

THE MODS IN CATALONIA: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE NEO-GRAMSCIAN APPROACH TO POPULAR CULTURE

Graham Sinclair

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2016

**Programa de Doctorat
en Ciències Humanes, del Patrimoni i de la Cultura**

Dirigida per: Dr Narcís Iglésias Franch

Memoria presentada per optar al títol de doctor per la Universitat de Girona

ABSTRACT

This thesis begins with an examination of Antonio Gramsci's hegemony theory. His rejection of economic determinism opened up a theoretical space within the ideological superstructure where cultural phenomena acquired a transformational significance.

The youth subcultures which emerged in Britain after the Second World War became the object of attention of many academics, especially those associated with the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. A (neo) Gramscian approach was adopted in an attempt to discover the meaning of these 'urban tribes'. The Mods were of particular interest as they seemed to represent a break from traditional class boundaries.

I develop a critical analysis of the usefulness of neo-Gramscian cultural theory in reaching an understanding of the Mods. A comparative study of the Mods at different times and in different countries suggests that a study of the signs – in this case music and clothes - of a youth subculture is not enough. For this reason I provide a historical background to the emergence of youth subcultures in Catalonia. Leaning on the Oral History tradition, through a series of interviews with contemporary subcultural stylists and a review of Catalan Modzines, I attempt to let the Mods speak for themselves.

My conclusions suggest that many cultural theorists returned to, adapted and at times revised Gramsci's ideas because they found themselves in an awkward ideological position. Gramscian hegemony theory would appear to allow for such flexibility but I also argue that a voluntarist desire to locate class struggle within subcultural practices may be vicarious rather than efficacious.

RESUM

La tesi arrenca amb un examen de la teoria de l'hegemonia de Gramsci. El seu rebuig del determinisme econòmic va obrir un espai teòric en el si de la superestructura ideològica on els fenòmens culturals van adquirir un significat transformador.

Les subcultures juvenils que van emergir a la Gran Bretanya després de la Segona Guerra Mundial van esdevenir l'objecte d'atenció de determinats acadèmics, en particular d'aquells a l'entorn del Centre d'Estudis Culturals Contemporanis de la Universitat de Birmingham. L'aproximació (neo)gramsciana d'aquesta escola proposava entendre el significat d'aquestes 'tribus urbanes'. Els Mods eren particularment interessants, perquè semblaven representar un trencament amb les fronteres de classe tradicionals.

En aquesta tesi desenvolupo una anàlisi crítica de la utilitat de la teoria cultural neogramsciana com a eina de comprensió dels Mods. Un estudi comparatiu dels Mods en diferents èpoques i a diferents països suggereix que amb un estudi dels signes –en aquest cas, música i indumentària– d'una subcultura juvenil no n'hi ha prou. Per

aquesta raó, presento els antecedents històrics de l'emergència de les subcultures juvenils a Catalunya. Recolzant en la tradició de la història oral, mitjançant una sèrie d'entrevistes a estilistes de la subcultura en actiu, i en l'examen de Modzines catalans, deixo que els Mods parlïn per ells mateixos.

Les meves conclusions apunten que diversos teòrics culturals van retrobar, adoptar i de vegades revisar les idees de Gramsci perquè es van trobar ells mateixos en una posició ideològica incòmoda. La teoria de l'hegemonia de Gramsci permetria en principi tal flexibilitat, però també argüixo que existeix un desig 'voluntarista' –més vicarial que no pas eficaç– de situar la lluita de classes en el si de les pràctiques subculturals.

RESUMEN

La tesis arranca con un examen de la teoría de la hegemonía de Gramsci. Su rechazo del determinismo económico abrió un espacio teórico en el seno de la superestructura ideológica donde los fenómenos culturales adquirieron un significado transformador. Las subculturas juveniles que emergieron en Gran Bretaña después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial devinieron el objeto de atención de determinados académicos, en especial de aquellos relacionados con el Centro de Estudios Culturales Contemporáneos de la Universidad de Birmingham. La aproximación (neo)gramsciana de esta escuela se proponía entender el significado de estas 'tribus urbanas'. Los Mods eran de particular interés, pues parecían representar una ruptura con las fronteras de clase tradicionales.

En esta tesis, desarrollo un análisis crítico de la utilidad de la teoría cultural neogramsciana como instrumento de comprensión de los Mods. Un estudio comparativo de los Mods en diferentes épocas y en diferentes países sugiere que un estudio de los signos –en este caso, música e indumentaria– de una subcultura juvenil no es suficiente. Por esta razón, presento los antecedentes históricos de la emergencia de las subculturas juveniles en Cataluña. Apoyándome en la tradición de la historia oral, a través de una serie de entrevistas a estilistas de la subcultura en activo, y en el examen de Modzines catalanes, dejo que los Mods hablen por sí mismos.

Mis conclusiones sugieren que muchos teóricos culturales recuperaron, adaptaron y en ocasiones revisaron las ideas de Gramsci porque se encontraron a sí mismos en una posición ideológica incómoda. La teoría de la hegemonía de Gramsci permitiría en principio tal flexibilidad, pero también yo sostengo que existe un deseo 'voluntarista' – más vicarial que eficaz– de situar la lucha de clases en el seno de las prácticas subculturales.

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INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF AIMS

Existence reflected in sign is not merely reflected but refracted. How is this refraction of existence of the ideological sign determined? By an intersecting of differently oriented social interests within one and the same sign community.¹

Like their subcultural predecessors the Teddy Boys, the original Mods were a product of the changes which Britain, and especially working class Britain, had experienced in the years following the Second World War. Unlike the Teddy Boys, the Mods attracted interest from cultural theorists because they seemed to represent something more than a simple generational step away from traditional working class culture. The first serious attempts to understand the Mods as exponents of popular culture were framed within British post-war cultural studies. This was part of a humanistic socialist tradition which relied to a significant extent on the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and represented a paradigmatic move away from a mechanistic approach to the relationship between the economic base and the ideological superstructure where 'culture' is located. But 'culture' itself is a difficult word, 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language'² according to Raymond Williams, who felt it could be used to describe 'a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development.'³ Peter Burke's idea of culture as a 'system of shared meanings, attitudes and values, and the symbolic forms (performances, artefacts) in which they are expressed and embodied'⁴ is perhaps more useful in understanding the Mods as it brings us closer to the idea of popular culture as a *way* of life rather than a lifestyle accessory. 'Popular' is another difficult word and Williams provides four meanings: 'well liked by many people'; 'inferior kinds of work'; 'work deliberately setting out to win favour with the people'; 'culture actually made by the people for themselves.'⁵ Only the last definition here works for the Mods.

¹ V.N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 23.

² Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (London: Fontana, 1983), p. 87.

³ *Keywords*, p. 90.

⁴ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

⁵ *Keywords*, p. 237.

Matthew Arnold's view of culture was that it represented 'the best that has been thought and said in the world',⁶ that it represented 'harmonious perfection'.⁷ Pete Meaden describes Mod as 'succinctly beautiful and self-contained'.⁸ Paolo Hewitt talks about 'little masterpieces [...] the jewels of the cities and High Streets'.⁹ For Kiko Amat 'Hay un gesto, una pose, una determinada elegancia aerodinámica [...] que es la marca eternal del modernista'.¹⁰ Most Mods would have no problem identifying with any of the above comments - apart from the idea of harmony, perhaps. They might feel less happy being considered part of *popular* culture. Matthew Arnold would not have considered Mod culture at all. It is my intention here to discuss the usefulness of (neo)Gramscian hegemony theory in reaching an understanding of the Mods. Gramsci's political philosophy has danced in and out of fashion; Mod too.

In the first chapter I will look briefly at the origins of hegemony theory, paying particular attention to the social context which allowed for and necessitated (for Gramsci) what was essentially a re-examination of the nature of the ideological superstructure. I will then examine how his ideas were revived by sociologists and cultural theorists such as Ernesto Laclau and Stuart Hall in the 1970s. I will try to develop the idea that economically defined social class was central to Gramsci's hypothesis and that some later theoreticians, by abandoning the centrality of class, have *revised* rather than developed hegemony theory. It is my hope that this analysis will lead to the possibility of locating Mod somewhere within the ideological superstructure.

In the second chapter I will examine some of the key factors which led to the development of post-war youth subcultures in Britain. I will then look at some of the specificities (and non-specificities) of the original Mods. Here I will be trying to reach an understanding of the meaning of Mod by discussing what Mods represented for themselves as well as for more academic commentators.

⁶ Matthew Arnold, 'Culture and Anarchy', quoted in Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 1987), p. 6.

⁷ *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 6.

⁸ Steve Turner, 'The Ace Face's Forgotten Story: An Interview with Pete Meaden' in Paolo Hewitt, ed. *The Sharper Word: A Mod Anthology* (London: Helter Skelter, 1999), p. 167.

⁹ *The Sharper Word*, p.6.

¹⁰ Kiko Amat in the introduction to: Pablo Martínez Vaquero, *¡Ahora! No mañana. Los Mods en la Nueva Ola Española de los Años Ochenta (1979-1985)* (Lleida: Mileno, 2008), p.11.

It has been argued that Mods 'directly embodied musical movement in a style of living - more so, perhaps, than any other subculture before or since.'¹¹ So, in the third chapter I will examine some of the similarities and differences in the music that was listened to by the original Mods and late 1970s British revivalists - focusing on 2-Tone music. I will also analyse the style and lyrical content of Spanish and Catalan bands from the 1980s. This discussion of the early recordings of the Who, the Specials and the Jam, along with groups such as Brighton 64 and Los Flechazos (from the Spanish/Catalan scene) should reveal something of the different attitudes and interests being expressed, not necessarily by Mod bands, but by bands that Mods like(d) and listen(ed) to.

The fourth chapter starts with a description of the period during which independent youth subcultures began to develop in Spain. It has three aims: the first *comparative*, allowing us to examine the relationship between different 'families' of Mods, and challenge the essentialist concept of a subcultural continuum running through the generations¹²; the second *contextual*, providing some background to the emergence of the Mod scene during, and as a part of, the Spanish new wave; the third aim is to provide a short historical *narrative* of the Mods in Spain.

Chapter five is a case study of Catalan Mods. The Mod tradition in Catalonia started within a context of cultural pluralism and it will be interesting to see how it has aged. My aim is to locate the Catalan Mods both in terms of style and meaning. This should be of interest for two main reasons: firstly, very little has been written about this group and so any conclusions will depend on original research as well as the literature. A study of the Modzines¹³ produced by and for Catalan Mods along with a series of interviews with 'faces' on the contemporary Mod scene should demonstrate the 'cultural memory'¹⁴ of the participants. Secondly, while the Catalan Mods may represent a third or even fourth generation phenomenon for British commentators, the generational system is perceived differently here in Spain, with the 'first

¹¹ Neil Nehring, *Flowers in the Dustbin: Culture, Anarchy and Postwar England* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 260.

¹² The idea of a chimeric 'spirit' or 'meaning' of Mod is present in nearly all of the contemporary literature on the subject.

¹³ Fan magazines dedicated to the world of Mod.

¹⁴ See Andy Bennett's foreword to Christine Jacqueline Feldham, *We Are the Mods: a transnational history of a youth subculture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. ix-xi.

generation' often being linked to the post-transition 'movida'¹⁵. So, our examination of the meaning of Mod here faces shifts in terms of time, place and subcultural generation.

I intend to explore the idea that the dynamism of youth cultures can only be understood within a historical and social context. Signs and symbols may remain the same but their meaning changes depending on how and when they exist. I also hope to examine the usefulness of Gramscian hegemony theory, as a flexible and non-determinist tool, within cultural studies. Gramsci's hegemony theory was championed by many of the cultural theorists associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. This piece of work is rooted in the same tradition, but I also develop a critical approach to certain aspects of what became known as 'British Cultural Studies'.

¹⁵ See Pablo Martínez Vaquero, *¡Ahora! No Mañana – los mods en la nueva ola española 1979-1985*, (Lleida: Mileno, 2009)

GRAMSCI AND POPULAR CULTURE

Class does not coincide with the sign community, i.e., with the community which is the totality of users of the same set of signs for ideological communication. Thus various different classes will use one and the same language. As a result, differently oriented accents intersect in every ideological sign. Sign becomes an arena of class struggle.¹⁶

It has been argued that Antonio Gramsci's most valuable contribution to revolutionary Marxism was his attempt to rid it of economic determinism.¹⁷ His impact in the field of popular culture stems from this and, in particular, from his development of the base/superstructure model using his concept of 'hegemony'.¹⁸ Gramsci's theories came from a desire to understand the concrete situation in which he found himself - they grew out of 'his political experiences and the political repressions and hardships he suffered'.¹⁹ The Russian working class and peasantry had overthrown tsarism and taken power in the revolutions of February and October 1917, but the revolution had not spread to other more economically advanced Western countries as had been expected. In Italy, resistance to Mussolini's fascists had not been sufficient to prevent them from coming to power in 1922. The task of organising the working class and peasantry on a *national* level appeared unfeasible.²⁰ The young Italian Communist Party, of which Gramsci was a founder member, was dominated by an economic determinism which tragically underestimated the dangers of fascism and therefore did

¹⁶ *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, p. 23.

¹⁷ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. by Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), pp. 378-419.

¹⁸ Gramsci first used the term in dealing with the 'southern question' but it is present throughout his work.

¹⁹ Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 162.

²⁰ Gramsci's emphasis on the importance of the 'national-popular' was a response to the north-south divide which still dominates Italian politics today.

not take into consideration the role that culture and ideology could have in achieving or circumventing radical social change.²¹

For Gramsci, Marxism is not simply a science whose concepts have to be defined and developed in a rigorous and logical manner, nor merely a perspective well equipped to make sense of the world, but a political theory focused upon the emancipation of the working class.²²

Unsurprisingly, and perhaps necessarily, given the historical context, his theoretical work also focused on the factors which could prevent this emancipation. As a logical consequence, his theory of hegemony was developed with the aim of understanding how a power bloc, which includes but is not solely made up of the economic ruling class, maintains its dominance by gaining the *spontaneous* consent of subordinate groups, including the working class, through what John Storey describes as 'the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups'.²³

Gramsci does talk about the coercive control of the state, 'special bodies of armed men'²⁴ as Lenin had put it, but it is the idea of 'spontaneous consent' or 'consensual control'²⁵ - the concept of hegemony being maintained through a process of negotiation - which is of particular interest within the context of popular culture studies. What was new here, both when the text was written and when these ideas began to be used by sociologists and cultural theorists in the 1970s, was the idea that the state, at least in its ideological aspect, was a process rather than a monolith. John Fiske was therefore able to argue that

consent must be constantly won and rewon, for people's material social experience constantly reminds them of the disadvantages of subordination and thus poses a threat to the dominant class. Hegemony [...] posits a constant

²¹ Bordiga, the leader of the PCI declared in 1924 that 'the bourgeois counter-revolution, for us, is the proof of the inevitability of the revolution.' quoted in the general introduction to Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. By Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith (London: Elecbooks, 1999), p. 74.

²² *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, p. 162.

²³ *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, p. 165.

²⁴ Vladimir Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/sep/staterev/ch01.htm#s2> [accessed 4 April 2015].

²⁵ P. Ransome, *Antonio Gramsci: A New Introduction* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), in *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, p165.

contradiction between ideology and the social experience of the subordinate that makes this interface into an inevitable site of ideological struggle.²⁶

This emphasis on ideology provided a new space for rather demoralised progressive intellectuals to situate their 'struggle'. It also, perhaps more importantly, offered insights into the social situations which had led to this demoralisation. Ernesto Laclau, in many ways like Gramsci himself, had returned to Marxist theory in an attempt to explain the lack of sufficient opposition to the arrival in power of a dictatorial regime - in this case Argentina in the 1970s.²⁷ The work of Louis Althusser, itself informed by Gramsci and very much the product of post-1968 France, became very influential at this time.²⁸ The work of both followed and borrowed from Gramsci directly in rejecting a mechanistic or determinist interpretation of the base/superstructure formulation. Althusser derided the idea of an essentialist capitalism acting according to perfect schemata.

The economic dialectic is never active *in the pure state*; In history, these instances, the superstructures, etc. - are never seen to step respectfully aside when their work is done or, when the Time comes, as his pure phenomena, to scatter before His Majesty the Economy as he strides along the royal road of the Dialectic. From the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the 'last instance' never comes.²⁹

Or, as Stuart Hall wrote in 1982,

the presupposition that the reflection of economic reality at the level of ideas could be replaced by a straightforward 'class-determination', also proved to be a false and misleading trail. It did not recognise the relative autonomy of ideological processes, or the real effects of ideology on other practices.³⁰

The key concept here is 'relative autonomy'. It owes a great deal to Gramsci and allows popular culture to be regarded as something other than either a dangerous tool of reaction, imposed ready-made from above, or as a pure form of working class

²⁶ John Fiske, 'British Cultural Studies' in *Channels of Discourse Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*, ed. by Robert C. Allen, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 291.

²⁷ Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism-Fascism-Populism*, 2nd edn. (London: Verso, 1979).

²⁸ John Storey, *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 2nd edn. (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), p. 126.

²⁹ Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London: NLB, 1977), p. 113.

³⁰ Stuart Hall 'The Rediscovery of 'Ideology': Return of the Repressed in Media Studies', in *Culture, Society and the Media* ed. by Michael Gurevitch and others (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 83.

expression to be celebrated at all costs. Tony Bennett goes further in suggesting that a *neo*-Gramscian approach '[shuns]...the intolerable condescension of the mass culture critic while simultaneously avoiding any tendency toward a celebratory populism, [and] both avoids and disqualifies the bipolar alternatives of structuralism and culturalism'.³¹ Neo-Gramscian cultural theory does however borrow from both culturalism and (neo)structuralism. One of my aims is to examine the usefulness of this idea of relative autonomy by looking at youth subcultures in general and Mod in particular. Dick Hebdige argues that these subcultures are spaces in which young people (mis)appropriate products of the culture industries and imbue them with new meanings.³²



Figure 1. The Jam. 1979.



Figure 2. 'God Save the Queen' by Vivien Westwood. 1977.

³¹ Tony Bennett, 'Popular Culture and the Turn to Gramsci', in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, ed. by John Storey, 2nd edn. (Essex: Prentice Hall, 1998), p. 219.

³² *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*.

I shall return to this in greater detail in Chapter 2 but for the moment would like to use one example to illustrate some of the insights a flexible reading of hegemony theory can deliver. The relationship between the Union Jack and British nationalism may be 'naturalised'³³ but when the flag was recrafted into jackets by the Who and t-shirts by Vivien Westwood for the Sex Pistols its meaning changed and the establishment was horrified. This is an example of what Hebdige, drawing on Levi-Strauss, describes as 'bricolage' in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. The non-permanence of this relationship between a cultural artifact (in this case the British flag) and its meaning has a deep significance, which becomes clearer if we think about the Jam wearing Union Jack suits in 1979 at a time when Paul Weller had said his group would be voting Conservative in the next election. Wearing these suits, especially in front of a quintessentially English monument like Big Ben (see Fig. 1), was seen by many as pro-establishment and pro-Tory.³⁴ Two years earlier, while yards of red, white and blue bunting were being used to decorate British streets for the 1977 Silver Jubilee, the Sex Pistols' 'God Save the Queen' had reached the top of the charts. Their reappropriation of the flag, the monarch's face albeit with a safety pin through her lip. (See Fig. 2) and the title of the national anthem led to the song being banned and members of the group being arrested.³⁵

More recently, in the aftermath of the racist murders at the Charleston Church in South Carolina, there have been calls for the removal of the Confederate flag from public buildings in the USA.³⁶ Kanye West's patching of the flag on the sleeve of a flight jacket is an overt piece of anti-racist bricolage/reappropriation. As the rapper, who is the son of a Black Panther, puts it

React how you want. Any energy you got is good energy. You know the confederate flag represented slavery in a way - that's my abstract take on what

³³ Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), pp. 15-31.

³⁴ Paul Weller (lead singer and guitarist with the Jam), who was later to become a Labour supporter, later regretted his comments - see John Reed, *Paul Weller: My Ever Changing Moods* (London: Omnibus, 2005). Many fans of the jam and Weller still find this hard to accept. See for example the 'Was Paul Weller a Tory Supporter?' thread in <http://www.northstandchat.com> [accessed 17/10/2015]

³⁵ Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (Faber and Faber: London, 1991), p. 351 – 367.

³⁶ See Matthew Teague, 'South Carolina's Confederate flag comes down as history of hate meets modernity', <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/10/south-carolina-confederate-flag-goes-down-as-history-of-hate-meets-modernity> [accessed 11/07/2015]

I know about it. So I made the song New Slaves. So I took the Confederate flag and made it my flag. It's my flag now. Now what are you going to do?³⁷

Within the frameworks that a (neo)Gramscian approach offers, the flag's different meanings are the result of a process of 'articulation' (in this case meaning both to express and to join together).³⁸ Texts, objects, or practices are not inscribed with meanings but permit people to create meanings even though they may be heavily laden with a 'preferred' ideology and tend to 'hail' us towards a pro-hegemonic position.³⁹ Contradictory ideas may be articulated at the same time. The anti-establishment music of Bob Marley, or the West Coast counterculture, or punk rock, supported and continues to support, through the sale of records, the very system it attacks. This process of 'resistance' and 'incorporation' is central to neo-Gramscian cultural studies.

This idea of 'culture as negotiation'⁴⁰ is useful as it locates youth subcultures on a terrain where meanings are created and hegemonic ideology may be contested. It follows then that the people who consume popular culture are not 'cultural dopes' but active participants. 'Ultimately, the notion of people as a purely *passive*, outline force is a deeply unsocialist perspective.'⁴¹ The fact that Stuart Hall chooses 'unsocialist' to describe something he perceives as unsuitable for the study of popular culture is revealing. The British 'turn to Gramsci', like Laclau's turn to Gramsci in the seventies and echoing Gramsci's return to Marxist theory in the 1920s, was a response to events in society outwith the specific field of popular culture. Paradoxically, the person with the greatest responsibility for putting Gramsci on the centre stage of British cultural studies was probably Margaret Thatcher. In the 1980s it seemed as if the 'organic intellectuals'⁴² of the hard right had won the battle for the hegemony of ideas in Britain as significant sections of the working class voted Conservative for the first time. On a more *coercive* level, the 'Ridley Plan'⁴³ was implemented and after the year-long 1984-85 strike the miners were forced back to work. For sections of the British left only

³⁷ Mike Larkin 'Crossing the line? Kanye West defies critics and wears controversial Confederate Flag jacket to boxing class' <http://www.dailymail.co.uk> [accessed 11/07/2015]

³⁸ Stuart Hall, *The Rediscovery of Ideology*, pp. 79-84.

³⁹ John Fiske, *British Cultural Studies*, pp. 289-90.

⁴⁰ See for example Christine Gledhill, 'Pleasurable Negotiations' in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, p. 239.

⁴¹ Stuart Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing the Popular' in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, p. 447.

⁴² *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 3-23.

⁴³ *The Economist*, 27 May 1978.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony seemed capable of explaining the hold Thatcherite ideas had over the nation. Some theoreticians, faced with what appeared to be the incapacity of the traditional organisations of the working class to resist this extreme conservatism, began to look for and develop alternatives. Gramsci's concept of the 'historic bloc'⁴⁴ offered the possibility of building alliances beyond traditional class boundaries.

Demoralisation led others to abandon the very concept of economically defined social classes. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*,⁴⁵ first published in 1985, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, expanding on Gramsci's non-determinist view of base and superstructure, find that economic structure is not determinant even in 'the lonely hour of the last instance.'⁴⁶ Social class is redefined: '...the very identity of classes is transformed by the hegemonic tasks they take on themselves'.⁴⁷ This goes well beyond the concept of class 'for' and 'in' itself⁴⁸ and leads us to a point where a social class is what it does. The authors admit 'Although we are no doubt radicalizing the Gramscian intuition in several respects, we think that something of the sort is implicit in...[his work]'.⁴⁹ This would appear to be a *revision* rather than a reassessment of Gramsci's ideas.

Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes the account to be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed - in other words, that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic corporate kind. But there is also no doubt that such sacrifices and such a compromise cannot touch the essential; for though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive nucleus of economic activity.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 137.

⁴⁵ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd edn. (London: Verso, 2001).

⁴⁶ *For Marx*, p. 113.

⁴⁷ *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 58.

⁴⁸ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. by Lewis S. Feuer (Glasgow: Williams Collins, 1974), pp. 12-13.

⁴⁹ *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. xiii.

⁵⁰ *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 161.

It is interesting that Laclau and Mouffe, despite their differences with Gramsci, still want to be associated with his ideas. This may have something to do with the counter-hegemonic weight of the tradition to which he belongs.

Gramsci's work has been hugely influential in the field of cultural studies, at least in the extent to which 'cultural studies is grounded in Marxism'.⁵¹ It is my intention in the chapters which follow to locate youth subcultures in general, and the Mods in particular, within the ideological superstructure. The concept of 'relative autonomy', alongside the processes of resistance and incorporation, will be central to this *contextual* analysis.

⁵¹ John Storey, *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture: Theories and Methods*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 3.

THE ORIGINAL MODS: CLEAN LIVING UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES⁵²

The Mods are often regarded as sterling examples of a quintessential 1960s popular culture. However, if we are looking for 'certain economic, technological, social, cultural and political changes [...which amount to...] a special phase of modernisation',⁵³ and which can help us understand the historical context of the Mods, it is worth being flexible with the calendar. Arthur Marwick, with more of a shake than a nod to Eric Hobsbawm's 'short twentieth century', postulates a 'long sixties'.⁵⁴ His version begins in 1958 or 1959 and does not really end until the mid-1970s, when the effects of the 1973-74 oil crisis began to be felt by ordinary people.⁵⁵ Paolo Hewitt claims that 'the '60s began when the war ended.'⁵⁶ As I mentioned in my introduction, the original Mods, like the Teddy Boys, appeared as both a result and part of the profound societal changes post-war Britain was experiencing. While Teds and Mods may have benefited from and been victims of these changes to different extents, any attempt to establish a bi-polarity in defining these groups tends to ignore what they had in common. There is some debate about which specific factors led to the emergence of youth cultures at this time, but most commentators accept a combination of some or all of the following: affluence, education, mass culture and rupture. Despite Harold Macmillan's famous claim that Britons 'had never had it so good',⁵⁷ great inequalities in wealth

⁵² This is Pete Meadon's classic description of Mod. See Steve Turner, 'The Ace Face's Forgotten Story: An Interview with Pete Meadon', in Paolo Hewitt, ed., *The Sharper Word: A Mod Anthology* (London: Helter Skelter, 1999), p. 167.

⁵³ Arthur Marwick, 'The 1960s: Was There a 'Cultural Revolution?' in *Contemporary Record*, v.2, no.3, Autumn 1988, p. 342.

⁵⁴ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958-c. 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 7.

⁵⁵ *The Sixties*, p. 7.

⁵⁶ Paolo Hewitt, *The Soul Stylists: Six Decades of Modernism – from Mods to Casuals* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2000), p. 31.

⁵⁷ Harold Macmillan, speech to Bedford Conservatives, 20/7/1957. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday> [accessed 16/6/2015].

continued to exist.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the working class as a whole did see their incomes increase, and teenagers were 'the prime beneficiaries of the new affluence'.⁵⁹ Mark Abrams commented in 1959 that 'as compared with 1938, their real earnings (i.e. after allowing for the fall in the value of money) have increased by 50% (which is double the rate of expansion for adults), and their real 'discretionary' spending has probably risen by 100%.⁶⁰ The 1944 Education Act led to 'an increasing number of young people spending an increasing proportion of their youth in age specific educational institutions'.⁶¹ So, the new teenagers not only had more cash, they also had the self-confidence which comes with education and knew what to do with their earnings in a way their parents never had. The idea that more and more people, especially teenagers, were being submitted to the passive consumption of uniform, and therefore inferior, cultural products was widespread: 'The hedonistic but passive barbarian who rides in a fifty-horse-power bus for threepence, to see a five-million-dollar film for one-and-eightpence, is not simply a social oddity; he is a portent.'⁶² Richard Hoggart, the founder of the CCCS at Birmingham University, is expressing genuine, multiple and complex concerns here. However, I do feel it is possible to accept that an increased number of mass produced cultural products, many of them aimed specifically at the youth market, were arriving and being produced in Britain without thinking that the 'barbarians were at the gate'.⁶³ It has been argued that a 'hiatus in social experience precipitated by the war'⁶⁴ led to a qualifiedly distinct, delinquent youth culture. T.R. Fyvel's *The Insecure Offenders* adds a clear class dimension. He argues that working class families were 'more vulnerable to the socially and psychologically effects of the dislocation brought about by the war'.⁶⁵ Phil Cohen develops this idea by arguing that patterns of rehousing and development, accompanied by the collapse of traditional labour markets, were responsible for a defragmentation which led to sections of working class youth turning towards

⁵⁸ Neil Nehring, *Flowers in the Dustbin: Culture, Anarchy and Postwar England* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 237.

⁵⁹ John Clarke and others, 'Subcultures, Culture and Class' in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Routledge), 1993, p. 18.

⁶⁰ M. Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer* (London: London Press Exchange, 1959), p. 9.

⁶¹ 'Subcultures, Culture and Class', p. 20.

⁶² Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Pelican, 1958), p. 250.

⁶³ 'Subcultures, Culture and Class', p. 20.

⁶⁴ 'Subcultures, Culture and Class', p. 20.

⁶⁵ T.R. Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963), p. 213.

subcultures as 'ritualistic' or 'magical' responses to the contradictions which existed in their 'parent' cultures.⁶⁶ Richard Barnes adds two other factors: the abolition of compulsory military service and the introduction of hire-purchase agreements.⁶⁷

It can be argued fairly safely that a combination of these factors facilitated a 'generational consciousness'.⁶⁸ In contrast to the ideas outlined above, it has been posited that this consciousness was classless. It has even been suggested that the lifting of the ban on D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1960 may be considered as a 'tribute to Mod's ethic of classlessness' because of the sex scenes involving an aristocrat and a working class man.⁶⁹ Colin MacInnes was the most vociferous, and probably the most famous, advocate of this position.⁷⁰ He 'shared the conventional belief that the teenager was a harbinger of the classless consumer society, and already part of a 'class' in its own right, youth'.⁷¹ Ironically, MacInnes, despite himself, depicted a ritualised and 'magical' form of class warfare in his novels. He hates the Teds and the Teds hate the (Mod) teenagers. The Teds are stereotypically portrayed as working class or lumpen. For MacInnes this amounts to the same thing. In *Absolute Beginners*, his Teddy Boy character 'Ed the Ted' is a 'primitive goon'. His speech is singled out for phonetic rendering 'to emphasise the moronism of anyone bearing any traces of the traditional working class [...] "Yer'll be earing from me agen, an ver lads...You fink I'm sof, or sumfink?"⁷² It is a 'class-conscious impairment of stylistic sensibility'⁷³ which opposes the Teds to the Italianate and progressive 'class-free' teenager. The idea that (proto)Mods were something other than working class because they were clean and spent money on clothes is central to Colin MacInnes' work.⁷⁴ It is also similar to the ideas developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe I

⁶⁶ Phil Cohen, 'Subcultural Conflict and Working Class Community', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no. 2, pp. 4-51.

⁶⁷ Richard Barnes, *Mods!* (London: Plexus, 1991), p. 7.

⁶⁸ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 74.

⁶⁹ Christine Jacqueline Feldham, *We Are the Mods: a transnational history of a youth subculture*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), p. 21.

⁷⁰ Colin MacInnes defined the new youth culture for many in his 'London novels': *City of Spades* (1957), *Absolute Beginners* (1959), *Mr Love and Justice* (1960).

Colin MacInnes, *The Colin MacInnes Omnibus: His Three London Novels* (London: Alison and Busby, 2005).

⁷¹ Neil Nehring, *Flowers in the Dustbin: Culture, Anarchy and Postwar England* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 223.

⁷² *Flowers in the Dustbin*, p. 223.

⁷³ *Flowers in the Dustbin*, p. 223.

⁷⁴ See *Absolute Beginners* in particular.

outlined in the previous chapter – a strange coincidence given the time, space and backgrounds which separated the writers. However, the idea that Mods were clean, spent money on clothes and *were* working class was absolutely clear to Pete Meaden – the original Ace Face: 'As I say, Modism, Mod living is a euphemism for clean living, under difficult circumstances [...] They worked during the day-time, you gotta understand this [...]'⁷⁵ Separate pieces of work by Peter Willmott in 1969⁷⁶ and David Downes in 1966⁷⁷ had reasserted class as a meaningful category within youth culture and many Mods were working class. This is reflected in the profiles of youths arrested during the 1964 bank holiday weekend at Margate.

The average Mod, according to the survey of the 43 Margate offenders interviewed by Barker and Little earned about £11 a week, was either a semi-skilled or more typically an office worker who had left Secondary-modern school at fifteen. Another large section of Mods were employed as department store clerks, messengers, and occupied menial positions in the various service industries of the West end.⁷⁸

This information also provided the source for Franc Roddam's choice of job for the protagonist of his 1979 film *Quadrophenia: A Way of Life*.⁷⁹ Jimmy, the main character, works in a West-end advertising agency. Other Mods in the film work in a chemist's, a supermarket, and as a refuse collector. While not a primary source, the film was seriously researched and probably does give an insight into the working life of the Mods. A fairly large proportion seem to have been members of the non-manual or white-collar working class. So, rather than representing 'upward' social mobility or classlessness, they were reflecting more general changes taking place *within* the working class – 'they were the first kids to have real jobs and they were proud of it, you know.'⁸⁰ However, their 'flamboyant style of conspicuous consumption meant that they could be easily incorporated within a discourse of classless affluence'.⁸¹ A (neo)Gramscian approach attempts to understand both the social background and the cultural significance of the Mods without ignoring or abandoning social class. As Dick

⁷⁵ 'The Ace Face's Forgotten Story', p. 169 and p. 179.

⁷⁶ P. Willmott, *Adolescent Boys of East London* (London: Penguin, 1969),

⁷⁷ D. Downes, *The Delinquent Solution* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

⁷⁸ Dick Hebdige, 'The Meaning of Mod' in *Resistance through Rituals*, p. 91.

⁷⁹ *Quadrophenia: A Way of Life*. Dir. Franc Roddam. Polydor. 1979

⁸⁰ Patrick Uden in *The Soul Stylists*, p. 59.

⁸¹ Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 65.

Hebdige observes: '[...] consciousness was still rooted in a general experience of class, but it was expressed in ways which were different, and in some cases openly antithetical to, the traditional forms'.⁸²

So, what exactly were the Mods up to? Why was it that although 'they looked alright [...] there was something in the way they moved that adults couldn't make out?'⁸³ And why did their obsession with smartness become a 'symbol of national decline and degradation'?⁸⁴ Stanley Cohen has argued that the 'moral panic' which defined Mods and Rockers for the public was constructed by the press, the police, the courts and members of the general public themselves – the 'audience' as he puts it.⁸⁵ A process of dehumanisation took place; not only were the human participants of the 1964 seaside events often referred to as animals – most famously by Dr George Simpson, chairman of the Margate magistrates' court, who described the arrested youths as 'sawdust Caesars who can only find courage like rats, in hunting in packs'.⁸⁶ – but the whole 'inventory' employed to describe what had happened involved a lexis more usually associated with natural disasters, *human* agency thereby being removed.⁸⁷ Reporting of the events involved exaggeration and distortion of the facts, sometimes with lasting effect. The 'affluent' youth who offered to pay his fine immediately by cheque had neither the money, a bank account, nor a chequebook.⁸⁸ This did not stop the (non)event being reported, presumably as it was in keeping with an agenda of associating deviance with youth affluence. The scene reappears fifteen years later in Franc Roddam's *Quadrophenia*, allowing this particular Mod to enter the realm of what Jean Baudrillard would have described as 'hyperreal',⁸⁹ where the actual and the imagined blur into a new reality. Stanley Cohen, more concretely, regards these results – reporting and depiction – as self-fulfilling. He argues that a process of demonic symbolisation took place.

⁸² *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 75.

⁸³ Dave Laing, *The Sound of Our Time* (London: Sheen and Ward, 1969) quoted in Dick Hebdige 'The Meaning of Mod' in *Resistance through Rituals*, p. 88.

⁸⁴ *Youth in Britain*, p. 13.

⁸⁵ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, 3rd edn. (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 24.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Roger Hutchinson, *The High Sixties: The Summers of Riot and Love* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1992), p. 52.

⁸⁷ *Folk Devils*, pp. 11-13.

⁸⁸ *Folk Devils*, p. 21.

⁸⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), p. 2.

A word (Mod) becomes symbolic of a certain status (delinquent or deviant); objects (hairstyle, clothing) symbolize the word; the objects themselves become symbolic of the status (and the emotions attached to the status). The cumulative effect of these three processes as they appeared in the inventory was that the terms Mods and Rockers were torn from any previously neutral contexts (for example, the denotation of different consumer styles) and acquired wholly negative meanings.⁹⁰

This 'wholly negative' definition of Mod is distilled in Richard Allen's 1980 cult novel *Mod Rule*.⁹¹ The central character is defined as a Mod not through music, clothes or style, but rather by his violent and misogynist character; Mod is thoroughly demonised. The processes described by Cohen resurface systematically when the 'audience' attempts to deal with youth subcultures. The headline of a 2005 article in *The Guardian* was 'The hoodie debate: How a top can turn a teen into a hoodlum'.⁹² Young people who have chosen to wear hooded tops are referred to as 'feral yobs' and 'street rats'.⁹³ The article suggests a continuity between 1960s youth cults (including the Mods) and today's teenage hoodie wearers. In terms of music and clothes – the most obvious symbols of youth cults, this continuity is hard to establish. However, the media's insistence on depicting links between consumer styles and deviant behaviour seems perennial.⁹⁴

So, while the 'audience' was busy transforming Mods into 'folk devils', what were the Mods themselves up to? Tom Wolfe does his best to work it out in a classic 1964 piece of 'New Journalism'.

What the hell is it with this kid? Here he is, fifteen years old, and he is dressed better than any man in the office. He has on a checked suit with a double-breasted waistcoat with a step collar on it and the jacket coming in at the waist about like so and trousers that come down close here and then flare out here,

⁹⁰ *Folk Devils*, pp. 27-28.

⁹¹ Richard Allen, *The Complete Richard Allen Volume Five: Mod Rule, Punk Rock, Dragon Skins* (Dunoon: S.T. Publishing, 1996).

⁹² Patrick Barkham, 'The hoodie debate: How a top can turn a teen into a hoodlum', *The Guardian*, 14 May 2005, pp. 8-9.

⁹³ 'The hoodie debate', p. 8.

⁹⁴ A point which is conceded in a sub-section of 'The Hoodie Debate' article: 'From quiffs to gold chains...six decades of youth culture and press hysteria'.

and a custom made shirt that comes up like...so at the neckband, little things very few people would know about.⁹⁵

This could be regarded as taking consumerism and narcissism to the extreme. A complementary view is that Larry Lynch, the boy wearing the clothes Tom Wolfe describes, was engaging in 'semiotic guerrilla warfare'.⁹⁶

The group of cultural theorists associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University in the second half of the 1970s saw 'young people locked into class-based struggles and conflicts fundamental to modern capitalism'.⁹⁷ A (neo)Gramscian approach allowed them to retain a role for social class whilst borrowing from post-structuralism and semiotics in an attempt to understand the *significance* of youth cultures. Dick Hebdige, who has been described as a 'luminary of these approaches',⁹⁸ argued that subcultures signify disorder through their use of signs (often clothing).⁹⁹ It is interesting that Stanley Cohen's sociological approach also emphasised the importance of signs in the creation of the Mods. Roland Barthes in 'The Rhetoric of the Image' makes a distinction between 'intentional' advertising and 'natural' news images¹⁰⁰ and Hebdige feels that this distinction 'can be used analogously to point up the difference between subcultural and normal styles'.¹⁰¹ For the Mods subcultural side-vents in jackets were 'terribly important'¹⁰² and could easily be three times the length of those of their straight counterparts. The significance of this 'need not be intentional'¹⁰³ but it is agreed that a de facto significance exists. In order to understand this, Hebdige relies on the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, who observed that 'in certain primitive myths, the mispronunciation of words and the misuse of language are classified along with incest as horrendous aberrations capable of unleashing storm and tempest'.¹⁰⁴ For the structuralists, the tools of language analysis are equally as useful for understanding other social phenomena: 'cultural texts

⁹⁵ Tom Wolfe, 'The Noonday Underground' from Tom Wolfe, *The Pumphouse Gang* (New York: Bantam, 1969).

⁹⁶ A term developed by Umberto Eco in *A Theory of Semiotics* (Indiana: Indiana Press, 1976).

⁹⁷ *Youth in Britain*, p. 71.

⁹⁸ *Youth in Britain*, p. 72.

⁹⁹ *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁰ Roland Barthes, 'Rhetoric of the Image', in *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977).

¹⁰¹ *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁰² *Mods!*, p. 11.

¹⁰³ *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁴ Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966) quoted in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 91.

and practices are studied as analogous to language'.¹⁰⁵ So when Mods became involved in cultural DIY, using already existing products – prescribed pills for proscribed practices, the Union Jack disassembled then reassembled into jackets, the 1962 Mods who took up the city gent look,¹⁰⁶ the inter-sexuality of Mod haircuts, the transformation of ultra-respectable Vespas and Lambrettas into symbols of deviance¹⁰⁷ - they were in fact involved in *bricolage*.

As John Clarke explains:

when the bricoleur re-locates the significant object in a different position within [...] discourse, using the same overall repertoire of signs, or when that object is placed within a different total ensemble, a new discourse is constituted, a different message conveyed.¹⁰⁸

The insights of (post)structuralism and semiotics add to an understanding of Mod because they pay attention to detail and details were fundamentally important to Mods. As we have seen, these details often involved the *detournement* of pre-existing objects.

Les went beserk. He used to wear a striped jumper and a beret and eat garlic and everything. He started to learn French. We saw him once sitting in Aldgate Wimpy holding up a copy of *Le Soir*. When we went in and joined him we saw that he was really reading *The Sunday Pictorial* which he had concealed in between the middle pages. It was all a pose. There was even a time when we saw him walking round wearing his beret and striped jumper and carrying a loaf of French bread under his arm.¹⁰⁹

So it was 'all a pose', but was it only a pose? It has been argued that such behaviour becomes part of a semiotic guerrilla war even if it is being conducted 'at a level beneath the consciousness of the individual members of a spectacular subculture.'¹¹⁰ Stuart Hall has warned about the dangers of treating the consumers of popular culture

¹⁰⁵ John Storey, *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 2nd edn. (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), p. 76.

¹⁰⁶ *Mods!*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ After Clacton, the general secretaries of the Vespa and Lambretta Scooter Clubs issued a statement disassociating their clubs from the disturbances. *Folk Devils*, p. 28. See also Dick Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 77-115.

¹⁰⁸ J. Clarke and T. Jefferson, 'Working Class Youth Cultures', in G. Mungham and C. Pearson, eds. *Working Class Youth Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), quoted in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 104.

¹⁰⁹ *Mods!*, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 105.

as cultural dopes.¹¹¹ The same caution should be paid when analysing the agents of a subculture. Stanley Cohen finds 'sociologically incredible: a theory which postulates cultural dummies who give homologous meanings to all artefacts surrounding them.'¹¹² There is a danger of elitism with structuralist/semiotic approaches. They tend towards the idea of a hierarchy within and between subcultures. These hierarchies are often very subjectively defined and this subjectivity in turn leads to further risks of elitism.¹¹³ Who decides on the nature of the signs of a subculture or, indeed, on the nature of the subculture itself? Are cultural theorists, distanced in time, age, and often social class and ethnicity, really the best placed to pass judgement on youth movements?¹¹⁴ Mod certainly did have its 'Ace Faces' but they were constantly changing. Pete Meadon said three years before his death that 'anyone can become a Mod, that's the beauty of it, anyone can become a Vietcong.'¹¹⁵ Meadon seemed perfectly aware of the democratic nature of the guerrilla war he felt he was taking part in.

Perhaps Mod can be better understood as a form of 'culture jamming'. Naomi Klein has argued that

the most sophisticated culture jams are not stand-alone [...] parodies but interceptions – counter-messages that hack into a corporation's own method of communication to send a message starkly at odds with the one that was intended.¹¹⁶

This suggests *agency*, a concept which has at times been avoided or underestimated by certain cultural theorists. The Mods have never been cultural 'dopes' or 'dummies'. In the following chapters, I will discuss their 'counter messages' in some detail, paying particular attention to their music, clothes and publications. Most importantly I will be asking the Mods themselves how they feel about their own subcultural practice.

¹¹¹ See for example, Stuart Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing the Popular' in R. Samuel, ed. *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 227-240.

¹¹² *Folk Devils*. p. lix.

¹¹³ In both 'The Meaning of Mod' by Dick Hebdige and *The London Novels* of Colin MacInnes we can observe an idealistically positive view of the Mods.

¹¹⁴ This is a question which I shall return to in Chapter 4.

¹¹⁵ 'The Ace Face's Forgotten Story', p. 179.

¹¹⁶ Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (London: Flamingo, 2000), p. 281.

FROM BRUNSWICK TO FLOR Y NATA

I have already mentioned that a (neo)Gramscian approach to popular culture borrows from (post)structuralism. Terry Eagleton has commented that structuralism is 'quite indifferent to the cultural value of its object: anything from *War and Peace* to *The War Cry* will do. The method is analytical not evaluative.'¹¹⁷ The 'method' has also been accused of being ahistorical. It would be unreasonable to levy exactly the same charges at (neo)Gramscian subcultural analysis because of its attempts to integrate and use post-structuralist/semiotic insights. However, it is important to bear in mind that an overemphasis on signs, clothes and music in the case of the Mods, at the expense of historical context can lead to misjudgements.

Terry Eagleton may well have been thinking about Roland Barthes when he made his comment about *The War Cry*. In *Mythologies*¹¹⁸ Barthes uses a Saussurean linguistic model to discuss examples of French popular culture ranging from wrestling to soap powders. On the surface his choice of subject may appear trivial, but it is precisely this 'bourgeois norm'¹¹⁹ – a false normality – which he attempts to deconstruct.

I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of *what-goes-without-saying*, the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there.¹²⁰

Central to this approach is the idea that signs have *multiple* meanings. Barthes' most famous example of how secondary significance operates is his analysis of a cover photograph of Paris-Match in 1955 (see Fig. 3).

I am at the barber's, and a copy of *Paris-Match* is offered to me. On the cover, a young Negro [*sic*] in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on the fold of the tricolour. All this is the meaning of the picture.

¹¹⁷ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd edn. (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 96. *The War Cry* is the Salvation Army's national magazine in Great Britain.

¹¹⁸ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, (London: Paladin, 1973).

¹¹⁹ *Mythologies*, p. 9.

¹²⁰ *Mythologies*, p. 11.

But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great empire, that all her sons, without colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro [*sic*] in serving his so-called oppressors. I am therefore faced with a greater semiological system: there is a signifier, itself already formed with a previous system (*a black soldier is giving the French salute*); there is a signified (it is a purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness); and finally there is a presence of the signified through the signifier.¹²¹



Figure 3. Cover *Paris-Match*, 1955.

Barthes was perfectly aware of the historical and political context in which he was writing and in which the editorial staff of *Paris-Match* selected that particular image for their cover. In 1955, the French state was profoundly conscious of its recent defeat in Vietnam and sensed some kind of 'political urgency'¹²² in defining itself in the war it was fighting in Algeria. Terry Eagleton may be right to warn of the dangers of an ahistorical interpretation of signs. However, there is no reason why a (post)structural/semiological view should not sit comfortably with a (neo) Gramscian approach, firmly rooted in the historical context.

¹²¹ *Mythologies*, pp. 125-126.

¹²² *An Introduction to Cultural Theory*, p. 84.

Many of the *signs* of the Mods don't change. Paolo Hewitt in particular traces a linear 'Mod tradition that began in Soho just after the Second World War and continues to this day.'¹²³ The key elements to this tradition are 'an attention to detail'¹²⁴ and 'the greatness of black music, black culture and the black race who have given so much to inspire us.'¹²⁵ Dick Hebdige follows a similar path acknowledging details or signs as arcane as hairdryers and by referring to Mods as 'the first all-British White Negro[es]'.¹²⁶ It is undeniable that the Mods, like virtually all British youth subcultures, paid great attention to detail. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of elements of Black culture in the creation of the Mods.¹²⁷ However, by concentrating solely on details of 'style', there is a danger of underplaying the huge economic and social differences between the early 1960s and the late 1970s in Britain, or the 1990s in Spain. Given these differences, it is unlikely that the significance of revival Mods is the same as their 1960s counterparts and I believe that these differences are reflected, refracted, represented and created within the subcultural framework.

In *Hiding in the Light*, Dick Hebdige, following on from Roland Barthes, discusses the photos which accompany two separate *Observer Colour Magazine* articles on different aspects of youth culture. The first article deals with youth and the police in Handsworth. 'Real issues are foregrounded [...] The photographs are in black and white [...] the photograph[s] as evidence, austere, cold, objective. Paradoxically, the black and white system signals that this is real [...] Black and white has become the real system.'¹²⁸ The next article is about Adam Ant, the pop star. 'The photographs are in colour. The colour system signifies escape, fantasy, a revelling in things. Paradoxically, its relation to the real is less direct. It doesn't claim to strip things down, to reveal the truth.'¹²⁹

The groups and recordings I have chosen for this part of my work were all mentioned by the Mods I interviewed for my research. A non-initiate - someone from the 'square

¹²³ *The Soul Stylists*, jacket notes

¹²⁴ *The Soul Stylists*, jacket notes

¹²⁵ This is Paul Weller's dedication in *The Soul Stylists*. He is credited with the concept of the book

¹²⁶ 'The Meaning of Mod', p. 94.

¹²⁷ That Black people have some kind of innate cool, as suggested by both Paolo Hewitt and Dick Hebdige, is obviously a more spurious argument.

¹²⁸ *Hiding in the Light*, p. 33.

¹²⁹ *Hiding in the Light*, p. 33.

world' as Alberto Valle would have it¹³⁰ - would have problems establishing the age difference between these two album sleeves¹³¹. (See Figs. 4 and 5)



Figure 4. The Who, *My Generation*, 1965.



Figure 5. Los Flechazos, *Preparados, Listos, Ya!*, 1991

The layout is virtually identical: the group name, in both cases with an idiosyncratic font, is placed in the top-left corner; the record company logos - 'Oro' and 'Decca' - are uniformly positioned in the top-right corner; the album name is, in both cases, at the bottom, suggesting that the group, or at least its name, is more important than the specific record. In both cases, the four musicians are looking upwards towards the photographer and in both pictures the musicians are dressed in Mod chic. We have two examples of typically 1960s album sleeve art, where the photographer (a swinging profession), is present through his or her positioning.¹³² We are led to an assumed

¹³⁰ One of my interviewees.

¹³¹ Los Flechazos, *Preparados, listos, ya!* (DRO DRO 4D0829, 1991), The Who, *My Generation* (Brunswick LAT8616, December 1965).

¹³² Michelangelo Antonioni's 1966 film *Blow-Up* epitomises the photographer as an integral part of the 'swinging sixties'.

commonality based on certain signs. Unsurprisingly, both groups are famous as Mod bands – or at least as ‘bands that Mods liked.’¹³³ However, The Who’s *My Generation* was released more than a quarter of a century before Los Flechazos’ *Preparados, listos, ya!* Given this difference in time (1965 and 1991) and space (London and León), it would be unlikely for the meanings of both groups to be as similar as the signs suggest.



Figure 6. The Specials, *Specials*, 1979.



Figure 7. The Jam, *In the City*, 1977.

¹³³ See the sleeve notes to The Who, *Quadrophenia* (Track 2647013, November 1973)

Space and time-wise the Specials and the Jam were much closer together. The Jam's first album *In the City*¹³⁴ was released in 1977 and, the Specials' *Specials*¹³⁵ in 1979. (See Figs. 6 and 7) The band names and musicians are still centre stage and, with the exception of the heavy boots worn by Roddy Radiation and John Bradbury of the Specials, the clothes worn would have been acceptable in original Mod circles. However, we can see that certain norms have changed here. Both groups have chosen black and white photographs, which hint at a harsher social reality even before we listen to their music.



Figure 8 – Brighton 64, *Barcelona Blues*, 1995.

What assumptions can we make about the meaning of Brighton 64¹³⁶, the seminal Barcelona Mod band, from their 'packaging'? They seem to have it all. (See Fig. 8) The image is both *colour* and *black and white*, the clothes are definitely Mod – Ricky Gil's t-shirt is very similar to one that Keith Moon was wearing in the early sixties¹³⁷ and his brother Ricky is wearing a suit with a three-button jacket not unlike the one Jimmy buys in the film *Quadrophenia*.¹³⁸ What's more, the sleeve photo is taken on the beach in Brighton, England with the pier in the background – the scene of the sub-cultural

¹³⁴ The Jam, *In the City*, (Polydor 2383 447 UK, April 1977).

¹³⁵ The Specials, *Specials*, (2-Tone CDLTT 5001, November 1979).

¹³⁶ Brighton 64 were formed in the early 1980s in Barcelona. See Ricky Gil, *Bola y Cadena: 20 Años de Explosión Mod* (Lleida: Editorial Milenio, 2003). Ricky Gil was a founder member as well as the biographer of the band.

¹³⁷ See photo in the booklet which accompanies: The Who, *The Kids Are Alright*, (Polydor 2675 179, June 1979) or the 'tunnel photo' of Jimmy in the *Quadrophenia* booklet: The Who, *Quadrophenia* (Track 2647013, November 1973)

¹³⁸ *Quadrophenia: A Way of Life*. Dir. Franc Roddam. Polydor. 1979.

clashes depicted in *Quadrophenia*,¹³⁹ but more accurately explained in Cohen's *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*¹⁴⁰. How much more Mod could things be? I touched on the idea of the 'hyperreal' in the previous chapter and it is worth remembering that while for many original Mods Brighton marked the beginning of the end, future generations regard the seaside resort as a kind of subcultural Mecca.

The record sleeves, like the clothes, mentioned above can only go so far in helping understand the groups different 'relations to the real'. Christine Jacqueline Feldman argues that

young people who embrace Mod [...], whether conscious of it or not, are incorporating ...[a]... past dream of idealised modernity into their lives and can use it to counter current subcultural trends that appear cynical or nihilistic.¹⁴¹

So, Feldman's 'Modernism' cuts across both space and time with no fundamental differences in meaning. However, in order to understand Mod's 'relation to the real' (the *matter* of Mod) a look at the lyrics of these different bands may prove more useful than an analysis of their wardrobes. 'How does it *feel* to feel?' sang The Creation – psychedelic power pop favourites of Pete Townshend.¹⁴² Feelings change and these changes are expressed in the lyrics of different generations of Mod bands. This may have a particular significance if it is in fact true that they 'directly embodied musical movement in a style of living – more so, perhaps, than any subculture before or since.'¹⁴³

Rather than examining the timelessness of classics such as the Skatalites' 'Guns of Navarone'¹⁴⁴ or the Kingsmen's 'Louie, Louie'¹⁴⁵ I intend to concentrate on some early recordings of the Who, the Specials and the Jam from Britain, as well as Los Flechazos and Brighton 64 from Spain and Catalonia respectively. These are not necessarily Mod bands but they are bands that Mods like and liked, and should help in an attempt to understand the differences between groups of young people wearing similar clothes, riding similar scooters but listening to different tunes in different

¹³⁹ *Quadrophenia: A Way of Life*. Dir. Franc Roddam. Polydor. 1979

¹⁴⁰ *Folk Devils*, pp. 120-148.

¹⁴¹ *We Are the Mods*, p. 3.

¹⁴² Pete Townshend even asked Eddie Phillips of The Creation to join The Who. He refused and Townshend had to make do with joining The Creation's fan club.

<http://www.chrishunt.biz/features> [accessed 20/03/2015]

¹⁴³ *Flowers in the Dustbin*, p. 260.

¹⁴⁴ The Skatalites, 'Guns of Navarone' (Island WI 168, April 1967) and covered by the Specials on *Specials*, (2-Tone CDLTT 5001, November 1979).

¹⁴⁵ Originally the B-side of The Kingsmen 'You Are My Sunshine' (Flip 321, April 1957)

decades. As I mentioned above, the music of the original Mods was black music and later, 'black' music, especially rhythm and blues, played by white bands like the Who and the Small Faces. With the exception of the Specials, none of the groups I've chosen have black members. In no way do I intend to underestimate the importance of black music for the Mods but I have chosen groups which came out of the scene or were very closely linked to it at various times and in different places. The 'whiteness' of these bands should not come as a surprise – the Mods loved and love black music but the movement itself has always been predominantly white.

Pete Townshend, the Who's songwriter and guitarist, made no explicit references to Mods or any other youth subcultures in his early lyrics. *Quadrophenia* was a rock opera about a Mod but it wasn't released until 1973. At the tail end of the first British Mod revival he did release 'Uniforms (Corps d'Esprit)',¹⁴⁶ which was a rather jaded, bitter attack on followers of fashions and youth movements. Even though it was offered as a picture disc with the image of a parka, Mods didn't buy it. They were more interested in the recently re-released *My Generation*,¹⁴⁷ which charted in Britain at number twenty. There is a Mod reference in the single 'My Generation' but it was intended for people in the know. Roger Daltrey's stammering vocal delivery (which at one point he refused to perform) is an imitation of a Mod 'blocked' on amphetamine.

People try to put us d-down (Talking about my generation)

Just because we g-g-get around

The things they say look awful c-c-cold

I hope I die before I get old¹⁴⁸

A sense of generational consciousness is apparent. Richard Barnes suggests that this feeling is best summed up in the 1965 top-ten hit 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere'.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Pete Townshend, 'Uniforms: Corps d'Esprit' (Atco K11751, August 1982).

¹⁴⁷ The Who, *My Generation* (Re-issue), (Virgin V2179, October, 1980).

¹⁴⁸ The Who, 'My Generation' (Brunswick 05944, November 1965).

¹⁴⁹ *Mods!*, p. 124. Dick Hebdige's use of the lyrics of the 1970 hit 'The Searcher' (sic) to stress the 'importance of the search-as-end-in-itself' for Mods doesn't really work. The song is too late to be of any real significance to the original Mods. It is actually called 'The Seeker', (Track 604036, April 1970). See 'The Meaning of Mod'.

I can go anyway, way I choose
I can live anyhow, win or lose
I can go anywhere for something new
Anywhere, anyhow, anyway I choose¹⁵⁰

But the late seventies were very different from the mid-sixties and this was reflected in the lyrics of the period. The Specials did mention youth subcultures specifically.

All you punks and all you teds
National Front and natty dreads
Mods, rockers, hippies and skinheads
Keep on fighting till you're dead¹⁵¹

The Specials called for a generational unity but it was a defensive unity rather than the desire for freedom and escape expressed by the Who.

Stop your messing around
Better think of your future
Time you straightened right out
Creating problems in town
Rudy, a message to you, Rudy
Stop your fooling around
Time you straightened right out
Better think of your future
Else you'll wind up in jail¹⁵²

This call for self-discipline and restraint from within the movement made sense in 1979. The Specials, along with the other 2-Tone bands, were openly political and felt that young people had more important things to do with their energy than fight each

¹⁵⁰ The Who, 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere' (Brunswick 05935, May 1965).

¹⁵¹ Rufus Thomas and the Specials 'Do the Dog' on *Specials*. This track draws very loosely on Rufus Thomas' song 'The Dog'. <http://www.thespecials.com> [accessed 16/6/2015].

¹⁵² Robert Livingstone Thompson, 'A Message to You Rudy', performed by the Specials (2-Tone CHSTT5, October 1979).

other. There were two clearly identified enemies at the time: Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative prime minister who had been elected in 1979, and the neo-fascist National Front, which in 1979 fielded 303 parliamentary candidates and won nearly 200,000 votes. While the Specials worked with the 'Rock against Racism' movement, some Mod revivalists were close to the nazi skinheads of the National Front. It was significant that the new ska scene was multi-ethnic (2-Tone), actively political and dominated by socially engaged lyrics. This politicised section of the Mod revival was a far cry from anything seen in the 1960s. There is a tendency to idealise the original Mods as freedom-loving multi-culturalists but the hard Mods developed early on and it did not take long for racist skins to join them. This violent, nationalist branch of Mod is still alive and well. In one of the more recent books concerning the Mod revival, Anthony Gregory takes pains to inform us that his father 'answered the call to fight for his country',¹⁵³ and that on 'Armistice day 2003 [...he...] attended the service and met some of [...his...] old Mod mates.¹⁵⁴ Groups like the Specials played an important role in influencing the political direction of sections of the revival.

It is commonly accepted that the 1960s was a period of sexual freedoms. Some aspects of sexual behaviour had been de-restricted or de-criminalised by the end of the decade. The original Mods were famously inactive sexually. Their consumption of amphetamine is generally held responsible for this.¹⁵⁵ The Fugs sang

I don't have a bedtime
I don't need to come
For I have become
An amphetamine bum
If you don't like sleeping
And don't want to screw
Then you should take
Lots of amphetamine too.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Anthony Gregory, *Mod Revival 1979: Second Generation Mod's(sic) 'n' Rockers* (Burton upon Trent: P. Way Publishing, 2004), p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ *Mod Revival 1979*, p. 115.

¹⁵⁵ See Harry Shapiro, *Waiting for the Man: The Story of Drugs and Popular Music* (London: Helter Skelter, 1999), pp. 83-102.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in *Waiting for the Man*, p. 95.

Nevertheless, certain signs of a more relaxed sexuality can be found in the lyrics of the Who. In 'The Kids Are Alright'¹⁵⁷ Daltrey sings that he doesn't mind 'other guys dancing with [...his...] girl.' 'Pictures of Lily'¹⁵⁸ is a song about infatuation and masturbation. The freedom expressed is naïve and limited (infidelity is still punishable in 'I Can See for Miles')¹⁵⁹ but it is a step forward from what their subcultural predecessors the Teddy Boys were listening to.

Fifteen years later, the Specials dealt with sexual relations in a far bleaker manner.

Ain't you heard of the starving millions
Ain't you heard of contraception
Do you need a programme of sterilisation
Take control of the population boom
It's in your living room
Keep a generation gap
Try wearing a cap¹⁶⁰

The early songs of the Who and the Specials, like most pop music since rock and roll, had strong Afro-American influences.¹⁶¹ Without rhythm-and-blues sources, both bands would have sounded very different or, more likely, would never have been formed. By the late seventies the Jamaican Ska sound, which influenced and dominated the Specials' music, was a much more overt sound of resistance than the Who's 'maximum' rhythm and blues.

When the Jam released their first album in 1977¹⁶² it sounded fresh and aggressive, fitting in nicely with other early British punk albums by bands like the Clash, Sex Pistols and the Buzzcocks, but there was something 'retro' about the Jam too. For any original Mods who were still around, the album's title 'In the City' rang a bell – it had been the title of the B-side of the Who's 1966 single 'I'm a Boy'. Later, Paul Weller, the Jam's songwriter and de-facto leader, would make overt references to Mod, with

¹⁵⁷ The Who, 'The Kids Are Alright' (Brunswick 05965, September 1966).

¹⁵⁸ The Who, 'Pictures of Lily' (Track 604002, April 1967).

¹⁵⁹ The Who, 'I Can See for Miles' (Track 604011, October 1967)

¹⁶⁰ The Specials, 'Too Much Too Young' on *Specials*.

¹⁶¹ See Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002), pp. 155-166.

¹⁶² The Jam, *In the City*, (Polydor 2383 447 UK, April 1977).

albums called *This is the Modern World* and *All Mod Cons*, which include cover versions of classic Mod tracks like Wilson Pickett's 'In the Midnight Hour' and the Kinks' 'David Watts'. However, at the time of *In The City* he was happy just to use a few 'clins d'oeil' to let the Mods know where he was coming from. The Mod revival had not yet got off the ground and it was regarded as a punk album.

The song 'In the City' is for and about young people:

I wanna say, I wanna tell you
About the young ideas
But you turn them into fears
In the city there's a thousand faces all shining bright
And those golden faces are under twenty five¹⁶³

However, these teenage concerns have moved away from the puppy love sentimentality of songs like the Tams' 1968 hit 'Be young, Be foolish, Be happy'.¹⁶⁴

In the city there's a thousand men in uniform
And I've heard they now have the right to kill a man
We wanna say, we gonna tell you
About the young idea
And if it don't work, at least we still tried¹⁶⁵

Here we have a sense of generational solidarity but, like the Specials, the Jam are conscious of an oppressive ideological state apparatus¹⁶⁶ which exists in opposition to the 'young idea'. Something has changed here – the youth are not just asserting themselves by stating that they are not old, they are also distancing themselves from the state itself. This overt political content does not exist in the lyrics of early Mod rhythm and blues but there is a very clear musical continuity running backwards from the Jam to the sixties – Paul Weller's guitar and Bruce Foxton's bass are clearly

¹⁶³ The Jam, 'In the City' on *In the City*, (Polydor 2383 447 UK, April 1977).

¹⁶⁴ The Tams, 'Be Young, Be Foolish, Be Happy' (ABC 10741 USA June 1968)

¹⁶⁵ The Jam, 'In the City' on *In the City*, (Polydor 2383 447 UK, April 1977)

¹⁶⁶ The term is borrowed from Louis Althusser in *Lenin and Philosophy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971)

influenced by the early recordings of the Who and their predecessors the High Numbers. In 'Away from the Numbers', the fifth track on the album, we learn that Weller finds 'reality so hard' and that he 'wants to break away from the numbers' - so he wants to escape but not only from reality but also from the 'numbers' - this is another clear Mod reference for insiders. 'Numbers' were lesser Mods - maybe because of their age but usually because they had not got the signs right, especially their clothes.

So, we have seen that for at least two of the bands that revival Mods liked in Britain in the late 1970s there is a definite continuity of signs in both clothes and musical style. However, when we begin to look at the groups' lyrics, it becomes clear that the preoccupations of subcultural stylists do change, reflecting and reacting to the social and economic background of a given moment.

So, what was happening in Spain? As we have seen, the album sleeve artwork of Los Flechazos situates the group in the sixties - not in chronological terms but rather through a set of semiotic indicators. Their most famous song, 'Viviendo en la Era Pop', sounds like 1960s pop but of course it is not. Its lyrics, like the video,¹⁶⁷ are intended to evoke the sixties through a litany of references, which have none of the subtlety of Paul Weller's 'numbers' or the Who's blocked Mod in 'My Generation'. Alex Díez, the lead singer and guitarist of Los Flechazos, bombards the listener with references to the 'swinging sixties'. So, the 1960s comic strip character Modesty Blaise is found sleeping in a 'campo de fresas' - the Beatles' 'Strawberry Fields'.¹⁶⁸ John Lennon's lyrics were already an exercise in nostalgia in 1967 - Strawberry Fields was the name of a children's home not far from Lennon's childhood home in Liverpool, where he used to go and play. The lyrics wander through Chelsea, Soho, Portobello Road and of course Waterloo for the sunset,¹⁶⁹ all iconic destinations for a 1960s follower of fashion. But the Mods were more than *followers* of fashion - they were trend setters and these pop references to the late 1960s would have left them cold. Los Flechazos are very clearly part of the Mod tradition in Spain - Alex Díez's latest book, *Club 45 - 90 Canciones de*

¹⁶⁷ See <http://musikorner.com/2011/11/18/hit-dance-los-flechazos-viviendo-en-la-era-pop/> [accessed 12/04/2015]

¹⁶⁸ The Beatles, 'Strawberry Fields Forever' (Parlophone R 5570, February 1967)

¹⁶⁹ The Kinks, 'Waterloo Sunset' (Pye 7N 17321, May 1967)

la Era Pop para Mods y Jetsetters,¹⁷⁰ shows how seriously he takes this legacy. The Larry Lynch mentioned in 'Viviendo en la Era Pop' is the same Larry Lynch Tom Wolfe described in 'The Noonday Underground', which I mentioned in the second chapter of this study. The lyrics of 'Viviendo en la Era Pop' suggest that at least some contemporary Mods are looking backwards. This may be necessary for their survival but it does represent a clear paradigm shift from their original, forward-looking counterparts.

Perhaps the most famous Spanish, or more precisely Catalan, Mod band is Brighton 64. We have already seen how their name, sleeve artwork and clothes pay tribute to earlier generations of Mods. Their flyers in 1982 read 'Brighton 64, Maximum R&B. Una experiencia alucinante.'¹⁷¹ 'Maximum R&B' was a Who slogan and early tracks like 'Barcelona Blues'¹⁷² try hard to emulate them. Ricky Gil makes an interesting observation when he states that

Albert había dado en el clavo con una de sus primeras canciones, y l'aportación del grupo (la intro de blues de la guitarra de Daniel, el guiño a *Taxman* y *Start!* del final de bajo) ayudaba a dar forma al himno nunca reconocido de la ciudad que en los años siguientes íbamos a reivindicar incansablemente.¹⁷³

What's interesting here is the fact that Gil mentions both 'Taxman' by the Beatles and 'Start!' by the Jam. The main bass and guitar riffs on 'Start!' are borrowed directly from George Harrison's 1966 track from the Beatles' album *Revolver*. It is clear that Brighton 64 wanted to place themselves in the Mod tradition and here they are borrowing, or reappropriating, sounds which had already been borrowed at least once. The Beatles were never a Mod band and original Mods tended not to listen to them. The Jam, who started life as a punk band albeit with the Mod references we have mentioned, were and are a reference for Mods. Brighton 64 ended up sounding much more like the Jam than the Beatles, and their lyrics have a lot in common with the punk-mod concerns of the Jam.

¹⁷⁰ Alex Cooper (aka Alex Díez), *Club 45 - 90 canciones de la Era Pop para Mods y Jetsetters* (Léon: Ediciones Chelsea, 2010)

¹⁷¹ Ricky Gil, *Bola y Cadena: 20 Años de Explosión Mod* (Lleida: Editorial Milenio, 2003), p32.

¹⁷² Brighton 64, 'Barcelona Blues' (Flor y Nata, 1982)

¹⁷³ *Bola y Cadena*, p.31.

Like Los Flechazos, they want to travel to the UK: 'Quiero viajar, conocer Brighton, Playas de guerras juveniles'.¹⁷⁴ Once again, a retro-trip into the heart of Mod mythology but there is a significant difference here between the lyrics of the two Spanish bands. Brighton 64 are also concerned about their here-and-now. 'Barcelona Blues' is peppered with social observations in the form of vignettes not unlike those used by the Kinks and later the Jam. 'En la estacion ya no hay luz' sounds like a casual observation, but is also a reference to the Jam's 1978 'Down in the Tube Station at Midnight'.¹⁷⁵ 'Ya no causa sensación, el ver alguien comer, delante de un gran hotel, las sobras de un simple cajón'¹⁷⁶ sounds more like a punk lyric than the hyperreal wanderings of Los Flechazos. As well as some social observation here, we can find criticism of Mods who have not really understood the real meaning of Mod – 'Vespas con tios de carton'.¹⁷⁷ Even Brighton 64 seem to be suggesting that a sign, in this case a Vespa, does not necessarily signify substance.

This brief look at some of the artwork and lyrics of Mod bands would seem to confirm the idea that while certain *signs* may remain the same, their *significance* changes according to the contexts in which they are produced. The Modernism of the Who was *modern* and forward-looking; the Specials were concerned with surviving and documenting Thatcher's Britain; the Jam too, but from a more personal perspective and with definite references to earlier Mods. The Mod revivalism of Los Flechazos is an exercise in nostalgia. Brighton 64 are revivalists too but do pay attention to the contemporary scene (both in Barcelona and Britain) that they were part of. If any pattern is emerging at this stage, it is that the original Mods were both modern and forward-looking; the British groups from the late 1970s I have discussed were more concerned with their present than the future; and that the past weighs very heavily on the shoulders of both Los Flechazos and Brighton 64.

¹⁷⁴ Brighton 64, 'Barcelona Blues' (Flor y Nata, 1982)

¹⁷⁵ The Jam, 'Down in the Tube Station at Midnight' (Polydor, POSP 8, 1978)

¹⁷⁶ Brighton 64, 'Barcelona Blues' (Flor y Nata, 1982)

¹⁷⁷ Brighton 64, 'Barcelona Blues' (Flor y Nata, 1982)

TRANSITION AND TRIBES

As I outlined in the first chapter, context is central to Gramscian hegemony theory. Any serious analysis of the origins and survival of a Catalan Mod tradition has to pay attention to Catalonia and Spain's very special political situation in the 1970s and 1980s. In this chapter I intend to describe the political and social environments which led to the development of youth subcultures in Spain, then provide an account of the early exponents of Mod in Catalonia. Fernán del Val Ripollés has argued convincingly in the 'Revista de Estudios de Juventud' that 'dentro del ámbito de la cultura los y las jóvenes de la transición comienzan a desarrollar una producción cultural propia, alejada de los esquemas que habían movido a generaciones anteriores'¹⁷⁸ and this was a general trend throughout Spain at the time. It has been further claimed that Catalonia in particular was the 'epicentre subcultural'¹⁷⁹ - the variety of examples or derivatives of Mod which are still relatively commonplace would seem to back up this idea, or at least make it worth investigating. After looking at the general socio-historical background, I will discuss post-Franco youth movements, paying particular attention to the Mods, their predecessors and derivatives. While there has been an increase in publications about Mods both globally and locally over the last few years,¹⁸⁰ academic material concerning what are described in Catalonia as 'urban tribes'¹⁸¹ is still quite limited. In this chapter I will rely on the available academic texts as well as the non-academic, but nonetheless specialised, literature which has come from the movement itself. For some Mods this record-keeping from within is a key feature of the movement. It is an approach which I will develop in the next chapter of this work.

¹⁷⁸ Fernán del Val Ripollés, 'Pasotismo, Cultura Underground y Música Pop. Culturas juveniles en la transición Española', *Revista de Estudios de Juventud*, 95 (December 2011), p. 74.

¹⁷⁹ Carlos Viñas, *Skinheads a Catalunya* (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, 2004), p. 114.

¹⁸⁰ See for example Richard Weight, *MOD: From Bebop to Britpop, Britain's Biggest Youth Movement* (London: The Bodley Head, 2015) and Robert Abella, *40 Mods de les Nostres Terres* (Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2012).

¹⁸¹ See for example Carles Feixa, *De Jóvenes, Bandas y Tribus: Antropología de la Juventud* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, S.A., 1999).

Javier Tusell, in *Dictadura Franquista y Democracia*¹⁸², argues that while Franco's Spain was a dictatorship, it was a dictatorship which stopped short of totalitarianism and, as a consequence, 'La llegada a la democracia fue muy temprano y pudo servir de ejemplo para otras latitudes'.¹⁸³ This conservative analysis operates from the premise that it is more useful to compare Spain with undemocratic states in Latin America and the Russian dominated Eastern Bloc rather than with other more 'modern' European states. It is certainly a more flattering approach but its 'usefulness' is debatable. The main failing of the argument is probably its insouciant oversight of the fact that, historically, Spain has been a purveyor rather than a victim of imperialist adventures of one sort or another. Its dictatorship was both home-grown and implemented. It is an influential and interesting argument though because it attempts to soften the image of what was in fact a brutal dictatorship. It was no accident that Paul Preston decided to call his 2011 book 'El Holocausto Español'.¹⁸⁴ Around 300,000 people died in the battles of the Spanish Civil War but around another 200,000 were executed legally, far away from war zones during the 'White Terror' that lasted long after the civil war was officially over.¹⁸⁵ Despite these figures, during the 1970s, when youth subcultures really began to emerge in Spain, other European countries did not consider their neighbour a pariah. Sylvia's 1974 hit 'Y Viva España' reached number four and charted for a total of twenty eight weeks in Britain.¹⁸⁶ It is hard to imagine an overtly pro-establishment Chinese song doing very well in the British charts at the moment, despite the fact that tourism is opening up. By the time Franco died, Spanish people had waited much longer than the German population under Hitler or the Italian population under Mussolini for free elections. The weight of the dictatorship, even in its aftermath, was a key factor in the idiosyncratic development of Spanish youth subcultures.

¹⁸² Javier Tusell's *Dictadura Franquista y Democracia, 1939-2004* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005) does attempt to integrate some cultural aspects of the 'transition' but does suffer from its openly conservative approach.

¹⁸³ *Dictadura Franquista*, p. 277.

¹⁸⁴ Paul Preston, *El Holocausto Español: Odio y Exterminio en la Guerra Civil y Después*, (Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, 2011).

¹⁸⁵ There is some disagreement regarding the number of deaths but it is clear that Franco's regime maintained the use of torture and execution long after the end of the Civil War. See *El Holocausto Español* and Julián Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁸⁶ Paul Gambaccini and others, eds. *The Guinness Book of British Hit Singles*, 7th edn. (London: Guinness Publishing, 1996), p. 348.

Youth organisations did exist in the post-war period but they were under the strict control of the regime, either directly in the case of the 'Frente de Juventudes', the 'Sección Feminina' and the 'OJE', or through the Catholic Church, in the case of Boy Scouts¹⁸⁷, 'Acción Católica' and other parish organisations.¹⁸⁸ All of these groups were ideological state tools – not merely as sites of indoctrination, but also as pro-hegemonic social practices through which the contradictions of Franco's Spain could be dispelled.

Louis Althusser has argued that ideology

is the expression of the relation between men (sic) and their 'world', that is, the (overdetermined) unity of the real relation and the imaginary relation between them and their real conditions of existence.¹⁸⁹

Post-war Spain was repressive, violent, extremely poor, and economically underdeveloped if compared to most of Western Europe. The Castilian version of 'Y Viva España'¹⁹⁰ is a patriotic eulogy to a hyperreal Spain and represents part of an ideologically *idealised* national construct.

The 'normal' exercise of hegemony [...] is characterised by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion – newspapers and associations – which, therefore, in certain situations, are artificially multiplied.¹⁹¹

Here Gramsci is referring to parliamentary regimes, but the importance of winning the battle for hegemonic dominance was equally as crucial in Spain. For this reason, there was no space allowed in any of the contemporary youth organisations for the development of a generational consciousness independent of that which was regarded as desirable by church and state. For more independent-minded young people the

¹⁸⁷ While in most of Spain the Boy Scouts was a pro-Franco organisation, dominated by the Catholic church, in Catalonia it was a subcultural space in which Catalan nationalist and anti-Franco ideas flourished.

¹⁸⁸ *De Jóvenes*, p. 111.

¹⁸⁹ *For Marx*, pp. 233-234.

¹⁹⁰ Three versions can be found on <http://lyricsplayground.com>

¹⁹¹ *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 80.

main attraction was probably the 'guateque',¹⁹² which was a small party with music and most importantly without adults. According to Carles Viñas, the 1960s 'foren l'època de maxima esplendor del fenomen *fan*, una manifestació espontània de bogeria adolescent'.¹⁹³

In his sociological study of 'urban tribes' in Lleida, Carles Feixa argues that '...no será hasta 1975, coincidiendo con la muerte de Franco, cuando la joven generación se apropia de un territorio urbano donde imperan «otras leyes, otros valores»'.¹⁹⁴ Much of the institutional preparation for major societal change had been completed by November 1978 with the referendum for the new constitution. Javier Tussell argues that 'las elecciones de octubre pueden considerarse como el momento final de la transición española a la democracia'.¹⁹⁵ This is not as clear as Tussell would have us believe; indeed, the legacy of the 'transición' is at the heart of many contemporary political debates in Spain.¹⁹⁶ While it is fair to say that the origins and evolution of youth subcultures in Spain are closely linked to the development of a more democratic model of society, El Caudillo¹⁹⁷ had left his mark: for more than twenty years he had denied most young Spanish people the right to ally themselves with contemporary subcultural movements in other countries. However, in doing so he had helped prepare a generation which, at least for a certain period, would embrace anything new with an unbridled enthusiasm for cultural plurality.

En el cas espanyol, la rebel·lia juvenil no era canalitzada per cap d'aquestes noves formes d'expressió, sinó que el jovent encara s'havia d'espolsar molts dels prejudicis i les censures imposades per l'autoritari règim franquista. Era un joventut que es trobava absolutament aïllada de tot aquest batibull de noves propostes culturals i dinàmiques innovadores que es generaven més enllà de les seves fronteres. Expressions que feien estralls entre els sectors més conservadors, motiu pel qual eren silenciats pel franquisme.¹⁹⁸

The years between 1975 and 1982 are often referred to as the 'transitional period' between dictatorship and democracy but there is a tendency to leap from Franco to

¹⁹² *De Jóvenes*, p. 108. *Skinheads a Catalunya*, p. 114.

¹⁹³ *Skinheads a Catalunya*, p. 115.

¹⁹⁴ *De Jóvenes*, p.108.

¹⁹⁵ *Dictadura Franquista*, p. 329.

¹⁹⁶ See 'Spain's Lauded Transition to Democracy Under Fire', <http://www.ft.com/> [accessed 25/10/2015]

¹⁹⁷ Franco's paternalist 'head-of-the-family' title.

¹⁹⁸ *Skinheads a Catalunya*, pp. 114-115.

Felipe González¹⁹⁹ which underestimates the instability and excitement of the intervening period. Javier Tusell, who, more than most, stresses the importance of the transitional government's role in achieving democracy, is forced to concede that there was more to constitutional reform than wheeling and dealing between professional politicians.

Los reformistas no hubieran cumplido su misión sin presión popular. Antes de 1973 e incluso a la muerte de Franco en 1975, desde luego no hubiera sido así; tampoco en los primeros seis meses de 1976. Luego cambió la situación pero no se entiende nada de lo ocurrido sin tener en cuenta la movilización: en general, la transición española fue pacífica.²⁰⁰

Tusell does not, of course, concede that right-wing reformers were opposed to such mobilisations. In Madrid alone, thirty six demonstrations of more than a hundred thousand participants took place over the ten years following Franco's death. Strikes broke out and were organised all over the country in 1976. While 'fortunately'²⁰¹ these did not end in deaths in the industrial suburbs of Madrid, there were many injuries at the hands of a largely unreformed Guardia Civil and protestors were killed elsewhere. In the period 1975-1980 at least 460 people died as a result of their participation in the 'transition process'.²⁰² In Vitoria, in March 1976, strikes and other protests were met with extreme violence – in that month alone five people died.²⁰³ This type of repression was a continuation of the politics of Franco in the Basque country and, as we shall see, had an important impact in the development of youth subcultures in 'democratic' Spain.²⁰⁴ Given the fact that in 1976 sixty-eight of the ninety-five serving army generals had taken part in the civil war on the side of the nationalists, it is unsurprising that the fear of military intervention was both deep and constant.²⁰⁵ There was a genuine belief that the legalisation of the PCE²⁰⁶ in 1977 would lead to a military coup d'état. This may sound like paranoia, but the antagonism between the military and civil authorities was real enough to lead to the coup attempt of February 1981. Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs remind us

¹⁹⁹ President of Spain from 1982 until 1996.

²⁰⁰ *Dictadura Franquista*, p. 279.

²⁰¹ Tusell's choice of adverb.

²⁰² *Dictadura Franquista*, p. 279.

²⁰³ *Dictadura Franquista*, p. 283.

²⁰⁴ Only the Basques, as a majority, rejected the new constitution in the 1978 referendum.

²⁰⁵ *Dictadura Franquista*, p. 313.

²⁰⁶ The Spanish Communist Party.

Cal no oblidar l'efecte continuat de la repressió patronal i política, i no solament considerant els treballadors sancionats, acomiadats o detinguts i empresonats, sinó tenint en compte, també, el temor que generava en molts altres.²⁰⁷

So, as a backdrop to an examination of the beginnings of youth subcultures in Spain, we have decades of dictatorship followed by a period of transition, which, despite the ever present risks of a return to a dictatorship, led to 'una tímida obertura i poc a poc es començaren a celebrar manifestacions culturals més agosarades i espontànies.'²⁰⁸

As I mentioned above, Carles Feixa observed a new urban space being occupied by young people after 1975. His work²⁰⁹ is based on fieldwork carried out in Lleida²¹⁰ and Nezahualcóyotl.²¹¹ His observations of developing youth subcultures in Lleida are of interest in themselves, but I feel they also offer an insight into what was definitely a general trend in Catalonia and probably in Spain as a whole. The physical space he observed became known as the 'zona de vinos' – the wine zone. Its first inhabitants were local hippies but in a pluralistic move typical of the years following Franco's death, the area quickly became '...el territorio juvenil por excelencia, un espacio neutral donde coexisten estilos muy diversos, una especie de lugar sagrado para las distintas tribus.'²¹² There were hardcore, heavy, feminist and rockabilly venues. There was also the first specifically Mod venue in Spain. 'La Casa de la Bomba' was an old neighbourhood bar which became a kind of epicentre for all things Mod. A fanzine, '*Los Flequillos de la Morsa*', was published on the premises and the annual 'Walrus Weekend' festival attracted Mods from all over Spain. It is perhaps not so surprising then that DJ Eneida Fever!²¹³ remembers that her 'first ever weekender was in Lleida'. Carles Feixa identifies different 'tribes' through their clothes and tastes in music – factors which I spent some time on earlier in this piece of work. Two interrelated points are noteworthy here: firstly, the concept of pluralism, and secondly, the fact that Feixa finds it necessary to mention the fact that violent conflict between

²⁰⁷ Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs, *El Règim Franquista. Feixisme, Modernització i Consens* (Girona and Vic: EUMO, 1992) p. 88.

²⁰⁸ *Skinheads a Catalunya*, p. 115.

²⁰⁹ *De Jóvenes* is the most famous example.

²¹⁰ A large provincial town in central Catalonia.

²¹¹ Nezahualcóyotl or 'Ciudad Neza' is a huge housing estate within the federal district of Mexico City.

²¹² *De Jóvenes*, p. 109.

²¹³ Eneida Fever! is one of the Mods I interviewed for this thesis.

subcultural groups was rare. This is understandable as many attempts to define, rather than understand, these groups have depended on a bipolar structural(ist) model: Mods vs. Rockers, Punks vs. Hippies, Chavs vs. Goths.

Feixa comments

La emergencia de las tribus urbanas es un proceso paralelo a la aparición en el espacio urbano de unas zonas y locales especializados en el ocio juvenil. No se trata, en general, de grupos con base territorial, organizados según el modelo de la banda, sino de 'estilos' más difusos y personalizados [...] Cada joven puede identificarse con un estilo de más o menos intenso, pertenecer sucesivamente a varios. [...] Aunque existe una cierta rivalidad, las peleas son muy raras.²¹⁴

Stylistic pluralism was a key feature of 'la movida', the Spanish cultural explosion of the 1980s, which accompanied and fed into the country's move towards a democratic model.

Felipe González, not long after the election defeat of 1996,²¹⁵ provided a five-point summary of his period in power. He mentioned the modernisation and liberalisation of the Spanish economy, the development of social cohesion, improvements in fixed capital, the development of the constitution (both in terms of military reform and the autonomous regions), and the break with the country's isolation from the international scene. He did not specifically mention cultural developments but for many, especially young, Spanish people 'la libertad se vio acompañada por una extremada pluralidad'.²¹⁶

As Nanye Blázquez explains

La movida, que en mi opinión empieza después del 23-F,²¹⁷ cuando terminan los riesgos, cuando definitivamente hay una democracia en este país, no solo soluciona un problema de cuarenta años, sino de quinientos [...] Entonces, los ciudadanos de este país se dedican, creo por primera vez en su historia, a vivir:

²¹⁴ *De Jóvenes*, p. 110.

²¹⁵ His Socialist government lasted for fourteen years. This was longer than Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives in Britain and among his European contemporaries only Helmut Kohl's government outlasted it.

²¹⁶ *Dictadura Franquista*, p. 390.

²¹⁷ The failed 1981 coup d'état.

a vivir su vida personal. Por ello es muy importante referirnos a esa cultura de las cosas personales, del *he hecho esto para ti...*²¹⁸

Spanish people began to reclaim and re-invent their cultures. Picasso's 'Guernica' returned to Spain in 1981. In theory, film censorship had ended in November 1977 but the fact that, even in the early eighties, it was still regarded as *chic* to attend *soirées* of 'forbidden' films reveals the reality that the state and the army had control over what people could and could not see well after the death of Franco.²¹⁹ However, what has been described, often negatively, as a 'popularisation of culture' was beginning to emerge. The existing legislative and structural bodies could not keep up with 'la movida' and this was probably why they could not slow it down. As Borja Casani, editor of *La Luna de Madrid*, one of 'la movida's' emblematic, homegrown cultural magazines, observed, 'La sociedad española, si es algo, es absolutamente visceral, popular. Procede de una raíz mucho más cercana a los mariquitas de Cádiz que al diputado tal o al economista'²²⁰

By the end of the 1970s 'l'anomenada Transició democràtica posterior va afavorir el trencament amb els vells arquetips i l'apropament d'un segment de joves a ofertes d'oci desconegudes, fins aleshores inaccessibles. Però tot això no va tenir lloc fins a finals dels anys setanta i inicis dels vuitanta, quan molts nois i noies es van apartar dels cànons socialment acceptats i van construir identitats alternatives allunyades dels paràmetres fins llavors més habituals.'²²¹ Punk rockers began to be seen on the streets of Valencia, Madrid, in Catalonia too, but especially in Euskadi.²²² The musical aspect of this subcultural phenomenon became known as RRB – Radical Basque Rock²²³ and it united punk rock with the Basque national liberation movement. Despite its provincial sounding name, RRB was a pioneer movement for the whole of Spain. The 'rock' in RRB was eclectic and Ska became one of the sounds of political change. In Catalonia, a Ska aesthetic had been introduced through contact between locals and French tourists. Two of the most famous Catalan Ska groups – Skatalà and Decibelios – were the result of these summer contacts. From the outset, the Catalan

²¹⁸ José Luis Gallero, *Sólo se Vive una Vez: Esplendor y Ruina de la Movida Madrileña* (Madrid: Ediciones Ardora, 1991), p. 1.

²¹⁹ *Dictadura Franquista*, pp. 395-396.

²²⁰ *Sólo se Vive una Vez*, p. 3.

²²¹ *Skinheads a Catalunya*, p. 115.

²²² The Basque Country

²²³ For the origins of the term see D. Cerdán, *Eskorbuto: Historia Triste* (Madrid: Ediciones Marcianas, 2001), p.38.

Ska scene was closely linked to the left-wing branch of the nationalist movement. Punk rock and Ska concerts provided a site for a variety of subcultural expressions. Punks, Hippies, Rockabilies and Goths were present but most interestingly, at least from the perspective of this piece of work, various types of Mod and Mod derivatives began to appear. This subcultural phenomenon was just as disturbing in Spain in the late 1970s as it had been for Richard Hoggart in 1958. In the second chapter we saw how British cultural theorists like Hoggart, who was himself from a poor, working class background, were hostile to youngsters experimenting with certain socio-cultural parameters. Hoggart not only suggested that the 'hedonistic but passive barbarians'²²⁴ were some kind of portent, but he also claimed that

they are a depressing group...perhaps most of them are rather less intelligent than the average [working class teenager], and are therefore even more exposed than others to the debilitating mass trends of the day...they have no responsibilities, to themselves or to others.²²⁵

Hoggart was not alone in his belief that mass culture, especially the North American variety, was a threat to what working class culture had been and should be. Leading members of the Frankfurt School had expressed similar concerns in the 1940s. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's attack on what they defined as the 'culture industry'²²⁶ was based on the premise that the new popular culture was predictable, uniform, and therefore guilty of engendering conformism amongst its working class consumers. Their assumption that the working class *should be doing something better* blended voluntarism with determinism. However, despite the paternalism of this attitude, it is crucial to remember that it was well meaning. Hoggart, like Adorno, wanted something better for the working class and looked backwards to an *idealised* proletarian popular culture. A tacit nostalgia is present in many of the commentaries on early youth subcultures in Spain but it does not always seem to be driven by any sympathy or concern for their practitioners or exponents. In 1994, thirty-six years after Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, Manuel Martín Serrano was arguing that

a la afinidad que despertaba el *camarada*, comienza a sustituir la que despierta el *colega*; el *tío* o la *tía* miembro de la misma tribu urbana, con la que se

²²⁴ *The Uses of Literacy*, p. 250.

²²⁵ *The Uses of Literacy*, p. 248-9.

²²⁶ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

comparte un ambiente discotequero donde el volumen de la música impide el diálogo y se chamulla un lenguaje empobrecido hasta límites próximos a la subnormalidad.²²⁷

Drawing a parallel between the subcultural and the subnormal is nothing new. What is disappointing is that Martín Serrano (and he is not alone)²²⁸ seems to have leapfrogged more than thirty years of cultural studies, which represented a paradigm shift by arguing that there is a lot more to youth subcultures than meets the untrained, elitist eye. One of Martín Serrano's errors is to confuse relatively new subcultural practices with 'pasotismo'.²²⁹ There are two problems here. Firstly, if 'pasotismo' implies an indifference towards the important questions of the day, it might be worth asking who decides what these questions are. The expression 'gatekeeping' was coined by Stuart Hood in his classic *On Television*²³⁰ in the late 1980s – he was referring to the way in which items were selected by the BBC as newsworthy or not. It is obvious that something selected as newsworthy is likely to become news. When it comes to culture, a kind of value-laden, ideological gatekeeping is a constant; it starts by defining what is or is not culture, and then suggests how it should be consumed. When it comes to *popular* culture, it is important to remember that the questions its exponents are engaging with (*las cuestiones que importan*) are not necessarily the same as those being asked by our hegemonic gatekeepers.

The other problem with the idea of 'pasotismo', in this context, is that it implies laziness. This is an absurd criticism to make of Spain's early youth subcultures given their dynamism. It is never easy to earn and maintain your place as an exponent of a youth subculture – there are a number of pressures from within the movement; Richard Barnes tells the story of one Mod who had been working abroad and, on his return, was not prepared to go out until he was informed of the length of side vents people were wearing in their jackets.²³¹ But there is also a series of pressures which come from outwith the movement – from parents, employers and the state, and here we will be examining Mods in the post-Franco period. Dealing with this antipathy

²²⁷ Manuel Martín Serrano, *Historia de los Cambios de Mentalidades de los Jóvenes entre 1960-1990* (Madrid: Instituto de la Juventud, 1994).

²²⁸ See, for example: John Hooper, *Los Españoles de Hoy* (Buenos Aires: Vergara, 1987)

²²⁹ *Real Academia Española. Diccionario Usual*. <http://lema.rae.es> [accessed 05/07/2015] From 'pasota' - 1. adj. coloq. Indiferente ante las cuestiones que importan o se debaten en la vida social.

²³⁰ Stuart Hood, *On Television*, (London: Pluto Press, 1987)

²³¹ *Mods!*, p. 11.

requires both skill and dedication. Words like ‘compromís’, ‘ardu’ and ‘esforç’ are used by some of Robert Abella’s interviewees in *40 Mods de les Nostres Terres*.²³² Kiko Amat has a personal but far from unique view of the matter:

Ser mod en els vuitanta no era gens còmode, la veritat...Ser mod era una ocupació a jornada completa que et destrossaria els estudis, que sabotejaria de manera endiablada la teva relació amb el sexe oposat, que convertiria el teu dia a dia en una constant prova de resistència a la mofa, el menyspreu i (molt sovint) també la violència física, i que obriria una rasa respecte al teus progenitors que no s’esmenaria fins al cap d’una dècada, com a mínim.²³³

However, the clearest proof of the invalidity of the ‘pasotismo’ argument is the cultural productivity of subculturalists in general, and the Mods in particular. The number of bands formed, parties organised and fanzines written is staggering – all the more so if we remember that most Mods were, and are, in full-time work too.

An outside view of Mod circles has its uses but necessarily misses out on some of the nuances of the movement. Charles Baudelaire made a clear distinction between the ‘flâneur’ and the ‘artist of modern life’ – the former is an observer, a bystander, whereas the ‘artist’ has a loftier aim – that of ‘seeking out and *expounding* the beauty of modernity’.²³⁴ A good ‘flâneur’ may have an eagle eye, capable of spotting from a great distance whether ‘a fashion or the cut of a garment has been slightly modified’²³⁵ but no matter how seriously the ‘flâneur’ takes his or role, it is not that of a participant. Richard Weight’s *Mod! From Bebop to Britpop*,²³⁶ the most recent publication on the subject, is an interesting read but it suffers from a rather heavy-handed attempt to tie Mod directly to modernism in general, and lack of attention or access to inside knowledge. He makes some basic slips when it comes to those subcultural details which may in fact be key parts of the meaning of Mod: whether Mods do, did, should or shouldn’t wear Doctor Marten boots is debatable; however, the fact the generic term for these boots is ‘Doctor (or Doc) Marten’s’ and not ‘Airwear’ (a description of their soles) is not. Similarly, as John Harris points out,

²³² *40 Mods*, p. 16.

²³³ *40 Mods*, p. 16.

²³⁴ D. Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985), p.18. Frisby is paraphrasing Baudelaire here.

²³⁵ *Fragments of Modernity* pp. 15-18.

²³⁶ Richard Weight, *Mod! From Bebop to Britpop, Britain’s Biggest Youth Movement* (London: Vintage, 2015)

'anyone who thinks that The Jam's 'Town Called Malice' is a celebration of family values probably hasn't heard the song.²³⁷ More seriously, Weight's suggestion that the original Mods were driven to fetishizing clothes and accessories by 'a prospect of greater inclusion in British society'²³⁸ does not add up. As we saw in Chapter 2, the original Mods were involved in a form of semiotic guerrilla warfare with British society. The Who's Union Jack jackets did not have the patriotic connotations of The Jam wearing similar (but far less original) jackets in the late 1970s, or indeed of the Spice Girl Geri Halliwell's Union Jack mini-dress in 1997.²³⁹ The Who, or at least their tailor, had *desecrated* the national flag in order to make their jackets. The music the original Mods listened to was mostly American or Jamaican. Their suits and scooters were Italian. If they had a philosophy, it was probably French.²⁴⁰ Nation-based 'inclusion' was not on their agenda. However, I am not suggesting that being a participant should be a prerequisite for any cultural theorist; indeed it has enormous dangers in terms of objectivity.

'Modzines' (fan magazines dedicated exclusively to Mod issues), in the tradition of punk fanzines, arrived early on in the British Mod revival and the most famous is probably Acid Jazz founder Eddie Piller's *Extraordinary Sensations*. By the 1980s subcultural Catalonia was already writing and recording its own history in fan publications such as *Pravda* and in particular *Reacciones* – the longest lasting of all the Spanish Modzines. These are fascinating documents and I will be looking at them in detail in the next chapter. Since the early 2000s, and especially over the last few years, several Spanish and Catalan Mods have published books on the movement. Unlike the Modzines, these are more accessible to the outsider – the *square* – but are still of course deeply influenced by the authors' proximity to the subject. Given the lack of non-hostile, academic material available on the Spanish and Catalan Mod scenes, I have chosen to use some of this material, which comes from inside the movement, for the next section of this chapter.

²³⁷ John Harris, 'Mod: A Very British Style by Richard Weight – review', *The Guardian*, 14 March 2013.

²³⁸ *Mod! From Bebop to Britpop*, p. 3.

²³⁹ Geri Halliwell wore this at the 1997 BRIT awards. It is considered to be a key moment in the 'Cool Britannia' movement – a PR amalgam of Blairite politics, Britpop and the YBA artists such as Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin.

²⁴⁰ For an interesting, and at times contradictory, view of the internationality of the Mods, it is worth having a look at Carolina Oliveira's *Mod Nations* documentary. You can find it at <http://www.themodgeneration.co.uk> [accessed 12/07/2015]

Most commentators agree that the Spanish Mod scene started at the beginning of the 1980s and that would seem to make sense as the first Mod festival in Spain took place in October 1980. Some of them try to identify *the* original Mod - maybe this is why at least two of the most interesting writers from within the movement refer to 'el espejismo' – the mirage of Mod. There are some fascinating stories about characters such as 'Flowers' – 'Demasiado tarde para los Who, demasiado pronto para los Jam'²⁴¹ - in Barcelona that predate 1980 but they remain anecdotal. The first Spanish Mods were original within their own context but were clearly different from the 'little diamonds' of post-war Britain. They were the product of a variety of situations, factors and inputs – the opening up of Spanish culture in general, la movida in Madrid, punk rock in the UK and the contemporary British revival scene. Ricky Gil, founder member of *Brighton 64*, describes the profile of early Spanish Mod as

Una mezcla de mod inglés de los 60 (trajes a medida, parkas, Fred Perry), new wave de finales de los 70 (corbatas estrechas, chapas en las solapas, peinados casi punks). Rude boy a lo Two-Tone (botas Martens) y clónico de Paul Weller (Jam shoes, camisas de amebas, pantalones Sta-prest). Todo ello daba un conjunto sumamente original en una época de gran uniformidad estética.²⁴²

So, perhaps what was original here was the pluralism of the style. As we shall see later this is not a constant in the story of the Spanish or Catalan Mods.

Coming back to the early scene, let's start where most Mods would start – with the music and we will see that the Mods were active consumers as well as producers of their own soundtrack. State-owned Radio 3, 'l'única finestra oberta que et permetia descobrir coses noves i totalment fora del circuit comercial'²⁴³ played a significant role here. Contemporary listeners of the station will be familiar with the programme *Capitán Demo*, which plays and promotes new bands. The concept isn't new – in 1979, within Rafa Abitbol's *Diario Pop* programme, Jesús Ordovás, the programme's director, had a section called *Esto no es Hawaii* which played demo-tapes (maquetas) from relatively unknown bands from the overlapping pop and embryonic Mod scene. Many of these tracks would never be professionally recorded but that did not stop them becoming hits for the audience they were very clearly directed at. This led to the

²⁴¹ See *¡Ahora!* pp. 272-273

²⁴² *Revival Mod*, p. 161.

²⁴³ Fernando Muñiz Gonzalez, 'Chapter 6' in *40 Mods*.

development of small, independent record labels, such as *Shanti Records* from Donosti, who produced a maxi-single of local songs which had been played on air by Ordovás.²⁴⁴ Independently produced singles like this were then played on local stations as well as back on Radio-3, which had first promoted them. A key impact of this increased accessibility to home-grown pop-rock, along with a wider exposure to what was happening elsewhere, especially in Britain, at this time was the emergence of small groups (*grupetes*). Like many of the early British punk bands just a few years earlier, most of these groups were less concerned with commercial success than with actively participating in something new, original and fun.

Catalonia was, and is, at the forefront of the Mod movement in Spain. The first recognised group of Mods in the whole of the Spanish state were teenagers from the French Lycée in Barcelona. By late 1980 they were already in contact with other like-minded subculturalists from the Eixample, Horta-Guinardó, Sant Gervasi and la Vall d'Hebron. These were middle class kids who had access to clothes and music through trips to Carnaby Street and/or relatives who lived in the British capital.²⁴⁵ A few months later Mods began to appear in more working class areas such as el Clot and Glòries. They were 'de familia clase media-baja, con problemas económicos'²⁴⁶ and felt that the middle class mods, '[que] tenían cierto regusto pijo y adinerado'²⁴⁷, were hostile to the new arrivals. This perceived difference between different groups of Mods is something we shall return to. However, at this time any significant disrespect or suspicion did not last for long and by 1981 the Mods in Barcelona were a fairly united group with their base established in what was to become a legendary meeting place in Mod history – the bar Boira in calle Amigó.

These Catalan Mod pioneers were fans of and had been influenced by the 1979 film *Quadrophenia*, white 1960s rhythm and blues/rock bands like the Kinks and the Who, the sounds of the British Mod revival bands, and especially their more punk counterparts the Jam.²⁴⁸ As we have seen, Mod is about more than consumption and by 1981 there were already a few home-grown Mod groups – or at least groups that Mods liked - on the scene. *Telegrama* came from Badalona, and in 1981 had already

²⁴⁴ *Revival Mod*, p.165.

²⁴⁵ Brighton 64's Gil brothers are a perfect example.

²⁴⁶ Quoted in ¡Ahora! p. 275.

²⁴⁷ Quoted in ¡Ahora! p. 275.

²⁴⁸ See for example Alberto Gil, 'Chapter 2' in *40 Mods*.

reached number three in *Esto no es Hawai's* chart – they played power-pop, not dissimilar to some of the British punk/revival bands, and adopted a Mod image quite early on. Their first major live success came at 'La Festa del Treball', organised by the Catalan Communist Party (PSUC) in 1981. *Los Sprays*, their name a clear reference to the British post-punk band *the Vapors*, from l'Hospitalet de Llobregat, appeared a few months later and were 'más influenciados por los 60 (Beatles) y por los grupos de pop babosa de la nueva ola madridileña'.²⁴⁹ Another early band, *Kamembert* from Castelldefels, have often been described as more pop or new wave but had a Mod following from 1981. As Manolo Crespo, their lead singer stated 'solo se nos distinguía de los mods por no llevar parka. Muchos de nuestros fans lo eran, y nosotros compartíamos sus gustos musicales y estéticos e íbamos a los mismos bares.'²⁵⁰ However, if one group more than any other is and was associated with the early Mod scene in Barcelona it is *Brighton 64*. This group was formed in 1981 by Albert and Ricky Gil after a series of trips to London, where they immersed themselves in Carnaby Street and the revival Mod scene. Despite their musical limitations, their rhythm and blues, very heavily influenced by the Jam and the Who (at times more aesthetically than musically),²⁵¹ became popular on the Mod scene very quickly. They won a prize for modernity and originality at the 1982 'Festa del Treball', they were the guests (and stars) of a special episode of the television programme *Musical Express*, and when they played the Rock-Ola along with *Telegrama* and *los Sprays*, they were the favourites of the Mod Madrid crowd.²⁵² By 1983 *Brighton 64* had become 'definitivamente...los líderes indiscutibles del modernismo catalán'.²⁵³ Coming from the movement itself was fundamental to this success but two other factors helped *Brighton 64* acquire the status of 'leaders'. On a positive note, the recently set up independent record label 'Flor y Nata' had released 'Barcelona Blues', already the anthem of the Catalan Mods, along with three other tracks on a maxi-single.²⁵⁴ Negatively, and in direct contrast to one of the key elements that had allowed the original Mods to develop, national

²⁴⁹ *Revival*, p.166

²⁵⁰ *¡Ahora!*, p. 120

²⁵¹ The group played in front of a Union Jack backdrop and Albert used to unplug his guitar in order to perform jumps in the style of Pete Townshend and Bruce Foxtan. *Revival Mod*, p. 166.

²⁵² *Revival Mod*, p.166. For more about Brighton 64 see Ricky Gil's *Bola y Cadena: 20 Años de Explosión Mod* (Lleida: Editorial Milenio, 2003).

²⁵³ *Revival Mod*, p. 167

²⁵⁴ Brighton 64, Barcelona Blues, (Maxi Flor y Nata Records FYN-5, 1983).

service still existed. Both *Telegrama* and *Los Sprays* had to deal with losing band members to the Spanish state.

Although our focus here is on Catalonia, the at times competitive but generally symbiotic relationship between Catalan Mods and their counterparts in other parts of Spain, especially Madrid, should not be overlooked. While Brighton 64 had established their dominance at home, they faced competition from elsewhere. The two main musical contenders – *Los Elegantes* and *Pánico Speed* were both from Madrid. *Los Elegantes* had played in the first Spanish Mod festival in October 1980 and their set included cover versions of Mod classics like ‘Louie Louie’ by *the Kingsmen* and ‘Zoot Suit’ by *the High Numbers*. They also played a reworked version of *the Selecter’s* ‘Too Much Pressure’ with the title changed to ‘Toma Anfetas’²⁵⁵ – what could be more Mod than that? While *Los Elegantes* were a band that Mods liked, *Pánico Speed* were a group of Mods who had formed a band. They were critical of the Spanish revival scene and preferred to associate themselves musically and subculturally with *the Small Faces*, and to a lesser extent *the Who*. Here we can see the beginnings of an important divergence – ‘*mods abiertos y mods cerrados*’.²⁵⁶ Robert Abella is probably overcritical when he refers to *Pánico Speed* as ‘*simplemente revivalistas*’²⁵⁷ but his observation that ‘los Brighton esperaban mucho del futuro, mientras que los Pánico parecían contentarse con vivir el presente mirando al pasado’²⁵⁸ is interesting. The forward-looking nature of the *original* Mods is something we looked at in the third chapter of this thesis and will be a key point for discussion in the next chapter.

By the end of 1983 it was becoming clear that there was no single, unified (or unifying) Mod scene in Spain. This should come as no surprise – there never had been before or has been since. The Mods in Madrid coincided with, benefitted from and were part of ‘la movida’. The Rock-Ola nightclub was the epicentre of the scene, which spread along the Avenida América in bars and cafes, transforming the area into a Mod’s paradise. The situation was not the same in other parts of the country. As Robert Abella puts it:

²⁵⁵ *¡Ahora!*, p. 58.

²⁵⁶ *¡Ahora!*, p. 184.

²⁵⁷ *Revival Mod*, p. 170.

²⁵⁸ *Revival Mod*, p. 170.

En cambio, en el resto del país, los mods viven el revival de una forma aislada y marginal, unos siguiendo la modernidad nuevaolera, otros investigando los años 60 por su cuenta y otros condenados a un escuterismo solitario.²⁵⁹

Barcelona did not really have a 'movida' and the Mod scene began to fragment rather than come together. The scene revolved around concerts by the three main Catalan bands but the 'movement' suffered from divisions between the various groups of Mods. The early unity in 1981 proved to be fragile and as a result it was impossible to organise Mod parties in any of the city's bigger venues. The first ever Spanish Modzine *Este es el Mundo Moderno* was published in Barcelona in 1982 – it included interviews with *Brighton 64* and *los Sprays*, and had articles on *Quadrophenia*, *the Jam*, Carnaby Street and the actor John Belushi.²⁶⁰ The fact that its first issue was also its last indicates something about the state of the Catalan scene only a couple of years after its inception.

This downturn in the Mod world was not unique to Catalonia. In Britain *the Jam* had split up. Punk rock, which had lent some subcultural space to revivalist and power-pop bands, was on the decline, and the Mods were being demonised in the popular press à la 1964. The scene in Madrid had maintained a certain energy but what has been described as 'cuadrofensismo'²⁶¹ had led to an increasing number of violent clashes between Mods and Rockers on and around the Avenida América. This culminated in the death of Demetrio Lefler, a young rocker in 1985. For once the media had something to say about the Mods, and it was all bad.²⁶² The 'prensa amarilla'²⁶³ in particular had a field day. In Luis Ortero's article 'Rockers, Mods y Punkis: la Guerra del Sabado Noche', which appeared in *Interviu*²⁶⁴ just after Lefler's death, Mods are accused of being elitist rich kids, racist and fans of Adolf Hitler. He describes the Mod-Rocker dichotomy as a subcultural class war - 'En el fono [sic], la rivalidad entre rockers y mods es una lucha de clases. O no tan en el fondo.'²⁶⁵ While this is a reductionist view based on little or no real evidence, it should come as no real

²⁵⁹ *Revival Mod*, p. 170

²⁶⁰ *Este es el Mundo Moderno*, Barcelona 1982

²⁶¹ A reference to the film *Quadrophenia*, and especially the choreographed clashes between rival groups of Mods and Rockers.

²⁶² See for example ABC

<http://hemeroteca.abc.es/nav/Navigate.exe/hemeroteca/madrid/abc/1985/> [accessed 16/08/2015]

²⁶³ Sensationalist newspapers and magazines.

²⁶⁴ *Interviu*, No. 463, 27/3-2/4, April 1985, p. 85-87.

²⁶⁵ *Interviu*, No. 463, 27/3-2/4, April 1985, p. 86.

surprise. As we saw earlier, Colin MacInnes also played with definitions of class in his descriptions of the early Mods. Ortero is clearly anti-Mod, and MacInnes anti-Teddy Boy, but they share the same discomfort with the idea that a clean, well-dressed youth can be working class.

The Mods did not disappear but they were moving towards a different, more underground space. Their interest in clothes remained solid and for the first time, perhaps in a move away from 'cuadrogenismo', the 'faces' on the Catalan Mod scene were not judged by how much they had spent in London but rather on how they managed to achieve 'una imagen impecable – siempre dentro de los cánones revival [...] – sin llevar una sola prenda adquirida en las tiendas de Carnaby [Street]. Aunque eran poquísimos los que lo hacían, comenzaba a verse ropa hecha a medida.'²⁶⁶ Something was happening here. The music Mods were listening to was also changing. The high point of this relatively low period for Catalan and Spanish Mods was 'The Grooviest Night in Town' – a two night concert organised by 'Keeps on Burning', a Mod association from Madrid. The final concert ended with a jam session by the 'two Alberts' – Albert 'Brighton' and Albert 'Pánico' – but the headliners on both nights were new. *Sex Museum*, from Madrid, played what was essentially a garage-punk set. *Los Negativos*, from Barcelona, had a more psychedelic garage sound. Robert Abella claims that 'The Grooviest Night in Town' 'situaba al modernismo español en la vanguardia de la escena musical independiente'.²⁶⁷ This may be going a bit far but what is clear is that these two concerts in January 1986 redefined to some extent the music that Mods enjoyed. From the mid-eighties onwards sections of the Mod movement began to listen to garage and psychedelic sounds. This marked the beginning of the 'black' Mod, 'white' Mod division in Spain. This had nothing to do with ethnicity but everything to do with music. 'Black' Mods listen(ed) to black music – soul, rhythm and blues and some jazz. The 'white' Mods listen(ed) to rhythm and blues played by white bands, garage and more psychedelic sounds. This division is still present on the scene. This year's (2015) Euro-Yeye festival, held in Gijón, featured DJs playing both types of music in the same venue for the first time – previously musical styles and their fans had been strictly but voluntarily separated.

²⁶⁶ *Revival Mod*, p. 171.

²⁶⁷ *Revival Mod*, p. 179.

If there had been a dip in the mid-eighties, the 'Grooviest Night in Town' marked the beginning of an upturn. One key, often behind the scenes, activity had kept the movement ticking over: the production of fan or modzines. As we saw earlier, *Este es el Mundo Mod-erno* only lasted for one issue but its editor Ringo Julián had started *Reacciones* in April 1984. Other modzines and leaflets appeared in Madrid, Seville, León and Tenerife²⁶⁸ but Barcelona's *Reacciones* achieved something rare in the world of fanzines: it was produced regularly – once every three months, it maintained a certain journalistic quality both in terms of its editorial policy and the writing itself, and it lasted – in total eighteen issues were published, the final one at the end of 1988.²⁶⁹ We shall be studying some of these in greater detail in the following chapter. In 1987 signs appeared that the 'lenta pero eficaz tarea de tantos jóvenes anónimos a lo largo de toda la década'²⁷⁰ was bearing fruit.

The scene had changed and nowhere can this be appreciated more clearly than in the music. In the third chapter of this thesis we looked in some detail at the songs of *Brighton 64* and *Los Flechazos* – the former were very heavily influenced by the late-seventies punk power-pop of British groups like *the Jam*, the latter far more 'sesentista' than 'nuevaolera' – this sixties pop sound was very popular in the redynamised movement but several of the groups I have mentioned in this chapter benefitted from the mood swing. Between 1987 and 1988 *Kamenbert*, *Pánico Speed*, *Sex Museum*, as well as *Los Flechazos* released their first albums, *Brighton 64* and *Los Negativos* their second. Classic Mod rallies in Málaga, Barcelona and Zaragoza saw the number of participants increase and a few new events appeared – most famously the first 'Purple Weekend' took place in León in November 1987. This period (1987-89) is often regarded as the apogee for Spanish Mods.

Before looking in more detail at individual participants in the Catalan Mod scene who it is hoped can bring us up to date, it is worth underlining certain factors which distinguish them from chronologically and geographically distanced counterparts. When they first appeared they formed part of a subcultural expression of a rejection of dictatorship. The pluralism which marked the 'movida' had something to do with the catching up Spain felt it had to go through, but also had a lot to do with

²⁶⁸ *Revival Mod*, p. 183.

²⁶⁹ *Revival Mod*, p. 176.

²⁷⁰ *Revival Mod*, p. 183.

an enthusiasm for life – for a way of life which Franco had systemically denied Spanish youth.

It has been argued that Mod was never a movement – that by the time it was recognised as such, its exponents had moved on. This is a contentious and condescending attitude which excludes generations of people who have described themselves as Mods even though they were not sipping cappuccinos in Soho in 1958. It is probably fairer to say that there has never really been one single unified bloc which includes all Mods. There have always been differences, based on social class, levels of openness, musical styles, clothes, scooters and even haircuts, amongst the various groups of youngsters who describe themselves as Mods.

KEEPING THE FAITH – CATALAN STYLE

As we saw earlier, Charles Baudelaire made a distinction between the ‘flaneur’ and the ‘artist of modern life’. What I have written up until now in this piece of work could be regarded as the work of a ‘flaneur’ – an informed but detached observer of the Mod tradition in Catalonia. In this chapter I use the Mods themselves – the ‘artists of modern life’ – as my principal resource. In 2015 I conducted a series of interviews with around a dozen Mods, or ex-Mods, who are well known on the Catalan, Spanish and, in some cases, European scenes. They were all happy to share their knowledge of the ‘movement’ and demonstrated the fact that Mods, as well as being exponents of a particular subcultural style, are also historians and custodians of a particular way of life. Three of the people I interviewed contacted me to say that they did not want to be referred to directly. I have respected this, although I do at times lean on their insights. I have included transcripts of the other interviews as appendices to this thesis. I mentioned the Modzine *Reacciones* earlier and the fact that it was unusual because it was published fairly regularly for four years from 1984 until 1988. I was lucky to have access to an almost complete collection of this publication. Modzines, produced by Mods for Mods, offer a valuable insight into the Mod world in Catalonia – they have been described as the *soul* of the movement.

Letting the Mods speak for themselves involves some risks in terms of objectivity but these are risks worth taking. More positivist approaches claim to minimise objective interference through detached observation and the application of non-judgemental experimental methods. However, this concept of detachment is nebulous. When dealing with real people in social contexts, finding a neutral analytical vantage point, free from personal prejudices, preconceptions and (sub)cultural assumptions is almost impossible. I have already mentioned several examples of subcultural baggage interfering with an understanding of the Mods. This is something I shall return to in the next chapter but two very different examples of a false *détachement* are worth remembering. Dick Hebdige in *Subculture: The Meaning of*

Style has an almost voluntarist desire to find the class struggle in subcultural practices. This leads him to a position where he is forced to claim that his knowledge, as a cultural theorist, gives him a superior understanding of youth subcultures when compared to that of the participants themselves.²⁷¹ It is unfortunate that Hebdige did not test his theory by speaking to any members of the groups he chose to describe. The other example is Richard Weight, who I mentioned in the previous chapter. He is so detached from his subject matter that he makes glaring mistakes about stylistic details – the very details which were and are quintessential for the Mods in the process of creating their identities. He also lets his desire to squeeze Mod into a modernist continuum - including the poetry of T.S. Eliot and the architecture of Le Corbusier - interfere with the realities of what Mod is and was for its participants.²⁷² Weight has read most of the mainstream contemporary sources but it is my view that his work would have benefited if he had taken the time to meet a few Mods himself.

Of course, listening to Mod voices offers no *guarantee* of objectivity. It does, however, provide us with an opportunity to learn something about what Mods themselves think they are or were up to. It should also be remembered that this thesis is not intended to be a comprehensive narrative of Mod history in Catalonia. It is rather an attempt to see to what extent the theoretical tools developed by Gramsci and later by the cultural theorists associated with the CCCS at the University of Birmingham remain useful when trying to reach an understanding of the Mods in Catalonia. This chapter is divided into five sections: self-definition; nostalgia; sartorial signs; musical signs; and politics. These sections cover the main areas which have been analysed by theorists who place themselves within the tradition of (neo) Gramscian cultural studies. British cultural studies benefits from a rich oral tradition, as exemplified by the 'School of Scottish Studies'²⁷³ and the 'Oral History Society',²⁷⁴ which have attempted to give voice to individuals and groups who are often under or misrepresented in traditional history. A classic example is Elizabeth Roberts' *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working Class Women, 1890-1940 (Family, Sexuality*

²⁷¹ *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p.105.

²⁷² *Mod! From Bebop to Britpop*. See in particular Weight's 'Author's Note' at the beginning of the book.

²⁷³ See <http://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/celtic-scottish-studies/archives>

²⁷⁴ See <http://www.ohs.org.uk/>

and *Social Relations in Past Times*).²⁷⁵ I have borrowed from her methodology in this chapter – it is my hope that this view from the inside will provide material which can help enrich our understanding of the Mods. Each section follows a similar pattern: an introduction, extracts from interviews with contemporary Mods with some comments, extracts from the modzine *Reacciones* and some concluding comments.

What is the Meaning of Mod?

Is it me – for a moment?²⁷⁶

The Mods, perhaps more than any other subcultural group, have always been capable of defining themselves. This probably started with Pete Meadon's classic claim that Mod was about 'clean living under difficult circumstances'.²⁷⁷ Despite the doubts of certain commentators, Mods are extremely self-aware. This is not merely the result of the amount of time they spend looking at themselves in mirrors.

THE MODS

ENEIDA FEVER!

Eneida is 37 years old and lives in Barcelona. She owns and runs a communications agency which specialises in promoting musicians, releasing records and organising festivals. She is also a famous DJ on the Mod scene.

Para mí, hacerse Mod era un estilo de vida, sobre todo pasión por la música [...] todos mis ingresos me los gastaba en discos.

Es muy elitista, sí. Se quejan de que no haya gente joven, de que el movimiento vaya como muriendo, pero al mismo tiempo si hay alguien joven que está empezando, es normal que no tenga toda la indumentaria Mod. Pues he visto a gente criticando los "novatas" en las fiestas. Ha sido muy elitista y me molesta bastante. Porque yo creo que cuanto más abierto seas y más fácil sea el acceso, más gente podrá disfrutarlo. De eso se trata, de pasarlo bien. Era mi objetivo, pasarlo bien. Yo creo que cualquier

²⁷⁵ Elizabeth Roberts *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working Class Women, 1890-1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986)

²⁷⁶ John Entwistle's theme from the album *Quadrophenia* and a typical example of Pete Townshend's Mod existentialism.

²⁷⁷ See Steve Turner, 'The Ace Face's Forgotten Story: An Interview with Pete Meadon', in Paolo Hewitt, ed., *The Sharper Word: A Mod Anthology* (London: Helter Skelter, 1999), p. 167.

movimiento es elitista, y más en un movimiento con una estética muy particular, y quieres defender un poco la autenticidad.

ALEX RAMONEDA

Alex is 39 years old and lives in Barcelona. He works in the commercial department of LP, an electricity and gas company. He played bass with the revival Mod band 'Saturday's Kids' from 2004 until 2009.

...se ha convertido en una forma de entender la vida. Si no fuera Mod, supongo que mi vida sería totalmente diferente. No tendrían nada que ver mis amistades, ni la mujer que he conocido, ni los grupos que he hecho, no tendría nada que ver. Para mí se ha convertido en una forma de vida... el Mod a mí me enorgullece.

PABLO RIBAS

Pablo is 42 years old and lives in Bordils near Girona. He owns a pop art shop in Girona, which he says could be doing better. He used to play drums in a Mod/Garage band in Girona.

Para mí es un estilo de vida vinculada a la música y a la estética.

Es individualismo, gusto por la buena música, pero no es una cosa exclusiva de los Mods. Los Mods son conocedores de música, no son analfabetos musicalmente, música negra de Jamaica, ska..., en cambio, mucha gente que no haya sido Mod no conoce tanta historia de la música o historia de los movimientos estéticos de moda... un Mod que no sabe de música no puede llegar tan profundamente.

DAVID PALMA

David is 49 years old and lives in La Bisbal. He is the owner of a grow-shop. He organises concerts and scooter rallies.

La música, una estética, por supuesto.

A mí no me gustaba lo de las tribus urbanas. Yo no era ninguna tribu, éramos un grupo. Pienso que es un movimiento culto, los Mods son cultos, hay mucho descerebrado por todos lados y los Mods auténticos son gente súper culta. Yo creo que en parte los

Mods lo que tienen de contracultura es ser muy educados, les gusta mucho la cultura, y claro, todos los movimientos no son así. La moda... siempre me ha gustado y creo que esto es contracultural al final, porque la cultura no gusta a los gobiernos de derechas. Si tengo algo de Mod dentro de mí, es eso, que me gusta mucho la cultura. El movimiento Mod, como le gusta la cultura, es un movimiento artístico.

LLUIS CARDENAL

Lluis is 38 and he lives in Banyoles. He works as an English teacher and in real estate. He is a very well-known DJ on the European Mod scene. He is a face.

..siempre desde un punto de vista de querer ser primero.

...lo interesante es que tú mismo te puedes crear tu propia estética y tú mismo, con todos los referentes que puedas tener, puedes crearte tu propia manera de ser, que es lo realmente interesante... este sentido de coolness.

Yo creo que es una cosa de súper competición, pero es una competición amigable, porque es una competición que puedes ver en otros amigos.

MAR

Mar is 38 years old and lives in Girona. She is a psychologist. She is also a well-known DJ on The Spanish scene. She organises and runs 'Barefootin' – a 1960s weekender in Girona.

...te gusta la música, te gusta la estética, te gusta la época, pero sin querer considerarme ni querer en ningún momento ser Mod. Y de, bueno, admiración por todo eso...

Sí, es el buen gusto... de ser serio... tanto para el look como para sobre todo la música. Bueno, quizá para mí está como desfasado. No tiene nada que ver con lo que eran los mods de antes. Hay alguna gente que vive como queriendo solo emular todo lo que hacían los mods: el vestir tal, la música no sé cuántos... Pero claro, es que no es la época que era antes. Es otra época, no sé puede comparar.

Pues es una persona de los años 60, joven, adolescente... bueno, joven entre los 16 y los veintipocos... y que le gustaba la música, quería buscar cosas nuevas, quería pasárselo bien... Y con un gusto por la estética, una estética muy concreta... Pero vaya, ahora yo creo que no hay mods. Para mí no.

RAMON

Ramon is 43 and lives in Girona. He works as a receptionist in a hospital. He is also a DJ
El interés por los 60. Yo creo que más que nada es el interés por los 60, la música de los 60. Una cosa te lleva a la otra y al final, pues... esta gente se lo tomaba muy en serio y... realmente tenían buen gusto para todo.

Pero el revival mod por la parte punk sí que me puede interesar. Pero lo que son los grupos de revival no me interesan. Pero no porque sean... o sea, no me interesan musicalmente. Luego, si son mods o no son mods... no me interesa este debate. Yo creo que lo mod se acaba en el 63. Como máximo. Lo mod se acaba en el 63, por lo que dicen. Y de hecho todos los grupos que salen nuevos, todos los grupos mod, entendidos como mod, pues salen de este Rhythm and Blues de esta época, ¿no?

Bueno, porque marcas un poco... la... no sé. No sé, también creo que va un poco con el carácter de aquí, ¿no? De los catalanes. Somos un poco así. Sí, yo creo que sí. Somos bastante individualistas. Lo que no quiere decir que seamos unos asociales.

Ir a la tuya, tener las cosas más o menos claras. A tu manera, y tú tienes tu mundo. Te has montado tu mundo, y es tu mundo. Evidentemente, cuando te interesa algo, es algo colectivo, ya sea lo Mod o lo sixties de cualquier escena... pero en algo muy personal.

ALBERTO VALLE

Alberto is 37 and lives in Barcelona. He works as a consultant in a PR and communications agency. A driving force behind the Catalan scene he organises at DJs Le Clean Cut Mod weekender as well as at other events. He is a face.

I think [Mod] is still a good word to define my way of living and my notion of stylism & coolness. Sometimes I wonder if one can be mod once the 21 years old are over, but, well, why not?

I think that this basically a matter of obsession for some obscure, different and cool forms of hedonism rooted between the mid-50s to the early 70s. It also means secrecy. It also means others will sometimes perceive you as an arrogant imbecile. It

also means you'll do a lot of mistakes in your quest for "brightness", but that's a part of it all.

I guess this is a common trait when it comes to be a part of a subcultural entourage (and by subcultural I am referring to Dick Hebdidge's definition of the concept). Especially when it comes to talk about 20th Century post WWII subcultures. So yes, of course, your life and tastes and the things you do and why you do them are different from the square world. Somehow I still feel this difference, but it doesn't mean that I am better. You know? Just different.

Well, Mod has always been quite an individualist thing... When you talk about a movement you're talking about something unified, and I definitely think that mod has never been a unified thing, but a very individualistic one.

There are certain key words or concepts that most of my interviewees share here. It is absolutely clear that for these Mods music is a central part of their subcultural existence. I shall be looking in more detail at the specifics of that music later on in this chapter. The word aesthetic is important too. We are talking about clothes here and we will be looking at the details and changing meanings of the clothes shortly. The key concepts which emerge here are the fact that Mod is regarded as a 'way of life' rather than a fashion; and the idea of individualism and /or elitism.

The concept of Mod as a 'way of life' is relatively easy to locate. The full title of Franc Roddam's 1979 film was *Quadrophenia: A Way of Life*²⁷⁸. This in itself was reference to the original Mods, probably more specifically to Pete Meaden. What is not clear is the way of life that is being referred to here. Alex Cooper, not a Catalan Mod, but a very important *face* on the Spanish scene (although he denies it), has an interesting take on this:

Yo ni siento ni pienso lo mismo que los mods originales de los 60; de hecho, en muchos aspectos pienso exactamente lo contrario. Para empezar no soy inglés [...] No pertenezco a la clase trabajadora. Siento un rechazo visceral por la espiral de consumismo que alimenta esta sociedad [...] No me agrada la fascinación por el 'último grito' [...] Si le dijeras a un mod de la primer generación que un español, de más de cuarenta años, que vista ropa de

²⁷⁸ *Quadrophenia*

segundo mano y conduce un scooter que tiene medio siglo, casado y con una hija dice ser mod, se partiría de risa o simplemente no se lo creería. Y, sin embargo, a pesar de todo lo anterior, yo vivo mi incoherencia con devoción y orgullo, como muchos de los de mi generación. El modernismo tiene que ver con el estilo y el buen gusto [...] Luego está la música, los mejores sonidos que puedes imaginar son parte de nuestra cultura.²⁷⁹

Cooper is clear about the importance of certain signs – in this case music and clothes. He is also convinced that the meaning of Mod is necessarily different for him than it was for its original exponents. This would fit in with the importance of context within Gramscian cultural theory as was outlined earlier.

It is very important to remember that the original Mods had no real role models in the early days. Getting ready for the weekend was all about finding something new – this could be clothes, a dance or even a wristwatch. Several of my interviewees mention the idea that Mods are individualists but they are also clearly members of some kind of group. This is not necessarily contradictory but is interesting. It may be the case that while the original Mods were seeking to be different on an individual level, revival Mods had and have a pattern to follow which leads to a group-focused individualism – Lluís Cardenal's 'competición amigable'.

THE MODZINES

The original Mods had no press of their own and by the time news of their subcultural styles reached the tabloids or teenage magazines, they had moved on. By the 1980s in Catalonia the Mods had at least one stable fanzine, *Reacciones*, which had a fascinating *descriptive* content (based around music, fashion, art, cinema and scooters) for people who identified with the scene. It also had a significant *prescriptive* content – so Mods or potential Mods could read not only about what was happening but also about what they should be doing in order to fulfil the prerequisites of the subculture. This was new and very different, especially when compared to what the original Mods had had access to. As the editorial board of *Reacciones* said in 1984 'Los Modzines son el alma de la escena.'²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Alex Cooper, *Club 45: 90 Canciones de la Era Pop para Mods y Jetsetters* (Léon: Ediciones Chelsea, 2010), p. 9.

²⁸⁰ *Reacciones 1*, (Barcelona, April 1984)

In the first issue of *Reacciones*²⁸¹ there is a three page explanation of what behaviour is and is not expected from a Mod. The article, signed by JoanMa, is written in Catalan, which is unusual²⁸². Its title is 'No Es Cosa d'uns Quants'. The writer insists that it is not enough to dress well and listen to the right music. He also makes it clear that drinking, smoking, taking pills and causing problems²⁸³ is not what the Mod scene is about either. If you just want to dance and have a good time, you might as well become a Punk. What separates Mods from other subcultural styles such as Punk is the fact they should have

idees sobre art (la part mes important de la cultura mod i més desconeguda a Barcelona), cinema, literatura, etc. No es una cosa de pocs a Barcelona, una cosa que només agrada a uns quants que la volen imposar. A qualsevol ciutat europea, un mod te un mínim de cultura, i el que pasa de cultura, no es mod [...] El POP ART es l'essència de MOD, i no una historia d'uns quants que s'heu muntat [...] seria bo d'agafar la vanguardia artística de la ciutat, ara que podem.

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There is no solid evidence that the original Mods were into much culture apart from their music and wardrobes. Some of the clothes the Who were provided with incorporated Pop Art designs but the Who were not original Mods. As we saw earlier, Pete Townshend himself described the Who not as a Mod band 'but a band that Mods liked'. The British revival Mods in the late seventies were more closely related to the punk scene than 1960s Pop Art culture. The view coming from *Reacciones* is that Mods should be more 'cultured' than their original counterparts and less pluralistic than the 1970s revivalists. 'El modernismo es abierto pero con unos límites que hacen que pueda seguir siendo un movimiento. [...] Ser modernista significa tener una identidad pura.'²⁸⁵ The July 1985 issue of the fanzine ends with the exhortation 'ROCKERS Y MODS QUADROPHENICOS: MATAROS ENTRE VOSOTROS Y DEJADNOS EN PAZ! HIPPIES NO, MILITARES Y PASMA TAMPOCO.'²⁸⁶ Their attempts to explain the meaning of Mod depend on distinguishing themselves from other subcultural groups, including people

²⁸¹ *Reacciones* 1.

²⁸² Although *Reacciones* was written and published in Barcelona, there are very few articles written in Catalan. The only Modzine which was written exclusively in Catalan was Barcelona's *In'n'Out*, which existed for a few months at the beginning of 1993.

²⁸³ He uses the expression 'armar bulla'.

²⁸⁴ *Reacciones* 6, (Barcelona, July 1985) This is a literal transcript.

²⁸⁵ *Reacciones* 6.

²⁸⁶ *Reacciones* 6.

within the Mod movement. The post-Quadrophenia Mods at *Reacciones* are clearly trying to situate themselves in an idealised, culturally eloquent Mod world, which probably never existed.

Are you looking backwards or forwards?

Are you looking backwards

Or are you looking forwards?

Are you taking over

Or are you taking orders?²⁸⁷

Nostalgia is nothing new. Nobody can say when it was first experienced but the word itself was invented at the end of the 17th century. It is a compound word based on the Greek 'nóstos' – homecoming, and 'algos' – pain.²⁸⁸ The term was used by Johannes Hofer in an attempt to explain the symptoms of Swiss mercenaries who had been abroad fighting for long periods. It was a form of homesickness experienced by soldiers, which, in its worst form, led to suicide. It is worth underlining here that nostalgia expressed a discontentment based on geographical and not temporal displacement. As the word and the concept became demilitarised, it began to be associated with an earlier, often idealised period in the sufferer's life. As Simon Reynolds points out

The original nostalgia had been a *plausible* emotion in the sense that there was a remedy (catching the first warship or merchant vessel back home and returning to the warm hearth of kith and kin, a world that was *familiar*). Nostalgia in the modern sense is an impossible emotion, or at least an incurable one: the only remedy would involve time travel.²⁸⁹

If the Catalan Mods are or were nostalgic, it means that they have taken the idea one step further. As well as spatial and temporal longing, there must be some kind of transpersonal nostalgia. These halcyon heydays belonged to someone else. This would represent a very unMod move. The original Mods were about living for the moment, the future and for themselves.

²⁸⁷ The Clash, 'White Riot' (CBS 5058, March 1977)

²⁸⁸ <http://www.oed.com> accessed [24/12/2015]

²⁸⁹ Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), p. xxv-xxvi.

THE MODS

ENEIDA

Yo nunca lo he visto de esta manera. No es una cuestión de nostalgia. Eso sería absurdo. Solo miro atrás si estás hablando de la música. Pero para mí la música de los años 60 suena muy actual, no es una cosa “retro”. Aunque la estética sí que es “retro”, es elegante. A mí me gusta más la estética de los 60 que de los 70. Es un punto de vista de gusto. Ahora no voy con una estética muy mod, pero me gusta vestirme bien, arreglarme. No cambiara, nunca iré con rastas.²⁹⁰ [Pero] pienso que las personas viven por ahora y están mirando hacia delante.

Los 90 sí eran la mejor época para festivales, discos, bandas. Hubo mucha actividad en el 96-98, la segunda mitad de los 90. Hubo un sello en Inglaterra que sacaba muchos *singles*, los comprábamos todos. Fue una época dorada.

ALEX

A ver, es complicado [...] porque vivir en el pasado no es bueno. Pero lo veo más nostálgico ahora. Mi generación, que ha tenido hijos, lo que hacemos son los vermut; hay un bar en Gràcia donde hacen vermut cada sábado donde se pincha, entonces aparece gente más conocida, adulta. Te digo: el pasado se vivió mucho más intensamente. Tu presente hace que no puedas hacerlo, es decir, no que sea mejor ni peor, pero no puedes... Entonces es un poco como nostalgia. No puedes ir a todos los sitios donde te gustaría ir. Ahora no puedo coger una moto y hacer 200 km medio borracho. [Seguimos] no al cien por cien como hace 10 años pero sí [...] con más cabeza, no tan locos como antes.

PABLO

Desde aquí se buscaba más a los mods originales, porque no había. En los 80 sí que [surgieron] los fanzines, los *meetings*, *white weekends*, y esos sí que tenían peso. A lo largo de los años... eran la generación un poco [de los] mayores.

²⁹⁰ Here Eneida is referring to ‘dreadlocks’, the Rastafarian hairstyle, and not ‘Rastas’, the people.

Yo lo veo como un estilo de vida; quizás si estuviéramos en los 60 un mod llevaría barba.... Pero hay algunos puntos que son permanentes, como la música, los scooters, los zapatos. El movimiento evoluciona: en el 2000 y poco pensaba que no había mods, pero vi que sí, que habían salido nuevos mods, y eso quizás me ha hecho ver que no era tan malo, que no era el único mod en el mundo. Hoy en día, con Internet conectas fácilmente, puedes seguir gente de Barcelona, de Inglaterra, o un grupo; bueno, evoluciona más rápido y conecta más.

DAVID

En Barna²⁹¹ hubo una bulla tipo mini Brighton. Hubo un pique muy grande entre Mods y Rockers en Barna. Había una zona donde se ponían *rockers* y había corrido alguna vez. Tenías que andarte con cuidado, se conservaba el espíritu *Quadrophenia* en aquellos primeros años.

Las escenas están muy vivas. Las nuevas tecnologías, las redes sociales han hecho que llegue a más gente, y hay más movimiento. Lo veo muy vivo, siempre dentro de la marginalidad. Alternativo totalmente. Lo veo mucho más vivo que cuando era joven. Hay gente de todas las edades.

LLUIS

Ahora hay un grupo que es súper interesante que se llama Original Mods. En este grupo hay gente que estuvieron en la misma escena, que incluso se hacen cruces de que nosotros nos estemos interesando en eso, porque para ellos es una cosa súper normal. Para ellos era el día a día... y muchas veces se quedan alucinados de que nosotros seamos mucho más precisos en los detalles, porque para ellos es pasado por encima. Porque no eran conscientes de que estaban creando una cosa súper especial. Explican que no pensaban que en treinta años habría gente que sería tan precisa con ese momento. [Te] estoy hablando de los Mods de finales de los 50, los primeros.

[Los Mods británicos] estaban viviendo en el momento, estaban siguiendo el momento y aquí era distinto, aquí estábamos viviendo una represión, pero era una represión distinta.

²⁹¹ Barcelona.

En el colegio me acuerdo que había tenido disputas con gente que me decía: “No, ahora mismo es otra cosa, es distinto, es otra época. No estás aprovechando lo que hay ahora. Pero yo decía: “Bueno, la gracia de lo anterior es la perduración del tiempo, quizás lo que estáis haciendo ahora no perdurará”.

En España, yo creo que la escena Mod era mucho más interesante en los 90. Lo interesante de los 90 en España era la ingenuidad para muchos de ellos. Era una escena mucho más elegante que ahora mismo. . Pero lo más importante es que ninguno de ellos perdía de vista las raíces, que eran el *coolness*.

Miro hacia atrás, pero miro hacia esos tiempos cuando eran jóvenes y estaban locos por las camisas que habían comprado hacía dos días.

Pero la escena Mod lo que está buscando es estar por delante de todo esto, porque mira hacia delante.

MAR

No, porque claro, los Mods de ahora van para atrás. En vez de ir hacia delante. Miran hacia atrás, no hacia delante. Y los Mods de antes miraban hacia delante, buscaban lo moderno. Yo creo que ahora no son Mods. Son fans de Mods. Algo así, ¿no?

ALBERTO

[The] current mod scene has a great musical and stylistic knowledge, but it has become an elder people scene. There's plenty of 40/50 year old people and a lack of younger people taking part of it.

Well, it depends. If we're talking about paying the mortgage I think more about my future, while if I'm thinking about cool Jazz albums to discover I will be looking at the 50s-60-70s, of course.

It is clear that, while rooted in the realities of existence in the present, like it or not, most of the interviewees have both fond memories and representations²⁹² of the past.

²⁹² Here I use the term 'representation' to mean a cognitively generated symbol or image that represents an external reality. See Alex Morgan, 'Representations Gone Mental', *Synthese* 191.2: (2014), pp. 213–44.

This separation between memories and representations is important. Memories refer to something experienced, no matter how subjectively the experience is remembered; for example, Eneida Fever! talks about a golden age. Representations, on the other hand, do not have to be lived experiences. Lluís Cardenal is absolutely clear about the wheres and whys of original Mods in post-war London, but, of course, was not there in person. There seems to be a three-dimensional relationship between contemporary Catalan Mods and their movement(s). There is a referential and, at times, reverential awareness and representation of the original Mod scene. Contemporary Mods may not be happy with the idea of a movement, but they are certain that they are part of a tradition. There is a clear, conscious memory of the ‘hey days’ of the Catalan Mod scene and a general feeling that things are not what they used to be. This may be nostalgic but it never comes across as wistful. The Mods and ex-Mods I interviewed are all involved in the contemporary scene in one way or another – most are DJs, two play in bands, three have shops selling clothes and music, some promote and organise groups and concerts, others organise scooter rallies. They are all very active in the present.

THE MODZINES

There are no contemporary Modzines in Catalonia. They were, however, a pillar (*the soul*, as *Reacciones* claimed) of the movement and as such are a useful indicator of the perspectives Mods had on their own cultural activity. These Modzines were produced when the Mod scene was at its brightest in Catalonia – ‘la época dorada’. So, what is contemporary for *Reacciones*, is either a memory (for older Mods), or a representation of something which is long gone. Like the Mods I interviewed, the Mods involved in the production of *Reacciones* are very clear about situating themselves within the historical framework of Mod in general.

In the first issue of *Reacciones* there is an article entitled ‘Liverpool Sound o Así Empezó Todo’.²⁹³ (See Fig. 9) This is strange. Very few Mods would claim that their scene began in Liverpool. The early Mods were a southern phenomenon based in London, and, as Lluís Cardenal commented, in certain very specific areas of the capital. Most Mods would also have a problem with the association of Mod with

²⁹³ *Reacciones* 1

Merseybeat,²⁹⁴ a term used which encompasses skiffle, rock and roll, and early pop, all of which were popular in Liverpool in the late 1950s and early 1960s. What seems to be happening here is that whilst tracing (or at least claiming) a direct lineage to the original Mods,²⁹⁵ the editorial staff of *Reacciones* (like most Modzines) are articulating, in the (neo) Gramscian sense of both *expressing* and *joining together*, the idea that the Mods are part of a more general 'swinging sixties'.

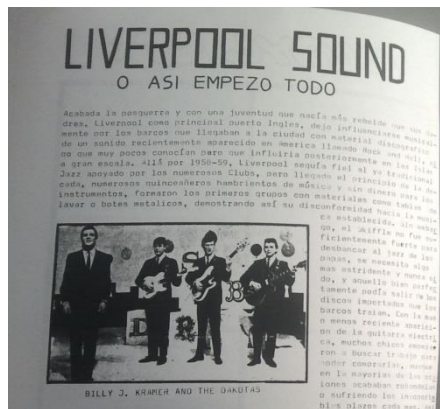


Figure 4 'Liverpool Sound', *Reacciones 1*.

We saw earlier that *Reacciones* called for increased cultural sophistication from its readers. I will leave music and clothes for the moment – they are so important in the Mod world that they deserve their own sub-section. However, if we look at the art and cinema described and often championed in the Modzines, once again we can observe this fascination with the sixties in general rather than Mod in particular. In *Reacciones 1* there are four pages dedicated to Roy Lichtenstein. In *Reacciones 3*, Ringo Julien, the journalist, editor and pop artist himself, introduces his public to the Swedish born but New York based pop artist Claes Oldenburg. The desire to mix Mod with Pop Art is well illustrated in the page below. The top half is the end of Ringo Julien's article about Oldenburg. At the bottom there is an advertisement for a concert featuring the *Supremes*. (See Fig. 10) In *Reacciones 4*²⁹⁶ we have a Lichtenstein detail on the front cover and an article about 1960s West Coast Pop Art inside. Andy Warhol is the 'cover boy' of *Reacciones 7*.²⁹⁷ Presumably this is because there is a two-page article

²⁹⁴ See http://www.merseybeatnostalgia.co.uk/html/about_merseybeat.html accessed 28/12/2015

²⁹⁵ In the same issue of *Reacciones*, there is a translation of the Tom Wolfe article 'The Noonday Underground' I quoted in the second chapter.

²⁹⁶ *Reacciones 4*, (Barcelona, 'Especial año' 1985)

²⁹⁷ *Reacciones 7*, (Barcelona, October 1985)

dedicated to Marilyn Monroe inside, but Norma Jean was not and never has been a Mod icon. In fact, it is Warhol's Pop Art which is being associated with Mod here.

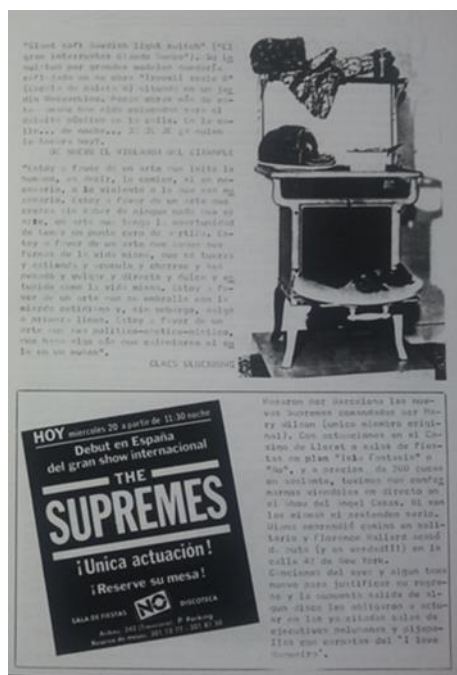


Figure 5 'Oldenburg and the Supremes', *Reacciones 3*

This *articulation* continues when we look at the treatment of cinema in the Modzines. Only one contemporary film is discussed in the fanzines I had access to. In *Reacciones 11*²⁹⁸ there is a review of Julien Temple's *Absolute Beginners*,²⁹⁹ written just a few months after the film's UK release. This film was interesting for the Mods for two reasons: it is a musical version of the 1959 Colin Maclnnes novel of the same name,³⁰⁰ which, especially after Paul Weller's insistence that the groups he signed should read the book, became almost biblical for revival Mods. Secondly, the cast included two actors who had deep associations with the early Mod movement: the musicians David Bowie and Ray Davies.³⁰¹ So, there is an almost hyperreal fascination with a very 1980s film, based on a 1958 work of fiction and starring ex-participants in the early movement. Something more than nostalgia seems to be developing here.

²⁹⁸ *Reacciones 11*, (Barcelona, December 1986)

²⁹⁹ *Absolute Beginners*. Dir. Julien Temple. Goldcrest. 1986.

³⁰⁰ *The Colin Maclnnes Omnibus*. See chapter two.

³⁰¹ David Bowie became famous in the 1970s but he made several recordings for Pye in the 1960s which were associated with the more flowery side of the Mod movement, See, for example, David Bowie, 'I Dig Everything' (Pye 7N 17157, July 1966). Ray Davies was singer and song writer with The Kinks.

In *Reacciones 3*³⁰² there is a review of Antonioni's *Blow Up*³⁰³ which is more concerned with the historical accuracy of the film rather than its cinematographic qualities. The main concern of the writer is that the group playing in a club scene is not the Who, but rather musicians, who would later become Led Zeppelin, pretending to be the Who. *Reacciones'* attitude towards film is best exemplified in an article, which is in fact a listing, entitled 'Where Have All the Good Films Gone?'³⁰⁴ Here we have a list of recommended viewing from the years 1963 until 1967. Most of the films have been selected because they have some kind of musical content but this is no guarantee of Mod. Two of the performers are Johnny Cash, the country singer and Acker Bilk, the very *uncool* jazz clarinettist. It doesn't appear that the films have been selected for their content either. They range from Gene Nelson's folksy musical romp *Hootenanny Hoot*³⁰⁵ to William Asher's beach farce *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini*,³⁰⁶ which is not saved by two songs by the Kingsmen³⁰⁷ and was described by the New York Times as 'the answer to a moron's prayer'.³⁰⁸ So what are these films doing in a publication which demands coolness and culture from its readers? Just after the last film entry, some kind of explanation is given: 'Luego ya vendrian Stardust y Quadrophenias varios'.³⁰⁹ The key is in the 'sell-by date' – the films were selected because they were produced in the mid-sixties and are therefore *necessarily* imbued with coolness.

In *Reacciones 11*³¹⁰ there is a 'welcome article' dedicated to the new James Bond. The editorial staff are worried – 'Muy difícilmente volveremos a ver el genuino Bond.'³¹¹ Of course, there is no genuine Bond – he is a character of fiction and the name 'James Bond' belonged to an ornithologist. However, we are led to understand that Sean Connery is the 'genuine' 007 and that Timothy Dalton will be unable to replace him. The Bond films are always set in the present but the 1980s, although obviously more modern than the 1960s, are not sufficiently 'genuine' for *Reacciones*. What has become clear here is that, in terms of art and cinema, there is a backwards

³⁰² *Reacciones 3*, (Barcelona, September 1984)

³⁰³ *Blow Up*. Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. MGM/Bridge Films. 1967 (UK)

³⁰⁴ *Reacciones 4*

³⁰⁵ *Hootenanny Hoot*. Dir. Gene Nelson. MGM. 1963.

³⁰⁶ *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini*. Dir. William Asher. American International Pictures. 1965.

³⁰⁷ This group was very popular with the Mods. Their version of 'Louie, Louie' is a Mod classic.

³⁰⁸ 'Wild Bikini Appearing in Neighborhoods' New York Times (1923-Current file) (New York, N.Y) (12 Jan 1967)

³⁰⁹ *Reacciones 4*

³¹⁰ *Reacciones 11*, (Barcelona, December 1986)

³¹¹ *Reacciones 11*.

looking tendency in the Catalan Modzines. Whether one can or cannot feel nostalgia for something one has not experienced personally is debatable. Svetlana Boym has argued that there is a difference between restorative and reflective nostalgia. The former is usually political, reactionary and based upon a desire to return to idealised better days. The latter is more personal and involves endless, wistful suffering for an irrecoverable past.³¹² Neither of these concepts work for the Catalan Mods. There is an attachment with the past but also a dynamic contact with the here and now. More than half of the content of the Modzines deals with groups, concerts, meetings and rallies in the present. As I have said, all of my interviewees are active on the contemporary scene. We are not dealing with nostalgia here but something closer to Simon Reynolds' concept of 'retro' which

uses the past as an archive of materials from which to extract subcultural capital (hipness, in other words) through recycling and recombining: the bricolage of cultural bric-a-brac.³¹³

Signs of the Times.

Zoot suit, white jacket with side vents

Five inches long.³¹⁴

Signs are central to subcultures, in fact these signs are often used to recognise or even define subcultural styles. The sticker below, designed by Ringo Julian, Pop artist and ex-editor of *Reacciones*, depicts the main interest areas of the Catalan Mods. (See Fig. 11) Starting at the top we have a star, which represents Catalan independence – this is unusual as Mods are famously apolitical. Moving clockwise, we have a rear-view mirror – the typical accessory for Vespas and Lambrettas. Next we have a black fist – this could symbolise black power but is more probably a reference to Northern Soul. The single-bar note represents music. Then we have an artist's palette and brushes – we have seen how the Catalan Mods,

³¹² See *Retromania* pp. xxvii-xxviii

³¹³ *Retromania*, p. xxxi

³¹⁴ The Who, 'Cut My Hair' (MCA, October 1973)

especialmente aquellos asociados con *Reacciones*, eran firmes creyentes en la importancia del arte, el Pop y el Op-Art en particular, en el mundo Mod. Los dos zapatos simbolizan bailar. El significado del 'círculo con flecha hacia arriba' es unclear; generalmente está asociado con la masculinidad pero aquí puede haber una referencia a los Who, o la música de los años 60 en general³¹⁵. La última imagen es un corbata negra delgada – un símbolo de la elegancia sartorial de los Mods. Todos mis entrevistados hablan de la ropa y debería añadir que todos ellos eran inmediatamente reconocibles como practicantes de la subcultura por la forma en que se vestían cuando los conocí para las entrevistas.



Figure 11 'Catalan Scene' Sticker by Ringo Julian.

THE MODS

ENEIDA

Hubo un momento en que se puso de moda ser mod. Pero era un mod que para nosotros era como los *tickets*³¹⁶, te pones una parka y ya eres mod. ¡Y no!

Era mi objetivo, pasarlo bien. Yo creo que cualquier movimiento es elitista, y más en un movimiento con una estética muy particular, y quieres defender un poco la autenticidad.

³¹⁵ Alberto Valle is pretty sure it is a reference to the Who. [Facebook chat 04/01/2016]

³¹⁶ In Mod slang, tickets were second-rate Mods.

ALEX

El estilo de vestir es lo mismo, más o menos [...] Hace cuatro años montamos una tienda de ropa, pero era complicado con los niños, y ahora tenemos la tienda online. Es una tienda de ropa *sixties* británicos.

DAVID

[Hay] una estética, por supuesto[...]las Dr. Martens las pedíamos a Londres, a una tienda que se llama Shellys, el catálogo era una fotocopia.

La moda... siempre me ha gustado y creo que esto es contracultural al final, porque la cultura no gusta a los gobiernos de derechas. [...] El movimiento mod, como le gusta la cultura, es un movimiento artístico.

Hubo una época, en el 95-96, que hubo la explosión de la música "máquina" en España, y los chavales iban con estética *skin*. No lo eran e iban a las fiestas esas, escuchaban *techno*. Yo, durante ese tiempo, dejé de usar Dr. Martens, [chaquetas] *bomber*... Todo me lo quité, no quería que se me asociara con esa gente. Empezamos a llevar ropa más *casual*, una chaqueta Fred Perry, y también un poco con el movimiento de fútbol.

PABLO

Es un estilo de vida vinculado a la música y a la estética mod.

[Pero] estéticamente no se diferenciaba la ideología; con Harrington y Doc Martens la gente no sabía si era nazi o Redskin.

Pero hay algunos puntos que son permanentes, como la música, los scooters, los zapatos.

LLUIS

Para mí significa muchas cosas, pero sobre todo significa muchas cosas concordes con los primeros, que fue toda esta obsesión que tuvieron con la ropa, sobre todo. Aparte de la ropa, el ser el primero en introducir toda esa obsesión que significaba con la ropa en todo lo que son los detalles, y siempre desde un punto de vista de querer ser

primero, el que despuntaba entre los otros. Cuando hay alguien que intenta traer un traje súper chullo, con las mejores ropas, con los mejores cortes, siempre intentas introducir una cosa nueva; es complicado, es difícil, pero siempre intentas introducir una cosa que esté un poco más por allí que los demás que están intentando introducir algo.

Como ahora la comercialización es mucho más difícil, hacerle entender a alguien que te está haciendo la ropa que quieres los pantalones cortados de una manera... y no entienden que estás dentro de una liga, que cuando estés en el lugar tienes que estar al máximo.

Bueno, ahora mismo hay tiendas donde puedes encontrar todo, pero dentro de esto, lo interesante es que tú mismo te puedes crear tu propia estética y tú mismo, con todos los referentes que puedas tener, puedes crearte tu propia manera de ser, que es lo realmente interesante. Porque lo que realmente no quieres es vestirme como cualquier persona que puede ir a Carnaby Street, entrar en cualquier tienda y en cinco minutos tener un súper traje, un súper vestido, unos súper zapatos, no, lo que tú quieres es estar un poco por delante de toda esta gente. Lo que quieres realmente es expresarte a ti mismo con todos estos detalles que te pueden poner un paso por delante de todos.

Igual uno se había ido a Francia y había visto que un chico llevaba la americana con un corte por detrás, con un símbolo que para ellos en Inglaterra era algo súper novedoso. Cuando hicieron los *double cuffs* había una cabida para el reloj. Lo recortaron para que el reloj entrara dentro del *cuff*, para que no te molestara con la piel y estuviera dentro de la camisa, pero siempre fuera visible.

Y yo con 14 años, viviendo en casa de mis padres, me acuerdo que había empezado a comprar mis corbatas en una tienda de Banyoles, me acuerdo que antes de salir de casa cenamos con mi novia y mis padres, y yo no sabía hacerme el nudo de la corbata. Mi madre no entendía que quisiera salir con una corbata: "Lluís, no hay nadie que en Banyoles vaya a salir con corbata. ¿Por qué te lo quieres hacer?". Para mí era como una cosa distinta.

ALBERTO

I have never met Alberto face-to-face but the photograph and the accompanying comment from his Facebook page have a lot to say. (See Fig.12)

‘Por eso, sé que es difícil para muchos entender lo que para mí significa Le Clean Cut³¹⁷ como momento mágico de modernismo en estado puro, sin peros, sin comillas, sin interferencias. Sólo esa sensación que se apodera de ti cuando estás delante de un combo de soul jazz de sublime exactitud, rodeado por los tuyos, viendo trajes hermosos, zapatos impecables, camisas de ensueño. Pañuelos, gemelos, fulares, alfileres de corbata, peinados perfectos que van de los castrense al backcombing, del tres con la raya al cero al frondoso flequillo’.³¹⁸



Fig. 12. Alberto Valle and Sara Ramos at ‘Le Clean Cut’.

It is clear, both from the way they dress and the fact that they insist upon a certain sartorial sensitivity, that clothes are important signs for the Mods. Despite the differences in their ‘looks’, all of these subculturalists (with the exception of David) have a style which can only be described as retro. Like the original Mods, they pay great attention to detail. Lluís talks at length about tailored cuffs; the buttons on Alberto’s suit have been covered in the same material as his double-breasted suit; Alex is wearing a *fish-tail* parka, not just any parka which can be bought in shops like Zara nowadays; both Pablo and Ramon were wearing button-down collar Ben Sherman shirts; Eneida and Mar’s look is more difficult to pin down but both have a very clear 1960s aesthetic to the trained eye. These details are very important – Paolo Hewitt

³¹⁷ A fairly exclusive yearly Mod weekender set up by Alberto and three other Mod DJs. <http://www.realmodworld.com/entre/le-clean-cut-alberto-valle/> [accessed 04/01/2016]

³¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/> [accessed 26/11/2015]

and Terry Rawlings, whose work I quoted in chapter 3, wrote a book together called *My Favourite Shirt: A History of Ben Sherman Style*.³¹⁹ David runs a grow shop, which has an annual party and prize ceremony for local producers and consumers of cannabis. This is last year's invitation.



Figs 13 and 14. Anniversary invitation and detail. Zero-Zero Grow Shop, La Bisbal. 2015.

The importance of detail for the Mods and even some ex-Mods is beautifully illustrated when we look more closely at the 'SpongeBob SquarePants' character on the right. Here he is not a sponge but rather a lump of hashish. He is not wearing any old



shirt, he is wearing a Fred Perry polo shirt. These were originally designed as sports shirts and named after the British tennis player. They became popular with some of the early Mods and their cultural significance changed. The character's belt buckle is the logo of Trojan Records³²⁰, a British record label founded in 1968, which is popular with Mods but especially with original Skinheads and their subcultural descendants. I have suggested that the meaning of Fred Perry tee shirts was transformed by the Mods and this is a key point we shall be returning to. First, let's have a look at what *Reacciones* had to say about clothes and other accessories for the Mod look.

THE MODZINES

Fashion was taken seriously at *Reacionnes* – by the time issue 6 came along, it was describing itself as a 'Modzine para Estilistas'. Not all the readers were happy with this, and despite a spirited defence of the idea in *Reacciones 8*, the heading had disappeared by issue 9 in April 1986. This didn't mean that the *Reacciones* team had

³¹⁹ *My Favourite Shirt: A History of Ben Sherman Style* (London: Ben Sherman Group, 2004)

³²⁰ See <http://www.trojanrecords.com/>

decided to stop talking about fashion. In fact, they continued more or less as they had started, combining what is basically a *retro* approach, with advice for the here and now. In *Reacciones 2*³²¹ there is a two page article on the Welsh fashion designer Mary Quant. The title of the article (see picture on the left) is 'La Maravillosa Extravagante de los Años 60: Mary Quant'. There is no fashion designer more closely associated with the 'swinging sixties' than Quant. However, apart from through 'retro' tinted eyes, there is very little to link Mary Quant to the original or early Mods. She was very much an establishment figure, selling to the top end of the market. Her two most famous 'inventions'³²² were the 'mini-skirt' and 'hot-pants'; early Mod girls wore neither of these. Contemporary Mods know this.

The early 60's Modernist girls wore straight, knee-length skirts and male-style shirts, which would be worn with a box-shaped jacket, patent-leather shoes and three-quarter length suede coats. This was marked contrast to the traditional women's style of the 50's. They also had their own style of make-up (with the eyes being the prominent feature) using thick eyeliner, plucked eyebrows, and little or no lipstick.³²³

There is a world of difference between these two photos. (See Figs. 15 and 16) In the first we can see a group of young, original Mods dancing at a party; in the second a fashion model – Twiggy – posing individually for a fashion shoot. The Mod girls have invented their own style and, in fact, it is strangely masculine for the time – skirts are straight and men's tops are being worn – a process of *bricolage* and *detournement* is taking place. It was also a lot more comfortable for all-night dance sessions. The look may appear conservative but was radically different from what was expected from working class girls on



**Fig. 15. 'Mod Girls dancing',
Reacciones 6.**

³²¹ *Reacciones 3*, (Barcelona, September 1984)

³²² See Jess Cartner-Morley, 'Chelsea Girl Who Instigated a New Era', *The Guardian*, 02/02/2000 for some detail about these claims of invention or discovery. It has been argued that the Mods influenced Mary Quant more than she ever influenced them.

³²³ <http://www.themodgeneration.co.uk/2009/02/mod-girls.html> accessed 04/01/2016

their time off. Twiggy, on the other hand, is there to represent a High Street brand – Mary Quant in this case. She is wearing expensive, designer clothes, which only the rich had access to. The irony here, as we saw in chapter 1, is that the Twiggy photograph probably provokes stronger associations with Mod than the picture of the Mod girls. This image of an unreal Mod world serves to ‘hail’ us towards an idealised, unified past – the ‘swinging sixties’. This is nicely illustrated when, in *Reacciones 6*, we can read about ‘Tuset Street’, which is actually ‘el carrer Tuset’ in Barcelona. It is referred to as the epicentre of all things Mod in Catalonia and the use of ‘street’ rather than ‘carrer’ is a clear reference to Carnaby Street in London. Places like the ‘Drac Drugstore’, with the ‘Cova del Drac’ club in its basement, were certainly important subcultural meeting points. However, the sounds being played had a lot more to do with the emergent Catalan ‘nova cançó’³²⁴ movement than what would usually associated with Mod.³²⁵ However, what was on offer was modern and different for Catalonia in the mid-60s, and for this reason ‘Tuset Street’ earns its place in the unified Mod past.³²⁶



Fig 16. Twiggy, *Reacciones 6*.

³²⁴ The ‘nova cançó’ movement started in Catalonia in the mid-1950s. It promoted the use of Catalan in culture and was openly critical of the Franco regime. See Gámez Olaya, Carles *Al vent : Crònica d'una Nova Cançó* (Valencia: Publicacions de La Universitat De València, 2009)

³²⁵ See <http://barcelofilia.blogspot.com.es/2012/08/la-cova-del-drac-tuset-30-1965-1991.html> [accessed 06/01/2016]

³²⁶ The film *Tuset Street*. Dir. Luis Marquina. Proesa. 1968, may also have added to the street's cultural significance.

As well as 'hailing' us back to the past, *Reacciones* offered concrete advice in the present. In issue 4 there is a three page article 'Moda y Modernismo', which gives details of the shops in Barcelona where it is possible to find, or to have made, stylistically acceptable clothes. In one of a series of articles called 'El Detalle Chic' there are instructions for tailors. The writers are almost apologetic for the article but justify it by saying 'Sabemos que puede quedar un poco chorra hablar de estas cosas, pero lo creemos conveniente visto lo que se ve que llevan algunos de los 'supuestos' modernistas'.³²⁷ Once again, something is happening here which could never have existed in the life of an original Mod: 'prospective' Mods are being told what they should and should not wear. There is even some illustrated advice for hairdressers in an article called 'No Me Tomes el Pelo' in *Reacciones 11*. Rather than looking for or inventing something new, the Mod establishment is laying down the law here. Nowhere is this clearer than in 1985's summer issue. Readers are told that Lacoste tee shirts are to be avoided as - 'como su logotipo'³²⁸ indica, son para animales [...] Otras prendas totalmente 'out' son los chalecos (en la más pura línea barman del Drugstore, todos ellos) y los sweters sin manga (mi puapua me comprara uno para ir a la disco después del insti si apruebo las mates).³²⁹ The article continues with specific clothing suggestions for specific days of an upcoming weekend event:

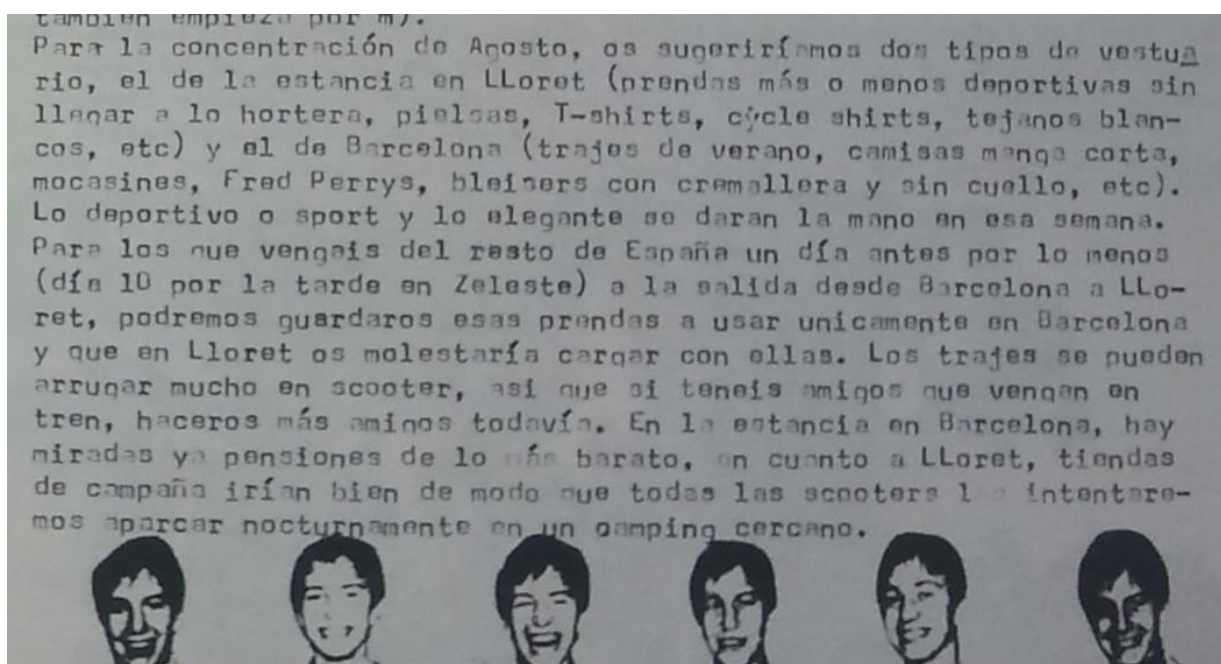


Fig.17. 'Clothes Advice', *Reacciones 11*.

³²⁹ *Reacciones 6*

The tone has softened here, probably because a few ground-rules have already been laid down, and the assumption is that the public being addressed is already part of the in-crowd. Nevertheless, the type of advice which is being offered is prescriptive and was not available for the original Mods. Had it been so, it would have been ignored.

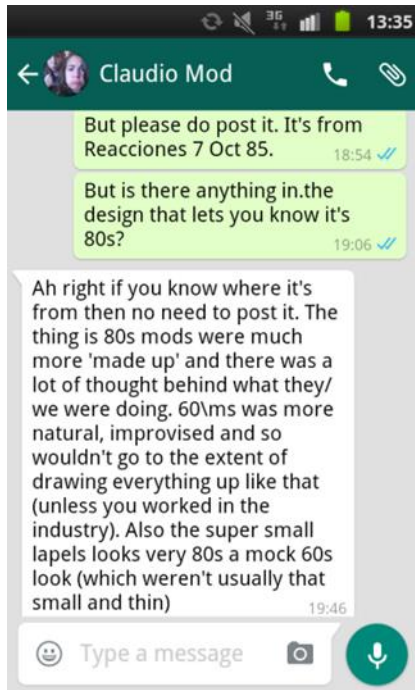


Fig.18. Screenshot. 08/01/2016

Some Mod-influenced teen and fashion magazines did appear in the mid-sixties but they had no influence on the core movement itself. I spoke to Claudio de Rossi,³³⁰ a 'face' and one of the best known tailors catering to the contemporary Mod scene in Europe, about the advice being offered in *Reacciones*. (See Fig. 18) He is, of course, interested in details and his most insightful comment is that some of the designs suggest a 'mock' 1960s look – he refers in particular to the size of jacket lapels. The term 'mock' is perhaps a little harsh given that Mods in 1980s Catalonia were trying their very best to be authentic. What we can see here is a desire to codify dress sense – what is acceptable or desirable is being

established as a norm. This is very different from what had been going on for the early Mods. As Claudio de Rossi points out 'the 60s was more natural, improvised' and improvised is the key word here. Of course, Mods did copy each other, and, as we saw in chapter 2, the weekly television programme *Ready, Steady, Go!* was a subcultural reference point and guide for Mods, especially for Mods who did not live in the capital and so had fewer sources for music and clothes ideas. However, improvisation and change were constant; I mentioned earlier a Mod who had been away and refused to go out on the town until he had found out about the latest changes in Mod fashion. Another big difference here lies in the meaning of what the Mods were wearing, or at least the meaning which has been attached to Mod clothes. As these clothing norms are established, the concept of *bricolage* recedes and a sense of uniform emerges – this would have been anathema to the early Mods. The semiotic class war being fought by working class youths outdressing their bosses in the late 1950s and early 1960s was

³³⁰ See <http://www.dnagroove.it>. This is Claudio's website.

not being reproduced in 1980s Spain and it is not happening now. Lluís Cardenal suggests otherwise but this probably stems from his desire to situate himself within an idealised Mod continuum. Times have moved on, society in general is less formal; a smartly dressed youth is more likely to be regarded as deserving respect than with fear or suspicion. Similarly, the *detournement* of items such as the bowler hats traditionally worn by city gents, and even the Union Jack flag, has changed its meaning. Rather than being menacing or rebellious, these items have become quirky and, in the specific case of Union Jack jackets, patriotic.

Sounds from the Street

Sounds from the city, sound so pretty

Young bands playing

Young kids digging - And I dig them³³¹

As we saw earlier, it has been argued that the Mods 'directly embodied musical movement in a style of living – more so, perhaps, than any subculture before or since'.³³² The comment is saved by the modifying presence of the word 'perhaps', but it is true that any attempt to understand the Mods would be futile without some kind of consideration of the music they play and listen to. All of the Mods and ex-Mods I interviewed are either DJs, musicians or party organisers. This is not why they were chosen, it just happens to be the case. Towards the end of each interview I asked each person to name three songs which symbolised Mod for them:

ALEX
The Jam – The Modern World
Secret Affair – Time for Action
Los Flechazos – A Toda Velocidad

ENEIDA FEVER!
Small Faces – Tin Soldier
R. Dean Taylor – There's a Ghost
in my House
The Action – I'll Keep Holding On

RAMON
Slim Harpo – I'm a King Bee
Marvin Gaye – You
Small Faces – All or Nothing

ALBERTO
The Who – My Generation
Lenny O'Henry – Across the Street
John Coltrane- A Love Supreme

ALBERTO'S Spanish selection
Los Flechazos – A Toda Velocidad
Brighton 64 – Conflicto con Tu Ayer
Los Negativos – Cansados y Decaídos

PABLO
Booker T and the MGs – Green
Onions
The Jam – Going Underground
The Who – I Can't Explain

³³¹ The Jam, 'Sounds from the Streets' from *In the City*

³³² *Flowers in the Dustbin*, p. 260.

MAR

Little Johnny Taylor – Somewhere
Down the Line
Robert Parker - Barefootin'
Etta James – Something's Got a
Hold on Me

LLUIS

Booker T and the MGs – Green
Onions
The High Numbers – I'm the Face
The Action – I'll Keep Holding On (He
also mentions the original version by
the Marvelettes)

DAVID

Martha and the Vandellas –
Dancing in the Street
The Jam – Beat Surrender
The Who – My Generation
He also mentions The Ethiopians
– Train to Skaville

This would be a lovely collection of records to own – in fact several of my interviewees do own all of these tracks and play them regularly at gigs. What is interesting here is the range of music which is covered. The early Mods listened to jazz, early reggae, soul, blues and rhythm and blues. All of these styles are covered in the selections – for jazz we have John Coltrane, the Ethiopians for reggae, Marvin Gaye for soul, Slim Harpo for the blues and Little Johnny Taylor for rhythm and blues. So far, this is all 'black' music but white musicians are also present here. The Who and the Small Faces were white rhythm and blues bands, who played to Mod audiences in the early and mid-sixties. The Jam (whose music I discussed earlier) and Secret Affair were part of the British Mod revival which was intertwined with the Punk Rock movement of the mid to late 1970s. Three more bands which I referred to earlier are mentioned on these mini 'playlists' – Los Negativos, Los Flechazos and Brighton 64; very different groups but all emblematic for the Spanish Mod scene. Once the Mods, as subcultural DIY artists, started making their own music, it was white. This comment may appear fatuous but it is relevant for two reasons: firstly, Mod is special, or at least different, in that its exponents are 99% white while its music is 100% black or black influenced. Secondly, the Mod scene in Europe has at times been divided between 'black and white' – this is not a reference to the ethnicity of the Mods themselves but rather to the music which different Mods listen to. I have mentioned this earlier but it is worth remembering the fact that at last year's Euro YeYe weekender in Gijón, it was the first time that DJs playing 'black' and 'white' music shared the same stage. It's obvious that original or early Mods did not have access to revival sounds and it would be absurdly purist to criticise later Mods for listening to them. What is clear is that the revival Mod sound is not the same as sounds from the early 1960s. It is also very unlikely that the same sounds, listened to half a century later have the same meaning. It is always worth listening to what the Mods themselves have to say about music.

THE MODS

ENEIDA

A mi madre le gusta mucho la música de los años 60, pero le gusta la música francesa de los años 60: Jacques Dutronc y toda esta gente. Mi madre coleccionaba singles. De hecho, tenía de The Kinks, de los Rolling... y entre la referencia de mi hermano y la música de casa, hemos sido siempre muy musicales. Pues eso ayudó muchísimo.

Claro, en Barcelona se juntó mucho con la escena Britpop. Mucha gente a quien le gustaba el Britpop empezó a descubrir la escena Mod. Se mezcló un poco todo. Pero a los que veníamos de la escena auténtica de los años 60, nos daba un poco de recelo. No lo veíamos como auténtico, nosotros éramos los auténticos, porque escuchábamos música de los años 60.

En cada momento de la historia esto se refleja en la música, se refleja en la sociedad, y los Specials tenían que cantar por lo que estaba pasando... el Thatcherismo. Bueno, Inglaterra fue muy bestia. 'Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead' fue número dos cuando murió la Thatcher.

PABLO

Tengo un hermano que tenía un grupo de música y en la banda había un Mod. Me empezó a gustar música del 77, The Clash, The Jam... y fue introduciéndome en los clásicos. Empecé a investigar.

Empecé con bandas del 77 y después The Who, The Kinks, las grandes bandas de los 60, y después escuché más música negra, soul, Rhythm and Blues, ska. Hoy escucho más música negra o jazz.

Sí, me gusta bailar. Pero pocas ocasiones. En casa con los niños.

Yo estaba entre las dos; quizás me gustaba más la música blanca que negra. Seguía más grupos de garaje o revival. Ahora lo veo diferente, todo se mezcla. Antes había fiestas, una solo de música negra, otra solo de música blanca con garaje o revival.

Es gusto por la buena música, pero no es una cosa exclusiva de los Mods. Los Mods son conocedores de música, no son analfabetos musicalmente, música negra de Jamaica, ska..., en cambio, mucha gente que no haya sido Mod no conoce tanta historia de la

música o historia de los movimientos estéticos de moda. Los Mods pueden conocer a los beatniks a los Redskins, mucha gente no conoce esto. Esto se valora a la hora de... Tú puedes ser Mod y gustarte cierto tipo de música, pero con una persona que entiende de música, aunque sea totalmente diferente, puedes conectar; tiene su tipo de música, tú tienes el tuyo, música blanca de country, que... es un conocimiento también, un Mod que no sabe de música no puede llegar tan profundamente, pero sí conoce otros temas.

DAVID

La música [...] hay muchos mods y skins con el mismo vehículo [los scooters Vespa o Lambretta]. Cuando hay concierto, vamos todos juntos. A los Skins les gusta el Northern Soul y a los Mods les gusta más el ska clásico. Hay muchos nexos de unión. A mí me gusta desde Rhythm and Blues a Northern Soul... me gusta hasta la musica Oi! Mi shock más grande fue The Jam, escuché esa energía y me volvió loco... Tengo todos los discos... Me gusta mucho la música soul, el Rhythm and Blues. Pero reconozco que en el movimiento Mod no era muy auténtico decir que te gusta The Jam. No eras como muy auténtico pero a mí no me importaba. Fue lo mismo cuando escuché La Polla Records la primera vez: increíble, un tío que dice lo que yo pienso tan claramente. Son un shock que te revolucionan.

LLUIS

Bueno, pincho de vez en cuando, cuando me dicen que pinche en algún sitio; pero bueno, es más una cosa que me gusta hacer, no me lo tomo como un trabajo, sino como un divertimento.

Había fiestas que, según que disc jockey, no [iban algunos]. Los que podían introducir algo nuevo en tema de estética eran pocos, era una cosa muy desagradable, muy guerrera. Aparte había la escena scooter-boys, que estaban muy en contra de todo esto. En los 80 había toda la escena Rock & Roll, sobre todo de Madrid... Había mucha pelea entre los Skinheads, los Mods de la época, los sixties, que no sabían dónde iban, la escena Mod, que lo gastaba todo. En los 90, la escena mod pasaba siempre por el Northern Soul o freakbeat. Eran dos distinciones, y en las fiestas lo veías. Cuando

pinchaban blanco del 64, los Mods no bailaban. Solo bailaban los freaks, pero cuando pinchaban Northern Soul, todos lo de blanco, ciao. En ese momento, había un desconocimiento de lo que era el blues y el Rhythm and Blues, porque dentro del Northern Soul muchas de las cosas que pinchaban era Rhythm and Blues pero no eran conscientes en ese momento de que todo eso era mucho Rhythm and Blues. Para ellos era soul, era música negra. Entonces, había esa disputa entre música blanca y música negra.

Dentro de todo, en los 90 éramos muy jóvenes, era muy raro que en esa época haya gente con un background musical. Había poca gente que hiciera diez años que escuchara esa música, era todo muy reciente. A la gente que estaba buscando cosas de jazz la veís fuera de la escena, y realmente era la única gente que podía discernir una cosa de la otra. Era una cosa muy efervescente.

Entre música y ropa siempre había el toque de coolness, importante para mí, y en la música todo lo que venía de los finales de los 50 con Blue Note, Beutopia, Hardbop. Escuchaba música negra, Blue Note, R&B, soul, Sam Cooke... Era eso lo que quería escuchar. Era buscar las raíces de todo. Empecé con todos los grupos blancos, pero buscaba algo más. Small Faces, Yard Birds... Me gustaba ver lo que ellos estaban buscando, cómo buscaban algo más.

MAR

Lo de pinchar fue porque queríamos... empezamos aquí, en la placeta, en Girona, en un bar pequeñito. Llevábamos nuestra música y allí nos poníamos, para los amigos, para pasárnoslo bien y tal. Y a partir de ahí pues vas investigando, y luego vas queriendo tener más el single que el LP y no sé qué, y tener la canción, y ya vas... bueno, empezó así. Y ya es ir cogiendo más colección entre comillas, porque tampoco es colección lo que tengo, pero... y ya está. Vas conociendo gente, te van llamando... Un poco así.

[Revival]...no, es que no escucho, yo... y para mí, cuando escucho a los revival para mí es punk, para mí no es música Mod, no tiene nada que ver. La conexión esta, a quien le gusta encontrará la conexión, pero yo creo que la conexión vino cronológicamente en su momento, pero ahora no se entiende, ahora es como: "pero ¿esto es Mod?". No lo entiendo, no lo sé, a mí me pasa esto. Igual es mi ignorancia, eh, también...7

Porque hay gente que solo escucha música hecha por los americanos negros. Y gente que sólo escucha música inglesa de los 60. Y hay como esta separación a veces.

Hay gente que escucha ambas. Pero siempre hay, por ejemplo en el Euroyeyé, sala de blanco y sala de negro, y siempre hay una separación, y no puedes escuchar lo mismo en todos los lados. Y gente que solo... bueno, hay gente de todo, ¿eh? Tú te vas de una sala a otra, y hay gente que le gustan las dos cosas. Pero es como que lo mod es lo negro. Es la sala negra. Eso es lo Mod auténtico. Esa es la sensación que yo tengo. Y luego lo otro es más sixties.

Pero lo curioso es que la pista grande es siempre la música blanca y la pista pequeña es la música negra.

RAMON

No sé, lo que es lo Mod, ya sabes que es muy complicado, un concepto complicado que abarca muchos tipos de música, mucha escena distinta, y a mí es lo que menos me interesa. Porque sí, porque yo, por ejemplo, hay cosas que me interesan de las primeras bandas Mod de Rhythm and Blues inglesas que me gustan mucho. Pero luego, cuando veo gente que es súper mod y súper ortodoxa y tal, que escuchan la música que escuchan de, por ejemplo, revival o de grupos más 80s, no tenemos absolutamente nada que ver [...] Musicalmente, yo me quedo en los 60.

Me gusta el punk del 77. Pero el revival Mod por la parte punk sí que me puede interesar. Pero lo que son los grupos de revival no me interesan. Pero no porque sean... o sea, no me interesan musicalmente. Luego, si son Mods o no son Mods... no me interesa este debate. Yo creo que lo Mod se acaba en el 63. Como máximo [...]. Y de hecho todos los grupos que salen nuevos, todos los grupos Mod, entendidos como Mod, pues salen de este Rhythm and Blues de esta época, ¿no?

It is clear that these Mods, just like their earlier counterparts, are music lovers. It is also worth noting just how many of the tunes have stood the test of time; in fact, songs which were listened to by early Mods are still more popular than music produced during either the British or Spanish revival. While several of the interviewees became interested in the scene through revival/punk bands like the Jam, they soon

began to look further back for their music. The only real exception is Alex, who is a firm revivalist.

THE MODZINES

The Modzines also dedicated a lot of time to music. In *Reacciones* this happens in several ways. In virtually every issue, there is an interview with a contemporary band on the scene. There are also concert reviews dedicated on the whole to three different types of performers: Catalan and Spanish groups like *Brighton 64* and *Los Negativos*, British artists associated with the revival scene – *The Truth*, *Mari Wilson*; and classic black artists on European tours – *Buddy Guy*, *Junior Wells*, *the Supremes*. There are also extensive listings of records that any right-minded Mod should have. These lists, or ‘readers’ charts’ as they are sometimes described, are usually divided into three categories: 1960s, 1970s/1980s international, and contemporary national. These are lists and not worth reproducing here. However, it is worth noting that in the readers’ charts rather than the classic listings, there is a definite tendency to prefer ‘white’ pop and rhythm and blues rather than ‘black’ classics.

Revival sounds apart, much of the music has remained the same but its consumption has changed. Going out in order to listen to soul or rhythm and blues in the late 1950s and early 1960s was a very different experience than nowadays. First of all, it was not easy to find, and the earliest Mods sought out small clubs which were predominantly run by and for Caribbean immigrants, often with a significant presence of black, off-duty military personnel from American airbases. Just going to these clubs was regarded as transgressive behaviour for white youths. The music was ‘black’ – jazz, soul, rhythm and blues and reggae. As the scene developed, new venues aimed at the Mods opened up or older venues reinvented themselves to cater to this new market. The most famous club associated with the Mod scene was probably the Flamingo in Wardour Street. Paul Anderson explains that

the club at first concentrated on the modern jazz style [...] but as the audience changed so did the style of music. The [Fla]mingo attracted many West Indian immigrants and black GIs and [...] pretty soon it became clear they wanted to

hear the newer sounds coming from America [...] It would also prove a magnet for the new, young, hip Mods in search of late night kicks.³³³

It has been argued that venues like the Flamingo did a lot to encourage multiculturalism, something which sounds positive now but which provoked a moral panic at the time. The Home Office was so concerned about the integration that was taking place in clubs where Mods went that they began to send undercover police officers to observe what was happening. The following quotation is an extract from a police report.

There is a traffic in 'pep-pills' and there is a great deal of necking, especially with coloured people. In this atmosphere any young person is obviously in serious moral danger...It requires a strong character and a secure home background to avoid contamination once the young person has entered the 'club world'.³³⁴

Despite the disapproval of the authorities, this integration was a fundamental feature of the early Mod scene. A look at the posters advertising concerts at the time show a mixture of black American soul and rhythm and blues artists sharing the billing with white British performers.³³⁵ (See Fig.19)

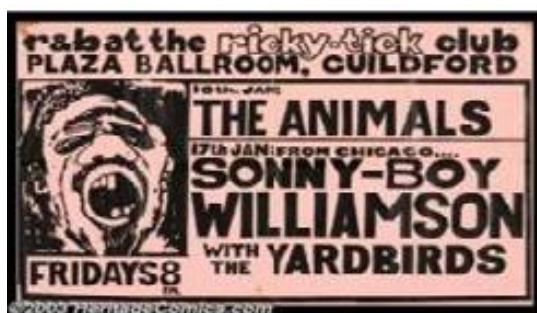


Fig.19. Sonny Boy Williamson concert poster, 1963.

The presence of quality music which can be described as 'black' or 'white' is a constant on the Mod scene. The mixture was innovative and progressive in the early sixties. We saw earlier how the Two-Tone music of ethnically mixed groups like the Specials took a direct stand against racism in the late 1970s. However, as several of my interviewees

³³³ *Mods: The New Religion*, p. 175.

³³⁴ PRO/HO300/08, LCC Children's Department, 'West End Jazz and Dance Clubs, Report for a meeting with the Home Secretary and Minister of Health, 15 September, 1964. Quoted in *Mod: From Bebop to Britpop*, p. 86.

³³⁵ See *Mods: The New Religion*.

have commented, things are a little different nowadays. At any major Mod event in Catalonia, or Spain for that matter, you can find musicians and DJs who play *either* black *or* white music. There is little hostility but some antagonism between the different groups of followers. While it could be argued that this white-black dichotomy flies in the face of the ethos of the original Mods – ‘the white negroes’ - it is probably preferable to suggest that it is just another of the changes experienced and articulated by a subculture which, at times despite itself, has never been static.

What about politics?

They smelt of pubs and Wormwood Scrubs
And too many right wing meetings³³⁶

The original Mods were famously apolitical. We will be returning to the various attempts to imbue them with politics later. The only overt reference to traditional politics from the original Mod scene comes from the September 1962 interview with Marc Feld (later to become Marc Bolan) and his Mod friends in *Town* magazine.

‘I’m a Conservative,’ says Sugar. ‘I mean Conservatives are for the rich, aren’t they, and everyone wants to be rich, really, don’t they?’ [...]

‘Yeah, like he says, they’re for the rich, really, so I’m for them,’ says Feld.³³⁷

It is difficult to know how seriously we should take this interview. The young Mods were definitely playing it up for the interview. Later, Sugar comments ‘Of course, I don’t know much about it.’³³⁸ It has also been argued that these comments represented a deviation from a purer, existential version of Mod, which had developed from the Beatnik scene.³³⁹ Apart from a few isolated comments like these, there is very little to link the early movement to any shared and/or established brand of politics; in fact, although there is an informed assumption that the majority of early Mods were working class, we have no real idea about what their political ideas were.

The British revival scene was a different story. As we have seen, the re-emergence of Mod coincided with the election of the Conservative prime minister

³³⁶ The Jam, ‘Down in the Tube Station at Midnight’ (Polydor POSP 8, October 1978). This song was released just after the death of the Who’s Keith Moon. As a tribute to the drummer, and a clear inter-generational Mod reference, the whole of the back of the picture sleeve is a photo of Moon.

³³⁷ ‘The Young Take the Wheel’, *Town*, September 1962. Quoted in *Mods!*

³³⁸ ‘The Young Take the Wheel’, *Town*, September 1962. Quoted in *Mods!*

³³⁹ See Jonathon Green, *Voices from the English Underground 1961-1971* (London:Minerva, 1989), p. 38 for example.

Margaret Thatcher, and the arrival of the British Punk movement. Three overlapping trends began to appear in and around the revival Mod scene. Mods who were listening to Two-Tone music tended to ally themselves or at least identify with the anti-racist movement Rock Against Racism.³⁴⁰ These Mods and Rude Boys were fairly close to the Punk scene. The 'hard Mods' had developed into skinheads in the late 1960s. The original Skinheads were not, on the whole, politicised, and certainly not associated with the extreme right. However, by the late 1970s, an organised neo-fascist party, the National Front, had begun to grow in the UK. Sections of the Skinhead movement did begin to identify with these ideas, as did some right-wing, patriotic Mods. The third group were the more purist revival Mods, who tended to remain aloof from the political scene and were not present in any of the concerts or demonstrations organised by RAR, unless it happened to be on an individual level. That the scene was more heavily charged politically in 1979 than in 1962 should come as no surprise. British society had gone through radical change – the economy was no longer booming and it was very difficult for the youth to have an optimistic view of the future. Society was more overtly politicised and polarized and this was clearly visible in the subcultural scenes where the Mods and their derivatives could be found.

The Catalan Mod scene tries quite hard to be apolitical. However, the specificities of Catalonia make this problematic. There is a fairly wide range of political ideas expressed both by my interviewees and in *Reacciones*. There is also an attempt to keep the movement free from politics.

THE MODS

ENEIDA

Yo me he desmarcado mucho de la política, de hecho soy bastante apolítica. Bueno, soy de izquierdas, pero no soy militante. Sí que ha habido muchas diferencias, ha habido mucha gente Mod que estaba metida en política. Aquí en Barcelona no tanto, sí que ha habido mucha gente catalanista, pero en España conozco bastante Mod de derechas, que tampoco tienen problema en decirlo. Pero yo siempre he intentado no mezclar mi fiesta con política. De hecho, tengo amigos de derechas con los cuales sé

³⁴⁰ See David Widgery, *Beating Time: Riot 'n' Race 'n' Rock 'n' Roll* (London:Tigerstripe Books, 1986)

que nunca hablaré de política, porque sé que nos vamos a pelear. Estamos aquí porque nos gusta la música, basta. No me ha interesado nunca a la política, y menos en el movimiento mod. Cuando realmente lo que querría es escuchar música y estar bailando.

No [somos] pijos, pero *middle class*. Los “escuteristas” sí que son *working class*. Pero lo que se ha definido como Mod aquí, la mayoría somos de clase media, y sin ningún problema en decirlo.

ALEX

Cada uno piensa lo que quiere [políticamente hablando], tenemos amigos que tienen diferente forma de pensar pero a la hora de escuchar música disfrutamos con ellos y bueno ...sí que a veces puede haber alguna discusión pero no... nada.

DAVID

Sí, siempre he visto el movimiento Mod como más apolítico, gente de izquierdas y con principios. Por ejemplo, los Sex Museum de Madrid, hablabas con ellos y era gente de izquierda del Atlético de Madrid. Sí que he tenido siempre la referencia del movimiento Mod como un movimiento de izquierda, pero me orienté hacia los Skinheads.

Una cosa que ha hecho conectarse con la peña es el movimiento “ultra”. Hay mucha conexión que en el movimiento “ultra”, hay mucho color: *skinheads*, mods, *punks*, hay de todo. Ahora mismo, en el movimiento “ultra” hay mucho color, sobre todo en los movimientos “ultra” de izquierda, y ahora hay mucha conexión.

PABLO

Bueno, el Mod cerrado era más político conservador y el Mod abierto más Beatnik o hippy, más abierto. Pero no se puede generalizar.

LLUIS

Aquí, en Banyoles, toda la gente que me conoce, sin que a mí me pregunten cuáles son mis tendencias políticas, todo el mundo, según cómo visto, me entenderá como una persona de derechas, pero nadie me ha preguntado. Entonces, en la escena Mod yo

creo que hay mucho de esto, o sea, hay una mala interpretación de que el *coolness* es una cosa súper de derechas.

No pueden entender que una persona de *working class* pueda ser mucho más pija que una persona de derechas. Lo que no pueden entender es que una persona de extrema izquierda puede ser mucho más *cool* vistiendo que una persona de extrema derecha.

Ahora mismo, hay una escena que se llama "modernista aborigen" que está siguiendo el rollo Mod, pero es un malentendido, porque de repente están buscando la escena Mod como una [referencia] Catalana cuando no es. Están buscando lo que podían haber sido los 60 aquí. Pero los 60 aquí no tienen nada que ver, es una cosa distinta completamente.

MAR

Puedes estar hablando con alguien que es justamente la idea contraria políticamente.

RAMON

No, no hay una línea política definida.

ALBERTO

Politics have always been unwelcome to the Mod sphere and luckily enough in Spain and Catalonia you barely find political linked troubles like the ones you might find in Italy. I'm a left-wing republican but I have Mod friends from all political colours and I am able to have a civilised conversation with many people with many different ideas. However, I still can't understand how someone fascist, nazi or Stalinist can consider him/herself to be a Mod.

The main thread that seems to come out of the interviews is that there is no single political orthodoxy in Catalonia's Mod world. There is a general tendency to veer towards the left but my interviewees make it clear that there are a variety of political points of views present on the scene. Most of them, however, are keen proponents of Catalan independence but they try not to let this interfere with the more central components of the Mod world. Of course this left-leaning, pro-independence feeling may well be influenced by the fact that my interviewees are all based in Barcelona or

Girona. They are also, for the most part, self-employed in the service sector; it is hard to evaluate the extent to which this may have had an impact on their reactions to more political questions. It would appear that the early Mods came from more working class backgrounds but we need to be a little cautious here. The most famous historical sources for the idea that early Mods were working class are, as we saw earlier, Pete Meaden's comments, and Stanley Cohen's analysis of the youths who were arrested during bank holiday skirmishes with Rockers in the early 1960s. Neither source is completely reliable – Meaden's definitions of Mod are as idiosyncratic as they are fascinating; the Mods Cohen describes were, firstly, Mods who had chosen to visit seaside resorts during bank holiday weekends; and, secondly, Mods who had got into trouble, rightly or wrongly, with the police. Nonetheless, most of the evidence does suggest that the early Mods were more likely to have been working class than their Catalan counterparts.

THE MODZINES

Language is central to Catalan national identity. Only two Modzines, *Jet 200* and *In and Out*, were written exclusively in Catalan and both were very short-lived. In others, the strained nature of the Castilian Spanish³⁴¹ used suggests that the contributors would have been more comfortable writing in their native Catalan.³⁴² In the Barcelona-produced *Reacciones 8* there is an explanation for their decision to use Spanish as their principal language – it is more pragmatic than political: 'Es que, - afortunadamente – Reacciones se vende MUCHISIMO más es en resto del estado que en Catalunya.'³⁴³ This tiny quote is, however, rich in 'Catalanismo' – Spain is referred to as 'the rest of the state' and the spelling of Catalonia is Catalan.

³⁴¹ For simplicity's sake and in keeping with standard British English I will use the word 'Spanish' to refer to what is referred to in Catalonia as 'castellà' – Castilian Spanish.

³⁴² Lluís Cardenal's *Boogaloo* is a short-lived but clear example.

³⁴³ *Reacciones 8*

In the following issue of *Reacciones*, the editorial team decided to dedicate a whole page to the national question in an article called 'El Tema del Día: Nacionalismo – Dicen que Viajar Abre la Mente.'³⁴⁴ (See Fig. 20) Here we find an example of Mods attempting to avoid politics – 'en el terreno político no entramos' – but at the same time expressing ideas which are in reality extremely politicised. The article starts by criticising the fact that just as Punk rock is associated with anarchism, Mod is beginning to be associated with nationalism. The use of the British Union Jack, as a subcultural reference to the birthplace of the Mods, is being replaced with a variety of national flags: the Catalan 'senyera', the Basque 'ikurriña' and the national flag of the Spanish state. This in itself is not perceived as a problem. The authors feel that it perfectly natural for Mods from different parts of Spain to express their national or regional identities either through the use of flags or language. What is perceived as unacceptable in Mod circles is that any group should attempt to impose its national perspective on anyone else. There is a call for 'Spanish' Mods to understand the right that Basque and Catalan Mods have to identify with their own flags and cultures. There is also a warning that Catalan Mods, who insist on speaking Catalan when interacting with Spanish-speakers, are behaving like 'hijos de puta' and that this behaviour 'solo hace denigrar una forma de vida'. In fact this is a call for tolerance and unity 'dando por sentado que si son fachas, poco tienen de Mod.' It is a conciliatory message, albeit with certain limits. These are confirmed in *Reacciones 11* when Ringo Julian's editorial ends with a reminder that 'en



Fig. 20. 'El Tema del Día', *Reacciones 9*.

³⁴⁴ *Reacciones 9*

ningún momento vamos a apoyar a cierto Centralista Madrileño a pesar de la amistad que con ellos nos une.³⁴⁵

In this chapter I have tried to let the Mods speak for themselves. Certain lines have emerged which can be traced back to earlier Mod generations and which I will deal with more thoroughly in my conclusion. Although there is a clear emphasis on the aesthetic, Mod is generally considered to be a 'way of life' rather than a fashion. Unlike the original Mods, contemporary exponents have a tendency to look backwards. This is understandable as they have a historical model which can be referred to as a subcultural source and an inspiration. Any sense of nostalgia which emerges is directed towards the 1990s, the high point of the Mods scene in Spain, rather than the 1960s. The relationship with the 1960s is a kind of 'retromania' to use Simon Reynolds expression.³⁴⁶ Nowhere is this clearer than in the clothes which are worn by or recommended to the readers of *Reacciones*. The amount of music available to Mods has increased to include revival sounds which were obviously not available to earlier generations. More importantly for this piece of work, the meaning of the music which has been listened to by various generations of Mods has changed, given the different contexts in which it is consumed. The Modzines appreciate that there is a political plurality within the movement. There is a clear willingness to avoid problems by either not discussing politics or by establishing what I would describe as *boundaries of respect*. I developed the idea that subcultural behaviour can be political without engagement in formal politics in chapter 1. We have also seen how different theorists have tried to imbue the Mods with some kind of political meaning – I will spend some time on this in my conclusion. For the time being we can be fairly clear that the politics within the Catalan Mod scene are not subculturally specific. Mods in Catalonia tend to have certain political ideas, not because they are Mods, but rather because they are Catalan.

³⁴⁵ *Reacciones* 11

³⁴⁶ *Retromania*

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The importance of historical and social context is not unique to Gramscian hegemony theory, but it is central to the approach. I have demonstrated the role social background has in the development of youth subcultures as well as the idea that subcultural stylists tend to define themselves through (frequently oppositional) references to this social context. This is neither a determinist nor a behaviourist reaction to historical circumstances. There is a space within capitalism's ideological superstructure where a *relative* autonomy exists and where Mod, as a subcultural phenomenon, can be located.

Gramsci's hegemony theory was the product of and the reaction to a very particular social context – the rise and arrival in power of the Italian Fascists led by Benito Mussolini. It is not, of course, a proven theory. However, nearly all serious contemporary Marxist interpretations of the relationship between the economic base and the ideological superstructure turn to Gramsci's ideas. This is especially true when the working or popular classes turn towards 'reactionary' ideas, which are perceived as going against their own interests. So, it has been argued that working class opponents of public healthcare in the USA or British working class Tory voters are victims of the hegemonic weight of what are felt to be almost anti-historical ideological forces. This assumption that the working class has a natural, historically progressive and transitional role is deeply Marxist. When the premise, usually developed by white, male, middle class intellectuals, suggests that the working class should be making the revolution, or at least be engaged in 'socially enriching' activities, twenty four hours a day, it is also deeply patronising. I mentioned this in chapter 2 and tried to highlight that, although it is a moralist perspective, it was well meant in the late 1950s when the early cultural theorists were genuinely afraid of the impact of mass culture on the working class.

By the time we get to the late 1960s and 1970s this moralism has largely disappeared. As we have seen, the cultural theorists associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham revisited Gramsci. They were not alone. On a political level, left wing intellectuals were looking to Gramsci in an attempt to explain what was happening within the British labour movement. This neo-Gramscian refocusing was most famously advocated in the British Communist Party's monthly review *Marxism Today*. Two key articles which epitomise this shift were Eric Hobsbawm's 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?' and Stuart Hall's 'The Great Moving Right Show.'³⁴⁷ The ideas contained in both articles are significant here for two reasons. Firstly, they represent a move away from the British Communist Party's traditional view of the working class as the sole natural agent of social change. A 'broad democratic alliance' was called for and a new importance was placed on non-economic struggles – the sphere of culture was imbued with a transformational significance. Secondly, Stuart Hall was one of the main advocates of this change and, as we saw earlier, Hall is a central figure in British cultural studies. This move away from a traditional view of the arena of class struggle had a profound impact on the work of Hall and many of the other cultural theorists associated with the Birmingham school and is fundamental to an understanding of neo-Gramscian cultural studies.

As we have seen, Gramsci's hegemony theory is absolutely central to their work. It was argued that the dominant forces in society do not need to use direct repression to maintain their power if they can win ideological hegemony. Just as the physical state with its schools, prisons and legal system acts as a buffer between what are perceived to be contrary and even contradictory political forces; so the ideological state, to once more borrow from Althusser, acts as a kind of intellectual buffer zone. Hegemonic ideological pressure is applied through negotiation rather than force and therefore hegemony can cut both ways – if hegemony is negotiated, the dominant forces in society need not always win. In fact, the battle to win ideological hegemony at times replaces the traditional class struggle. This probably borrows more from Louis Althusser than Antonio Gramsci. A clearer Gramscian insight is the use of the term 'relative autonomy', which is a quintessential element of the approach. Although there is a hegemonic bias towards dominant ideas, there is also the possibility for

³⁴⁷ Both can be found at: http://banmarchive.org.uk/collections/mt/index_frame.htm

oppositional, transformational ideas and behaviours to be articulated, in neo-Gramscian terms expressed and joined together, within the ideological superstructure. Behaviour is perceived as ideology and for this reason exponents of subcultural styles, in this case the Mods, are ideal subjects for analysis using neo-Gramscian insights. The question we must ask however is how useful these insights are.

The first studies of the original and early Mods pre-date the British Communist Party's move towards a 'broad democratic alliance' but are nonetheless influenced by Gramscian hegemony theory.³⁴⁸ There is a clear attempt here to move away from superficial readings of subcultural styles as mere fashions. There is also a rejection of the moralist judgements of earlier cultural theorists, who were more influenced by the Frankfurt School than Gramsci, and worried about the impact of mass (often American) culture on British youth. Dick Hebdige, like Stuart Hall and the other CCCS theorists, had a sympathetic approach towards youth subcultures, and as we saw earlier, used some new, or at least 'reappropriated', analytical tools and concepts in trying to reach an understanding of these movements. It could be argued that there are four key concepts shared by these neo-Gramscian cultural theorists. Firstly, it is impossible to understand a group like the Mods without a clear view of the social and historical context in which they were operating. This means that more structuralist approaches focussing only on subcultural signs may miss significant differences between different generations of Mods. The second key concept is that of relative autonomy – it is assumed that the Mods, like other subcultural groups, can be located within the ideological superstructure where they are engaged in negotiating meanings. Whether this helps us understand the Mods is unclear. However, it is a very important step for cultural theorists as it allows them to move away from the determinist and at times patronising perspective which had been prevalent in the work of some of the earlier Marxist cultural theorists. Thirdly, the concept of reappropriation allows for a deeper understanding of certain subcultural signs – the meaning of the same cultural artefact may change when re-used in a different context. Finally and centrally, there is the idea that exponents of subcultural styles are involved in social resistance. This resistance may be symbolic, rather than economic, but it nevertheless challenges the ideological hegemony of the power bloc.

³⁴⁸ See Dick Hebdige's unpublished 1974 thesis 'The Style of the Mods' for example.

The processes of resistance and incorporation, which I discussed in Chapter 1, and which are central to (neo)Gramscian cultural studies, operate both within and between subcultural generations. The 'semiotic guerrilla warfare' of the original Mods, which I defined as a kind of culture jamming, would have been incorporated into something purely aesthetic had it not been for the Punk explosion and subsequent development of 2-tone in the late seventies.³⁴⁹ Spanish youth subcultures began to appear after Franco's death in 1975 and flourished with the development of democracy in the country, especially during the years of Felipe G3n3lez's government. Pluralism was a key feature of the subcultural 'movida'. The space which opened up was non-sectarian – the Punks, Teds, Natty Dreads, Mods, Rockers, Hippies and Skinheads of the Specials song I quote in Chapter 3 could all be found in the same, clubs, bars and concerts. This changed over the years but pluralist traces can still be found in Catalonia although the Mod scene is at times hermetic, exclusive and elitist. A clear continuity exists through the different Mod generations as regards clothes, music, attitude and means of transport. However, as I have discussed and shall return to shortly, this does not mean that these signs have retained the same meanings. The Mods' obsession with style makes it easy for them to be defined in purely aesthetic terms. While this is an attractive approach, it has limitations, which I discussed in chapters 2 and 3. As Terry Eagleton has argued, 'meaning is not immediately *present* in a sign'.³⁵⁰ I think I have demonstrated that borrowings from structuralism and semiotics are useful but that they need to be backed up with a contextual approach. Similarly, an exclusively economic attempt to understand subcultural phenomena like the Mods fails as it cannot explain the non-deterministic relationship they have with the economic base.

As we saw earlier, a neo-Gramscian approach has also been adapted to describe a kind of symbolic class war being led by sub-cultural stylists. Nowhere is this clearer than in Dick Hebdige's use of the term 'semiotic guerrilla warfare' when describing the clothes of the Mods. It may be the case that certain early Mods were sticking two sartorial fingers up at their bosses by out-dressing them, but it is easier to assume rather than identify any class antagonism here. Hebdige tries to cover himself

³⁴⁹ See *The Soul Survivors* and Enamel Verguren, *This is a Modern Life: The 1980s London Mod Scene* (London: Helter Skelter, 2004).

³⁵⁰ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: an Introduction* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 111.

by suggesting that the Mods were waging a class war without necessarily realising they were doing so. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that a good number of the Mods were working class just as there is plenty of evidence to suggest that a fairly high percentage of the world's population is working class. This does not however mean that these 'workers' are constantly engaged in the class struggle, unless we are referring to the economic struggle which takes place, from a classical Marxist perspective, at the point of production.

In Britain and especially England Mod has been incorporated into the mainstream of both fashion and identity. Nowhere is this more evident than in the decision to include Mods in the closing ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics.³⁵¹ The 'Mods' look absolutely nothing like their original counterparts and in a hyperreal subcultural non sequitur, the song which accompanies their entrance into the arena is 'Pinball Wizard' from the Who's 1969 rock opera 'Tommy'.³⁵² It is worth remembering here that the contemporary Catalan Mod movement is not particularly working class and the original Mod mantra of 'clean living under difficult circumstances' quite simply does not apply. Many of the symbols which are still used by the Mods were reappropriated almost sixty years ago and have of course lost their oppositional force, if they ever had one, over time and distance. The attention to detail remains but the meanings of these details have become almost purely aesthetic. The music is often the same but it is no longer new or avant-garde. Many of these Mods are subcultural collectors dealing in 'retro', a concept which would have been unfathomable for the original Mods. The original Mods, like the 1970s revival Mods, were part of a *youth* subculture. There are hardly any young Mods in Catalonia today. So, Catalan Mods are different from their British counterparts from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. This difference does not make them any less interesting. Like the original Mods they live for the present and are deeply involved in their own subcultural practices. Unlike their predecessors, they necessarily need to look backwards for subcultural references which keep the movement alive. This apparent contradiction is not dialectical – it does not have to work itself out as there is nothing wrong with it. It can be described as a

³⁵¹ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5750rG3MxFQ> [accessed 20/02/2016]

³⁵² The Who, *Tommy* (Track 613 013/4, March 1969)

compresent 'unity of opposites.'³⁵³ The idea that you cannot 'step in the same river twice'³⁵⁴ can be applied to the Mods – it is impossible for contemporary Catalan Mods to be or mean the same as their earlier counterparts. However, there is a 'hidden harmony'³⁵⁵ in their relationship with their subcultural predecessors. By considering things in this way we can avoid the purism that suggests that only the original Mods were authentic. As Gramsci himself commented

Creating a new culture does not only mean one's own 'original' discoveries. It also, and most particularly, means the diffusion in a *critical form* of truths already discovered, their 'socialisation' as it were, and even making of them the basis of vital action [...]³⁵⁶

We can also sidestep the ahistorical assumption that there is a timeless, transglobal and usually Modernist (rather than Mod) commonality to the Mods. The signs may be constant but their significance necessarily changes.

Furthermore, it allows us to gain insights into contemporary Mods without the voluntarist desire to find class struggle where it is probably not located. The neo-Gramscian cultural theorists at the CCCS were products of their time and their beliefs. Faced with a downturn in militant working class activity, they, like many of their contemporaries, began to look for alternative transformational forces. Their non-economistic and anti-determinist view of where change could come from was heavily influenced by their re-reading of Gramsci. However, what began as a revisit became a revision, and curiously, for people who still defined themselves as Marxists, the traditional class struggle was more or less abandoned in both theory and practice. At the same time, British cultural studies had not yet embraced post-modernism and a societal transformational desire remained. For this reason much of the serious writing, emanating from or influenced by the CCCS, about the Mods, has a tendency to create a surrogate class struggle within the subcultural superstructure. In very much the same way as Laclau and Mouffe³⁵⁷ hang on to Gramsci despite having abandoned his ideas, it

³⁵³ This is a borrowing from the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, whose concept of the 'upward-downward river' (hodos ano kato) married apparent opposites in a state of permanent flux. See José Ferrater Mora, *Diccionario de Filosofía: Tomo II*, (Editorial Ariel: Barcelona, 1994) pp. 1612-1615)

³⁵⁴ This Plato's interpretation of Heraclitus' theory. See <http://www.iep.utm.edu/heraclit/#H3> [accessed 21/02/2016]

³⁵⁵ This is another borrowing from Heraclitus. *Diccionario de Filosofía* pp 1612-1615.

³⁵⁶ *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 638, (my italics)

³⁵⁷ I discussed this idea in Chapter 1.

is difficult for these theorists to abandon the *notion* of the class struggle even when they are rejecting it in practical terms.

The Catalan Mods may or more probably may not be involved in symbolic class warfare. What is sure is that they are at the heart of the contemporary Mod world. Gramsci's hegemony theory is a useful tool in understanding the space in which subcultural groups like the Mods operate. It does not completely abandon the role of the economic base in the creation of the ideological practices of a society but rejects a mechanical relationship between this base and the ideological superstructure. *Relative autonomy* allows for an ideological arena where meanings are negotiated and in which experimentation and innovation are not only permissible but which may also be *perceived* as the expression of a form of resistance or transformational desire. British Cultural Studies' adoption of Gramscian hegemony theory may well tell us more about the ideological development of its theorists rather than the subcultural groups it was studying. Nonetheless, the insights brought to youth subcultures in general, and the Mods in particular, by neo-Gramscian cultural theorists were a significant step forward. For any theoretical approach to retain any usefulness or interest, it must be capable of redeveloping itself, at times through borrowings. The Mods – the non-stop dancers - remain healthy when they too are on the move.

APPENDICES

ONE – ALBERTO VALLE

04/03/2015, Via Email

¿Estás trabajando? ¿A qué te dedicas?

I am currently working as a consultant for a PR & Communication agency

¿Eres Mod? ¿Te consideras como un mod?

I think it is still a good word to define my way of living and my notion of stylism & coolness. Sometimes I wonder if one can be mod once the 21 years old are over, but, well, why not?

¿Qué significa ser Mod para ti?

To me, as a 37 year old, mod has been part of my life for the last 23 years. I think that this basically a matter of obsession for some obscure, different and cool forms of hedonism rooted between the mid 50s to the early 70s. It also means secrecy. It also means others will sometimes perceive you as an arrogant imbecile. It also means you'll do a lot of mistakes in your quest for "brightness", but that's a part of it all.

¿Te sientes diferente a los demás?

I guess this is a common trait when it comes to be a part of a subcultural entourage (and by subcultural I am referring to Dick Hebdidge's definition of the concept). Especially when it comes to talk about 20th Century post WWII subcultures. So yes, of course, your life and tastes and the things you do and why you do them are different from the square world. Somehow I still feel this difference, but it doesn't mean that I am better. You know? Just different.

¿Cuándo y cómo llegaste a ser un Mod? ¿Cómo reaccionaron tus padres/familia/amigos?

My first step into it was when I was 11 and listened to The Who's "My Generation". That song changed my world and became an obsession. So by listening to further Who stuff I came to read something about the mods and started looking for further information. I must say it wasn't an easy thing to do in 1990 Spain, without internet, for a child who wasn't actually in touch with the mod scene that was going on by then. Anyway, when I was 14, I somehow knew that was my way, that was what I really was feeling I was.

My parents weren't too happy about it. They found it to be cobwebs and dangerous. They didn't like the clothes and especially my haircut. In the early 90s any mod/ 60s look here was like something from another planet to the square world.

¿Cómo es la escena Mod actual?

The current mod scene has a great musical and stylistic knowledge, but it has become an elder people scene. There's plenty of 40/50 year old people and a lack of younger people taking part of it. Unfortunately I'd say there are many drugs which I can't say I like it too much. Of course, like everyone, I've tasted different types of drugs, but I almost immediately understood that there's no need for them. My drug is the atmosphere you'll find at a club, the music, the friends, the style. That really fulfills me. I don't need cocaine to enjoy what I am supposed to love the most!

As usual, this is more a male than a female thing, even if I have to say that there are much more female mods now than 15/20 years ago (at least in Spain).

If I want to have fun I go to Mod, R&B, Soul, Jazz dos and gigs.

¿Hay diferente grupos de Mods? ¿Está politizado el movimiento? ¿Es un movimiento muy Catalanista?

Well, Mod has always been quite an individualist thing, so I think that it is hard to talk about “groups”. In the end, everyone has his friends & buddies and that goes far beyond the fact of being mod. Most of the mods I used to go with in my teen days aren’t mods anymore, but we still see each other from time to time.

Politics have always been unwelcome to the mod-sphere and luckily enough in Spain and Catalonia you’ll barely find political linked troubles like the ones you might find in Italy.

I am a left-winged republican but I have mod friends from all political colors and I am able to have a civilized conversation with many people with different ideas. However, I still can’t understand how someone Fascist, Nazi or Stalinist can consider him/herself to be a mod.

¿Son importantes para ti las más antiguas generaciones de mods? ¿O los mods en otros países?

Yes, of course. I am in touch with mods from everywhere and I show a lot of respect for those who were here before I was. And I am not only referring to mods. I go along with elder skinheads, rockers, teds... the guys who begun my city’s subcultural life. In a way, I feel that we’re all part of the same underground family.

¿Cuándo el movimiento mod empezó en Cataluña?

In 1980, when different mods converged at a Specials’ gig. That was the beginning of the local scene. I don’t think mod is any movement. It is a phenomenon that has been going on for almost 60 years now (the first appearance of the mods on the press is from 1958!) with a lot of internal differences and debate. When you talk about a movement you’re talking about something unified, and I definitely think that mod has never been a unified thing, but a very individualistic one.

¿Cómo reacciona la gente a tu “look”? ¿y los medias?

Unlike the older days, to have a mod look now is perceived as something cool. So people normally doesn’t react that much. Some like it, some might laugh at it, but the vast majority don’t seems to give a fuck, which is perfectly ok for me.

And as for media, I’ve always thought that subcultures and media should try to avoid to converge. I never answer media interviews and the couple of times I did it I regretted it almost immediately.

I work with media and with journalists and been a journalist myself for 8 years, so I know what I am talking about.

¿Te fijas más en el futuro o en el pasado?

Well, it depends. If we’re talking about paying the mortgage I think more about my future, while if I’m thinking about cool Jazz albums to discover I will be looking at the 50s-60-70s, of course.

Dime los nombres tres canciones que simbolizan el movimiento Mod para ti?

The Who: My Generation (for being my first input)

Lenny O’Henry: Across the street (well, there are plenty of tunes like this, perfect mixtures between R&B and Early Soul, this is just the first that came into my mind. Perfectly mod and cool as fuck)

John Coltrane: A Love Supreme (that’s something that goes beyond and brings you to a more elevated sense of modernism, of spiritual coolness).

Y tres canciones Mod de España.

Los Flechazos: A Toda Velocidad (I was 14 and a brand new mod when it came out with a video clip full of mod references, from scooters to mid 60s David Bowie pics).

Brighton 64: Conflicto con Tu Ayer (this is from their debut mini-album and my fave song from this seminal Spanish mod band from the 80s)

Los Negativos: Cansados y Decaídos (I used to play this one when I was coming back from parties, in the morning; kind of a private ritual but full of significance to me).

¿Cómo te llamas?

Àlex

¿Y cuántos años tienes?

39

¿Estás trabajando? ¿Qué haces?

Estoy trabajando para LP, que es una comercializadora de luz y gas, en el departamento comercial; aparte tenemos la tienda online. Hace cuatro años montamos una tienda de ropa, pero era complicado con los niños, y ahora tenemos la tienda online.

¿Qué tipo de tienda?

Una tienda de ropa *sixties* británicos.

¿Sigues en plan mod?

Bueno. no al cien por cien como hace 10 años pero sí, seguimos yendo a los conciertos que podemos. El estilo de vestir es lo mismo, más o menos; además tenemos la tienda online... y nuestros *scooters*.. Con más cabeza, no tan locos como antes.

¿Para ti qué significa como antes? ¿Qué significa ser mod para ti?

Igual que antes; antes lo vivías más intensamente, pero sí que se ha convertido en una forma de entender la vida. Si no fuera mod, supongo que mi vida sería totalmente diferente. No tendrían nada que ver mis amistades, ni la mujer que he conocido, ni los grupos que he hecho, no tendría nada que ver. Para mí se ha convertido en una forma de vida.

¿Pensas que es igual para todos los mods?

Para mí va más allá de la estética, va con la música, con un estilo de pensar, de vivir. Es disfrutar, por ejemplo, de concentraciones, saber que cada año te vas a encontrar con la misma gente, y sí es un estilo diferente. Lo engloba todo.

¿Y para ti la música... qué grupos son emblemáticos de la escena mod?

Para mí son los Jam. Con ellos conocí la escena mod. Después los Small Faces...y después hay muchos estilos: el *2 tone*, que me gusta mucho, *soul*, *nothern soul*... muchas cosas.

¿Hay o hubo grupos de mods aquí en Cataluña?

El movimiento mod... gente joven ya no hay. Básicamente, la gente que se mueve es la misma. La última generación la encontraríamos a finales de los 90, principios del 2000, y a partir de allí ya somos los mismos. La última generación de mods que hubo fue esa.

Dame tres canciones Mod emblemáticas para ti.

The Jam – The Modern World, Secret Affair – Time for Action, Los Flechazos – A Toda Velocidad

¿Y para vosotros son importantes otras generaciones de mods, o mods de otros países?

Aquí no hubo mods hasta los 80 por razones políticas. Son muy importantes para nosotros, porque fueron ellos quienes abrieron las puertas al movimiento con sus cosas buenas y sus cosas malas, son una gente a la que admiras mucho por lo que hicieron en ese momento dificultoso para el país. El mod a mí me enorgullece, tengo muchos contactos con gente de esa y me cuentan muchas historias...

Sí, Eneida me ha hablado de dos mods de Perpignan...

Para nosotros la gente de Perpignan es mucho más antigua, en Perpignan ya hacía años que había movimiento, claro. En Barcelona empezó a haber mods en el 83, antes no había. Para Perpignan los ingleses son lo mismo que para nosotros los de Perpignan.

¿Hay una diferencia entre los mods de Barcelona y, por ejemplo, los mods de pueblo?

El movimiento mod en Barcelona engloba muchos tipos de gente y de elementos. Hay mod más auténtico o más psicodélico, hay mucho tipo de mod. En una misma fiesta puedes encontrar muchos estilos. Ahora ya no serían fiestas mod sino fiestas de los 60 lo que se hace. Porque claro, una fiesta mod no puede llevar mucha gente. Y una fiesta años 60 abarca muchos estilos y eso es el movimiento mod ahora.

¿Hay política en el movimiento?

No, cada uno piensa lo que quiere, tenemos amigos que tienen diferente forma de pensar pero a la hora de escuchar música disfrutamos con ellos y ...sí que a veces puede haber alguna discusión pero no... nada.

¿Era difícil ser mod? Por ejemplo, con la familia...

No, era más difícil según qué cosa; a principios de los 90, del rollo mod no había mucha información, se tenía que buscar más, pero era más fácil, porque había más gente que ahora. No, no supuso ningún problema. Bueno, mi hermano era *rocker* y alguna vez nos encontramos por la calle y no me saludaba, y sus amigos tampoco; dependía de dónde te encontraras.

¿Qué tal la escena mod de ahora?

Hay mucha fiesta, pero no hay una nueva generación. Hay más cosas, pero la gente es más o menos la misma, como si hubiera convertido en una especie de club privado. Hay muchas fiestas, por ejemplo hoy hay dos. Cosa que antes era impensable, dos fiestas del mismo estilo. Está el Boiler, por ejemplo, que pincha una música muy mod, pero es para todo tipo de gente. Hay varios tipos de fiestas, hay unas más cerradas, unas más abiertas. Ahora mismo, escenas hay muchas.

Pete Marsden decía que mod era "llevar una vida sana en circunstancias difíciles".

¿La escena mod tiene aquí el mismo carácter obrero que en Gran Bretaña?

En Barcelona se decía que los mods eran de la Diagonal para arriba, la zona alta, y era cierto, porque los locales que había estaban en la Diagonal. Siempre se ha relacionado el movimiento mod no con pijos, pero acomodados... un poco. Ahora la cosa ha cambiado un poco.

Un *hard* mod de la Bisbal habló de los pijos de la zona alta, Brighton 64...

Sin ser pijos eran clase acomodada. No eran gente pobre. Los *rockers* sí que eran más de barrios.

¿Para ti cuál es la diferencia entre pijo y clase media?

Pijo es una forma de vida, puedes ser pijo y no tener un duro. Un pijo es una persona ostentosa, que habla de cierta manera, que quiere lucir ciertas cosas que los mods no. A los pijos les gusta ir a los sitios más caros, aunque después tengan que comer sopa en su casa, solo para demostrar que tienen dinero.

¿Miras el movimiento mod con nostalgia? ¿Dónde vives, en el presente, en el pasado, en el futuro?

A ver, es complicado [...] porque vivir en el pasado no es bueno. Pero lo veo más nostálgico ahora. Mi generación, que ha tenido hijos, lo que hacemos son los *vermuts*; hay un bar en Gràcia donde hacen *vermuts* cada sábado donde se pincha, entonces aparece gente más conocida, adulta. Te digo: el pasado se vivió mucho más

intensamente. Tu presente hace que no puedas hacerlo, es decir, no que sea mejor ni peor, pero no puedes... Entonces es un poco como nostalgia. No puedes ir a todos los sitios donde te gustaría ir. Ahora no puedo coger una moto y hacer 200 km medio borracho.

Me habías dicho que había muchos más chicos que chicas... ¿Sigue igual?

Sí, es una cosa que no cambia mucho. Las chicas son mas *sixties* y los chicos más mod. Además, el movimiento mod nunca ha sido muy femenino . Así que es muy complicado encontrar chicas mod.

¿Estás en contacto con mods de otros países?

Bueno, a ver, más de la península. Como mucho mantenemos relación con gente de Inglaterra por motivos laborales, por el tema de la tienda y por motivos “escuteristas”, pero claro, ya no podemos subir tanto como antes. También tenemos amigos en Portugal, pero es complicado. Mantienes relaciones por Internet.

¿Y qué piensas sobre el futuro, por ejemplo de tus niños?

Complicado, porque por mucho que quieras que le guste el mismo estilo que a ti, a lo mejor para su generación ser de este estilo representa como si a alguno de mi generación le gustara el charlestón. Intentaré inculcarle según qué cosas, pero él dependerá de la generación en la que viva. Lo más parecido fue en los años 2000, cuando hubo el *britpop*. Si en una generación futura existe algún movimiento así, británico, de rock, me gustaría que estuviera en él. Pero mod... lo veo muy complicado.

En general, son las mismas personas. ¿Es algo que va a desaparecer?

Supongo que sí. A ver, nunca se sabe, pero todo va cambiando mucho, y dudo que haya una nueva generación. Habrá una explosión de otro tipo, a lo mejor con mucha influencia mod, pero no serán los mods.

¿Cómo te llamas?

David Palma Bastero.

¿Qué edad tienes?

49.

¿Estás trabajando?

Si, soy propietario de una *grow shop*.

¿Y cómo va la cosa?

Estamos contentos.

¿Cuál es tu relación con el movimiento mod?

Te lo voy a explicar. Tenía unos 18 años aproximadamente, estamos hablando del año 83. La realidad era muy diferente, recuerdo vagamente haber visto *Quadrophenia*, me impactó mucho, y escuchar música -una música entra más y otra menos- y entré por el tema musical. Reconozco la influencia de un chico que vino de Barcelona y que era mod. Al conocerlo, conocí la cultura mod. Ha tenido muchos problemas, se llama Surera. Su padre era propietario de discos Revolver. Empecé a juntarme con mods gracias a este chico.

¿Te considerabas un mod?

Sí.

¿Qué significaba para ti?

La música, una estética, por supuesto. En la época el movimiento sí que era de izquierdas, catalanista, pero no tenía un fuerte acento político. Éramos de izquierdas, claramente. Bajaba a la Zeleste, había un bar al lado donde se concentraban los mods, y los fines de semana me juntaba con esta gente. Es verdad que los que teníamos una conciencia más política nos volvimos *skinheads*, mi etapa mod fue corta. Me volví *skinhead* y dejé de tener relación con los mods.

¿En qué se diferencian estos grupos en la ciudad y en los pueblos?

En Barcelona iban por separado, cada uno a su sitio, y aquí no. En la comarca éramos cuatro, dos mods, dos *punkies*, dos *skinheads*, y nos acabamos juntando porque éramos gente radical o fuera del sistema e íbamos a los mismos locales. Me acuerdo de una bronca en un concierto de los rebeldes donde *punkies*, *skins*, *rockers* y gente del pueblo fuimos juntos contra los “centuriones” de Barcelona, que van con Harley, en plan *Hells Angels*. Hacíamos peña, los *punkies*, *rockers*, *skin* y mods contra ellos.

En esa época, si eras mod o skinhead... ¿cómo reaccionaban los demás, los padres...?

Si en Barcelona nos veían como bichos raros, no te digo aquí. De mi madre siempre he recibido mucha comprensión. Siempre he cumplido como trabajador, no somos como los *punkies*. La reacción de los demás aquí era brutal. Los mods pasaban más desapercibidos, los *skins* cantaban mucho y no te digo los *punks*. Por la calle era algo, pienso que he sido de los primeros *skinheads* de aquí. La gente ni sabía, no tenían ni idea, ni los jóvenes, no había cultura, ni por “Barna”. Después sí que hubo la explosión de las tribus urbanas, pero en aquel momento éramos totalmente *underground*.

Has seguido la línea skin, pero ¿todavía tienes contacto con los mods?

Por supuesto, y una demostración muy clara son las concentraciones de *scooters*. Hay muchos mods y *skins* con el mismo vehículo. Cuando hay concierto, vamos todos juntos. A los *skins* les gusta el *Northern Soul* y a los mods les gusta más el *ska* clásico. Hay muchos nexos de unión. A mí me gusta desde *Rhythmes and Blues* a *Northern Soul*, me gusta hasta la musica *Oi!*

¿Y qué pasa con la política? Has dicho que las personas más politizadas han seguido más la línea Skin...

Sí, siempre he visto el movimiento mod como más apolítico, gente de izquierdas y con principios. Por ejemplo, los Sex Museum de Madrid, hablabas con ellos y era gente de izquierda del Atlético de Madrid. Sí que he tenido siempre la referencia del movimiento mod como un movimiento de izquierda, pero me orienté hacia los *skinheads*. Ha habido cosas muy raras, como el movimiento fascista catalán; ¿los conoces?

Si, he leído el libro *Skinheads a Catalunya*. Habla un poco de esto.

Surera, el chico del que te hablaba antes, cambió hacia el rollo fascista.

¿Qué tal las relaciones con otros países? ¿Tienes mucho contacto?

Ahora sí, pero en aquellos años nada, éramos como grupúsculos; por ejemplo, las Dr. Martens las pedíamos a Londres, a una tienda que se llama Shellys, el catálogo era una fotocopia. Y allí pedíamos las primeras Martens. Éramos pocos, no había la facilidad de ahora. Había poca conexión, la única era la música. Grupos tan especializados, no venían muchos. Había grupos de *Rhythm and Blues*, un festival de seis horas guapo en Figueres, venían los mods de "Barna" e íbamos al festival, pero era más generalista... Del movimiento, si no eran grupos de aquí, no podías ver grupos. Luego sí que fue cambiando y ahora hay un movimiento brutal. Una cosa que ha hecho conectarse con la peña es el movimiento "ultra". Hay mucha conexión que en el movimiento "ultra", hay mucho color: *skinheads*, mods, *punks*, hay de todo. Ahora mismo, en el movimiento "ultra" hay mucho color, sobre todo en los movimientos "ultra" de izquierda, y ahora hay mucha conexión.

Bichos raros en "Barna" y aquí... ¿Había reacciones en la prensa?

Muy poca... si no había una pelea, alguna muerte. Hubo un tiempo, en los 80, donde en el casco antiguo de Barcelona había un grupo de nazis que cada 15 días mataban a un *punki* o a un *redskin*, o pegaba una paliza; entonces salían noticias relacionadas con el tema. [Así] hasta principios de los 90; de pronto la prensa empezó a hablar de las tribus urbanas. Es cuando hubo un conocimiento generalizado. De pronto hubo mogollón de artículos e incluso reportajes en televisión sobre las tribus urbanas.

¿Qué año más o menos?

Principios de los 90. A mí no me gustaba lo de las tribus urbanas. Yo no era ninguna tribu, éramos un grupo. La prensa, por supuesto, busca las peleas. En "Barna" hubo una bulla tipo mini Brighton. Hubo un pique muy grande entre mods y *rockers* en "Barna". Había una zona donde se ponían *rockers* y había corrido alguna vez. Tenías que andarte con cuidado, se conservaba el espíritu *Quadrophenia* en aquellos primeros años.

Luego ya, cuando adopté la estética *skinhead*, la cosa cambió, y normalmente te girabas y esperabas.

Dijiste que los mods eran menos políticos que los *skins*, pero ¿piensas que hay algo radical dentro de los mods?

Pienso que es un movimiento culto, los mods son cultos, hay mucho descerebrado por todos lados y los mods auténticos son gente súper culta. Yo creo que en parte los mods lo que tienen de contracultura es ser muy educados, les gusta mucho la cultura, y claro, todos los movimientos no son así. La moda... siempre me ha gustado y creo que esto es contracultural al final, porque la cultura no gusta a los gobiernos de derechas. Si tengo algo de mod dentro de mí, es eso, que me gusta mucho la cultura. El movimiento mod, como le gusta la cultura, es un movimiento artístico. Incluso en el

movimiento *skinhead*, que siempre ha sido más descerebrado, hay una rama culta, gente que va un poquito más allá. Hay un *skinhead* de por aquí que está escribiendo un libro.

Hablando de música, que para los mods es algo central, ¿qué canciones representan para ti la onda mod?

Mi *shock* más grande fue The Jam, escuché esa energía y me volvió loco... Tengo todos los discos... Me gusta mucho la música *soul*, el *Rhythm and Blues*. Pero reconozco que en el movimiento mod no era muy auténtico decir que te gusta The Jam. No eras como muy auténtico pero a mí no me importaba. Fue lo mismo cuando escuché La Polla Records la primera vez: increíble, un tío que dice lo que yo pienso tan claramente. Son un *shock* que te revolucionan.

Dame tres canciones que para ti son muy Mod.

The Jam – Beat Surrender, The Who – My Generation – divina juventud! Y Martha and the Vandellas – Dancing in the Street. The Ethiopians – Train to Skaville también...

¿Y de grupos españoles o catalanes mod?

Claro, Brighton 64 por afinidad, Los Flechazos, Los Negativos, Sex Museum. En Gijón hay mogollón de grupos mods, hay un movimiento brutal. Montan un festival de *scooters* que dura una semana, todo vinculado al movimiento mod. De allí han salido grupos muy guapos de *power pop*. Hay uno que me encanta que se llama Doctor Explosión. ¡Buenísimos! Los escuchábamos mucho, esto fue en la época mod. Después, cuando giré hacia los *skins*, muchas bandas nacionales como Kortatu, Decibelios... ¿Los conoces? Ellos se declaran clase obrera, pero ya sabes que la clase obrera es muy indefinible. A veces, no sabes si las protestas vienen de un lado o de otro. Yo siempre los he considerado como grupo de izquierdas, pero nunca se han definido políticamente y han tenido rollos raros. Se les han aparecido motones de fachas en sus conciertos. Aunque su actitud no es de fascistas, pero tampoco han dicho que sean antifascistas. Y luego en España surgieron en los últimos 80, principios de los 90, unos grupos de *ska*. No tirando a *Oi!*, sino tipo Madness o *ska* jamaicano: Aran, Doctor Calypso, Komando Moriles...

¿Crees que es algo nostálgico, algo del presente, con futuro...?

Las escenas están muy vivas. Las nuevas tecnologías, las redes sociales han hecho que llegue a más gente, y hay más movimiento. Lo veo muy vivo, siempre dentro de la marginalidad. Alternativo totalmente. Hubo una época, en el 95-96, que hubo la explosión de la música "máquina" en España, y los chavales iban con estética *skin*. No lo eran e iban a las fiestas esas, escuchaban *techno*. Yo, durante ese tiempo, dejé de usar Dr. Martens, [chaquetas] *bomber*... Todo me lo quité, no quería que se me asociara con esa gente. Empezamos a llevar ropa más *casual*, una chaqueta Fred Perry, y también un poco con el movimiento de fútbol... Gente como Carlos Bella, que está haciendo arqueología y recuperando esa cultura. Lo veo mucho más vivo que cuando era joven. Hay gente de todas las edades.

¿Cómo te llamas?

Me llamo Eneida Fever.

¿Estás trabajando?

Tengo una agencia de comunicación, hago promociones de artistas, lanzamiento de discos, *singles* y festivales.

¿Qué tipo de música?

No me limito a música de los años 60, hago pop, rock... incluso algún grupo de electrónica bailable. Básicamente música *indie*.

¿Qué edad tienes?

37 años.

¿Eres mod?

Si me preguntan ahora, no sé qué decir, supongo que en espíritu sí, siempre lo he sido, siempre he defendido mis raíces. De sentimiento, sí lo soy.

¿Qué significa para ti?

Para mí, hacerse mod era un estilo de vida, sobre todo la pasión por la música. Normalmente, las chicas en el movimiento mod están más interesadas en la moda, yo siempre he estado más interesada en la música. De hecho, fui de las pocas chicas que empezaron a hacer de *disc jockey*. Aunque me gustaba mucho cuidar de mi estética, todos mis ingresos me los gastaba en discos.

¿Cuándo empezaste?

Con 16 años. Tengo un hermano mayor que tiene ocho años más que yo, él era mod, y como cualquier hermana pequeña lo admiraba mucho, nos llevábamos muy bien y empecé a escuchar los discos que él escuchaba.

También me has hablado de la música de tu madre.

A mi madre le gusta mucho la música de los años 60, pero le gusta la música francesa de los años 60: Jacques Dutronc y toda esta gente. Mi madre coleccionaba *singles*. De hecho, tenía de The Kinks, de los Rolling... y entre la referencia de mi hermano y la música de casa, hemos sido siempre muy musicales. Pues eso ayudó muchísimo.

Entonces, la reacción de tus padres...

Muy bien, estaban sorprendidos; tampoco era usual que una chica de 16 años, en lugar de escuchar New Kids On The Block, escuchase The Kinks, pero les hacía mucha gracia. Al principio, hubo un poco de recelo, pero después, cuando vieron que me lo tomaba en serio, que pasó de ser mi *hobby* a ser mi dedicación, me apoyaron completamente.

¿Y ahora, la escena mod actual?

Aún existe. Estoy bastante desconectada, pero como tengo bastantes amistades, sobre todo en Facebook, voy siguiendo todo lo que se hace. Continúan habiendo los mismos festivales de mi época, de hecho algunos amigos festejan su 25 aniversario, *buf*. Pero también veo fotos de gente joven que nunca había visto, luego la cosa aún funciona. No es tanto un *boom* como en los 90. Ahora creo que es más relajado, pero hay gente que sigue luchando y haciendo fiestas.

Cuando hablas de tu época...

Los 90 sí eran la mejor época para festivales, discos, bandas. Hubo mucha actividad en el 96-98, la segunda mitad de los 90. Hubo un sello en Inglaterra que sacaba muchos *singles*, los comprábamos todos. Fue una época dorada.

Y en las fiestas, ¿mucho droga?

En mi época mucha, había pastillas y coca. No sé ahora lo que hacen.

¿Hombres y mujeres?

Sí, más chicos que chicas, pero sí. Es una escena bastante drogadicta, muy de fiesta loca, festivales de cuatro días, rollo sin dormir, sin comer, llegabas al último día y todo lo llevabas muy ancho. Anfetaminas no, al principio sí, pero después ya no se encontraban. La gente tomaba éxtasis y *speed*.

En tu época, ¿había diferentes grupos de mods?

Sí, estaba dividido en blanco y negro. La gente que escuchaba música negra: *soul*, *Rhythm and Blues*, *ska*, *reggae*. Y luego, más de mi equipo, nos gusta el *freakbeat*, *Rhythm and Blues* blanco, algo de psicodelia, de garaje. Había muchas diferencias. Incluso en los festivales había dos salas, la sala de negro y la sala de blanco. Había los conciertos que todos veían, y después se separaban por salas. No era una guerra abierta, pero se respetaban el uno al otro. No había conflictos. Típicas bromas, mira los pantalones, la camisa, pero como somos pocos no había guerras en absoluto. Cada uno tenía su grupito de amigos, pero yo me acuerdo de: "ahora voy a bailar *soul*; *pim*, *pim*, *pim*, *pim*. Ahora garaje..."

¿Hay diferencias entre mod de pueblo y mod de Barcelona?

Claro, en Barcelona se juntó mucho con la escena Britpop. Mucha gente a quien le gustaba el Britpop empezó a descubrir la escena mod. Se mezcló un poco todo. Pero a los que veníamos de la escena auténtica de los años 60, nos daba un poco de recelo. No lo veíamos como auténtico, nosotros éramos los auténticos, porque escuchábamos música de los años 60. Sí que nos poníamos Adidas y eso, pero los veíamos como *newbies*. Hubo un momento en que se puso de moda ser mod. Pero era un mod que para nosotros era como los *tickets*, te pones una parka y ya eres mod. ¡Y no!

Las diferencias entre Inglaterra y aquí...

Yo creo que en Inglaterra el mod tenía un sentido, por cultura y política hay gente que ha sentido la necesidad de desmarcarse de la sociedad, de hacer cosas nuevas, de encontrar un trabajo, de ser independiente, pero aquí no hubo esa necesidad. De hecho, cuando empezó el movimiento mod en Barcelona en los 80, eran los pijos que se hicieron mod, cuando de verdad el movimiento es totalmente *working class*. De hecho, muchos de los mods somos *middle class*. Es un poco la diferencia que veo entre Inglaterra y aquí. Lo decíamos con el Álex (Alice cooper): no somos *working class*, no hemos estado luchando, pero no por eso lo hemos tenido fácil, porque claro, llevar tú un estilo de vida que tus padres no llevan, ¿sabes? No había necesidad de hacerse mod aquí, era porque te gustaba.

¿Hay política en el movimiento?

Yo me he desmarcado mucho de la política, de hecho soy bastante apolítica. Bueno, soy de izquierdas, pero no soy militante. Sí que ha habido muchas diferencias, ha habido mucha gente mod que estaba metida en política. Aquí en Barcelona no tanto, sí que ha habido mucha gente catalanista, pero en España conozco bastante mod de derechas, que tampoco tienen problema en decirlo. Pero yo siempre he intentado no mezclar mi fiesta con política. De hecho, tengo amigos de derechas con los cuales sé que nunca hablaré de política, porque sé que nos vamos a pelear. Estamos aquí porque nos gusta la música, basta. No me ha interesado nunca a la política, y menos en el movimiento mod. Cuando realmente lo que querría es escuchar música y estar bailando.

¿Cuál es la importancia de las diferentes generaciones de mods? ¿Son influencias, referencias para ti?

Sí, cuando hubo el *boom* mod del final de los 70, que era más *punki*; a mí me gusta mucho el *punk*, los Buzzcocks me encantan. Sí que hubo influencia, porque hemos aprendido de ellos, ha sido un grupo referencia. El movimiento de los 70 sí que me gusta. El movimiento mod ha ido evolucionando dependiendo de la época, en los 90 se mezcló con el Britpop. En los 70 se mezcló con el *punk*. Pienso que es bueno, porque así gente que no conocía la música mod pudo tener acceso. Creo que ha podido ayudar, y después la gente hace lo que quiera. Nunca estuve en contra de que alguien venga a una fiesta, aunque no sea mod. Pero sí que hay gente a quien le molesta que alguien que no sea mod venga a una fiesta mod. Para mí, cuanta más gente pueda disfrutarlo, ¿por qué no? Nunca me he cerrado en esto.

¿Pensas que es algo elitista?

Es muy elitista, sí. Se quejan de que no haya gente joven, de que el movimiento vaya como muriendo, pero al mismo tiempo si hay alguien joven que está empezando, es normal que no tenga toda la indumentaria mod. Pues he visto a gente criticando los “novatas” en las fiestas. Ha sido muy elitista y me molesta bastante. Porque yo creo que cuanto más abierto seas y más fácil sea el acceso, más gente podrá disfrutarlo. De eso se trata, de pasarlo bien. Era mi objetivo, pasarlo bien. Yo creo que cualquier movimiento es elitista, y más en un movimiento con una estética muy particular, y quieres defender un poco la autenticidad.

¿Los mods miran al futuro o es algo muy nostálgico?

Yo nunca lo he visto de esta manera. No es una cuestión de nostalgia. Eso sería absurdo. Solo miro atrás si estás hablando de la música. Pero para mí la música de los años 60 suena muy actual, no es una cosa “retro”. Aunque la estética sí que es “retro”, es elegante. A mí me gusta más la estética de los 60 que de los 70. Es un punto de vista de gusto. Ahora no voy con una estética muy mod, pero me gusta vestirme bien, arreglarme. No cambiara, nunca iré con rastas. Pienso que las personas viven por ahora y están mirando hacia delante.

Dime de tres o cuatro canciones súper mod, emblemáticas del movimiento.

Pues...The Small Faces – Tin Soldier; algo Northern soul como R. Dean Taylor – There’s a Ghost in my House. The Action – I’ll Keep Holding On

¿Y de los grupos españoles o catalanes?

¿De los 60 o de cualquier época? En los 60, aquí en Barcelona había un grupo: Los Salvajes; y estaban Los Bravos. Bueno, Los Salvajes y Los Sírex. Unos eran los Beatles, los otros los Rolling Stones, y como yo soy muy “rollingstoniana”, me gustaban Los Salvajes, era *Rhythm and Blues* blanco, muy sucio. Para cualquier persona que haya seguido la escena mod, Los Salvajes es un grupo que hemos seguido mucho. Y luego en los 90 hubo muchísimas bandas. De Madrid había los Stupid Baboons, que hacían *Rhythm and Blues*, Los Flechazos, la banda de Álex Cooper. Pero el pop en español nunca me ha gustado. Los grupos españoles de los 60 que me han gustado, me han gustado porque cantaban en castellano. Los Iberos era un grupo español que hacía un pop brutal, a todos los mods les encanta. Hacían *blue-eyed soul*. Actualmente, no conozco ninguna banda que se pueda definir con un perfil mod.

¿Qué piensas del contenido de la letra de las canciones? Por ejemplo, la diferencia entre the Merton Parkas y The Specials.

Specials eran mucho más políticos. En cada momento de la historia esto se refleja en la música, se refleja en la sociedad, y los Specials tenían que cantar por lo que estaba pasando... el Thatcherismo. Bueno, Inglaterra fue muy bestia. *Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead* fue número dos cuando murió la Thatcher.

En Spotify, número uno de descargas.

Qué fuerte, por eso todo tiene un sentido. A nosotros no nos afectó la Thatcher, ¿por qué tenemos que cantar canciones políticas? No somos ingleses, no nos afectó entonces... Los Brighton 64, banda emblemática, cantaba mucho sobre Barcelona, sobre la ciudad, las canciones sí que eran canciones que han marcado una época. También los 80 fueron una época bastante oscura, y los Brighton que eran *middle class*. *Barcelona Blues* es un himno para los mods de Barcelona. Yo escucho música de los 60, que es súper machista. Los Beatles, por ejemplo: si tu escuchas 'You better run for your life if you can, little girl' es como: 'si te vas con otro, te mato'. Son letras que hoy en día estarían prohibidas. Creo que cada música tiene su contexto, que se ha de entender. Ahora mucha gente no se da cuenta aquí, porque hablan en inglés. The Who es como más agresivo, lo decía 'My Generation' "Estamos aquí y queremos hacernos oír, no queremos pasar desapercibidos". Porque antes era: nacías, trabajabas, te casabas y ya está. Esta generación de los 60 fue: "¡Ey, qué pasa! ¡No, no quiero hacer esto!". Por eso digo: no es lo mismo un mod inglés de los 60 que un mod español. En los años 60 no creo que hubiese muchos mods que supieran lo que era el movimiento mod. Ahora, con toda la información que nos llega, sí. Mi vecino era mod, pero es muy raro encontrar una persona que haya sido mod en los 60. Mi madre, que se vestía con la estética mod, había oído hablar de los mods, pero muy por encima. Era *middle class*, y para ella no era mod, era vestirse de la época.

Dicen que los mods son pijos...

No pijos, pero *middle class*. Los "escuteristas" sí que son *working class*. Pero lo que se ha definido como mod aquí, la mayoría somos de clase media, y sin ningún problema en decirlo.

Es diferente, en Gran Bretaña hay una tradición *working class*.

La *working class* aquí es más como un 'chav', es más como... la *working class* aquí no ha tenido esta actitud de querer comprarse ropa buena, tener su trabajo... aquí ha sido como... que no tiene esa conciencia de clase como hay en Inglaterra.

Clean living under difficult circumstances...

Aquí ha sido por poco acceso, En Inglaterra ha sido una necesidad por política social, aquí en España no ha habido eso. Ahora la gente compara la *working class* con un 'chav'. Yo creo que aquí se ha visto más desde este punto de vista.

No quiero joder tu T-shirt. ¿Así está bien?

Si.

¿Cómo te llamas?

Lluís Cardenal.

¿Qué edad tienes?

38.

¿Estás trabajando?

Trabajando.

¿A qué te dedicas?

Soy profesor de inglés y me dedico a llevar temas de pisos, alquileres... todo lo que es arrendamiento de pisos.

¿Estás pinchando también?

Bueno, pincho de vez en cuando, cuando me dicen que pinche en algún sitio; pero bueno, es más una cosa que me gusta hacer, no me lo tomo como un trabajo, sino como un divertimento.

¿Eres mod?

Sí.

¿Qué significa para ti?

Para mí significa muchas cosas, pero sobre todo significa muchas cosas concordes con los primeros, que fue toda esta obsesión que tuvieron con la ropa, sobre todo. Aparte de la ropa, el ser el primero en introducir toda esa obsesión que significaba con la ropa en todo lo que son los detalles, y siempre desde un punto de vista de querer ser primero, el que despuntaba entre los otros. Cuando hay alguien que intenta traer un traje súper chullo, con las mejores ropas, con los mejores cortes, siempre intentas introducir una cosa nueva; es complicado, es difícil, pero siempre intentas introducir una cosa que esté un poco más por allí que los demás que están intentando introducir algo.

Entonces, te sientes diferente, ¿no?

Sí, es una cosa en que ahora mismo tenemos ventaja, porque lo tienes más fácil para encontrar cosas que en ese momento eran más obvias. Pero ahora mismo encontrar todos estos detalles, esas cosas que te gustan a ti, cuestan encontrarlas. Como ahora la comercialización es mucho más difícil, hacerle entender a alguien que te está haciendo la ropa que quieres los pantalones cortados de una manera... y no entienden que estás dentro de una liga, que cuando estés en el lugar tienes que estar al máximo.

¿Es muy difícil ahora ser mod?

Bueno, ahora mismo hay tiendas donde puedes encontrar todo, pero dentro de esto, lo interesante es que tú mismo te puedes crear tu propia estética y tú mismo, con todos los referentes que puedas tener, puedes crearte tu propia manera de ser, que es lo realmente interesante. Porque lo que realmente no quieres es vestirme como cualquier persona que puede ir a Carnaby Street, entrar en cualquier tienda y en cinco minutos tener un súper traje, un súper vestido, unos súper zapatos, no, lo que tú quieres es estar un poco por delante de toda esta gente. Lo que quieres realmente es expresarte a ti mismo con todos estos detalles que te pueden poner un paso por delante de todos.

¿Y eso dentro de la escena mod?

Exacto.

¿Hay algo de solidaridad o es más de competición?

Yo creo que es una cosa de súper competición, pero es una competición amigable, porque es una competición que puedes ver en otros amigos, es como en todas las cosas, se puede plantear en todos los sentidos, es cuando ves una cosa y dices: “ostras eso lo podía haber hecho yo”, pero no lo has hecho, ha habido alguien por delante que lo ha hecho. Entonces, es la dificultad que tienes de estar por delante de los demás, y decir: “he estado un paso por delante de los que vienen detrás”. En el 2015 he estado intentándolo, expresándolo en las fiestas o en los bailes, porque en los bailes es lo mismo, intentando introducir alguna cosa nueva.

¿Conoces el libro de Richard Barnes?

Sí, sí, sí. Para todos los referentes ha sido lo que siempre hemos estado mirando, ha sido como todo lo que has querido reflejar, lo que has visto reflejado con la gente, con la forma de vestir, con los cortes, con las camisas, con los peinados, con los bailes, con todas estas cosas con las que siempre te has sentido súper identificado. Richard Barnes ha sabido plasmarlo de tal forma que para todos es impresionante.

¿Cuándo empezaste a ser mod?

A principios de los 90 tenía 14, 15 años, y estando de verano en Palamós conocí a un chico, un amigo que venía también a la playa; era un chico de Barcelona que hacía un fanzine que se llamaba *Only Mod*, él se llamaba Joan Ferrer. Hacía *Only Mod* y *Midnight Hours*. [Conocerle] fue una cosa súper fácil porque todo lo que vestía era exactamente lo que estaba buscando, no pude identificarme con alguien más que con él. Toda la ropa que llevaba era perfecta. A partir de aquí me interesé de una manera tan obsesionada que él se quedó aturdido: “Qué fuerte que te interese tanto esto y que lo puedas saber también”. Los 80 fueron una época complicada en España, porque toda la información que llegaba aquí era una información muy diversa. Del libro de Richard Barnes hay la intención del *coolness*, es lo que refleja. Y eso se ve en los 80, faltaba mucho el *coolness*.

¿Aquí en España?

Sí. Era una cosa como muy estereotipada, era como: “has de llevar esto así”, pero no encontraba este sentido de *coolness* que podías encontrar en todos los artistas de Hollywood de esa época, eso lo tenían súper claro. Steve McQueen, Paul Newman. El *coolness* lo tenían súper entendido y a partir de aquí creaban su estética. En los mods de los 80 era como un poco forzado, estereotipado.

Estás hablando mucho de la ropa. Entonces, ¿para ti la entrada [en el mundo mod] era el look más que la música?

Sí, para mí era sobre todo el *look* lo que me interesó más. La música era una cosa que venía al lado. Era sobre todo el *look* de gente como Mark Feld, que con 14,15 años tenía esta especialidad en el vestir, esa gente que con 12,13 años sabía perfectamente cómo impresionar a sus amigos. Saber a los 14,15 años cómo vestirte y impresionar a la otra gente era una actitud impresionante.

¿Cómo sabes quién es Mark Feld?

Bueno, sí, a Mark Feld lo descubrí por el libro, me interesó muchísimo sobre todo por su actitud cuando era joven. Me acuerdo de que hasta los 18-20 años no entendí todo lo que Mark Feld intentaba explicar. Era todo este sentido del *coolness*, de saber estar, partía de todo lo que hacían sus padres, de crear una estética, del saber estar, vestir, no había nada más. Cuando ves las fotos, es impresionante. Yo creo que lo interesante es toda la gente que estuvo en Stoke Newington, en Hackney; en esos momentos todos los jóvenes judíos estaban intentando salir de una postguerra brutal.

En Gran Bretaña ahora se habla mucho de los judíos... Marc Bolan. ¿Aquí no?

No, porque es distinto, porque todas las referencias que tenían aquí de ese momento eran como una cosa del momento. [Los mods británicos] estaban viviendo en el momento, estaban siguiendo el momento y aquí era distinto, aquí estábamos viviendo una represión, pero era una represión distinta. La gente que he conocido en Barcelona que en este momento estaba interesada en esa subcultura nunca estuvieron en ese momento [en situación] de entender lo que era para ellos, lo que era salir y vestir bien. El poder salir por la noche, entrar en una discoteca y ser los únicos que llevaban Americana, esa camisa, ese corte, todo eso no estaba establecido aquí. No había cultura de eso. En Inglaterra sí. Lo que es muy curioso es que en Inglaterra, al final de los 50, sabiendo cómo son los ingleses, porque eran muy suyos en esa época, fueron incapaces de mirar películas italianas o francesas... Bueno, lo más fascinante para mí de la cultura mod es que es tan complicado de entender lo que realmente fue, constantemente son tendencias italianas, francesas, son momentos, son años... que ahora lo vemos con 30 años de distancia, pero no somos capaces [de entender que] en ese momento eran meses, eran temporadas y semanas, momentos. Igual uno se había ido a Francia y había visto que un chico llevaba la americana con un corte por detrás, con un símbolo que para ellos en Inglaterra era algo súper novedoso. Y colores diferentes, tonalidades.

En *Ready, steady, go...* Hay un hico que baila con su reloj... y dos semanas después todos con el reloj así.

No, no, son súper detalles. Incluso hay algunos... es una cosa más novedosa: cuando hicieron los *double cuff links* (dobles gemelos) había una cabida para el reloj. Lo recortaron para que el reloj entrara dentro del *cuff*, para que no te molestara con la piel y estuviera dentro de la camisa, pero siempre fuera visible. Todo este tipo de detalles es súper interesante, pero lo que es súper curioso del tema, ahora mismo tenemos una ventaja brutal con Facebook. Ahora hay un grupo que es súper interesante que se llama Original Mods. En este grupo hay gente que estuvieron en la misma escena, que incluso se hacen cruces de que nosotros nos estemos interesando en eso, porque para ellos es una cosa súper normal. Para ellos era el día a día... y muchas veces se quedan alucinados de que nosotros seamos mucho más precisos en los detalles, porque para ellos es pasado por encima. Porque no eran conscientes de que estaban creando una cosa súper especial. Explican que no pensaban que en treinta años habría gente que sería tan precisa con ese momento.

¿De qué generación de mods estás hablando? ¿De los 70?

No, yo estoy hablando de los mods de finales de los 50, los primeros.

Cuando te hiciste mod, ¿cuál fue la reacción de tus amigos, familia...?

Bueno, en mi familia no entendían que en el momento en que estábamos viviendo, los 90... no entendían que yo quisiera recuperar todo lo que tenía mi padre de joven y me lo llevara a una modista que tenía aquí, en Banyoles, y me lo arreglara. No entendían, pero era una cosa súper elegante, entonces era el respeto. Pasaba todo lo que decían los mods de los 60 cuando pasaban los *riots* en Brighton y en Margate, lo que decían: "No entendemos". O sea, entraba alguien bien vestido en un bar: "No entendemos que estos chicos sean gamberros". Porque tienen buen vestir, se peinan bien, saben dónde están. Mi padres no sabían mucho de dónde venía y no acababan de entender. En el colegio me acuerdo que había tenido disputas con gente que me decía: "No, ahora mismo es otra cosa, es distinto, es otra época. No estás aprovechando lo que

hay ahora. Pero yo decía: “Bueno, la gracia de lo anterior es la perduración del tiempo, quizás lo que estáis haciendo ahora no perdurará”.

Yo también. En el 79, pidiendo cosas de mi padre o di mis hermanos grandes...

Esto fue curioso, con 14-15 años yo tenía una novia de Girona, y me acuerdo que había una gente de Barcelona que hicieron un “*Scooter Rally*” en Banyoles por el lago, y de que había una discoteca que los dejaban hacer. Y yo con 14 años, viviendo en casa de mis padres, me acuerdo que había empezado a comprar mis corbatas en una tienda de Banyoles, me acuerdo que antes de salir de casa cenamos con mi novia y mis padres, y yo no sabía hacerme el nudo de la corbata. Mi madre no entendía que quisiera salir con una corbata: “Lluís, no hay nadie que en Banyoles vaya a salir con corbata. ¿Por qué te lo quieres hacer?”. Para mí era como una cosa distinta. Yo no quería salir como todos los otros chicos de Banyoles, yo quería hacerme el nudo de la corbata, quería llevar la camisa bien, que no hubiera una arruga, que todo me sentara bien. Tenía como un tipo de obsesión que me daba igual que a mi novia le gustara o no. Si le gustaba era porque me entendía. Ella tenía que entender que era una cosa que me gustaba.

Cuándo tu empezaste, ¿había otros mods?

No, en Banyoles no. En Girona sí había una pareja de mods que eran argentinos y que tenían una tienda, restauraban muebles; nos intuíamos bastante bien. En Girona había habido otros grupos, primero hubo Los Granates, eran los primeros Lazy Sundays.

¿Del hermano de Pau? Sí. El hermano de Pau primero tuvo un grupo que se llamaba Los Granates. Curiosamente, tenían un cantante que era alucinante, porque era igual que Roger Daltrey, físicamente tenía la misma cara. Mi hermana mayor, que ahora vive en Praga, ahora conoció a los Lazy Sundays, porque estaban buscando un líder que fuera un cantante. Entonces, mi hermana, que había venido de muchas fiestas mods de Barcelona, se quedó un poco desencantada con Girona. En Girona estaban los chicos del anticuario y estaba Pau.

¿Y la escena mod ahora qué tal?

En España, yo creo que la escena mod era mucho más interesante en los 90. Lo interesante de los 90 en España era la ingenuidad para muchos de ellos. Era una escena mucho más elegante que ahora mismo. Había muchas disputas y peleas, porque todos intentaban descifrar lo que realmente era la escena. Había una mezcla del *sixties* y de lo que era realmente mod. Los *sixties* querían coger lo que había sido mod, los mods eran muy peleones, sobre todo musicalmente. Estéticamente era obvio que había grupos y peleas entre mods. Había fiestas que, según que *disc jockey*, no [iban algunos]. Los que podían introducir algo nuevo en tema de estética eran pocos, era una cosa muy desagradable, muy guerrera. Aparte había la escena *scooter boys*, que estaban muy en contra de todo esto. En los 80 había toda la escena *Rock & Roll*, sobre todo de Madrid... Había mucha pelea entre los *skin heads*, los mods de la época, los *sixties*, que no sabían dónde iban, la escena mod, que lo gastaba todo. En los 90, la escena mod pasaba siempre por el *Northern Soul* o *freakbeat*. Eran dos distinciones, y en las fiestas lo veías. Cuando pinchaban blanco del 64, los mods no bailaban. Solo bailaban los *freaks*, pero cuando pinchaban *Northern Soul*, todos lo de blanco, *ciao*. En ese momento, había un desconocimiento de lo que era el *blues* y el *Rhythm and Blues*, porque dentro del *Northern Soul* muchas de las cosas que pinchaban era *Rhythm and Blues* pero no eran conscientes en ese momento de que todo eso era mucho *Rhythm and Blues*. Para ellos era *soul*, era música negra. Entonces, había esa disputa entre música blanca y música negra.

Eneida Fever también habla de música blanca y música negra. Para un británico es un poco raro.

Dentro de todo, en los 90 éramos muy jóvenes, era muy raro que en esa época haya gente con un *background* musical. Había poca gente que hiciera diez años que escuchara esa música, era todo muy reciente. A la gente que estaba buscando cosas de jazz la veís fuera de la escena, y realmente era la única gente que podía discernir una cosa de la otra. Era una cosa muy efervescente.

¿Cuándo empezaste tú a poner música?

Entre música y ropa siempre había el toque de *coolness*, importante para mí, y en la música todo lo que venía de los finales de los 50 con Blue Note, Beautopia, Hardbop. Escuchaba música negra, Blue Note, *R&B*, *soul*, Sam Cooke... Era eso lo que quería escuchar. Era buscar las raíces de todo. Empecé con todos los grupos blancos, pero buscaba algo más. Small Faces, Yard Birds... Me gustaba ver lo que ellos estaban buscando, cómo buscaban algo más. Era no quedarte con una postal de Carnaby Street, sino que era buscar el porqué. Qué había detrás de Carnaby Street. Por qué había habido Carnaby Street. Qué era importante para la gente de Carnaby Street. Era siempre ir un poco hacia atrás. ¿Por qué Carnaby Street ha sido importante? No es una cosa que haya aparecido de repente. Es porque antes de esto ha habido gente que ha ido a buscar otras cosas.

Sabes que era un sitio muy gay y jamaicano.

Sí.

¿Hoy en día hay muchos hombre y mujeres? Por lo que veo, hay muchos más hombres mod que mujeres...

Es políticamente incorrecto, pero la escena mod ha sido una cosa ... Bueno, muchas mujeres han dicho que era una cosa súper machista, porque ha sido muy complicado, las mujeres que eran mod ha sido porque han tenido un novio mod. Cuesta mucho encontrar mujeres que se hayan interesado por lo mismo y hayan llegado sin tener una pareja. Ha costado mucho que hubieran chicas DJ's que hayan introducido temas chulos que no hubieran introducido los chicos antes. O sea, ha costado mucho que las mujeres hayan podido introducir algo en lo que los chicos hayan estado por detrás. Y esto se puede trasladar a muchas otras escenas y a muchos momentos. Yo creo que las mujeres no han tenido esa sensibilidad para introducir algo más, siempre hemos estado los chicos por delante en todas las escenas. En la escena mod hay pocos referentes de chicas que hayan sabido entender lo que es la escena. Al final de los 50, cuando ves todos los judíos y toda esta gente, no habían chicas. Quizás era una cosa que no les interesaba tanto. Es mucho más comprensible que en esa época fueran los chicos quienes introdujeran la moda y no las chicas. Era una cosa de chicos.

¿Esta tradición de los mods originales e incluso de los mods de otros países es importante para ti?

Lo que es interesante con Facebook es hablar con los mods originales de la época, ellos mismos están viviéndolo, encuentran que todo lo que para ellos fue la escena es tan complicado... porque había *newcomers* todo el rato. Ahora mismo, la definición de lo que era... ellos mismos no lo saben definir, y es lo que lo hace interesante. Perdería interés si en 20 minutos supiéramos explicar lo que es. Y para mí pierde significado con mucha gente que ahora mismo se queda con qué es el mod en 20 minutos. ¡Pierde interés! Si los de la época no lo saben definir... Igual había uno del norte de Londres que traía unas influencias diferentes de los del sur. Era imposible entenderlo, eran semanas, días. Pero lo más importante es que ninguno de ellos perdía de vista las

raíces, que eran el *coolness*. Que siendo un *working class*, pudieras entrar en una empresa y el *boss* te mirara diciendo: “ostras, tengo la pasta para poder ser el triple que tú, pero no podré nunca ser como tú”.

¿Son los mods en Cataluña *working class*?

Sí son *working class*, pero creo que aquí hay un prejuicio o malentendido. Aquí, en Banyoles, toda la gente que me conoce, sin que a mí me pregunten cuáles son mis tendencias políticas, todo el mundo, según cómo visto, me entenderá como una persona de derechas, pero nadie me ha preguntado. Entonces, en la escena mod yo creo que hay mucho de esto, o sea, hay una mala interpretación de que el *coolness* es una cosa súper de derechas.

¿Conservador? Exacto, conservador y de pijo. No pueden entender que una persona de *working class* pueda ser mucho más pija que una persona de derechas. Lo que no pueden entender es que una persona de extrema izquierda puede ser mucho más *cool* vistiendo que una persona de extrema derecha.

¿Y catalanistas? ¿Hay mods catalanistas por aquí?

Sí que los hay. Ahora mismo, hay una escena que se llama “modernista aborigen” que está siguiendo el rollo mod, pero es un malentendido, porque de repente están buscando la escena mod como una *rif*?? Catalana cuando no es. (¿con una raíz catalana?) cuando no es. Están buscando lo que podían haber sido los 60 aquí. Pero los 60 aquí no tienen nada que ver, es una cosa distinta completamente. Para mucha gente aquí, lo que quiere decir el *coolness*, saber vestir bien, el no cantar, el saber estar... aquí, lo que nadie puede entender es que tú puedas salir por la noche y el vestirse bien pueda significar algo como: soy cool, me visto bien, puedo salir por la noche”.

¿Tu *look mod* es algo radical o antisistema?

No, no es radical en el sentido de que tú no te enfrentas a nadie, sino que eres tú, que te estás sintiendo bien. Entonces, si la gente lo entiende, perfecto, y si no lo entiende, es igual. Para mí no importa. Otra cosa muy curiosa: ahora mismo, en 2015, lo que no puedes hacer es que la escena mod sea *mainstream* musicalmente. A finales de los 50, lo que hacían esta gente de Hackney y de Stoke Newington era salir completamente de lo que hacían sus padres. Lo que no podemos ahora mismo, en 2015, es vestir con ropa de los 60, porque estamos haciendo un *revival* de nosotros mismos ¡y no es esto lo que queríamos!

Los mods no son retro.

¡No es retro! A mí lo que no me interesa es encontrar una chaqueta del 62, a mí lo que me interesa es encontrar una chaqueta del 2015 que tenga todos los cortes exactos y todos los detalles que estaban buscando en los 60. Para mí esto es lo realmente interesante.

¿Miras hacia adelante o hacia atrás?

: “Tío, esa es la que yo quiero, con los decks y los puños”. Es esto para mí. La escena *rocker* y *fifties* es otra escena que está buscando siempre el coleccionismo de los 50. La escena *sixties* en este sentido es igual. La escena *sixties* del 68 está buscando chaquetas del 68. Pero la escena mod lo que está buscando es estar por delante de todo esto, porque mira hacia adelante.

¿Tres canciones típicas mod, tres clásicos para ti?

Green Onions, I'll keep on holding on, que es toda la filosofía que la gente de los 60 se quedaron con The Action, y nosotros buscamos con The Marvelettes, con toda esta escena... Y *I'm the face*. de The High Numbers.

¿Y canciones mod de España?

No, no, no, es otra concepción, es distinto. En el momento en que me estás pidiendo esto..., porque estamos aquí, pero me lo podrías decir de Francia, Alemania, Italia, y no encontraría. Hay una cosa que desde aquí, desde Francia, desde Italia... Yo puedo entender que no es una cosa nuestra, ni de los italianos, ni de los alemanes, es inglesa completamente. Y a mí me da igual no ser inglés, porque yo sé perfectamente que puedo haber entendido peor o mejor que una persona que haya vivido allí. O sea, los Brighton no pueden hacerse una cosa de aquí cuando son de allí, es comprensible. No tiene sentido. Me interesan mucho más los grupos que pudiera haber en Manchester en ese momento; había grupos chulísimos en esa época que a Londres ni llegaron. Sheffield, había una escena brutal en ese momento. Leeds era súper más interesante que lo que pudieran hacer aquí en los 80. Es mucho más interesante lo que pudiera pasar allí que aquí.

¿Cómo te llamas?

Mar: Mar.

¿Qué haces en la vida?

Mar: Soy psicóloga.

¿Y tú?

Ramón: Yo Ramón.

¿Y qué haces?

Ramón: Soy mod y solo vivo para la vida mod. [Risas]

Mar [riendo]: ¡Qué cabrón! Esto lo tienes que invalidar.

Ramón: Solo vivo para mod...

Mar: Va, tómatelo en serio.

Ramón: Trabajo en la recepción de un hospital.

Mar, explícame tu relación con el movimiento mod.

Mar: ¿La relación? La relación... paralela, no sé... te gusta la música, te gusta la estética, te gusta la época, pero sin querer considerarme ni querer en ningún momento ser mod. Y de, bueno, admiración por todo eso.

¿Admiración por qué?

Mar: Por todo eso, la estética, la música que escuchaban, que hacían...

Ramón: Yo lo mismo. El interés por los 60. Yo creo que más que nada es el interés por los 60, la música de los 60. Una cosa te lleva a la otra y al final, pues... esta gente se lo tomaba muy en serio y... realmente tenían buen gusto para todo. Luego ya...

¿Eso del gusto es muy importante para ti?

Sí, es el buen gusto... de ser serio... tanto para el *look* como para sobre todo la música.

Porque tú pinchas, ¿no?

Mar: ¿Yo? Sí. Y él también.

Ramón: ¿Y yo qué? [Risas] No, aquí la que pinchas eres tú.

Mar: ¿Yo? ¿Qué dices? Bueno, vale, sí, pincho.

Organizan fiestas?

Bueno, sí...

Explica un poco tu escena. Lo de pinchar y...

Mar: Lo de pinchar fue porque queríamos... empezamos aquí, en la placeta, en Girona, en un bar pequeñito. Llevábamos nuestra música y allí nos poníamos, para los amigos, para pasárnoslo bien y tal. Y a partir de ahí pues vas investigando, y luego vas queriendo tener más el single que el LP y no sé qué, y tener la canción, y ya vas... bueno, empezó así. Y ya es ir cogiendo más colección entre comillas, porque tampoco es colección lo que tengo, pero...y ya está. Vas conociendo gente, te van llamando... Un poco así.

¿Hay una relación entre los sixties y los mods aquí? Estoy hablando de Girona.

Mar: ¿En Girona? Bueno, en Girona relación entre los *sixties* y los mods no sé, porque no sé si lo conozco, pero... hombre, sí, entre la gente que nos gusta, sí, claro, hay relación. Pero no hay nadie, bueno, hay poca gente y toda está como dispersa, a la que le gusta todo esto. No hay un sitio donde reunirse ni hay nada. Todo muy al aire, pero bueno... Hubo épocas en que sí, en los 90 había cosas.

Ramón: En los 90 había un grupo, los Maybe Sundays, que eran un grupo de la escena *sixties*. Fueron mods en cierto modo, pero era básicamente *Rhythm and Blues* y psicodelia.

¿Qué significan para ti los mods en Cataluña hoy en día?

Ramón: No sé, es que lo mod, ya sabes que es muy complicado, un concepto complicado que abarca muchos tipos de música, mucha escena distinta, y a mí es lo que menos me interesa.

¿Por?

Ramón: Porque sí, porque yo, por ejemplo, hay cosas que me interesan de las primeras bandas mod de *Rhythm and Blues* inglesas que me gustan mucho. Pero luego, cuando veo gente que es súper mod y súper ortodoxa y tal, que escuchan la música que escuchan de, por ejemplo, *revival* o de grupos más 80s, no tenemos absolutamente nada que ver. Otra cosa es la actitud... que sí... del *punk*, ¿no? Del momento. Musicalmente, yo me quedo en los 60.

¿Tú igual?

Mar: Bueno, sí, algo parecido en mucho. ¿La pregunta cuál era? [Risas] Es que me he perdido con la explicación. ¿Qué pienso del movimiento mod ahora?

Ahora, sí.

Bueno, quizá para mí está como desfasado. No tiene nada que ver con lo que eran los mods de antes. Hay alguna gente que vive como queriendo solo emular todo lo que hacían los mods: el vestir tal, la música no sé cuántos... Pero claro, es que no es la época que era antes. Es otra época, no sé puede comparar.

Para mí, los mods originales eran súper progresistas, y los de ahora no los son.

No, porque claro, los mods de ahora van para atrás. En vez de ir hacia delante. Miran hacia atrás, no hacia delante. Y los mods de antes miraban hacia delante, buscaban lo moderno. Yo creo que ahora no son mods. Son fans de mods. Algo así, ¿no?

¿Qué piensas de los grupos de *revival*? ¿Los pones cuando pinchas?

No, es que no escucho, yo... y para mí, cuando escucho a los *revival* para mí es *punk*, para mí no es música mod, no tiene nada que ver. La conexión esta, a quien le gusta encontrará la conexión, pero yo creo que la conexión vino cronológicamente en su momento, pero ahora no se entiende, ahora es como: "pero ¿esto es mod?". No lo entiendo, no lo sé, a mí me pasa esto. [riendo] Igual es mi ignorancia, eh, también...

Ramón: Estoy de acuerdo ¡al cuadrado!

Mar: No, que igual es mi ignorancia, tampoco soy una experta en todo esto. Es la sensación que te da desde fuera.

Ramón: A nosotros nos interesa... los 60.

Mar: Que no digo que no me guste el *revival* mod, que yo escucho, por ejemplo, The Jam y me gusta. Pero es *punk*. Lo que escucho se parece mucho más al *punk* que a los *sixties*.

Ayer dijiste que es complicado encontrar algo diferente en un grupo de *revival*.

Ramón: No... no lo entiendo. Me gusta el *punk* del 77. Pero el *revival* mod por la parte *punk* sí que me puede interesar. Pero lo que son los grupos de *revival* no me interesan. Pero no porque sean... o sea, no me interesan musicalmente. Luego, si son mods o no son mods... no me interesa este debate. Yo creo que lo mod se acaba en el 63. Como máximo. Lo mod se acaba en el 63, por lo que dicen. Y de hecho todos los grupos que salen nuevos, todos los grupos mod, entendidos como mod, pues salen de este *Rhythm and Blues* de esta época, ¿no?

Aquí, en Cataluña, tal vez también en España, se habla mucho de *black* y *white*. ¿Qué significa?

Mar: Porque hay gente que solo escucha música hecha por los americanos negros. Y gente que sólo escucha música inglesa de los 60. Y hay como esta separación a veces.

Ramón: Y hay gente que escucha ambas.

Mar: Hay gente que escucha ambas. Pero siempre hay, por ejemplo en el Euroyeyé, sala de blanco y sala de negro, y siempre hay una separación, y no puedes escuchar lo mismo en todos los lados. Y gente que solo... bueno, hay gente de todo, ¿eh? Tú te vas de una sala a otra, y hay gente que le gustan las dos cosas. Pero es como que lo mod es lo negro. Es la sala negra. Eso es lo mod auténtico. Esa es la sensación que yo tengo. Y luego lo otro es más *sixties*.

Ramón: Pero tiene su lógica, ¿no?

Mar: Pero sí, tiene su lógica, porque los mods escuchaban...

Ramón: Los mods originarios lo que hacían era recuperar la música negra. Cuando un blanco se pone a hacer música negra está bien, pero no es lo mismo, ¿no? Y ya no digamos en el 67, ¿no?, en el 67-68, cuando la cosa acaba con pelos largos y bigotes, ¿no? Pero a mí me interesa esto, eh...

Mar: Pero ya es otra historia.

Ramón: Claro.

Mar: ¿Pero en otros sitios no pasa esto?

Ramón: No, no, aquí en Barcelona... yo lo sé por amigos ex mod... en los 90, en Barcelona, sí que hubo este momento de separación. Lo blanco y lo negro. Trabajaron juntos, pero hubo un momento en que se dividieron, la escena se dividió. Ahora, por ejemplo, el único club importante que hay en Cataluña, que es el Boiler, es negro, es de música negra.

Mar: Muy pocas veces escuchas DJ's que pinchen blanco.

Ramón: Bueno, muy pocas... una o dos, ¿no?

Mar: Por eso. Una o dos en diez años. Bueno, no hemos ido a todas las ediciones, pero no hay DJ's que pinchen música blanca entre comillas.

Nat?: ¿Y existe todavía, blanco y negro?

Mar: Claro, claro.

Ramón: Lo que pasa es que no hay tampoco, a nivel de gente que conocemos, ninguna rivalidad. Son escenas distintas. O por ejemplo en los *weekends*, como el Purple Weekend o el yeyé, sí que hay dos pistas siempre. Suele haber dos pistas, y está bien. A mí, como me gustan los dos tipos de música...

Mar: Pero lo curioso es que la pista grande es siempre la música blanca y la pista pequeña es la música negra.

Ramón: ¿Sí? ¡No...!

Mar: ¡Sí! Tanto en el yeyé como en el... y cuando... la mayoría de clubs que conocemos... así más... ¡son de música negra, todos! Bueno, no es así exactamente, quizás...

Ramón: No, no, sí, sí, en el yeyé es verdad. El Purple...

Mar: No, no, el Purple no, porque sí es verdad que en la pista grande también pinchaban...

Ramón: Negro.

Mar: Negro, sí, sí. Porque yo me acuerdo de ir... *soul* y tal... Pero en el yeyé sí, en el yeyé...

Graham: Pero esto en la onda *sixties*, esto no es en la onda pura mod, ¿no?

Mar: Es *sixties*, sí. Bueno, pero allí van todos los mods, y van los *sixties*. Y van... de todo.

¿Y los mods son súper elitistas o no?

Mar: Yo creo que hay de todo, claro. Aquí en Barcelona, no.

Ramón: En Barcelona, de hecho, pocos mods.

Mar: Sí.

Ramón: Mods así, ortodoxos, eh. Hay mucha gente de la escena *sixties*. Pero mods...

Mar: De los demás tampoco conocemos tanto como para decir... yo al menos no... Sí que hay muchos muy ortodoxos, pero... yo no los conozco. [Ríe].

¿Y los mods se mezclan en política, como los redskins?

Mar: No. Puedes conocer su política, pero no, yo creo que no se mezclan. No. Puedes estar hablando con alguien que es justamente la idea contraria políticamente.

Ramón: No, no hay una línea política definida.

¿No son como los redskins, por ejemplo, que es evidente que son...?

Mar: No. No, al menos...

¿Y en la onda *sixties* y mod, hay más chicos o chicas? Por ejemplo, históricamente los mods eran muy de chicos y no de chicas...

Yo creo que sí, que cuadra un poco, que hay más chicos mods que chicas... y *sixties* hay más tías, ¿no?

Ramón: No lo sé.

¿Cómo te sientes cuando pinchas? Como mujer, ¿no?

Mar: Pues la verdad es que no... no sé cómo...

Ramón: No, hay bastantes... hay bastantes chicas.

Mar: Como mujer, no sé, creo que ya hay bastantes, pero claro, siempre menos. Y que cuando ves programas de DJ's siempre ves que muchas veces no hay ni una. Y dices: "¡joder, pero si hay un montón de tías que pinchan bien!". Pero ahí también se mezclan rollos de colegas, de... este pincha porque es mi colega. Tampoco puedes decir que sea por discriminación, ¿no? Igual las tías tampoco se hacen tanto... se meten tanto en la escena, ¿no? También es como: "bueno, pincho, pero...". Bueno, eso es al menos lo que hago, eh, no me meto allí, yo. Pincho porque me gusta, pero no me meto a saco para pinchar siempre. Hay gente que vive estas ganas de pinchar tan... Lo mío no es tan exagerado. Me gusta la música y ponerla para la gente, pero no es algo que sea... no sé.

¿Eso de ser mod aquí no es una cosa muy política, entonces?

Ramón: No, aquí no. Aquí no.

Mar: Yo creo que no.

Ramón: En Cataluña, no. En el resto, tampoco, creo.

¿Y para ti, Mar, qué es un mod?

Mar: Pues es una persona de los años 60, joven, adolescente... bueno, joven entre los 16 y los veintipocos... y que le gustaba la música, quería buscar cosas nuevas, quería pasárselo bien... Y con un gusto por la estética, una estética muy concreta... Pero vaya, ahora yo creo que no hay mods. Para mí no.

¿Y para ti?

Ramón: Sí, igual, alguien que buscaba buscar la diferencia a base de esto, de un determinado gusto para la música, la estética... y esto, el individualismo, ¿no? A mí es lo que me atrae un poco, ¿no? Este individualismo.

¿Por qué?

Ramón: Bueno, porque marcas un poco... la... no sé. No sé, también creo que va un poco con el carácter de aquí, ¿no? De los catalanes. Somos un poco así. Sí, yo creo que sí. Somos bastante individualistas. Lo que no quiere decir que seamos unos asociales.

Mar: ¿Pero qué quiere decir "individualistas"?

Ramón: Pues que todos somos muy...

Mar: Te gusta ir a la tuya.

Ramón: Ir a la tuya, tener las cosas más o menos claras. A tu manera, y tú tienes tu mundo. Te has montado tu mundo, y es tu mundo. Evidentemente, cuando te interesa algo, es algo colectivo, ya sea lo mod o lo *sixties* de cualquier escena... pero en algo muy personal.

Pero entonces los mods no son antisistema, ¿no?

Mar: Bueno, es algo, un poco... ahora, sobre todo, ¿no?, aquí, en nuestro entorno es...

Ramón: ¡Aquí es súper *underground*!

Mar: Es *underground*.

Ramón: Es súper *underground*.

Mar: Porque no existe. En Girona, no hay mods. En Barcelona, hay poquitos. No es algo que se conozca, la gente aquí no sabe qué es un mod.

Ramón: Sí. Bueno, ahora está un poco de moda, todo está de moda, con Internet.

Mar: Bueno, pero...

Ramón: Cualquier cosa se puede convertir en...

Mar: ¿Pero alguien cree que...? Aquí alguien dice: "Esto es mod"; o: "Este es un mod. Y dices: "¡Pero qué dice!". Es como no conocer el concepto y haber oído la palabra, ¿no? Pero que... hace poco nadie sabía lo que era. Aquí, en nuestro entorno *gironí*. Aquí es bastante *underground* ser mod. O que te guste todo esto. No hay gente que conozcas... así, en grandes cantidades, que le guste todo esto.

Supón que estas pinchando mañana y alguien te dice: "oye, pon tres discos mod". ¿Qué pondrías?

Mar: ¿De los que tengo?

Claro...

Mar: Pues.... ostia, perdona, pero ahora tengo un lapsus. Pondría *Somewhere Down the Line* de... Little... espérate... no me saldrá el nombre ahora, eh. Little Johnny Taylor. *Barefootin*, de Robert Parker. O pondría, yo qué sé... ahora me voy a quedar ahí en blanco, con otra...

Ramón: Yo pondría Los Flechazos. [Risas]

Mar: Qué cabrón. Brighton 64. [Risas]

Ramón: Y...

Mar: Ah, ya está. Etta James... *Something's Got a Hold On Me*, por ejemplo. Y ya está, ¿no? Tengo más, eh, pero estas son las primeras que me han venido...

Ramón: No sé, por decir algo blanco de *Rhythm and Blues*... no sé, cualquier... es que no sé.

¿Y música mod de Cataluña o España?

Mar: Yo no tengo nada.

Ramón: Yo tampoco. [Risas]

Porque la música que pincháis normalmente es negra, ¿no?

Mar: Ramón, no. Yo pincho solo negro, sí. Normalmente sí. Yo de blanco tengo los Kinks, tengo los Small Faces, tengo... pero no los pincho, solo pincho negro. Esta separación, que decimos...

¿Cómo te llamas?

Pablo.

¿Qué edad tienes?

42.

¿Qué haces en la vida?

Tengo una tienda, soy propietario..., podría ir mejor.

¿Eres mod?

Sí, bueno, fui mod. pero me desvinculé del tema. Tuve niños, pero después volví a tomar conciencia de ser mod. En realidad, nunca he dejado de serlo, pero tuve una época que estaba en otros temas: no escuchaba tanta música, no me compraba tanta ropa...

¿Qué significa de ser mod para ti?

Es un estilo de vida vinculado a la música y a la estética mod.

¿Cómo empezaste?

Tengo un hermano que tenía un grupo de música y en la banda había un mod. Me empezó a gustar música del 77, The Clash, The Jam... y fue introduciéndome en los clásicos. Empecé a investigar.

¿Tocabas en un grupo?

Sí, tenía un grupo, tocaba la batería, pero más como *hobby*.

¿Y tus padres, qué tal con tu hermano y tú en plan mod?

Bueno, mi hermano no era mod. Mis padres, como eran mayores, nos dejaban bastante libertad. Bueno, a veces nos decían algo por las pintas que llevábamos. Más la gente, que nos decía: "pareces de una película".

¿Qué tipo de música escuchabas?

Empecé con bandas del 77 y después The Who, The Kinks, las grandes bandas de los 60, y después escuché más música negra, *soul*, *Rhythm and Blues*, *ska*. Hoy escucho más música negra o jazz.

¿Bailar es importante para ti?

Sí, me gusta bailar. Pero pocas ocasiones. En casa con los niños.

Dame tres canciones Mod que son emblemáticos para ti.

Booker T and the MGs – Green Onions, The Jam – Going Underground, The Who – I Can't Explain

¿Hay escena mod ahora en Girona?

Bueno, hay cosas, porque ha vuelto a estar de moda el *soul* comercial tipo Amy Winehouse y la gente está más dispuesta a escuchar eso. Se creó un club en el Jardins de la Mercè y Lluís Cardenal pone música. Y una chica va a empezar 'Barefootin' en el 'Yeah!' Está arriba, la escena mod, pero engloba mod, *sixties*, *soul*

¿Antes había grupos distintos de mods?

Sí, sobre todo en los años 90 había dos ramas: el mod abierto, que escuchaba garaje, grupos de los 60, Los Negativos, Brighton 64, etc., y después había el mod cerrado, que era mas *clean*, más purista; escuchaba música negra.

¿Y tú dónde?

Yo estaba entre las dos; quizás me gustaba más la música blanca que negra. Seguía más grupos de garaje o *revival*. Ahora lo veo diferente, todo se mezcla. Antes había fiestas, una solo de música negra, otra solo de música blanca con garaje o *revival*.

¿Y había algo político?

No. Bueno, el mod cerrado era más político conservador y el mod abierto más *beatnik* o *hippy*, más abierto. Pero no se puede generalizar.

Los mods sí que escuchan *ska*, pero solo de los originales. Madness era más *ska* popular, los mods se querían diferenciar más. Los *skins* sí que escuchaban más *ska*. Y bueno, las fiestas, cuando había mods y *skins*, eran un poco así... algunos...

Había chispas?

No... la gente tenía miedo, era un tema intimidatorio. No era tan conflictivo como en Inglaterra, pero aquí estaba vinculado al fútbol. Esa onda a mí no me iba tanto... de ir al fútbol y pelearse. En los años 90 había esto y la sociedad relacionaba los *skins* con violencia; el diario de un *skin* habla de esta época donde se relaciona *skin* con la violencia y el mal. Los pobres no tenían culpa, pero estéticamente no se diferenciaba la ideología; con Harrington y "Doc" Martens la gente no sabía si era nazi o *redskin*.

¿Son importantes para ti las diferentes generaciones de mods?

Sí, desde aquí se buscaba más a los mods originales, porque no había. En los 80 sí que [surgieron] los fanzines, los *meetings*, *white weekends*, y esos sí que tenían peso. A lo largo de los años... eran la generación un poco [de los] mayores.

¿Y eran referencia?

Sí que eran una referencia de conocimiento, de música, de estilo de ropa. Antes, supongo que se valoraba más a quien conocía los orígenes o quien se había ido a Londres a comprar discos, ropa que aquí todavía no había. No había Internet. Íbamos a Barcelona y a Perpignan. Era un referente, Perpignan; hasta más que Barcelona.

¿Y de otros países también? No tanto, bueno, muchos franceses e ingleses que venían a *meetings* y a veces venían a pinchar. También había holandeses, alemanes...

¿Cuándo empezó el movimiento mod en Cataluña?

Para mí empezó al final de los 70, principio de los 80. Son los años en que en Gran Bretaña había *revival*. Es cuando los mods de aquí conocen a los mods a través de The Jam y estos grupos *revival*. Al principio se descubre más el *revival*, The Jam o *ska*, y después los orígenes del movimiento.

¿Entonces para ti los mods es una cosa nostálgica? ¿Miras hacia atrás o hacia delante?

Yo lo veo como un estilo de vida; quizás si estuviéramos en los 60 un mod llevaría barba.... Pero hay algunos puntos que son permanentes, como la música, los *scooters*, los zapatos. El movimiento evoluciona: en el 2000 y poco pensaba que no había mods, pero vi que sí, que habían salido nuevos mods, y eso quizás me ha hecho ver que no era tan malo, que no era el único mod en el mundo. Hoy en día, con Internet conectas fácilmente, puedes seguir gente de Barcelona, de Inglaterra, o un grupo; bueno, evoluciona más rápido y conecta más.

Has dicho un estilo de vida. ¿Es más que la estética entonces?

Sí, pero bueno, creo que es un estilo de vida, pero no se centra únicamente en los mods. Es individualismo, gusto por la buena música, pero no es una cosa exclusiva de los mods. Los mods son conocedores de música, no son analfabetos musicalmente, música negra de Jamaica, *ska*..., en cambio, mucha gente que no haya sido mod no conoce tanta historia de la música o historia de los movimientos estéticos de moda. Los mods pueden conocer a los *beatniks* a los *redskins*, mucha gente no conoce esto.

Esto se valora a la hora de... Tú puedes ser mod y gustarte cierto tipo de música, pero con una persona que entiende de música, aunque sea totalmente diferente, puedes conectar; tiene su tipo de música, tú tienes el tuyo, música blanca de *country*, que... es un conocimiento también, un mod que no sabe de música no puede llegar tan profundamente, pero sí conoce otros temas.

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