

THE STYLE OF THE MODS

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The war created money. It made massive infusions of money into every level of society. Suddenly classes of people whose styles of life had been practically invisible had the money to build monuments to their own styles ... (For instance) ... The important thing about the building of Las Vegas is not that the builders were gangsters but that they were proles. They celebrated very early, the new style of life - using the money pumped in by the war to show a prole vision of style. The usual thing has happened, of course. Because it is prole, it gets ignored, except on the most sensational level.

The above quote is taken from the Tom Woolfe's The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby, first published in the States in 1964. I have chosen to introduce my piece with a section from this book, not only because it throws light directly on my theme, but also because that collection of essays is so characteristic of its time - containing many of the assumptions, the obsessions, the extravagancies of expression which, I think, mark off the journalism of the sixties from most of the earlier writing. The prose style is fast, flashy, highly visual and crammed with adjectives, the tone varies from a barely controlled hysteria to a wittily understated cool, the essays included deal exclusively with the amorphous new popular culture, which, though already being emulated by the smart set of New York was being created from beneath, by those deprived of the fruits of mainstream American culture; by the dispossessed, the lower working-class, and principally the young lower working-class - in Woolfe's own words "ratty people with ratty hair and dermatitis." Tom Woolfe's obsessive interest in youth, in the myth of affluence, his iconoclasm, his voracious appetite for visual image and all things new were to become representative of the decade.

The year in which Woolfe's book appeared is also particularly appropriate, as 1964 saw the first Bank Holiday seaside confrontations between mod and rocker and gave the British working-class teenager his first major splash of publicity and notoreity since the early '50s, when the Teddy Boys were regularly used to fill a vacant column or two in the national tabloid press.

By the end of the Mods phenomenon (circa 1968) the early articulations of straightforward, uncomprehending middle-class outrage had been largely abandoned, to be replaced in the papers by a cautious ambivalence, whilst to recognise the vast potential of the youth market and had begun to exploit that market to the full. The six weekly magazines and countless columns addressed exclusively to a young mod audience, the barrage of interviews and music with which the private radio stations bombarded Britain's ears, the new dances, and new fashions paraded weekly before the nation's jaundiced eyes on programmes such as Ready Steady Go and Whole Scene Going effectively popularised the mod life-style and simultaneously disarmed and deprived it of its original meaning.

By 1968, Tom Woolfe's language (which I shall henceforth call Woolfish or Wolverine) was the language of the airwaves and it too had lost its original impact. The colour supplements carried long appreciative features on the very latest developments in youth cultures, the Beatles had their M.B.E's, the mods had finished their apprenticeships and were comfortably

settled in marriage, and everybody awaited the new youth style, which hopefully would be equally spectacular. The rebellion of youth had become a valuable frozen asset upon which the media could draw for its most sensational images, the original spontaneous evolution of a style had finally created a whole new "pop" industry to serve its needs, and in the process the elaborate rituals of youth people had become predictable and institutionalised.

All youth styles are threatened with the eventual neutralisation of any oppositional meaning. The mods were, perhaps, particularly susceptible to this combination of limited acceptance and full blooded commercial exploitation. In describing the mod-style, I will not, therefore, ignore the treatment it received from the media nor its perpetual courting of publicity. Rather its interaction with the media and "pop industry" dramatically highlight the vulnerability of all youth styles, their susceptibility to manipulation and emasculation.

I shall start therefore with a short analysis of the Bank Holiday incidents, the coverage they received in the news media, and the relationship between the mod as performer and the crowd-camera as audience.

Action! Camera! Roll them Rockers over!

Stan Cohen in his book about the effects of media amplification on the mods and rocker phenomenon: Folk Devils and Moral Panics, describes how every Bank Holiday the stage is set at the South Coast resorts, mods or no mods, for the presentation of any spontaneous spectacles the crowds might produce.

There is a certain shabbiness .. the overstrained and overpriced commercial facilities, a strange sensation of crowds moving randomly around one, and the all-pervasive smell of onions, hot dogs and fish and chips; the sense of cheapness and somehow having been cheated.

Trouble or excitement must be created - passive audiences must become active initiators of a "happening". The mods were extraordinarily inclined to make this transition, and would have been especially desperate for "action". Whether or not pills were as widespread a part of the mod life-style as is generally claimed, (and I personally believe they were important) amphetamines were symbolically enshrined at the heart of the mod sub-culture). Amphetamine-induced states were at least simulated and account for the nervous, insecure, and anxious behaviour of the "hard mods" whom Cohen describes as being always at the centre of any trouble. In the words of Denzil, the mod interviewed in the Sunday Times colour supplement, pills make you "edgy and argumentable". The state is perhaps best described as perpetually postponed climax, an extraordinary sensitivity to the "action" potential and realisable in a given situation, accompanied by an intensification of the desire to be the instigator of that action. Pills only made the "sense of cheapness" and of "somehow having been cheated" more acutely felt and enabled the mod, through sheer frustration to force the potential violence out of the situation and get fully involved in it. Simultaneously, the attractiveness of such an involvement would have been greatly enhanced by the opportunity it offered of taking part in

a spectacle, at once outrageous and inexplicable to the crowds which automatically gathered to gape. The mod could certainly be assured of such a crowd, and perhaps if lucky (like the mod who waved the flags at Margate at the press cameraman's request) he might even make the media ... become pure image, frozen for all time in the media's memory bank. He knew he was guaranteed at least some publicity, some coverage as the boy discouraged from any future active involvement, by his fame at Margate; nonetheless implied in his remark:

I'll stay at home and watch all the other goons on the TV.

Performances were, moreover, facilitated by the geography of the average British resorts. The promenades often constitute a series of tiers or levels similar to the seats in a cinema or theatre sloping down toward the screen or stage (eg the beach) admirably suited for the impromptu theatricals of 1964. The promenade at Brighton for instance, overlooks a lower walk which itself overlooks the beach and sea. Often incidents (generally conveying a vague impression of violence, or excitement - eg. the two who threw coins at the dancing drunk and drew a crowd) took place on this intermediary level as people gathered to watch from the top - (the ideal spectacular sport, perhaps - tantalisingly close physical proximity to the actors with the physical barriers nonetheless providing safety). It is significant that many of the so-called acts of hooliganism centred around the sea (throwing girls in, throwing stones at a policeman's helmet) which allowed for the largest possible audience. In Brighton these acts of hooliganism most frequently occurred between the two piers so that there was a chance of an audience on three sides - maximum exposure. The central role the crowd played as catalysts for the various "outrages" was generally recognised and criticised accordingly causing a reporter from Tribune to comment:

The fact is that we have become a nation of viewers, looking out of our car window or through the telly screen and getting vicarious thrills.

There was a tendency for the younger mods to act out the conflict in the terms defined by the media after the Bank Holiday troubles. Once the initial episodes were proved to hold the formula for apotheosis into media image, they were replicated at every large coastal resort, on every Bank Holiday for years to come.(1) The 1964 incidents dramatically illustrate how the media and its young subject interact. I would suggest that the subject's willingness to dance for the camera at Margate, Brighton and Hastings, exposes the "fatal flaw" in youth culture and indicates its basic susceptibility to control and exploitation at other levels.(2)

Finally, the press and television handled the Bank Holiday performances in such a way as to displace them from their context and render them ridiculous. As the information passed through the normal filtering process - the selective eye of the camera, the reporter and the editor - the original meaning was necessarily lost and only the performance remained - a useless residue - a parody of the total experience. The Guardian for example, equated confrontations between Mods and Rockers with the "medieval tournament." George Melly in his book Revolt into Style described how "mod facing a rocker was a spectacle not dissimilar in visual impact to the

confrontation of armed gladiator and man with trident and net in the Roman arena." In a later issue of The Guardian the following passage appeared:

It all looked like a pedestrian Western, with the rival gangs engaging each other, and the police in the role of sherrif's posse arriving at the last minute.

The last word from the media must be what it "looked like", it seems unnecessary to penetrate the phenomenon which is being reported. Thus the incidents were deprived of all meanings save those verifiable within the various media themselves - stereotypes derived from unreal, remote, and fantastic situations themselves only comprehensible in terms of the media (in this case the Western and Roman epic genres are the relevant ones). The media had shifted the interpretation of the 1964 events onto ground and henceforth would attempt to direct the mod style, bombard it with its own language, its own codes, its own image.

The Meaning of Mod:

1) Its appearance.

Like most primitive vocabularies, each word of Wolverine, the universal Pop Newspeak, is a prime symbol and serves a dozen or a hundred functions of communication. Thus "mod" came to refer to several distinct styles, being essentially an umbrella-term used to cover everything which contributed to the recently launched myth of "swinging London."

Thus groups of art-college students following on Mary Quant's footsteps and developing a taste for the outrageous in clothing were technically "mods"(3), and Lord Snowdon earned the epithet when he appeared in a polo necked sweater and was hastily grouped with the "new breed" of "important people" like Bailey and Terrence Steamp who showed a "swinging" disregard for certain dying conventions. But for our purposes, we must limit the definition of the mods to working class teenagers who lived mainly in London and the new towns of the South and who could be readily identified by characteristic hairstyles, clothing ect. According to Melly, the progenitors of this style appear to have been a group of working class dandies, possibly descended from the devotees of the Italianate style; known through the trade world as mods who were dedicated to clothes and lived in London. Only gradually and with popularisation did this group accumulate other distinctive identity symbols (the scooter, the pills, the music). By 1963, the all night R and B clubs held this group firmly to Soho and central London, whilst around the ring roads the Ton Up boys thundered on unperturbed, nostalgically clinging on to rock and roll and the tougher working class values.

Whether the mod/rocker dichotomy was every really essential to the self-definition of either group remains doubtful. The evidence suggests that the totally disparate goals and life styles of the two groups left very little room for interaction of any kind. After the disturbances of Whitsun 1964, at Clacton, in which hostilities between mods and rockers played no important part (the main targets for aggression being the pathetically inadequate entertainment facilities and small shopkeepers) the media accentuated and rigidified the opposition between the two groups,

setting the stage for the conflicts which occurred at Margate and Brighton during the Easter weekend and at Hastings during the August Bank Holiday. The fact that the mod clashed before the camera with the rocker is, I suspect, more indicative of the mod's vanity than of any really deeply felt antagonism between the two groups. The mods rejected the rocker's crude conception of masculinity, the transparency of his motivations, his clumsiness, and embraced a less obvious style, which in turn was less easily ridiculed or dismissed by the parent culture. What distinguished the Bank Holidays of 1964 from all previous bank holidays is not the violence (this was a fairly regular feature) but the public debut of this style at the coastal resorts. The very visible presence at Margate, Brighton, and Hastings of thousands of disturbingly ordinary, even smart teenagers from London and its environs who somehow seemed to constitute a threat to the old order (the retired colonels, the tourist-oriented tradesmen who dominated the councils of the south coast resorts). The mods, in Dave Laing's words "looked alright but there was something in the way they moved which adults couldn't make out." They seemed to consciously invert the values associated with smart dress, to deliberately challenge the assumptions, to falsify the expectations derived from such sources. As Stan Cohen puts it they were all the more disturbing by the impression they gave of "actors who are not quite in their places."

I shall go on now to analyse the origins of this style in the experience of the mods themselves by attempting to penetrate and decipher the mythology of the mods. Finally, I should like to offer an explanation of why an overtly inoffensive style could manage to project menace so effectively.

2) Halfway to Paradise on the Piccadilly Line.

The mod's adoption of a sharp but neat and visually understated style can be explained only partly by his reaction to the rocker's gradiloquence. It is partly explained by his desire to do justice to the mysterious complexity of the metropolis in his personal demenour, to draw himself closer to the Negro whose very metabolism seemed to have grown into, and kept pace with that of the city. It is partly explained by his unique and subversive attitude toward the commodities he habitually consumed (more of this second point later).

The life style to which the mod ideally aspired revolved around night clubs and city centres which demanded a certain exquisiteness of dress. In order to cope with the inavoidable minute by minute harassments, the minutiae of highspeed interactions incumbent upon an active nite-life in the city, the mod had to be on the ball at all times functioning at an emotional and intellectual frequency high enough to pick up the slightest insult or joke or challenge or opportunity to make the most of the precious night. Thus speed(4) was needed to keep mind and body synchronised perfectly. His ideal model-mentor for this ideal style would be the Italian mafiosi-type so frequently depicted in crime films shot in New York (one step above London in the mod hierarchy). The Brooklyn sharp kid had been emulated by the wartime black marketeer, the "wide boy" and the post war "spiv" and the style was familiar, readily accessible and could be easily worked up. Alternatively, an equally acceptable, perhaps even more desirable image was projected by the Jamaican hustler (or later "rudie") whom the mod could see with increasing regularity as the decade wore on operating with an enviable

"savoir-faire" from every available street-corner. Thus the pork pie hat and dark glasses were at one time essential with mod accessories. The grey people (who oppressed and constricted both mod and negro) held a monopoly on daytime business, the blacks held more shares in the action of the night hours.(5)

Another and perhaps more pervasive influence can be traced to that of the indigenous British gangster style the evolution of which coincides almost exactly with that of the mods.(6) With the introduction of the Gaming Laws in 1963, London had become a kind of European Las Vegas and offered rich rewards and a previously unattainable status to Britain's more enterprising criminals. The famous protection gangs of the Krays and the Richardsons (from East and South London respectively; both major breeding grounds of mod) began converging on the West End, and many working class teenagers followed their elders into the previous inviolable citadels of Soho and Westminster to see what fruits were offered. The city centre, transfigured and updated by the new nightlife, offered more opportunities for adventure and excitement to the more affluent working class youth and the clandestine, intergang warfare, the ubiquitous, brooding menace, provided a more suitable background to the mods ideal life-style. As the gangsters stuck faithfully to their classic Hollywood scripts, dressing in sober suits, adopting classic Capone poses(7), using sawn off shotguns on each other, petrol bombing each others premises, being seen in whispered consultation with bespectacled "consigheres", Soho became the perfect soil on which thriller fiction fantasies and subterranean intrigue could thrive; and this was the stuff for which the mod lived and in which his culture steeped.(8) It was as if the whole submerged criminal underworld had surfaced, in 1965, in the middle of London, and had brought with it its own submarine world of popular fiction(+), sex and violence fantasy. As it acquired power it explored the possibilities for realising those fantasies - the results were often bizarre and frequently terrifying. The unprecedented marriage between East and South London criminal cultures and West End high life and the Chelsea jet sets bore some strange and exotic fruit, and one of its most exquisite creatures was the Soho mod.

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Mugshot of the Ideal Mod

In the Sunday Times magazine of April 1964, Denzil, the 17 year old mod interviewee fulfils the ideal mod role, looking excruciatingly sharp in all the photographs and describing an average week in the life of the ideal London mod.

Monday night meant dancing at the Mecca, the Hammersmith Palais, the Purley Orchard, or the Streathen Locarno.

Tuesday meant Soho and the Scene club

Wednesday was Marquee night.

Thursday was reserved for the ritual washing of the hair.

Friday meant the Scene again.

Saturday afternoon usually meant shopping for clothes and records, Saturday night was spent dancing and rarely finished before 9 or 10 Sunday morning.

Sunday evening meant the Flamingo, or, perhaps, if one showed signs of weakening, could be spent sleeping.

Even allowing for exaggeration the number of mods who managed to even approximate this kind of life could not exceed a few hundred, perhaps at most a few thousand. In fact probably no one possesses the super human stamina (even with a ready supply of pills), let alone the hard cash which would be required to get a mod through this kind of schedule but the fact remains that Denzil did not let the side down. He has pushed the group-fantasy, projected the image of the impossible good life that everybody needed right down and onto the indelible printed page. And meanwhile, every mod was preparing himself psychologically so that if the opportunity should arise, if the money was there, if Welwyn Garden City should be metamorphosed into Piccadilly Circus, he would be ready. Every mod was existing in a ghost world of gangsterism, luxurious clubs, and beautiful women even if reality only amounted to a draughty Parker anorak, a beaten up Vespa, and fish and chips out of a greasy bag.

A Snapshot of the Standard Mod

The reality of mod life was somewhat less glamorous. The average Mod, according to the survey of the 43 Margate offenders interviewed in the Barker-Little Sample, earned about £11 a week, was either a semi-skilled or more typically an office worker who had left Secondary-modern school at 15. 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. The mods are often described as exploring the upward option, but it seems probable that this has been deduced incorrectly from the mod's fanatical devotion to appearance, and the tendency to boast when in a blocked or amphetamine-induced state. As Denzil says: "There's a lot of lying when you're blocked about the number of girls you go out with in the week, how much your suit costs etc ..." The archetypal mod would, I think, be more likely to be the 18 year old interviewed in the Barker-Little Sample whose only articulated ambition - to become the owner of a Mayfair drinking club towered so high above his present occupation as a meat porter that he no longer seriously entertained it; but had realistically if resentfully accepted society's appraisal of his worth ("more or less manual - that's all I am"), and existed purely for and through his leisure-time. The bell-boy hero in Pete Townshend's new rock opera about the mod experience - "Quadrophenia" is apparently, similarly resigned to an insignificant and servile role during the day, but is all the more determined to make up for it at night. Like the 15 year old office boy in Woolfe's essay "The Noonday Underworld", whose clothes are more exquisitely tailored than the bosses, the mod was determined to compensate for his relatively low position in the day-time status-stakes over which he had no control, but exercising complete dominion over his private estate - his appearance and choice of leisure pursuits.

The wide gap between the inner world where all was under control, contained

and lit by self-loves and the outer world, where all was hostile, daunting, and loaded in "their" favour was bridged by amphetamines. Through the alchemy of "speed"(8), the mod achieved a magical omnipotence, whereby the dynamics of his movement were magnified, the possibilities of action multiplied their purposes illuminated. Amphetamine made life tolerable, "blocked" one's sensory channels so that action and risk and excitement were possible, kept one going on the endless round of consumption, and confined one's attention to the search, the ideal, the goal, rather than the attainment of the goal - relief rather than release. The "Who's" song "The Searcher" stresses the importance of the search-an-end-in-itself:

I ain't gonna get what I'm after till the day I die.

Speed suspended the disappointment when the search failed, inevitably, to turn up anything substantial and gave one the energy to pick up and start again. It also tended to retard mental and emotional development (by producing dependency, by working against communication stimulating incessant vocal at the expense of aural activity) whilst accelerating physical deterioration. The mod lived now and certainly paid later. As the mod was swept along the glossy surface of the sixties hopelessly attempting to extend himself through an endless succession of objects, he would realise at some point that this youth (perhaps the unstated and impossible goal) was by no means everlasting. Tommy, the pinball wizard would eventually, and with great reluctance, face up to the fact that the game was limited by time and that there were never any replays. Hence the mid sixties obsession with the processes of ageing apparent in the songs of the Who and the Rolling Stones (both Mod Heroes).

From the Who's, "My Generation", the theme song of the battlefields of 1964:

Things they do look awful cold
Hope I die 'fore I get old.

From the Rolling Stone's record "Mother's Little Helper", which deals with middle aged amphetamine addiction, an understandably predictable mod nightmare:

What a drag it is getting old.

And thus, finally we come to the elaborate consumer rituals of the mods, their apparently insatiable appetite for the products of the capitalist society in which they lived, their fundamental and inescapable confinement within that society.

Whilst not suggesting that the mod style had stumbled across any serious flaw in the monolith of capitalism, I shall now attempt to indicate how it did handle the commodities it took to itself in a unique and subversive manner. If it found no flaws it did at least come across a few hairline cracks. It did at least beat against the bars of its prison.

Conspicuous Consumption and the Transformed Commodity

The mods are often charged by the self-styled commentators of pop with a debilitating tendency to multiple addiction. The argument goes something like this - being typically alienated consumers, the mods eagerly swallowed the latest brand of pills in order to borrow enough energy to enable them to spend the maximum amount of time consuming the maximum amount of commodities, which, in turn, could only be enjoyed whilst under the influence of speed. However, despite his overwhelming need to consume, the mod was never a passive consumer; as his hedonistic middle-class descendent, often was.(9) The importance of style to the mods can never be overstressed - Mod was pure, unadulterated STYLE, the essence of style. In order to project style it became necessary first to appropriate the commodity, then to redefine its use and value and finally to relocate its meaning within a totally different context. This pattern, which amounted to the semantic rearrangement of those components of the objective world which the mod style required, was repeated at every level of the mod experience and served to preserve a part at least of the mod's private dimension against the passive consumer role it seemed in its later phases ready to adopt ...

Thus the scooter, a formerly ultra-respectable means of transport was appropriated and converted into a weapon and a symbol of solidarity. The metal comb was honed to a knife-like sharpness, thereby providing the mod's individual narcissian and collectively projected menace with a mutual symbolisation within a single object.

Thus pills, medically diagnosed for the treatment of neuroses, were appropriated and used as an end-in-themselves, and the negative evaluations of their capabilities imposed by school and work were substituted by a positive assessment of their personal credentials in the world of play (i.e. the same qualities which were assessed negatively by their daytime controllers (eg. laziness, arrogance, vanity etc.) were positively defined by themselves and their peers in leisure time). Like the Surrealists(10) and Dadaists, the mods relied principally on the dissonance between object and context to evince the desired disturbed response from the dominant parent culture, and learned to make their criticisms obliquely, having learned by experience (at school and work) to avoid direct confrontation where age, experience, economic and civil power would, inevitably, have told against them. The style created, therefore, constituted a parody of the consumer society in which they were situated. The mod dealt his blows by inverting and distorting the images (of neatness, of short hair) so cherished by his employers and parents, to create a style, which while being overtly close to the straight world was nonetheless incomprehensible to it.

The mod triumphed with symbolic victories and was the master of the theatrical but ultimately enigmatic gesture. The Bank Holiday incidents, and the November 5th 1966 scooter-charge on Buckingham Palace (a scarcely remembered and largely unreported event of major importance to the mods involved) whilst holding a certain retrospective fascination for the social historian and calling forth an Agincourt-like pride in those who took part, fail to impress us as permanently significant events, and yet an 18 year old mod could say at the time about Margate: "Yes, I was there ... It was

like we were taking over the country".(11)

The basis of style is the appropriation and reorganisation by the subject of elements in the objective world which would otherwise determine and constrict him. The mod's cry of triumph, quoted above, was for a romantic victory, a victory of the imagination; ultimately for an imagined victory. The mod combined previously disparate elements to create himself into a metaphor, the appropriateness of which was apparent only to himself. Like the surrealists the mods underestimated the ability of the dominant culture to absorb the subversive image and sustain the impact of the anarchic imagination. The magical transformations of commodities had been mysterious and were often invisible to the neutral observer and no amount of stylistic incantation could possibly effect the oppressive economic mode by which they had been produced.

The state continued to function perfectly no matter how many of Her Majesty's colours were defiled and draped around the shoulders of skinny pill-heads in the form of sharply cut jackets.

Autopsy Report on one White negro now deceased:

I have already emphasised the positive values of the mods' relative exclusiveness, his creation of a whole supportive universe which provided him not only with a distinctive dress, music etc., but also with a complete set of meanings. I should like to conclude by suggesting that it was this same esotericism, this same retreatism which led to the eventual and inevitable decline of mod as a movement. For the mod was the first all-British White Negro of Mailer's essay, living on the pulse of the present, resurrected after work only by a fierce devotion to leisure, and creating through the dynamics of his own personality (or more accurately through the dynamics of the collective personality of the group), a total style armed (albeit inadequately) against a patronising adult culture, and which need look no further than itself for its justifications and its ethics. Ultimately it was this very self-sufficiency which led to the Mod's self-betrayal. Being determined to cling to the womb of the Noonday Underground, the smoke filled clubs and the good life without ever facing the implications of its own alienation and to look merely to its own created and increasingly commercialised (and therefore artificial and stylised) image, mesmerised by music, stultified by speed, Mod was bound eventually to succumb; to be cheated and exploited at every level. The consumer rituals were refined and multiplied ad infinitum and came to involve the use of commodities directed specifically at a mod market by a rapidly expanding pop industry. Dress was no longer innovative - nobody "discovered" items like Levi Jeans or Hush Puppies any more. Style was manufactured from above instead of being spontaneously created from within. When a mod magazine could declare authoritatively that there was a NEW MOD WALK: feet out, head forward, hands in jacket pockets, then one had to acknowledge reluctantly that this particular white negro had, somewhere along the line, keeled over and died.

FOOTNOTES

1. "The Margate Offenders" - from Youth in New Society.
2. c.f. the skinhead "invasion" of Southend.
3. The current fashion for camp rock derives much of its creative impetus from the extreme narcissism and self-conscious urbanity of this group. Bowie and Bolan were among its more conspicuous members.
4. I use the term to cover the "blues", "purple-hearts", "black bombers", dezedrine, benzedrine, enzedrine, and methedrine which were easily available to the mods in the mid 60s.
5. The "Hard mods" especially emulated the negro and this emulation became explicit in the style of their direct descendants; the skinheads.
6. With the conviction of the Krays in 1969, and the introduction of new and more restrictive gambling legislation in the same year, this style took a crippling blow.
7. This is not so far fetched as it may at first appear. The mid-60s gangsterism was a game, a serious highly dangerous and profitable game, but a game nonetheless, the rules of which had been fixed in a mythical Hollywood Chicago years before. The effectiveness of an extortion racket depends primarily on its flair for publicity, on a consistent projection of mean psychopath (Richard Widmark type) roles(+), on its convincing presentation of a real yet ultimately unspecifiable menace. It functions through the indulgence of all those who came into contact with it in a popular fantasy and adheres rigidly to the conventions of that fantasy. It is in a word, living cinema. (overstated I know, but I plan to expand this point in a future paper).
8. For confirmation of the centrality of speed in the mod's life-style, one need look no further than to the cultural significance assigned to the scooter, the first innovative means of transport introduced by a British youth culture ("the motor-bike was borrowed from the States"). The verb "to go" was included in both "Ready Steady Go": and "Whole Scene Going", the two mod programmes, and testifies to the importance of movement.
9. The Hippie. The distinction between the two styles can best be illustrated by comparing the major symbolic exhibitions of the mod's solidarity - the Bank Holiday gathering, with its equivalent in Hippie culture - the festival. At the coast, as I have previously pointed out, the mods were impatiently reacting against the passivity of the crowd, each mod was a creative subject capable of entertaining an unimaginative adult audience arrogantly displaying the badge of his identity to a nation of featureless picture-watchers. The hippies' festivals, on the other hand, deliberately avoided contact with other cultures (when contact did

occur as at Altamont it was often disastrous), were conducted in remote locations in a complacent atmosphere of mutual self-congratulation, and centred round the passive consumption of music produced by an elite of untouchable superstars (see "Altamont" a collection of essays describing how several thousand spectators failed to do anything about a few score outlaw bikers). If this comparison seems unfair we need only look to the mods consumption of R & B and Tamla Motown in their clubs. The mods never consumed their music statically (the hippies general sat and watched) but would USE the music as a catalyst for their own creative efforts on the dance floor even dancing alone if need be. Perhaps the distinction can be formulated in 2 equations:

WORKING-CLASS+MOD+SPEED = ACTION
 MIDDLE-CLASS+HIPPIE+MAJIJUANA = PASSIVITY

10. This analogy is again not so far fetched as it might seem. At the more articulate end of the mod spectrum the "Who's" publicists emphasised the influence of Pop Art on the group's presentation. Kit Lambert, the group's manager called their act "a new form of crime armed against the bourgeoisie", perhaps overstating the case somewhat. Again, Pete Townshend's conversion of a Union Jack into a jacket shows the most explicit subversive dislocation of object from context.

11. Quoted in Booker's The Neophiliacs.

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