik gemacht haben. Also, dass war schon vorher so dass ich nach Spanien gekommen bin und da waren Leute in Sechziger-Jahre-Stil angezogen und ich habe gedacht, „Hey! Geil! Sie seit hier...aber wo seit Ihr in Deutschland?“ Ich habe schon ueberall in sämtlichen Laendern Menschen kennengelernt die die Musik moegen...auch durch mein Ex-Freund...und durch die Tour und Band-Tour und Konzerte und Alles. Aber diese Szene kann ich halt garnicht. Also, dann eben in Deutschland eben auf diese Menschen getroffen... wo ich mir zum erst Mal wirklich Gedanken gemacht habe, ‘Ach, das waren auch damals auch schon Mods,’” Lena Dehnärt, oral history interview by the author, digital recording, Dehnärt residence, Cologne, May 29, 2007, DCUP.

<sup>553</sup> “10<sup>th</sup> Magic Soul Weekender,” [handbill advertisement], circa May 2007, Madrid; “15<sup>th</sup> All Saints Mod Holiday 1992-2007,” [handbill advertisement], circa Oct. 2007, Lavarone, Italy; “Hot Mod Summer on the Lake,” [handbill advertisement], circa June 2007, Perugia, Italy. These are just a few examples of the seventy-five Mod handbills I collected in Germany.



Figure 28 A German Mod couple in Brighton, August 2007. Photo by author.

For participants in the scene, this heterogeneous and international community is where the *soul* of their *mod-ernity* lies. In her description of the German Ruhr Valley Mod scene (or as she alternatively calls it, a retro-oriented “sixties scene”) anthropologist Heike Jenß suggests that the diminishing number of German Mods in the 2000s has necessitated more and more international gatherings.<sup>554</sup>

Although the mere existence of a Mod scene in Germany (or elsewhere) in the twenty-first century, and not the number of participants, is a stunning achievement, the international *Weltanschauung* and accompanying travel habits of many German Mods is one that has been cultivated since the 1960s and remains one of its most noticeable features. One interview in

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<sup>554</sup> Jenß, *Sixties Dress Only*, 176.



particular, with Alain Ayadi, also reminded me of the important national versus international identity politics at play. Alain relayed why Mod was initially so appealing: “To me, Mod seemed elite... something special, something apart. It was nothing mainstream. And for me, someone who isn’t German, or who wasn’t German at that time—my mother is Dutch and my father is French-Algerian—it was a way out of German culture... where different rules and different aesthetics applied. What was “German”: garden gnomes, Bratwurst, and potato salad...wasn’t important anymore. [Mod] was a kind of escapism.<sup>555</sup> For Alain, who grew up in Germany and is now a German citizen, but whose parents are not German, Mod gave him a sense of identity that superseded what he saw as stereotypically German means of cultural belonging.

This chapter on Mod culture in Germany began in Bavaria and it shall end there, too. In the same week that I was to interview Klaus Voormann, I was also invited to the apartment of Harry Vogel and his wife Annette Hutt (fig. 29), for a dinner party.

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<sup>555</sup> “Mod erschien mir elitär... etwas besonders, etwas abseits. Es war kein Mainstream und für mich als Jemand der kein Deutscher ist, oder damals gewesen ist—meine Mutter ist Holländerin, mein Vater ist Algeriern-Fransöser war es ein Weg raus aus der deutscher Kultur... wo andere Regeln, wo andere Ästhetik galt. Was deutsch war...Gartenzwerge, Bratwurst, Kartoffelsalat... war nicht mehr wichtig. Es war ein Fluchtmöglichkeit.” Ayadi, Interview.



**Figure 29 Annette Hutt and Harry Vogel circa 2000. Photo courtesy Harry Vogel.**

Harry told me that the others who will come are the core of Munich’s Mod scene. As I entered their fantastically-decorated “pad,” with its brightly-colored walls (the living room is painted orange), geometrically-patterned curtains, a collapsible egg-shaped chair, and white bookshelves, I immediately met a group of very nice people—most of whom were between their mid-twenties and late-thirties. First I talked with Claudia and Silvia. Claudia was a petite brunette with bobbed hair and big, blue eyes. Silvia was from Italy and was married to a Bavarian named Hans. She had long black hair and was also dressed from head-to-toe in black: a turtleneck and pants. Carina and her boyfriend, Thomas arrived a short while later. Carina was a tall girl with pixie-ish short hair and wore an outfit combining hip hugger pants with a thick belt and a dark blue collared shirt with a vest. Thomas sported a prematurely grey Caesar haircut with sideburns and his fashion evoked the Ivy League look. Thomas asked me about my work and we discussed

German movies from the sixties such as *Engelchen* (1968) and *Mord und Totschlag* (1967) as he is a film buff in general.<sup>556</sup> Overall, I felt very welcomed by everyone there.

Later that evening, Harry pointed something out on his book shelf. It was a silver object that looked like a cross between a space-age spider and a rocket. He asked me if I knew what it was, but I had no idea. It turned out to be a lemon press! He went on to explain how something like this is Mod... because the concept and form of it are both much more interesting than the function or the sum of its parts. He told me that something this cool-looking cannot be used simply in the way it was intended because its decorative function is much that no facet in living as a Mod is too small for one's attention. It is not just the idea of living life surrounded and connected with like-minded people locally and globally. Every commodity with which one surrounds oneself can be an object of beauty to enhance one's life.<sup>557</sup> Later that evening, I thanked Annette for co-hosting such a nice party and how good it was to meet her. I was moved as I saw tears welling-up in her eyes as she told me that this is what she thinks is so wonderful about the Mod scene—how one gets to know people from around the world.

Several months later, in June 2007, I made my next and final visit to Munich. Harry Vogel hosted a summer barbeque at his parents' home in a leafy, residential part of town. I saw once again many of the people I had met at Harry and Annette's party in March. Soon after arriving, I was greeted by Thomas (Czerlach) and Carina (fig. 30).

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<sup>556</sup> *Engelchen: Oder die Jungfrau von Bamberg*, DVD, directed by Marnan Gosov (1968; Munich: Euro Video, 2007); *Mord und Totschlag*, directed by Volker Schlöndorff (1967; Munich: Constantin), 1967.

<sup>557</sup> For the aestheticization of everyday life, see Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London: Sage, 2007) 64-80; Andy Bennett, *Culture and Everyday Life* (London: Sage, 2005), 70-72.



**Figure 30 Carina Marrder and Thomas Czerlach, Aachen, April 2007. Photo by author.**

Since my interview with Thomas was cut short when I saw him at the “Casino Royale” event in Aachen, I conducted a second part of it here. Tonight, I found out one of the main reasons he enjoys identifying with this culture. “I do think that we [Mods] *are* the Europeans, actually. Everyone is always talking about it, but we are living it. Some of us travel more than others, but even when we can’t always be everywhere at once, there’s always the telephone and the Internet where you can get in contact with other ‘cultures’ or people from throughout Europe or worldwide. There are a lot of people even in our generation who think, ‘Sure, a united Europe is here, but what’s the point?’ – But I *know* what the point is. I think that’s very positive, actually, that we are living as Europeans.”<sup>558</sup> Hearing him say this, I get goose-bumps. Thomas’s words

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<sup>558</sup> “Ich finde schon daß wir auch schon die Europäer sind, eintlich. Alle quatschen davon und wir machen es halt...wir machen es wirklich. Wir reisen ja immer nur hin—manche mehr, manche weniger, aber es ist wirklich so.

attest to the fact that he and many of his contemporaries are now experiencing what those in the sixties envisioned for the future. A German Mod today indeed inhabits a lifestyle unbounded by artificial confines of national identity. It is a truly international phenomenon.

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Und selbst wenn man nicht immer persönlich Vorort ist, allein durch daß Telefonieren und das Internet man kennt sehr viele Menschen aus anderen 'Kulturen,' oder aus anderen europäische Länder oder auch weltweit. Viele Leute auch in unsere Generation meinen, 'Ja, Europa ist da, aber was habe ich schon davon?' Ja, ich weiss was man davon hat.' Daß finde ich eigentlich sehr positive daß wir als Europäer leben, halt." Thomas Czerlach, oral history interview by author, digital recording, Vogel residence, Munich, June 16, 2007, DCUP.

#### 4.0 MOP-TOPS, MINISKIRTS, AND OTHER MISDEMEANORS: “GENDER TROUBLE IN THE USA”<sup>559</sup>

I let my hair grow long like his  
Pretended I was in showbiz  
They called my mother up at school  
They said I must have blown my cool  
They said your son is acting bad  
He thinks he is the English lad  
But I didn't care about disgrace  
If only I could take the place of Ringo.

-“Like Ringo,” American novelty record (1964)<sup>560</sup>

Parents must be nuts to allow their daughters to parade around in public in skirts shorter than the dresses they wore when they were little tots.

-Letter to the Editors of *Life* magazine, April, 22, 1966<sup>561</sup>

The first interview that I conducted to find out how and why Mod existed in the present-day United States was, appropriately enough, in New York City. I say *appropriately* because this is, after all, where Mod culture literally “landed” with the Beatles on February 7, 1964 at Kennedy airport. In this book's first two chapters I have already suggested that initial transmissions of

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<sup>559</sup> See the book of the same name by Judith Butler.

<sup>560</sup> Steve Karmen, Joe Lauer, and Dick Lord, comp., “Like Ringo,” on *Beatlemania: The World of Beatles Novelty Songs*, Dick Lord, Ace NR CDCHD 1075, CD.

<sup>561</sup> Donna L. Lundell, “Letter to Editor,” *Life*, May 13, 1966, 27.

Mod youth culture outside of Britain can be accredited to the Mod-ish style of the Beatles and their commercial successes overseas. Just as Hamburg became the literal *port-al* for Mod style via the city's docks, the landing strip at the newly renamed airport served as the point of entry for a look and sound that would rattle U.S. popular culture in unprecedented ways. As one recent book title has it, the Beatles were *the* band that “shook youth, gender, and the world.”<sup>562</sup> This chapter thus will examine more specifically how Mod, as first introduced through the Beatles and the subsequent “British Invasion,” caused a crisis surrounding *gender aesthetics* in middle-class American culture. Here, I define gender aesthetics as the physical and accessorized attributes of men or women and how they relate to socio-historical constructions of masculinity and femininity. As we shall see, male Mod styles were often deemed effeminate, while the female equivalents were marked as either masculine, androgynous, or infantile. This chapter will also look at how these gendered images of Mod established in the mid-sixties are reflected (or not) in the United States' contemporary scene. As in the last two chapters, some of this history will be told through oral history accounts by those who have been involved in the culture.

In trying to uncover if these subversive energies of Mod in the sixties still hold sway over Mods in the new millennium, I began seeking answers in the autumn of 2002. Having recently discovered a short film called *American Mod* (2002)—produced and filmed in New York—I got in touch with Charles Wallace, one of the musicians featured in the film. We scheduled an interview while in New York on what unfortunately turned out to be a rainy and blustery October weekend. On the Friday afternoon I was to meet Wallace, the winds were so intense that my tiny Union Jack umbrella (a recent gift from my sister's trip to London) nearly snapped in two a few minutes after I emerged from the subway. The matter was not helped by the fact that I was

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<sup>562</sup> Steven D. Stark, *Meet the Beatles: A Cultural History of the Band that Shook Youth, Gender, and the World* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005).

seemingly taking one wrong turn after the other in my attempts to find the café where we were meeting. As I soldiered along despite the weather, trying to find a shop selling umbrellas, I imagined what the current Mod scene must be like in New York. With the rain and small, winding streets, the setting certainly reminded me of Mod's birthplace: London's Soho. However, I was keen to hear Wallace's take on the scene he had been a part of the last several years. My mind flashed back to my recent viewing of *American Mod*, the film that brought Wallace and his neo-Mod band Headquarters to my attention.

*American Mod* is the creation of independent filmmaker Kolton Lee and is a fictionalized account of a "night in the life" of three friends within the New York Mod scene. These three characters are Chester, every bit the pretty boy Mod "Ace Face;" Max, his buddy; and Sandy, the trio's female sidekick with black, bobbed hair. Chester chases after a long-legged blonde beauty reminiscent of George Harrison's first wife, model Pattie Boyd. Meanwhile, the more obviously Mod, though also less stereotypically attractive Sandy wants Chester to be more than a friend. The film is also noteworthy for the late British gay icon Quentin Crisp's cross-dressing role as a drug dealer's "Grandma," which was also Crisp's last film role.<sup>563</sup> The film debuted in an East Village theater in March of 2001 with two sold-out shows. Wallace has since shown the film throughout the U.S. and Europe, mainly to other Mod enthusiasts, but the film has also aired on the Sundance cable channel in the U.S. The website that Wallace designed to promote the film also featured a link to a site for his sixties-inflected rock band Headquarters and listings to Mod-themed events happening in and around New York such as "Smashed! Blocked!" "'Tiswas," and "Splashdown: A Rock and Soul Explosion."<sup>564</sup> When I eventually talked to Wallace, he told

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<sup>563</sup> *American Mod*, Dir. Lee, Kolton (Group Four Films, 2000). See also "American Mod," *Celebrity Café* at [http://thecelebritycafe.com/movies/full\\_review/112.html](http://thecelebritycafe.com/movies/full_review/112.html) (accessed Aug. 18, 2008).

<sup>564</sup> "Out in New York," *American Mod* at [http://www.americanmod.net.out\\_in\\_ny.html](http://www.americanmod.net.out_in_ny.html) (accessed Dec. 12, 2002).



me, though, that New York's Mod scene was rather small, "with the same thousand or so people interchanged throughout these clubs. It sounds like a lot, but in New York that is very underground."<sup>565</sup> Maybe Wallace could help me understand exactly what current, youthful New York Mods would find so fascinating about the culture and aesthetic.

Not knowing "the rules" of exactly how to present myself in this kind of research situation—it was all still new to me—I decided to dress in my most Mod outfit—a sleeveless, dark blue, and belted mini-dress with patterns of large gold flowers on it. I was not "in costume," as I do own some Mod fashions myself, but I obviously chose not to go with a more neutral or "professional" look. I was not sure if this choice would make Wallace more comfortable talking with me—i.e., if I look the part, I must have personal stakes in the topic—but it was the choice I went with. However, given the wet weather, I did not think, at that particular moment, that I looked Mod at all. Instead, I looked and felt like a drowned rat and quickly bolted to the café's ladies room to freshen up. The second I walked out of the restroom I saw Wallace (b. 1971, Michigan/New York) walk through the doors. I recognized him from the film and his band's website. He looked like a much taller version of Steve Marriott—the exceptionally petite lead singer of sixties Mod band the Small Faces. This image suits him. Later that night, at Headquarters' performance in the West Village, I saw him mimic all the sixties' "greats" (Marriott included) as both a front-man and a guitarist. He was wearing white pants and a button-up paisley shirt. Sporting a mop-top-type hairstyle, a wash of dark-blond bangs splayed across his forehead. He is well spoken, with hints of a Midwestern accent that underscored his Michigan roots despite many years living in Manhattan. His distinctively arched eyebrows and eyes were expressive as he talked. He nonetheless gave off an air of detached cool that I, by this

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<sup>565</sup> Charles Wallace, oral history interview with author, analog recording (transferred to digital), New York, Oct. 11, 2002, DCUP.

point in my life, tended to associate with musicians generally and Mods specifically. Having played in bands myself, and having spent a lot of time around male rock musicians, I was not unnerved by his demeanor and soon we were easily engaged in conversation. He came across more open and friendlier by the minute. The questions I had for him were myriad: How did he get into Mod culture? What was the current scene like in New York? Why were the sixties so interesting to him? I listened closely to Wallace's erudite answers and found my mind creeping towards an initial understanding of what may have brought him (and others in New York) to the city's Mod community: the excitement associated with the "1960s" whether in fashion, in art, or in the decade's idealized vision of "progress" and "modernity."

Though we talked about many topics, I was struck by two of Wallace's comments regarding the Mod lifestyle and, in particular, what they suggested to me about "gender aesthetics" and American society from the mid-sixties onward. First, when I asked him why he thought Mod (male) style stood out in 2002 he told me, "I think it's pretty radical to wear a suit and a tie. You walk into a club nowadays with all these grunge people and rock people [and] you have to be completely nondescript. People just drop their jaws. 'This guy is obviously not a businessman because the suit is just too weird, but it's like completely radical.' The Mods went against the early pre-hippie, beatnik style."<sup>566</sup> In this sense, what Wallace saw as subversive about this male style was its formality. Because many male youths belonging to subcultures in the 1990s and 2000s wore casual clothing (baggy jeans, t-shirts, etc.), the supposedly more "conservative" appearance of a suit and tie was also paradoxically more cutting-edge. When I asked him the broader question of why this sixties-born style would appeal to someone who came of age in the 1980s, Wallace explained, "I don't like sixties music because [to like it now]

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<sup>566</sup> Wallace, Interview.

is ironic. It's a sentence that still has to be finished. [There was] racism and sexism and social change and breaking boundaries of clichés and opening people's mind. In the sixties a lot changed, but a lot of it reversed—or at least it stopped in the 70s. All the hippies got old and had kids and went back to the fifties styles.” Here, Wallace picked up on that though “a lot changed” in the 1960s, it was, by and large, a change that was subdued or tamed by the 1970s. His assumption was that many of the people who were involved with those changes gave up on them and went back to more traditional lifestyles and roles such as marriage and family; husband and father, wife and mother.

I began this chapter with these comments from Wallace because, as I will discuss below, Mod has been historicized and arguably still is understood in American culture as a fashion that *visually suggested* social transformations on all fronts—but especially in terms of gender. As Wallace's words also implied, though Mod was part and parcel of an era that hoped for vast societal changes, seemingly radical changes in appearance did not always necessarily mean actual changes in Mods' actual lifestyles or habits over the long term. Despite many young men wearing their hair longer by the mid-sixties, and some young women wearing more daring, bright fashions and short skirts, it did not necessarily mean they would end up as less conventional as older adults with lifestyles different from their parents. As scholars like Mary Jo Bane have successfully shown, cultural hegemony of the nuclear family, marriage, and aspirations to conventional middle-class life, did actually not alter drastically after the 1960s.<sup>567</sup>

As we have already seen in the previous chapters, the original period of Mod culture existed roughly from the late-fifties to 1967 in the U.K. and from 1960 to 1967 in Germany. Furthermore, the originally-British phenomenon of Mod was tied to longstanding discourses

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<sup>567</sup> Mary Jo Bane, *Here to Stay: American Families in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), xiii, 23, 29, 35.

surrounding modernity there. In Germany, the tensions between nationalism and cosmopolitanism influenced the way Mod culture has evolved there in the last forty years. This asks the questions then: “What happened to Mod culture in the United States and what was most important about it there?” As Charles Wallace’s quotes above indicate, he related Mod’s initial U.S. emergence to social upheaval (“breaking boundaries of clichés and opening people’s minds”) as well as to fashions that have continued to upset the status quo of today’s youth culture and/or the mainstream. While Wallace saw current Mod fashion as subversive-looking due to its “conservative” or—in his words—“nondescript” appearance, much of this chapter will show how it was deemed revolutionary, radical, and/or ostentatious. Primarily, it was codified as such because Mod fashions suggested that the established middle-class’s ideas and symbols of “masculine” and “feminine” could be disrupted and redefined visually. In the Mod period of the American sixties, which began with the Beatles and the British Invasion of 1964, and ended with the rise of the San Francisco sound and accompanying counterculture of 1967’s “Summer of Love,” Mod fashions’ later challenge to contemporary appearances for middle-class men and women became the subject of much social angst.<sup>568</sup> Thus, if British Mods reconceptualized what being modern meant, and Germans redefined their identity through Mod’s cosmopolitan, hybrid nature, then young, (mostly) middle-class Americans of the 1960s hoped to redesign the nationally accepted appearance of gender, what I call “gender aesthetics,” anew by following the lead of the British. By chapter’s end, the role of gender in post-sixties Mod culture will also be evident.

Unlike Mod’s original associations with English, working-class youth, the American version of Mod was tied primarily to middle-class teenagers and youths. As might be guessed,

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<sup>568</sup> Shelly Foote, “Challenging Gender Symbols,” in *Men and Women: Dressing the Part*, ed. Claudia Brush Kidwell and Valerie Steele (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 151, 154, 157.

this disparity has to do with the way class was, and still is, viewed in Britain versus the United States. First and foremost, the primary postwar ideal in the U.S. was that everyone was or could be within the middle class. If nothing else, many citizens self-identified as middle-class and the term itself became the yardstick for measuring norms of the “American Way of Life” in postwar society. The middle-class as the barometer of U.S. culture often still rings true today.<sup>569</sup> According to a few fashion historians, the middle class has historically “established the patterns for many of our dominant clothing and gender traditions.”<sup>570</sup> It is in this context, then, that I focus on how Mod style upset middle-class society in the postwar United States. Readers may notice the lack of attention paid to middle-class African-Americans’ adoption and/or reaction to Mod culture in this chapter. Unfortunately, this reflects the very little evidence I could find on the topic—one that, should more historical documentation surface—would surely make an interesting book in and of itself.

Since I am arguing that Mod in the U.S. invited animated discourse about changing aesthetics in male and female appearances which hinted at changing sex roles during the mid-1960s, it is important to understand how gender issues had been historicized in the years leading up to Mod’s arrival. It is only then that one can see how Mod style was shocking as it was for many members of the middle-class mainstream. Much Anglo-American scholarship of gender and/or appearance (including analyses of fashion) underscores the social significance of the connection between expectations of masculine and feminine appearance and greater cultural changes. Judith Butler, for instance, is well known for her theory that gender is “performed”

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<sup>569</sup> Nan Mooney, *(Not) Keeping Up With Our Parents: The Decline of the Professional Middle Class* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008), 23-25; Burton J. Bledstein, “Introduction: Storytellers to the Middle Class,” *The Middling Sort: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class*, ed. Burton J. Bledstein and Robert D. Johnston (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1-2, 20-21.

<sup>570</sup> Claudia Brush Kidwell and Valerie Steele, “Introduction,” in *Men and Women: Dressing the Part*, ed. Claudia Brush Kidwell and Valerie Steele (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 4.

through one's looks, gestures, and mannerisms. If being masculine or feminine is a role versus an immutable, natural state, there is no reason, then, why the "costumes," let alone behaviors, of these social actors cannot easily be changed. Judith Halberstam also examines the malleability of gendered appearances with her work on transgender people. The scholarship of both Butler and Halberstam is often not only couched within theories of gender, but often within issues surrounding sexuality. Thus, these scholars often examine gay, lesbian, and transgendered communities as sites for more radicalized experimentation with the means of identity. In this chapter, a closer look at Mod culture in the United States will illuminate gender concerns surrounding mostly straight and middle-class youths, asking the question: Did Mod act as a potential change agent that "queered" notions of gender aesthetics in the 1960s that continues to influence the identity of American youths today—especially those in Mod communities?<sup>571</sup>

In order to best answer this question, I will first give a historical overview of the spectrum of American gender types—with special attention paid from the turn-of-the century to the end of World War II. With a similar goal in mind, the next section will examine the first seventeen years after WWII and during the "Cold War" (1946-1963). I will dedicate attention to the much propagated, if often stereotypical, notion that this was a period of heightened conformity for men and women, but I will also show that there were some people of both sexes who modeled alternative aesthetics coupled with non-typical lifestyles. The next two parts of the chapter will look specifically at Mod's entrée into American consciousness through the Beatles, the British Invasion, and all the mediated formats thereof in the years 1964 to 1967. While the first of these two subsections will highlight the initial mediated transmissions of the music and

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<sup>571</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998); Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

fashion, the second will focus closely on the gender discourse presented in both mainstream and teen magazines, as well as TV shows. As in the last two chapters, the final portions of the chapter are concerned with Mod's presence from the 1970s to the present. Given the theme here, these final observations will continue to spotlight gender aesthetics in post-sixties Mod culture.

#### **4.1 GENDER ROLES AND AESTHETICS: 1890S TO 1945**

In order to understand Mod's reception in 1960s America, it is necessary to take a longer look at the gender aesthetics of the middle classes beginning at the end of the nineteenth century. Why some Americans would eventually read Mod male fashions as feminine, and therefore even, at times, tacitly "homosexual," stemmed from this earlier point in time. This was equally true for Mod female styles of the mid-sixties, which were often seen as fostering "inappropriate" adult, female identities such as that of the "little girl," tomboy, or lesbian. It would be unrealistic to say that all middle-class Americans were always of the same mind in these matters, just as it is true that competing notions of both masculinity and femininity have always existed. Yet, as we shall see, there were always particular gender styles that have come to dominate the appearance and attitude of middle-class Americans. Though I will be tracing these middle-class views of gender back to the late 1800s, the reaction of these Americans to Mod culture and its fashions has much to do with gender ideals in the 1950s. This decade has been called the "quintessential middle-class decade" of the twentieth century. As I will show, however, concepts of masculinity and

femininity in the fifties were founded on fashion aesthetics culled from the turn-of-the-century.<sup>572</sup>

Issues of gender in the U.S. came to a head in the late nineteenth century, but American visions of idealized types of men and women can be traced back to the founding of the nation—particularly in the colonial rebellion against the supposedly more “decadent” lifestyles of the British (and the Europeans). As one historian has written, “American soldiers [were to look] formidable, but not foppish... it would not do for them to appear too fashionable,” like the Redcoats.<sup>573</sup> Interestingly, the English, in turn, accused the French of similar flamboyance. The continued differentiation between American and British masculinities in the nineteenth century can be attributed, in part, to the cultivation of the British “gentleman.” This type would remain the ideal in the U.K. until World War I. To the English, a gentleman was no longer just someone born into the landed gentry, but was a civilized man of courtesy and distinction—a substantial cut above the “mob.” Though British men did not see the gentleman as a fop or a dandy, this was still a form of masculinity that associated refined and fastidious *appearance* (nicely tailored black, frock coats and stovepipe hats, for instance) with integrity and a gentleness of *manner*.<sup>574</sup>

Just as the gentleman ideal captivated much of middle and upper-class British society during the course of the nineteenth century, a dominant American view of masculinity began to emerge as well. Though illustrations of the clean-shaven, patrician, and Anglo-Saxon “fashionable man” occasionally appeared on the covers of popular magazines by the late

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<sup>572</sup> This quote comes from Mooney, *(Not)Keeping Up With Our Parents*, 23.

<sup>573</sup> Kate Haulman, “Fashion and Culture Wars of Revolutionary Philadelphia,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62:4 (2005) at <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/wm/62.4/haulman.html> (accessed on Aug. 22, 2008). See also Amelia Rauser, “Hair, Authenticity, and the Self-Made Macaroni,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38:1 (2004), 101-117.

<sup>574</sup> Valerie Steele, “Appearance and Identity,” in *Men and Women: Dressing the Part*, ed. by Claudia Bush Kidwell and Valerie Steele (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 16; Philip Mason, *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1982).



1800s—which seemed a cousin to the English gentleman—it did not become the middle-class image of masculinity that dominated the period.<sup>575</sup> While I would like to say that more middle-class American men concerned themselves with fashion or their appearance during the nineteenth century, this did not seem culturally pervasive. The examples that do exist, though, stemmed from New York’s urban life. Department store clerks—often characterized as pale and thin—were depicted as overly concerned with their appearance. There were also the hangers-on of the New York theatre scene, caddish fellows known as “Mashers,” who dressed flamboyantly.<sup>576</sup>

Historical evidence suggests that more varied masculine styles tended to appear in the working rather than middle class. An example of this is New York’s Bowery b’hoys of the 1840s. Not unlike the East End Mods of early 1960s England, the b’hoys were working-class. A substantial number were Irish-immigrant youths who grew their sideburns long, dressed ostentatiously, and followed the work of the poet Walt Whitman *and* Shakespeare. A Whitman biographer has depicted the look of the b’hoys as distinguishable by their wearing of “a red shirt fastened to one side with large white buttons, a black silk tie knotted carelessly under a rolling collar, and trousers that flared slightly over his high-heeled calfskin boots.”<sup>577</sup> Like the earliest, British Mods, the Bowery B’hoys attempted to broker a new vision of working-class masculinity by exaggerating the fashions and tastes of their “betters.”

In terms of the middle-class masculinity, however, several masculinity scholars concur that the leading U.S. style that emerged by the 1890s was the one that some American men are

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<sup>575</sup> Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 70.

<sup>576</sup> Louise Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 227, 239-240; Eric Segal, “Norman Rockwell and the Fashioning of American Masculinity,” *Art Bulletin* 78:4 (Dec. 1996), 643.

<sup>577</sup> Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 224; David S. Reynolds, *Walt Whitman’s America: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 103-104.

potentially still struggling with today. This emergent American manhood was that of the tough, hyper-manly man who was ruled by his “animal instincts” and driven by competition. Some historians describe this as “rugged individualism.” John Pettegrew’s harsher-sounding moniker, “brutes in suits”—is due to what he calls “de-evolutionary masculinity”— certainly implicating Darwin’s *Origins of the Species* (1859).<sup>578</sup> This essentialist view of both men and women tied men to a coarser attitudes and behavior and women to gentler ones. This differs greatly from the English gentleman who valued controlling “instincts” in favor of a civilized demeanor. The concept of “civilization” played a prominent role in this discourse, suggesting that men were torn between unregulated natural drives and the approved modern mores. In this formulation, “civilization” was greatly influenced by the supposed moral superiority of women, which required men to tame and control their primal instincts. However some, like President Theodore Roosevelt, equated this restraint with the weakening of both “race” and “nation.”<sup>579</sup> In redefining their masculinity as linked to the great wilderness of the American expanse, middle-class men differentiated themselves further from European notions of refinement and temperance. A neo-Westernism emerged as images of young men in buckskin clothes and coonskin caps à la Davy Crockett sprouted up and were valorized above and beyond that of the black-suited, debonair, and well-bred man of the city.<sup>580</sup>

While not all men or youths could escape regularly to what they thought of as the “wild frontier,” the Boy Scouts of America, fitness centers like the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), and active involvement in athletics—whether playing football, boxing, or baseball—

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<sup>578</sup> John Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America, 1890-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 1-3; Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 227-229, 231-232.

<sup>579</sup> Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 229; Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 70.

<sup>580</sup> Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1982), 74.

also cemented the notion that manliness was corporeal more so than sartorial. As Eric Segal's thorough readings of Norman Rockwell magazine covers and advertisements of the early 1900s show, images of well-dressed men and boys evoked negative connotations of supposed European foppishness and, hence, effeminacy. Thus, American masculinity at this time sought to define itself further as foil to "the excessive cosmopolitanism of Europe." To make sure boys did not become "sissies" or grow up to be "deviants," the portrayals of boyhood depicted by Rockwell were, to paraphrase Segal, more beholden to the American Boy Scout image than that of a British, lace-collared Little Lord Fauntleroy. According to this assessment, whether as a youth or a grown man, paying too much attention to one's clothing or "look," was not only distinctly non-masculine, it was also un-American.<sup>581</sup>

As I have suggested in the previous chapters, the more noticeable lifestyle differences that emerged between social classes in Great Britain and the relentless quest for national cohesiveness in Germany were hallmarks of modernization in those countries. I argue here that issues surrounding industrialization and urbanization in the United States led to questioning the roles of men and women in this new society. One could certainly argue that similar circumstances raised gender issues in many other western countries. However, I suggest that the abovementioned factors of modernization—combined with an ethnically diverse population and the closing of the western frontier—contributed to a unique social situation surrounding issues of masculinity and femininity in the United States.

Given this framework, how did urbanization initially affect American men and women's conceptions of gender? As difficult as it may be for some to disassociate American culture from the impressions of New York's or Chicago's skyscraper-rich skylines, the United States'

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<sup>581</sup> Eric J. Segal, "Norman Rockwell and the Fashioning of American Masculinity," *Art Bulletin* 78:4 (Dec. 1996): 633, 637, 638, 639-640.

nineteenth century was a period marked by transformation from predominantly rural to urban living. The century had started as still very agrarian, but this was to change greatly. By 1890 thirty percent of the population lived either in towns or cities. By 1910 half of all Americans did.<sup>582</sup> This mass move from country to city—including black migration from the south and continued immigration primarily from Europe—helped populate and diversify urban terrains. Thus, the biggest American cities continued to grow and began feeling uncomfortably crowded. Some males of Anglo-Saxon descent believed that city created an “oppressively crowded, depersonalized, and often emasculated life.”<sup>583</sup> Furthermore, new groups arriving into the U.S. were sometimes targeted as “forces that eugenicists believed threatened white male survival.” In this sense, urbanization contributed to the so-called “crisis of masculinity” at the turn-of-the-century mostly among middle-class men.<sup>584</sup>

Urbanization also had another effect on American men. Unlike the wide open spaces that had required agricultural and architectural cultivation in the earlier years of the country’s history—work that was physical and required determination and resilience—much city employment took place in cramped spaces which did not necessitate such heartiness. Alan Trachtenberg has called this the “incorporation of America,” or the initial rise of corporate, urban culture in the United States.<sup>585</sup> Though factory work was physical, it usually took place in overcrowded spaces and was monotonous and routine. Corporate work functioned in similarly small spaces, where pushing papers and a walk across the office was often the zenith of its physicality. A Protestant clerical career—especially in urban settings—was another type of

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<sup>582</sup> “Urban Population of the United States in 1890,” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 54 (Sept. 1891): 502-9; Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 58.

<sup>583</sup> Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 58.

<sup>584</sup> Kitch, *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 72.

<sup>585</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 3-10, 45-46.

indoor work already coded as feminized due to the involvement and influence of women at these churches.<sup>586</sup> The reality of more and more young women entering white-collar workplaces prior to marriage was also seen as threateningly *feminizing*. It is not difficult to imagine men gazing in horror as the then-popular chew tobacco spittoons were replaced by plants and parlor-like décor, making men feel they had to be genteel at work as well as with at home.<sup>587</sup> For these reasons, scholar James Gilbert argues that the supposedly “progressive” period of the 1890s went hand-in-hand with a crisis of American masculinity.<sup>588</sup>

It was during this period, also, that the mythology of the American West and “the cowboy” found potency with many men. The extremely popular “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show,” for instance, became a spectacular “traveling advertisement” of an Americana that was primarily of the past.<sup>589</sup> After McKinley’s assassination in 1901, Theodore Roosevelt (often referred to by scholars as “TR”) was sworn in as president. Roosevelt’s reputation had preceded him. The historian and former governor of New York who had lived in South Dakota’s Badlands for several years was perceived as a kind of “cowboy president.” He also wrote the multivolume *The Winning of the West* (1885-94) that promoted the notion—clearly adopted from Frederick Jackson Turner’s 1893 essay “The Significance of the Frontier in American History—that “the Frontier was a vital element in shaping American institutions and national character.” With the closing of the Frontier and the rise of urban culture, Roosevelt worried that this shift marked “the beginning of [a] crisis in American history.”<sup>590</sup> His image was the very model of rugged individualism—a self-made man who answered to no one but his country. Interestingly, this

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<sup>586</sup> Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 8-10.

<sup>587</sup> Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 250.

<sup>588</sup> James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 16. See also Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 58.

<sup>589</sup> Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 66-67; Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America*, 17.

<sup>590</sup> F.J. Turner reference from Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits*, 40. See also Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 228; Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 30.

image of President Roosevelt ignored his association with “Teddy Bears,” which were named after him because he had once refused to shoot a bear on a hunting trip simply for the sake of “the kill.” It is also probably unlikely that those who followed TR’s style knew that the president had one been accused of effeminacy himself. As scholar Gail Bederman discloses to contemporary readers, it was during Roosevelt’s early political career in the New York state assembly that some journalists suggested he was a dandified sissy—even calling him “the exquisite Mr. Roosevelt” and comparing him to Oscar Wilde. Are these accusations what made him literally head for the hills? In any case, the fact that Roosevelt’s image became what it was underscores the trend of many American men longing for a rough and ready identity of a glorified, pre-urbanized past.<sup>591</sup> Anything else, apparently, did not make them “man enough.”

Despite desires for and allusions to the Wild-West “look” in popular culture—with its pseudo Native American or “frontier style” of suede and/or buckskin clothing, animal pelts and hats, and moccasins—most middle-class men, whether in cities, towns, or countryside, normally did *not* dress in this style. More typical fashions for these turn-of-the-century and early twentieth-century American men remained similar—if sometimes drabber—variations of what the Victorians had worn: the black suit with a black silk top hat. A sea of hats, in fact, flooded American streets until the mid-twentieth-century—whether the top hat, Derby, Boater, Panama, or Homburg. No “decent” man of even modest means was seen in the streets without wearing one. Though Jacob Riis’s photography of the American working classes would eventually counter this idea, a French visitor to the States remarked as early as 1857 that “everyone dresses

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<sup>591</sup> Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 170; Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, 23; Richard Lacayo, “The Making of America—Theodore Roosevelt,” *Time* at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1207820,00.html> (accessed Aug. 20, 2008); *Teddy Bear Museum* at <http://www.thetedybearmuseum.com/history.htm> (accessed Aug. 20, 2008).

the same way,” regardless of profession or “class.” It must have appeared so to some. Starting after the American Civil War, the unspectacular sameness of men’s dress was such that “any man who paid attention to fashion [was thought of] either as a n’er-do-well or a fool.” By 1901, unlike the English Edwardians—who followed the dapper and somewhat dandified lead of their King (nicknamed “Bertie”)—American men’s fashions tended to be connected to the practicality of the business world where men needed something simple and interchangeable.<sup>592</sup> Clearly, the dreamt-of “rugged individuality” of masculinity was more dream than reality when it came to the verities of everyday life.

Due to this growing fear of losing traditional masculine traits such as individualism, self-reliance, and independence, the tendency to exclude cultural “outsiders” for their “otherness” increased. In this time of change, the spectrum of what an American man should be (versus what he often was) narrowed. As mentioned earlier, this struggle for masculinity was primarily the concern of the middle and upper classes. Those who were working-class, black, Asian, Native American, Latino, or gay posed a threat to this impossible ideal of a united state of masculinity. Somehow, a ruggedly, masculine type who did strenuous physical work could only be white, educated, and middle or upper class. And, after all, who had ever heard of a black or gay cowboy?<sup>593</sup> Could such men really be in command over the wide open spaces? While these groups of frontiersmen, especially those of color, were usually marginalized, they did exist. In

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<sup>592</sup> Maria Costantino, *Men’s Fashions in the Twentieth Century: From Frock Coats to Intelligent Fibres* (New York: Quite Specific Media Group, 1997), 6; Banner, *American Beauty*, 233-234.

<sup>593</sup> This is an ironic commentary on the times—for there were always gay and black cowboys—even if it has only been more recently acknowledged in historical scholarship. See Chris Packard, *Queer Cowboys: And Other Erotic Male Friendships in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Brenda Cooper and Edward C. Pease, “Framing Brokeback Mountain: How the Popular Press Corralled the ‘Gay Cowboy Movie,’” *Critical Studies and Media Communication* 25: 3 (Aug. 2008): 249-273; Julia Leyda, “Black Audience Westerns and Politics of Cultural Identification in the 1930s,” *Cinema Journal* 42:1 (Fall 2002): 46-70; Paul W. Stewart and Wallace Yvonne Ponce, *Black Cowboys* (Broomfield, CO: Phillips Publishers, 1986); Monroe Lee Billington and Roger D. Hardaway, eds., *African American on the Western Frontier* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998).

Michael S. Kimmel's words, "Racism, antifeminism, and nativism fed off... fears [of losing masculine virtues], as though by excluding the 'others,' gender identity could be preserved. American manhood had earlier been grounded upon the exclusion of blacks and women, the non-native-born (immigrants) and the genuinely native-born (Indians), each on the premise that they weren't 'real' Americans and couldn't by definition be real men."<sup>594</sup> Though this particular passage does not say so, the wished-for super-virility of the cowboy ideal—and its exclusionary vision—clearly equated its opposite (femininity) with weakness or impotency. More insidious still, was the notion that femininity and/or feminization were indicators of homosexuality.

Though homosexuality has been practiced by both traditionally "masculine-looking" as well as more stereotypically "feminine" men since ancient times, a derogatory term for gay men by heterosexuals at the turn-of-the-century was "fairy," which connoted girlishly impish behavior and, above all, feminine dress or stylishness. It was, however, a term that these more effeminate gay men eventually used themselves. George Chauncey points out in his book *Gay New York*, most "fairies" were not usually transvestites but often simply adopted particularly natty accessories or details to their dress—signaling their orientation to likeminded others. Recognizable attire, as explained by a gay man in the late 1930s, could be "green suits, tight-cuffed trousers, flowered bathing trunks, and half-lengthed flaring top-coats."<sup>595</sup> Given the rather stagnant and monotone clothing choices for men (black suits, more black suits, and hats) for the first several decades of the twentieth century, any clothing that appeared a little too fine, a little too conscientiously put together, became identifiable markers of queerness. Thus, these more visibly obvious gay men were easy to pick out of a crowd—and could be easily excluded and

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<sup>594</sup> Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 58.

<sup>595</sup> George Chauncey, *Gay New York* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 52



harassed. Needless to say, and based on this only partial vision of gay male culture, images of an idealized, butch masculinity were not attributed to homosexuals.

Though “gay New York” gives an alternate portrait of turn-of-the-century masculinity, there were educated, middle-class men whose “crisis of masculinity” did not so much have to do with fitting into a rough and rugged type, but with their work. The intellectuals who lived in Greenwich Village alongside the “New Women” (who will be discussed shortly) served as forerunners, in a sense, to the Beats of the 1950s. They longed for creative work to define them, rather than what they saw as meaningless work in an office. They questioned the middle-class work ethic that they saw as the fault behind this situation. Whereas the early Village feminists questioned “the tradition-bound subordination of women to men, male rebellion targeted the white-collar workaday of corporate America, and very broadly, any institutional structure or social relation that delimited individuality.”<sup>596</sup> Clearly, there was a population of smart, middle-class men who did not feel empowered by their supposed cultural preeminence.

The roles and aesthetics of middle-class women in the late nineteenth-century were also complex and multi-faceted. As was the case with American men during this era, middle-class women vied to reconfigure womanhood in this “progressive” period. A dominant image of the middle or upper-class woman as homemaker and mother—a holdover from the “cult of true womanhood” earlier in the century—tended to prevail.<sup>597</sup> While only approximately six percent of married women worked by the beginning of the twentieth century, male contemporaries feared their increasing social power, which was connected to concepts of the so-called “New Woman”

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<sup>596</sup> Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits*, 60-61.

<sup>597</sup> Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18:2 (Summer 1966): 151-174; Kessler-Harris, *Women Have Always Worked: Women Have Always Worked* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1981), 35-44, 63, 67.

of the 1890s and the early 1900s. These women ranged from the office workers to Gibson Girls; from the Greenwich Village Bohemians to Suffragists.<sup>598</sup>

For women of the “middling sort” who eventually married and refrained from working at that point, there were certain professions deemed “feminine” and non-threatening that they could take on if they so chose. Office work such as that of bookkeepers or secretaries were acceptable. Some married middle-class women, depending on how many children they had, took in boarders at their homes for extra income.<sup>599</sup> The Gibson Girl, meanwhile, was not a real woman, but a concept created from the illustrations by Charles Dana Gibson for popular magazines starting in 1890. The style of Gibson’s girls—with long hair piled high on their heads, the wearing of shirtwaists, and engagement in “sporty” activities such as bicycling—was soon mimicked by young women around the country who wanted to appear “modern.”<sup>600</sup>

Another possibility for “modern living” was centered in New York’s Greenwich Village. In the early years of the twentieth century, this part of Manhattan became *the* gathering place for female artists and provocateurs who felt they did not fit in anywhere else. These Bohemian spaces were born of an “attitude of dissent from the prevailing values of middle-class society—artistic, political, utilitarian, sexual—usually expressed in lifestyle and through a medium of the arts.”<sup>601</sup> Often not just “runaways” from the bourgeoisie, many of these Village denizens were women of the upper-class who wanted lifestyles that seemed impossible in the more staid “provinces” of the country. Dancer Isadora Duncan and poet Marianne Moore belonged to this

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<sup>598</sup> This percentage of working, married women comes from Michael B. Katz, Mark J. Stern, Jamie J. Fader, “Women and the Paradox of Economic Inequality in the Twentieth-Century,” *Journal of Social History* 39:1 (Fall 2005): 67.

<sup>599</sup> Kessler-Harris, *Women Have Always Worked*, 97; Martha Norby Fraundorf, “The Labor Force Participation of Turn-of-the-Century Married Women,” *Journal of Economic History* 39:2 (Jun. 1979), 409.

<sup>600</sup> Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 37-44; Banner, *American Beauty*, 154-159.

<sup>601</sup> César Graña and Marigay Graña, *On Bohemia: The Code of the Self-Exiled* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1990), xv.

community, as did famed Salon hostess Mabel Dodge and *Little Review* editor Margaret Anderson. Here, women gave themselves license to marry or not, to love men or women, or, in the case of Marianne Moore, proudly fly the flag of maligned “spinsterhood.” Some in the group looked traditionally feminine in dress and demeanor, while others roamed the Village in dada-inspired wearable art or men’s clothing. As one woman of the period remembers, “The Village was full of so many different kinds of people. There was a real mobility of thinking and an impulse towards change there. There was a freedom. People were here for many reasons: artistic, low rents, free love, convenience. I thought the Village was where it was at.”<sup>602</sup> This bastion of “new womanhood” was a space where liberties in style and lifestyle mirrored each other in their diversity.

Starting in the late 1800s also, many educated, middle-class women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, became politicized around the idea of suffrage. Though some states did allow women voting rights prior to nationwide suffrage, women did not cast national ballots on all issues and elections until 1920, when their inclusion in this vital political process became the Nineteenth Amendment of the Constitution.<sup>603</sup> The Twenties is also synonymous with the so-called “Jazz Age.” Like in Britain and on the Continent, the “Roaring Twenties” could be seen as the aftermath of the Great War. Witnessing the fleeting fragility of life in the trenches firsthand, youthful veterans who had survived the battlefields of faraway Europe often came home greatly changed—and not always for the better. This initial return of sad-eyed soldiers influenced author Ernest Hemingway to name this group the “Lost

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<sup>602</sup> Andrea Barnet, *All-Night Party: The Women of Bohemian Greenwich Village and Harlem, 1913-1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2004), xv-xviii, 5-6. Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 229; Ruth Wittenberg quoted in Jeff Kisseloff, *You Must Remember This: An Oral History of Manhattan from the 1890s to World War II* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), 435.

<sup>603</sup> Jeff Hill, *Defining Moments in Women’s Suffrage* (Detroit, MI: Omnigraphics, 2006), 50-51.

Generation,” in his first acclaimed novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926).<sup>604</sup> Not surprisingly, perhaps, the hero of the novel, Jake Barnes, was literally gelded during the War, and, thus, wanted to remain an expatriate in Europe than return home (to the hyper-masculinity?) of the States.

It was also during the twenties that prohibition of alcohol was in effect and would be until 1933—requiring those youths who wanted to imbibe to sneak out to underground and illegal speakeasies. In these clubs the 1920s really roared—with hot Jazz sounds often played by black performers.<sup>605</sup> Once again, these spaces provided an alternative to mainstream, American values both in sights and sounds. In this decade, also, many conservative, middle-class Americans continued to attribute non-traditional female lifestyles and fashions as potentially threatening. With her more open views of sexuality and an urbane lifestyle, this decade’s “New Woman” symbolized for many a traditional thinker “the end of civilization as he had known it.” The “giddy flapper” did not necessarily see postponing motherhood and family as ludicrous and, instead, was happy to lose herself “in a drunken stupor to the lewd strains of a jazz quartet.”<sup>606</sup>

With the right to vote, Flappers got “It,” as well. “It” became a buzz word through a film of the same name starring actress Clara Bow. Soon known as the “It Girl,” Bow helped establish girlish sex appeal as *the thing* that made women modern. These often very thin and shapeless young women with short, trendy “bob” haircuts sometimes could also look a little tomboyish as compared to the more hourglass-shaped Gibson Girls of their mothers’ generation. The joviality

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<sup>604</sup> Paula S. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 18-19; Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (New York: Scribner, 1926).

<sup>605</sup> Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Noonday Press, 1995), 74; Kathy J. Ogren, *The Jazz Revolution: Twenties America and the Meaning of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 84-85.

<sup>606</sup> For a comprehensive look at claims of “newness” or a new modernity attributed to the U.S. in the 1920s, see Nathan Miller, *New World Coming: the 1920s and the Making of Modern America* (New York: Scribner, 2003). Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful*, 17-25, quote from 25.

of the twenties was due in great part to these (mostly) college-educated, cocktail-drinking, Charleston-dancing party girls whose “uniform” was a “short dress, roll-top silk stockings, girdle-bra that bound the breasts and minimized the hips, handbag, makeup.” Unlike the Bohemians of the Village, though, these very fashion-conscious young ladies eventually left the dance floor behind to “settle down” when they knew their season in the sun was over.<sup>607</sup>

While it seemed that all eyes were on the flapper during the 1920s, a new style icon emerged for men, too. The Italian immigrant and silent film star Rudolph Valentino influenced some men to adopt a more debonair style—harkening back to the “sartorial masculinity” that had been usurped by the neo-Western ideals of masculinity from a few decades earlier. Many women went wild for Valentino’s suave and mysterious good looks and attentive men took note. However, because Valentino was foreign (sometimes even tagged a “gigolo”) and played “exotic” roles like in *The Son of the Sheik* (1926), the star was also accused of effeminacy. This illustrates that even though Valentino was wildly successful, some men still stereotyped his non-rugged, obviously “un-American” look as unmanly. Nonetheless, some male youths followed Valentino’s stylistic lead—perhaps in rebellion against such attitudes. Even at the young star’s mobbed funeral in 1926, many young men were seen wearing “balloon trousers, spats and the slick hair and long sideburns” that had been popularized by Valentino.<sup>608</sup>

Despite the “problem” that many men still equated fashion and, thus, inadvertently, consumerism, too, with a less-than-desirable notion of masculinity, the 1920s was also the period when clothing retailers tried more vigorously to cater to men. Men’s sections in department

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<sup>607</sup> Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, 122, 131, 133, 135; Joshua Zeitz, *Flapper: A Madcap Story of Sex, Style, Celebrity, and the Women who Made America Modern* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007).

<sup>608</sup> David I. Grossvogel, *Vishnu in Hollywood: The Changing Image of the American Male* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 21-22, 26-27; Costantino, *Men’s Fashions*, 7. On the “exotic” as feminine, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 6.

stores often resembled exclusive clubs and did not allow women into this “sacred” space. The rise of ready-to-wear clothing in the early 1900s also picked up speed by the 1920s, allowing men more efficiency in their shopping. Unlike women, most men were not keen to linger for as long as possible in these consumer palaces and wanted to take care of their sartorial business as quickly as possible. In any case, though men had to buy clothes, they still wanted to do it “the way a man would.”<sup>609</sup>

The stock market crash of 1929 swiftly brought this more experimental and celebratory period to a close and ushered in the Great Depression. Much of the money that men and women had been able to spend on stylish garb in the previous years was often no longer available. Soon after his election to President in 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt enacted the New Deal, a network of programs that helped, among other things, curb unemployment and bring the United States out of this economic devastation.<sup>610</sup> It is also important to note that the President’s wife, Eleanor, was an activist for women’s rights and other disadvantaged groups, perhaps, the first truly non-traditional First Lady of the United States. Some biographical scholarship also points to the Roosevelts’ non-traditional marriage and that Eleanor had a longstanding relationship with Associated Press journalist Lorena Hickok.<sup>611</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> Jan Whitaker, *Service and Style: How the American Department Store Fashioned the Middle Class* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 49; Costantino, *Men’s Fashion*, 22-23.

<sup>610</sup> William W. Bremer, “Along the ‘American Way:’ The New Deal’s Work Relief Programs for the Unemployed,” *Journal of American History* 62:3 (Dec. 1975): 636-652.

<sup>611</sup> For this perspective on the Roosevelts’ marriage, see Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt’s Private Papers* (New York: Norton, 1971); “FDR’s Secret Love: How Roosevelt’s Lifelong Affair Might Have Changed the Course of the Century,” *U.S. News and World Report*, Apr. 18, 2008 at <http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/politics/2008/04/18/fdrs-secret-love.html?PageNr=3> (accessed Sept. 1, 2008). For Eleanor Roosevelt’s relationship with Lorena Hickock, see Blanche Wiesen Cook, “Review: Personal, Not Political,” *Women’s Review of Books* 16:4 (Jan. 1999): 7-8. For a more general overview of non-traditional femininity in during this period, see Sharon Hartman Strom, Review: “Practical Idealists: Women’s Politics and Culture in the New Deal Years,” *Reviews in American History* 16:4 (Dec. 1988): 604-611.

By the time the U.S. entered WWII in 1941, women had to take on many “traditionally male” jobs while fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons served in the armed forces. The famous 1943 image of “Rosie the Riveter,” (interestingly, also painted by Norman Rockwell) shows a large, muscular woman wearing jean overalls, thick-soled shoes, and goggles atop of her head, while a large riveting machine lays across her lap. In this iconic image, this new “industrial strength” woman—doing “man’s work” is depicted in clothing that was, in no way, coded as feminine at the time.<sup>612</sup> Thus, for a relatively short time more women inhabited a “masculine” space, work, and dress than had often been the case in prior to the War. Some women wanted to continue working, though most did not have the opportunity to continue industrial work, as those jobs went back to returning G.I.s. Certainly, there had always been a minority of women who chose unconventional paths. However, for the majority of middle-class women, the division of labor resumed so that men worked outside the home, while most of these women returned to the conventional roles homemaker, mother, and wife.<sup>613</sup>

With the defeat of the Axis powers, and the economic disaster facing Britain and France, the U.S. soon symbolized postwar strength—and, as we shall see, the role of the wife and mother in the postwar, nuclear family was to serve a specific purpose in creating this strength. As for their husbands, individual American men were expected to embody the vim and vigor that both media and government projected as the United States’ image in the world.

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<sup>612</sup> “Rockwell’s Rosie the Riveter Painting Auctioned,” *Rosie the Riveter World War II/Home Front National Historical Park website* at <http://www.rosietheriveter.org/index.htm> (accessed Aug. 23, 2008). For women working in factories during World War II, see Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers’ War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 43; Nancy Baker Wise, *A Mouthful of Rivets: Women at Work in World War II* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 1-27.

<sup>613</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris, *Women Have Always Worked*, 141-143. For some of these alternate paths in the immediate postwar period, see Wini Breines, “The ‘Other Fifties’: Beats and Bad Girls,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 382-408.

## 4.2 MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES: 1946 TO 1963

The eighteen years prior to when the Beatles' *joie de vivre* would enliven American culture has been historicized mostly as a time of conformity and moments (if not periods) of paranoia. Though some recent scholarship has tried to add nuances to this image, even these revisions cannot help but paint a portrait not altogether different from the more familiar one. For instance, despite that fact that some middle-class women became "working moms," they were often still expected to keep up with their female neighbors in terms of housework. While women of this period may have felt "homeward bound" to early marriage and motherhood, any additional work that they took on was their choice, and hence, "their problem" to sort out.<sup>614</sup> As the Cold War emerged from the ashes of World War II, and even more men entered a white-collar labor force, yet another crisis in masculinity arose as well. Furthermore, while middle-class women and men struggled with their roles in aftermath of the War, the teenager and a market for "teenage culture" revealed itself as a new and potent phenomenon.

As in Britain and Germany, World War II *changed everything*. The War had destabilized cultures and nations around the world and the United States was certainly not immune to these changes. While Britain lost its Empire and Germany lost any good international reputation that it *may* have had before the War, the U.S. became one of two global powers—the other, of course, was the Soviet Union. While the Soviets had been part of the Allied Forces, their sweeping influence and control of Eastern Europe (soon called the "Iron Curtain"), as well as their nuclear capabilities, created a climate of competition and unprecedented fear of Communism in the

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<sup>614</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).



United States.<sup>615</sup> The onset of this Cold War fostered a cultural shift in the country that was coupled with an increasingly interventionist and bureaucratic government. Though the U.S. government policies had gone back and forth with isolationism versus interventionism since before WWI, the post-World War II period saw the U.S. pick up, in many respects, where the British Empire had left off. With occupying forces in the defeated Axis nations of Germany and Japan, and nuclear capabilities that threatened global, nuclear holocaust, the Americans found themselves in a position of power that would have seemed unfathomable in the early twentieth century. Only five years after World War II, U.S. troops already found themselves sent to fight another war, this time to battle Communist forces in Korea. If the postwar period in Britain and Germany (and Japan) required literal rebuilding from the ground up, the U.S. was in a state of building up its militaristic powers. It is not for nothing that even the otherwise conservative President Eisenhower warned in his 1961 farewell speech of unnecessary spending to create a monopolizing “military industrial complex.”<sup>616</sup>

While the word “austere” was applied to the immediate postwar years in the U.K., I suggest the word most often associated with the U.S. at this time would have been the one connected to economist John Kenneth Galbraith: “affluence.”<sup>617</sup> It was with the coming of American postwar prosperity that suburban growth also took off. The planned communities outside of major cities, such as Levittown, New York (built between 1947 and 1951) with their manicured lawns, boxy, identical-looking homes—and the nuclear families that lived in them—

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<sup>615</sup> Walter LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2005* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008); Melvin P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

<sup>616</sup> Mary Sheila McMahon, “The American State and the Vietnam War: A Genealogy of Power,” in *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 45-46; “Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Farewell Address,” USA-Presidents at <http://www.usa-presidents.info/speeches/eisenhower-farewell.html> (accessed Aug. 19, 2008).

<sup>617</sup> John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

have become part of a clichéd, but nonetheless accurate, iconography of Cold War America. The idea that “everyone was middle class” during this time not only dominates contemporary perceptions of the 1950s; it was also enthusiastically fostered during the decade itself.<sup>618</sup> If England was “grey,” then the U.S. was “beige”—like the dull suits and hats worn by the many mid-level executives commuting to and from their “Levittowns” to corporate offices cities. This was the sort of image that inspired William H. Whyte’s influential book *The Organization Man* (1956). He described a society where dreams of the rugged, self-made man of an idealized American past seemingly were transformed into nightmares of men as mindless rats caught in spinning wheels. Men had to achieve material success and, thus, were “trapped” in a community of people who were apparently all striving for the same. Bizarrely, though the U.S.S.R.’s Communism was much maligned at this time as a society devoid of individualism, it seemed that Cold War American culture was the other side of the same coin. Even if one was not working for the State, one was, as late-sixties counterculturalists would later flippantly say, you were working for the interests of “*the man*” and not oneself.<sup>619</sup>

During the late-forties through the fifties, the lines between men and women were plainly drawn. Men were expected to be good providers and dependable fathers, while women tended to home and hearth. In the expanding middle class, it was more-than-likely that many of these women were college educated and once had career aspirations. Rather than pursuing them, though, most chose the more accepted path of housewife and mother. Even one of the most glamorous of new jobs for women in the postwar period—that of the airline “stewardess”—was

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<sup>618</sup> Karen McNally, *When Frankie Went to Hollywood: Frank Sinatra and American Male Identity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 18-19.

<sup>619</sup> William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Doubleday, 1956) at <http://writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/whyte-chap1.html> (accessed Aug. 19, 2008). For Levittown, see Herbert J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (New York: Pantheon, 1967); Joshua Ruff, “Levittown: the Archetype of Suburban Development,” *History Net* at <http://www.historynet.com/levittown-the-archetype-for-suburban-development.htm> (accessed Aug. 19, 2008).

seen as merely a stepping stone to a “better life” of marriage and family.<sup>620</sup> Despite outward appearances, though, not all happy homemakers were smiling sincerely. By 1963 Betty Friedan’s groundbreaking book *The Feminine Mystique* spoke about “the problem that has no name.” Interviewing and observing women in the 1950s and early 1960s, she discovered many felt a general sense of malaise with married life and motherhood. She also wrote about the guilt that accompanied these feelings, which would paralyze some young housewives with depression. This sense of despair was thought to be due to a lack of identity outside the family unit, and more importantly, an absence of creative work to help define their lives. In Friedan’s words, women who did not have a greater hand in shaping their lives by seeking further enrichment through creative work were “committing a kind of suicide.”<sup>621</sup> Though there were exceptions to the rule, and some young women lived more Bohemian lifestyles, many married women feared making a leap beyond the conventional for fear of social suicide.<sup>622</sup>

While much feminist critique has emphasized the restrictions women faced during this period, recent scholarship shows that American masculinity had also reached another crisis point of its own. In a different, but somewhat similar way, white middle-class men felt trapped also. Cold War culture enforced an unquestioning homogenization of masculine culture, where “masculine strength and the patriarchal home [served] as protective forces in a dangerous world.”<sup>623</sup> Within this cultural milieu any break from this role was seen as an affront to national values. Being “different” was not something the majority of Americans sought to be. While, as

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<sup>620</sup> Kathleen M. Barry, *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 50-51.

<sup>621</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963), 15, 336.

<sup>622</sup> For a fresh look at the “making of Betty Friedan” prior to her writing of this landmark book, see David Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the making of The Feminine Mystique: The American Left, The Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

<sup>623</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, “Sex, Gender, and the Cold War Language Reform,” *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 106.

David Riesman's book *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) suggested, being part of the urban (or suburban) herds was not always a warm or inclusive-feeling experience, this society fostered what the author called an "other-directed" society. In this culture, people's actions were determined by what they thought would yield approval from others. And, it seemed, that this overly busy crowd which sought to "keep up with the Joneses," was not only predominantly male, but, as in the 1890s, predominantly white and middle class.<sup>624</sup>

Despite notions of a mostly unadventurous early postwar period, the late forties and fifties was actually a transitional moment in American popular culture. Like earlier twentieth-century decades, there were preferred models of how to be a man or a woman in the modern era. However, the explosion of the nuclear bomb profoundly changed the way Americans envisioned the future—and this was especially true for young people. While some clung to the certainties of a more traditional lifestyle, others—either by choice or birth—sought out something more. Colliding with the birth of teenage culture and the popularity of movies and—by the mid-fifties—television, young men and women were exposed to even more "role models" through various media outlets.<sup>625</sup>

Though there were men and women who were stigmatized because of their "difference" from the mainstream, some young people increasingly overlooked or, even, celebrated attitudes and consumer goods born as a result of this difference.<sup>626</sup> As we will see, in terms of gender aesthetics at this time, the main transition in popular culture was that arguably more young men and women from the middle class began supporting or imitating the look, sound, and feel of

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<sup>624</sup> David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950).

<sup>625</sup> H.H. Remmers and D.H. Radler, *The American Teenager* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957), 31; Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (New York: Viking, 2007), 464.

<sup>626</sup> Arthur F. Redding, *Turncoats, Traitors, and Fellow Travelers: Culture and Politics of the Early Cold War* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008).

“otherness:” While Mod would, through the commercial success of its music and fashions, eventually popularize a foreign brand of difference on a grander scale, this shift in sentiment among the young was already beginning. Many of the up-and-coming “youth heroes” of the 1950s were working-class, African-American, gay or bisexual. During the last years of World War II—approximately twenty years since Rudolph Valentino’s popularity—some Americans initially saw singer Frank Sinatra as “foreign” and “not traditionally masculine” because of his Italian-American heritage. Nonetheless, it was not only Italian-American or working-class fans from his hometown of Hoboken, New Jersey, that supported Sinatra, but middle-class female “bobbysoxers” who regularly helped to mob his concerts.<sup>627</sup>

There were a great many Americans whose skin color was their difference. Black Americans were still fighting for equal rights and remained on the outside looking in at this monotone and mono-hued American culture.<sup>628</sup> Segregation was still a reality in many parts of the United States, making it difficult for non-whites to imagine inclusion in the newly-minted, postwar “American Dream” of middle-class affluence. Other men who were “different” were those who desired same-sex companionship. While debates remain to this day whether being gay is choice or not, most of the medical community—as well as American culture at large—thought of homosexuality as a mental illness during this era. Jane Sharron DeHart advises, “Despite Alfred C. Kinsey’s findings in his 1948 report that 37 percent of American males had engaged in post-adolescent same-sex sexual activity at least once, homosexuality was further pathologized... by government officials, psychologists, and journalists alike.”<sup>629</sup> Homosexuality

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<sup>627</sup> McNally, *When Frankie Went to Hollywood*, 14; Savage, *Teenage*, 444-445.

<sup>628</sup> See for instance, Jan van Delinder, *Struggles Before Brown: Early Civil Rights Protests and Their Significance Today* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008).

<sup>629</sup> Jane Sherron De Hart, “Containment at Home: Gender, Sexuality, and National Identity in Cold War America,” *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, 126.

was a disease to be cured. Left to fester, it could infect and negatively transform American society.<sup>630</sup> During the Cold War, the then-enemy-number-one of Communism was coupled with a fear of homosexuality. Just like homosexuality, Communism was often described as a sinister and invisible disease. In this sense, homosexuality was both a moral affront and a physiological illness. It was during this time that one of the worst insults was to be called a “pinko fag.”<sup>631</sup> As the Army-McCarthy “witch trial” hearings of 1954 looked to rout out both Communists and homosexuals from positions of governmental and economic power, it is ironic that one of McCarthy’s key legal henchmen, Roy Cohn was a closeted gay man who would eventually succumb to AIDS in 1986.<sup>632</sup>

While being black or gay (or a Communist-sympathizer) automatically positioned one as an outsider in Cold War America, some used this status to their advantage. For some men, their non-mainstream masculinity empowered them and allowed creativity to flourish. African-American Modern Jazz musicians, like Miles Davis and John Coltrane, whose music and style, as we saw in Chapter One, helped pave the way for Mod culture in Britain, encoded their outsider status with style and the exclusivity of “cool.” Similarly, is it merely coincidental that many of the 1950s Beat writers such as Allan Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs were gay men? In creating this “hip” world that, in fact, wanted to exclude the society that *excluded them*, rebellious cliques thrived in their apartness from the lemming-like masses. As one author has it, this challenge to the fifties mainstream was meant to show “America’s other appetite, not for

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<sup>630</sup> Michael S. Sherry, *Gay Artists in American Modern Culture: An Imagined Conspiracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 52-66.

<sup>631</sup> For the connections made between communism and homosexuality during this period, see Sherry, *Gay Artists*, 56-57; David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For this derogatory term, see “McCarthyism,” *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Culture* at <http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/mccarthyism.html> (accessed Mar. 9, 2005).

<sup>632</sup> Daryl Ogden, “Cold War Science and the Body Politic: An Immuno/Virological Approach to Angels in America,” *Literature and Medicine* 19:2 (Fall 2000): 241-243.

wealth but for autonomy. It is a common folk's grab at rich folks' freedom—the purest form of which is freedom from the demands of money. It is an equalizer, as available to outsiders as to insiders.”<sup>633</sup> Another way to define this is that whether circumstances of birth or choice brought this newfound coterie together, participants' goals were the same.

Two other important strains of non-traditional masculinity that appeared by the mid-fifties were those influenced by the new popular music genre of “Rock and Roll,” as well as those influenced by new Hollywood stars such as Marlon Brando, James Dean, and Montgomery Clift. These unconventional male images were especially appealing to the postwar babies coming of age during a period where conformity was king. Though the term “teen-ager” was conceived of during the War, many in this new and populous group of American youth wanted, like in England and Germany, to cultivate a culture of their own.<sup>634</sup> While not all of these young people desired to belong something as avant-garde as Beat culture, Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957)—the writer's semiautobiographical novel of traveling through the American expanse as a rejection of “normal life”—nonetheless made an impact with young audiences. Though not a Beat novel per se, J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) had, in some respects, already primed readers for *On the Road* with its similarly rebellious tone through seventeen-year-old protagonist Holden Caulfield's voice.<sup>635</sup> Given these glimpses into non-traditional middle-class values and lives, American teenagers also looked at different ways to express being a man or a woman. This would emerge more noticeably with the arrival of Mod, but the first wave of working-class Rock and Rollers and defiant movie heroes gave the earliest male baby boomers, especially, different

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<sup>633</sup> Marler, Regina, *Queer Beats: How the Beats Turned America On to Sex* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2004); John Leland, *Hip: The History* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), 7.

<sup>634</sup> Savage, *Teenage*, xv.

<sup>635</sup> Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957); J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (New York: Little, Brown, 1951).

images to emulate and mimic than what the middle-class world of the “organization man” had wrought.

“Middle-aged” Bill Haley (and his Comets) aside, most of the initial American Rock and Roll musicians such as Chuck Berry and Little Richard, were African-American. In yet another way for black men to be excluded from a potentially more inclusive vision of American popular culture, the new music genre was known as “race music.” In the genre’s earliest days, it was seen as highly improper for middle-class white teens to listen to it.<sup>636</sup> Though not all listeners knew that the term “rock and roll” was slang in the black community for sex, those who did realize the name’s history gave the music an even “racier” image. Seeing and hearing what black artists’ rock and roll sounds were doing to quite a few of America’s young, a Memphis music producer by the name of Sam Phillips was looking for the magical formula that would bring the energy of this African-American music to the white mainstream. His idea required a white performer to deliver the shock and sting of this fresh and exciting sound to this larger audience. Phillips found his star in a truck driver from Tupelo, Mississippi, by the name of Elvis Presley. Phillips was astounded by the singer and guitarist’s initially evocative, hip-shaking performance and quickly recorded a few songs. “That’s All Right Mama,” and “Milkcow Blues Boogie” were released as singles in 1954 on Phillips’s Sun Records—some of the first recordings by this young, working-class fellow who would soon be called the “King” of rock and roll. By 1956, top forty hits such as “Heartbreak Hotel,” and “Blue Suede Shoes,” would catapult Presley to national and

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<sup>636</sup> Nik Cohen, *Awopbopaloobop Alopbamboom: The Golden Age of Rock* (New York: Grove Press, 1969), 15-16, 31-51; George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 120-130.



international acclaim. With his quivering lips, shaking hips, and unrefined good looks, his image struck the right, rebellious chord with teenagers from various social classes.<sup>637</sup>

While Elvis became the premiere symbol of masculine rock and roll culture, other voices emerged that would go on to influence the British musicians who would spearhead the British Invasion. Buddy Holly and the Everly Brothers, in particular, brought melodic and harmonic sensibilities to their brand of rock music. Unlike Elvis, their sex appeal and youthful allure was much less obvious than that of Elvis. The lank Texan Buddy Holly wore dark, nebbish-looking glasses and was not traditionally good looking or sexually “threatening” in any way that was apparent. Similarly, lyrics to one of Don and Phil Everly’s biggest hits, “Wake Up, Little Susie” (#1, 1957), is quite chaste. The song bemoans the possibility that a teenage couple’s reputation may be ruined because of falling asleep at the drive-in—rather than because of any actual hanky-panky there.<sup>638</sup> A fairly popular British Invasion band, Manchester’s Hollies, would name themselves after the late Texas rock and roller, while the early Beatles’ harmonies echo that of the Everly Brothers.

The young male stars in 1950s Hollywood were also seen to exemplify an alternative masculinity. Although today’s assessment of Marlon Brando as the ultimate macho of the fifties by many of today’s audiences, some critics read his then image as not typically masculine. Despite now-iconic visions of a muscular Brando as Stanley Kowalski wearing a ripped undershirt in the film version of Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire*, many fifties’ critics placed him in a crop of up-and-coming actors who embodied a more “boyish” kind of

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<sup>637</sup> Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock ‘n’ Roll Music* (1975; New York: Plume, 1997), 120-152; Joel Whitburn, *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits* (New York: Billboard Books, 2004), 500; Lipsitz, *Time Passages*, 118-119.

<sup>638</sup> Tim Riley, *Fever: How Rock ‘n’ Roll Transformed Gender in America* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2004), 27-28; Felice and Boudleaux Bryant, comp., *Wake Up Little Susie*, the Everly Brothers, Cadence 1337, 45 rpm; Whitburn, *Billboard Book*, 213.

masculinity. One scholar sees this as the case because these actors were put in contrast to the hyper-manly images of established stars such as John Wayne, Clark Gable, and Gary Cooper. Furthermore, these new actors often conveyed a charged eroticism that was not overt in these earlier Hollywood greats. That Brando, as well as Montgomery Clift, James Dean, and Paul Newman, showed more varied emotions than the aforementioned leading men may have led critics to the belief that the new stars' personae was boyish, and, thus, also not quite fully masculine. They were performing manhood but were not truly men themselves.<sup>639</sup>

That these actors became idols to some young men in the 1950s suggests that a new male ideal was being sought. In mimicking either their rock and roll or film heroes, male teenagers stood a fair chance of being called "deviant" or a "juvenile delinquent" ("JD").<sup>640</sup> Both these kinds of images in fifties popular culture, while marketable, were not seen in a favorable light by most adults. Instead, many middle-class adults thought that these new role models would lead their children towards rebellious behavior. The worry over juvenile delinquency was not born in the 1950s, but had already existed in the early 1900s and was spread through the work of psychologist G. Stanley Hall. However, the advent of these new icons coupled with a greater population of young people helped exacerbate adult anxiety.<sup>641</sup> In a still-segregated United States, Elvis Presley's whiteness could not cover up that he still "sounded black" and was nonetheless bringing race music to youthful ears around the country. Presley, as well as Brando, also brought a threatening pelvis-swiveling and nearly bare-chested working-class sexuality to fifties America. Meanwhile, the more overt boyishness and neurotic energies of Montgomery

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<sup>639</sup> Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 203, 252.

<sup>640</sup> Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (New York: Viking, 2007), 92-93; Palladino, *Teenagers*, 82-83, 159-165; Anna M. Kross, "'A Place to Go,'" *New York Times*, May 23, 1948, SM32.

<sup>641</sup> Martin Tochin, "Patience Called Key to Grasping Teen-Age Music," *New York Times*, Apr. 2, 1959, 36.

Clift and James Dean can be read as especially rebellious, if not queer, as if the “incomplete man[hood]” of boyishness belied sexual ambiguity.<sup>642</sup> However, the main difference between earlier entertainers and this new group was that these “new males” seemed unafraid to be labeled less manly for showing warm sensuality and emotive intensity.<sup>643</sup>

While male youths were primed and ready to rebel, it seemed that older middle-class men did not necessarily love the traditional role of husband/father/provider in all instances. Whether they always admitted to it or not, many longed for some kind of escape, but their “rebellion” was of a different stripe. Several years before the invention of the birth control pill, which would allow women more discreet control over their sexuality (more so than with condoms, for instance), men found their initial sexual revolution of the postwar in the pages of Hugh Hefner’s *Playboy*. The new magazine, which debuted in 1953, took the best of burlesque entertainment, added what might be described as “pep talk” for would-be libertines in business suits, and created a product like none other at that time. Essentially, the promotion of the so-called “Playboy lifestyle,” suggested that the traditional role of husband and father had created males that were slaves to both work and a home life—constantly commandeered by bossy, desexualized women—required a serious revamping.<sup>644</sup>

By the late fifties, Philip Wylie’s recurrent articles in *Playboy* suggested American men needed to fear the “womanization of culture.” This negative portrait of mid-century life described “nagging, parasitic women [who] were sapping the virility of American men... The notion was predicated not only on a supposed rampant rise of female social domination but also a dangerous swapping of gender identity.” No matter how much founder Hugh Hefner would later

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<sup>642</sup>This queer reading of Clift and Dean is found in Cohan, *Masked Men*, 238.

<sup>643</sup> Riley, *Fever*, xiii, 17-19.

<sup>644</sup> For more detail on this attitude as part of the “Playboy Lifestyle,” see Carrie Pitzulo, “The Battle in Every Man’s Bed: *Playboy* and the Fiery Feminists,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17:2 (May 2008): 259-289.

argue that his sex-positive message was “feminist,” there seemed to be a distinction between his submissive and carefree “bunnies” and the rest of the (inherently bossy and frigid) female population.<sup>645</sup> In *Playboy*’s male-centric world, “the good life” consisted of a focus on leisure, urbane living, and non-monogamous sex with as many willing women as possible. The epitome of this lifestyle was the “Playboy pad,” which was to be the quintessence of modern glamour in its presentation of fashionable consumer goods—from Modernist Scandinavian furniture to the most trendy martini shakers and glasses available.<sup>646</sup> Though this different strain of masculinity was something new, and again, an alternative to suburban, married life, it was still a lifestyle bound to expectations of idealized American masculinity. Instead of taming the wild frontier, a playboy (note “boy” is part of the moniker) sought to seduce and dominate a bevy of beautiful women in his tricked-out bachelor pad. Meanwhile, it is hard to know who these women were. Though Kinsey’s report on female sexuality had stated that many women were not virgins before their wedding night, social norms transmitted through media suggested that “good girls” still did not.<sup>647</sup>

While the extent of his own “playboy activities” would not be known to the public until much later, the president elected in fall 1960, John F. Kennedy, also represented a seemingly new masculinity—especially as a mainstream political figure. Though well-educated, he did not come across as stuffy. He was also not part of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, or “Wasp,” elite, as he was a Catholic. However, at his core, Kennedy was not that “alternative” in his masculinity. The youthful (though not young) Commander in Chief had willingly fought in

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<sup>645</sup> Qtd. in Pitzulo, “The Battle in Every Man’s Bed,” 263.

<sup>646</sup> Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 167, Cohan, *Masked Men*, 268.

<sup>647</sup> Beth Bailey, “Sexual Revolution(s),” in *The Sixties: From History to Memory*, ed. David Farber (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 236; Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing-Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1994), 61.

World War II, as had most men in his generation. He was married with young children and, living-out the male double-standard, had mistresses as well as a wife—though to the extent that this was known to the American public at this time is not clear.<sup>648</sup> At heart, Kennedy was a complex figure: not fully ahead of his time, but *potentially* different from the presidents who came before him. Amidst mounting tensions between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R, he was not fully innovative in terms of foreign relations, but was rather a typical “Cold Warrior.”<sup>649</sup>

What marked Kennedy and the Kennedy administration as truly different, though, was his focus on young people and issues that concerned them. Additionally, the president’s sophisticated and cosmopolitanism wife Jacqueline (“Jackie”) brought a new fashion and flair to both Washington and the country. His administration founded the Peace Corps, which sent young Americans to help in the modernization of developing countries. Though the Civil Rights movement was already underway thanks to black leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Kennedy also strongly supported this endeavor. And, perhaps most exciting for some, Kennedy promised to accelerate the burgeoning space program. He wanted to explore and utilize this “New Frontier,” and get a man on the moon by decade’s end.<sup>650</sup> While Kennedy envisioned U.S. astronauts beating the Russians to the Earth’s satellite, young women aspired to beat their friends to department stores in order to acquire Jackie-inspired fashions. The First Lady, with her bright pink suits, pillbox hats, and distinctive “flip” hairstyle, became the 1960s’ first bona fide style

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<sup>648</sup> Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, 31; John H. Summers, “What Happened to Sex Scandals? Politics and Peccadilloes, Jefferson to Kennedy,” *Journal of American History* 87:3 (Dec. 2000), 838.

<sup>649</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 218.

<sup>650</sup> David Hapgood and Meridan Bennett, *Agents of Change: A Close Look at the Peace Corps* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1968); “Teaching with Documents: Founding Documents of the Peace Corps,” *The National Archives* at <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/peace-corps/> (accessed Aug. 24, 2008); Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 489.

icon.<sup>651</sup> The less-is-more design of her clothes (A-line cuts and sleeveless shift dresses) combined with minimal accessorizing was distinctively modern and not necessarily traditionally feminine, either, in that they did not emphasize female curves. Jackie's clothing, designed primarily by Oleg Cassini, countered fifties fashions that emphasized "gently softened shoulder-lines, corseted waists, roundly padded hips and long, swirling skirts only eleven inches above the ground."<sup>652</sup> In this sense, Jackie Kennedy's style easily paved the way for baby-boomer girls' eventual love of the more minimalist look of Mod.

Though already in their forties and thirties respectively, "Jack" Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline brought a sense of liveliness to the early sixties. In modern times—in the twentieth-century, certainly—he was perhaps the first president to be seen as inherently youthful and not less manly for it. Breaking with male fashion traditions, for instance, Kennedy was known for not wearing hats in public—a real breach in "proper" masculine attire—and also for his voluminous hair before the Beatles' "mop top" style was popularized.<sup>653</sup> Despite his age, Kennedy was seen by the younger generation as the first to "[make] everybody respect the young."<sup>654</sup> One of his most famous lines, taken from his inaugural address (where he was also hatless!): "Ask not what your country can do for you... but ask what you can do for your country," suggested that the large, population of young people take more active involvement in shaping the future of the U.S., as well as advancing their own individual destinies.<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> Kathleen Craughwell-Varda, "Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis," in *The Fashion Reader*, ed. Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun (New York: Berg, 2007), 291; Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 39-41.

<sup>652</sup> John Peacock, *The 1950s* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 7.

<sup>653</sup> Neil Steinberg, *Hatless Jack: The President, the Fedora, and the History of an American Style* (New York: Plume, 2004).

<sup>654</sup> Qtd. in Peter Braunstein, "Forever Young: Insurgent Youth and the Sixties Culture of Rejuvenation," in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s*, ed. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002), 244.

<sup>655</sup> John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address," *American Rhetoric Top 100 Speeches* at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkinaugural.htm> (accessed Aug. 24, 2008).

While the Kennedys transformed the White House both literally (Jackie famously had several rooms redecorated) and figuratively, young people also went through their own set of changes. With the decline in popularity of the first wave of rock and roll stars, one of the “rock” or, at least “pop” genres most loved at this time was that of the Girl Group. During a time when milquetoast singers like Pat Boone or Andy Williams were supposed to fill the void that Elvis and Buddy Holly had left, Girl Groups like the Chantels, the Shirelles, and the Ronettes offered something distinctively more rebellious. Songs like the the Shirelles’ “Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow” (penned by Carole King and Gerry Goffin) expressed female desire and sexuality and the guilt that often accompanied it. The Ronettes’ “Be My Baby,” encased as it was in Phil Spector’s relatively cacophonous “wall of sound,” production, expressed the vocalists’ sheer determination to “get their man.”<sup>656</sup> Interestingly, while Jackie Kennedy seemed the stylish power behind her man, Girl Groups embodied a similar panache, albeit vocally, that made strong statements about modern womanhood, yet still worked within a traditionally heteronormative context.

As the U.S. top forty charts featured female performed pop songs of love and loss for the teenage population, near nuclear catastrophe loomed as President Kennedy struggled to handle the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1961. Early in the president’s administration, public perception of his Kennedy had been that he was a president who could potentially bring the American public in from a societal chill that had lasted since the War. Even the public relations imagery that called the Kennedy administration “Camelot” implied that this was one made up of benevolent kings and knights saving maiden Liberty.<sup>657</sup> The proximity to nuclear holocaust

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<sup>656</sup> Riley, *Fever*, 36, 43, 45.

<sup>657</sup> Good friend and Harvard classmate Alan J. Lerner penned the song “Camelot” for Broadway musical of the same name. As a favorite song of Kennedy’s—a longtime fan of the King Arthur legend—the song became the unofficial

during this foreign relations debacle, however, in some ways, at least, countered this idealized image of the president. Sadly, the assassination of Kennedy in November 1963 dashed the dreams that many Americans had (albeit, sometimes unrealistically) projected onto the president—as both a leader and a role model. Though Kennedy had not been the only example of early 1960s masculinity, his already strongly iconic style and image was a difficult one to think of losing or to try and replace. Where would this generation of Americans—especially young men—turn next for inspiration?

#### 4.3 THE BEATLES AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1964-1965

By interviewing U.S. Mods today, I have clearly seen how much of an impact the Beatles and the “British Invasion” groups of the mid-sixties have had on the American conceptualization of Mod culture both past and present. Actor and musician Alex Baker (b. 1970, San Francisco/Los Angeles) who discovered Mod in the early eighties in his hometown of Walnut Creek, California, tells me, “I’ve heard [the sixties] called the most overrated decade ever, but like it or not, the world moving into the sixties and coming out of it was dramatically different. There was this sense of revolution that was touched-off by the Beatles in fashion and music and culture.” Similarly, according to Bay Area musician Paul Bertolino (b. 1969)

I didn’t realize until much later that soul music was such a major part of the whole Mod scene. I was a music-obsessed kid from the very beginning...My aunt introduced me to the Beatles via “The Beatles’ Second Album” when I was probably around two years old.

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“anthem,” of his administration. The original stage production also starred British actors Richard Burton, Julie Andrews, and Roddy MacDowell. See “Return to Camelot: Music of the Kennedy Years,” WOSU FM at <http://www.wosu.org/archive/jfk/myth.php> (accessed Oct. 15, 2008); Patricia K. Felkins and Irvin Goldman, “Political Myth as Subjective Narrative: Some Interpretations and Understandings of John F. Kennedy,” *Political Psychology* 14: 3 (Sept. 1993): 447-467.



When I was three or four I actually imagined what it would be like to be at High School dances in the early to mid-sixties. I had vivid pictures in my head of girls with Patty Duke hair and guys in suits and I loved it. I wanted to be there even then. My obsession with the Who and the Kinks, which started when I was 12, is what introduced me to slightly more authentic Mod music and culture.<sup>658</sup>

Similarly, when I asked fulltime investment banker and part-time DJ Dan Melendez (Los Angeles, b. 1974) what songs he would define as quintessentially “Mod,” those by British Invasion groups came to his mind: “Circles” by British garage group Les Fleur De Lys (a Who cover, though), “Zoot Suit,” by the Who as the High Numbers, and “Just out of Reach,” by the Zombies, for instance. In the case of these three narrators, the American roots of Mod culture are intrinsically linked to the British Invasion. In the words of the American author of *The Mini-Mod Sixties Book*, “It all started with the Beatles.”<sup>659</sup>

#### **4.3.1 The Beatles’ Initial Mod Message of 1964**

If Mod came to the U.S. via the Beatles then the culture’s initial arrival was greeted with “screams heard round the world.”<sup>660</sup> As was the case with earlier conflicting generational reception of pop culture phenomena (like Elvis), articles in the mainstream press—written by adults—initially found the Beatles either a fad that would soon disappear or a potentially threatening influence on American teens. Even prior to the Beatles’ arrival in the U.S., *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines ran somewhat dismissive stories about the group. According to *Time*’s November 1963 article, British youth had already succumbed to a “new madness” called

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<sup>658</sup> Paul Bertolino, Email to author, Jan. 13, 2003.

<sup>659</sup> Alex Baker (b. 1970), oral history interview with author, analog recording (transferred to digital), Jan. 3, 2003, the Bourgeois Pig Café, Los Angeles, DCUP; Bertolino, Email.

<sup>660</sup> I take this phrase from Peter Marks, “Recalling Screams Heard Round the World,” *New York Times*, Feb. 6, 1994, 1; Samantha Bleikhorn, *The Mini-Mod Sixties Book* (San Francisco: Last Gasp, 2002), 10.

Beatlemania. The tone of the article is bemused and slightly mocking—as if American teens would remain immune and above-it-all—unlike their weaker, British cousins. According to this brief write-up, “Though Americans might find the Beatles achingly familiar... they are apparently irresistible to the English.” *Newsweek*, meanwhile, reported that “Beatle music” is “high-pitched, loud beyond reason, and stupefyingly repetitive.” Furthermore, the author also tried feminizing the group, stating, “They prance, skip, and turn in circles” when performing.<sup>661</sup>

Despite the disparaging tone of these articles, thousands of ecstatic and expectant American teenagers—both girls and boys—first caught glimpse of the Beatles as they deplaned their transatlantic Pan Am flight on February 7, 1964. Two days later, these same youths were most likely part of the 73-million-person audience who would be introduced to them further via *The Ed Sullivan Show*.<sup>662</sup> The symbolism of the band’s arrival at New York’s Kennedy airport cannot be ignored. Though both sides of a particular argument have been effectively supported—either that the Kennedy assassination *did* or *did not* set the tone for the Beatles’ imminent stateside success—it remains important to contextualize historically this shift from one youth hero (Kennedy) to a new set of them (The Beatles).<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>661</sup> “The New Madness,” *Time*, Nov. 15, 1963; “Beatlemania,” *Newsweek*, Nov. 18, 1963, 104.

<sup>662</sup> This number of viewers is highly cited because it was the largest television audience at this point in history. Here are just a few sources where this figure appears: Allan Kozin, *The Beatles* (London: Phaidon, 1995), 62; Ian Inglis, “The Beatles Are Coming!” Conjecture and Conviction in the Myth of Kennedy, America, and the Beatles,” *Popular Music and Society* 24:2 (Summer 2000): 95; Edna Gunderson, “The Beatles are Benchmark,” *USA Today*, Feb. 24, 2004, life section, 3; and Christopher Porterfield, “February 9, 1964: Yeah, Yeah, Yeah!” *Time: 80 Days that Changed the World*, Mar. 31, 2003, A47.

<sup>663</sup> This theory is a phenomenon of retrospection and was not written about in any books, magazine, and newspaper articles from 1964 that I have found. This historicizing suggests that the gloomy mood in the U.S. after Kennedy’s assassination was such that the public was ripe for the optimism, wit, and charisma that the Beatles would bring—thus, making their astounding success possible. See Michael Snyder, “It was 30 Years Ago Today,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 6, 1994, 30; Todd Leopold, “When the Beatles Hit America,” CNN, Feb. 10, 2004 at <http://www.cnn.com/2004/SHOWBIZ/MUSIC/02/05/beatles.40> (accessed Mar. 14, 2005); Lynne Margolis, “Ladies and Gentleman...the Beatles!,” *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 9, 2004, 10. This theory has been most fervently contested by a British scholar of the Beatles legacy. See Inglis, “‘The Beatles are Coming!’, 97.

Footage of the Beatles' arrival clearly shows more enthusiasm than disaffection for the band. Nonetheless, filmmakers Albert and David Maysles managed to capture the images of a few dissenters amidst the otherwise jubilant crowd. The more-than-likely staged protest here is not against the band's supposedly wild music, but against their "long" hair. Their cameras capture posters reading, "Beatles Unfair to Bald Men" and "Beatles are starving the barbers."<sup>664</sup> The TV press conference that followed showcased the band members' witty responses to a gauntlet of questions, including several focused on their uniform haircut. While *mop-top* was soon picked up to describe their coifs, the term did not yet come up in this first encounter with the American press. Reporters instead asked if their hair helped them "sing better," or if any of them were actually bald underneath. Finally, asked if they planned on getting haircuts while in the U.S., George Harrison replied: "I had one yesterday."<sup>665</sup> While the Beatles' mop-top seems short, quaint, or passé by today's standards, the United States circa 1964 was unprepared for this new style.

In the early days of jet travel, these "long-haired" Liverpoolians appeared beyond foreign. As one author observes, "given how rarefied foreign travel was then, England might as well have been in a different galaxy."<sup>666</sup> Later reflecting on this stylistic culture clash, John Lennon remarked about Americans, "You were all walking around in fuckin' Bermuda shorts and Boston crew cuts and stuff on your teeth [i.e., dental braces]."<sup>667</sup> Needless to say, the

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<sup>664</sup> *The Beatles: The First U.S. Visit*, DV D, directed by Albert and David Maysles (1964; Hollywood, CA: Capitol, 2004).

<sup>665</sup> Mop-top is spelled both with and without a hyphen. For consistency, unless directly quoting a source that spells the word without a hyphen, I will hyphenate the word within the entire paper. According to the BBC, mop-top was coined in Britain because the hairstyle resembled "a shaggy dish mop." "Mop Top Hair," *BBC* at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cult/ilove/years/1963/fashion2.shtml> (accessed Mar. 9, 2005). For press conference dialogue see *The Beatles First U.S. Visit*.

<sup>666</sup> Fred Kaplan, "Teen Spirit: What was so Important about the Beatles' Appearances on the *Ed Sullivan Show*?" *Slate*, Feb. 6, 2004 at <http://slate.msn.com/toolbar.aspx?action=print&id=2095079> (accessed Feb. 4, 2005).

<sup>667</sup> David Fricke, "Best in Show," *Mojo*, Special Edition, *1000 Days of Beatlemania* Oct. 2002, 89.

intercultural criticism flowed both ways. Unbeknownst to the crowds gathered at the airport that day, by decade's end, the Beatles' "mop-top" would become more than just part of a teen phenomenon; it became symbolic of changing masculine aesthetics during the 1960s—part of what had already, by 1963, been codified as "Mod" in their native Britain.

According to George L. Mosse's book *The Image of Man*, the connection between masculinity and nationhood has remained tenaciously solid. While female symbols such as Marianne, Britannia, or Lady Liberty have stood for nationhood, masculinity has been connected to the project of a nation-state and left indelible marks on many cultures. If notions of a "national type" were read as "strong," the nation was strong: physically powerful bodies were equated with a powerful national body. This connection between nations and masculinity was especially powerful during and after World War II. According to Mosse, "Words and pictures told 'the German' or 'the Englishman,' and they always connoted a definite type who would represent national character. The man who was said to fulfill this role... approximated the masculine stereotype."<sup>668</sup> Americans were no less vulnerable to this stereotyping.

While the mop-top hairstyle still caused consternation in the Beatles' native Britain, its implicit effeminate was read as more effeminate in the U.S. than in the U.K. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, American perceptions of British foppiness links back to the revolutionary war, but resonated yet again amidst the cultural ambience of the aptly, if maybe ironically, named "British Invasion."<sup>669</sup> While this stereotyping was recurrent within the discourse about the Beatles' presence stateside, it is important to place their style within a more specific strain of mid-century

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<sup>668</sup> George L. Mosse, *Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 192.

<sup>669</sup> De Hart, "Containment at Home," 133.

British culture.<sup>670</sup> If Americans first saw the Beatles' haircuts as odd, they would soon also read them as distinctively "Mod" and this "Mod style" offended mostly older, middle-class Americans with its presumed effeminacy. The Beatles' affiliation with this new flavor of Britishness marked the group as queerly masculine in the United States.<sup>671</sup>

Susan J. Douglas recalls the group's androgynous appeal: "[the Beatles] so perfectly fused the 'masculine' and 'feminine' strains of rock 'n' roll in their music, their appearance, and their style of performing. It wasn't just their long hair, or Paul's eyelashes, the heels on their boots, or the puckish way they clowned for the camera. Without ever saying so explicitly, the Beatles acknowledged that there was masculinity and femininity in all of us."<sup>672</sup> While Douglas keys into what she sees as essential to the Beatles' outward appeal, their choice of profession also positioned them as feminine. The Beatles' romantic, early lyrics suggested their music was akin to the bards of courtly times, where knights subordinated themselves to their female lovers, even taking on feminine attributes.<sup>673</sup> Not dissimilar to Britain's romantic poets Shelley and Byron, the lyrical Beatles embodied femininity both in their fashion and creativity.

In a queer reading of the Beatles' films *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*, Ann Shillinglaw points out that prior to manager Brian Epstein's influence—Epstein was a closeted gay—the Beatles did not have the stylish flair that caused controversy.<sup>674</sup> Appearing as a close-knit, nearly identical-looking group reminiscent of earlier American doo-wop and Motown groups, and

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<sup>670</sup> Several *New York Times* articles from 1964-1965 connect the blurring of gender lines via "Mod fashion" with the Beatles themselves, some of which emanate from Britain. See "Youth in Uniform," *New York Times*, June 7, 1964, SM72; Gloria Emerson, "British 'His and Her' Hairdos Blur 'Him-Her' Line," *New York Times*, July 23, 1964, 29; Anthony Carthew, "Shaggy Englishman Story," *New York Times*, Sept. 6, 1964, SM18; Anthony Carthew, "Dir Sir—Or Madam?" *New York Times*, Nov. 7, 1965, SM59.

<sup>671</sup> Per Judith Butler's groundbreaking work on gender as performance, the body becomes a site for the inscription and display of cultural gender norms. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1990), 8.

<sup>672</sup> Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 116.

<sup>673</sup> Chris Blazina, *The Cultural Myth of Masculinity* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 35.

<sup>674</sup> Ann Shillinglaw, "Give us a Kiss: Queer Codes, Male Partnering, and the Beatles," *Queer Sixties*, ed., Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Routledge, 1999), 133, 139.

seemingly nonplussed by the screaming girls at their heels, American men arguably found these qualities effeminate. Epstein's influence on the Beatles mirrors the impact of gay culture on Mod style itself. The Beatle suit, for instance, mimicked styles favored by some men within the British gay communities of the 50s and 60s. Music industry observer Simon Napier-Bell argues, "[The Beatles' early] image was [misread as] that of a boy next door. To anyone who had seen it before, their image was instantly identifiable. It was the cool, cocky brashness of a kid who's found a sugar daddy and had himself set up in Mayfair."<sup>675</sup> In this reading of the Beatles' image, the assumed effeminacy of homosexuality is naturalized.

Viewing the Beatles' image retrospectively, the contemporary observer might be hard-pressed to understand why their Mod style was seen as effeminate. Or, one might ask why this perceived effeminacy was connected with their cultural influence upon young people at the time? Beatlemania was certainly a curious phenomenon to many psychologists and sociologists who tried to understand female hysteria surrounding these foppish musicians. Psychologist Evan Davies claims that the Beatles' apparent femininity was key to the mania they inspired—suggesting that the Beatles' great success symbolized a cultural shift whereby western culture was in “transition from excessive paternalism to an era of semi-maternalism, in which love will acquire an idealistic orientation.”<sup>676</sup> As American history attests to, being gay does not immediately equate with effeminacy, but “queerness” opens doors for challenging normative gender aesthetics. Homosexuality, already outside of the mainstream, permits broader identity play in which some gay men may adopt traditionally feminine traits if they so choose. While the

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<sup>675</sup> Curiously, while the Motown fashion of matching suits or dresses is so distinctive, there is precious little written on this. However, see Paul Friedlander, *Rock and Roll: A Social History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2006), 59. Shawn Levy, *Ready, Steady Go: The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London* (New York: Broadway, 2003), 74.

<sup>676</sup> Evan Davies, “Psychological Characteristics of Beatle Mania,” *Journal of History of Ideas* 30 (1969): 280.

Beatles were not marked by the mainstream press as homosexual, their initial reception in the States was nonetheless linked to “hints of queerness.” In describing contemporary, gender-bending rock artists, Thomas Geyrhalter addresses the notion of queerness: “Queer, in fact, is much more about confusion and subversion on all available levels than about having an explicit, fixed sexual identity.” Within this framing, the “queer” reading of the Beatles in 1964 seems plausible.<sup>677</sup>

Maybe this reading of the Beatles was not overly surprising given who was on the pop charts and seen on the popular teen show *American Bandstand*. Even California’s Beach Boys, who seemed cool because of their supposedly laid-back California background, simply toned-down the originally gritty surf music sound of the late fifties and earlier sixties, and, by 1963, were sending out a very non-radical message to teenagers by singing “Be True to Your School” in late 1963. Aside from the jovial romp “Louie Louie,” by the Kingsmen—which would quickly be picked-up by Mods in England—the sounds of the pre-Beatles Top Forty charts were mostly filled with pillow-soft crooners like Andy Williams or Dionne Warwick that “even mom and dad would like” and a guitar-strumming nun singing about “Dominique.”<sup>678</sup> Girl Groups and Motown artists aside, the pre-British Invasion music scene in the U.S. was not as energetic or sparky as it could have been—or would soon be. Though Ed Sullivan had hosted surf guitarist Dick Dale and girl group the Angels (“My Boyfriend’s Back”) in late 1963, most of his musical

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<sup>677</sup> Geoffrey and Brenda Guiliano, *The Lost Beatles Interviews* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 67; Thomas Geyrhalter, “Effeminacy, Camp, and Sexual Subversion in Rock: the Cure and Suede,” *Popular Music* 15 (1996): 224.

<sup>678</sup> Jake Austen, *TV A-Go-Go: Rock on TV from American Bandstand to American Idol* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2007), 32; Whitburn, *The Billboard Book*, 50, 576, 668, 678; Friedlander, *Rock and Roll: A Social History*, 67-73.

guests performed opera, Jazz, or pop: Tony Bennett, Connie Francis, and Ella Fitzgerald were more typical guests in the months prior to the Beatles' appearance on the show.<sup>679</sup>

During the group's pivotal appearance on *Sullivan*, as the Beatles played their second song, "Till There Was You," (originally from the musical *The Music Man*) a close-up of each band member was accompanied by their name appearing on screen. When the camera landed on John Lennon his name was shown with the disclaimer: "SORRY GIRLS, HE'S MARRIED." This labeling of John as "the married Beatle," and, thus, clearly heterosexual, seems a surprising move given the gender controversy already surrounding the band. This gendered media moment that started it all was the first, but certainly not the last image to transmit Mod aesthetics to the youthful masses of the United States. As *Look* magazine would soon write about the Beatles' arrival, "The United States was wired for the Beatles with 301,600,000 record players, radios, and TV sets, many of them owned by young people. So the Beatles just plugged in with their wild new sound, their driving beat, their different dictions... their hair... the Beatles internationalized the culture of young sounds and dances."<sup>680</sup> Under the somewhat irreverent banner of the "British Invasion," Mod music, fashions, slang, and design would become the primary teen sensibility for the next several years thanks to the "Fab Four" and other bands from the U.K. who dressed in natty "gear."<sup>681</sup> With twenty million teenagers—seventeen-year-olds being the largest age demographic in 1964 America—young people wanted something special and new to call their own.<sup>682</sup> As one letter to *Teen* magazine sounded, "I just realized what a marvelous year it is to be young in. And there's a special reason. Four rather scruffy boys who

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<sup>679</sup> "The Ed Sullivan Show Episode Guide," *TV.Com* at [http://www.tv.com/the-ed-sullivan-show/show/1156/episode\\_guide.html?season=17&tag=season\\_dropdown%3Bdropdown](http://www.tv.com/the-ed-sullivan-show/show/1156/episode_guide.html?season=17&tag=season_dropdown%3Bdropdown) (accessed Oct. 15, 2008).

<sup>680</sup> "The Open Generation," *Look*, Sept. 20, 1966, 33.

<sup>681</sup> For a comprehensive definition of the "British Invasion," see Ira A. Robins, "British Invasion," *Encyclopedia Britannica* at <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9105702> (accessed Aug. 13, 2008).

<sup>682</sup> Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996), 195; Inglis, "'The Beatles are Coming!,' 97.



came from an equally scruffy city in England have taken this old world by the ears... Sort of like four pep pills rolled into the package of four young men with long hair, the wacky name of ‘Beatles’ and a barrel full of charm.”<sup>683</sup> Given the cultural atmosphere, the Beatles quite literally found a captive audience and captivated it.

In many people’s minds, the Beatles had, mid-1964, certainly eclipsed the fame of Elvis “The King of Rock and Roll” Presley and other American performers. This, however, remains a point of speculation among many scholars. Scholar Ian Inglis argues that since the first wave of American-born 1950s rock and roll had given way to pop hits by the likes of the Singing Nun and Pat Boone, the crack musicianship, fresh songwriting, and charisma of the four Liverpudlians could not but draw near-instant excitement. American scholar Greil Marcus believes that by the Beatles being a group, there were multiple ways in which to connect with the group as a phenomenon. Instead of loving or hating one particular rock performer (like Elvis), one might gravitate towards liking one band member first (Ringo? John?) and then, perhaps, the whole band.<sup>684</sup> Since the Beatles’ debut LP in the U.S., *Introducing the Beatles*—the Vee-Jay release prior to the more well-known *Meet the Beatles*—featured both R&B covers (several by Girl Groups, actually) as well as original songs written by band members John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison, also gave potential fans sonic and lyrical choices.<sup>685</sup>

However, musical variety was usually not the main reason why young people took part in this “mania.” Individual affinity between performers and audience was, in many ways, probably more crucial to creating the Beatles phenomenon. According to a magazine article published spring of 1964, “few reporters could remember which Beatle was which. But by the end of their

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<sup>683</sup> Ann Elliott, “We Get,” *Teen*, Nov. 1964, 6.

<sup>684</sup> Marcus qtd. in Inglis, ““The Beatles are Coming!”” 99.

<sup>685</sup> The Beatles, *Introducing the Beatles*, Vee-Jay VJLP-1062, 33 1/3 rpm.

two-week visit to America, each of them had become a distinct personality. Each of them, in fact, had become a star.”<sup>686</sup> Susan Douglas writes that this identification, particularly for female fans, heavily relied on how these fans saw individual Beatles as reflections of themselves. She writes that unlike the Beatles’ pop forerunner, Elvis Presley, fans had choices of who to identify with and why. In her words, “If you think about it, girls often chose the Beatle that they themselves most resembled, either physically or as a personality type, or the one they most wanted to be like...Through this powerful identification with John, Paul, George, or Ringo, you could, on some semiconscious level, become a Beatle yourself...out in the world having fun.”<sup>687</sup> On a more self-conscious and overt level, male fans grew their hair and wore Beatle-style fashions. If they had any musical interest or talent, these young men might have tried playing the same instrument as their favorite individual Beatle—the one who they most aspired to be like.<sup>688</sup>

Given this imitation-as-flattery of the group’s fans, and since this initial wave of American Beatlemania in early 1964 spawned a plethora of band-inspired products (fig. 31) it is not surprising that the campy “Beatles wig” was one of the most popular items that year.

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<sup>686</sup> Alfred G. Arnowitz, “Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Music’s Gold Bugs: The Beatles,” *Saturday Evening Post* 21 Mar. 1964, 31.

<sup>687</sup> Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 119; Palladino, *Teenagers*, 197.

<sup>688</sup> This will be more thoroughly discussed from pages 374 to 378.



Figure 31 Beatles products advertisement. Courtesy of the Popular Culture Library, Bowling Green State University.

Beyond those teenage boys who already began cutting or growing their hair to imitate the band's style, the wig allowed teen girls and businessmen alike the fun of momentarily adopting the mop-top look. This quickly ubiquitous Beatles image became such that newspapers and periodicals—from the *New York Times* to *Mad* magazine—circulated written and visual critiques of the Beatlemania bandwagon.<sup>689</sup> The focus of these texts often played upon the gender ambiguity the Beatles supposedly spurred or showcased fashion crimes perpetrated by the

<sup>689</sup> The following paragraph describes more specifically those references in the *New York Times*. For caricatures of the Beatles in this comic-based magazine, see Fred Hembeck, "Q: Beatlemania—*Mad*, *Sick*, or *Cracked*? A: All of the Above," *Hembeck.com* at <http://www.hembeck.com/Beatles/BeatlesSatireIntro.htm> (accessed Feb. 16, 2005).

group's teen look-alikes. Several articles from 1964 opined about this growing "problem." *Look* magazine most blatantly blamed the Beatles, saying the trend "began with four loud Liverpudlians shaking their mane, yelling yeah, yeah, yeah." The *New York Times* claimed that not only teenagers were getting Beatle cuts, but also eight to twelve-year-old boys who enjoyed seeing their parents "suffer" at the sight of their long bangs. Even the otherwise favorable *New York Times*' movie review of the Beatles' first film *A Hard Day's Night* (August 12, 1964) refers back to the group's mindboggling hold on "otherwise healthy young people."<sup>690</sup> Meanwhile, by year's end, another *New York Times* article told of a teenage boy in Connecticut being suspended for growing his hair too long—one of many similar news stories that would appear in the next several years. Reporting from England for the *New York Times* later that year, a journalist stated that though the Beatles were being blamed "for everything with the exception of the climate," their style was actually nothing compared to other British bands soon making their way to across the Atlantic. This article juxtaposed a photo of the Rolling Stones' Brian Jones against that of John Lennon. The layout of the piece suggests that more extreme sartorial decadence would come with a second battalion of British invaders.<sup>691</sup>

#### **4.3.2 More British Are Coming: 1964-1965**

In 1775, when Paul Revere warned colonials of the King's approaching army, young revolutionaries were ready to fight the power of the crown. In 1964, young Americans—already enchanted by the Beatles—were happy to surrender to the British. It was not just the bands, but

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<sup>690</sup> Bosley Crowther, "Screen: The Four Beatles in 'A Hard Day's Night,'" *New York Times*, Aug. 12, 1964, 41.

<sup>691</sup> "What the Beatles have Done to Hair," *Look*, Dec. 29, 1964; "Beatles Make Long Hairs of 9-10-12-year-old Set," *New York Times*, Oct. 14, 1964, 54; "The Unkindest Cut for Student Moptops," *Life*, Sept. 24, 1964, 4; "School Orders Boys: Brush Bangs Back and Go to Classes," *New York Times*, Dec. 17, 1964, 44; Anthony Carthew, "Shaggy Englishman Story," *New York Times*, Sept. 6, 1964, SM18.

anything connected to the British Isles, that intrigued U.S. youth. It seemed to these Americans that Liverpool and, soon, London more so, “must be some kind of continuous space-age funfair, one endless parade of boutiques and discotheques and hip trattorias, Carnaby Streets and King’s Roads... England became the epitome of everything elegant, enlightened, deeply switched-on, and its exports became automatic triumphs.”<sup>692</sup> Given this willing audiences, bands making up the so-called British Invasion were those who already had found national success in the U.K. either through Liverpool’s Merseybeat phenomenon or London’s Rhythm and Blues scene.<sup>693</sup>

Liverpool groups like Gerry and the Pacemakers initially charted with their self-penned “Don’t Let the Sun Catch You Crying,” while the Searchers had a hit with Jackie DeShannon’s 1963 recording “Needles and Pins.” The Swinging Blue Jeans would also have their one memorable hit with “Hippy, Hippy Shake,” a cover of a 1959 Chan Romero performance. Whether originals or covers, the melodic recordings of British groups made it onto the United States charts.<sup>694</sup> Londoners the Rolling Stones (“It’s All Over Now” and “Time is on my Side”) and the Kinks (“You Really Got Me,” “All Day and All of the Night,”), represented the rawer sounds emanating from Britain’s capital. The more poppy Londoners Dave Clark Five, the next British rock band to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show* after the Beatles, were also enormously popular on the U.S. charts with their 1964 hits “Glad All Over” (#6), “Bits and Pieces” (#4), and “Because,” (#3).<sup>695</sup> Newcastle’s Animals also impressed U.S. audiences with their highly

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<sup>692</sup> Cohen, *Awopbopaloobop*, 203.

<sup>693</sup> Robert Shelton, “The Beatles Will Make the Scene Here Again, but the Scene Has Changed,” *New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1965, 40

<sup>694</sup> Gerry Marsden, “Don’t Let the Sun Catch You Crying”/ “Away From You,” performed by Gerry and the Pacemakers, Laurie 3251, 45 rpm. Not all British Invaders wrote their own lyrics or music. Covers were popular. In the examples given above, see Jack Nitzsche and Sonny Bono, comp. “Needles and Pins,” performed by the Searchers, Kapp 577, 45 rpm; Chan Romero, comp., “Hippy Hippy Shake,” performed by the Swinging Blue Jeans, HMV Pop 1242, 45 rpm.

<sup>695</sup> Bobby Womack, comp., “It’s All Over Now,” performed by the Rolling Stones, London 45-LON9867, 45 rpm; Norman Meade, comp., “Time is on my Side,” performed by the Rolling Stones, London 45-LON9708, 45 rpm; Ray

atmospheric version of the American folk ballad “House of the Rising Sun,” which made it to number one, while the Zombies, from St. Albans (near London) made it to number two with “She’s Not There.” Thus, what the Beatles had started with their first hit single in the U.S., “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” became a near-domination of the American Top Forty charts within a year.<sup>696</sup>

Only Motown singles by artists such as the Supremes or Smokey Robinson and the Miracles were able to hold their own alongside the British during this year—having incredible successes prior to the onslaught of British talent.<sup>697</sup> Considering these artists’ already stylish image (they were some of the most beloved artists among British Mods), the difference between their look—especially the suit-wearing male groups—was simply in the details. Groups like the Temptations, already wore more slim-fitting suits, but the Beatles’ wore even slimmer-fitting outfits stayed true to Continental (read: Italian), Mod-appropriated designs.

While the “Continental Look” was available to men in the U.S. by the mid-fifties, and received a significant amount of attention, it was not until a decade later that British Invasion bands really helped to popularize it.<sup>698</sup> As was the case with the Beatles before them, the bands who flourished in 1964 and 1965 brought a specific sense of style with them. Like the John, Paul, George, and Ringo, their hair was longer than was currently acceptable in the U.S, and they

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Davies, comp., “You Really Got Me,” the Kinks, Reprise 0306, 45 rpm; Ray Davies, comp., “All Day and All of the Night,” performed by the Kinks, Reprise 0334, 45 rpm; Dave Clark and Mike Smith, comp., “Glad All Over,” performed by the Dave Clark Five, Epic 9656, 45 rpm; Dave Clark and Mike Smith, comp., “Bits and Pieces,” performed by the Dave Clark Five, Epic 9671, 45 rpm; Dave Clark and Mike Smith, comp., “Because,” performed by the Dave Clark Five, Epic 9704, 45 rpm; Traditional, “House of the Rising Sun,” performed by the Animals, MGM 13264, 45 rpm; Rod Argent, comp., “She’s Not There,” performed by the Zombies, Decca F11940, 45 rpm; John Lennon and Paul McCartney, comp., “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” performed by the Beatles, Capital 5112, 45 rpm. For the Dave Clark Five on *Ed Sullivan*, see “Ed Sullivan Show Episode Guide,” *TV.com* at [http://www.tv.com/the-ed-sullivan-show/show/1156/episode\\_guide.html?season=17&tag=season\\_dropdown%3Bdropdown](http://www.tv.com/the-ed-sullivan-show/show/1156/episode_guide.html?season=17&tag=season_dropdown%3Bdropdown) (accessed Oct. 15, 2008).

<sup>696</sup> Whitburn, *Billboard Book*, 253, 558, 617, 538, 348, 29, 697, 51 (page numbers in order of bands mentioned).

<sup>697</sup> “Part 3: Britain Invades, America Fights Back,” *The History of Rock and Roll*, DVD (1995; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video; 2004); For Motown chart hits by these groups, see Whitburn, *Billboard Book*, 429, 614.

<sup>698</sup> Costantino, *Men’s Fashions*, 92.

usually wore matching outfits consisting of suits and ties. Of these groups, only the Kinks' look evoked a "truly British" stereotype. Their initial signature look did, in fact, consist of red velvet coats and ruffle shirts.

Producers of teen magazines, keen to shore up the commercial potential of the Beatles and their musical fellow countrymen, published numerous articles about the British influence on teen culture and continued, in over-the-top fashion, to allude to the colonial past. A September 1964 article in *Dig* magazine exemplifies this style of marketing: "Almost two hundred years ago, the British invaded American shores and set about to conquer our struggling young country. Their attempt wasn't much of a success...but England never gives up, and two hundred years later, their never-say-die attitude has finally paid up... Here's hoping England's battle won makes up for her long ago battle lost. Here's hoping the hits keep coming. Roll on, Britainica [sic.] Long may you rave." Similarly themed articles followed up until 1966, and, while the term "British Invasion" was not always used, articles featuring British bands and performers proliferated. Whether reading *Teen*, *Tiger Beat*, *16*, or any other girl-centric magazine in 1964, one was more likely to read about British acts than American ones. This sudden onset of teen Anglophilia seemingly transformed some young people's attitudes about not just themselves, but the world. A *Teen* reader wrote a letter to the editor just to say, "1964 was a really wonderful year. I was introduced to a new way of life: Beatlemania. Every day was like a new year in itself. The world was uplifted as people began to realize that we teenagers aren't as bad as some think. We care about world affairs—Vietnam, the Cold War...Who says we have one-track minds? Just last night, after watching *Shindig* and writing Japanese Haiku poetry for school, I went into my room to read 'The Making of a President...' the accompanying music [was] a Rolling Stones

album. Can you top that?" Here, a young fan of British Invasion sounds equates traditional education with a new kind of "pop cultural" form of edification.<sup>699</sup>

With British-made music and fashions holding an air of mystery and excitement circa 1964, it was inevitable that the word and idea of "Mod" would circulate in mid-sixties youth culture as well—and, eventually, come to label it.<sup>700</sup> Given the on-going and mistaken notion in the United States that juvenile delinquents were usually working-class, poor, or non-white, it is not surprising that the already sensationalized news of working-class Mod versus Rocker riots along the British Seaside would swiftly make its way into American periodicals.<sup>701</sup> The first such expose on "Mods and Rockers" was written by British journalist Peter Laurie (also author of the Mod-centric 1965 book *The Teenage Revolution*, referred to in Chapter One) and appeared not in *Life*, *Look*, *Newsweek*, or *Time*, but in a fashion magazine, *Vogue*. While Laurie does discuss the youth culture as clothes-obsessed, making it an appropriate topic for the magazine, the lengthy article is fairly well-rounded in familiarizing American readers to this still-mainly-British group. Laurie is careful to define the word Mod for the readers given this "exotic" framing. "Mods are teen-agers, sophisticated, urbane... from twelve to eighteen at the most." Important, too—especially given the way the Beatles' style was increasingly read as feminine, or, at the very least, androgynous—Laurie attests to this quality in Mod culture: "The girls razor cut their hair close to the head and down the neck like a boys" while "It is said the boys wear

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<sup>699</sup> "Britain Conquers America," *Dig*, Sept. 1964, 31. For another article in a similar vein in 1964 and 1965, see Stephen Kahn, "On the Flip Side: Teen Pan Alley Visits Big Beat Britain!," *Flip*, June 1965, 44.

<sup>700</sup> For "Mod" as the key descriptor of youth culture starting in 1964, see Braunstein, "Forever Young," 244. Braunstein sees this sensibility as lasting until 1966. I will argue later in the chapter that it remained dominant until mid-1967.

<sup>701</sup> Savage, *Teenage*, 92-93. For middle-class youths seeking out non-conformity, see Riley, *Fever*, 11; Joseph Lelyveld, "The Paradoxical Case of the Affluent Delinquent," *New York Times*, Oct. 4, 1964, SM13.



lipstick and make-up,” though he does add, “This [claim] is not well substantiated.”<sup>702</sup> Thus, some English writers helped propagate this androgynous reading of Mod in the United States.

Considering the way Mod imagery had already, by this time, circulated and established itself in the U.K., it is not surprising that Laurie describes the group’s media savvy (“The swampy complications of mass media are to Mods like water to ducks”). Importantly, the author makes no bones about the class issue behind British Mod culture—an aspect of Mod that would not translate into the eventual U.S. version. An interested American reading this article in the summer of 1964 would learn that only one of thirty British students would go on to university and that those youths, including Mods, who were “not allowed to participate in the power, sophistication, and vigor that is the twentieth-century technological culture” would have to “make do with the fringe things: music, clothes, style.”<sup>703</sup>

The sentiment of *Vogue*’s article was soon echoed by *Life* magazine, though more sensationally. In their September 18 issue, *Life* introduced the Mods as a stylish yet wild group that are, in fact, embroiled in gang fights with the Rockers in coastal resort towns such as Hastings and Brighton. The article even goes as far as ludicrously comparing these street fights to 1066’s Battle of Hastings.<sup>704</sup> However, the article’s author seeks to define Mod beyond that image and emphasizes Mods’ fashion sense also. Alongside *Life*’s images of rioting youths, one photo features a twenty-three-year-old named Michael Pain who is described as “a typical Mod who spends about \$11.50 a week on clothes and drives a scooter.”<sup>705</sup> To a greater degree than Laurie’s *Vogue* article, *Life* positions Mod as another country’s “youth problem” that will

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<sup>702</sup> Peter Laurie, “Mods and Rockers,” *Vogue*, Aug. 1964, 68, 135.

<sup>703</sup> Laurie, “Mods and Rockers,” 68, 135. For reference to Americans’ general lack of knowledge about the British class system, see Michael R. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2007), 58.

<sup>704</sup> “Britain Has its own Long Hot Summer” *Life*, Sept. 18, 1964, 61-64.

<sup>705</sup> “Long Hot Summer,” 62.

hopefully stay there. The *Life* article's framing of Mods as violent may have been an attempt to dissuade American youth from equating Mod with the Beatles. It also provided images of a "moral panic" that could potentially enter the country with all things British, if Americans were not careful.<sup>706</sup> However, a seemingly young *Life* reader responds, "It may interest you to know, choosing between the Mods and Rockers (your article Sept. 18), that the Beatles are considered Mods. In fact, all the Beatles' singing friends (Cilla Black, Gerry and the Pacemakers, Peter and Gordon) are Mods or have Mod connections."<sup>707</sup> Her words suggest that there was indeed a stylistic connection in the minds of some American youth between the Beatles and the concept of Mod. In mentioning these other British performers as the Beatles' "friends," this reader equates the burgeoning galaxy of U.K. stars with Mod. This underscores that while more information was coming from England as to what "Mod" meant, the American interpretation tended to remain linked to the Beatles and the British Invasion.

Though Mod was seen as something "British," American teens sought to tap into their English cousins' cool style secrets. In 1965, the popular youth magazine *Teen* published three articles about Mod. The first article, called "The Mods Vs. The Rockers," (January 1965) highlights the difference between the two newly "discovered" youth gangs of England. Specifically describing Mod boys versus girls, the author of this article does not necessarily paint the group as androgynous. Rather, s/he reinforces the group's heterosexuality. "Mods like to date in private twosomes," she writes. They "take their girls out on gaily painted scooters, have gone cool on the Beatles in favor of Rhythm and Blues groups... [and] spend most evenings at a

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<sup>706</sup> A "moral panic" is when "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media," Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and the Rockers* (London: Routledge, 2002, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) 1.

<sup>707</sup> Karen Wickie, to Editor, *Life*, Oct. 9, 1964, 29.

ballroom and happily drop anything up to 20 dollars a week on clothes.”<sup>708</sup> This concurs with two aspects of Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber’s view on British girls’ involvement in subcultures: First, “the Mod preoccupation with style” may have allowed young women to picture their actual participation in the culture; Second, the authors point out that “the feminizing of the male image may in no way signal the complementary liberation of the female from the constraints of the feminine image.” In the analysis of McRobbie and Garber, the subculture’s girls still generally looked like girls and were “fans” of bands who read teen magazines and shopped, whereas the boys in their group—despite their particular image—were still more likely to participate in more masculine activities like forming bands and collecting records.<sup>709</sup>

The other two articles feature writer Robyn Guest in London hanging-out with three Mod girls to see how they actually spent their time. In “London’s Mods: Too Much Too Fast?” (November 1965) and “London Mods: New Thoughts on Old Ideas,” (December 1965), the author aims for a “day-in-the-life” angle that seemingly allows American would-be Mods to mimic what they read about. For instance, the first of the two pieces explain to American girls how to wear one’s makeup in a truly Mod style: “Most girls wear makeup on their eyes; they usually never wear a face powder or foundation. No lipstick either. Eye makeup will include eyeliner, eyebrow pencil, mascara, and occasionally eye shadow.” Even though their make up is minimal, Mod girls still feel the urge to use it. The second article juxtaposes stereotypical images and names affiliated with England with the consumer-oriented “newness” of Mod. In namedropping symbols of traditional England, the author writes: “It’s fine and wonderful to be able to wear Mod clothing and whistle in tune to ‘God Save the Queen,’ but until you’ve walked

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<sup>708</sup> “The Mods vs. The Rockers,” *Teen*, Jan. 1965, 22-23.

<sup>709</sup> Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, “Girls and Subcultures,” in *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1975), 215.

the narrow cobblestone streets that wind secretly to Dickens' [sic.] home; until you've stood on the threshold of the Parliament gates... London Life is going to be a fairy tale to you." She then contrasts these images with the Mod shopping hub of Carnaby Street, where "teens trample over each other every shopping day," and where "Mod girls and boys pick out each others' clothes." In sum, both articles show how Mod is exotic but still adoptable within American teen culture.<sup>710</sup> Given the way Mod was reported in these articles, U.S. readers would be hard-pressed to understand Mod style beyond its fashions, or that male Mods' "dressing-up" had more to do with class than gender issues. Instead, Mod remained connected to the way the style was originally transmitted into the U.S through the British Invasion bands. According to one fashion history,

In the U.S., where no tradition of Mod clothes existed, the insane success of [the band's] 1964 debut tour inspired endemic imitation by teenagers. But in the inner sanctums of 'Modocracy' the Beatles in their early phases were considered cloying. 'To be quite honest with you,' one of the grapevine's voices recalls, 'in those days the Beatles were regarded fashion- wise, particularly, and quite generally, amongst our sort of set if you like—as hicks. I mean they were these guys with silly suits and hairdos out from Liverpool of all places!'<sup>711</sup>

Thus, young Americans acquainted themselves with Mod "just enough," so that they could be Mod on their own terms.

Because of this influence from the U.K., American teens sought to figure out how they could channel this exciting new energy and style and make it their own. Clearly, one of the most obvious ways to do this was to mimic the hairstyles, clothing, and, for the girls, make-up. Another way to create a homegrown Mod culture was to form a band. Though rock and roll was originally American, the British Invasion sound with its melodic and jangly, amplified guitars and driving beat— re-imported a new, hybrid genre back to the States. The youthful enthusiasm

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<sup>710</sup> Robyn Guest, "London's Mods: Too Much Too Fast?," *Teen*, Nov. 1965, 76; Robyn Guest, "London Mods: New Thoughts on Old Ideas," *Teen*, Dec. 1965, 34, 36-37.

<sup>711</sup> Joel Lobenthal, *Radical Rags: Fashions of the Sixties* (New York: Abbeville, 1990), 200.

surrounding British bands motivated teens, and those in their early twenties to start groups which, since the 1980s, have been known as “garage bands.” Like their 1980s counterparts, these bands—mostly white and suburban—practiced in makeshift spaces, such as garages or basements and never achieved much if any commercial recognition. As one chronicler of the phenomenon astutely recognizes, “The British Invasion was the match that started the fire of this distinctly American style. Overnight, bands were growing their hair and picking up guitars in attempts to emulate the Beatles, the Dave Clark Five, and (within a few months) meaner, bluesier groups like the Rolling Stones, Animals, and Kinks.”<sup>712</sup> Though the phenomenon started in 1964, many of the more “successful” garage groups did not see any recognition until as late as 1966 or 1967.

Creating a template for what young people know today as “Indie” (i.e., independent) rock scenes, garage band mini-scenes blossomed in almost every corner of the U.S.—from Seattle to Chicago to Boston—and in smaller cities in between. As the former drummer of a suburban Chicago area group called the Knaves recalls, “We were more than just a surrogate for these English rock groups. To these suburban high school kids we weren’t just a cover band... we were The Who and The Kinks and The Stones! It was a glorious time.”<sup>713</sup> These groups provided an immediate connection between American youths and the youth culture they imagined in England—even taking-on British-sounding names like Moses Lake, Washington’s the Bards,

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<sup>712</sup> Richie Unterberger, *Unknown Legends of Rock and Roll* (San Francisco: Miller Freeman, 1998), 68. See also Eric James Abbey, *Garage Rock and its Roots: Musical Rebels and the Drive for Individuality* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2006), 75; Robert Shelton, “The Beatles Will Make the Scene Here Again, but the Scene Has Changed,” *New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1965, 40.

<sup>713</sup> Unterberger, *Unknown Legends*, 68; Brent Hopkins, “Story of the Shags,” *60s Garage Bands* at <http://www.60sgaragebands.com/bandbios/shags.html> (accessed Aug. 19, 2008).

Saginaw, Michigan's Count and the Colony, and New Jersey's Redcoats.<sup>714</sup> These Brit-names were often matched with what was considered appropriate costumes, such as "lace layered ascots, white collarless shirts, and tight white pants along with knee-high black boots." Some groups, though, instead of looking like fops literally in red coats, would dress in faux colonial costumes. Certainly, American groups like the Beau Brummels, the Knickerbockers, and the Sir Douglas Quintet copied the Anglo look which groups like the Kinks had popularized. However, as one might guess from their name alone, Paul Revere and the Raiders—*rebelled* with costumes smacking of "1776" colonial couture.<sup>715</sup>

Whether dressed as a Brit or Yank, or something in between, the swinging sounds of London soon were "playing in Peoria," as adolescents and teens across the nation succumbed to this new, hip music. They got it where they could find it. As American Studies scholar John Dougan, a western Massachusetts native remembers: "When a local band specializing in British Invasion covers, the somewhat obviously named Tower of London, gigged the town hall (in itself a remarkable occurrence), my friends and I, denied entrance for being too young, stood outside listening through an open window. We excitedly identified songs, nodded our heads in semi-rhythmic unison as the band played, and exchanged glances and broad grins of inexpressible joy...I had crossed over into a new world from which I would never return." Though most of these Brit-inspired garage bands would never make a national impact, young people living in mid-sized cities or small towns in the U.S. were more likely to see one of these bands live than

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<sup>714</sup> This is similar to the "Beat" band phenomenon in Germany chronicled in the last chapter. See "The Bards," *60s Garage Bands* at <http://home.unet.nl/kesteloo/bards.html>; "Count and the Colony," *60s Garage Bands* at <http://home.unet.nl/kesteloo/countcolony.html>; "The Redcoats," *60s Garage Bands*, <http://home.unet.nl/kesteloo/redcoats.html> (all accessed Aug. 19, 2008).

<sup>715</sup> For the chart success of the Beau Brummels, the Knickerbockers, and the Sir Douglas Quintet, see Whitburn, *The Billboard Book*, 53, 349, 577; For colonial-style fashion, see "Vogue's Own Boutique [featuring Mark Lindsay from Paul Revere and the Raiders], *Vogue*, Apr. 15, 1967, 142-145.

any of the Billboard chart-toppers from Liverpool or London, thus making them important to this period of Mod culture in the U.S.<sup>716</sup> Most of these groups were, not surprisingly given the more traditional gender roles still assigned young women in the early-to-mid sixties, made up of young men.

A more recent portrayal of an American garage bands appears in Tom Hanks's 1996 film *That Thing You Do!* Set in the summer of 1964, the account traces the fictionalized group, the Wonders from initial practice sessions in their hometown of Erie, Pennsylvania, to the recording of a single ("That Thing You Do!") in a local church-cum-studio. The single becomes a national hit with accompanying commercial fanfare such as a TV appearance and a U.S. tour. Appropriately enough, the group is named the Wonders because they become one of many "one hit wonders" to dot the sonic terrain of the U.S. in the mid-sixties.<sup>717</sup> Real life versions of the Wonders—often much grittier-sounding—such as Chicago's Shadows of Knight ("Gloria," 1965) and Los Angeles's Standells ("Dirty Water," 1966) could be heard on commercial radio, but many other groups would feel lucky if a local radio station played their recordings. Boston's the Remains, who in the 2000s are especially beloved by current Mod and sixties enthusiasts, supported the Beatles on their last tour of the U.S. in the summer of 1966.<sup>718</sup> Despite this national opportunity to bring their music to the American masses, their most recognizable song,

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<sup>716</sup> John Dougan, *The Who Sell Out* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 6-7; Brent Hopkins, "Story of the Shags," *Garagebands* at <http://www.60sgaragebands.com/bandbios/shags.html> (accessed Aug. 19, 2008).

<sup>717</sup> *That Thing You Do!*, DVD, directed by Tom Hanks (1996; Los Angeles: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 2002).

<sup>718</sup> Van Morrison, comp., "Gloria / Dark Side" Shadows of Knight, Dunwich D-116 A, 45 rpm; Ed Cobb, comp., "Dirty Water / Rari" the Standells, Tower/Capital 5027, 45 rpm. For the story of the Remains, see Unterberger, *Unknown Legends*, 70-74. Both the Remains and the Standells were featured performers at the sixties-oriented "Las Vegas Grind," held June 30 to July 2, 2000. See Roy Sanchez, "Viva Las Vegas!" *I-94 Bar*, <http://www.i94bar.com/gigreviews/grind.html> (accessed Aug. 29, 2008); David Krough, "Travel Getaways: Vegas Goes Garage: The Grind 2000," *WMOR Tampa* at <http://www.wmortv32.com/travelgetaways/150617/detail.html> (accessed Aug. 29, 2008).

“Why Do I Cry?” is not played on “Oldies” rock stations today as the aforementioned Shadows of Knight or Standells’ hits are.

Bands such as the Remains often simply suffered from either bad management or bad promotion (in the Remains case, the latter), and had things gone differently, they may have been as very well-known band indeed.<sup>719</sup> Still, for every “also-ran” group like the Remains, there were hundreds who never even made it that far—certainly there are some that probably never even recorded any singles, but played school dances and entertained their circle of friends. In any case, it is said that imitation is the highest form of flattery, and it was the case that the American response to the British Invasion was both mimetic and innovative in creating something new. Certainly, the sloppy chord progressions played by many of these groups’ guitarists—whether recorded or not—did not convey the kind of sleek musicianship or production quality that the commercial British bands did. The importance of these bands was felt on a more local level in the mid-sixties, but as we shall see, by the 1980s, a renewed interest in the sound through a “Garage Revival” would impress a new generation of American and foreign youths.

While many garage bands in the 1960s were male, there were indeed some female garage bands. If the histories of most U.S. garage bands have been lost and recovered, the story of girl groups who actually played instruments is buried even deeper in any archives of the American Mod era. According to one female rock writer who has scratched the surface of this little-known phenomenon, “the all-girl rock group... has always been—like the all-woman big bands or baseball teams that flourished in during World War II—at best, an oddity. That has a lot to do with the ways females were trained to play (music or anything else) or work together long before

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<sup>719</sup> Unterberger, *Unknown Legends*, 73.



the dawn of the power chord.”<sup>720</sup> Sixties scholars interested in the decade have usually focused on the images of mostly white, teenage girls screaming and fainting at the sight of the Beatles or African-American all-female singing groups like the Ronettes or the Supremes.<sup>721</sup> Nonetheless, there *were*, at this time, some young women who did not want to just passively consume British Invasion music, act as remote cheerleaders for these groups, or merely sing songs written for them by others. Interestingly, although many classic girl groups were women of color, these all-female rock bands were mostly Caucasian. The overwhelming number of garage bands, both male and female, had primarily white members. Perhaps, many African-American teens did not necessarily feel that they could relate to this British Invasion phenomenon. Unlike working-class British Mods, who, due to their social position in England, felt they could relate to what they thought American blacks were experiencing too, African-American teens did not necessarily feel connected to working-class Brits. This is probably because the American press did not usually raise class issues as connected to these bands. As one contemporary African-American journalist has written about the period, the Beatles “ripped off black music” which was “aided and abetted by naïve young whites, especially teenage girls who were never exposed to the real thing.”<sup>722</sup> Though the Beatles certainly were on the radar of the black community, it is possible that some

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<sup>720</sup> Barbara O’Dair, “Garageland,” in *Trouble Girls: Rolling Stone Women in Rock*, ed. Barbara O’Dair (New York: Random House, 1997), 415.

<sup>721</sup> The hysterical teenage girl of the Beatlemania phenomenon has also been read as a foreshadowing of the more open, female sexuality expressed in the later sixties and as a result of the women’s movement of the early 1970s. See Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs, “Beatlemania: Girls Just Want to Have Fun,” *The Audience Studies Reader*, ed. Will Brooker and Deborah Jermyn (London: Routledge, 2002), 180-184. For this view of “girl groups,” see Barbara Bradby, “She Told Me What to Say: The Beatles and Girl-Group Discourse,” *Popular Music and Society* 28:3 (July 2005): 359-390; Cynthia J. Cyrus, “Selling an Image: Girl Groups of the 1960s,” *Popular Music* 22:2 (May 2003): 173-193; O’Dair, “Garageland,” 415.

<sup>722</sup> Richard Carter, “The Plain Vanilla Beatles were a Musical Zero to Black People,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Mar. 11, 2004, 10.

regarded Beatlemania and the subsequent British Invasion as yet another ridiculous fad which white, Suburban Americans could get excited about.<sup>723</sup>

While race and class issues became either hazy or more demarcated in light of this emergent youth culture, gender continued to play a vital role as well—not just in terms of changing activities and aesthetics for young men, but women as well. Unknown to many people today, groups like New York’s Goldie and the Gingerbreads (1962-1967—formed even before the British Invasion), Chicago’s Daughters of Eve (1965-1968), and Niles, Michigan’s the Luv’d Ones (1965-1968) formed during the initial years of American Mod culture. For some, it might seem that the mere existence of such bands is incredible.<sup>724</sup> Given the later commercial triumphs of American, sixties-influenced female bands of the 1980s such as the Go-Gos and the Bangles, it seems obvious that these “girls in the garage” were ahead of their time.<sup>725</sup> So why was it that they did not have at least one commercial hit, like some of their male counterparts?

Part of the answer may be found in that prior to the more heightened awareness of gender roles among young women in the late 1960s and early 1970s (the era of the women’s liberation movement), women who assumed non-traditional roles were stigmatized in a way similar to the way some young men were. The difference was that, as in the case of the garage bands, women were derided more for their actions than for their style. Just as Mod-looking male youths were

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<sup>723</sup> For instance, the African-American newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, published articles between 1964 and 1966 acknowledging the Beatles’ great success and, specifically, the group’s commercial impact on black artists. See Hazel Garland, “Video Vignettes,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, Feb. 22, 1964, 17; Izzy Rowe, “Izzy Rowe’s Notebook,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 9, 1964, 17; Ted Watson, “The ‘Midnight Man’ in Chicago,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 9, 1964, 17; Phyllis Garland, “Listening In: Experimenting in Jazz,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 16, 1964, 17; “Photo Standalone 16 – No Title [caption: “What! Brown Beatles?”],” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 16, 1964, 17; Ted Watson, “The ‘Midnight Man’ in Chicago,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 30, 1964, 18; “‘Beatle’ Paul Also Success as Composer,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 25, 1964, 13; “U.S.-Britain Relations Strained Musically,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 29, 1965, 16; “Quality Music Outlasts Fads,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 31, 1965, 17; “Motown Heads List In Single Record Sales in the U.S.,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, Jan. 15, 1966, 7B.

<sup>724</sup> Genya Ravan, *Lollipop Lounge: Memoirs of a Rock and Roll Refugee* (New York: Billboard, 2004).

<sup>725</sup> Richard Harrington, “The Beat Go-Go’s On,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 12, 1981, C4; Richard Harrington, “Bangles: the Best Girls’ Band in L.A.,” *Washington Post*, Sept. 28, 1984, 45.

seen as feminine because they chose to wear their hair “long” or adorn themselves in brightly-colored clothing, women in garage bands who usually wore their hair very long as well, were nonetheless often read as masculine not simply because they wore jeans (or matching pantsuits), but because they were playing “traditionally male” instruments and trying to deliver the same kind of hard-hitting rock energy as their male counterparts. Just as “effeminate” implicated some kind of lurking homosexuality among Mod-styled American boys, “masculine” also suggested lesbianism among women who strapped-on a guitar or unabashedly pounded a drum set.

Gamine sex appeal complemented with often sparkly, matching dresses for her band notwithstanding, Genya (“Goldie”) Ravan, shares in her autobiography that she was “very sensitive about any risk of Goldie and the Gingerbreads being labeled a ‘lezzy group,’” not because she was homophobic, but because society was. In her words, “I didn’t want anything to stand in the way of success for the band, and I knew all it would take was one gay band member coming out of the closet [guitarist Carol MacDonald was, in fact, a lesbian] for us all to be branded... and that would be bad for business. After all, this was long before being out was in.” The Gingerbreads ultimately became the first all-female band to be signed to a major label in the U.S., but still faced much chauvinism in the male-dominated industry. Since Ravan and her parents were Holocaust survivors who had immigrated to New York after WWII, it is easy to understand why she would have been initially reluctant to tour Germany with her band in 1962—the band’s first big career move. However, she and the band were to find much more success there and in Britain by the mid-sixties than they ever would in the United States.

Ravan remembers fondly what it was like to be an all-girl band in England circa 1964: “[It] was a great time to be a musician in the U.K. The clothes were incredible, and Carnaby Street was the place to buy them... Our press agents wanted us to look Mod.” Their first single,

“Can’t You Hear My Heart Beat,” which was produced by Alan Price of the Animals, reached number #25 on the British charts in 1965. Unfortunately, American success with this song eluded the band. Their rendition was usurped by Herman’s Hermits’ release of the song in the United States before that of the Gingerbreads. The Hermit’s Hermits version ended-up reaching #2 on the American charts in early February of 1965. With the exception of one-hit-Brit-Invasion-wonder the Honeycombs (“Have I the Right?” #5, October 1964) who had a female drummer, “girl musicians” were noticeably absent from line-ups of the day’s hitmakers.<sup>726</sup>

Girl garage bands that stayed stateside and experienced only regional or minor national musical coups, like Chicago’s Daughters of Eve, faced what the band’s former drummer, Debi Pomeroy, describes as the “pretty masculine domain” of the “Beat boom.” Perhaps to feel more comfortable within this atmosphere, some all-girl bands, like this one, adopted Mod male style. Despite their flowing, long hair and made-up faces, Pomeroy describes the band’s stage costumes as directly influenced by the styles worn by the *male* British Invasion stars. V-Neck tops, turtlenecks, and jeans with Cuban-heeled boots made up the first on-stage “gear” they wore. However, other outfits later included a more mixed array of “mesh stockings and white Mary Jane shoes...Nehru jacket and pant suits...and purple and green bellbottoms with bright green turtleneck sweaters and bright green suede Beatle boots.” Formed in 1965, the band’s three-year run included tours—with mostly male bands like the Buckingham—around the Midwest and South to promote their singles on the small, “USA” record label. Their last single, “Social Tragedy,” was released in 1968, but the band then broke up due to band members’

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<sup>726</sup> Ravan, *Lollipop Lounge*, 9-11, 63, 65,72, 104-105; “Girl Band Reunites,” *New York Times*, Nov. 13, 1997, E6; “Goldie and the Gingerbreads,” *Genya Ravan.com* at <http://www.genyaravan.com/goldie.html> (accessed Aug. 29, 2008); Whitburn, *The Billboard Book*, 283, 291.

marriages and/or pregnancies. Only Pomeroy would remain active in the music industry thereafter.<sup>727</sup>

Another Midwestern all-girl band, the Luv'd Ones, originally called the Tremelons, formed in 1964. Lead vocalist, guitarist, and songwriter Char Vinnedge was the main force behind the band. Char was able to convince her sister to play bass “because she loved Paul McCartney.” Though she had been musical from a young age, the Beatles were the main reason Vinnedge decided to start the band and the Luv'd Ones often included “I Want to Hold Your Hand” and “She Loves You” in their early performances. As the liner notes to a 1999 compilation CD of their songs attest, the group did not project a typically demure female image in sight or sound. The photograph on the cover of the Sundazed reissue itself shows four young women with long hair and fully dressed in black—black, sleeveless tops and tight-fitting pants—looking boldly into the photographer’s lens. Their most “famous” song, “I’m Leaving You,” which made it to number 25 on Muskegon, Michigan’s WTRU in the summer of 1966, was literally antithetical to the many popular “please-come-back-to-me” anthems of a few years earlier. Unlike the girl groups of the early sixties, these four made up “a real rock and roll band, and they didn’t give a damn about boys ‘owning them’ or wail helpless sentiments... the Luv’d Ones just flat out rocked.” In Vinnedge’s reflections of the group’s many gigs, the stories were often the same. Crowds were skeptical of the girl band’s talent until they began playing. Suddenly the audience was “with them,” realizing that *even though they were girls*, they were also very good band.<sup>728</sup> Though the group were on the Dunwich label—the same one that

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<sup>727</sup> Debi Pomeroy and Mick Patrick, “Chicago’s Daughter’s of Eve: The Story of an All-Girl Band,” *Spectropop* at <http://www.spectropop.com/DaughtersOfEve/index.htm> (accessed June 30, 2008).

<sup>728</sup> Jud Cost and Bob Irwin, *The Luv’d Ones: Char Vinnedge, A Rare Vintage Indeed*, The Luv’d Ones, *Truth’s Gotta Stand* [CD booklet] Sundazed SC 11050 (1999).

launched the Shadows of Knight into their one-hit-wonder fame—the Luv’d Ones were often overlooked in favor of this already somewhat recognized male group.

In end effect, a lack of acceptance in this mostly male environment was the main problem for all-girl bands of the era. Because they did not fit the girl group model, but “were self-contained units of instrumentalists/songwriters/singers” who did not have male Svengalis like Phil Spector to promote them, they could not fit neatly into preconceived notions of what female performers should be or look like.<sup>729</sup> Critics did not necessarily see these groups as talented, nor could they rely on waifish sexiness—because they did not fit that stereotype of earlier female performers either.<sup>730</sup> Simply put, nice young women simply wouldn’t do that. Why would they want to “rock” like boys? Something had to be *wrong* with them—talent or not.

Though these all-female bands were unknown within U.S. mainstream culture, their existence is doubly important when held in comparison to the more widely circulated images of women—especially in teen magazines—who were connected to the British Invasion phenomenon. Included in this cohort were the beloved “dolly bird” singers—known for their glamorous and/or trendy look—as well as the girlfriends and wives of British band members.<sup>731</sup> Though the term dolly bird might sound sexist to today’s ears, it was merely a convenient and catchy way to label these girlishly-styled singers. Unlike the all-female garage bands discussed, who tried writing most of their material, Dusty Springfield, Sandie Shaw, Cilla Black, or Lulu usually did not write their own songs and did not accompany themselves on instruments. Petula

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<sup>729</sup> Jacqueline Warwick, *Girl Groups, Girl Culture: Popular Music and Identity in the 1960s* (New York: Routledge, 2007), ix.

<sup>730</sup> Pete Johnson, “All-Girl UFOs Adept at Rock ‘n’ Roll,” *New York Times*, Aug. 25, 1966, D14.

<sup>731</sup> “Dolly bird” came into use in 1964 and is defined as “a pretty young woman,” thus these singers were both trendy and attractive. See “dolly bird,” *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* at [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dolly bird](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dolly%20bird) (accessed September 3, 2008). For the attachment of the word to these female singers, see Alec Palao, “Bring Us the Birds: The Brit Girl Sound,” Various Artists, *One Kiss Can Lead to Another: Girl Group Sounds, Lost and Found* [CD booklet], Rhino R2 74645 (2005), 145.

Clark, though, is an exception to the rule. Though her most famous song, “Downtown” was penned by Tony Hatch, she was a songwriter herself and even composed a film soundtrack in 1964.<sup>732</sup> Thus, audiences focused on their strong vocal deliveries and sweet-but-sassy personal styles. Some, like Dusty Springfield, found inspiration in and occasionally tried to mimic the vocal girl groups like the Ronettes.<sup>733</sup> In saying this, I am not suggesting that these powerful performers’ contributions were lesser than those of sixties’ all-girl bands, but it was the “girls with guitars” who truly broke boundaries in the sense that these instruments have been traditionally coded as masculine and singing traditionally “feminine.”<sup>734</sup> However, even these singers seemed, in the mind of at least one writer, outside conventional femininity: “Marriage is not on the charts for any of Les Girls as the moment. They’re all too busy as singing spinsters, spinning out success with every disc and beating the British boys at their own game!”<sup>735</sup> Since none of the performers here are French, I have to question why the writer calls these British—not French—singers “Les Girls” (lesbians?). Thus, even if these pop stars tried their hardest to fit the glamour-girl role expected of them, or if they relied on men to guide them to success, their choice of occupation—or that they even wanted a career—was still eyed dubiously.

Nonetheless, given the already suspicious mainstream attitudes toward the English, all-male bands, the British dolly bird singers served an important function. By giving more media attention to “girl singers,” rather than female bands, any sexual ambiguity attributed to the all-male groups could be safely ignored. This idea was also strengthened through media attention

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<sup>732</sup> “Career-Biography.” *Petula Clark* at <http://www.petulaclark.net/bio.html> (accessed Nov. 28, 2008). She composed soundtracks for two French films in 1964 and 1966. See “Petula Clark,” *IMDb* at <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0164379/> (accessed Nov. 28, 2008).

<sup>733</sup> Valentine and Wickham, *Dancing with Demons*, 54.

<sup>734</sup> Mary Ann Clawson, “‘Not Just the Girl Singer’: Women and Voice in Rock Bands,” in *Negotiating at the Margins: The Gendered Discourses of Power and Resistance*, ed. Sue Fisher and Kathy Davis (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 235-254.

<sup>735</sup> “England’s Top Darlings,” *Teen*, June 1965, 81.

given to women like Jane Asher (Paul McCartney's mid-sixties girlfriend) or Jill Stuart (Chad Stuart's wife). They symbolized a more traditional feminine "supporting role" for women. For instance, though Jill Stuart was not known at the time for anything in particular, Jane Asher was already a famous actor in Britain. Still, magazines like *16* seemingly cared more that she was Paul McCartney's girlfriend than about her already well-known roles on stage and screen. Finally, by featuring musicians' significant others alongside the groups themselves firmly placed seemingly foppish British Invasion stars in the "safe," confines of heterosexual hegemony.<sup>736</sup>

One female performer who fell into both of the above categories of pop singer and rock-star consort, and who proves a fascinating study in terms of gender stereotyping is Marianne Faithfull. At first, Faithfull was portrayed as innocent, wistful, and pure—more an unadorned, folk-singer type than a make-up-wearing dolly bird. Faithfull was discovered by Rolling Stones manager and Mod mogul Andrew Loog Oldham in 1964. Oldham convinced Mick Jagger and Keith Richards to write a ballad for her that had, so to speak, "brick walls all around it, and high windows and no sex."<sup>737</sup> In her autobiography, she describes how she was marketed as a fresh, yet familiar, type of female performer—like French pop Chanteuse or folk singer Joan Baez. She writes, "'As Tears Go By' was like a Françoise Hardy song... maybe that's what Mick [Jagger] had picked up from me when we met. Slightly existential but with a dash of San Remo Song Festival... or that's what Andrew [Loog Oldham] saw in me at the party"<sup>738</sup> Faithfull's early image plays into a common one of the era: the doe-eyed, innocent girl-woman. In 1966, a teen magazine article celebrated this by saying, "In a field where it has become a common nonsense

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<sup>736</sup> "Dusty's Different," *Teen Screen*, Nov. 1964, 30-32; "England's Top Darlings," 36-37, 81; "What is Jane Asher Really Like?" *16*, Oct. 1964, 38; "Meet Pattie Boyd and Maureen Cox," *16*, Oct. 1964, 39; "Pattie Boyd's 'Letter from London,'" *16*, Feb. 1965, 18; "Jill Stuart's 'Letter from London,'" *16*, Oct. 1965, 50; Janis Murray, "English Trends and Friends," [features pictures from Ray Davies's wedding and information on Mick Jagger's girlfriend, Chrissie Shrimpton], *16*, July 1965, 28.

<sup>737</sup> Marianne Faithfull with David Dalton, *Faithfull: An Autobiography* (Boston: Little Brown, 1994), 23.

<sup>738</sup> Faithfull with Dalton, *Faithfull*, 24.



to see a girl look like a boy and vice-versa, it is a refreshing sight to find a girl whose figure emanates so much femininity you can't believe she's for real."<sup>739</sup> Unlike the all-girl bands that were suspected of "deviant" sexual behavior mainly because they played instruments and did not necessarily always dress ultra-feminine. Faithfull's comparatively traditional look was actually misleading. As we have already seen in Chapter One, the singer was far from conventional in her choice of lovers. In the cavalcade of British female singers who rose to fame at this time, "dolly bird" Dusty Springfield would also be outed as lesbian after her initial commercial success.<sup>740</sup>

Nonetheless, from 1964 until 1967 Marianne Faithfull's media image in both the U.K. and U.S. still personified the preferred private and public expectations of young women during the 1960s: early marriage and motherhood.<sup>741</sup> In 1965 Marianne married her boyfriend John Dunbar and gave birth to their son Nicholas. Faithfull's exceptionally early call to motherhood (she had her son at eighteen) was no different from that of the many women Betty Friedan interviewed who couldn't imagine themselves beyond marriage and family, let alone the age of twenty-one. From seventeen to twenty years old, Marianne played the part correctly. She looked good, wore Mod fashions, and gave the air of a sweet, virginal girl despite already being a mother. Her first three U.S. hits, the Jagger-Richards-penned "As Tears Go By," Jackie De Shannon's "Come and Stay with Me," and "This Little Bird," had a heartbreakingly fragile quality to them as well.<sup>742</sup> Until her adulterous affair with Mick Jagger became public in 1967, she was seen as virtuous as a pop singer could get.

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<sup>739</sup> "Marianne NOW!" *Hullabaloo*, Dec. 1966, 52.

<sup>740</sup> Lucy O'Brien, *She Bop II: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop and Soul* (London: Continuum, 2002), 254. See also Penny Valentine and Vicki Wickham, *Dancing with Demons: The Authorized Biography of Dusty Springfield* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 2, 4, 131, 164-165, 167.

<sup>741</sup> Early marriage and motherhood was a trend in the immediate postwar period that had not changed very much by 1965. See May, *Homeward Bound*, 79.

<sup>742</sup> Whitburn, *The Billboard Book*, 218.

Just as the American public first came to “know” the Beatles by watching the *Ed Sullivan Show*, teenagers could familiarize themselves with the British Invasion bands and Brit-girl singers like Marianne Faithfull through the music-oriented TV shows that began cropping-up in late 1964.<sup>743</sup> Interestingly, just as big name bands from England like Gerry and the Pacemakers or the Kinks were soon featured on teen-g geared music showcases like *Shindig!*, (1964-1966), the more easily accessible American garage bands were often recruited to appear in already popular sitcoms in an attempt for those shows to cater to youthful viewers. For instance, the Standells appeared on 1965 episodes of *The Munsters* (“Far Out Munsters,” March 18) and *Ben Casey* (“Three ‘Lil Lambs,” March 29), while *the Castaways* even performed their one very well-known song, “Liar Liar” on a daytime soap opera called *Never Too Young* that same year.<sup>744</sup> Perhaps the only famous British act with semi-regular appearances on American sitcoms or dramatic series, rather than just music or variety shows, was Chad and Jeremy. Best known today for their hits “Yesterday’s Gone” and “A Summer Song,” the duo was featured in episodes the *Dick Van Dyke Show* (playing a group called The Redcoats, no less), *The Patty Duke Show*, *Laredo*, and *Batman* between 1965 and 1966. Perhaps this had to do with the fact that Jeremy Clyde already had a background in acting. Interestingly, he would return to it as his fulltime profession after the duo’s popularity cooled off.<sup>745</sup>

The teen-oriented pop music shows that began broadcasting on U.S. Television by late 1964 were not nearly as cutting-edge as England’s *Ready, Steady, Go!* While the British show

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<sup>743</sup> Palladino, *Teenagers*, 195-196; Bill Osgerby, “‘So Who’s Got Time for Adults!’: Femininity, Consumption and the Development of Teen TV—from *Gidget* to *Buffy*,” *Teen TV: Genre, Consumption, Identity*, ed. Glyn Davis and Kay Dickinson (London: BFI, 2004), 73

<sup>744</sup> “TV/Film Cameos” and “Rock Group TV Cameos [PDF],” *60sgaragebands.com* at <http://www.60sgaragebands.com/cameosjingles.html> (accessed Jan. 26, 2008).

<sup>745</sup> “TV Shows,” *The Chad and Jeremy Fan Page* at <http://cj.thefondfarewells.com/tvshows.html> (accessed Jan. 25, 2008); Whitburn, *The Billboard Book*, 114; “History,” *Chad and Jeremy* at [www.chadandjeremy.net/cj/hist1.htm](http://www.chadandjeremy.net/cj/hist1.htm) (accessed Oct. 11, 2008).

took its cues from London's Mod underground, the American equivalents could not help but be influenced by the glitzy and unapologetically commercial Hollywood environment in which they were produced. It should not be ignored, either, that the U.S. template for teen music shows was *American Bandstand*—which was originally filmed in Philadelphia—was a program which began broadcasting nationally in 1957 with the first wave of rock and roll. Host Dick Clark also soon moved his show to Los Angeles. In any case, now that an even larger population of teenagers existed, this literally (Baby-) Boom-ing market was eager for British Invasion sounds and this inspired TV producers to create similar, yet more “with it,” music shows.<sup>746</sup>

In September of 1964, *Shindig!* was the first of the two major music programs to premiere on American television between 1964 and 1965. In some sense, *Shindig!* “replaced” *Hootenanny* (ABC, 1963-1964), a program that had capitalized on the popularity of folk music artists like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez with young adults. This programming move reflected young people's steering away from folk to the British Invasion sounds and ABC's concern in keeping up with the youth market.<sup>747</sup> Nonetheless, folk music remained influential, though it sometimes took on different forms to maintain popularity. For instance, original west coast “folkies” Roger McGuinn and Gene Clark, both fans of the Beatles' musical style, soon grow their hair long, merge folk sounds with Merseybeat, and founded hitmakers The Byrds.<sup>748</sup>

*Shindig!* was produced by an Oxford graduate by the name of Jack Good, but was hosted by a clean-cut-looking and popular Los Angeles DJ named Jimmy O'Neill. The Mod sensibility

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<sup>746</sup> Jake Austen, *TV-A-Go-Go: Rock on TV from American Bandstand to American Idol* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005), 25-30.

<sup>747</sup> Cecil Smith, “Strum Along with Hootenanny,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 19, 1964, C3; Ronald D. Cohen, *Folk Music: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 153-154.

<sup>748</sup> “Bio,” *Roger McGuinn Official Website* at <http://www.ibiblio.org/jimmy/mcguinn/McGuinn.html> (accessed Dec. 3, 2008). For more on this blend of mid-sixties rock and folk music from the mid-sixties to decade's end, see Richie Unterberger, *Eight Miles High: Folk-Rock's Flight From Haight-Ashbury to Woodstock* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2003).

of the show was made hip by “liberal use of geometric shapes in backdrops as well as on platforms used by the shows performers.”<sup>749</sup> In this sense, Good imported his native knowledge of Mod visual style and made it accessible to American audiences through television.

Like its forerunner, the long-running *American Bandstand*, *Shindig!* not only showed bands performing (usually lip synching) their current hits, but also youthful participants. This virtual teen clique included a house band called The Shindogs, house dancers named the Shindiggers, and an all-girl vocal/back-up group called the Blossoms (featuring former girl group singer Darlene Love). With an all-male band, a mixed boy-girl dance troupe, and an all-girl singing group, *Shindig!*'s Mod aspirations were thus undercut by normative gender roles. Was this at least partially due to who was producing the program? In American teen magazine *Hit Parader*, one writer suggested that Britain's *Ready, Steady, Go!* was more innovative because “there are lots of young people in charge, but even the older technicians seem more open-minded than their American counterparts. Creative ideas are developed quickly without being bogged down in dreary conferences.”<sup>750</sup> While the so-called British “dolly bird” singers such as Sandie Shaw and Dusty Springfield, made appearances on the program, as did the Mod-esque Supremes, all-girl bands like the U.S.'s own Goldie and the Gingerbreads (who had been on Britain's *Ready, Steady, Go!*) or Britain's Liverbirds (who appeared on German TV) did not.<sup>751</sup> In this sense, the first televised visions of Mod, music culture was a more conservative one, despite efforts to be very much the opposite.

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<sup>749</sup> Peter Bart, “Briton Produces TV Rock ‘N’ Roll,” *New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1965, 37; Norma Coates, *It's A Man's, Man's World: Television and the Masculinization of Rock Discourse and Culture* Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002, 147-150.

<sup>750</sup> “The English TV Scene... Swings!,” *Hit Parader*, Oct. 1966, 20; “Shindig! Can TV's Big Time Teen Show Survive the Ratings and Adult Pressure?” *Teen*, Jan. 1965, 54-55, 82; “England's ‘Ready, Steady, Go’ Girl: Cathy McGowan,” *Teen*, Oct. 1965, 32-35.

<sup>751</sup> “*Shindig!* [Episode guide],” *TV.com* at <http://www.tv.com/shindig/show/2198/summary.html?tag=tabs;summary> (accessed Sept. 3, 2008); Ravan, *Lollipop Lounge*, 102; Thorsten Schmidt, *Beat-Club: alle Sendungen, alle Stars, alle Songs* (Bremen: Kultur Buch Bremen, 2005), 12.

As an alternative to *Shindig!*, *Hullabaloo* (NBC, January 12, 1965) tried to be Mod by enlisting the Beatles' manager, Brian Epstein, to host segments that were filmed ahead of time in the U.K and edited into the program. As one teen magazine put it, his "weekly made-in-London segment gives the show the fab pick-me-up it needs to make it a top teen TV show."<sup>752</sup> Despite the pop and op-art style sets and trendy dances featured in the weekly "Hullabaloo-A-Go-Go" sequence that gave the show an up-to-the-minute look, *Hullabaloo* was not always loved by young audiences due to the fact that the show's producers were trying to court a wider audience. Operating more akin to the variety show format that *Ed Sullivan* had made famous, each episode featured established and benign celebrity guest hosts such as Paul Anka, Sammy Davis Jr., or Steve Lawrence. As one communication scholar has observed, *Hullabaloo*'s format and style served to bridge the emerging gap between the generations—attempting to "legitimate rock and roll" to adults. No episode, perhaps, made this point clearer than one from September 1965 featuring Gary Lewis (who led a British Invasion-inspired group, the Playboys) singing the Beatles' "Help!" with his entertainer father, Jerry Lewis.<sup>753</sup> Nonetheless, the fashions worn on both *Hullabaloo* and *Shindig!* offered young Americans another way to understand Mod style. For instance, a *New York Times* reviewer of both programs described it in this way: "The boys on these shows have quite a lot of hair, wear dark jackets or turtleneck sweaters, stovepipe trousers and pointed boots. The girls favor above-the-knee skirts." Thus, the clothing worn by the regular cast and musical guests were always decidedly Mod—allowing TV an increasingly greater role in the culture's American formation during the mid-sixties.<sup>754</sup>

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<sup>752</sup> "Teens Take Over TV!" *Flip*, June 1965, 42.

<sup>753</sup> Coates, *It's A Man's, Man's World*, 153-155; "Hullabaloo" [episode list], *TV.com* at <http://www.tv.com/show/1759/summary.html> (accessed Sept. 3, 2008); *Hullabaloo* [vol.3, Sept. 1965]: *A '60s Music Flashback* (Orland Park, IL: MPI Home Video, 1995).

<sup>754</sup> Paul Gardner, "The Kids Get Their Cultural Kick," *New York Times*, Mar. 21, 1965, X19.

By the summer of 1965, a third music program *Where the Action Is*, provided young people with a half hour of music every weekday afternoon. The title refers to the fact that the show, hosted by Dick Clark, would shoot in various cities around the U.S. to see what was “happening” with teenagers there. Though the show offered a by-now-usual potpourri of British Invaders and their Dolly Bird accomplices, the show had its own stable of house bands—most notably the colonially bedecked Paul Revere and the Raiders. After the cancellations of *Shindig!* and *Hullabaloo* in 1966, *Where the Action Is*, remained the only way for youths to see their favorite English bands and singers on television. However, it, too, would be cancelled by the spring of 1967.<sup>755</sup>

While these teen-oriented music shows brought Mod culture to American youths, another genre tried to do the same. The “spy genre” had already become successful through the popularity of the James Bond films *Dr. No* (1962) and *Goldfinger* (1964). Though Bond represented a more traditional “English gentleman,” the spy’s sleek style and his über-modern gadgetry presented a Mod rather than conventional image. In the wake of the films’ popularity, a slew of spy-themed programs appeared on American television between 1964 and 1965—most of them produced in the United States—featuring very fashionably attired secret agents. *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* (1964-1968), *The Avengers* (1965-1969), *I-Spy* (1965-1968), and *Get Smart* (1965-1969) were hits with American audiences. The British export *The Avengers* was an especially good resource for fledgling “Modettes” in the 1965 to 1967 seasons, since female spy Emma Peel often wore go-go boots and other up-to-the-minute gear—including some relatively

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<sup>755</sup> “Where the Action is!,” *16*, Dec. 1965, 60; “In Memorium: Where the Action Is/Was,” *Teen Life*, June 1967, 38-39.

racy leather catsuits.<sup>756</sup> Though not a spy program, *Batman* (1966-1968) was also Mod in its campy pop art style, certainly borrowing from the sensibility of the original comics. It is no wonder Britain's the Creation would title one of their 1966 songs (and U.K. hit) "Biff! Bang! Pow!"<sup>757</sup>

By commercializing what was already a highly marketable style, i.e., the Americanized, British-Invasion-version of Mod culture, through the world of television, producers and advertising executives looked to tame a youth sensibility that seemed subversive. Furthermore, by focusing more on the commercial potential of the music versus the "fashion crimes" committed by many of these performers, gender anxiety among the grown-up masses seemed to be quelled. Or was it?

#### 4.4 MOD "GENDER TROUBLE" IN THE U.S.A.: 1964 TO 1966

"All I know is, these English matching boy-girl hairdos turn my tum," opined a *Mademoiselle* writer after an assignment in London during the fall of 1964. Another (female) journalist writing for the *New York Times* that same year shared, "Many British girls have snipped off their hair during the hot weather, and a large number of normal young men have let theirs grow and grow. The result cannot be defined as a social revolution, but it is causing mix-ups." Meanwhile, as many young American men mimicked their new heroes' haircut, to suggest some others were

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<sup>756</sup> Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott, *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 34-35; "The Great TV Spy Scramble," *Life*, Oct. 1, 1966, 118-119; Luckett, "Sensuous Women and Single Girls," 283.

<sup>757</sup> Sasha Torres, "The Caped Crusader of Camp: Pop, Camp, and the Batman Television Series," in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*, ed. Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 330-343; The Creation, "Painter Man" / "Biff! Bang! Pow!" Planet PLF 119, 45 rpm.

displeased would be an understatement to say the least. As a letter from a male reader to *Dig* magazine illustrated:

I wish someone would tell me what's happening to teenagers... The Beatles are certainly no worse than the "entertainers" who were the big deal before they came along. But I do mind the image they project. Whatever happened to the red-blooded American male? If he died along with chivalry, I wish someone had told me about because I would have liked to send flowers. I miss him that much. The male image that used to be idolized was made up of strength, magnetism, courage, handsomeness, and masculinity. The male image today is entirely different. Today's idols are weak, spineless, bland individuals who are never handsome. Instead, they're pretty! (In the case of the Beatles, make that *pretty ugly*.) What's wrong with teenagers? Don't they realize that by identifying with these creeps we'll become just as weak and spineless and bland as they are?

All three accounts' reactions to this shift in gender aesthetics—spearheaded by Mod youths—were typical of many Americans at the time.<sup>758</sup> To the point of cliché, it has been said that the 1960s was not only the decade of the sexual revolution par excellence, but also an era when hair became longer while skirts became shorter. Thus, transformations in sexual behavior seemingly coincided with changes in gender aesthetics.

With some exceptions, long hair has been primarily coded as rebellious and/or feminine throughout western history. Notably, this stylistic change was a direct reaction to the styles that had been mainstreamed in the previous decades, where men did indeed, wear their hair shorter—sometimes in militaristic crew cuts—and women usually wore their hair longer. This switch in the mid-sixties implies that men with "long" hair and women with "short" styles were both doing something that could be seen as culturally threatening at the time.<sup>759</sup> When Beatlemania first hit American shores, some teenage boys wanted to mimic their new heroes. Likewise, some female

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<sup>758</sup> "The New Speed," *Mademoiselle*, Nov. 1964, 133; Gloria Emerson, "British 'His and Her' hairdos Blur 'Him-Her' Line," *New York Times*, July 23, 1964, 29; J. Laring, "Uncensored Teenage Opinions," *Dig*, Nov. 1964, 37.

<sup>759</sup> For instance, in the seventeenth century, during England's Civil War, those who supported the crown—and the status quo—wore their hair very long and were known as "cavaliers," while those who rebelled against the King—the "roundheads"—wore much shorter hair. See Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 142. For specific reference to longer hair as feminine, see Fisher, *Materializing Gender*, 131; Anthony Synott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," *British Journal of Sociology* 38 (1987): 384.



fans wanted to pay their new, favorite band the sincerest form of flattery—either adorning themselves with the commercialized Beatle wigs or sometimes cutting their hair a little shorter. The outcome of these efforts was that men and women’s hairstyles could sometimes look quite similar in the eyes of the older generation. Within the initial months of the Beatlemania, the June 1964 *Teen* magazine’s cover features a look-a-like male-female couple with Beatles hairstyles with a bold caption of “Everything’s coming up Beatles!” (fig. 32). Inside the issue, one article’s author begs the magazine’s mostly female readers that if they have to “go Beatle,” that they should choose a flattering bob.<sup>760</sup>



Figure 32 Courtesy of the Popular Culture Library, Bowling Green State University.

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<sup>760</sup> “If You’ve Got to Go Beatle, Go ‘Bob,’” *Teen*, June 1964, 36-39; The bob was a super-modern, chin-length cut for women in the 1920s, see Banner, *American Beauty*, 271.

The success of commercial goods stamped with Beatles imagery during 1964 allowed opportunists of all sorts to cash in. Visual responses to the Beatles and their style were found in many types of newspapers and periodicals. However, the most pertinent—in terms of gender aesthetics—were to be found in magazines aimed at younger audiences. Photographic and cartoon images featured in magazines such as *Teen Magazine* and *Tiger Beat* (aimed at female adolescents) illustrated the androgynous (if sometimes confusing) lure the Beatles offered teenage girls, while American humor magazines such as *Mad*, *Cracked*, and *Sick* (aimed toward adolescent males) took it upon themselves to lampoon the supposed effeminacy of the group.<sup>761</sup>

As introduced in the last section of the chapter, the Beatles not only inspired young people to pick up instruments and play them in the newly-minted British Invasion style, but also influenced some brave teenage souls to incorporate a very different and new sense of style into their day-to-day lives. While the Beatles themselves may have inspired a particular kind of haircut, and were initial fashion role models for young men, it was the accompanying British-born “Mod fashions” promoted in print media that would further establish the presence of this youth sensibility in the United States. By doing so, a new kind of mania engulfed the country—and fostered anxiety still tied closely to the “masculinity crisis” that arose in the 1950s. In this case, the coming of Mod reawakened not just these fears (ones that had never fully gone away), but also new anxieties concerned with aesthetic choices young women were making and how this would affect America’s patriarchal culture. Who these women desired (long-haired fops) and

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<sup>761</sup> Fred Hembek, “Q: Beatlemania—*Mad*, *Sick*, or *Cracked*? All of the Above,” *Hembek.com* at <http://www.hembek.com/Beatles/BeatlesSatireIntro.htm> (accessed Feb. 16, 2005); Frank Frazetta, “Blech,” *Mad*, October 1964. *Hembek.com* at <http://www.hembek.com/Beatles/BeatlesSatireIntro.htm> (accessed Feb. 16, 2005).

who they were perhaps realizing they wanted to be (fun-seekers) probably did not bring any source of comfort to the older generation of the mid-1960s.<sup>762</sup>

In the pages that follow, I will examine how, alongside the rising commercial popularity of Mod culture between 1965 and 1967, the style's fashions were often couched in a discourse of "gender trouble" for American audiences. This will be illustrated primarily with examples from articles and advertisements from various general audience and niche publications. Since this issue has already been discussed in terms of Beatlemania's impact in 1964, the remainder of this analysis will look at how this phenomenon was framed through the pages of magazines and newspapers from 1965 to 1967.

#### **4.4.1 1965: Creeping Feminization and the New Mod Girl**

During the course of 1965 the meaning of Mod expanded from what had been introduced in the first year of its presence in the United States. More so than aligning it to a solely British phenomenon associated with the Beatles or British gangs known as "Mods and Rockers," it became more and more allied with trendy and youthful clothing mainly from Britain. As this transformation of meaning occurred, there were increasing concerns of how this trend was affecting gender identity. Primarily, the press reflected a growing distress that this effete, British style was feminizing young American men while also destabilizing female ("feminine") aesthetic. A November 30 article in *Look* magazine began its lengthy article on Mod by posing the question, "What are little Mods made of? Clothes and hair and a real cool air." In "The Minneapolis Mods" Iris Bauer explains that the Mod fashions of London's

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<sup>762</sup> Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 116-117; Barbara, Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs. "Beatlemania: Girls Just Want to Have Fun," *The Audience Studies Reader*, ed. Will Brooker and Deborah Jermyn (New York: Routledge, 2003), 180-184.

Carnaby Street have “hit America’s theoretically ultraconservative farmland.” Although Bauer’s connection between liberal-minded Minneapolis and the “ultraconservative” heartland seems unfair, she wants nonetheless to show the degree to which Mod has infiltrated the United States. Here, Mod is not just of interest to cosmopolitan New Yorkers, but also to youth in the pastoral Midwest. Bauer introduces the idea that American parents fear Mod is part of a “creeping feminization” within popular culture. The author posits this as a “needless worry” and sees Mod’s effeminacy as “shock value” whereby male teens empower themselves in the one area they feel they have control: their clothing.<sup>763</sup>

This concern of an “effeminate generation” is echoed in a recurring *Mademoiselle* op-ed piece called “Man Talk.” The September 1965 column describes this fear of feminization as a kind insidious female revenge. David Newman and Robert Benton correlate the feminization of culture with women’s failure to “gain total entry into the man’s world.” Because this entrance has been barred, the authors believe women “force men to worry about things like fashion and dancing...this is a ‘woman’s world:’ fashion, fad culture, music, art, pop movements, [and] publications.” In Newman and Benton’s view, women want more control over men. In contrast to the violent mobs described as battling it out in Brighton, Mod men are described here as more androgynous, pliable, and, therefore, less threatening. While this article is unusually severe in its attitudes towards men’s fashions and a woman’s “place,” it is not singular in content. In the same month *Look* published “Minneapolis Mods,” *Mademoiselle* featured an article entitled “Pop Sex: Some Sex Symbols of the Sixties.” In the first page of the article Mod is used to describe the current male style and also uses the term “creeping feminization” in conjunction with Mod. The author blames the Beatles for this new style and further complains about how difficult it is to differentiate between “the New Young Man and the New Mod Girl,” both of whom apparently sport identical hairstyles and clothes. However, instead of implying that “creeping feminization” will

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<sup>763</sup> Iris Bauer, “The Minneapolis Mods,” *Look*, Nov. 30, 1965, 79 and M9.

lead to nationwide homosexuality—which seems to be the implicit meaning in most of 1965’s articles about Mod, male style—the author interprets this style as being about “youthful narcissism.”<sup>764</sup>

Teen magazines directed at an adolescent female audience offered a rich array of images that bespoke young girls’ fascination with, as well as fear of, boys with long hair. In this and ensuing issues, even into 1965, the commentary moved from emphasizing the Beatles as part of a fad as something which caused teenage girls to pause and reflect on the potential consequences of long hair on boys (and, thus, also more short hair on girls). Letters found within this issues struggle with the pros and cons of long-haired boys. A reader from New Jersey writes, “We’ll take the pompadour and the adorable Beatle cut any day. If you ask me, a boy with a crew cut looks like he’s bald,” while a letter titled by the editors, “Likes Masculine Boys,” asks if “We girls should form an organization called ‘Let’s Stamp Out Short Pants & Shaggy Haired Boys?’” Nearly a year later, the issue still had resonance for *Teen*’s readers. A letter—and accompanying cartoon courtesy of the editors—from April 1965 chides young men for “becoming carbon copies of the female sex.” “First they steal our long hair...next they’ll steal our high-heeled shoes and tight pants,” write “Two Disgusted Girls” from Brooklyn. *Tiger Beat* also offered visual and textual commentary. In 1965 the magazines features a cartoon segment where the Beatles visit the popular TV show *Peyton Place*. In the cartoon a teenage girl grabs Beatle Ringo and says, “Oh, you long-haired swinger! I don’t know who you are, but you’re irresistible! That nose... how it denotes your manliness!” While teen magazines jabbed at the new male gender aesthetics, the critique was not as harsh as those featured in adult-oriented, mainstream publications. Perhaps this is because, as Naomi Klein writes, “Teen idols [from the 60s on—she describes long-haired 70s heartthrobs David Cassidy and Bobby Sherman] always looked like girls,” because showing overt signs of traditional

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<sup>764</sup> Richard R. Lingeman, “Pop Sex: Some Sex Symbols of the Sixties,” *Mademoiselle*, Nov. 1965, 185.

masculinity (such as hairy chests) was “too scary” for their adolescent female audience.<sup>765</sup> Also, it was usually more men than women—who found this new style threatening. Nonetheless, despite the fact that teen magazines tended to be more “open-minded”—and to be fair, this was probably just in order to cash in on the latest youth tastes—this did not mean that all articles, images, or even responses from readers were uniformly supportive of such trends.

If the content in newspapers and both mainstream and niche magazine articles suggested fears that the new Mod boy was sissified, then other stories’ authors worried equally as much that Mod style was changing girls from organic and curvy beings to ones made up of harsh, geometric angles and near-mechanical limbs. The other fear was that she was remaining a little girl rather than growing up. In 1965 childlike baby-doll dresses with buckled Mary Jane shoes and robot-like silver and plastic mini-dresses dominated the pages of various publications.<sup>766</sup> Just as the “effete” male Mod was eyed suspiciously, so were the fashions that made women look either girlish or “machine-like.”

Already starting in the early sixties, a “juvenile look” became a new trend in Mod female fashion. In 1965, more articles appeared showing that clothing for girls veered towards this ultra-childish trend. The pubescent attributes of this style—already obvious—was underscored by advertisements for similar “Mod” dresses for six-to-ten-year-olds.<sup>767</sup> The desire that many women have to look young for as long as possible correlates with the avoidance of growing-up and, therefore, growing old. Historically, both these situations had not served women very well. I would argue that much of this reluctance to look older or adopt a mature woman’s style had to do with connotations of

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<sup>765</sup> Naomi Klein, *Promiscuities* (New York: Fawcett, 1997), 55.

<sup>766</sup> The mechanical: “Fashion: The Sleek ‘Space’ Flair in Plastics,” *Life*, Apr. 9, 1965, 91-92; “Fashion: It’s OP from Toe to Top,” *Life*, Apr. 16, 1965, 52-54; “Courrèges: Lord of the Space Ladies,” *Life*, May 21, 1965, 47-65; “Paris: The New Jet-eration,” *Mademoiselle*, Oct. 1965, 142-145; and “Paris: The News as We See It,” *Vogue*, Sept. 1, 1965, 255-259. For the trend in childlike fashions this year, see also Braunstein, “Forever Young,” 245.

<sup>767</sup> “Juvenile Look in Paris Fashions,” *Life*, Sept. 4, 1964, 43-48B, 52; Violette LeDuc, “Courrèges: A Slaying in the Corrida of Fashion,” *Vogue*, May 1965, 244 and “Fashion: The Sugar and Spice Look,” *Life*, May 28, 1965, 99-100. See also Bleikhorn *Mini-Mod Sixties*, 19.

potential burdens of domestic care-giving and motherhood. To those girls who really embraced this Mod style, the very thought of motherhood appeared unfathomable. Motherhood was not fun or cool.<sup>768</sup> The idea of being and looking like a woman would mean that girls had to exchange playful freedoms for being mothers and caretakers. The role of mother did not allow for playfulness, but a twenty-going-on-forty mentality. The word and idea “woman,” easily scared young women into prolonging adolescence—a space where more options actually existed. In *The Second Sex*, Simone deBeauvoir sees girlhood as a more nurturing, freeing, and creative space for females— and one that allows for more equality between the sexes. She writes, “The little girl seeks activity and independence, like her brothers...Her spontaneous surge towards life, her enjoyment of playing, laughing, adventure, lead the little girl to view the maternal sphere as narrow and stifling.”<sup>769</sup> When viewed in this light, the seemingly schoolgirl looks of Mary Quant’s Mod London designs were not meant to demean or infantilize women, but rather to allow them to reconnect with the playful freedom associated with girlhood.

In comparison to the charcoal grays, off-whites, camels, and brick-reds which were often seen in 1950s female fashion, the often bright colors of Mod clothing seemed to evoke juvenility over maturity. The word “girl” itself was freely and positively bandied about even when referring to women in their twenties and thirties.<sup>770</sup> The hip, Quant-outfitted, single *girl* was the direct opposite of those young but melancholy sad-sacks that Betty Friedan described as unable to imagine their lives past marriage or the age of twenty-one. Hilary Radner suggests that in the 1960s this newfound love for the “girl within”

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<sup>768</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London: Viking, 1997), 353-354. Before long, Mod fashions for actual little girls existed as well. See “Display ad 35- No Title [“Gimbels: the Look is Young”], *New York Times*, Feb. 18, 1966, 8.

<sup>769</sup> de Beauvoir, *Second Sex*, 268.

<sup>770</sup> Peacock, *The Fifties*, 54, 58; Then-editor for *Cosmopolitan* magazine and over thirty-years-old, Helen Gurley Brown was one of the first to use this word in an empowering, positive way. See Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962; New York: Avon, 1983).

allowed single women much more agency despite an “immature” appearance. This girlish persona “presents a utopian fantasy of a woman free from the constraints that appeared to limit her mother.”<sup>771</sup>

In the May 21 issue of *Life*, French designer Courrèges, already beloved by the Mod set, is called “Lord of the Space ladies” and “the couturier of space age clothes.”<sup>772</sup> Space exploration had clearly fired the imagination of some fashion designers.<sup>773</sup> One female reader, Dianne Karlstein of Belle Harbor, New York, felt obliged to respond to Courrèges’s unusual style. She writes that “the mental midget of feminine fashion...is designing under the delusion that he is dressing a Pythagorean Theorem.”<sup>774</sup>

Courrèges was not the only one “guilty” of wanting to merge the female body with technology. The August 6 *Life* article “I was a Teen-Age Computer” discusses computerized predictions of female fashions designed by the Bobby Brooks Company. The fashions touted are described as “a cross section of current preferences...English Mod dresses, smock shapes, pop art, football stripes and jazzy stockings.”<sup>775</sup> While this did not imply a computerization of women’s bodies themselves, it exemplifies the idea that women’s fashions were being dictated in an automated manner and not dependent on traditional values of femininity. Distaste for this “fashion machine” came in the form of angry letters to *Life*’s editors a few weeks later. Julie Bickus of Bloomington, Illinois wrote that “if this mode of dress is going to continue, I am glad I can sew.” Another letter from male teen-ager named Gordon Brown in Northridge, California, wrote that this phenomenon should be blamed on a teen-age market that demands such quick

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<sup>771</sup> Friedan, *Feminine Mystique*, 336; Hilary Radner, “Introduction: Queering the Girl,” in *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s*, ed. Hilary Radner and Moya Luckett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 10.

<sup>772</sup> “Courrèges: Lord of the Space Ladies,” *Life*, May 21, 1965, 47-65.

<sup>773</sup> Lobenthal, *Radical Rags*, 86; Bleikhorn, *Mini Mod Sixties*, 70-71, 73, 75.

<sup>774</sup> Diane Karlstein, “To Editors,” *Life*, Jun. 11, 1965, 14.

<sup>775</sup> “Fashion: I was a Teen-age Computer,” *Life*, Aug. 6, 1965, 83.



turnover of fashions: “The teen-ager (and I am one) is certainly a phenomenon that is wielding a psychotic affliction on our society. Combining [teen-ager and computers] doesn’t help matters much.”<sup>776</sup> These letters suggest that objections to these emerging gender aesthetics were not always limited to American adults. No matter whether focusing on young men or women, gender issues remained at the forefront of the Mod discourse throughout 1965.

#### 4.4.2 1966-1967: More Peacocks and Mod’s Decline

In its February 15, 1966 issue, *Vogue* boldly declares that “*breakaway* is the pulse word for what goes now... Beat and Mod are O.T.Q (out of the question, no good).”<sup>777</sup> Given that *Vogue* had not used the word Mod in its pages since August of 1964, it curious to see such a public denouncement of the term. *Vogue*’s lapse in using the word Mod and the word’s subsequent dismissal poses the following question: Was Mod always a little too bohemian and underground for the highbrow *Vogue* to mention within their pages, or was it simply a matter of reader demographics and the fact that *Vogue* catered to an older crowd? Paradoxically, *Vogue*’s dismissal of Mod actually coincides with numerous mentions of the term in *Life*, *Look*, and *Mademoiselle*. In May 1966 *Life* featured a cover story about men’s Mod fashions. By that July, *Look* also featured a lengthy article about Mod fashions for both men and women called “Mod in America: High Gear... Low Gear.”<sup>778</sup> *Life*’s cover story reads, “Face it! Revolution in Male Clothes” and features Chicago rather than London teens. In the article, the issue of effeminacy remains a primary concern and dandified styles, such as shirts with ruffles, are shown within the

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<sup>776</sup> Julie Bicks, to Editors, *Life*, 27 Aug. 1965, 17; Gordon Brown, to Editors, *Life*, Aug. 27, 1965, 17.

<sup>777</sup> “Fashion Feature: The Breakaways,” *Vogue*, February 15, 1966, 113.

<sup>778</sup> Iris Bauer, “Mod in America: High Gear...Low Gear,” *Look*, July 12, 1966, 47+.

pages of the article. *Look*'s article is a follow-up to the "Minneapolis Mods" story of November 1965 and is written by the same author, Iris Bauer. "From Maine to California, teen-agers have gone mad for mod," Bauer writes. She correlates the popularity of Mod fashions with the popularity of rock music. "Credit for the quick catch-on of mod is due to those pried pipers of fashion—the rock-and-roll combos. Their unsquare outfits mesmerized youthful followers as much as their far-out rhythms."<sup>779</sup> Though Bauer never mentions gender, it is clear that her conception of Mod is more specifically aimed at male teenagers. In the photos that accompany the story, only one teenage girl is shown.

Both the stories on Mod male fashion featured in *Life* and *Look* received plentiful and varied feedback from their readers.<sup>780</sup> This was the first time in either magazine that American responses to the concept of Mod had been so richly documented. Though not all letters contain a negative response, the dominant theme in these letters—seemingly from "the older generation"—reconfirms how upset people were by the effeminacy they blamed Mod for creating. Responding to *Life*'s article, a woman from Maine writes, "During my teens...when I walked down the street with my date I was the one with the long hair, high heels, and ruffles." One of *Look*'s readers from Atlanta writes in response to the July article that even *traditional* military units may not be of help anymore. "Uncle Sam has some adorable styles that he will furnish for free, with choice of design: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard," he writes, and then adds: "I'm referring to the WAC and WAVE [female] branches of above services, of course." The most severe denouncement of Mod comes from a Reverend Claude Raymond Baublitz of York, Pennsylvania. Baublitz compares Mod fashion to the

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<sup>779</sup> "Fashion: The Guys Go All Out to Get Gawked at," *Life*, May 13, 1966, 82 - 90; Bauer, "Mod in America," 47.

<sup>780</sup> The letters to the editor section was seen as "the proper vehicle for reader corrections, rebuttals, and disputes and, as such, was considered an important reflection of reader involvement." Abrahamson, *Magazine-Made America*, 59.

unwanted and highly taxed tea that the British army forced upon American colonists in 1774: He suggests that this “British import...should be accorded the same treatment as was a load of tea they once sent here.”<sup>781</sup> Despite these negative responses, some readers were more positive. “I feel that the public shouldn’t be so alarmed and ready to criticize the way boys are dressing and instead should give them credit for this change,” writes Noreen Freimark of New York. Pittsburgher Stephen Rugg says his initially cynical view of the style changed the minute he tried on a pair of hip-huggers. “The difference in comfort amazed me. So whoopee for John Stephen and Pierre Cardin—the revolution is here to stay.”<sup>782</sup>

Teen magazines continued to be part of this discourse. In the January 1966 issue of *Tiger Beat*, editors ask their readers: “Is it a Boy or a Girl?” which accompanies a photo of boys and girls taken from the back. Many letters about the Beatles and long hair continued to fill *Tiger Beat*’s mailbox. Some were even from young men. “A Long Hair” from Scranton, Pennsylvania writes, “Why is it that some girls don’t like long hair on boys? My steady loves my long hair... she often washes and sets it with her hair rollers and clips.” Another male reader, advocating for boys wearing earrings (a new trend, he writes), supports the blurring of gender lines. “Who is to say what belongs to girls or boys exclusively?” Jim Anderson of Philadelphia asks.<sup>783</sup> Thus, teen magazines continued to be a venue for young people of both sexes to ponder questions that were

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<sup>781</sup> The negative comments on Mod: Gladys G. Pinkham, “To Editors,” *Life*, Jun. 3, 1966, 20; J. Carey, to Editors, *Look*, Aug. 23, 1966, 12; and Rev. Claude Raymond Baublitz, to Editors, *Life*, Jun. 3, 1966, 20.

<sup>782</sup> Positive responses to Mod: Letitia Vergani, “To Editors,” *Life*, Jun. 3, 1966, 20 and Stephen Rugg, “To Editors,” *Life*, Jun. 3, 1966, 20.

<sup>783</sup> Cover, *Teen Magazine*, May 1964; “If You’ve Got to Go Beatle Go Bob,” *Teen Magazine*, June 1964, 36; “No Crew Cuts Please,” *Teen Magazine*, June 1964, 8; “Likes Masculine Boys,” *Teen Magazine*, Aug. 1964, 10; “Wake Up, Men!” *Teen Magazine*, Apr. 1965, 15; “The Beatles Visit Peyton Place A-Go-Go,” *Tiger Beat*, Sept. 1965, 27; “Is it a Boy or a Girl?” *Tiger Beat*, Jan. 1966, 7; “He Likes His Hair Long,” *Tiger Beat*, June 1966, 4; and “New Fads for Boys,” *Tiger Beat*, June 1966, 4. These rare issues of *Teen* and *Tiger Beat* were accessed through the rich collections at Bowling Green State University’s Popular Culture and Music libraries.

usually simply read in just one way by mainstream magazines and their primarily adult audiences.

While Mod fashions for men continued to ignite masculinity debates, the style more easily integrated into the mainstream, female fashion world. Despite some “outrageous” Mod manifestations such as disposable paper dresses and Courregès’s spacey, silver clothing, the word Mod was soon used to market rather mundane and less trendy-looking products. In July’s issue of *Mademoiselle* the Shapely Classics company offers a dress called “Carnaby Street” that is ecstatically described as “Madly Mod!” The Stanley Wyllins group ran an advertisement in *Mademoiselle*’s August issues for their Watermill jumper that reads, “You think you’re smart...you are, in a Watermill jumper! Marvelous and a bit mod-y.” In the same issue, Life Stride Shoes touts their “London Look Suede” which is comprised of “Pantsuited perfection in delicious thick-wale corduroy... picking up more Mod fashion from the bright-striped poor boy, the big-buckled belt, the racing gloves.” By November, even a “granny gown” was described as Mod by LeVoy’s of Salt Lake City: “Mod in design, the square neck and double-flounced sleeves are beautifully accented with fabulous white Cluny lace.” These examples demonstrate that in terms of fashion, Mod was becoming a marketing cliché.<sup>784</sup>

*Life*’s cover story on Mod male fashions served as a jumping off point for the magazine’s prevalent usage of the word for the remainder of the year. In the magazine’s “Newsfronts” section, a photo of Billy Graham speaking with two mop-topped young men is accompanied with the caption, “Before an Oxford rally [Graham] stopped to deliver a sidewalk sermonette to a pair of Mods.” Another such write-up from October describes the wedding of British aristocrat and

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<sup>784</sup>“Shapely Classics: Carnaby Street,” [advertisement], *Mademoiselle*, July 1966, 31; “The Watermill Jumper by Stanley Wyllins,” [advertisement], *Mademoiselle*, August 1966, 22; and “Life Stride Shoes,” [advertisement], *Mademoiselle*, August 1966, 62; “Le Voy’s of Salt Lake City,” [advertisement], *Mademoiselle*, Nov. 1966, 91.

member of the “Chelsea mod set” as “The Very Model of a Modern Mod Marriage.” By December, even the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were described as wearing “mod costumes.” While Mod is still used primarily in conjunction with anything or anyone British, it is the first year in which the descriptor is used so often.<sup>785</sup>

In the case of both the *Life* and *Look* articles and based on the advertisements in *Mademoiselle*, it appears that despite *Vogue*’s comment to the contrary, 1966 was the year that—for better or worse—Mod was more fully incorporated into American popular culture. It is often said that once a phenomenon reaches commercial saturation that the trend has officially died—that obsolescence is part and parcel of pop culture. After all, it must have been even more difficult to take an already unusual style seriously once Mattel launched their new Barbie doll, Francie—“Barbie’s Mod Cousin”—in the Fall of 1966.” Maybe what *Vogue* really meant was that Mod was “so In it was [already] Out.”<sup>786</sup>

As had been the case with Mod’s presence in the United States since 1964, gender issues continued to be featured in the American press. As longer hair became more prevalent and “accepted,” members of the older generation did not always de facto view it negatively. Instead, some tried to understand the underlying issues that may be afoot. In a 1967 *Look* magazine article, communication scholar Marshall McLuhan and writer George B. Leonard maintained that though the industrial age divided masculine and feminine, the future required more diffusion of qualities between the sexes. McLuhan and Leonard predicted that the macho John Waynes of the world would be replaced by a new breed of sensitive Paul McCartneys. The authors saw the

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<sup>785</sup> “Newsfronts,” *Life*, June 17, 1966, 40A; “Newsfronts,” *Life*, Oct. 7, 1966, 50A; “Newsfronts,” *Life*, December 2, 1966, 42B.

<sup>786</sup> Nigel Whiteley, “Toward a Throw-Away Culture, Consumerism, ‘Style Obsolescence’ and Cultural Theory in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Oxford Art Journal* 10:2 (1987), 3-27; “Mattel,” [advertisement], *Life*, Nov. 25, 1966, 7; Lerman, “Where’s It At?,” 76.

current style of young men as testament to feminine, rather than masculine, logic. McLuhan's reading of the feminine is bound to sensitivity and receptivity. In analyzing the young McLuhan reads long hair on men as saying, "We are no longer afraid to display what [society] may call feminine. We are willing to reveal that we have feelings, weaknesses, tenderness—that we are human. And, by the way, we just may be ridiculing all of those uptight movie males with cropped hair and unflinching eyes."<sup>787</sup>

In embracing a supposedly feminine style—namely long hair, but also a dandified style of dress, Mods attempted to broker a different vision of masculinity: one that described them as human first and male second. Per McLuhan's theories on industrial society, it appears that the industrial, capitalist state had ignored man's humanity in exchange for alienated labor, and then, falsely wed the notion of privileged masculinity to this labor. Also, in connecting technology, masculinity, and war, it seemed logical that these über-masculine projects should be questioned. In a 1966 *Mademoiselle* column, British journalist Alan Pryce-Jones connects this questioning to Mod fashion. This style "is a kind of oriflamme, a rallying point for the forces of optimism in a world increasingly drab... one day Vietnam, the next Rhodesia; one day troubles at home, the next, a still darker cloud over the rest of the world. But still trousers get tighter, ties dizzier, sideburns bushier."<sup>788</sup> Both these articles suggest that some men during this era were aware that Mod fashion suggested more than what first met the eye.

The word Mod was not only abundantly used in the press by this time, but also in television programs. Issues linked to gender were also connected to these even more heavily commercialized visions of Mod culture. In April 1967, "The Mod Party" episode of *I Dream of Jeannie* aired on NBC. This program was already one of the popular "fantasy" shows of the

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<sup>787</sup> Marshall McLuhan and George B. Leonard, "The Future of Sex," *Look*, July 25, 1967, 57.

<sup>788</sup> Alan Pryce-Jones, "An Opinion: Young Men's Looks," *Mademoiselle* Feb. 1966, 85.

1960s, whereby astronaut Major Tony Nelson (Larry Hagman) becomes “Master” to a blonde bombshell of a genie that he frees from a bottle. Since this was a show that already greatly exaggerated some women’s deferential behavior to men, this episode helped stabilize the meaning of Mod for “straight” consumption. Major Nelson’s best friend and co-astronaut Roger Healy decides to throw a Mod theme party and invites Tony and Jeannie to come. Roger claims he is inspired to throw a party that is “Carnaby Street all the way,” for an old friend coming into town. Healy’s friend runs a modeling agency and works with a bevy of beautiful models wearing the latest Mod fashions. The fact that two astronauts—a strongly heterosexual, male identity in the sixties—are willing to wear Mod gear shows that, by this point, the commercialization of the style has softened some of the gender concerns that it initially sparked. The only reference to gender issues—and a very oblique one at that—is when psychologist Amanda Bellows (the wife of Tony and Roger’s boss) tells one of the longhaired musicians at the party that he’s “basically insecure—with that hairdo.”<sup>789</sup>

Part of this “heterosexualization” of Mod for the masses also appeared in a two-part episode of *That Girl* (ABC) that broadcast in December 1967. In the two parts of “It’s a Mod, Mod World,” the show’s heroine—aspiring actress Anne Marie—is *discovered* by British photographer Noel Prince. As the aptly British-sounding Prince begins working with Anne for a “Mod Look” photo spread, he begins to fall for her. In this televised adoption of Mod, trendy female fashions are paired with a caddish British photographer. Using words like “chap,” and “love,” and initially described as a “charming Englishman” by Anne Marie’s boyfriend Donald

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<sup>789</sup> NBC, *I Dream of Jeannie*, “Episode 61: The Mod Party,” April 24, 1967. Regarding discourse about astronauts as decidedly male and the new macho heroes of the 1960s, see Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 177; Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: William Morrow, 1999), 452; Lisa Parks, “Bringing Barbarella Down to Earth: The Astronaut and Feminine Sexuality in the 1960s,” in *Swinging Single*, 253. For this reading of *I Dream of Jeannie*, see Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 134-135.

and a “single English-type bachelor,” by her father, there are absolutely no allusions to “queerness” in the character of Noel Prince. Instead, the producers of the program seem to highlight the fact that for every image of a foppish British male, there is also a plethora of womanizing, definitely straight “English gentleman” who exists within Mod culture. Here, it seems that Noel Prince is clearly modeled after a British photographer with just that reputation—David Bailey.<sup>790</sup>

1967 also saw the last big pop cultural import of “Mod” embodied in a tiny model named Twiggy. Already famous in the U.K., Twiggy became the leading female face of Mod style in America that year. Just seventeen, Twiggy had an impossibly thin body, huge eyes, and a boyish haircut. Twiggy both embodied and parodied certain aspects of what Mod had been understood to be: androgyny, youth, and all things British. Twiggy’s extreme looks—especially her large eyes—made her look like a living (Mod) doll. Unsurprisingly, it was long after Twiggy’s stateside success that Mattel produced a Twiggy Barbie doll. Twiggy lunchboxes, tote bags, and false eyelash sets soon followed.<sup>791</sup> In the one-off special magazine about her produced in the U.S., called *Twiggy: Her Mod Mod Teen World*, language is used to firmly position her not only as the new face of Mod, but also to continue couching Mod within the U.S.’s colonial past in statements such as “She’s doing for Mod fashions what the Beatles did for the Mod Sound in music” and “Twiggy has claimed the colonies for the Crown.”<sup>792</sup> *Life* also ran two articles on Twiggy during this year. “In the swift-moving teeny-mod-mini-world of British fashion, Twiggy

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<sup>790</sup> *That Girl*, ABC, “Episode 43: It’s a Mod, Mod World (Part I),” Dec. 7, 1967; *That Girl*, ABC, “Episode 44: It’s a Mod, Mod World (Part II),” December 14, 1967. For David Bailey’s “womanizing” reputation, see Shawn Levy, *Ready, Steady, Go!* 23.

<sup>791</sup> “Mattel,” [advertisement], *Life*, Nov. 24, 1967, 8. A complete list of 1960s Twiggy collectables is found on Twiggy Lawson’s website. “Fashion,” *Twiggy the Official Site* at <http://www.twiggylawson.co.uk/fashion.html> (accessed on Oct. 20, 2008).

<sup>792</sup> “The Mini-Girl in the Mini-Era,” and “The Twiggy Invasion: Mod with the Most,” *Twiggy: Her Mod Mod Teen World*, 1967, 4, 7.



now strides ahead of the pack,” reads the first article entitled “The Arrival of Twiggy.” The second article, April’s “Twiggy Makes U.S. Styles Swing Too” presents Twiggy’s shape as feeding into the gender concerns that surrounded Mod starting in 1965. The authors write, “Twiggy, with hair shorter than most boys and eyes bigger than most girls, and a shape that is no shape at all, is apt to set the cause of female curves back for year to come.”<sup>793</sup> Yet again, American gender norms were challenged by Mod style, and this time, in the guise of tiny teenage Londoner.

Responses to Twiggy by *Life* magazine readers were primarily negative and again pigeonholed Twiggy’s style as something useless and tiresome from England. “Send that leggy ironing board back to Britain,” suggests Gus Nagel of Colorado. Even more incendiary is J.F. Coppedge’s letter: “History shows that you can measure a nation’s strength by the principles of its females. Britain and France, once great, are now noted for nothing much but unkempt hair and short skirts.” While both these letters appear to be written by members of the “older generation,” the following complaint seems to be written by a young woman. “Many of my friends are bringing out their sewing machines because most of these fashions from England are too ugly to even consider wearing,” writes Mary Staudinger of Minneapolis.<sup>794</sup> The common thread in all three responses is that these *Life* readers are desirous as seeing Mod return from whence it came.

While these readers were outraged at the way Twiggy continued to “bother” decent Americans with another wave of Mod style, the groundwork of what would become the American “Counterculture” of the late sixties was already being laid. What became known as the

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<sup>793</sup> “The Arrival of Twiggy,” *Life*, Feb. 3, 1967, 33 and “Fashion: Twiggy Makes U.S. Styles Swing Too,” *Life*, Apr. 14, 1967, 99-101. See also “Is it a Girl? Is it a Boy? No it’s Twiggy,” *Look*, Apr. 4, 1967, 84-90.

<sup>794</sup> Gus Nagel, “To Editors,” *Life*, May 5, 1967, 14; J.F. Coppedge, “To Editors,” May 5, 1967, 14; and Mary Staudinger, “To Editors,” *Life*, May 5, 1967, 14.

“Hippie” look included many young men with much longer hair and an overall more casual—if not downright sloppy—dress-style. In hindsight, Mod would seem quaint in comparison. Young Americans began longing less for Mod England and turned their gaze to the emerging scenes in Los Angeles’s West Hollywood (“the Sunset Strip”) and San Francisco (“Haight Ashbury”). Even the most (arguably) Mod of Mod bands, the Who, only had their first American hit (“Happy Jack”) in 1967, and toured the U.S. for the first time that year sporting more psychedelic than Mod fashions.<sup>795</sup> Though the band continued to smash their instruments as they had done in England and the Continent since 1964, they appeared on American stages not in their pop-art “gear,” but bedecked in psychedelic, satin, rococo-style outfits more akin to what the Beatles had recently modeled on the cover of their *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heartsclub Band* album.

#### 4.5 BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE MODS: THE LATE SIXTIES

Since Mod did not fully become a household word in U.S. pop culture until 1966, it is interesting that its subsequent dissipation should have happened so quickly. At the beginning of 1967 Mod still appeared attractive as an international youth and pop culture style. However, the truth was that the *height* of Mod had already passed and was soon eclipsed by the psychedelic styles emanating from San Francisco. While the term had come to garner more press attention by 1966, Mod had become a parody of itself at the start of 1967. Not only was Barbie’s “Mod Cousin” Francie in little girls’ playrooms, but the cartoonish model Twiggy became the “it girl”

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<sup>795</sup> “Youth Invades Los Angeles’s Gaudiest Street: The Mad New Scene on Sunset Strip,” *Life*, Aug. 26, 1966, 75-83; Sue Cameron, “Bad Scene in San Francisco,” *Teen*, Apr. 1966, 58-59; Whitburn, *The Billboard Book*, 677.

of Mod's final months as the premiere youth style. By mid-1967, after the cancellation of *Shindig!*, *Hullabaloo*, and *Where the Action Is!*, the closest approximation to Mod youth culture on TV was *The Monkees* (NBC, 1966-1968). The Monkees was a musical group put together by TV producers explicitly for the show. Looking every part the "British Invasion" group in the first season—and even with a Manchester, England native in the group—by the show's second season, the group had traded-in their tailored, matching outfits for "ethnic" print clothing and wider-legged pants, for instance. Monkee Mickey Dolenz even stopped straightening his curly hair to look like Mod bands and began wearing a proto-afro instead.<sup>796</sup> Prefabricated or not, The Monkees' stylistic shift on television indicated that the heyday of Mod in United States was on the wane. Soon the sleek lines of Mod would be replaced by the casual anti-fashions of the American-born hippie counterculture.

In 1967 *Look* magazine's parent company Cowles Publishing decided to launch a book called *Youthquake*. Based on the full-page advertisement that first appeared in *Look*'s May 16 issue, it appears that this book was to serve as a guide for the older generation in understanding a seemingly alien youth culture. The ad displays the book's cover which contains a lengthy heading at the top of it. This heading starts with the term "What's Happening" and combines many supposedly trendy slang terms. Noticeably, the word "hippies" appears towards the beginning of this heading and "Mod" towards the end. In many ways, this ordering of terms is symbolic of how the year evolved. By the end of 1967, America was more concerned with *why* young people thought they were "turned on and tuned in" rather than if they listened to the Beatles or wore Mod fashions.<sup>797</sup> 1967's Summer of Love is said to have started by June.<sup>798</sup> Was

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<sup>796</sup> Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001) 74. For the trend in "ethnic fashions" in the later sixties, see Rowbotham, *A Century of Women*, 356.

<sup>797</sup> "Youthquake" [advertisement], *Look*, May 16, 1967, 11.

Mod still a buzz word by this time, or had “Mod” become so overused that its cachet had completely dwindled? Despite Mod’s strong presence in 1966, it was still primarily used to describe British rather than American things. In contrast, the laid-back hippie was homegrown, a group whose origins historian Arthur Marwick links to the American Beatniks of the 1950s.<sup>799</sup>

While visual and textual references to Mod were diminishing, the media texts still using it continued situating Mod as quintessentially British, and therefore, still foreign. In January’s *Mademoiselle* an advertisement for Junior House clothing shows an illustration of a girl standing in front of an amalgamation of British landmarks. The caption reads, “Bouncing frisky, white polka-dots off the foggy grey London town. Modly becoming—no wonder English birds are dotty about it.” In February, *Mademoiselle* runs an article about traveling “on the cheap” in Europe. A vignette of shopping in London describes “Mods and their ‘birds’ comb[ing] London’s markets for [old military] uniforms.” In April, after two years of promoting “London Look” cosmetics with model Jean Shrimpton, a Yardley of London advertisement uses the word Mod to describe its lipstick shades. Finally, a TWA advertisement that appears in the January 20 issue of *Life* reads, “Pomp and ceremony...mods and mini-skirts. There’s nothing quite like London.” This TWA ad is especially suggestive of the idea that American youth had been acting as cultural tourists for the last several years. While Mod had been linked to international youth culture, this ad underscored that it remained site-specific to Britain and all things British.<sup>800</sup>

Soon to have a stateside hit with a moody, rather than jubilant, depiction of this swinging Britain, Antonioni’s 1967 film *Blow-Up* incorporated Mod style and was documented by *Life*,

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<sup>798</sup> Derek Taylor, *It Was Twenty Years Ago Today: An Anniversary Celebration of 1967* (New York: Fireside, 1987), 13.

<sup>799</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 481-2.

<sup>800</sup>“Junior House” [advertisement], *Mademoiselle*, January 1967, 18; “Traveling with Mlle: Europe on the Cheap,” *Mademoiselle*, Feb. 1967, 165; “London Looks” [advertisement], *Mademoiselle*, Apr. 1967, 62; “TWA” [advertisement], *Life*, Jan. 20, 1967, R2-R3.

*Look*, *Vogue*, and *Mademoiselle* throughout the year. Antonioni made a point to spend time in “Swinging London” and shot the film there so as to tap into what he saw as the nexus of international youth culture.<sup>801</sup> *Blow-Up* was seen, and is still seen, as an important film of the period.<sup>802</sup> Press reports and reviews connected the word Mod with the film from the start. The lengthiest article about the film appeared in the January 27 issue of *Life*. It describes one of the film’s most risqué scenes as “one in which the photographer [the film’s protagonist] and two mod teenagers...roll around the studio floor, both girls in the nude.” The film’s male lead, David Hemmings, is featured in a small write-up on Men’s fashion in *Look*’s February 21 issue. He reports that in London “the styles are moving away from mod Carnaby Street to the more elegant Jermyn Street.”<sup>803</sup> A few months later *Look*’s May 2 cover story features the film’s female star, Vanessa Redgrave. The article describes her as “a British mod” and uses the word as a descriptor within the article three other times—all used to describe Redgrave’s fashions.”<sup>804</sup> *Vogue*, however, stays true to its assessment from the previous year that Mod was no longer a relevant buzz word and does not use it to describe *Blow-Up* at all. Conservative Historian and sometime journalist Arthur Schlesinger Jr.’s review of the film in *Vogue*’s February 1 issue describes the film as “psychedelic” rather than Mod.<sup>805</sup> *Mademoiselle* follows suit and does not use Mod in their July article about the film’s male star, David Hemmings.<sup>806</sup>

Perhaps the real message about Mod’s descent in 1967 is not primarily tied to its “Englishness,” but rather to how faddish it became between 1966 and 1967. Authors Richard and Gwyneth Cravens wrote a telling piece for *Mademoiselle*’s April issue called “Underground

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<sup>801</sup> “Hypnotic Eye on a Frantic World,” *Life*, Jan. 27, 1967.

<sup>802</sup> Peter Lev, *The Euro-American Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 91-98.

<sup>803</sup> “In the Know,” *Look*, Feb. 21, 1967, M4.

<sup>804</sup> “Vanessa Redgrave: Rebel Star,” *Look*, May 2, 1967, 45.

<sup>805</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “Movie Review: *Blow-Up*,” *Vogue*, Feb. 1, 1967, 113.

<sup>806</sup> “Man Lures: David Hemmings,” *Mademoiselle*, Jul. 1967, 82-83.

Incorporated,” in which they describe how “spontaneous tastes” are “straightjacketed...by idea men, computerized by market analysts, and packaged by advertising agencies.” Thus, the initial excitement associated with these styles naturally dissipates. In more of the authors’ words, “the promptness of modern promotion means that an offbeat piece of clothing or furniture can instantaneously become a raging fad and then, almost as rapidly, wind up in a graveyard of white elephants....Mod (formerly property of the British Underground) delivered a coup de grace to the conformist silhouettes and hues of American men’s fashions. College fraternity presidents and insurance salesmen are now wearing the wild Paisleys, stripes, and polka-dots, and the boots, ruffled shirts, and leather jackets that comprised the U.S. Underground male’s costume of a few years ago.”<sup>807</sup> If Mod started as something outside the mainstream, then the appropriation of this style by American culture’s archetypal conformists was nothing short of heresy. Perhaps this commercial diffusion of Mod reached its pinnacle of ridiculousness when Maidenform bras ran a two-page ad in August’s *Mademoiselle* that boasted in bold letters: “I dreamed I had a mod, mod world on a string in my Maidenform confections” (fig. 33).<sup>808</sup> By *Mademoiselle*’s October issue, Maidenform must have noticed they were late in jumping on the Mod advertising bandwagon and dropped the term from its slogan, stating merely, “I dreamed I had the world on a string in my Maidenform bra.”<sup>809</sup>

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<sup>807</sup> Richard and Gwenyth Cravens, “Underground Incorporated,” *Mademoiselle*, Apr. 1967, 246.

<sup>808</sup> “Maidenform” [advertisement], *Mademoiselle*, Aug. 1967, 66 -67.

<sup>809</sup> “Maidenform” [advertisement], *Mademoiselle*, Oct. 1967, 41.



**Figure 33 Maidenform ad, August 1967. Courtesy of the Hunt library, Carnegie Mellon University.**

While the Twiggy phenomenon still used the word Mod, the rise of words like “psychedelic” and “groovy” soon edged their way in to the youth vernacular, and then, the press. There was a moment of overlap, and perhaps confusion, when journalists pegged hippies as wearing Mod fashions. This overlap of terms is exemplified in a September opinion column entitled “The Hippie Put-On” featured in September’s *Mademoiselle*. In the following excerpt Author Michael Ackerman writes about the commercialism of youth culture and uses hippie and Mod as nearly synonymous: “Turn on, Tune In, Drop out, are words that make middle class parents from Westport and Wichita quake with fear. But when the hippie ‘tunes in’ wearing the latest Mod fashions ‘tunes in’ with a couple of hundred dollars of stereo equipment, and then jumps in his car and heads up to the Cheetah discotheque to have his senses bombarded at a \$3 admission... I am forced to wonder in what way this hippie has ‘dropped out’ of our thing

oriented society.”<sup>810</sup> In this context, Ackerman sees Mod and hippie as complementary terms used to market materialist culture to young people.

By 1967 the feel of what was trendy and interesting was no longer particularly “Mod.” In March, Newsweek even ran a story about the declining sales in Mod male fashions asking readers, “Is Mod Dead?” By the summer of 1967 both *Look* and *Life* began featuring stories on drug use as tied into youth counterculture, and *Look*’s August 22 issue even ran a cover story called “Inside the Hippie Revolution.” Soon American terms like “flower power,” “psychedelic” and “groovy” began to take the place of Mod.<sup>811</sup> While Britannia both made and ruled the waves of the early to mid-sixties, by mid-1967 the sun was starting to set on its style Empire. Even British Invasion group the Animals felt the need to praise “San Franciscan Nights” in their August ’67 hit.<sup>812</sup> Two years before the famed Woodstock festival, the Monterrey Pop festival stands as a symbol to this transition. While British Mod superstars the Who took the stage, so did San Francisco’s premiere countercultural hippie band, the Grateful Dead. Until the latter band’s lead singer Jerry Garcia died in 1995, the group would become synonymous with the Americanized sixties legacy, as tie-dyed-adorned teenagers born in the sixties, seventies, or eighties continued to call themselves Deadheads and “go on tour” with the band by attending their summer concerts across the U.S.<sup>813</sup>

And so it was. Though Mod had actually set into motion discourse about gender roles in early to mid-sixties U.S. culture —both overtly and tacitly—the main way “The Sixties” has

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<sup>810</sup> Michael Ackerman, “The Hippie Put-On,” *Mademoiselle*, Sept. 1967, 44.

<sup>811</sup> “Is Mod Dead?” *Newsweek*, Mar. 6, 1967, 73-74; “Inside the Hippie Revolution,” *Look*, Aug. 22, 1967, 58 -64.

<sup>812</sup> Whitburn, *The Billboard Book*, 28.

<sup>813</sup> Taylor, *It Was Twenty Years Ago Today*, 80-83; For scholarship on “Deadheads,” especially in reference to “going on tour” with the Grateful Dead, see Al Alvarez, “Good Use,” in *The Grateful Dead Reader*, ed. David G. Dodd and Diana Spaulding (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 231-232; David L. Pelovitz, “‘No, but I’ve Been to the Shows’: Accepting the Dead and Rejecting the Deadheads,” in *Perspectives on the Grateful Dead: Critical Writings*, ed. Robert G. Weiner (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 55-65.



been historicized by scholars and journalists alike seems to, for the most part, ignore the Mod period as faddish and superfluous. This transitional period can be seen as starting during 1967's "Summer of Love" and heightened youth activism in response to the Vietnam War.<sup>814</sup> The protests that ensued in 1968 reflected youth discontent with America's policy in Vietnam and also an overall frustration with the government. However, the focus on this later period has diminished the importance of this *other* "Sixties." Another less explored potential reason is that American Mod was never truly linked to a rich tradition of underground youth movements as it was in postwar Britain (or Germany). Nonetheless, Mod played a vital part in making the late sixties possible, because, according to one historian, Hippies "took a latent, implicit Mod critique of adult society, maturity, and the life cycle and politicized it." It was a "shift from attitude to ideology, from posture to provocation."<sup>815</sup> In this way, Mod truly paved the way for greater social changes attributed to the United States of the late sixties.

Thus, Americans young and old mostly came to know Mod through its commercial aspects: the Beatles and the British Invasion, Carnaby Street fashions, and Twiggy, for instance. Contrastingly, the whole hippie phenomenon of the sixties counterculture had been a grass roots youth movement developed *in the U.S by U.S teens*. Looking back, then, the most underground or rebellious aspect of Mod to be adopted in the United States during the 1960s would be that surrounding gender. If this was the case, would gender continue to be an important thread in Mod culture as it returned and continued to evolve in the United States in the late 1970s and 1980s?

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<sup>814</sup> For American scholarship on the 1960s that exemplifies these aspects of the decade, see Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); Charles Kaiser, *1968 in America: Music, Politics, Chaos, Counterculture, and the Shaping of a Generation* (New York: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1988); Alice Echols, *Shaky Ground: The '60s and its Aftershocks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>815</sup> Braunstein, "Forever Young," 252.

#### 4.6 THE 1970S AND 1980S: MOD UNDERGROUNDS

If Mod faded from view in the late 1960s, how and when did it resurface? More similar in its evolution to Germany's than Mod's native Britain, strains of this youth culture were noticeably absent in the U.S. until the late 1970s. Unlike the Northern Soul or Skinhead scenes in the U.K., which were direct offshoots of sixties' Mod, American music and youth culture of the early to mid-seventies emerged more so from the hippie-era sixties. Bands like Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead, with their free-and-easy California sounds, continued to find fans in the early 1970s. The British-born Glam Rock movement also did not carry as much weight as it did in the U.K. Although former Mod David Bowie's androgynous alien stage persona "Ziggy Stardust" made waves stateside, as did the flamboyantly-dressed Elton John, any kind of "British Invasion" on the scale of 1964-1965 was a thing of the past. More so than any of these make-up-laden Brit musicians, many American teens who craved rock theatrics rallied around groups like Detroit's Stooges, whose lead singer Iggy Pop combined certain femme elements of glam with a harder-edged, traditionally American machismo.<sup>816</sup>

It must not be ignored, either, that the Stonewall Riots—which sparked the Gay Liberation Movement—also sparked the "golden era," pre-AIDS heyday of gay culture: the 1970s. With the advent of Gay Pride parades and openly gay urban neighborhoods like San Francisco's Castro and New York's Christopher Street (part of Greenwich Village) mainstream America *finally* started realizing that long hair and/or effeminacy did not necessarily equate with homosexuality. This was due to a more open, visual presence of homosexuals and occasional

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<sup>816</sup> Andrew J. Edelstein and Kevin McDonough, *The Seventies: From Hot Pants to Hot Tubs* (New York: Dutton, 1990), 141-144, 159-161; Phillip Auslander, *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006); David Buckley, *Elton: The Biography* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2007), 133-135; Regarding Iggy Pop in particular, see Robert Matheu and Brian J. Bowe, ed., *Creem: America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 89.

media coverage of these new gay communities. Those who would have continued to stereotype gay men as feminine or androgynous, suddenly witnessed the so-called “clones”—gay men who were more typically masculine than many of their heterosexual brothers—often sporting short hairstyles, facial hair, and bulging muscles attained by daily workouts at a gym.<sup>817</sup> Writing many years later about both Mod and the phenomenon of gay skinheads in the U.K., scholar Murray Healy points out that Mod was “neither essentially homosexual or heterosexual [but] was potentially transgressive, delinquent, deviant and a little bit queer,” but “wearing a little bit of make-up and the occasional brightly colored item of clothing is not likely to predispose boys to sleeping with other boys.”<sup>818</sup> Thus, by the early 1970s, the style of Glam Rock may have still seemed “queer,” but unlike the American reading of Mod in the mid-sixties, it was not necessarily equated with homosexuality. Ironically, David Bowie would declare himself gay despite being married and a father during this time.<sup>819</sup> Had queerness finally become not only more fashionable, but marketable, too?

However, a potent way in which potentially subversive gender aesthetics with Mod roots *were* tamed was with the birth of British “heavy metal” bands like Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. Unlike the British Invasion or Glam bands, these groups were hyper-masculine in a more traditional sense—either in their more sexually aggressive on-stage personas (Led Zeppelin) or in the music’s expansive and deafening clangs (Black Sabbath).<sup>820</sup> Despite the fact

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<sup>817</sup> The importance of what did or did not happen in the 1960s in terms of gay visibility prior to Stonewall is succinctly documented in Patricia Juliana Smith, “Icons and Iconoclasts: Figments of Sixties Queer Culture,” in *The Queer Sixties*, ed. Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Routledge, 1999), xi-xxvi. For more gay visibility and “clones” in the 1970s, see Edelstein and McDonough, *The Seventies*, 83-85.

<sup>818</sup> Murray Healy, *Gay Skins: Class, Masculinity and Queer Appropriation* (London: Cassell, 1996), 35.

<sup>819</sup> Michael Ansaldo, “Bowie Proclaims He’s Gay,” *Rolling Stone* at [http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/davidbowie/articles/story/8856155/bowie\\_proclaims\\_hes\\_gay](http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/davidbowie/articles/story/8856155/bowie_proclaims_hes_gay) (accessed Nov. 28, 2008).

<sup>820</sup> Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), xvi; Will Straw, “Characterizing Rock Music Culture: The Case of Heavy Metal,” in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (1999; New York: Routledge, 1993), 451-461.

that band members of these bands all continued wearing their hair long, these “manes” had, by the 1970s, lost most of their effeminate or countercultural connotations. With tales of (hetero-) sexual hi-jinx between heavy metal stars and their female “groupies” or “good old boy” rockers with not a progressive bone in their bodies, it was clear that longer hair on men did not mean what it had in the Mod or late sixties.<sup>821</sup>

Many of these heavy metal or hard rock groups—Led Zeppelin in particular—were part of the “Arena Rock” phenomenon of this decade. Though the Beatles had set the precedent for such huge concert venues with their 1965 performance at New York’s Shea Stadium, rock and roll in the seventies became so commercialized and very much a part of mainstream youth culture, that commercially successful bands could no longer play more intimate venues and accommodate all their fans. One eighties Mod would later describe this as a period when “rock music—even British rock music—got pompous and overblown with the advent of such overly self-indulgent bands like Yes and Emerson, Lake, and Palmer.”<sup>822</sup> Coinciding with this more distanced relationship between rock musicians and their fans was the increasing slickness of rock music heard on FM radio. Where AM radio stations had promoted the British Invasion “singles,” FM stations now played whole LP sides to underscore the production value of rock bands’ latest projects.<sup>823</sup> Interestingly, the sleekly-produced sounds of American mid-seventies bands like the Eagles, for instance, contrasted with the not-so-polished social conditions of the period. The early-to-mid seventies were rife with discontent. The oil crisis, Watergate, and President Nixon’s

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<sup>821</sup> Edelstein and McDonough, *The Seventies*, 92-93, 141-144, 149-153; Steve Waksman, *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 237-276.

<sup>822</sup> Thomas K. Arnold, “Bands’ Sparks Keep Fire Burning for ‘60s British Music,” *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 24, 1982, SDA6.

<sup>823</sup> Roy Carr and Tony Tyler, *The Beatles: An Illustrated Record* (1978; New York: Harmony Books, 1981), 44-45; Steve Waksman, “Grand Funk Live! Staging Rock in the Age of the Arena,” in *Listen Again: A Momentary History of Pop Music*, ed. Eric Weisbard (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 157-161; Edelstein and McDonough, *The Seventies*, 144-149.

resignation, and escalated poverty, violence and drug abuse among urban blacks all added to the malaise of American life in this decade.<sup>824</sup> For those youths who saw the writing on the wall and turned away from mainstream rock, it is not surprising that some teens eventually looked for something more rebellious and raw.

Like in Germany, American youths would not really revive Mod until the late-seventies, when Mod was couched within a discourse of punk and a “new wave” of music from both England and the States. While the U.K. would produce punk heroes the Sex Pistols and the Clash, the U.S. also had their own cavalcade of underground punk bands. The New York Dolls the Ramones (founded in 1971 and 1974 respectively) both existed before the Sex Pistols unleashed punk on Britain, and sometimes usurp the title of “first punk bands.” The New York Dolls started as a glam band, and like Bowie and others of his ilk, wore make up and some women’s clothing. The Ramones had a uniform look with matching hairstyles (extra-long, black Prince Valiant cuts) and usually wore matching ensembles of black t-shirts, jeans, and leather jackets. By the late seventies Los Angeles and San Francisco soon had several punk bands, too, including the Germs (L.A.) and the Dead Kennedys (San Francisco). The former scene was such a phenomenon that filmmaker Penelope Spheeris’s first feature-length feature, *The Decline of Western Civilization* (1981) attempted to tell the story of the punk scene which had evolved in southern California.<sup>825</sup>

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<sup>824</sup> Lucy Rollin, *Twentieth-Century Teen Culture by the Decades* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 241-244.

<sup>825</sup> Edelstein and McDonough, *The Seventies*, 178-179; Phil Strongman, *Pretty Vacant: A History of Punk* (London: Orion, 2007); *The Decline of Western Civilization*, VHS, directed by Penelope Spheeris (1981; Culver City, CA: Media Home Entertainment, 1996); Lance Sinclair, “Punk Must Be Humiliated So That It May Survive: Three Movies by Penelope Spheeris,” in *No Focus*, ed. Chris Barber and Jack Sargeant (London: Headpress, 2006), 109-116; Mark Hejnar, “The Next Decline: A Conversation with Penelope Spheeris about the Decline...Part III,” *No Focus*, 117-122.

As was the case in the U.K. and Germany, the American Mod Revival was sparked by the initial screenings of the Who's *Quadrophenia* (1979).<sup>826</sup> For a new generation of Americans, this film was the first impression into what the initial British subculture of Mod may have looked like. The film also informed those who had missed recognizing Mod culture's underground beginnings the first time around. By the late-seventies, the Who—like Led Zeppelin—was also performing to massive sell-out crowds in arenas. Thus, the film brought to light the band's Mod origins. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the American public of the mid-to-late 1960s was only vaguely aware of the Who's Mod roots. Since the American interpretation of Mod was more closely connected to the earlier British Invasion groups and Carnaby Street fashions, the Who's American success instead was indicative of their performance at Woodstock in 1969 and their “rock opera” album *Tommy*.<sup>827</sup>

The *Los Angeles Times*' review of the film described it as “the British American Graffiti,” the 1973 George Lucas film that glorified U.S. youth culture circa 1962. The reviewer's main commentary highlights that while the American film was a “sunny, nostalgic look at innocence,” *Quadrophenia* “threatens to explode at every turn. Given the limited social mobility in Britain, the future promised only more of the same frustration.” The *New York Times*' review of the film opined that the teens featured in the film “speak with such thick accents that American audiences may find their conversation indecipherable. For this and other reasons, the film—which was a hit in England—hasn't traveled well.” The Who's Roger Daltrey also worried that suburban, car-driving American kids would have a hard time relating to British teens who rode around on vehicles must have “look[ed] like hairdryers” to them. Despite what

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<sup>826</sup> *Quadrophenia*, DVD, directed by Franc Roddam (1979; Los Angeles: Rhino/Wea, 2001).

<sup>827</sup> Kevin Davey, *English Imaginaries: Six Studies in Anglo-British Modernity* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), 93.

these film critics saw as too Anglo-idiosyncratic, the movie did excite some American teens to investigate what this more British version of the Mod aesthetic was all about.<sup>828</sup> Both of the above reviewers, as well as Daltrey, underestimated the appeal something like Mod would have for an American audience circa 1979. For instance, one newspaper article from 1982 described a San Diego Mod, “He prefers listening to the Kinks and the Zombies rather than Ted Nugent or Judas Priest and claims he wouldn’t be caught dead wearing an AC/DC T-shirt and faded blue jeans.”<sup>829</sup> For American youths of the eighties, Hard Rock and Metal, which had up to this point never been non-commercial, now represented the status quo just as much as conservative “Preppies” or student athletes (“Jocks”).<sup>830</sup> Occasional rereleases of the film in theaters throughout the 1980s proved popular with teens—even those who identified with punk. As one L.A. girl attested, “*Quadrophenia*... it was sort of about our lives. Their lives in the film...were kind of, like, punk.” If young people wanted to break away from these more accepted identities, Mod offered a valid alternative.<sup>831</sup>

The fact that it was this more class-based vision of the culture that reintroduced Mod to the U.S. is interesting in light of how conservative the political climate was becoming. Clearly, the situation in the U.K. was similar—England already had a conservative prime minister named Margaret Thatcher—who would soon become closely allied with U.S. President Ronald Reagan after the 1980 election. Despite the fact that “Young Republicans” had helped elect Reagan, a

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<sup>828</sup> Eric James Abbey, *Garage Rock and its Roots: Musical Rebels and the Drive for Individuality* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006), 55; Robert Hilburn, “Movie Review: Growing Up in the ‘60s,” *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 21, 1979, E1; Janet Maslin, “Screen: Rock Drama from a Who Album,” *New York Times*, Nov. 2, 1979, C6; Janet Maslin, “The Who Look Proudly on Budding Film Careers,” *New York Times*, Nov. 13, 1979, C8; Ann Japenga, “Kids Say, ‘Excuse Me.’ Mods: Stylish Code Makes a Movement,” *Los Angeles Times*, G1.

<sup>829</sup> Thomas K. Arnold, “Lifestyle: Mod Music, Clothes Make Comeback with San Diego Teen-Agers,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 18, 1982, SD\_B1.

<sup>830</sup> Bob Batchelor and Scott Stoddart, *The 1980s* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2007), 31-34.

<sup>831</sup> Sheila Benson, “‘*Quadrophenia*’: A Welcome Return,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 21, 1980, H3; Deborah Caulfield and Jade Garner, “‘Fringe’ Teens Versus Mainstream Flicks,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1981, L22.

turn to Mod style could be seen as rebellious response to this more conservative cultural atmosphere. As one fashion historian posits, Mod trends from the sixties “were a cry of innovation and freedom,” that “[80s youth] gravitated to... as a reference point of rebellion, celebrating its breakthroughs and recycling its decorative motifs.”<sup>832</sup> The fact that the U.S. was moving politically to the right in the early eighties was not lost on those youths who disapproved.

Just as California had led youth culture in the latter part of the sixties (albeit, Hippie, not Mod), the relatively early explosion of punk rock there also opened up the possibilities for this second wave of Mod to succeed. Kevin Long, who was in one of the first L.A. Mod bands, the Untouchables, witnessed the birth of this scene and describes it in an online essay called “Epicenter of a Scene.” According to his observations, the main venue for the burgeoning Mod scene circa 1980 was the O.N. Klub in the then downtrodden neighborhood of Silverlake. Long describes the activities and interests of those at the club as “an odd amalgamation of sorts, combining the sound and style of 1960’s swinging London with the music of original and second-wave Jamaican and English ska, the danceable grooves of American Sixties soul and R&B, while tapping into the DIY spirit and independence of late Seventies punk rock.” Additionally, this veteran of the L.A. scene describes the young people in attendance as diverse at the city itself. L.A. Mods of the early 1980s were not just white (as media images of sixties Mods suggest), but African-American, Latino, and Asian-American. This inclusiveness extended beyond ethnic minorities, but also to a healthy population of women, and those of varying “socio-economic standing, education [and] sexual orientation... this scene was broader, deeper and more expansive than any other local music scene at the time. What united these otherwise

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<sup>832</sup> Lobenthal, *Radical Rags*, 245.



disparate forces was its passion for R&B, soul, and ska music.”<sup>833</sup> In a newspaper article from 1982, the input of male versus female scene participants was described in this way: “The men are the peacocks in this bunch. The guys own the scooters and clothes, but the girls contribute to new ideas in dance.”<sup>834</sup> Even if the focus of the 80s scene was yet again on the boys, it is clear that girls were still in on the action. Though mimicking the British Mod Revival was their goal, this portrait of L.A.’s early-eighties Mod scene clearly reflects the diversity of the city and serves as a microcosm of idealized American multiculturalism as well as California’s reputation as one of the most progressive states in the country.

*Quadrophenia* and the Mod Revival played out differently in the States, because while the British enacted a history familiar to them, the way the word Mod had evolved in the U.S. bore little relation to this part of its British origins. Thus, this “Revival” was elemental rather than fully imitative. They were actually creating something altogether new while referencing the old. One big difference, too, was that British Mod Revival bands of the late seventies did not do as well in the U.S. as they did at home. Though the Jam toured the U.S. several times in the early eighties, their following was laughably small as compared to in England. As one newspaper writer reported in 1980, “The British rock trio fell several hundred tickets short of a 3,500-seat sellout,” while two years later, the L.A. Times stated once again that “In their native England, the Jam are monsters,” but still remain only marginally well-known in the States.<sup>835</sup> If Britain’s most successful Mod Revival band had received this kind of reception in the States, then it is more-than-surprising that even one concert review of the Secret Affair exists at all. In this one

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<sup>833</sup> Kevin Long, “Epicenter of a Scene,” *California Mod Scene* at <http://www.california-mod-scene.com/essay.html> (accessed July 7, 2008).

<sup>834</sup> Japenga, “Kids say ‘Excuse Me,’” G1.

<sup>835</sup> Robert Hilburn, “The Jam—Will It Be the Who of the ‘80s?” *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 18, 1980, G1; Don Waller, “The Jam: Another Try in America,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 23, 1982, L75.

article, the group is primarily used as an excuse to talk about the local Mods at their concert: “Suitable attire for the young men in the movement is literally suit and tie—the thin-lapelled, straightlegged, ‘60s variety. The ladies opt for miniskirts, Cilla Black bobs and dark eye makeup. Suitable music is British: contemporary groups which would not have been out of place at Liverpool’s Cavern Club or London’s Marquee in 1964—the Jam, the Lambrettas, and of course, Secret Affair.” The American understanding of the “original” Mod period, couched as it is in the British Invasion narrative, is clearly underscored here, as well, whereby Cilla Black and the Cavern Club are both mentioned.<sup>836</sup>

Tandem to these U.K. Revival-inspired activities, though, was another Mod scene that fused British Invasion sounds and sensibilities with American sixties bands who could be described as garage or, even, psychedelic. Thus, the discussion of “punks in parkas” that followed the Mod Revival scene in the U.K. was supplemented by the idea of “punks in paisleys” in the U.S. Though similar bands were emerging on the East Coast such as Pittsburgh’s Cynics, New Jersey’s Mod Fun, and Rochester’s Chesterfield Kings, southern California’s so-called “Paisley Underground” was quickly attached to this musical and sartorial style and was the 80s manifestation of Mod which received more media attention than American interpretations of the Mod Revival. Though most of the L.A. bands who were a part of this scene—the Three O’Clock, the Dream Syndicate, and Green on Red—only received critical accolades, the all-girl Bangles (formerly the Bangs) would go on to win international commercial favor.<sup>837</sup> Given the focus on the Paisley Underground, even retrospectively, Los Angeles (and

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<sup>836</sup> Terry Atkinson, “Mods Revealed By Secret Affair,” *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 15, 1980, G5.

<sup>837</sup> Robert Palmer, “In Pop, A 1960’s Revival Has Already Begun,” *New York Times*, Apr. 3, 1983, S20-21; Richard Harrington, “Bangles: The Best Girls’ Band in L.A.,” *Washington Post*, Sept. 28, 1984, 45.

arguably all of California) remains the focus for discussions of Mod culture's post-sixties existence in the United States.<sup>838</sup>

Given the greatly unacknowledged attempts of all-girl garage bands to help define American Mod culture in the 1960s, the incredible commercial success of not just the Bangles, but L.A.'s Go-Go's during the early-to-mid 1980s is nothing short of remarkable. Completely opposite of what had happened in the 1960s, their male colleagues had significantly less luck in cultivating wider audiences. Both these female bands liberally cited—both in music style and clothing choices—their indebtedness to the Mod mid-sixties.<sup>839</sup> The Go-Go's sassily proclaimed “We’ve got the beat!” on the 1982 hit of the same name, while their other well-known song “Our Lips Our Sealed” was inspired by a band member’s romance with the Specials’ Terry Hall. Prior to their U.S. success, the group had also embarked on a British tour with Ska revivalists Madness.<sup>840</sup> With members of both the Go-Go's and the Bangles often wearing mini-skirts or vintage fashions and, in the case of the Bangles, lead singer Susanna Hoffs’s use of “the John Lennon” 325V63 model Rickenbacker guitar, both hoped to mimic the jingle-jangle of the best British Invasion groups. The girls who first called themselves the Bangs hoped to be a female and 1980s version of the Beatles. Songs from their major label debut *All Over the Place* (1984) such as “Hero Takes a Fall” and “Going Down to Liverpool” clearly suggest this ambition

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<sup>838</sup> *The Los Angeles Times* was truly generous in its coverage of both the Revival and the Paisley Underground manifestations of Mod in the early 1980s. See Patrick Goldstein, “Pop Music: Mod Revival From Britain,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 9, 1979, N90; Atkinson, “Mods Revealed by Secret Affair,” G5; Craig Lee, “Crowd Struggles in Change of Life,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 18, 1982, G6; Robert Hilburn, “The Jam: Spreading the Message,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 1982, G1; Japenga, “Kids Say, ‘Excuse Me,’” G1; Jeff Spurrier, “L.A. Beat: Three O’Clock Nods to the ‘60s,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 30, 1983, K76; Chris Morris, “Tripping Out on the New Psychedelia,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 18, 1983, U82; Craig Lee, “Checking out the ‘Paisley Underground,’” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 18, 1983, U84.

<sup>839</sup> Richard Harrington, “The Beat Go-Go’s On,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 12, 1981, C4.

<sup>840</sup> The Go-Go’s, *Beauty and the Beat*, IRS NR 70021, CD; VH1, *Behind the Music*, “The Go-Go’s,” May 21, 2000; “Interview: Jane Wiedlin,” *Songfacts* at <http://www.songfacts.com/int/2007/10/jane-wiedlin-go-gos.html> (accessed Sept. 10, 2008).

through a pop sensibility eerily similar to the British Invasion sound.<sup>841</sup> Despite being part of the original Paisley Underground scene, the Bangles' Vicki Peterson explained that the mid-sixties sound was inspiration, not pure mimicry: "We're writing songs that mean something to us now in the '80s."<sup>842</sup> In this case, band members of groups like the Bangles who grew up listening to music of the Mod era had internalized the sounds so deeply that the aesthetic could not but affect (or guide) their own *contemporary* creative expressions.

While these two groups became media darlings—primarily through the help of the newly established music television network MTV—the garage vision of Mod culture continued to prosper on an underground level. Occasionally, glimpses into this underground were possible through MTV as well. *The Cutting Edge* (1983-1987), a weekly music show hosted by Peter Dinklage, the lead singer of a New York garage band the Fleshtones, highlighted groups like his who were on the IRS music label, such as the sixties-tinged Go-Go's, REM, and Let's Active. MTV's *120 Minutes*, which aired late every Sunday night starting in 1986, was another show that played Mod-styled music as well as other "alternative" acts from North America and Britain who did usually achieve chart success stateside.<sup>843</sup> Sometimes the show helped bands get name recognition which eventually gave them mainstream success, such as the case with REM. Otherwise, the main way that young people would have heard (or heard of) such bands and music was through programs on college radio stations. University station's free format programming allowed for college student DJs to play whatever they fancied, as they were not

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<sup>841</sup> Peter Taylor-Mercer, "Songs from the Bell Jar: Autonomy and Resistance in the Songs of the Bangles," *Popular Music* 17:2 (1998), 190-191; The Bangles, *All Over the Place*, Columbia NR 39220, CD.

<sup>842</sup> Peterson qtd. in Chris Morris, "Tripping Out on the New Psychedelia," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 18, 1983, U82.

<sup>843</sup> Holly Kruse, *Site and Sound: Understanding Independent Music Scenes* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 93; Don Snowden, "Pop Beat: Fleshtones Let '60s All Hang Out," *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 11, 1984, D1; "120 Minutes," *TV.com* at <http://www.tv.com/120-minutes/show/22444/summary.html> (accessed Sept. 10, 2008).

restricted to Top Forty playlists like commercial stations were.<sup>844</sup> More so than echoing the mainstreamed Mod sensibility of the mid-sixties, this period of American youth culture reflected the original entrepreneurial aspects of its British underground incarnation prior 1964.<sup>845</sup>

The 1980s, in general, was a period nostalgic for the 1960s. Miniskirts were just as popular among fashion designers as they were to newly Mod teenagers who scoured second hand stores for tossed-out originals. Those Mods today who grew-up in the 1970s and 1980s were weaned on syndicated reruns of many TV shows from the 1960s that introduced them to the mass circulated sights and sounds of Mod style. Generally speaking, though, the 1980s was a decade of not just miniskirts, but mini-scenes. Groups of Preppies, Jocks, Punks, Goths, Hippies, Rappers and Metalheads could be found alongside Mods in many cities, suburbs, and towns across the country.<sup>846</sup> Equally “mini” or “micro-mini” were the underground music scenes such as those of the aforementioned Mod Revival and Paisley Underground, as well as, for instance, the one in Athens, Georgia, which spawned many sixties-sounding groups such as the B52s and REM.<sup>847</sup> As was the case with the 1980s Mod scenes in Britain and Germany, fanzines proved invaluable sources of information for this pre-Internet generation of participants.

Though interviews or record reviews covered British bands, a lot of the zines’ content focused on the sixties-inspired sounds chiming throughout the underground. One could learn about an all-girl garage band from Portland, Maine called the Brood or catch up with news from the Manhattan Mod scene, for instance.<sup>848</sup> These low-fi media sources were crucial to the

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<sup>844</sup> Tim Wall, “Finding an Alternative: Music Programming in U.S. College Radio,” *The Radio Journal—International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media* 5:1 (2007), 35-54.

<sup>845</sup> For a mapping of this alternative network that included sixties-sounding bands during this period, see Rachel Felder, *Manic, Pop, Thrill* (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco, 1993).

<sup>846</sup> Lucy Rollin, *Twentieth-Century Teen Culture*, 284-285; Batchelor and Stoddart, *The 1980s*, 31-34.

<sup>847</sup> Holly Kruse, *Site and Sound*, 16, 19-20, 27, 36, 79, 103.

<sup>848</sup> These examples are given from the San Diego-based fanzine *99<sup>th</sup> Floor*, Fall 1985-Winter 1986, 1, 6.

American Mod scene of the 1980s. As musician Bart Davenport (San Francisco, b. 1969) remembers,

For the most part, in America in the 1980s you couldn't find ANYTHING remotely Mod looking a store where new clothes were sold. You had to hunt! Nowadays, one only has to go online and mail order brand new Mod clothes designed by Paul Weller himself. We also had to seek out the obscure 60s bands that we slowly found out about through fanzines and rock books. Today, all you have to do is go down to Virgin Megastore and buy the second *Nuggets* box [a compilation box set of songs by British bands of the mid-sixties] and you are set. There was no e-mail then either. We found Mods in other cities and countries through a complex web of pen pals whose addresses were made public in xeroxed, little zines... We made mix-tapes for each other. We invented our own dances or rented VHS tapes of *Ready Steady Go!* and copied moves we saw the original Mods doing there.<sup>849</sup>

While these means served as portals to Mod identity, only truly mainstream mediated outlet that an emergent Mod may have utilized were the then-newly dubbed "classic rock" or "Oldies" stations.<sup>850</sup>

It was in the later part of the period (1986-1989) that many of my American narrators sought out, or accidentally happened upon Mod scenes already in progress. Bart Davenport continues, in his interview, to describe the heady atmosphere of the Bay Area Mod scene at this time:

The real heavy Mod years for me and Xan [his friend and bandmate] were '87, '88, '89. At that time, we were in the Birmingham, a rough, garage R&B quintet that played almost exclusively to Mods and 60s scensters at scooter rallies, all-ages gigs and house parties...the late eighties Berkeley Mod scene was INTENSE! We felt like we were the coolest people on planet earth. And maybe we were. Our house parties were out of control and our sense of style was probably the most flamboyant of any American Mods. The girls wore mini skirts and go-go boots and had amazing hair. They all knew about Mary Quant and all that. Some of them even made their own clothes. The guys wore eyeliner, hair spray, tight-as-hell flared trousers and...WHITE BELTS...ages before the emo-indie kids [of the 90s and 00s] appropriated them.<sup>851</sup>

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<sup>849</sup> Bart Davenport, Email to author, Feb. 26, 2003.

<sup>850</sup> For comments on "Oldies" radio as a way for American Mods to hear rock and pop from the sixties, see Graham Lentz, *The Influential Factor* (Horsham, Eng.: Gel Publishing, 2002), 116.

<sup>851</sup> Davenport, Email.

In further describing the scene, Bart discusses the male-female dynamic among the Bay Area Mods. In doing so, he underlies the fact that the Mod scene mimicked the greater heteronormative culture. Nowhere in my correspondence with Bart did he say that openly gay, bisexual, or lesbian Mods existed—at least at this time. I am not implying here that they never existed, but in Bart’s and other narrators’ memories, it is a point that rarely comes up.

The social scene of parties and gigs where there were ONLY Mods would ever be there eventually took its toll. There was a lot of incest going on. There was some boyfriend-stealing, girlfriend-stealing, secret blowjobs, hidden cassette recorders taping certain females while having sex...scooters were set on fire by jealous boyfriends etc. etc. etc. Many of us would agree now that the small-town-incest of it all eventually became our downfall. That, and let’s face it; they weren’t all Mods for life. Some of them grew up, got married and had kids. I didn’t.<sup>852</sup>

Here, Bart’s words suggest that being a “Mod for life,” does not fit within the stereotypical matrix of growing up. That is, in order to be a true Mod forever, one would probably not marry and/or have children, because that would surely stifle the ability to truly take part in such a leisure-oriented lifestyle. If you are at home with kids, it would be difficult to also be on-the-go. Unlike Mod in 1960s America, in which the culture’s rebellious nature was linked to gender aesthetics and an especially strong fear of “creeping feminization,” the 1980s incarnation of the culture, or any media coverage surrounding it, is noticeably void of such critique. Perhaps because Mod in the eighties was a shoring-up of a now older, and thus, more established youth culture, such moral panic around gender was linked instead to punk, new wave, and heavy metal: the more contemporary youth culture styles.

Instead, the Mod scene in the eighties was subversive in the fact that it was an underground that existed parallel with the commercialization of rock music and youth culture that sometimes even had Mod origins (the Who, Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin was in the

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<sup>852</sup> Davenport, Email.

Yardbirds). That being said, there were some gender issues in this rock scene that Mods may have been reacting to. The arena rock stars of the seventies and eighties had spun a severely homosocial web, such that not only was their style sometimes known as “cock rock,” but their audiences were predominantly made up of male adolescents and grown men. Thus, for this new generation, embracing Mod sensibilities was getting back to something deemed authentic and inclusive: an identity not connected *solely* to bloated, commercial aspirations and one that allowed more participation for young women as well. One California Mod musician neatly summed up this attitude: “These [arena rock bands] took themselves too seriously; they saw themselves as the object of all the excitement, instead of pointing to the excitement through their music. That’s what the British Invasion bands did, and that’s why they came off as so sincere, so unpretentious. That’s what we’re trying to do, too.”<sup>853</sup> It is this feeling of excitement through music—enough excitement to choose an underground subculture rather than follow the pack—that allowed Mod to blossom in 1980s America.

#### **4.7 THE 1990S AND BEYOND: ENGENDERING MOD AMERICA**

It is a cold, snowy, slushy January evening in Pittsburgh and of the possibilities for an evening out, a crowd of people—both young and not so young—have braved their way to the to the Rex Theatre to attend a rare Mod night in the Steel City. Unlike many other Mod-themed events I have attended elsewhere, that focus on DJ-spun music from the 1960s, this evening features live music. A local band named Camera will headline the show, while Charles Wallace, whom you

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<sup>853</sup> Thomas K. Arnold, “Bands’ Sparks Keep Fires Burning for ‘60s British Music,” *Los Angeles Times* [San Diego edition], Feb. 24, 1982, SD\_A6.



met at the beginning of this chapter, and his New York-based band Headquarters, will open. In between, Wallace will have the *American Mod* film shown. The venue is decorated with both Union Jacks and “Old Glory,” symbolizing the theme here: a joining of British and American sensibilities. A Vespa sits in the lobby of the theater. At one point, two young women pose for pictures atop of it—both are modeling dresses from Luxx—the only boutique in town to sell contemporary, locally-designed Mod outfits. Similar to other excursions into Pittsburgh’s nightlife, most of those in attendance are just wearing what they normally would, i.e. not necessarily dressed-up or wearing Mod styles. This makes the few exceptions stand out. A college student named Corey with a dark brown mop top wears a sharp, grey jacket, a black shirt, and skinny black and grey tie. His girlfriend Cindy sports a black bob and wears a black mini dress with white accents (fig. 34).



**Figure 34 Corey Wittig and Cindy Yogmas, Pittsburgh, 2004. Photo by author.**

Most people arrive in couples. This seems a very straight scene. A few other women in attendance wear sixties-style dresses, but their hairstyles and accessories do not match that look. More common, among the crowd, though, are fellows with trendily disheveled hair wearing rock t-shirts (someone has a Who t-shirt on) and jeans. It makes those dressed Mod stand out even more. Pittsburgh circa 2002 is apparently not quite used to such fancy sartorial sights. While enjoying this scene, the first one I have encountered since arriving in Pittsburgh, I notice amused looks on the faces of some of the other guests. Do those dressed Mod—mostly in couples—appear to them incredibly fashionable or *old-fashioned*? To gain some kind of understanding, it is helpful to look at what lead up to the point where Mod in the U.S.—both in terms of fashion

and gender—could potentially be seen as either conventional or, as Charles Wallace mentioned in the opening of this chapter, confrontational.

If one were to read Mod culture as conventional, it may have to do with the fact that unlike other more recent subcultures, such as those of the Punks, Goths, or Ravers, for instance, a gay presence is rare. Considering that it has become relatively more acceptable for Americans to come out as gay, lesbian, or bisexual since the 1990s—certainly more so than in the 1960s—Mod culture today, given its past associations with gender and sexuality, is surprisingly unreflective of these social changes.<sup>854</sup> The scene continues to be more heterosexual, with many girlfriend-boyfriend or wife-husband couples in attendance. Certainly this is not the case one hundred percent of the time, but by and large, based on my narrators' comments, as well as from my own observations, I contend that Mod events attract straight couples, or those looking to date someone of the opposite sex. In this strictly gender-related sense, there is nothing very radical about current Mod culture.

Chicago Mod Eric Reidelberger (a.k.a. "Eric Colin," b. 1970) tells me, "I think a fair majority of people in the Mod scene are straight... at least that's my experience," adding that it is "probably because a person can only handle one subculture at a time." In saying this, Eric alludes to the difference between being a part of a definitive gay subculture versus a one that may or may not be (but probably is) mostly heterosexual Alex Baker concurs: "Most Mod scenes are overwhelmingly straight. My impression is that it always has been. In Berkeley in the 80s there were no gays in our scene. In SF during the height of 90s Britpop/Mod/Lounge/Mocker chic clubs there were more gays around. They tended to cultivate flamboyant 'Z Man' [a character from the 1970 film *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*] type personas. In the LA Mod scene currently

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<sup>854</sup> For the lessening of stigma against homosexuality and the coming out of more gay teens in the 1990s, see Rollin, *Twentieth-Century Teen Culture*, 344.

there are a few of them on the fringe as well, but the major players are all pretty much straight lads trying to pull the birds and vice versa.”<sup>855</sup>

Interestingly, in terms of gender aesthetics, Pittsburgh DJ Justin “Juddy” Hopper (b. 1972) related to me that several of the super-stylish Mod girls at his “Viper Soul Lounge” events are lesbians—though it would be hard to tell. Apparently they sport the more girlish, rather than tomboyish, Mod style. This fits with another observation of Alex Baker’s—that “the Mod look on girls is such a cornerstone of what we think of as high fashion now,” so they could not be read as butch in the least.<sup>856</sup> Baker’s view is supported by the issues of *W*, *Vogue*, and *Allure* magazines, which, in 2003, featured a Mod photo essay to promote this “latest hot look” back from the past. As an exception to the rule, a 2008 *New York Times Style Magazine* recently devoted a fashion spread to Hard Mod/skinhead-style clothing for men.<sup>857</sup> In this sense, the presence of Mods wearing suits and their girlfriends or wives wearing vintage dresses, is not so much conservative, as it is distinctly non-queer. Perhaps now that there have been thirty years to establish the aesthetics of a gay and lesbian culture—with its own stylistic markers—it is difficult, if not impossible—to make the arguments that were made in the mid-sixties about the androgynous nature of Mod. Compared to other styles that have emerged since then, Mod does not win any “awards” for flamboyance or queerness today. The early 00s trendy term “metrosexual,” was used to describe men who were fashion and style-conscious—much like Mods past and present—as “just gay enough” in their grooming habits. Even though “the times have changed,” too much interest in one’s appearance is still somehow linked to gay male

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<sup>855</sup> Eric Colin Reidelberger, Email to author, Aug. 19, 2008; Baker, Interview.

<sup>856</sup> Reidelberger, Email; Baker, Interview; Justin Hopper, oral history interview with author, digital recording, June 9, 2008, 61C Café, Pittsburgh, DCUP.

<sup>857</sup> Merle Ginsberg, “Savoir Blair,” *W*, Jan. 2003, 102-109; Danielle Pergament, “Mod, Mod World,” *Allure*, Aug. 2003, 128-137; “The Mod Squad,” *Vogue*, May 2003, 196-213; “English Beat,” *New York Times Style Magazine*, Fall 2007, 161-167.

culture. Nonetheless, this moniker plays upon the fact that this new, urban male is still indisputably heterosexual.<sup>858</sup>

If Mod was seen as controversial—at least in terms of fashion—it needs to be compared to other youth culture styles from the 1990s to today. Nineties youth have, in many respects, reached the apex of an androgynous look. However, the way it played out really had little to do with the “feminization of American culture” that fear mongers of the mid-sixties had prophesized. If anything, the casual and bland nature of most of the clothing had nothing either extremely feminine or masculine about it. Ushering in the final decade of the last century and millennium, ripped jeans—or extremely baggy ones that revealed intimate apparel beneath—t-shirts, chunky-heeled shoes and work-style boots, and Khaki-colored clothing became the preferred fashion for young adults. It was also not uncommon to walk across a college campus and see students of both sexes wearing athletic garb as day wear—a trend that had continued from the late 1980s. Given this backdrop, it becomes more apparent why wearing a crisp, continental-looking suit or an ultra-girlish pop art dress challenges the status quo.<sup>859</sup>

Accompanying these 1990s fashions were the thrashing power-chords of Seattle-born “Grunge,” which became a major commercial trend in 1991 with the chart success of the band Nirvana. For most youths of color, as well as an increasingly ardent white posse of fans, the aural collages of black America that made up Hip Hop supplied the other prominent sounds of the decade.<sup>860</sup> Clearly, it could be argued that this casual, unisex style *is* what differentiated the 1990s from previous decades. I insist, however, that it mirrors the fact that young people who

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<sup>858</sup> Reference to stereotypical gay/lesbian style; “For Men from Venus,” *New York Times*, Oct. 19, 2001, ST11; Stephanie K. Taylor, “Metrosexual Mania? Many See the Movement as Passe,” *Washington Post*, May 4, 2004, A02.

<sup>859</sup> Rollin, *Twentieth-Century Teen Culture*, 332-334, 346-347.

<sup>860</sup> *Hype!*, VHS, directed by Doug Pray (1996; Los Angeles: Republic Entertainment, 1997); Emmett G. Price III, *Hip Hop Culture* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio, 2006), 15-16; Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 7-8.

came of age at this time lacked a distinctive and attractive youth culture style to rally around. Those dissatisfied with this mainstream, as in the decade before, continued splintering-off into various subcultures like those of Punk, Mod, Goth, Skinhead, or Hip Hop to find a community that, to them, offered that “little something extra.” This seemingly lackluster generation of youth was not just guilty of boring or derivative fashions, but was also accused of being somewhat identity-less in general.<sup>861</sup> Therefore, it is well worth examining the discourse surrounding the stereotype of this generation as well as the tension between young people in the 1990s and those of the previous cohort, who were young in the 1960s. In doing so, it explains better how contemporary Mod both reflects and reconfigures this cultural dialogue.

Mods of the 90s and the 00s tend to believe, not unlike their contemporaries in the U.K. and Germany that their lifestyle, while drawing from the Mod era of the sixties is very much “of the now.” If they look back to this “other” sixties, it is a portrait of style and savoir faire that remains somehow coolly detached from what the Baby Boomers did by the late sixties or after. Though it would be impossible to suggest that no American Mods of the 1960s became hippies later on, this is not a point that today’s Mods tend to focus on. For the culture’s adherents today, Mod youth are seemingly frozen in time and often, through media images—whether in films, on album sleeves and CD covers, on TV, or on the Internet—have become role models.<sup>862</sup>

The Mod sixties as an idyllic past to be referenced and mimicked for young people in the 1990s and the 2000s, is not just reflected in the American Mod scenes themselves, but can be traced to sartorial aspects of the “Indie” rock scenes of the last nearly twenty years. As Wendy

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<sup>861</sup> David M. Grossman and Sophronia Scott, “‘Twentysomething: Proceeding with Caution,” *Time*, July 16, 1990, 57-62; Lauren Blumenfield and Katherine S. Newman, “No Room for the Young,” *New York Times*, May 16, 1993, E17.

<sup>862</sup> All American Mods I communicated with described this relationship with media in terms of the start of their Mod identities. For instance, see Davenport, Email, Baker, Interview, Rollins, Email, Bertolino, Email.

Fonarow astutely posits in her analysis of this subgenre of rock music in Britain, “Indie’s sartorial style owes much more to the mod tradition than to punk, with androgynous males and females, a childlike sexuality, prevalence of anoraks, and the so-called ordinariness of their look. In fact, at fairly regular intervals indie has mod revivals. Segments of the indie community dress up in finely tailored 1960s suits similar to those sported by the Beatles in their early days. In the early 2000s, there was another resurgence of the 1960s fashion.”<sup>863</sup> Though the author is writing about Indie music in the U.K., the same has been true in the U.S. Or, as rock journalist Ann Powers charmingly recounts, the youthful, sometimes childish, clothing currently worn by older “bohemians” of all stripes must remind them of the time when their “personalit[ies] first arose.” Is it that by wearing Mod fashions, youth today are reminded of when a collective youth culture persona first arose, too?<sup>864</sup>

While Mod-tinged Indie bands do not always consistently dress the part, they sometimes adopt other stylistic elements. Portland, Oregon’s mixed-gender (their keyboardist is Zia McCabe) Dandy Warhols, for instance, have a name that reflects aspects of Mod: “dandy” and “Andy Warhol.” The cover of their debut, *Dandys Rule, OK?* Is pure pop art minimalism with simply DANDY WARHOLS printed in silver lettering upon an all-white background. The LP’s last three tracks, all entitled “It’s a Fast-Driving Rave-Up with the Dandy Warhols’ Sixteen Minutes,” reference both the 1965 *Having a Rave Up With the Yardbirds* LP and Andy Warhol’s idea of “fifteen minutes of fame.”<sup>865</sup> Another boy-girl band of this era (Hilarie Sidney was the drummer from 1992 to 2006), Denver Colorado’s the Apples in Stereo, have mimicked

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<sup>863</sup> Wendy Fonarow, *Empire of Dirt: The Aesthetics and Rituals of British Indie Music* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan, 2006), 45; See also Matthew Bannister, *White Boys, White Noise: Masculinities and 1980s Indie Guitar Rock* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 138.

<sup>864</sup> Ann Powers, *Weird Like Us: My Bohemian America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 204.

<sup>865</sup> “Everybody will be famous for fifteen minutes,” *New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Third Edition, E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil, ed., *Bartelby* at <http://www.bartleby.com/59/3/everybodywil.html> (accessed Nov. 28, 2008).

Mod style. The album design for 1997's *Tone Soul Evolution* is a clear imitation of Piet Mondrian's famous white, blue, red, and yellow geometric paintings—which were also featured on Mod dresses by Yves St. Laurent in 1965.<sup>866</sup>

In the early 1990s aspects of Mod style were also apparent in the Third Wave feminist rock movement of Riot Grrrl, a subculture of independent rock that simultaneously started in Olympia, Washington, and Washington, D.C., and spread to other cities around the country. Third Wave Feminism in and of itself is a kind of camp feminism that subverts preconceived notions of what it is to be pro-woman. It relies heavily on past and present popular culture references, even kitsch, and tends to poke fun of what these GenX women believe was a much too sober attitude behind second wave feminism. While *womyn* of the early 1970s would have found the use of the word “girl,” nothing short of degrading, third wave feminists see it as a way to fight fire with fire: even liberating more extreme terms like cunt, slut, and bitch. Like the Mod girls of the 1960s, riot grrrls imbued the word “girl,” even just by spelling alone, with a new sense of playful self-empowerment—as if Eartha Kitt's catwoman (from *Batman*) had suddenly become president of the National Organization of Women. Riot grrrls often wore children's flower barrettes in their (usually) pixie-ish hairstyles and high-waist, baby doll dresses that looked like they were made in the 1960s. The overt little-girl-femininity of the riot grrrls also toyed with the public's stereotypical notions of what it means to look like a gay woman (read: butch), as quite a few of those involved in the scene were openly lesbian. And, while their music owed more to punk than Mod, strains of sixties surf and garage could be heard in some songs, especially in the guitar playing of Bratmobile's Erin Smith. Like the all-girl bands of the mid-sixties, groups such as Bratmobile and also the critically-praised Bikini Kill never had chart

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<sup>866</sup> *Dandys Rule, OK?*, the Dandy Warhols, Tim/Kerr Records TK94C0091, CD; *Tone Soul Evolution*, the Apples in Stereo, Sire 31013, CD.



hits, but they and the riot grrrl movement amassed some mainstream attention due to national media coverage of it.<sup>867</sup> In sum, this group of female musicians and activists lived the can-do ethic and sassy attitude that many Mod girls in the sixties strived for.

As far as actual Mod female fashion is concerned, the legacy of Mary Quant's enthusiastically girly pop designs is alive and well. Kennedy Fraser suggests that designers starting as soon as the early 1980s have been "drawn time and again to the past as to a world of paradisaic certainties." Just as Quant nostalgically attached her designs to the past freedoms of girlhood, such fashions offer a similar comfort to Mod women today.<sup>868</sup> A contemporary designer named Jessika Madison, who is based in Minneapolis, is drawn to this utopian ideal of Mod fashions for women and creates re-makes of famous sixties dress styles made with dead stock materials—sometimes actually from that decade. She started her own fashion e-business called Dada Die Brucke in the late 1990s because "original items of 60's clothing are scarcer to find and are increasingly in a sorry condition."<sup>869</sup> Her website dadaddress.com advertises "Style A-Go-Go for Young Moderns." Thus, women who are eager to find authentic-looking Mod dresses of a girlish ilk have a vital link to them through this online business. Since this online article was written, New York designer Lisa Perry has launched her own up-to-date Mod collection for upscale clients. While Madison's dresses will cost shoppers a hundred or more dollars, Perry's dresses start at over one thousand.<sup>870</sup>

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<sup>867</sup> Mimi Marinucci, "Television, Generation X, and Third Wave Feminism: A Contextual Analysis of *The Brady Bunch*," *Journal of Popular Culture* 38: 3 (2005): 506-508; Marion Leonard, *Gender in the Music Industry* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 93-95; Joanne Gottlieb and Gayle Wald, "Smells Like Teen Spirit: Riot Grrrls, Revolution, and Women in Independent Rock," in *The Popular Music Studies Reader*, ed. Andy Bennett, Barry Shank, and Jason Toynbee (New York: Routledge, 2006), 359-361.

<sup>868</sup> Kennedy Fraser, *The Fashionable Mind: Reflections on Fashion, 1970-1981* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 240.

<sup>869</sup> Helen Barrell, "The Fantabulous World of Jessika Madison and Dada Die Brucke Clothing: Interview Part I," *Uppers Organization* at <http://www.uppers.org/article.asp?article=27515> (accessed Dec. 12, 2002).

<sup>870</sup> See Lisa Perry's website at: [lisaperrystyle.com](http://lisaperrystyle.com).

Whether Indie or Mod, if girls were “rioting” in these mid-sixties-style outfits, what were the “boys” up to? With the focus on grunge in the 1990s, a music that combined classic rock, punk, and heavy metal, Mod gender aesthetics were noticeably absent. Men in these bands looked more like the idealized frontiersmen of the 1890s, or at the very least, with their long, unkempt hair, jeans, boots, and flannel shirts, looked as if they had just returned from chopping wood in the forests of the Olympic peninsula. Though the late Kurt Cobain (of Nirvana) listened to the Monkees as a child, and admitted to being a Beatles fan, these sixties influences were only obliquely evident in his melodic songwriting. Nonetheless, their music video for “In Bloom” depicted them as a sixties-era, British Invasion-style band on the Ed Sullivan Show. This visual reference had more to do with their massive success, though, than their actual musical style.<sup>871</sup>

As in Germany between 1994 and 1996, the American indie scene embraced the Anglo sounds and styles coming from the Britpop explosion in England. As mentioned earlier, some bands of this period (especially in the later nineties) like the Dandy Warhols and the Apples in Stereo revived some Mod sensibilities either in their music, style, or both. Radiohead, too, in the title track on their album *The Bends* (1995) sing, “I wish it was the 60s/I wish we could be happy/I wish, I wish, I wish that something would happen,” implying again that aspects of the 1960s continue to be idealized—even in non-Mod Indie rock.<sup>872</sup>

It was not until the beginning of the new millennium, that Mod aesthetics were more evident in the Indie rock camp. In 2002 *Rolling Stone* dubbed The Vines (Australia), The Hives (Sweden), and The Strokes (U.S.) as leading bands in a “Return of Rock.” The most media-

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<sup>871</sup> Clinton Heylin, *Babylon's Burning* (New York: Canongate, 2007), 595-615; David Fricke, “Kurt Cobain,” *Rolling Stone*, Jan. 27, 1994, 37; Jonathan Gold, “Out of the Blue,” *Spin*, June 1994, 38; “Grunge Flashback: Alternate Video for Nirvana’s ‘In Bloom,’” *Tunequest*, Apr. 30, 2008 at <http://www.tunequest.org/alternate-video-for-nirvanas-in-bloom/20080430/> (accessed Dec. 4, 2008).

<sup>872</sup> Fonarow, *Empire of Dirt*, 75.

hyped of these bands, The Strokes, were described in a 2002 *New York Times* article as having “the taut pop-blues structurings and boyish sweetness of London Mod, circa 1966 (The Kinks, The Who and especially The Yardbirds).” The fact that these bands are somehow linked with Mod style has caused controversy amongst the contemporary Mod subculture. Jason Rollins (Philadelphia, b. 1970) sees absolutely no connection between these bands and the Mod ideal. “The fact that they wear skinny ties only proves that they have stylists that are paid to dress them in those clothes—nothing else.” he says. Or, if the sound was mimicked, it was done so simply to sell records. Bart Davenport remembers visiting the New York Mod club “Shout” in spring 2002. As he recalls, that week the club had been featured in *SPIN* magazine and the article was called “Strods”—combining the band name the Strokes with Mods. “Some of my friends who have been going to ‘Shout’ for years were very put off by it,” he told me. “They had never even heard a Strokes song.”<sup>873</sup> So, while indie bands may adopt aspects of Mod culture or style, this is still separate from the Mod scenes that exist today and that cultivate a more detailed and specific homage to mid-sixties culture.

The wearing of continental style suits with skinny ties is not the only way Mod culture came into view during the mid-nineties to early 2000s. In 1997 the premiere of *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*, Mike Myers’s filmic alter-ego is a “gentleman spy” from the mid-sixties who is cryogenically frozen in order to fight his escaped nemesis Dr. Evil at some future date. Unlike the more straightforward interpretation of Mod music and fashion delivered by “Return of Rock” bands a few years later, *Austin Powers* was a purely satirical tribute to the popular spy films and TV shows of the original Mod era. Though Myers created the character

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<sup>873</sup> Gerald Marzorati, “They Are It,” *New York Times*, Oct. 6, 2002, 96; Nicholls, Craig. “Rock is Back,” *Rolling Stone* at <http://www.rollingstone.com/features/featuregen.asp?pid=1054> (accessed Mar. 10, 2003); Jason Rollins, Email to author, Mar. 10, 2003; Davenport, Email.

and film as an homage to a time period beloved to him (he admits to being a Mod in Toronto during the early 1980s), the costumes, sets, and allusions to Mod style is consistently exaggerated for laughs—trying to show the Mod aesthetic as both cool and kitschy.<sup>874</sup> Most evident in the film, though, is the resurrected mid-sixties notion that Mod male style is effeminate. I use the word “resurrected,” since most male Mods told me that they did not see how the style could be seen as such today. Alex Baker, for instance, said he never thought of Mod male style as effeminate, but rather that it “always seemed to have a slightly macho cool element to it. At first it was because of spy shows like *Man From Uncle*, *I Spy*, and *The Prisoner*: tough secret agents shooting and kicking ass, while wearing very Mod outfits.” Justin Hopper also came to Mod through the second Ska revival of the early 1990s and told me he recognized the more macho aspects of dressing Mod:

I remember there was this girl I was dating sort of started dating a guy I was really good friends with. This is 1990, 1991, or something, and, um, I remember distinctly I was going to a party where I knew he would be, and I...and this never ended up happening... but I remember having just seen *Quadrophenia* for the first or second time, which I can't even count the times I've seen it now, but, I remember getting dressed thinking...putting on jeans and Clarkes and a Ben Sherman and a suit jacket thinking, 'Well, I'm gonna have to beat the fuck out of this guy and I'm gonna wear a suit while I do it.' [Laughs] And it was somehow important to me... the idea that I wasn't gonna just be some dickhead beating some guy up because of my girlfriend—who wasn't—you know, you're 19 years old and you don't know what the fuck's going on, but... I felt empowered by the idea of doing it while, sort of, looking good, you know? I thought there was something really tough about being a skinny little kid in a suit when no one else was wearing a suit.<sup>875</sup>

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<sup>874</sup> Jay Roach, *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* DVD commentary (New York: New Line Entertainment, 1997); “Mike Myers,” *Inside the Actors Studio*, Bravo (New York: Bravo, Jan. 14, 2001); In an interview with the *Biography* cable channel Myers says, “I was also a Mod. I also saw *Quadrophenia*. There was a really cute girl who was a Modette, so I became a Mod.” “Mike Myers as a Mod,” [http://www.biography.com/broadband/clipview/index.jsp?id=starbites\\_ep005\\_mikemyers](http://www.biography.com/broadband/clipview/index.jsp?id=starbites_ep005_mikemyers) (accessed 30 Aug. 2006). The Toronto Mod scene is still currently active. See Jason Keller, “Brit Ex-Pats Bring Carnaby Street to Hip Canucks: The Mod Club—It Started as a Theme Party, Now it's a Franchise,” *National Post* Oct. 29, 2005, WP7 and the website Mod Club at [www.themodclub.com](http://www.themodclub.com).

<sup>875</sup> Hopper, Interview.

Unlike these narrators' perceptions of the style's manliness-though-strength, Powers instead embodies the English gentleman as dandified fop—much like Mod was portrayed in the 1960s.

This return of a queered Anglo-identity is underscored by Powers's constant attention to himself: his clothes, his jet, his "scene," and so on, despite his offers to "shag women rotten" at every turn. Scholar Judith Halberstam perceives this caricaturizing of British, sixties masculinity as similar to that of a "drag king"—a cross-dressing woman who must try extra hard to be "a man." She writes, "With his foppish clothes and fake chest hair, his penis enlarger and off-color jokes, Austin is abject masculinity incarnate... suggesting that white English masculinity, perhaps more than most, relies heavily on prosthetics, tricks, and bad jokes." Mike Myers and the film's director Jay Roach have admitted that they wanted the stylistic element of Powers's Mod past to be humorous—much as Woody Allen's world of the future in *Sleeper* (1973) was. However, Powers as a camp character is ostensibly the core of the film's humor, more so than the over-the-top, Technicolor Mod world around him, and this remains true in the two sequels that followed in 1999 and 2002.<sup>876</sup> In the world of Austin Powers, the "manliness" of Mod is again called into question—even if tongue-in-cheek.

If the Austin Powers films revisit the old stereotype of male Mods as effeminate, Chynna Clugston's comic series *Blue Monday* (2000-2001) and *Scooter Girl* (2004) challenge the other stereotype of Mod, in which they are Vespa-riding machos, despite their fancy clothes—like Jimmy in *Quadrophenia* or the Mods on Brighton beaches in fisticuffs with Rockers circa 1964. One volume of her *Blue Monday* series, is named after the 1965 Who song "The Kids are Alright." The second gets its title from Colin MacInnes's 1958 "Mod novel" *Absolute Beginners*. Clugston's stories follow a group of high school students who listen to Blur, The

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<sup>876</sup> Judith Halberstam, *A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 146

Jam, and The Kinks—a fact that instantly signifies Mod style in its 90s, 70s, and 60s musical incarnations.<sup>877</sup>

Set in the early nineties, Clugston’s characters, especially her female protagonist Bleu L. Finnegan, are unexpectedly wise to sixties Mod culture. Bleu runs around in mini-skirts and target emblem t-shirts, while the boys who torment Bleu and her friends at school are parka-wearing thugs who ride scooters. Bleu fantasizes about pop stars, which is not unusual for a teenage girl, but the cartoonist makes sure they are mostly retro-stars. A cartoon version of The Jam’s Paul Weller makes his first appearance on the first page, with Bleu eventually shouting out to the 90s world, “Where’s that handsome Mod dream on a Lambretta?”<sup>878</sup> Though the Mod boys at school continue to torment her and her butch, punk rock best friend Clover through pranks, the girls often get back at them, coming out on top. Unlike *Blue Monday*, where Mod symbols and characters are peppered throughout, Clugston’s *Scooter Girl* takes place in a contemporary Mod scene. Margaret Sheldon, who of course wears her hair in a bob, is “scooter girl,” the cool, Mod chick who torments “Ace Face” Ashton Archer. At the start of the comic Ashton has it all: good looks, fabulously sharp clothes, a hip DJ-ing gig, and a bevy of girls whom he woos and discards. He is painted as a caricature of the womanizing Mod who is too pretty for his own good. However, things change when he sees Margaret on her scooter for the first time and is instantly smitten with her. “This girl on a silver special... her eyes seemed to burn through me, and sure enough I felt like lightning had hit my spine with a vengeance. It was simultaneously exhilarating and creepy, somehow, and I knew right then that I had to talk to

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<sup>877</sup> Chynna Clugston-Major [now just Clugston], *Blue Monday: The Kids are Alright* (Portland, OR: Oni Press, 2000); Chynna Clugston-Major, *Blue Monday: Absolute Beginners* (Portland, OR: Oni Press, 2001); Chynna Clugston-Major, *Scooter Girl* (Portland, OR: Oni Press, 2004).

<sup>878</sup> Clugston-Major, *Blue Monday: The Kids are Alright*, 32.

her.”<sup>879</sup> As the story progresses, Margaret’s Mod coolness and disinterest in Ashton seemingly zaps him of his “powers” and he begins to hate her. They end up getting into a Mod style battles of the sexes, as a “competition of cool” ensues, that Ashton eventually loses—though the story does end with them as a couple.

The gender issues of Mod from the 1960s to the present are woven from a complex combination of threads. The cultural history of American gender aesthetics since the late nineteenth century has created a society in which the original reception of Mod style disturbed middle-class visions of masculinity and femininity. In the current moment, this is no longer the case. As Chicagoan Eric Reidelsberger explains, “I would imagine in some circles in the 60s it was looked upon like that but it’s never struck me as extremely androgynous, the women always looked like women and the men always looked like men.”<sup>880</sup> Instead, Mods look to this originally mid-sixties style for an ethos that promoted the possibility of a society with a different look to it: one in which experimentation with appearance could potentially mean more experimentation on other social fronts. Though it has been written that “the past is another country,” its “Mod region” is gladly visited by some young people today. As a Pittsburgh fashion writer has recently stated, “In the tiresome world of 21<sup>st</sup> century hipsterdom, the past—irresistibly authentic in comparison to the banal present—is regularly raided for ironic incorporation into our daily wardrobes.”<sup>881</sup> I would argue, though, that in the Mods’ case, it is not necessarily ironic. The fashions become a portal to lauded images of a preferred youth culture.

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<sup>879</sup> Clugston-Major, *Scooter Girl*, 9.

<sup>880</sup> Reidelsberger, Email.

<sup>881</sup> Adam Atkinson, “MOD-Century Menswear,” *Lux*, Mar. 2008, 76.

However, it is important to remember that Mod also happened the first time in conjunction with the postwar generation and prior to the escalation in Vietnam and the consequences of this war. If this was the downside of the sixties, then the era in which Mod culture blossomed in the U.S. also gave young men and women a glimpse of innovation, newness, and—just maybe—new opportunities for self-expression. As Donna Gaines has said, “The Mod scene has an upbeat tempo about it. It gives people a sense of forward motion while having roots in the past, a simpler time.” It was and is upbeat and *fun*: both for men and women. Walking into a Mod club circa 2000 you will see male *and* female DJs spinning vinyl. Furthermore, Mod girls *do* ride scooters. If bands play at Mod events most of them will be all-male, but with a notable few exceptions. The scene is “straight” versus “queer.” Some things have changed and some things have not. If you walk into L.A.’s Club Satisfaction you will see “doe-eyed girls in polyester A-line dresses and bobbed hair shimmy and shake alongside boys in three-button suits and Beatle boots.”<sup>882</sup> The styles remain while the “gender trouble” has passed. This is American Mod in the new millennium.

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<sup>882</sup> Solvej Schou, “It’s a Mod, Mod World: ‘60s Scene Gets Another Global Revival,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Nov. 5, 2005, A2.



## 5.0 EPILOGUE: JAPAN'S "CULT OF MOD"

"I love the retro-future atmosphere of plastic." – Kaori Saotome, female Tokyo Mod quoted in *Girls 60s* magazine, 2004<sup>883</sup>

"I want to play on an Italian beach [or] go to St. Tropez."-Japanese teenager identified as Yoko, quoted in *Life* magazine, 1964<sup>884</sup>

Long hair & miniskirts: 'black ships' of subculture invade! – Takarajima Henshubu, *Encyclopedia of the 1960s*, 1991<sup>885</sup>

The inexpensive and uncomfortable bus journey from Tokyo to Kyoto took all night. My travel companion, photographer Corey Le Chat, and I awoke as the coach rounded a city corner. We thought: "We must be in Kyoto." Gazing out the window, our eyes were met with a sight we probably expected to see—a grand temple—whose grounds seemed to go on and on for many blocks. After two weeks staying in the neon-saturated Shinjuku district of Tokyo—seeing more malls, shops, and fast food restaurants than shrines or temples—this vision was a welcome one. Minutes later, the coach pulled in and parked in front of the train station. This glimpse of the temple—of what I think of as a more traditional view of Japan—quickly disappeared. I am now curious if this juxtaposition between old and new Japan will be more obvious in the coming days?<sup>886</sup> As we disembarked from the bus, the ultra-modern Kyoto central train station stood

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<sup>883</sup> *Girls Sixties*, Spring 2004, 15.

<sup>884</sup> Arthur Koestler, "Japan, For Better or Worse: Her Course is Set," *Life*, Sept. 11, 1964, 92.

<sup>885</sup> Henshubu Takarajima, ed. *1960nen Daihyakka* [Encyclopedia of the 1960s] (Tokyo: JICC Co., Ltd., 1991), 40.

<sup>886</sup> John K. Nelson, *Enduring Identities: The Guise of Shinto in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 8.

monolithically before us. Despite our tiredness, Corey and I decided to look around the station prior to taking a taxi to our hotel. As we stepped inside, we saw on either side of us staircases and escalators that seemingly ascended into the heavens. They went so high, it was nearly impossible to see where they stop. We will later read in our guide book that this “sweeping steel-and-glass structure whose sheer size boggles the mind” was designed by Hiroshi Hara who won a national competition for it.<sup>887</sup> Exploring *Kyōto Eki* further, we saw one part of the station had a multi-media exhibit devoted to Japan’s original king of *anime* (animation) Osamu Tezuka.<sup>888</sup> Looking up, over, and around, endless streams of shops and restaurants that dot each level of the Station-cum-mall, the overall feeling the place exudes is one of light, endless space, and, in my mind, at least, “the future.” In this respect, the station was nothing short of Mod.

In the moments that has passed between our initial arrival into Kyoto and our walk through the train station, we had witnessed the juxtaposition of tradition and innovation that has been increasingly typical of the cityscapes of Japan since the postwar period. As mentioned in Chapter One, if British and European designers of the Mod sixties vividly imagined and tried to incorporate conceptions of the ultra-modern or futuristic into the contemporary, it was, in many ways, a reaction to the depressing shades of the war years not long behind them. Here, in Kyoto, one of the only Japanese cities to be spared bombing during World War II, the near-futurism of Kyoto’s train terminus was mere blocks away from the *Higashi Hongan-Ji*, a seventeenth-century Buddhist temple that draws one into Kyoto’s past. It was at this temple, just a few days into our stay, that I saw the following quote (translated into English) posted on one of the temple’s inner walls: “The future comes when it is an extension of the present. The future will

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<sup>887</sup> Annalise Nelson, “Kyoto,” in *Let’s Go© Travel Guide: Japan*, ed. Teresa Elsey (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2004), 414.

<sup>888</sup> Mark Schilling, *The Encyclopedia of Japanese Pop Culture* (Boston: Weatherhill, 1997), 263-268.

not come when we disconnect ourselves from the present.” The British conception of Mod was to re-conceive modernity in the present despite the aspects of Victorian modernity that remained—miniskirts versus bowler hats, so to speak. Japan may just have proved the most Mod of countries in this manner, especially in the new Millennium.

Every May for the last twenty-five years Japanese Mods from Sapporo to Nagasaki have gathered in Tokyo for the annual “Mods Mayday” scooter run—speeding by structures of the city’s past and present. Riding Vespas or Lambrettas, mop-topped men and mini-skirted women reenact an originally British event of 1960s vintage. In response to photos documenting this event on the *Uppers Organization* website, a site user identified only as Benji G. comments, “Keeping up with the definition of modernism, I believe Japan is now one of the leaders [...] As of right now there is no country so cutting edge in art and contempo [sic.] culture than Japan. We as an enduring mod subculture, and especially the youth, like me, have to evolve along with the times and the changing contempo, and that is becoming Japan.”<sup>889</sup> If, as we have seen, Mod is tied to the contemporary as well as the mid-sixties period, it is also connected to the futuristic visions promised by modernist design. More so than elsewhere, the digitally fast pace of Japanese cities and the mass of neon that illuminates them seem to fulfill this promise.<sup>890</sup>

Akin to today’s Mods in Britain, Germany, and the United States, Japanese enthusiasts recreate this mid-sixties style with both local and contemporary inflections.<sup>891</sup> In the words of a

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<sup>889</sup> User Comments, “Mods Mayday Tokyo,” *Uppers Organization*, Sept. 11, 2001, <http://www.uppers.org/show/Article.asp?article=283> (accessed Dec. 3, 2004). Regarding Mod’s Mayday, see Simon Bartz, “Fuzzy Logic: A Stage-Dive Back into the Mayhem,” *Japan Times* at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/print/fm20050612sb.html> (accessed Mar. 24, 2006); Thomas Chadwick, “Event Review: Mod Mayday 2001,” *Adventurasia* at [http://www.adventurasia.com/editorials/japan/tc\\_modmayday01.php](http://www.adventurasia.com/editorials/japan/tc_modmayday01.php) (accessed Mar. 24, 2006); and Louis Templado, “Blasting into the Past with Japan’s Thoroughly Modern Mods,” *Asahi*, <http://www.asahi.com/English/weekend/K2002060100253.html> (accessed 2 January 2004).

<sup>890</sup> Paul Waley, “Re-Scripting the City: Tokyo from Ugly Duckling to Cool Cat,” *Japan Forum* 18:3 (2006): 372.

<sup>891</sup> This definition of Mod is given in I. Willis Russell, “Among New Words,” *American Speech* 41 (May 1966), 140; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Mod.” <<http://digitallibrary.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/oed/oed->

1964 *Life* magazine article describing Japan's past use of western imports, it was "as if by magic, the foreign seed bore characteristically Japanese flowers."<sup>892</sup> In recurrent phases since 1964, Mod style has been translated into Japanese. In the myriad of youth culture fads to be embraced, discarded, and recycled by Japan's youth since the postwar period, Mod still appears in many ways as fresh and innovative as when it first blossomed internationally during the mid-sixties.<sup>893</sup> The opening chapter of this dissertation explored Mod culture's relationship to the rise of high modernity in Britain, while the last two have examined Germany and the United States' adoption and adaptation of Mod as related to specific cultural issues in those countries. In both the cases of Germany and the U.S., however, this youth culture was interpreted by other Western cultures, which, historically, already had much more contact with the U.K. and, thus, more familiarity with British culture.

When I first told people that I was going to study Mod in Japan, a typical response was, "Oh, the Japanese really get into their subcultures 150% percent, don't they?" Having already looked at books like *Fruits*, which consists of a photographic essay of young people in Tokyo's Harajuku neighborhood sporting their current favorite fashions, I tended to agree with this statement even before stepping onto Japanese soil. As another Western observer of Japanese Mods has stated, they are "very different, quite extreme and eccentric." It seemed to me that Japanese Mods would strive fervently for the most perceived authenticity possible—even trying to out-Mod the British themselves. This idea reminded me of a scene in the 2003 film *Lost in Translation*, where the Japanese director of a *Santori* whiskey commercial asks American actor

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idx.pl?type=entry&byte=2652198084> (accessed Mar. 20, 2004); and *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2004 online ed., s.v. "Mod." <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/cgi-bin/dictionary> (accessed Mar. 28, 2004). For a very recent discussion of Mod see Solvej Schou, "It's a Mod, Mod World: '60s Scene Gets Another Global Revival," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Nov. 5, 2005, A2.

<sup>892</sup> Koestler, "For Better or Worse..." 63–79.

<sup>893</sup> Douglas McGray, "Japan's Gross National Cool," *Foreign Policy* 130 (May-June 2002): 44-54.

Bob Harris (played by Bill Murray) to talk about the product with “more intensity.”<sup>894</sup> Indeed, since Japan’s emergence as the most “Western” of Asian nations since the postwar period, the country has excelled in almost every aspect of socio-economic endeavor it has taken on. And, as in the past, this intensity and drive has shone through a fusion of global and local ideas.<sup>895</sup>

During the early part of the *Edo* period (1603-1868), starting in 1638, the government chose to isolate itself from Europeans. Because this came, at least in part, from anti-Catholic sentiments (Catholic missionaries sought to convert the Japanese en masse), the only contact with Westerners for over two hundred years was with protestant Dutch traders. It was not until after trade treaties were signed with many western countries in 1858 that more cultural exchange took place between the Japanese East and European (and now North American) West. Nonetheless, even prior to the 1853 appearance of American Commodore Matthew Perry’s so-called “black ships” in Edo (read: Tokyo) Bay and the Meiji Restoration of 1868, which renewed contact to more of the outside world, some European goods had been available to Japanese via the Dutch. While imports like woolen textiles or more “far-out” technologies like clocks and microscopes became “tangible” ways to conceive of the West, they were also embraced with the little contextual knowledge about the places from whence they came or the people who produced them.<sup>896</sup>

However, Japan already had a longstanding practice of appropriating and incorporating foreign traits, symbols, and ideas—many of them from China—into their country’s way of

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<sup>894</sup> Shoichi Aoki, *Fruits* (New York: Phaidon, 2001); Laura Jane Preston, “Planet of the Nu Mods,” *NTouch* University of the Arts London at <http://www.arts.ac.uk/ntouch/content/new/looks/mods.htm> (accessed Sept. 14, 2008); *Lost in Translation*. DVD. Directed by Sophia Coppola (Universal City, CA: Universal, 2003).

<sup>895</sup> This idea will be explored more thoroughly in the subsequent sections.

<sup>896</sup> Yoshida Mitsukuni, *The Hybrid Culture: What Happened When East and West Met* (Tokyo: Cosmo Public Relations, 1984), 15-17, 38-40; Ian Buruma, *Inventing Japan: 1853-1964* (New York: Modern Library Chronicle Books, 2003), 9-15; Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* [Second Edition] (New York: Routledge, 2008), 263.

life.<sup>897</sup> The prime example of this was Japan's sixth-century adoption of Chinese ideographs for constructing their own written language, which is phonetically foreign to the original. After Japan opened itself to the world, other imports, such as the "American Pastime" of baseball (*yakyū*), which was first played there in 1872, also became a favorite leisure activity in Japan. Attending a game in Nagoya instead of New York will allow attendees to eat Sushi and sip sake rather than hot dogs and beer, and certainly the "Star-Spangled Banner" is not played beforehand. Beyond those obvious and peripheral differences, the Japanese version of this "U.S." sport is said to reflect a nationally-defined, group-oriented mentality. As one author puts it, players are expected to "follow the rule of sameness... 'recognize and respect the team pecking order'; and, finally, must strive for **wa** – 'team harmony and unity,'" rather than individual members trying to win the game by any means possible.<sup>898</sup> In a big picture sense, Japan's translation of Mod culture from the 1960s forward is not only here contextualized within a national tradition of mimesis and hybridity par excellence, but as we shall see, is mirrored in the collectivist, group dynamics of Mods there, as well.<sup>899</sup>

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<sup>897</sup> Botond Bognar, "Archaeology of a Fragmented Landscape: The New Avant-Garde Architecture in Japan," in *The New Japanese Architecture*, ed. Botond Bognar (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 11; Mitsukuni, *Hybrid Culture*, 8-11; Peter Lutum, "Aspects of Hybrid Consciousness in Modern Japan," in *Japanizing: The Structure of Culture and Thinking in Japan*, Peter Lutum, ed. (Berlin: LIT, 2006), 2.

<sup>898</sup> William W. Kelly, "Sense and Sensibility at the Ballpark: What Fans Make of Professional Baseball in Modern Japan," in *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan*, ed. William W. Kelly (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 79-106; Robert Whiting qtd. in Charles Hayford, "Samurai Baseball vs. Baseball in Japan," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, Apr. 2007 at [http://japanfocus.org/\\_Charles\\_W\\_Hayford-Samurai\\_Baseball\\_vs\\_Baseball\\_in\\_Japan](http://japanfocus.org/_Charles_W_Hayford-Samurai_Baseball_vs_Baseball_in_Japan) (accessed Nov. 5, 2008). See also Robert Whiting, *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat: Baseball Samurai Style* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1977); Robert Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa: When Two Cultures Collide on the Baseball Diamond* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

<sup>899</sup> It is important to mention that the image of Japanese "group mentality" is a powerful one that requires more nuanced readings, for fear of falling into total stereotyping. See William W. Kelly, "Introduction: Locating the Fans," in *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan*, ed. William W. Kelly (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 10-11. Nonetheless, I find this idea of Japanese group mentality an intriguing parallel to Mod culture—a group of people who prides themselves on individualism, but who also strongly valorize the collective and their community.

Since Mod has itself been a hybrid culture from the very beginning—mixing American, Caribbean, and British music, French, Italian, and British fashions, and Italian and Scandinavian design—I suggest this is a doubly fitting subculture for those Japanese who have chosen to identify with it. In terms of examining Mod culture’s historical and geographical trajectory, it only seems appropriate, then, that this study of the “Mod Diaspora” ends in Japan. Indeed, as Chapter One attests, an extended look back at the seeds that eventually bore Mod shows Queen Victoria’s wished-for modern Empire—one so expansive that the sun never set on it. Today, in the twenty-first century, the arguably most *modern* manifestation of Mod is now found in the “Land of the Rising Sun.”

In the following sections, this epilogue will look first at how Mod came to Japan in the 1960s. It will then examine how contemporary Mod culture continues working as an agent of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and gender identity within a country whose culture has been greatly influenced by the creative implementation of foreign ideas. Here, special focus will be placed on how these three concepts have been incorporated visually into the Japanese Mod scenes from the 1960s to the present, as symbolic language has been the most easily translatable into this non-Western culture. In the case of Japan, I am looking at Mod’s adoption and, to quote John Fiske, the translation of its “semiotic power” through fashion, accessories, community events, and mediated artifacts.<sup>900</sup> When asked why he thought Mod had become such a transnational phenomenon, a contemporary Mod from Canada replied, “It’s the graphic language and music that appeals visually and socially to most people. It is a very aesthetic thing... people come to me for mod hairstyles who can’t even speak English.”<sup>901</sup> Although the barriers of spoken and written language have often kept Westerners and Japanese apart, it appears Mod’s

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<sup>900</sup> John Fiske, *Reading the Popular* (London: Routledge, 1989), 10.

<sup>901</sup> Preston, “Planet of the Nu Mods.”

unique dialect has united young people through fashion, design, and musical style for over forty years.<sup>902</sup>

## 5.1 MOD IN POSTWAR JAPAN

Sitting on the front steps in front of Rosa Fiesta Casa Grande club in Roppongi, Tokyo, prior to the “French Blue” Mod event in June 2004, I struck up a conversation with a man in his twenties. We were waiting for the club’s doors to open and the rest of the Mods to arrive from their scooter run from Shibuya. When I asked him if he is from Tokyo, he says, “No, Hiroshima. Americans have heard of this city?” I cannot quite read the expression on his face, but there was an uncomfortable moment. I quickly said, “Of course.” Though my response seems lacking, I was really not sure what to say.

It is impossible to talk about Japan in the postwar period without talking about Hiroshima or Nagasaki. The August 1945 atomic bombings may have launched the world into the stark realities of the “Nuclear Age,” but they affected the Japanese in ways that no other nation’s citizens could begin to understand. The explosions above Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which literally vaporized human beings, were not just the culmination of a lost war, but events that had a profound psychological impact on the Japanese. As one scholar describes it, the aftermath of the War hit many Japanese (especially the younger generation) with a sense of meaninglessness.

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<sup>902</sup> For English language work, specifically on pop and youth culture in Japan, see Gordon Matthews and Bruce White, *Japan’s Changing Generations: Are Young People Creating a New Society?* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2004); Karl Taro Greenfield, *Speed Tribes: Days and Nights with Japan’s Next Generation* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1995); Timothy J. Craig, ed., *Japan Pop! Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000); and John Whittier Treat, ed. *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996).



The loss of WWII “discredited the institutions and values for which millions of Japanese that had just given their lives, in particular, the emperor system, its institutional expressions, and the philosophical and mythological systems of thought that informed it. Henceforth, what should the Japanese live and die for? It was a question not easily answered.”<sup>903</sup> The fact that atomic weapons were used on Japan continues to raise questions. Primarily, several historians have argued that Americans’ racism towards the Japanese during the War was so intense that it impacted the decision to use atomic weapons on Japan. The country’s wartime activities were, in many respects, quite similar to those of the Germans, especially with their annexation and brutal subjugation of neighboring lands and people. Nonetheless, the German enemy was not demonized by Americans because of their race as the Japanese were. The Germans were called many things, but they were not called “back stabbing monkeys” or “vermin in need of extinction.” Some propaganda even questioned if “the barbaric Japanese were... members of the same species as the rest of the world’s people.” Given this backdrop of accelerated, WWII-era racism, the postwar relationship between U.S. occupiers and the Japanese occupied was ostensibly a harder emotional bridge for those in Japan to cross than for the Germans.<sup>904</sup>

This underlying tension could be seen in the youth of the immediate postwar years. Unlike German postwar youths, many younger Japanese felt more ambivalence than cynicism about what had happened. They were confused, and depending on whom they hung out with or what they read, their socio-political views continued to span from left to right. Had not the

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<sup>903</sup> David G. Goodman, *The Return of the Gods: Japanese Drama and Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca, NY: East Asia Program Cornell University, 2003), 19. On the horrors of the Hiroshima bombing, see John Hershey, *Hiroshima* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1985).

<sup>904</sup> For quotes, see W. Anthony Sheppard, “An Exotic Enemy: Anti-Japanese Musical Propaganda in World War II Hollywood,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54: 2 (Summer 2001): 303. For more on American racism toward the Japanese in WWII, see John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986); Sumiko Higashi, “Melodrama, Realism, and Race: World War II Newsreels and Propaganda Films,” *Cinema Journal* 37:3 (Spring 1998): 38-61; Vera L. Zolberg, “Contested Remembrance: The Hiroshima Exhibit Controversy,” *Theory and Society* 27:4 (Aug. 1998): 565-590.

beloved Emperor—a true living god—sanctioned this War? Was their nation and all it stood for not worth fighting for? And, most importantly, why had the Japanese paid such a dear price for their efforts? A fog of confusion descended over the land and its people for several years.<sup>905</sup>

### 5.1.1 Rebuilding Urban Japan: 1946 to 1964

As the only country to be attacked by nuclear weapons, and only one of a few nations subject to Allied carpet and fire bombs, Japan had truly suffered huge losses by the end of World War II. Cities large and small were in ruins. Indeed, much of urban Japan had simply disintegrated into rubble and ash and many people were starving or on the brink of starvation. Although Americans were behind the horrific bombings of Japan during the War, they were also equally responsible for helping rebuild the country afterwards during an occupation starting in 1946 and lasting until 1952. With the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP), American General Douglas MacArthur at the helm, the ultimate goal of the Allies was, of course, to democratize a recently fascist country and dissuade movement towards communism.<sup>906</sup> Just as had been the case in Germany, the presence of the U.S. forces had piqued the curiosity, if nothing else, of the occupied Japanese.

By the mid-1950s, a few years after the Occupation had ended, more recognizable facets of Anglo-American popular culture filtered into Japan. Initially, as in the U.K. and Germany, Jazz became *the* hot music genre in Japan immediately after the War. Also, as elsewhere, this

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<sup>905</sup> Buruma, *Inventing Japan*, 138-144.

<sup>906</sup> William Chapman, *Inventing Japan: The Making of a Postwar Civilization* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991), 5. For the occupation, see Ian Buruma, *Inventing Japan: 1853-1964* (New York: Modern Library Chronicle Books, 2003), 129-152; Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 154-162; Julian Cope, *Japrock sampler: How the Postwar Japanese Blew Their Minds on Rock 'n' Roll* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 28-32.

was not entirely new, but a return to the youth culture trends of 1920s modernity. It was in this earlier decade that *moga* and *mobo*—“modern girls and boys”—initially adopted Jazz as a new, hip music. After the defeat of Imperial Japan, internationally-minded young men and women once again gravitated to it as they had in the 1920s. As one scholar describes it, Jazz clubs were “marked sites for Japanese cosmopolitans to experience the nation’s emergent modernity.”<sup>907</sup> However much Jazz remained an important music genre in Japan, things were soon to be shook up.

It was only a matter of time before American Rock-n-Roll also became a huge hit with Japanese youth. By the mid-fifties *rockabiri* (i.e., Rockabilly) bands and the “Japanese Elvis Presley,” Kosaka Kazura, who even covered “Heartbreak Hotel” in 1956, emerged as the premiere musical style for young people. Another *rockabiri idoru* (“idol”), an Anglo-Japanese named Mickey Curtis, soon emerged on the scene. The year 1959 would also see the arrival of Japan’s first music-oriented youth TV show, *The Hit Parade* (hosted by Curtis) featuring both Japanese rockers and docile pop crooners and singing actors. Soon, similar shows like *Spark Show*, *Hoi Hoi Music School* and *Yume de Aimasho* (*Let’s Meet in Our Dreams*) followed. Though these performers were initially seen as simply imitative of Western stars, some “Japanized” what they were doing. For instance, performer Masaaki Hirao took traditional folk songs and transformed them, giving them a rock and roll sound. Similar to the newly established

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<sup>907</sup> David Novak, “2.5×6 Metres of Space: Japanese Music Coffeehouses and Experimental Practices of Listening,” *Popular Music* 27:1 (2008): 17. Another scholar describes some coffeehouses for young people as also playing Western classical music. See John Morris Dixon, “Introduction: Japanese Avant-garde Architects,” in *The New Japanese Architecture*, ed. Botond Bognar (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 9.

West Germany, this wave of popular culture came to Japan amid increasing prosperity fostered by U.S. aid. The country was experiencing its own “economic miracle.”<sup>908</sup>

Despite the rebuilding of urban Japan from the immediate postwar years onward, greater transformations, both topographical and cultural, began in the following decade. It was during the sixties that Japanese migration from countryside to city peaked. As *Life* magazine Editor-in-Chief noted in 1964, “Since the end of the War, which left her devastated, Japan has grown faster than any other country in the world and is to be congratulated for working so hard and well. Her growth rate—within a capitalist framework—has been nearly 10 percent since 1954... roughly three times that of the U.S.”<sup>909</sup> From this point onward, the modernization that had begun prior to Japan’s militarization in the thirties and forties, put the country en route to the hyper-consumer-conscious society it was to become towards the end of the twentieth century.

While the initial Western influence in postwar Japan came from the United States, it should be noted that the fascist Japanese had previously lumped the U.S. and the U.K. together in their disdain for “Anglo-American liberalism.”<sup>910</sup> Further, Japan and Great Britain shared some things in common. On a very superficial level, one might paint them both as island nations with a penchant for drinking tea and driving on the “wrong side of the road.” On a more serious level, though Britain and Japan had fought on different sides, both of these countries awoke to find their imperial might crushed at the end of the War. Japan lost Manchuria and Korea, while the U.K. lost a good portion of the planet. Just as British young people during the 1950s sought to design a new “empire of cool” in the aftermath of World War II, so did the Japanese. However, prior to Mod’s arrival, a proto-Mod, beatnik-ish type subculture called *Raritteru* looked to

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<sup>908</sup> Cope, *Japrocksampler*, 35-36; Schilling, *Encyclopedia of Japanese Pop*, 197-198; Lipton, *Modern Japan*, 187.

<sup>909</sup> George P. Hunt, “Editorial,” *Life*, Sept. 11, 1964, 2-3.

<sup>910</sup> Buruna, *Inventing Japan*, 113.

almost literally “sleep away” the disappointments of postwar life. Unlike the Mods’ use of amphetamines to boost their jubilant, night-long festivities, this group of Modern Jazz lovers were “intoxicated by sleeping pills,” and took them “to drowse through life, withdrawing into nothingness”—seemingly the desired place through which to “enjoy” life.<sup>911</sup>

Although Britain had not suffered nuclear nightmare, it also found its cityscapes, where Mod culture would develop, in ruins. For the postwar generation, Mod’s celebration of youth and a playful attitude towards consumer culture was refreshing. More importantly, its forward-looking attitude was desperately desired, not just by Britons, but also by youth around the world. Mary Quant later toasted Mods for being a “superbly international” group of young people who decried dangerous pre-World War II notions of nationalism, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia.<sup>912</sup> After all, these same values, whether culturally traditional or not, were those that had led to war. While Quant describes Mod as facilitating camaraderie among youth in the western world, Asian youth were also quickly attracted to this new style, what a *Look* magazine article about this region would by 1967 describe as “the cult of Mod.”<sup>913</sup>

Even some British Mods became aware that their style of youth culture had reached Japan. As early as November 1964, the editorial page of the *Mod’s Monthly* read in boldface, “Mod Scene Booming—From England to Japan,” and further remarked, “We are shortly setting up centers all over the world to distribute Mod books.”<sup>914</sup> Unlike the United States, Mod’s initial impact in Japan was not directly linked to the arrival of the Beatles. Although the Beatles were introduced to Japanese youth via records and other affiliated media products, the Beatles

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<sup>911</sup> Koestler, “For Better or Worse...,” 90.

<sup>912</sup> Mary Quant, “The Young Will Not Be Dictated To,” *Vogue*, Aug. 1, 1966, 87.

<sup>913</sup> Gereon Zimmermann, “Asia,” *Look*, July 11, 1967, 45.

<sup>914</sup> Mark Burns, “Editorial: Mod Scene Booming—From England to Japan,” *The Mod*, Nov. 1964, 1.

themselves did not tour Japan until 1966. Clearly, some Mod activity was brewing prior to the Beatles' 1966 Asian tour.

Nineteen sixty-four was also a fundamentally important year for Tokyo—and by extension—Japan. By hosting the Olympics that year, there was a great push to finally revamp areas that were still in rough shape from the War. This rejuvenating project also extended nationwide, especially in the implementation of new expressways. Everything was to look spectacular and, of course, highly up-to-date. One Japanese chronicler of the 1960s explains it this way, “It was like being able to engineer a ‘future city’ from old science fiction movies one right after another... [In this way] the sixties might just be the most beautiful period in the twentieth century for cities [because of] modern design.”<sup>915</sup> This concept of remaking urban Japan with “science fiction” in mind was taken a step further by the Metabolists—an avant-garde architectural group that came together in 1959.

To understand the importance of the Metabolists' visions, it is necessary to reflect back on merry Mod England circa 1964. The intent of the earliest British Mods was so create a total environmentally-enhanced culture that entailed their own fashion sense, favorite music, and hip hang-outs. They wanted to create and be enveloped by a totally new atmosphere. Their love of modernist design from Italy—whether in clothing or products (suits or Vespas)—shaped their visual realm. Although quickly built sterile postwar building facades dotted urban Britain, interior spaces could be reinvented to be more playful, colorful, and *trés moderne*. The boutiques that began to thrive in Carnaby Street often reflected the ideals of what could be done to mod-ify one's self and one's surroundings. The spaces themselves were also meant to serve as examples of the culture though they reflected various nuanced readings of Mod. One boutique might be

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<sup>915</sup> Takarajima, *Encyclopedia*, 16.

decorated in pop art, while another looked like the latest discotheque, and still another aspired for a space age aesthetic. Thus, young Mods not only went to these stores in search of fab, new, gear, but also the experience of stepping into a differently imagined world.<sup>916</sup>

The Metabolist architects dreamt more outrageous spaces than they actually ended up building, but their legacy lives on. The group was committed to the idea that “life, design, and building share a dynamic process of change,” hence their name. These exceptional innovators had a view of Modernist design that mixed organicism, traditionally Japanese architectural forms, and science fiction fantasies. The “organic” and “Japanese” aspect of the group’s work mirrors earlier adaptations of modernist design and architecture in Japan during the 1920s, and especially in the rebuilding after Tokyo’s 1923 earthquake.<sup>917</sup> Metabolists such as Kisho Kurokawa and Arata Isozaki had an uncanny way of mixing Japanese tradition and a form of British Modernism. One scholar links the group’s dynamism not only to the pop idea of manufactured obsolescence, but also to an aspect of Shinto. The Metabolists’ “concept of change also involved a certain traditionalism, a faithfulness to Japanese history and religion that resulted in efforts to echo symbolic shapes like roofs in their designs; to follow the tradition of the Shinto shrine involves periodic demolition and rebuilding which in turn echoes the obsolescence principle of the British Archigram group by which the Japanese were considerably influenced.” The idea of “change” and a new look for urban Japan also inspired the group to sketch out and create models of floating cities or towering buildings made of interconnected capsule-like structures. Though structures designed by the group were primarily constructed starting in the

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<sup>916</sup> Lesley Jackson, *The Sixties: Decade of Design Revolution* (London: Phaidon, 1998), 109. See also Marnie Fogg, *Boutique: A '60s Cultural Phenomenon* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 2003).

<sup>917</sup> Peter McNeil, “Myths of Modernism: Japanese Architecture, Interior Design and the West, c. 1920-1940,” *Journal of Design History* 5:4 (1992): 281.

early 1970s, their influential ideas would remain and eventually help create snapshots of an overall more Mod Japan in the 1990s and 2000s.<sup>918</sup>

### 5.1.2 The Beatles

A September 1964 issue of *Life* magazine dedicated an entire issue to the western perspective of postwar Japan. The issue examined changes resulting from the War and the American occupation. As youth culture was then a topic of great interest, a large part of the magazine focused on intergenerational tensions. *Life* magazine reported that Beatles' records had already made their mark in the form of the Tokyo Beatles. The article observes "Many youths running away from the old traditions, go western with a vengeance. Hardly had the British Beatles hit the Tokyo record shops than the Japanese had Beatles of their own. In a matter of weeks Tokyo youngsters were gyrating to 'I Want to Hold Your Hand' by Beatles with names like Jiro Ichikawa and Takashi Saito." However, *Life's* American reporter probably made the group sound more popular than they actually were. Though they delivered Beatles songs like "Please Please Me" in Japanese, teenagers soon became much more interested in the English-language originals. In 1966, when the Beatles finally did arrive, they were slated to perform at Tokyo's famed Budokan Hall. Because of this, a tension between East and West was almost immediately palpable.<sup>919</sup>

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<sup>918</sup> George R. Collins, "Visionary Drawings of Architecture and Planning: 20<sup>th</sup> Century through the 1960s," *Art Journal* 38:4 (Summer 1979): 253, 247; Kisho Kurokawa, *Metabolism in Architecture* (London: Studio Vista, 1977), 26-27; Steven Wardell, "Capsule Cure," *Atlantic Monthly*, Oct. 1997, 42-47; Waley, "Re-Scripting the City," 372.

<sup>919</sup> Michael Rougier, "The Young in Rebellion," *Life*, Sept. 11, 1964, 89; Schilling, *Encyclopedia of Japanese Pop*, 200.



Designed for the 1964 Olympic Games, the Budokan had been meant for traditional Japanese martial arts like Judo, certainly not pop or Western events. Members of the older generation displayed “Beatles Go Home” banners upon the band’s arrival while a group of militant right-wing students objected to the Beatles’ influence on Japanese youth.<sup>920</sup> In a press conference prior to their performances, a Japanese reporter posed the following question: “Some Japanese say that your performances will violate the Budokan, which is devoted to traditional martial arts, and that you set a bad example for Japanese youth by leading them astray from traditional Japanese values. What do you think of all that?” In answering the reporter, Paul McCartney turned the situation around by saying that a touring Japanese dancing troupe would not insult British values and that the Beatles were “traditional,” too. In the terse and clever style John Lennon was known for, his reply unfortunately proved less diplomatic: “It’s better to watch singing than wrestling, anyway.” Being blind to their own country’s history of imperialist tendencies and the way the West had long fetishized, feminized, and controlled parts of the “Orient,” the group could not understand why they were poorly received by a faction of nationalistic Japanese. By the end of the tour, the Beatles received multiple death threats and were only too happy to leave Japan immediately following their last performance.<sup>921</sup>

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<sup>920</sup> Glenn Sadin, “Group Sounds and Japanese Pop,” in *Bubblegum Music is the Naked Truth*, Kim Cooper and David Smay, ed. (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2001), 177; Cope, *Japrock sampler*, 87-89. Even the *New York Times* felt the need to cover the arrival of the Beatles in Japan. See Robert Trumbull, “Tokyo is Girding for the Beatles,” *New York Times*, May 22, 1966, 12, and Emerson Chapin, “Visit from the Beetorusu Gives Tokyo Police Hard Day’s Night,” *New York Times*, July 1, 1966, 38. For reference specifically to this aspect of the Beatles’ reception in Japan, see Devin McKinney, *Magic Circles: The Beatles in Dream and History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 127. For more information on the phenomenon of nationalistic Japanese student radicals during the 1960s, see Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 194-195.

<sup>921</sup> This tension is documented in newsreels filmed in conjunction with *Concert at Budokan 1966* (1966), which is currently unavailable in the United States. However, some of this footage is found in the *Beatles Anthology* (Los Angeles: Apple Corps. Ltd., 1995). Information on this tour is commonly written about in most Beatles biographies. This interview text was found quoted online: “Beatles Photos and Quotes Database: 1966,” <http://www.geocities.com/~beatleboy1/db66.html> (accessed Nov. 15 2004); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 6.

Despite the controversial visit, there were still many Japanese youth who *did* respond favorably to the Beatles tour of Japan. As current Japanologist and former Teardrop Explodes front man Julian Cope explains, “If early July 1966 was a cool time to be English in Japan, then late ’66 was even better, as the England football team won the World Cup... [There were] Carnaby Street threads, Union Jack prints, Swinging London and the fabulous four were all the Japanese could think about.” The so-called “Beatles Typhoon” was what the Japanese called *their* British Invasion.<sup>922</sup> In its wake, a plethora of Beat style combos with names like the Tigers, the Tempters, and the Carnabeats adopted a Mod look and musical style under the banner of “Group Sounds” (“G.S.”) shortly after the Beatles’ departure and remained active into the early 1970s.

According to a 1969 *Rolling Stone* article on the Japanese rock scene, the term was devised because the two r’s and two l’s in rock and roll made the English word too difficult for most Japanese to pronounce. In imitating British bands, and often even covering their songs, bands like the Tigers and the Spiders attempted to be just as media-savvy as their western counterparts. While published during the height of the hippie-influenced “flower power” aesthetic in the United States and Europe, *Rolling Stone*’s 1969 report of Japanese G.S. bands describes a scene that is still in awe of mid-sixties Mod style. According to the article’s author, “Right now, in early 1969, much of the clothing, the long hair, and music, is early Beatles, meticulously neat, well-combed, and copied note for note.” Record covers and promotional

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<sup>922</sup> Takarajima, *1960nen Daihyakka* [*Encyclopedia of the 1960s*], 102, 104, 106; I. Hitomi, “The Spiders,” *Trans-World 60s Punk* at <http://60spunk.m78.com/spiders.htm> (accessed Nov. 5, 2008).

photographs of many G.S. bands show them in matching, uniform-like outfits comparable to those worn by the Beatles during the early phase of their fame.<sup>923</sup>

Like the Beatles or the Stones, several of these groups benefited from savvy management. Unlike an initially more youthful, underground, and/or hip command of the emerging “youth market” that a Brian Epstein or an Andrew Loog Oldham gave their groups, many G.S. bands were managed by two huge corporations. Watanabe Productions and Asuka Pro immediately groomed G.S. outfits for mass consumption. A Mod promotional look already successful with the Beatles and other British bands, for instance, became a safe style strategy to promote these groups. The Tigers, for instance, not only played this promotional game, but also appeared in completely different (matching) outfits for each new single that came out. They were also the first G.S. band to play the once verboten Bukodan, which the Beatles had, of course, already “christened.” This intentional corporate “make over” could be read as more Monkees-than-Beatles, as management tried to censor any signs of truly rebellious behavior among their groups. For instance, The Golden Cups were required to play more staid songs on their TV appearances, while their live shows tended to be raucous, feedback-drenched rave-ups.<sup>924</sup> As Daisuke Usui (Nagoya, b. 1971) would tell me in 2004 when I asked him about G.S. bands: “The Golden cups were the rebels, bad boys: taking drugs, having fights.”<sup>925</sup> Apparently, any attempts to truly hide this reputation by Watanabe or Asuka ultimately failed. Almost forty years later, the reputation that has persisted is evident from Usui’s words.

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<sup>923</sup> Guy de Launey, “Not-so-Big in Japan: Western Pop Music in the Japanese Market,” *Popular Music* 14 (May 1995): 203–225; Kimura Atsuko “Japanese Corporations and Popular Music,” *Popular Music* 10 (Oct. 1991): 317–326, and Max E. Lash, “Japanese Rock,” *Rolling Stone*, Mar. 1, 1969, 12; For instance, see the reprinted single sleeves in Various Artists, *Wildworld Volume Two: Japan Wild Favorites!* Wildworld 002, CD; Various Artists, *GS Meets Soft Rocks*, Chronicle TECN-25706, CD.

<sup>924</sup> Cope, *Japrocksampler*, 93-94; Schilling, *Encyclopedia of Japanese Pop*, 202.-204.

<sup>925</sup> Daisuke Usui, Oral history interview with author, analog recording transferred to digital, July 21, 2004, Elephant’s Nest Pub, Nagoya, DCUP.

The Spiders were an exception to the rule and were not under corporate management. They were diligent in seeking and achieving national success, but also sought acknowledgement from the West. Up until that time, the only Japanese to have had a hit in the West was Kyu Sakamoto with the song “Sukiyaki” (1963). In the fall of 1966, the group toured Europe, playing among other venues, the famed Hamburg Star-Club, the venue for many of their musical heroes (fig. 35). They also starred in several movies: *Wild Scheme A-Go-Go* (1967), which featured the Spiders doing what was called their “Monkey Dance,” and *Go Forward!* (1968), a rock-meets-espionage-film, were intentional nods to the Beatles films *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) and *Help* (1965), respectively. These bands adopted Mod style in the hopes that a Beatles-like charisma and, maybe even, international success would follow. Nonetheless, neither the Spiders, nor any of their rival bands, ever became big names outside their native Japan during the 1960s or 1970s.<sup>926</sup>

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<sup>926</sup> Mitsu Tôru, “Introduction: Japanese Issue,” *Popular Music* 10:3 (Oct. 1991): 259; Sadin, “Group Sounds,” 178; Cope, *Japrocksampler*, 99.



Figure 35 The Spiders in Hamburg. Courtesy K & K Center-of Beat and Ulf Krüger.

The mania which followed the fashionable and charismatic Beatles around the globe took on a near-religious tint. At least one scholar argues that in contemporary mass society, fandom around popular culture phenomena has replaced religion as a “unifying element.” Though John Lennon’s now-infamous remark of the same year (1966), about the Beatles being more popular than Jesus, had caused the group’s albums to be burnt in some U.S. states, this probably had little resonance with the mostly non-Christian Japanese.<sup>927</sup> Instead, in a similar-yet-different vein, traditionally-minded Japanese worried the Beatles embodied a way in which Western popular culture was treated as god-like and all-encompassing. Even a playwright who was part of the

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<sup>927</sup> Mark Sullivan, “‘More Popular Than Jesus’: The Beatles and the Religious Far Right,” *Popular Music* 6 (Oct. 1987): 313-326. Jonathan Gould, *Can’t Buy Me Love: The Beatles, Britain, and America* (New York: Harmony Books, 2007), 346-347.

post-*shingeki* (postmodern) theatre movement of the 1960s “cast” the group as transformative characters in his production *Atashi no Beatles* (*My Beatles*, 1967), where they were meant to symbolize how ancient gods would return to Earth in contemporary form.<sup>928</sup>

This linkage also reflects what more recently has been written about the religious aspects of fan culture surrounding rock stars in Japan. Writing about this phenomenon, Hiroshi Aoyagi believes that the continued influence of Shinto in Japan manifests as a blending of religious rituals with day-to-day life: the ancient and the modern.<sup>929</sup> I posit this is reflective not just in pop idol worship, but in the subcultural affiliations there, too. As British Mod Stuart Whitman recounted, “I can remember going to *Modstock*, which was about four years ago at the Rocket in Holloway Road [London]. We got there and there was loads of Japanese people starting taking photographs of everybody and, you know, and they’re really into it—really big—you know how Japanese people get into everything so big? And they’re really obsessed with it, you know?”<sup>930</sup> A near-zealous devotion to being every stitch a Mod, for instance, is perhaps why the Japanese stand out among this transnational youth culture.

“For many fans of popular culture,” Michael Indra writes, “organized religion seems less relevant, partly because they perceive it as backward looking rather than forward looking.”<sup>931</sup> As we have seen in previous chapters, the idea of Mod is a celebration of innovation, contemporaneity, and what a truly “modern future” could be. This paradoxically holds true for Mod today. Another astute view of this intense connection to Mod may be provided by religion

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<sup>928</sup> Goodman, *Return of the Gods*, 14.

<sup>929</sup> Hiroshi Aoyagi, *Islands of Eight Million Smiles: Idol Performance and Symbolic Production in Contemporary Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 33.

<sup>930</sup> Stuart Whitman, Oral history interview with author, digital recording, Aug. 26, 2007, NUTS Weekender, Brighton, DCUP.

<sup>931</sup> Michael Indra, “It’s About Faith in Our Future: *Star Trek* Fandom as Cultural Religion” in *Religion and Popular Culture in America*, ed. Bruce and David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 171.

scholar Richard B. Pilgrim. He has described Japanese culture as one in which “artistic form and aesthetic sensibility become synonymous with religious form and religious (or spiritual) sensibility.” Since Mod is also a lifestyle that is especially concerned about the aesthetic details of everyday consumer goods—a way to make the ordinary special—this subculture theoretically is a perfect fit for Japan.<sup>932</sup>

Another aspect of the Shinto religion is the search for purity. In 1964, psychologist Robert Jay Lifton describes a “special intensity” that some postwar political movements and ideologies had. Those involved “deplore[d]... impurity in the world around [them]—the threat of war—and [sought] out, however theoretically, a universal symbol of peace. In the initial wave of Mod in Japan, young people there, not dissimilar to Mods in the U.K., Germany, or the U.S. saw “impurity” in the sterile, adult world around them. They had not witnessed war as their parents and grandparents had, but they did not see the *sarariman* (salaried man) and dedication to work and corporate progress as the highlight of modern life. This Japanese version of the “organization man” was “the personification of impure self-betrayal, of rote, purposeless subservience both to his immediate superiors and the overall social and economic system.”<sup>933</sup> If emperor worship had ceased once the Japanese lost the war, and many of the (mostly male) adults around them found satisfaction in “working for the man,” then young people gravitated to a less sterile form of achievement and materialism through a strange hybrid form of consumerism and spirituality. Is it really so strange? After all, as one scholar has it, “Religion is a repertoire of cultural practices and performances, of human relations and exchanges, in which people conduct symbolic negotiations over material objects and material negotiations over sacred

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<sup>932</sup> Richard B. Pilgrim, “The Artistic Way and the Religio-Aesthetic Tradition in Japan,” *Philosophy of East and West* 27:3 (July 1977): 285.

<sup>933</sup> Robert Jay Lifton, “Individual Patterns in Historical Change: Imagery of Japanese Youth,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 6:4 (July 1964): 371.

symbols.”<sup>934</sup> With the ever-circulating and contested stories about what Mod culture is or can be (among Mods themselves), there is a great amount of seriousness attributed to youth culture allegiance in general, and this quality, as we shall see, is more than evident in Japan.

## 5.2 JAPAN’S MOD SCENE CIRCA 2004

I first became aware of a Japanese Mod scene through the Internet in late 2002. From looking at the *Uppers* website’s “city guide” web pages for Japan, I discovered there were regular Mod-themed events in Tokyo and Nagoya. I also learned of a bar dedicated to the Jam’s Paul Weller in Kyoto, which I realized I had to see with my own eyes to believe.<sup>935</sup> When I journeyed to Japan in the summer of 2004 to observe the Mod scene there, I traveled to these three cities. I also added Osaka to my list in order to interview a member of Shonen Knife, an alternative band whose matching, onstage outfits often quote the 1960s. Aside from the continued existence of Mod culture in Japan, it is possible, at times, to glimpse sixties icons and motifs in more mainstream spaces. For instance, in 1999, images of the Beatles and the American TV show *Bewitched* appeared in Television commercials.<sup>936</sup> Dinner-theatre-type venues in Tokyo and Osaka (and probably in other Japanese cities, though I was not able to see them myself) host Beatles look-and-sound-alike bands, while Mary Quant products are available at department

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<sup>934</sup> David Chidester, “The Church of Baseball, The Fetish of Coca-Cola, and the Potlatch of Rock ‘n’ Roll,” in *Religion and Popular Culture in America*, ed. Bruce David Forbes and Jeffery H. Mahan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 225.

<sup>935</sup> “City Guide: Japan,” *Uppers Organization* at <http://www.uppers.org/showCityguide.asp?country=9&city=0> (accessed Nov. 6, 2008).

<sup>936</sup> Michael Prieler, “Japanese Advertising’s Foreign Obsession,” in *Japanizing: The Structure of Culture and Thinking in Japan*, Peter Lutum, ed. (Berlin: LIT, 2006), 239.



stores. The host of *Matthew's Best Hit TV* wears a blonde, mop-topped wig and sports many fitted and brightly colored suits—not unlike fictional sixties spy *Austin Powers*.<sup>937</sup>

From Tokyo to Nagoya, aspects of Japanese commercial culture today embrace icons of the Mod era such as Twiggy, Mary Quant, and the Beatles. For instance, a female Mod living in Tokyo today could easily find Mary Quant cosmetics and accessories via its many kiosks throughout the city's department stores. This same woman may also buy a newly released Twiggy CD and Twiggy doll with her Twiggy-branded Japan Credit Bank (JCB) "Linda" credit card (fig. 36). At the end of a long day of shopping, she might then take in a show at Roppongi's recreated Cavern Club to see a Japanese Beatles tribute band perform for three thousand yen.<sup>938</sup>



**Figure 36 Twiggy JCB flyer advertisement. Collected by author.**

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<sup>937</sup> *Matthew's Best Hit TV* at <http://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/matthewuv/> (accessed Nov. 6, 2008).

<sup>938</sup> Twiggy "products" were easily found in urban Japan during the summer of 2004. Japanese toy company Medicom launched a line of Twiggy dolls. The packaging for these dolls announces in English, "Mod Queen Twiggy Begins Again!" Meanwhile, JCB's "Linda" project team, made up of women in their twenties and thirties, chose sixties-era images of Twiggy for their credit card logo because, per team leader: "When I first saw photos of Twiggy I couldn't believe they were more than thirty years old...With her fashion and make-up, she could fit right into the 'in' set in Tokyo today" (Toshihide Kanno, "Twiggy: '60s Fashion Icon Returns," <http://asahi.com/English/weekend/k2002051900117.html>, accessed Jan. 20, 2004); Tokyo and Osaka have recreated Liverpool's now defunct Cavern Club; the club where the Beatles started their career. Both Cavern Clubs regularly feature Japanese Beatles tribute bands. In 2004 the exchange rate was 100 Yen to the U.S. Dollar.

Clearly, though, I was more curious to see the Japanese Mod scene in action, than how aspects of the culture have been commercialized. I attended two smaller Mod events in the Shinjuku and Roppongi neighborhoods (“Facing Facts” and “French Blue”) and one larger event in Shibuya (“Friday on My Mind”), held at Tokyo’s Club Quattro. “Facing Facts” was a dance event featuring five different DJs spinning primarily American rhythm and blues and soul from the late fifties to early sixties. One DJ whom I talked to there wore a flat cap and jeans and told me his favorite bands were American garage-type groups like the Sonics. Another DJ in his mid-twenties, who played in a band called Big Fanny and the Sharps, told me his favorite performer is James Brown and that he loves the Blues. He, too, was wearing a flat cap and jeans. At one point, two rows of girls wearing more 1950s versus 1960s-style dresses dance in synchronized, Motownesque steps as if they had already practiced beforehand.

“French Blue” took place on a Sunday afternoon into early evening and incorporated a scooter rally (from Shibuya to Roppongi) that turned into a multi-band concert and DJ event at a nightclub. As a cavalcade of Vespas and Lambrettas roared down a Shibuya side street, I noticed that many of the girls riding these scooters were wearing black helmets that looked similar to those jockeys would wear, which is a fashion accessory I had not seen elsewhere (fig. 37).



**Figure 37** Mod girls wearing unusual helmets. Tokyo, June 2004. Photo by Corey LeChat.

Overall, the scene was vibrant: young women in bright green, red, and purple dresses; young men in brightly striped shirts and sharply tailored jackets. After the scooter run—at the nightclub—bands with names like the Outs and Boy Friends hit the stage, with the Marquee as one of the headliners. Appearing onstage in Italian-style suits and with tricked-out, expensive-looking equipment, I paid special attention to the bassist, who was holding his teardrop-shaped bass almost vertically à la the Stones' Bill Wyman. The DJs spin a potpourri of different styles—from Northern Soul to Beat—and the ratio of male to female DJs is nearly equal.

The next event I attend, “Friday on My Mind” (named after the mid-sixties hit by Australian band, the Easybeats), features the Japanese band The Collectors—a Tokyo-based Mod rock group who have been together since the early 1980s. They have since achieved mainstream, commercial success in Japan, but still employ Mod imagery such as targets and

British flags in their press and CD designs.<sup>939</sup> At this event, and through the event's co-coordinator, Kotaro Furuta, I was able to meet two early members of the 1980s Tokyo Mod scene, Manabu "Modfather" Kuroda and Masami "The Mod" Murano. Also in attendance at the venue were some staff members of *Girls 60s* magazine, Mizuki Ishikawa, art editor and Eri Nishimura, writer and editor—who sold copies of their magazine in the venue's foyer.

In Kyoto I spent time at the Weller's Club. It was a shrine-like nightclub dedicated to British Mod icon Paul Weller. After having seen a bar in the Shinjuku neighborhood of Tokyo dedicated to the Small Faces' Steve Marriott called "Feels So Marriott: Heartful Rockland," I was starting to wonder if such "tribute clubs" were commonplace. Tadashi Yamamoto's club is dimly lit and had minimal furnishings, but what *was* there was definitively of mid-century design: white, round, and low-to-the ground, pod-like chairs. Days in Kyoto are spent walking through covered shopping arcades, where I find vintage clothing stores such as Eve and Emu & Stag where many sixties fashions were available, if relatively expensive compared to U.S. prices. Also in Kyoto was Happy Jack, a record store that is named after a mid-sixties' song by the Who, and is a shop that primarily, if appropriately, deals in vinyl versus CDs. In the store there were separate sections for Mod music as well as British Beat, and a few English-language books available about Mod.

There were similar stores in Osaka, though more plentiful there were Mod-style furniture stores. The most impressive of these was called Spiral in the Trip—which looked like a warehouse full of movie set pieces from the 1968 film *2001* (fig. 38).

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<sup>939</sup> George Young and Harry Vanda, comp., "Friday on my Mind," performed by the Easybeats, *The Easybeats: Absolute Anthology*, Impact IMTLP 5.00012, 33 rpm. See for instance the CD packaging of The Collectors, *More Complete Set of the BAIDIS Years*, Baidis Tecn-35829-30, CD.



Figure 38 2001 in Osaka, summer 2004. Photo by Corey LeChat.

In fact, the store actually sells recreations of French designer Olivier Mourgue’s Djinn chairs (1965), which were featured in the film. A virtual sea of these chairs appear in scene that takes place in the lobby of a rotating, Hilton Hotel, which is located en route to the moon.<sup>940</sup> Not so ironically, perhaps, the store itself opened in 2001, which by 2004 evoked a double nostalgia—both for director Stanley Kubrick’s 1960s vision of a full-tilt space age and the fact that the “futuristic” year of 2001 was already three years past.<sup>941</sup> Large, white, and orb-like TVs and record players dominated the store’s interior and window display, as did Italian-designed chairs, coffee tables, and mini sofas. The store’s sixties-design theme was clear from the moment I saw it. The items that populated the store fit what art historian Lesley Jackson has described as an important aspect of sixties design. He writes that by the early 1960s “spheres, domes, and discs, while the pattern design in the circle itself [was] the most dominant images.” These

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<sup>940</sup> *2001: A Space Odyssey*, DVD, directed by Stanley Kubrick (1968; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007); *Stanley Kubrick* website at <http://www.stanleykubrick.de/eng.php?img=img-l-6&kubrick=newsletter14-eng> (accessed on Nov. 30, 2008).

<sup>941</sup> For this view of “retro-futuristic nostalgia,” see Elizabeth E. Guffey, *Retro: The Culture of Revival* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 23-24.

shapes, as we have seen in Chapter One, were integral to the curvilinear design of mid-sixties Mod style. By the decade's end the first spherical television was also designed and is now included in what Mods consider part of the design style today. When I talked with the store's owner she proudly showed me how her shop was recently featured in the latest issue of *Girls 60s* magazine, garnering both the Mod community's stamp of approval and patronage.<sup>942</sup>

Traveling out of the Kansai region of Japan and onward to Nagoya, I was impressed with the vibrant Mod scene there. For instance, there were two events being held on the night of July 24, 2004 and both were attended by between sixty to eighty people in rather small venues. The Osu Kannon shopping district of Nagoya also had at least three distinctively Mod-oriented clothing shops including the Other, His Clothes, and Métropolitain. Besides this, there were other vintage shops that carried Mod sixties styles with those of other eras. In particular, the Other serves as ground zero for a wealth of Mod activity. The store sponsors music events in Nagoya two or three times a year and also produces a limited amount of 60s-influenced music CDs under the store's name (fig. 39).

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<sup>942</sup> Jackson, *The Sixties*, 83, 109.



Figure 39 "The Other" shop, Nagoya. Summer 2004. Photo by Corey LeChat.

Niche media also contribute to the sense of identity formation among contemporary Japanese Mods. What is foregrounded here is a definite “group mentality,” that suggests that if one follows these simple steps, you can be “in” with the Mods crowd. Editors of *Girls60s*, which was first published in 2004, proclaim on its cover that it is a “Real 60s Fashion and Lifestyle” magazine for women interested in Mod style. Though its fashion spreads and shopping tips are formatted similarly to both mainstream and underground western fashion and lifestyle magazines such as *Vogue* or *Bust*, the content and look is focused on the niche audience of Japanese Mod girls. Based in Tokyo, but covering the Mod scene throughout the country, the magazine acts a guide to the Mod lifestyle and advises young women what to wear and where to shop if they want to be part of the “sixties scene.” In this sense, niche media as embodied by *Girls 60s* magazine functions similarly to Japan’s “manual books” popularized in the 1980s and 1990s.

These books gave detailed instructions on specific hobby or lifestyle choices and how to fully incorporate them in one's everyday life.<sup>943</sup>

Three articles are extremely telling of various aspects of Japan's adoption and adaptation of Mod in the early twenty-first century. An article in the spring issue of the magazine features the lead singer of the Collectors, Hisashi Katoh, advising readers, "The Mod culture is boys' culture. So Mod girls (also called Modettes) are, in some ways, the best accessories of cool Mods," and then gives Mick Jagger's sixties-era girlfriend Marianne Faithfull as a shining example. The article continues to say that Mod girls may never be more stylish than male Mods and, further, because of her "B-grade" attractiveness (and singing chop), Lulu is the prime example of Mod-sixties girlhood. Unfortunately, it is likely that Katoh's male-centric reading of Mod—and especially because he is a lauded Mod "rock star"—could negatively impact a female Mod's sense of true belonging. In this reading, the "Modette" is a prized accessory that is both needed to reinforce the heteronormativity of the culture and also the superior attractiveness of the males in the scene. She should be smartly dressed and "with it," but also unobtrusive in this Mod, male world.<sup>944</sup> Despite an article such as this one, and a few odd looks given to me by some of the male Mods I tried to interview there, I am still reluctant to assess Japan's Mod scene as potentially "more sexist" than those in the U.K., Germany, or the U.S., especially since the only overt sexism I experienced was from an expatriate—an English teacher living in Japan. For some reason, he refused to acknowledge that I (and not my male travel companion, Corey) was the one studying the Japanese Mod scene and avoided eye contact with me during the whole of our conversation.

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<sup>943</sup> Kaoru Sakuraba, "Different just like everyone else," *Nikkei Weekly*, Nov. 15, 1999.

<sup>944</sup> Hisashi Katoh, "Swinging London," *Girls 60s*, Spring 2004, 51.



Thus, while such observations *may* lead readers to think that Mod lends itself (yet again) to some kind of gendered hierarchy in Japan, several other articles in this and another issue contradict this sentiment. A review of the 2004 Ryuichi Honda film *Pussycat! Go! Go! Go!* reveals the young director's desire to recreate the 1965 Russ Meyer film *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (fig. 40)



Figure 40 Advertisement/Poster for the film *Pussycat! Go! Go! Go!*. Collected by author.

The original features buxom, strong, and, for lack of a better term, “ass-kicking,” women in hip clothing who get into all sorts of trouble.<sup>945</sup> Unlike the Meyer film, though, where the leads sport tight-fitting, black and rockabilly-ish attire, Honda’s heroines are cloaked in go-go boots, floral mini-dresses, and the like. Their toughness is thus counteracted by more visually playful, Mod fashions. Another “pro girl” article is called “Mod Girl Group: That’s a NoNo!” The piece chronicles the rise of a Tokyo-based, sixties-inspired female band. The members met in the city’s Mod scene and appear equally serious about their music and style. They relate to the article’s author that their next gig has them wearing “garage fashion,” but the one after that will have them wearing something “bright and cute.” What they say about their love of R&B music, though, is endlessly fascinating—especially in terms of Mod’s transnationalism. One of the band members muses that they “admire white R&B groups who admire black R&B... we love the primitive rhythm unique to whites who cannot express blackness completely.” She then opines that they are putting a “yellow” spin on this white interpretation of black music. If that is not a truly transnational statement about Mod’s peculiar relationship to race and style, then I do not know what is. Then, it can be truly said, that while *Girls 60s* is a way to “train” women to be Mod consumers, it is also a source that can also make readers reflect about which qualities of Mod are lost or gained in Japanese translation.<sup>946</sup>

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<sup>945</sup> *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, directed by Russ Meyer (1965; Hollywood, CA: RM Films International Inc., 2005).

<sup>946</sup> “Girls 60s Cinema Close Up: *Pussycat! Go! Go! Go!*,” *Girls 60s*, Summer 2004, 57; “Mod Girl Group: That’s a NoNo!” *Girls 60s*, Summer 2004, 26-28.

### 5.2.1 The Scooter, Modernity, and the Vespa in Japan

Since Mod is primarily an urban phenomenon, and Tokyo remains one of the world's most populous cities, it is no surprise that the city is one of Mod culture's twenty-first century hubs. Given their style consciousness, young Japanese today are as concerned with keeping up their image as the original British Mods were, no matter which fashion allegiances are made. Borrowing from Roland Barthes's *Empire of Signs*, sociologist John Clammer describes contemporary urban Japan as a "sign saturated society," whereby citizens "consume a particular product primarily for its symbolic value." Clammer characterizes urban Japan's "centerlessness, neon saturated streets, temporary looking buildings, and simulational zones [as] both sites of consumption and sites/sights to be consumed." In creating Mod communities, today's Japanese Mods help determine the look of their urban terrain—they are "urban images makers," because they design spaces or sites for consumption, such as their events and stores, and also visually consume a myriad of traditionally Mod images in constructing their lifestyle. And, though the Metabolist architects' did not end up constructing as many actual futuristic-looking structures as they designed, space-aged themed "Love" and, especially, "Capsule" hotels, reflect some of their aspirations. As an important model for Ridley Scott's set-in-the-future film *Blade Runner* (1982), Corbusian-style buildings and neon-dominated streets, contemporary, urban Japan is, in this way, a highly Mod place.<sup>947</sup>

As this dissertation has shown, Mod has used many material symbols to express its ideological bent. If one were to think of a single, metaphorical object from the archive of images

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<sup>947</sup> John Clammer, *Contemporary Urban Japan: A Sociology of Consumption* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 47; Waley, "Re-Scripting the City," 363, 372-373; Sarah Chaplin, *Japanese Love Hotels: A Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 2007), 94.

that exist to describe Mod's past and present incarnation, it would also be the Italian scooter. In 1997 the San Francisco, all-female pop-rock outfit, The Kirby Grips, recorded a song called "Mod Boy" as an ode to the latter-day Mods that lyricist China Tamblyn had encountered in the 1980s and 90s. "Mod Boy," she sings, "Meet me in Brighton and bring your Lambretta."<sup>948</sup> Invoking the Lambretta in a British setting, Tamblyn touches upon what remains the premiere image associated with Mod style: the Italian scooter. The sleek and stylish Lambretta or Vespa favored by Mods symbolize youth and forward movement. As both consumer goods and objects coveted by a particular group, scooters, like Mod, are about the brokering between commercial and subcultural style. And, as mirrored in the sprightly speed of the scooter, Mod represents a playful spin on a fast-paced, urban-centered world.

Looking even further beyond these interpretations, though, there is something else valuable to be gleaned from the idea Mods and their scooters. Rushing by on their Vespas at feverishly fast speeds, the Mods take in a great mass of images that blur together within their vision. What is understood through this visual montage? Is it similar to Wolfgang Shivelbusch's observations on early twentieth century train travel where "speed causes objects to escape from one's gaze, but one nevertheless keeps on trying to grasp them?"<sup>949</sup> Similar to media-driven experiences today, with their constant glut and rapidity of images, it is often hard to discern how one picture connects to the next. We are nonetheless required to make sense of them. The pace of the scooter in conjunction with these images mirrors this identifiable modern reality where we are expected to make quicker connections between the things we see.

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<sup>948</sup> China Tamblyn "Mod Boy" on *The Kirby Grips Starring in "The Celery Stalks at Night,"* The Kirby Grips, Late Bloomers Records 2-23-56, CD. As an interesting side note, China Tamblyn's uncle, Larry Tamblyn, was a founding member of American garage band, the Standells, who are discussed in Chapter Three. Her father is the actor Russ Tamblyn, who is also mentioned in Chapter Two.

<sup>949</sup> Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 57.

In its signification of movement, it is the scooter that embodies Mod's urgent *nowness*, whereby a moving panorama of past and future visions is visible together in one glimpse. Taking in many visuals at once, Mods on their scooters are somehow simultaneously aware both of what lay behind and ahead of them. Mods today see and interpret a mix of signifiers and images as if they were spread across a wide horizon; where a re-vision of history is juxtaposed with future possibilities. American Alex Baker touches on this metaphor: "The thing about the [original] Mods was that they were actually embracing newness [...] they were *scanning the horizon* and looked beyond where they were. [They thought:] 'We like these suits and scooters from Italy—they were trying to invent their own little culture and they were very in tune with things that were going on.'"<sup>950</sup> It is this concept that remains true to Mod today: the culture has become a mixing and matching of the most visionary ideas and styles assembled—not just from disparate locations—but moments in time.

Taking this metaphor one step further, imagine a group of Mods speeding on their Vespas going from club to club or party to party. Amid all the comings and goings there is a palpable anticipation that the next party should be better than the last—but would it *really* be? Would it not just be more of the same—with all the recognizably familiar signs of their culture? As I have touched upon throughout this dissertation, an essential part of the Mod narrative is that excitement for the present was combined with expectations of an even more exciting, more modern future. However, there was tension inherent even in that sentiment as expressed by The Who lyrics "Hope I die before I get old."<sup>951</sup> As much as the earliest Mods embraced modernity and all the trappings of contemporary life, there was still some doubt as to whether the future

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<sup>950</sup> Alex Baker, Oral history interview with author, analog recording transferred to digital, Jan. 3, 2003, the Bourgeois Pig Café, Los Angeles, DCUP.

<sup>951</sup> Pete Townshend, comp., *My Generation / Shout and Shimmy*, the Who, Brunswick 05944, 45 rpm.

would indeed be better, or even as good as “the now.” Perhaps this was as good as it would get. Besides, the future also meant an end to youth. Would idealism fade as they got older?

As I have indicated in previous chapters, Mod idealizes modernity so that it can be a route to transcendence. On a visceral level, perhaps the scooter works as a conduit for this. Umberto Eco recognizes the vehicle’s transformational powers: “The Vespa came to be linked in my eyes with [...] the subtle seduction of faraway places where [it] was the only means for transport.”<sup>952</sup> If the recall of Mod today—imbued as it can be with nostalgic, wishful thinking—takes us back to a better version of modernity, then it is the Vespa that take us there. The Vespa becomes symbolic of people and places continually longing to move forward, yet also looking back. Eco’s words are certainly suggestive of the way Mods today nostalgically paint the sixties: no matter how fast your drive, you have inevitably missed the *actual* party—but why not try to throw another one? In embracing the scooter, and therefore, Mod, contemporary Mods attempt to find a new kind of party invoking memories of the last one.

As often shown in the previous chapters, popular notions of *sixties* Mods today are linked to images of Mods on scooters racing down the highways of southern England in the 1979 film *Quadrophenia*. It has become evident that this was a film which first introduced many of today’s Mod’s to the culture. It also etched the scooter into people’s minds as an important part of the culture. In fact, the film goes so far as to make the scooter synonymous with the Mod’s sense of identity. When the film’s protagonist Jimmy Cooper no longer wants to be a Mod, the only solution is the destruction of his scooter and all it symbolizes. One song featured on the soundtrack is called “The Real Me,” so the issue of Jimmy’s identity is central to the film.<sup>953</sup> In *Quadrophenia* the scooter becomes an extension of who Jimmy is, or at least, who he is trying to

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<sup>952</sup> Qtd. in “Vespa Obsession,” *Piaggio Vespa*, at [www.vespa.org](http://www.vespa.org) (accessed on Feb. 27, 2003).

<sup>953</sup> Pete Townshend, comp., “The Real Me,” on *Quadrophenia*, performed by the Who, MCA MCA2-10004, 33rpm.

be. In this identification between the Mod and his scooter, Jimmy projects all that he desires to be onto a mechanically precise machine.

Like Jimmy, the first subcultural Mods strove for an excessively perfect appearance and the affect of upward mobility. The Vespa was symbolic of both these aspirations. As Dick Hebdige explains, “The Mods converted themselves into objects, they ‘chose’ to make themselves Mods, attempting to impose systematic control over the narrow domain which was ‘theirs,’ and within which they saw their ‘real selves’ invested.”<sup>954</sup> With all its streamlined perfection the Vespa symbolized a type of soulful materialism to the Mods. It was more than just machinery—it was instead a metaphor for what kind of person they sought to be: urban and sophisticated, modern and well traveled.

Based on their consumer rationale, Mods assumed this personal excellence—and therefore happiness—could be bought. In Mod style, with its emphasis on image and consumer culture, there was a sense that happiness could indeed be purchased. It is then not altogether unsurprising that the scooter, as the ultimate symbol for “dreams that money *can* buy,”<sup>955</sup> has made a rather pronounced appearance in Japan’s contemporary Mod scene. Though Japan’s rise to becoming a consumer utopia accelerated in the postwar period, and peaked in the 1980s, this current consumption of “Mod goods” is different in the sense that it is not automatically available within mainstream culture. It requires social networking (both on and offline) in order to find where these items can be located and purchased. It also a consumer practice which has

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<sup>954</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (London: Routledge, 1988), 111.

<sup>955</sup> I thought this turn of phrase was my own, but it has been used several times before. For instance, it was used as the title for a surrealist film in the immediate postwar period. See *Dreams That Money Can Buy*, directed by Hans Richter (1946; London: Bfi Video, 2006).

evolved through the empathetic appropriation of *other* cultures' nostalgic longings. This is a phenomenon some scholars see as increasingly common in contemporary Japan.<sup>956</sup>

The feverish use of these scooters by the original British Mods during the early sixties never fully translated into the American Mod scene, where it was not necessary to own a scooter to be a “true Mod.” However, the Japanese I spoke with appeared to take the scooter as seriously, if not more seriously, than their British counterparts. British expatriate and Tokyo resident Gordon Moir (b. 1966) remarks on the amount of money Tokyo Mods put into the purchase and maintenance of their scooters. According to Moir, these are not just any scooters, but the best vintage Vespas and Lambrettas available anywhere. At Tokyo's French Blue scooter rally held in June 2004, Moir pointed to a gold Lambretta and said, “You're talking about over five thousand pounds (approximately \$9200 in U.S. dollars based on current exchange rates). They're dream scooters... you can't even afford one of those if you re-mortgage your house these days. People of my age get one of those and put them in the living room and say, 'I'm not going to ride apart from sunny days.' To see them in the really sixties style with the extra accessories is quite unusual.”<sup>957</sup>

According to Kotaro Furuta (b. 1970), longtime Mod enthusiast and owner of Jungle Scooters, a Vespa and Lambretta dealership in the Setagaya district of Tokyo, scooters have played a crucial role in Tokyo's Mod scene from the late seventies onward. He described how in 1979 after a midnight viewing of the film *Quadrophenia* in Tokyo's Shinjuku district, two teenagers decided they were going to be Mods. Each of them thought that they must be the only

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<sup>956</sup> It is said that Japan oscillates between a nostalgia for the “quaint Asia” it has never been—that of southeast Asia—and, for instance, idealized western pasts, like that of the American 1950s, the styles of which became very popular in the 1980s. See Koichi Iwabuchi, “Nostalgia for a (Different) Asian Modernity: Media Consumption of ‘Asia’ in Japan,” *Positions* 10:3 (2002): 549; Karal Ann Marling, “Letter from Japan: Kenbei vs. All-American Kawaii at Tokyo Disneyland,” *American Art* 6: 2 (Spring 1992): 107.

<sup>957</sup> Gordon Moir, oral history interview by author, analog recording transferred to digital format, June 20, 2004, Tokyo, French Blue Scooter Rally, Shibuya, Tokyo, DCUP.



Mod in all of Tokyo, if not Japan. One day they crossed paths while on their Vespas, suddenly realizing the possibility of many others interested in Mod style. Furuta identified these Mods as a future guitarist of Tokyo Mod band, the Collectors—Kotaro Furuichi—and Manabu “Mabo” Kuroda, future member of Tokyo Mod band I-Spy (1980-1993). Like the revered Mod musician Paul Weller, Kuroda is known in Japan’s Mod circles today as “the Modfather.”<sup>958</sup>

Furuta also explained from personal experience why the scooter is an essential accessory for any true Japanese Mod. He became intrigued with the style while at university in Tokyo during the late eighties to early nineties. He attended his first Mod event during this time. In his words: “When I went to club Jam in Shinjuku, I went the first time, no scooter—went by train, went to gig. There were many Mods with scooters talking, but I have no scooter, I cannot join them. Then I get scooter, I can join. No scooter, no Mod in Tokyo.”<sup>959</sup> Despite Furuta’s experience, Nagoya’s Daisuke Usui thinks that scooters, while still important, are not the only tickets available for entry into Japan’s Mod community. He sees this strict attitude among Mods as having been more persistent when Kotaro Furuta’s story of “no scooter, no entry” took place. While Usui enjoyed the cachet of once owning scooters, he believes that the time and cost of upkeep was ultimately not worth it. Well-known and active in the Mod scene in both Nagoya and throughout Japan, this choice has not held him back in any way. Thanks to his fluent English, perfected by his time living in London, Usui is also familiar to those involved in the global scene as the main Japanese correspondent and writer for the international Mod website, *The Uppers Organization*.<sup>960</sup>

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<sup>958</sup> Kotaro Furtura, owner of Jungle Scooters, Tokyo, oral history interview by author, analog recording transferred to digital format, June 28, 2004, Jungle Scooters, Tokyo.

<sup>959</sup> Furtura, Interview.

<sup>960</sup> See Usui’s contributions to the *Uppers Organization* website at: <http://www.uppers.org/show/Contributer.asp?Id=53>.

Regardless of Furtura and Usui's slightly differing views on the role of the scooter in today's Japanese Mod scene, it is also important to note that while scooters have a history that extends back to the early postwar period, some Japanese Mods of Gen-X or later, do not always associate Mod with the 1960s. Although scooters, and many other Mod visual motifs, are used to advertise Mod wares and events, contemporary Mods will often attribute the sensibility to 1970s or 1990s revivals rather than with the mid-sixties period. For instance, the 1979 film *Quadrophenia*, which appeared in tandem with of the late-seventies British revival of Mod, came up in several interviews while in Japan. This cinematic recreation of the earliest, subcultural Mod period has become a touchstone for many Gen-X Mods' visual understanding of the style. Perhaps because Mod is an imported, western style in Japan, it is the case that Mod can exist outside a specific historical trajectory linked solely to a progression from the 1960s onward. In this understanding of Mod style, there are many possible routes that can lead from mid-sixties London to twenty-first century Tokyo.

Ronnie Fujiyama (b. 1965, Tokyo) was one of several of my correspondents who recalled the impression that *Quadrophenia* made. Fujiyama plays lead guitar for the all-girl Tokyo band the 5678's. Featured in Quentin Tarantino's 2004 film *Kill Bill-Volume 1*, their name comes from the fact that their sound is influenced by music from the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s. While Fujiyama and her bandmates mix Mod and Rockabilly fashion sense, sometimes sporting beehive hairdos and mini-skirts, she first understood what Mod style was through seeing *Quadrophenia* in the early eighties. Shonen Knife's Naoko Yamano remembers viewing the film "four or five times... as a high school student." A member of the band, the Marquee, Fumio Nawa (b. unknown, Tokyo) also attests to the film's influence and how it offered something Western, but "non-American," in term of pop culture: "The biggest reason I became a mod was

after watching *Quadrophenia*. I first saw this film when I was in High school. Afterwards, I fell head over heels in love with mod. Also, because Japan is usually deeply influenced by American culture, I felt this British culture thing was so fresh and attractive. Eventually, I got a M-51 shell parka and a Lambretta and started going to nightclubs. I joined a scooter group, the High Numbers and formed a band called the Marquee. I went to the Whisky A Go-Go club in Tokyo every weekend and would lose myself, I would go mad every time. I've been a mod for about eight years."<sup>961</sup> Jungle Scooters owner Kotaro Furtura also first recognized Mod through watching the film in the late eighties. Growing up in the countryside, he did not see Mods until moving to Tokyo at age eighteen. In his words, "I saw a Vespa Mod style... I saw one Mod with a Vespa. When I saw this person I thought: 'this is Mod style.'" Had Furtura, nor any of these other Japanese Mods, not seen *Quadrophenia* prior to encountering this person, they probably would not have had as defined a frame of reference to recognize the style.<sup>962</sup>

*Quadrophenia* could easily be read as quintessentially representative of Mod. However, its depiction of the lifestyle does not reflect how it had evolved, so its view of Mod is narrow. The Mods in the film are portrayed as mostly male and working-class. Much of the film takes place in Brighton, where Jimmy and his friends partake of a mass riot between Mods and Rockers. Girls are included in the film, but take on supporting roles as love objects and hangers-on. Predominantly, these Mods are seen as the pill popping, scooter-obsessed, angry young men that some (not in-the-know) still assume all Mods are. The view of Mods in *Quadrophenia* is oddly nostalgic for a more violent faction of the movement that many former Mods say

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<sup>961</sup> Qtd. in Graham Lentz, *Influential Factor* (London: Gel, 2002), 131.

<sup>962</sup> Naoko Yamano, member of the band Shonen Knife, oral history interview by author, analog recording transferred to digital format, July 12, 2004, Club Quattro, Osaka; Yoshiko Fuji (a.k.a. "Ronnie Fujiyama), member of the 5678s band, interview by author, tape recording, 20 June 2004, French Blue Scooter Rally – Shibuya Tokyo.

represented only a small portion of the subculture in the mid-sixties.<sup>963</sup> In their exposure to this film, the Japanese I spoke with simply referred to it as a visual introduction to Mod in terms of fashion and scooters. Nothing of the violent gang mentality displayed in the film has influenced the way Mod is played out in Japan today. In fact, it is not uncommon for contemporary Japanese Mod and Rockabilly (“Rocker”) bands to share the billing at events—even the annual Mods Mayday.<sup>964</sup> However, it is also not difficult to imagine that *Quadrophenia*’s rebellious attitude may have been very attractive to my respondents when they were teenagers.

In today’s Japanese Mod scene, participants deftly use micro and niche media to spread concepts and products. This kind of community building connects to the original Mods’ local and transnational identity formation through locally and internationally circulating media texts such as fanzines, magazines, albums, TV shows, and films. Within the approximately ninety pieces of ephemera I collected, I gathered twenty-four handbills specifically advertising Mod DJ events and concerts, seventeen for stores advertising Mod clothing, furniture, and other collectibles, as well as several print advertisements for Mary Quant cosmetics and the Twiggy-themed “Linda” JCB credit card. As today’s Mod communities are primarily below the mass-market radar, these forms of micro-media help Mods create an air of distinction—what Bourdieu describes as “cultural capital.”<sup>965</sup>

The sheer will and dedication to seek out these events and products creates a bond between contemporary Mods. In this scenario, those who find and make it to Mod events, buy Mod clothing, and decorate their homes in modernist furnishings and assorted curios have

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<sup>963</sup> Rawlings, *Mod*, 74.

<sup>964</sup> Bartz, “Fuzzy Logic.”

<sup>965</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgement and Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 170. See also Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996).

worked to acquire information about Mod culture, thereby validating their participation in the community. This dedicated search for and/or creation of a contemporary Mod “scene” is key to understanding the existence of Mod communities in Japan and around the globe. These Mod scenes create spaces for enthusiasts to “perform” Mod within a social setting through distinct choices of music and fashion. British sociologist David Muggleton, in *Inside Subculture* asserts that micro-media “is integral to the networking process of assembling individuals as a crowd for a specific purpose and imbuing them with a particular identity.”<sup>966</sup> For Mods searching a community of like-minded people, micro-media is an inexpensive, if not fruitful, form of community building.

### **5.2.2 Cosmopolitanism in Mod Japan?**

The clichéd image of Japanese tourists abroad is that of hoards of people traveling together in a motor coach—sticking in groups—and usually not speaking whatever native language goes along with the country they are visiting. The omnipresent camera hangs around their neck, but is then quickly utilized to capture one of many special moments occurring. Sure, it is a stereotype and a cliché. However, as we have seen in chapter two, because cosmopolitanism is a key attribute to Mod culture, I was curious to see how this aspect is played out in a nation with a hybrid history, a yearning to travel, and a language barrier that clearly trumps that between English and other Latin-based or European languages.<sup>967</sup>

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<sup>966</sup> David Muggleton, *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), 135.

<sup>967</sup> For possible institutional reasons for this situation, see Robert W. Aspinall, “Using the Paradigm of ‘Small Cultures’ to Explain Policy Failure in the Case of Foreign Language Education in Japan,” *Japan Forum* 18:2 (July 2006): 255-274.

While Mod serves as its own visual language in Japan, English “loanwords” are also visably peppered throughout the country. According to James Stanilaw’s *Japanese English: Language and Culture Contact*, Japanese statistics claim these loanwords “account for between 5 and 10 percent of the daily Japanese vocabulary.”<sup>968</sup> English appears more generally in the romanization (*rooma-ji*) of subway stop names and, more specifically, in the ubiquitous use of English for Mod event names. Beyond the events I was able to attend in Japan, I collected a wide array of handbills and flyers announcing Mod dance nights and events such as Tokyo’s “Uppers!,” and “Shapes of Things” (fig. 41) and Osaka’s “Twist & Shout,” and “Readymade Weekend.” Beyond, perhaps, the event’s date, further details were always in Japanese characters only.<sup>969</sup>

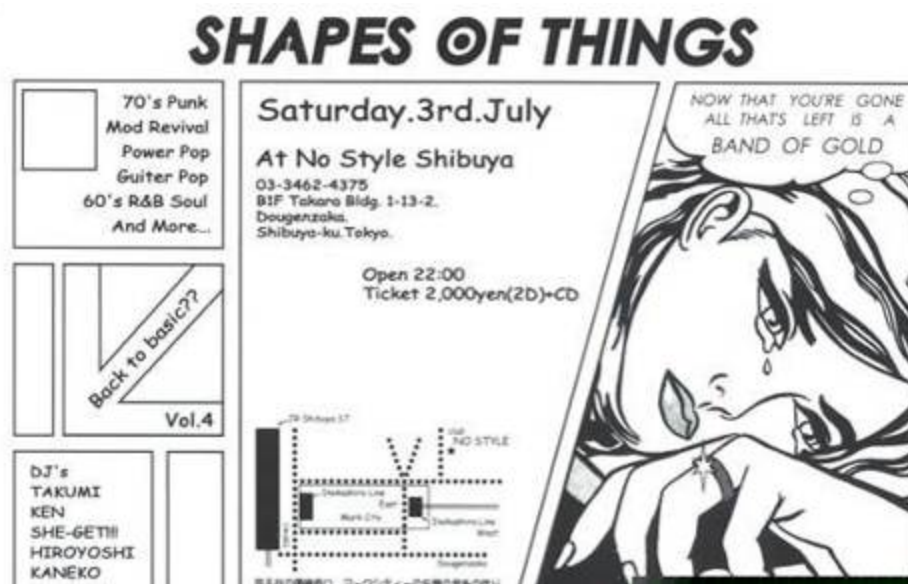


Figure 41 Mod event flyer, Tokyo, summer 2004. Collected by author.

<sup>968</sup> James Stanilaw, *Japanese English: Language and Culture Contact* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 1.

<sup>969</sup> “Uppers!” [handbill], Tokyo, circa June 2004; “Shapes of Things,” [handbill], Tokyo, circa July 2004; “Twist and Shout,” [handbill], Osaka, circa July 2004; “Readymade Weekend,” [handbill], Osaka, circa July 2004. Collected by author.

Despite the pervasive use of English in its written and “pop cultural” forms, I found, to my surprise, that even some Mods greatly interested in the British origins of Mod—and a desire to be truly “authentic”—did not attempt to speak English. Many Mod bands that I saw, such as Tokyo’s the Marquee (named, of course, after the Who’s regular London venue) sang many songs in English, and yet could not speak it conversationally, nor would they use any in their on-stage patter between songs. In Osaka, Beatles tribute band, the Beatrips mimicked the Beatles lyrics, vocal delivery, and mannerisms perfectly and yet also could not speak English. This occurrence has been called “phonetic consumption,” whereby

Lyrics... can be considered just as much of a consumer product, functioning in the same way to promote a song or an artist as the CD cover design would. Language, transformed from one tradition (foreign as “authentic”) to another (foreign as “sophisticated”) to yet another (English to Japanese, and back again, as fun and playful, but with a serious message). The use of language has developed in the postwar era to reflect the way Japanese composers and audiences view their lives against a global backdrop of these cultural industries. In this way, translations provide both evidence and counterevidence for the maintenance of a US/UK hegemony in Japanese popular music.<sup>970</sup>

Since Mod originated in England, I had theorized that Japanese Mods would somehow be more inclined or eager to speak English than the average Japanese, but this was not the case. Those Mods that I interviewed who did speak English well, such as Kotaro Furuta from Tokyo and Daisuke (“Dai”) Usui from Nagoya, had either attended college or spent time overseas—usually in Britain. Dai, who had lived in London from 1995 to mid 1997, assessed the difference between the Japanese Mod scenes in this way:

I thought it was really cool since England is the birthplace of mod, and some mods were still about. The nineties mods looked exactly the same as the people in the pictures I’d copied from sixties magazines or books. I was envious of these Brit mods because they had longer legs, those hipsters fit them so well and most of them were much taller than

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<sup>970</sup> Carolyn S. Stevens, *Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity, Power* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 155.

me! There seemed to be less unwritten rules about mod taste or sensibilities and they seemed to know how to relax and enjoy themselves as mods. I preferred dancing to good music and talking with my mates about cool gear than discussing what a mod should be. In a way, it was a lot of fun for me to be with the English Mods who took themselves less seriously.<sup>971</sup>

While Dai's comment about English Mods implies that Japan's scene may be more "rule oriented," British expatriate and Tokyo resident Gordon Moir (Birmingham, b. 1966) saw things in exactly the opposite light. "One thing that is better here than in the UK, I think... I wear 60s-style suits to work, but I can dress as a scooter boy one day, casual the next day, and Mod the next and they don't criticize you. I haven't noticed any bitchiness... [it's] all really friendly and nice."<sup>972</sup> Perhaps both these statements refer to the notion that it might be easier to be forgiving when outside one's own cultural context.

From the 1960s onward Mod has been an international movement, and, indeed some Japanese Mods I talked to had traveled to the Western hubs of the culture. However, the majority of those with whom I talked expressed that they did not have ongoing contact with Mods in England, Europe, or the United States. Despite Mods' international *modus operandi*, or even signs of mainstream globalization in Japan such as Starbucks and Tower Records, I found that enthusiasm for foreign pop culture did not necessarily translate into an enthusiasm for all things international or foreign—such as the English language itself.

Based on this observation, the English strewn throughout Japanese, particularly in printed form, took on a more fetishistic feel than a practical one.<sup>973</sup> It is a big draw in advertising, whether Mod or not. Many magazines, for instance, do at least have some English words on their

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<sup>971</sup> Qtd. in Graham Lentz, *The Influential Factor*, 130.

<sup>972</sup> Moir, Interview.

<sup>973</sup> English is simply popular in Japanese advertising. See Prieler, "Japanese Advertising's Foreign Obsession," 240.



covers.<sup>974</sup> Alongside the British flag and pop art designs, the English language, then, is yet another set of symbols for the Japanese to use and modify. For instance, *Girls60s* magazine has practically no English or Romanization within its pages, but runs the English phrase “Real 60s Fashion and Lifestyle Magazine” at the top of its cover. Similarly, Kyoto’s Mitsuba coffee shop advertises itself in its handbills as: “50s-70s Modern! Interior-Fashion-Music-Art,” but the store’s proprietor does not speak English, either. In examining this recurrent use of English by non-English-speaking Japanese, I wondered to whose benefit this kind of English-language advertising exists? Given the nature of my inquiry, and the emphasis on Japanese appropriation of Mod symbols, I found that my lack of fluency in Japanese was not a disadvantage, but rather proved beneficial. Conversing through Mod symbols rather than (always) through English or minimal Japanese seemed to underscore Mod’s communicative power despite linguistic and other cultural obstacles.

### **5.2.3 Gendering Mod: Mod versus “Sixties” Style**

In Kyoto’s Weller’s Club hosts “Girls Go On!,” a semi-monthly event featuring all-female DJs spinning many Mod-era hits. The DJs play a mix of mid-sixties music from different parts of the globe such as France’s Françoise Hardy, Britain’s Kinks, America’s Beach Boys, and Japan’s Tigers. One of the DJs, Kazuyo Ikeda, a.k.a “DJ Stereo,” (Kyoto, b. 1974,), who at time of interviewing worked as a video game designer for Nintendo, did not fully identify with Mod

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<sup>974</sup> Mitsukuni, *Hybrid Culture*, 115.

because she sees it as a male style (fig. ). “I like 60s culture, but not only Mod culture. Mod culture is for boys. I am just interested in 60s clothes and songs.”<sup>975</sup>



Figure 42 Girls Go On!” DJs. “DJ Stereo” far right. Kyoto, July 2004. Photo by Corey LeChat.

The way Ikeda talks about Mod as gendered is reminiscent of the androcentric way the Birmingham School scholars—barring Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber—originally portrayed the culture.<sup>976</sup> In Nagoya, Mod impresario and musician (currently leader of the band, the Absolude), Daisuke Usui maintains that there are more men involved with the Nagoya Mod scene, and that the women involved were distinctly less visible.

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<sup>975</sup> Kuzuyo Ikeda, oral history interview by author, analog recording transferred to digital format, July 8, 2004, Kyoto.

<sup>976</sup> Almost all the essays in the Birmingham School anthology, *Resistance Through Rituals*, focus on the male involvement in youth subcultures. This is underscored by Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber’s contribution—the only piece to focus on girls. See Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, “Girls and Subcultures,” *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson, 1975), 209-222.



**Figure 43 Dai Usui and the Absolude. Nagoya, July 2004. Photo by Corey LeChat.**

He also sees a gender division between those aligned with the originally British, Mod music and those more interested in the Japanese Group Sounds style. He describes the Group Sounds scene as more “psychedelic” than “Mod,” with more brightly colored fashion attracting women, thereby making the scene “more unisex.” I later read another interview with Dai about this phenomenon, where he explained this “other Mod scene” in more detail

There is also a big Japanese sixties and seventies crossover scene that branched off in the mid-nineties. More people especially ex-mods became interested in a Japanese culture sixties movement called G.S. (Group Sounds). This scene has been steadily growing and it has become bigger than the mod scene especially in Nagoya. There is a clothing shop called the Other (Osu, Nagoya) run by ex-faces of the Nagoya mod scene, Hata and Takahiro Suzuki. They also have a small indie record label called the *Other* label. Their charismatic drive has made the Japanese sixties and seventies scene bigger and they are also highly respected by mods here too.<sup>977</sup>

This viewpoint was supported by the fact that Osaka native and current Tokyo resident, Kae Doi (b. 1970) who first became interested in Mod through what she described as a “neo-

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<sup>977</sup> Qtd. in Lentz, *Influential Factor*, 154.

psychedelic” Japanese band called the Hair.<sup>978</sup> Furthermore, a commercially successful group called Love Psychedelico (with a female lead singer) have been described as not just influenced by the Beatles and the Kinks, but Bob Dylan, too. It has been suggested that Love Psychedelico’s commercial success is contingent on that fact that 1960s-tinged music sounds fresh to people used to a music industry which mostly promotes “soft hip-hip, R&B, and dance music.” I believe this holds true for more mainstream-crossover bands like Love Psychedelico and the Collectors as well as groups like the Marquee, who truly belong to Japan’s underground Mod scene.<sup>979</sup>

While some Japanese Mods differentiate between “Mod” and “60s style” via gender more than their current American or British counterparts, some predominantly female, contemporary, and internationally acclaimed rock bands from Japan utilize Mod imagery to market themselves. Shonen Knife is the most globally renowned of these groups, due in part to touring with Nirvana during the band’s last international tour in 1994. Known for often wearing matching, sixties-style dresses and outfits, and covering songs like the Kinks’ 1965 hit “Till the End of the Day,” the all-female Osaka trio adopts Mod style while not always sounding like mid-sixties rock. Asked about how the band came upon the Mod band “uniforms,” lead singer and guitarist Naoko Yamano (b. 1961) replied, “Our mother liked to make dresses and she bought many 60s fashion magazines. Atsuko [Naoko’s band-mate and sister] saw a book and was inspired by the 60s clothing and fashion and then she made Pierre Cardin or Mondrian, sixties style dresses.”<sup>980</sup> Another Japanese group with a female singer, Pizzicato Five (P5), once released an album called *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* (1989) and one of their most popular songs is called “Twiggy

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<sup>978</sup> Daisuke Usui, interview by author, tape recording, 21 July 2004, Elephant’s Nest Pub, Nagoya; Kae Doi, oral history interview by author, analog recording transferred to digital, June 20, 2004, French Blue Scooter Rally – Shibuya, Tokyo.

<sup>979</sup> Stevens, *Japanese Popular Music*, 147.

<sup>980</sup> Yamano, Interview.

Twiggy.” One music writer describes them as former “luminaries of the much-hyped *Shibuya-kei* scene... [Their] music combine[d] Burt Bacharach songcraft with go-go kitsch; chanteusy murmurings backed by an updated pastiche of everything that was fabulous about the 60s.”<sup>981</sup> However, with a more digitized versus guitar-based sound, they would also probably not describe themselves as a Mod band, but rather, one that is obsessed with the sixties. Finally, the fact that the Japanese magazine *Girls 60s* is not called *Girls Mod* underscores this gender division. What is presented in the magazine is visually Mod in every sense, from the mini-skirted fashions to the recommended events and modernist furniture shops, to the ever-present image of the scooter. The use of these images succinctly encapsulates this gendered notion of Mod.<sup>982</sup> It must be, then, that if one is a female Mod, one is perhaps more appropriately described as a “Sixties Girl.”

Is it the female population’s near-obsession with “cute” style that encourages such identification? After all, the moniker “sixties girl,” immediately implies a girlishness that “Mod” does not. However, the phenomenon of *kawaii* or “cute culture” in Japan also parallels one of the gender identities discussed in Chapter Three. According to Peter Braunstein, Mod’s “rejuvenating” sense of role playing via fashion was meant to stifle the onset of maturity.<sup>983</sup> In its sensibility of “thinking young” despite one’s actual age, Braunstein maintains that Mod was unlike the later sixties counterculture because it asked everyone to *act* under thirty instead of *distrusting all those over this age*. The playfulness of bold colors, baby doll dresses, and Mary Jane shoes alone assured that women who wished for extended girlhood could have their wish, at

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<sup>981</sup> Bill Haw, “Pizzicato Five Profile,” *Nippop* at [http://nippop.com/artist/artist\\_id-19/artist\\_name-pizzicato\\_five/](http://nippop.com/artist/artist_id-19/artist_name-pizzicato_five/) (accessed Nov. 13, 2008).

<sup>982</sup> *Girls60s* is produced in Tokyo by Masahiro Hoizumi and published by Tetsuya Ueda. In July 2004, the second issue had just hit newsstands. The colorful pages feature various fashion spreads of new and vintage clothes of the Mod style, while advertisements run the gamut from selling scooters to wigs.

<sup>983</sup> Braunstein, “Forever Young,” 251.

least on the surface. This concept of eternal girliness is also something that has come to stereotype Japanese women. In this light, it is important to evaluate the ideal of *kawaii* and its connection to contemporary Japanese Mod culture.<sup>984</sup>

Though the exact meaning, like Mod itself, is contested, *kawaii* can generally be translated as “cute.” According to Japanologist Sharon Kinsella, *kawaii* has become a standard style aesthetic in Japan that can be applied to other fashions “such as [those of] preppy, punk, skater, folk, black, and French.”<sup>985</sup> Though it has 1960s roots, too, *kawaii* became a more dominant aesthetic in height of Japan’s economic prosperity, the 1980s. It can be coded as rebellious because “to be cute in this socioeconomic setting was to celebrate appearances and attitudes that are ‘infantile and delicate at the same time as being pretty’ and thereby participate in the creation of a utopia in the affluent environment where people could remain forever ‘young,’ ‘playful,’ ‘childlike,’ and thus ‘liberated from the filthy world of adult politics.’” Like postwar Japanese youth, the *sarariman*, and the “mature” world he stood for, was completely unattractive, and this contrary youth style reflected this opinion.<sup>986</sup>

Given Mod’s already recognizably youthful aesthetic, its coming with *kawaii* creates an especially sugary version of it, especially for females involved in the subculture. This love of youthfulness and cuteness also harkens to the body type favored by mid-sixties female fashions.

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<sup>984</sup> See Sumiko Iwao, *The Japanese Woman: Traditional Image and Changing Reality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); Joanna Liddle and Sachiko Nakajima, *Rising suns, Rising daughters: Gender, Class, and Power in Japan* (New York: Palgrave, 2000); Michael Berger, “Japanese Women: Old Images and New Realities,” *Women and Women’s Issues in Post World War II Japan* ed. Edward R. Beauchamp (New York: Garland, 1998), 112-123; and Sharon Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan,” *Women, Media, and Consumption in Japan*, ed. Brian Moeran and Lisa Skov (London: Curzon, 1995), 220-254.

<sup>985</sup> For definitions and discussion of *kawaii*, see Ana M. Goy-Yamamoto, “Japanese Youth Consumption: A Cultural and a Social (R)evolution Crossing Borders,” *Asia Europe Journal* 2 (2004): 271-282; Kinsella, Sharon, “Cuties in Japan,” *Women, Media, and Consumption*, 220; Larissa Hjorth, “Odours of Mobility: Mobile Phones and Japanese Cute Culture in the Asia-Pacific,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 26 (Feb.-May 2005): 39-55; Anne Allison, “Portable Monsters and Commodity Cuteness: Pokéman as Japan’s New Global Power,” *Postcolonial Studies* 6 (2003): 381-395; and Kate Drake, “Quest for Kawaii,” *Time International* June 25, 2001, 46.

<sup>986</sup> Aoyagi, *Islands of Eight Million Smiles*, 82.

Prior to one of the Tokyo Mod events I attend in June 2004, the French Blue scooter run and music showcase, Ronnie Fujiyama explained why she thought Mod fashion worked so well for Japanese women. “Sixties clothes... Mod... is a good look for skinny Japanese girls.”<sup>987</sup> In Ronnie’s eyes, there is something integral to the typically svelte, Japanese female body that matches Mod’s less-than-curvy designs (fig. 43).



**Figure 44 Kae Doi (far left) and Friends. Tokyo, June 2004. Photo by Corey LeChat.**

Her comment helped answer the question of why Twiggy’s image abounds in twenty-first century, urban Japan and perhaps, why the former model’s woman-child look resonates with Japanese women. Whether Mod or not, the connection between young Japanese women and Twiggy suggests a bond through girlish, pixie-like bodies. Longtime expatriate and writer

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<sup>987</sup> Fujiyama, Interview.

Donald Richie maintains that the notion of *kawaii* in Japan is often equated with miniaturization, where “smaller—and cuter—is better” and that “cuteness is considered... to be a virtue.”<sup>988</sup>

Beyond the aisles of *kawaii* Sanrio products and its icons such as “Hello Kitty” and “Chococat,” Mod-themed or accented toys were also available at Japanese stores. For instance, Twiggy’s image did not merely adorn the ads for the JCB “Linda” credit cards, but was made available to a potentially younger female audience through the then newly issued Twiggy Barbie-sized doll for sale at 8300 Yen (approximately eighty dollars US). There were also mini, bendable Twiggy dolls available at 850 Yen (approximately eight dollars US). Another doll company called Pullip (Korean, but marketed in Japan) had big-eyed dolls—not unlike the Margaret Keane paintings and prints made popular in the Mod era. These dolls were presented in 60s clothing such as go-go boots, mini skirts, and white-rimmed sunglasses selling for the equivalent of sixty-seven US dollars.<sup>989</sup>

As already mentioned, Peter Braunstein equates the original Mod movement with youthful optimism and exuberance. Similarly, Richie describes Japan’s popular culture, one of “extended juvenility,” where many young adult women still respond favorably to Hello Kitty “character goods,” and even the Liberal Democratic Party once used a doll to promote their candidate for Prime Minister. Japan’s love of cute seems a natural match for Mod style.<sup>990</sup> In the land of twenty-four hour Pachinko parlors and rainbow-colored gaming arcades whose high winnings are usually plush toys and colorful candy, it makes sense that former teen model Twiggy and mini-skirt inventor Mary Quant’s products should still meet with positive reception in Japan. Mary Quant did not just invent the mini-skirt; she also popularized a new way in

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<sup>988</sup> Donald Richie, *The Image Factory: Fads and Fashions in Japan* (London: Reaktion, 2003), 54-56.

<sup>989</sup> Margaret Keane, *MDH Margaret Keane (Tomorrow’s Masters Series)* (New York: Johnson Meyers, 1964).

<sup>990</sup> Richie, *Image Factory*, 53.



which to be an adult woman. The 1960s are remembered as years dominated by youth and yet, based on standards of the decade, Quant was not young when her fashions became popular. Born in 1934, Quant was already thirty by the time she became famous. Despite her age, Quant not only designed fashions with a waifish, schoolgirl look, but also wore these clothes herself.<sup>991</sup> As we have seen from chapter three, Quant wanted the rest of the world's female population to ignore the then-acceptable aesthetics for womanhood as well. In 2004 Japan, the girlish look was still prevalent and was a noticeable feature in many of the female Mods observed and interviewed for this study.

### 5.3 MODERNIST JAPAN: FINAL THOUGHTS

Over the course of forty years, Mod has woven itself into the thread of youth culture in many countries. Similar to Mods in Britain or America, today's Japanese Mods are looking to recapture a style that speaks for them while also speaking of an innovative past. Unlike enthusiasts in U.S. or the U.K., my Japanese respondents conceptualized Mod much more noticeably along gender lines. In Japan distinctions are being made between what is "Mod" (mostly male) and what is "Sixties" (female). Some Japanese Mods did not solely see the style as linked to the mid-sixties, but instead saw it as a continuous youth sensibility easily tied to the late seventies, early eighties, or mid-nineties. Comparatively, U.S. Mods placed less importance on what was "purely" Mod, and instead all things sixties were described by this word. Americans also placed little emphasis on the late 1970s revival, as it did not play as big a role in

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<sup>991</sup> Juliet Gardiner, *From the Bomb to the Beatles: The Changing Face of Post-War Britain* (London: Collins and Brown, 1999), 133.

the U.S. as in England and Japan. Lastly, Mod female fashion is read as “*kawaii*” (cute), more so in Japan than in either the U.K. or the United States. Where Mary Quant’s fashions or Mod icon Twiggy are seen as girlish, playful, or simply androgynous in the West, both reach a level of near virtuousness in Japan.

Mod is past and it is present. Mod is British and it is global. The Mod sixties view of modernity is somehow endearingly antiquated in its retro-futurism and yet, deemed as more progressive and interesting than contemporary realities by many of its current adherents. Thus, Mods today continue to tout the style’s idealized, if not internalized, modernity. If Tokyo Mod Kae Doi confessed that she likes techno as well as Mod sounds from various decades, is she *still* a Mod? Right before hopping aboard her Vespa, Doi encapsulated the strange discourse that time and distance have produced when trying to conceptualize Mod today—whether in Tokyo, New York, London, or Hamburg. Doi stated, “I am a Modernist, so I like modern music...Mod music is past music. So I am interested in techno...more technology.”<sup>992</sup> Moments later Doi, dressed in a red mini-dress and go-go boots, races off with her colorfully dressed friends. Tonight she will spin vinyl for a Mod event in Roppongi where no techno shall be played.

Mod “messages,” just as in the 1960s, are transmitted through a variety of media and interpersonal forms of communication. Both in past and present incarnations, Mod can be seen as a fluid entity traveling through what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai identifies as various “scapes.” In film or through the Internet, Mod transmits its ideology via a “mediascape,” whereas interaction between Mods of various nationalities happens within an “ethnoscape,” the commingling of mobile people.<sup>993</sup> “Post-Subculture” scholars such as David Muggleton, Rupert

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<sup>992</sup> Doi, Interview.

<sup>993</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 7 (1990): 295-310.

Weinzierl, and Andy Bennett maintain that subculturalists today are more international by nature and tribal by definition.<sup>994</sup> One such scholar, Geoff Stahl sees these “tribes” and their affiliated totems resulting from a “circulation of ideas, texts, styles, and people around the globe.... The institutional and infrastructural mechanisms that enable this mobility have produced networks, circuits, and alliances, all modes of communicative and community action, which traverses the globe.”<sup>995</sup> Given these theorists’ views, it is clear that Mod exists today in a form it was aspiring to in the mid-1960s. While sixties Mods looked forward to speedy and affordable international travel by supersonic jet and, hopefully someday, space travel by rocket, today’s actual travel and media technologies actually offer a much more diverse, well-informed, and instantly accessible international network (via digital means) of Mod peers. These contemporary flows of information and people may not be as romantic as the original mid-sixties vision of supersonic or space travel, but they have allowed Mod’s fantasy of international understanding through youth style, media, and technology to blossom.<sup>996</sup>

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<sup>994</sup> See David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl, eds., *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, eds., *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>995</sup> Geoff Stahl, “Tastefully Renovating Subcultural Theory: Making Space for a New Model,” *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, ed. David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 28.

<sup>996</sup> For a view of high Modernist design and its connection to technological innovation see Barry Curtis, “A Highly Mobile and Plastic Environ,” *Art & the Sixties: This Was Tomorrow*, ed. Chris Stephen and Katharine Stout (London: Tate, 2004), 46-63; Nigel Whiteley, “Pop, Consumerism, and the Design Shift,” *Design Issues* 2 (1985): 31-45. For a more recent look at the links between youth and technology see Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (London: Routledge, 2004). For a specific connection between innovation, new media and youth movements (political and non-political) see Chris Atton, *An Alternative Internet* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 1-24; Amy Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture* (London: Marian Boyars, 2005), 70-88.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

In October 1965, the American novelist James Michener was asked to judge a “battle of the bands”-type competition in suburban New York. Sitting alongside music producer Phil Spector and beloved regional radio DJ “Cousin Brucey,” the author of *Hawaii* and *The Source* was asked to evaluate a bevy of Mod-influenced American teen bands. Initially surprised at the invitation, Michener nonetheless participated, even writing an article about it for the *New York Times*. He stated that, though an unlikely judge for such an event, he was not “entirely a square,” and “as a novelist [he] was fascinated by the sociology that accompanied the mania: the long hair, the Edwardian elegance among boys who would normally be repelled by such fashion... the phenomenon of teen-age screaming, and most important of all, the presence of great protest.”<sup>997</sup>

The way in which the famed author described his interest in this emergent youth culture is much the way I initially approached the intense study of Mod culture. I have never been a Mod, but I can honestly admit I have never been a “square,” either. More importantly, I, too, often have wondered what deeper issues might be lurking behind the stylistic machinations of the Mods—past and present; American and foreign. What would make young people in the 1960s, 1980s, or 2000s want to be Mods? Was it the melodic jingle-jangle of the guitar-based music? Was it the anti-mainstream, yet elegant, fashion? Or, was it a kind of protest? Has the adoption of the

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<sup>997</sup> James A. Michener, “One Near-Square Who Doesn’t Knock the Rock,” *New York Times*, Oct. 31, 1965, SM56.

lifestyle expressed some deep-seated belief that all things Mod symbolize how contemporary life *could be*, rather than how it actually is?

Through the years, even leading up to my doctoral research, I have read countless books about the 1960s in hopes of understanding truly this idea of “Mod.” Never finding a fully satisfactory answer, I felt that it was important to turn to those people who have either through coincidence of birth or later intentional “investigations,” so to speak, become Mods. I believe those participants interviewed for this dissertation offer heretofore undiscovered insights into the nuanced dimensions of what Mod culture has been. It was truly these participants’ oral histories that largely guided the theme of each chapter: modernity, cosmopolitanism, and gender. The epilogue, as a shoring-up of these various aspects of the youth culture, showed how these concepts have translated in a non-Western, yet westernized country.

As we have seen, in each decade’s contemporary culture, Mod youth have been the most optimistic of contrarians. When postwar Britain was clearly grey and class-bound, then Mods of that time envisioned and created a micro-world of colorful classlessness. Later, when 1970s punk touted nihilism and an intentional ugliness, the Mod revivalist band the Jam channeled aggressive attitudes and music into frenetic, energizing anthems which, in turn, invigorated teenagers to don once again elegant attire to counteract punk’s snarly “rattiness.” Soon many young people returned to the “Mod fold” to invigorate a (by then) near-mythologized British youth identity. In the 2000s, Mod continued to be a source of national pride for current participants. They realized they were legacies of a longstanding, beloved youth movement that has stemmed from both Mod’s sixties and seventies incarnations, which has become a very international, if underground, export. Though they enthusiastically have used new media to spread their sensibility, their coterie of DJs have continued spinning soul, rhythm and blues, and

beat sounds that run contrary to the “thump-thump-thumps” of the most popular of contemporary DJed music.

German Mods gladly took up the torch of reconceptualized modernity demonstrated to them by their British cousins. In the postwar period, those youths who became Mods felt truly trounced and battered by a recent fascist past that was no fault of their own. In order to show that they were wanting “in” on this emergent and progressive youth culture, and not their parent’s generation, young Germans eagerly adopted the spirit and style of Mod. The relatively close proximity between England and Germany allowed a faster transmission of Mod culture through, first, the Beatles, and then a myriad of other British groups. The desire to be “cosmopolitan” versus solely “German” has been the strongest leitmotif inherent in Mod culture’s evolution in Germany. This has continued through the many permutations of Mod—from the 1980s to the present. As many of my narrators indicated, Mod has functioned not just as an alternative to mainstream local, national, and international socio-political circumstances of the Federal Republic of Germany, but also to the humdrum aspects of bourgeois middle-class, adult life. The internationally-minded Mod of the 2000s ostensibly has become the most well-traveled and “connected” European of all.

The American discussion of Mod culture hinged on the idea that its contrariness there since the 1960s has been connected with issues of gender identity. With Mod’s seemingly “queer” connotations of masculinity and femininity, the American middle class found this new youth sensibility incredibly shocking and offensive. Unlike the U.K. and Germany, where the ideas surrounding “modernity” and “cosmopolitanism” in connection with Mod have stayed relatively similar from the sixties onward, ideas surrounding the theme of gender have changed greatly. Instead of associating Mod fashions (though falsely) with homosexuality or “queerness,”

for instance, more contemporary scenes have illustrated just how patently heterosexual this subculture tends to be. This evidence supports the idea that a wider spectrum of gender aesthetics had become more acceptable in not just middle-class American culture, but U.S. culture in general after the 1960s. The contrary or alternative aspect of later-day Mod fashion instead has become the fact that its tailored look appears “traditional,” or “old fashioned,” even, in terms of male and female fashions compared to the less form-fitting, unisex look of youth culture styles from the 1980s and beyond such as those connected to hip hop and the indie rock scenes.

In the dissertation’s epilogue, Japan served a microcosm for identifying Mod culture participants’ dreams of an ultimate modern life—not just in a smaller, parallel culture to that of the mainstream—but actually in the make up of Japan’s cities themselves. This idea was then expanded upon in manifestations of cosmopolitanism and gender. Is Japan indeed the most Mod of all places today? Here, I posited that the project of postwar “modernization” there and the Mod subculture itself fused in a way that has not been as apparent in the three other nations examined. On a more nuanced level, I also wanted to try answering why Mods in Japan are so dedicated—even though the culture’s origins are so removed from their own. I wanted to emphasize that despite the limitations of distance and language, the visual rubric of Mod has been most ardently adopted and supported in the Japanese Mod scenes I observed. This simply magnified, for me, the inherent transnational appeal of all the various components of Mod identity.

In this dissertation, I have actively sought to transcend not just geographic boundaries but intellectual ones. Just as the first wave of Mods borrowed from different nations’ cultures to create what in their opinion was a kind of “ultimate modern style,” I have drawn from a wide palate of scholarly work that has struggled with the tensions of identifying with a nation, age

group, generation, or time period. In this sense, I have positioned Mod not just as a fashion or subcultural-allegiance, but as a state of mind and lifestyle. This culture has its own complex histories, mythologies, and ideals, which have now spanned three generations. As the sources throughout this dissertation show, those intellectuals who contributed to my understanding of the Mod Diaspora come from not just communication studies, but also history, cultural studies, literature, sociology, cultural anthropology, urban and design history, and musicology. I realized early on that this interdisciplinary approach was necessary, since those who have adhered to the Mod way of life designate spaces, clothing, literature, music, design, modes of transport, and even hairstyles, as stamped with their particular aesthetic. I do not believe as comprehensive a portrait of Mod culture could have emerged without interweaving this complex network of disciplinary viewpoints.

Overall the vision of Mod that I hope has radiated throughout this dissertation is that it was *the* youth culture that set the tone for those to follow, yet remains clearly distinct from all the rest. For instance, like rappers or hip hop artists who wear lots of pricey-looking “bling” (jewelry), the earliest British Mods’ showed-off expensive-looking suits and scooters. Like that of the original working-class Mods, the favored image of current hip hoppers is to wear clothing and accessories that aspire to moneyed status. The glam rockers of the 1970s, many of whom had been Mods in their teenage years (David Bowie, Marc Bolan), utilized a “queer identity,” taking androgyny several steps further than the Mods had done. Wearing make-up, for example, was a norm for this subcultural set. In the early 2000s, so-called “indie” bands like the Strokes and Franz Ferdinand began wearing suits and skinny ties, combining the look of sixties Mod with its more “new wave,” sensibility from the late seventies and early eighties.



However, unlike these other youth cultures, the main distinction Mod has continued to have is that it has originated from a desire to create the ultimate modern experience. Even as a supposedly “retro” lifestyle, the looking-back aspect has had more to do with roads of modernity not taken—that somehow these alternative routes may have led society to an even more satisfying and sophisticated present-day existence. Mod has been the only youth culture to fully valorize and embody the hopes instilled in the modern project of “progress.” The Mods I met, interviewed, and observed—no matter in which country—described the discovery of Mod as nothing short of an epiphany: It is energizing and youth-preserving. It is voluminous in its history and imagery. To be a Mod is to look in the face of an often disappointing world and still think it is fantastic, because one has seen what is possible. One might see Mod as an urban fairytale come to life, which suggests that once upon a time, in the mid-sixties, young people allowed their imaginations to run wild and let those imaginings color the world. Those who have continued breathing life into these visions and impulses of a “better modernity,” believe that this is more than a fairy story or mythology. It can be lived. To be a Mod is to “be real” in a way that is not obvious in mainstream society. The “real” is an identity that prefers leisure over work, for instance. That is where the authenticity of experience has been found. Moreover, this reality has come from a utopian impulse to believe that work, class, gender, and nationality do not predestine the course of one’s life. For a modern person, these traits are malleable, changeable. That is what the modern world *should be*—even if this is not what it *has been*.

I have attempted to make this dissertation as thorough as possible in my quest to carefully analyze the “hows” and “whys” of this longstanding, transnational youth culture. However, I am also of the belief that as an academic text, this should not be a stopping point—a “definitive text”—but a resource from which to draw. Just as I have been indebted to scholars who have

asked provocative questions and analyzed various cultural phenomena from their unique perspective, I expect that this will function in a similar way. Hopefully, this examination of Mod will open up more dialogue and questions surrounding the difference between the ideals of modernity versus postmodernity in contemporary youth cultures. Moreover, I believe that scholars from the various disciplines I draw from will bring their own questions. I realize that this dissertation could have been written using various methodological and theoretical frames. Future scholars of Mod and other youth cultures may want to examine further themes I did not detail, but are clearly part of Mod culture. For instance, design scholars could easily delve into more detailed readings of the symbols and signifiers of Mod. And, though new media was described in analyzing the networking of Mod culture, it was not at the core of this text. As “new media” is on the lips of many up-and-coming communication scholars, those with that specialization could further investigate the relationship between new media and Mod—especially in the years to come—as technological advances are sure to be forthcoming.

Finally, it is my greatest wish that readers are left feeling as if they can fully perceive the sights, sounds, and concepts that have made Mod culture the distinct youth culture it has been and continues to be. Whether enthusiastic shouts of “We are the Mods” come with English, American, German, or Japanese accents, ultimately there is unity behind this declaration. It is more than just a call to action. It is the fervent belief that the modern world can be worth fighting for.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **LOCATING RESOURCES**

Oral history is key to the unique slant of this project. The rich and varied voices and perspectives of those who either self-identify as insiders or keen observers of Mod culture have influenced the tenor of this study. Over sixty voices are included here. Readers may notice that the majority come from German Mods, rather than those from the U.S., Japan, or the U.K. This is due to the fact that I was able to spend a whole year conducting research in Germany through a Fulbright fellowship. Most of my interviews with American Mods were planned for when I happened to be passing through New York or L.A.—hubs of Mod activity—en route to visit family members in Hawaii and Long Island. Others were done via email. Participant observation, the anthropological methodology which supplemented my oral history research, was made possible in Germany (2006-2007) through the German-American Fulbright Association and in Japan (2004) through the Solis Horwitz Nationality Room Scholarship, University of Pittsburgh. An August 2007 trip from Germany to the U.K. was self-funded.

Beyond oral history interviews, and because this dissertation examines how Mod circulates through different types of communication sources, I wanted to include as many different kinds of media as possible. For archival research on Mod in the 1960s, I heavily relied

on magazines and newspapers from the period. Luckily, I was usually able to look at original paper copies, rather than those transferred onto microfilm or microfiche. This was important because I was able to see the original colors and design elements featured in the publications. At the Hillman Library at the University of Pittsburgh, I systematically read through and scanned issues of *Life* and *Look* magazines from between 1964 and 1967. I did the same at Carnegie Mellon University's Hunt Library with issues of *Mademoiselle* and *Vogue* from this time period. Through a generous grant from the Popular Culture Association (see acknowledgements for details), I was able to look at original copies of sometimes hard-to-find, mid-sixties editions of American teen magazines *Tiger Beat*, *Dig*, *Flip*, *'Teen*, *Teen Scene*, *Hullabaloo*, and *16* at the Music and Browne Popular Culture libraries of Bowling Green State University in Ohio. They also had several issues of the sixties-era British *Fabulous*, which I examined as well. The other teen-oriented British magazines cited within the dissertation—*Boyfriend* and *Honey*—were found at the St. Pancras and Colindale branches of the British Library, London. Reading those teen or music-centered magazines from 1960s Germany—*Bravo*, *Ok*, *Musikparade*, and *Star-Club News*—required taking various research trips and making personal contacts. I located paper copies of *Bravo* at Berlin's *Archiv der Jugendkulturen* (Archive of Youth Cultures). I found hard copies of 1965 to 1967 issues of *Ok* and *Musikparade* at the *Deutsche Bücherei* (the German National Library), Leipzig. Ulf Krüger, Hamburg, generously allowed me to borrow his near-complete collection of the *Star-Club News*. He also granted me access to the photographic images of sixties Germany included in Chapter two through his Hamburg-based archive and store, K&K Center-of-Beat. At the *Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky* (state and university library of Hamburg), I was able to look at issues of popular weekly periodicals *Der Spiegel* and *Der Stern*, while the branch at the *Forschungsstelle für*

*Zeitgeschichte* (Research Center of Contemporary History) offered sixties-era issues of the scholarly journal, *Deutsche Jugend*. Some primary source material and additional research advice came from Mods I met and interviewed. Former Hamburg Mod Alain Ayadi (Berlin) entrusted me with his personal collection of 80s to 90s-era German and American Mod fanzines and various collectable ephemera. Munich-based Jani Egloff, a fellow Ph.D. candidate (University of Hamburg) and scholar of Mod culture, shared her knowledge of Mod resources in Germany. For film and TV show footage not easily available, I was given access to Thomas Schmidt's (Hamburg) large, personal archive of *Beat-Club* and *Beat! Beat! Beat!*, and other miscellaneous, German, and sixties-era films and TV shows. Thomas Czerlach and Carina Marrder also helped me gain access to other rare sixties TV shows and films. Other hard-to-find German print materials from the 1900s to the 1950s were available at the *Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung* (Archive of the German Youth Movement) in Witzenhausen's Burg Ludwigstein, Hesse. Eddie Piller also gave me two copies of his 1980s fanzine, *Extraordinary Sensations* and several recent CDs of Mod or Mod-influenced bands from his Acid Jazz label.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **ORAL HISTORY GUIDELINES AND METHODS**

Oral history provides insights that are hard to generate through other methodologies. Through peoples' words, unique to their own experiences, I have been able to understand the multiplicity and complexity of how Mod is used to form both their identities and communities. This method sheds light on idiographic (non-repeatable) rather than nomothetic (generalizable) approaches to scholarly inquiry. This is especially salient given the human agency involved in constructing social phenomena like Mod. All my informants were asked open-ended questions that allowed them to tell their "Mod life story." I was not looking to quantify their experiences, but rather, hoped that various threads of remembrance might be interwoven with one another to produce a multi-textured account of their cultural history.

Most social scientific, ethnographic research done as part of a university degree requires permission through the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Since I am in the humanities and not in the social sciences, and because my project is a cultural history, I decided to use oral history methods. While this methodology still requires authors to ask narrators (i.e., interviewees) for written permission to reproduce transcribed excerpts of their words, the format of release forms

follow those suggested by lawyer John A. Neuenschwander's book *Oral History and the Law*.<sup>998</sup> I also took many cues from the oral historian Valerie R. Yow. For details on these guidelines, see "Oral History Evaluation Guidelines," *Oral History Association* 3 (1989; Revised Sept. 2000) at [http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/pub\\_eg.html](http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/pub_eg.html). See also Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (1994; Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005). Because of following these oral history methods, institutional (IRB) exclusion was granted to my fieldwork by Christopher M. Ryan, Vice Chair of the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board. A letter confirming this, dated March 5, 2004, was written to my advisor, Ronald J. Zboray, who is also Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Communication. This letter is on file in the Department of Communication, University of Pittsburgh.

Though I had some initial contacts for my interviews in the U.S. and Germany, seeking out those included in this study, especially those in Japan and England, required initial Internet-facilitated contact. For my research in Japan, for instance, I first looked at the *Uppers Organization* website, which includes pages of "city guides" for Mod activities around the world. I also asked one of the founders of the site, Richard Karström, if he had any Japanese contacts. He quickly responded with the name and email for Daisuke Usui in Nagoya. "Dai," in turn, helped connect me with more possible narrators. This "snowballing" effect from person-to-person was typical of how I found my narrators, not just in Japan, but in the U.K. and Germany, too. I must also mention the effectiveness of the social networking website *Myspace*, which greatly facilitated my search for and communication with British Mods in short order. Before I

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<sup>998</sup> John H. Neuenschwander, *Oral History and the Law* (Oral History Association, 2002), 7, Appendix C1, 79.

conducted interviews in the U.K., I was able to contact possible narrators and arrange times to meet with them during my stay there in mid-to-late August, 2007.

The transcription style and post-research release forms used (especially in light of the pending publication of a version of this dissertation with Peter Lang Publishing, New York) followed a model also provided by Valerie Raleigh Yow. For transcription, this oral historian advises an initial “raw” transcription including all “ums,” “ahs,” and individual speaking ticks. However, when including portions of these transcripts, Yow recommends excluding any of these which do not emphasize certain pregnant pauses, thinking moments, or emotions about the subject matter being discussed (see Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 325-328).



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