Armed Glances: the history and culture of sunglasses & cool

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

The thesis sets out to explore the enduring and widespread appeal of sunglasses in western popular culture as evident in the fields of fashion, film and advertising. The emergence of sunglasses as a fashion accessory is established through evidence from UK and US fashion magazines of the early Twentieth century, optical trade and professional journals and the collection of sunglasses and tinted spectacles held by the British Optical Association. The strong association in popular culture between sunglasses and contemporary notions of 'cool' is explored through analysis of images of sunglasses, consideration of their function as a 'material agent', existing histories and theories of 'cool', modernity and attendant changes to emotional culture, behaviour and personality. The relationship between sunglasses, vision and the gaze is also considered as the study explores the potential meanings of the shaded eye in these contexts.

The study contributes to knowledge by providing a more detailed history of sunglasses emergence and transition to the status of fashion accessory than exists elsewhere and by using sunglasses as an object study (or fragment) from which the phenomenon of 'cool' can be examined. Existing perspectives on cool are shown to lack the usefully broad understanding of the appeal of 'cool' that sunglasses can provide, in so far as they draw together a number of aspects of cool in one object. The study concludes that this allows us to see both cool and sunglasses as demonstrative of a superior adaptation to the conditions of modernity – a value so desirable and broadly applicable as to help to explain not only the enduring appeal of sunglasses but the increasing significance of cool in western culture.

Introduction
foreword

What prompted this study was a single incident quite a few years ago, when I thoughtlessly reached for my sunglasses on the dashboard of my car, for a short hurried walk from my car to the supermarket entrance. (I was out of milk). As I slipped them on, I wondered to myself why I had bothered, and I quickly answered my own question with the rationale that since I was in the middle of doing some decorating, I was looking somewhat dishevelled, and that the sunglasses had made me look more presentable, and feel less embarrassed. As I approached the entrance, my reflection in the glass façade of the supermarket confirmed to me that, not only did I feel better; I actually looked 'quite cool'. This idea amused me because I had wondered since being a teenager what made one person 'cool' and another 'uncool'. It was a quality that seemed elusive, and the idea that I could fool myself that I had it by simply and absent-mindedly putting on my sunglasses was curious.

I had recently completed a multidisciplinary study about Tupperware (Gill-Brown, 2001), which I had used as a focus from which to explore attitudes to domestic work and domesticated femininity, and in the context of the emergence of visual cultural studies/material culture studies, I believed that detailed analysis of the connotations of seemingly trivial images and objects could reveal a rich complex of associative meanings which inform the popular imagination in a profound and powerful way. That the way we use signs and signifiers in visual culture might tell us more about the concerns, fears and aspirations of a culture than what any of its inhabitants might consciously utter.

> Without a doubt, objects… serve as monuments of collective memory, as indices of cultural value, as foci for the observation of ritual, and satisfy communal as well as personal needs. (Moxey, 2008:132)

Bearing this in mind, I began to think about the connections between sunglasses and fashion, popular culture and cool. Working as a lecturer in a fashion department, I could see sunglasses were remarkably resilient. They seemed to be part of fashionable looks on every level, every season, every year, from subcultures and street fashion, to couture, and luxury branding, from <u>Vogue</u> to <u>ID</u> to the British punk fanzine <u>sniffin' glue</u> as well as numerous blogs and online articles. In fact, it seemed sunglasses were almost synonymous with fashion. I quickly realised that sunglasses were similarly ubiquitous in film; not merely as an aid to realism within costume design, but in iconic images from the films

which would frequently be used for film promotion in the form of posters and video/dvd packaging. As I considered music, they seemed to be an essential part of the rock star look, the rapper, then in pop culture, the celebrity, the gangster… the tourist, the American. The connotations became ever broader. One object so meaningful across so many different visual cultural discourses seemed likely to have a good story to tell. Ultimately, I wondered whether there might be something about the shared conditions of modern existence that could be making shaded eyes so attractive, so evocative.

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So, in this study I set out to explore the range of sunglasses' potential significance, hoping to establish how they became associated with cool. Equally I hope that studying images of sunglasses might reflect back on the elusive qualities of cool. If sunglasses have such a privileged relationship with cool in the semiotic realm, perhaps they can tell us something about what it is. At this point, I must make it clear that I am not assuming that there is necessarily 'one cool', nor – as is already apparent – that there is one singular meaning for sunglasses. Meaning is not fixed, it does not 'inhere'. However, given the assumption that the meanings of sunglasses will be multiple, unstable and reconfigured in different cultural places and times, a seemingly enduring and robust connection is all the more remarkable. Of course, the connection is variously nuanced, but it is also meaningful and generally applicable enough that a shaded eye can be a critical part of thousands and thousands of aspirational images, used endlessly in marketing to the widest of audiences, crossing boundaries of race, class, gender, sexuality and even to some extent, age. The life of a signifier of cool in particular, rarely makes it from one generation another – and even more rarely makes it into widespread circulation without losing its 'edge' for those who originally adopted it; but in spite of making it into supermarkets, mass produced greeting cards, and kids TV; in short, in spite of becoming a cliché, sunglasses are still seen in just about every successive trend and youth cultural style, no matter how far from 'the mainstream' or how 'different' that new group may wish to appear to be.

Methodology
I knew from the beginning that a methodology for studying sunglasses would be multi- and cross- disciplinary. Since my initial observations were based on the proliferations of context and nuance of meaning for sunglasses, the drive to explore both how this was possible and what if anything might connect these differing instances I knew must inevitably take me into diverse territories. Hebdige's assertion that to study the significance of a designed object needs to take account of the spheres of 'production, mediation and use' (1987:80) was an initial guide, to which I knew, from the beginning, I

would wish to add a further layer of 'representation'. These considerations require the examination of the object in terms of its aesthetic and physical properties (what has been produced, materials, forms, relationship with other objects - these might require engagement with material culture, design history and theory), the way it has been promoted and sold (packaging, representation within its advertising, marketing, and merchandising – again, visual culture, semiotics), and how it has been used by those into whose hands the object falls (consumers of different kinds – opening up a need for some kind of ethnography, anthropology). This category of use could be broadened as I already stated was my intent, to include use by artists and designers within further representations; film costumiers, stylists, advertisers, graphic designers, photo editors and so on. My point here is not to delineate or firmly fix these relationships between aspect and discipline, but to underline the necessity of multiple strategies and methods in studying the cultural significance of the designed object.

Carter and Michael, authors of a short analysis of sunglasses in their tentative 'sociology of the sun' (2004) published in a collection of essays about ethnography, theory and the 'cultural body' (Thomas and Ahmed Ed.s, 2004), confirm that 'heterogeneous relationalities' are a 'key concern' of the recent turn towards the material and the object within sociology. This they say leads to a 'happy indifference' to 'traditional disciplinary boundaries' (2004:260). I interpret these 'heterogeneous relationalities' as diverse patterns of connection or perhaps, constellations.

In the case of sunglasses, there are also some interesting ambiguities and multiple possibilities in terms of identifying what *kind* of object we are dealing with. Carter and Michael refer to them as a 'socio-technical artefact' (ibid:261) which already indicates the difficulty of placing sunglasses within a particular traditional discipline, since they are both technological (engineering, optometry) and cultural (fashion). Carter and Michael say they are producing a sociology of the sun, and that a focus on sunglasses is an experimental 'reflexive twist' on this, but in fact most of what they have to say about sunglasses has very little indeed to do with the sun, and quite a lot to do with the politics of the gaze, and the 'enactment' of gazes, the 'aestheticisation of knowing'. (Of the examples given for analysis, two are against the white artificial light of technology in the sci-fi genre, one is indoors at night, and one is an image of a girl with no visible light source and no other cues for the presence of the sun. Only one is outdoors, and even there – the sun is not mentioned in their analysis). I don't mean to criticise them for this, but to see this as an example of how, even within the stated parameters of their study, sunglasses' meanings quickly proliferate and escape.

From meaning to materiality… and back again

The need for plurality in academic approaches to images and objects has been recently argued by Keith Moxey (2008), in his summary of the significant movements within art history, material culture, visual studies and visual culture to reclaim the idea of 'presence' for the cultural object against the dominance of linguistic, and I guess semiotic analysis. The argument here is that analysis of meaning, the emphasis on interpretation, fails to acknowledge the 'physical' materiality of the object all too frequently, the encounter with the object.

Here, the work of Carter and Michael is interesting in their borrowings from material culture, where the concept of the object as not merely a commodity but a 'material agent' is highlighted; something which, though physically and epistemologically produced by humans, nonetheless has a form of agency towards those humans, which requires certain behaviours and offers certain 'affordances' (2004:272-3), not all of which may have been anticipated by any of the humans involved in production, mediation, nor use.

Campbell (1996) makes a slightly different distinction between the 'meaning of objects' and the 'meanings of actions', which reminds us that shared cultural meanings cannot be mapped neatly on to specific buyers and users of objects and images. Many material culture studies focus on ethnographic methods, to find out 'what people really do' with cultural artefacts and how they render them meaningful through use. However, studies focused in this way cannot address questions of how an object becomes capable of holding if not the same, similar, *positive* values for ever increasing numbers of people as readily as a historically informed analysis of popular imagery. Campbell is right: in the 'real world', 'real people's' ideas and aspirations however formed, get clouded over by other factors (e.g. I was given these by my boyfriend) and hemmed in by certain practicalities (I wear spectacles, so I cannot easily carry sunglasses), or anxieties (I cannot carry sunglasses off). This is why, in Campbell's terms, an 'act' of purchase or wearing does not have the same meaning as the object. However the knowledge that an object has certain shared potential associations is still there, and will be factored in by the user in complex ways. In the realm of fantasy occupied by fashion, advertising and film, aspirations and fears are freer to take flight, and therefore offer a more immediate source of evidence for the way the popular imagination is constructed.

Along with others like Pinney (2002), the need to adopt a range of methods to study the cultural artefact's meanings is supported by Moxey:

> ...an appreciation of the 'exterior' of the visual object, its protean interventions in the life of culture, its vitality as a representation, need not be regarded as an alternative to coming to terms with its 'interior', its capacity to affect us, its aesthetic and poetic appeal, its status as a presentation.... both approaches... add power and complexity to our current understanding of the visual. (Moxey, 2008:133).

Since my study is principally focused around the relationship between sunglasses and widespread connotations of cool within popular/mass culture, a mixed approach with the emphasis on analysis of images in which such associations are consciously and unconsciously constructed seems most appropriate. Image analysis will offer evidence with which to test my initial observations, as well as the potential to open up the discourses surrounding these ideas; to take me beyond those initial associations into new territories for the production of meaning.

However, to fully explore the possible connotations of those images and their relationship to 'cool' (for example where characters in films wear sunglasses) it is important to have some understanding of not only what sunglasses might 'contain', but some of the issues of use, encounter and presence – i.e. how it feels to wear them, or to confront someone wearing them. Certain physical/material properties such as visibility, size, relative cost to produce and portability may influence their use both in the real world and as a signifier within imagery as much as does their 'aesthetic content'. As previously stated, my primary interest remains in sunglasses as a signifier within popular cultural imagery; their ability to capture the popular imagination which makes them valuable semiotic currency. To explore this fully, necessarily engages me in a variety of methods and frameworks, excavating the layers of meaning, association and consciousness which may be mobilised by this signifier.

The object as lens

A slightly different driver for an approach based on 'heterogeneous relationalities' is the notion of the object as a lens, placeholder, or point of intersection. The capacity for objects to somehow move in and between differing discourses, to travel in time and space, to be so 'heterogeneous' and yet to remain (in spite of Baudrillard's assertion (in Walker, 1989:81) that the object is nothing but the discourses that twist themselves around it) a unified and obstinate 'thing', has made them attractive to many writers about culture, not merely those focused on the study of designed objects or material culture per se. The idea is that somehow the life and fortunes of an object can reveal something about the wider culture that other kinds of study are less good at revealing.

Fairly recently this idea has been put forward notably in Appadurai's book <u>The Social Life of Things</u> (1986), where he and Kopytoff argue, in keeping with some of the approaches Moxey identifies, that things have 'a life, a 'biography' (e.g. Gell 1998, cited in Moxey 2008:134), albeit perhaps a 'secondary' one:

> For better or for worse, human beings establish their collective identity by creating around them a second nature composed of images which do not merely reflect the values consciously intended by their makers, but *radiate new forms of value formed in the collective, political unconscious of their beholders*. (Mitchell, 2005 in Moxey, 2008:142, my emphasis)

This life is evidently made possible by human beings, but studies of culture which primatise the human beings, cause the life of the object to fade in and out of relevance, potentially losing certain connections, discontinuities, and transformations. Therefore, the 'biographies of things' offer the promise of 'mak[ing] salient what might otherwise remain obscure' (Kopytoff in Appadurai 1986:67) – and that 'cultural responses to... biographical details [e.g. strong feeling surrounding the fate of a valued artwork] reveal a tangled mass of aesthetic, historical and even political judgements, and of convictions and values' (ibid:67).

To me there is also an appropriate modesty about any cultural analysis which tells 'a story', a route through, which may well illuminate, but never claims to offer 'the definite article'. Holding on to 'a thing' as it travels through discourse, time and space is an enterprise which, as a way of knowing a fragmented world, cannot help but offer a view from below, from the side.

Fragments of modernity

Although this 'material turn' is written about as something recent, it is by no means a completely new approach to the study of culture, and my approach owes a significant debt to that of the much earlier authors brought together usefully by David Frisby in <u>Fragments of Modernity</u> (1985). Simmel, Kracauer, Benjamin (and even Nietzsche, to an extent) were all convinced of the value of studying modernity from its seemingly insignificant fragments; as Nietzsche said, taking seriously the 'meanest things that are ignored' (ibid:28): Simmel's 'fortuitous fragment' (ibid:49), Kracauer's 'exemplary instance', Benjamin's rag, refuse or monad. As Benjamin sets out in his notes on 'Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress' in the <u>Arcades Project</u> (2002, *1950*), his aim was 'to discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event... to grasp the construction of history as such' (2002:461).

Perhaps as well as seeing a pair of sunglasses as such a 'fragment', Benjamin's ideas might allow for an interpretation of the personal anecdote described at the very beginning of my thesis, as a 'small individual moment' which the rest of this study attempts to excavate. He goes on to say 'It's not that what is past casts light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, the image is dialectics at a standstill' (2002:462). Within that moment, of me grabbing my sunglasses, historical processes come together with the 'now' to produce a very particular set of relationships between ideas, social relations, things and times, some of which may seemingly be contradictory. Benjamin's work supports the idea that not only a lowly object like a pair of sunglasses, but also such a *moment* is a cultural 'object' worthy of investigation.

As I have already suggested, this is not just about focusing on objects, but on the multiplicity of connections with the wider social reality they might reveal. Benjamin's position gives critical importance to what Gilloch describes as 'collecting and juxtaposing apparently disparate ideas and concepts for the purposes of mutual illumination' (Gilloch, 2002:235) As Benjamin states 'What for others are deviations are, for me, the data which determine my course. – on the differentials of time (which for others, disturb the main enquiry) I base my reckoning'. (2002:456)

The productive multiplicity of connections and relationships which may be found in the object was also acknowledged by Kracauer (1995, *1927*), whose analysis of the Tiller Girls performances, for example, was used to extract a theory of modern life. Of Kracauer's approach, Frisby states 'the starting point must be the object itself, whose empirical diversity provides *no closed system of concepts*' (1985:120, my emphasis). Strong similarities with Benjamin's approach are evident; Kracauer also stated that 'the place which an epoch occupies in the historical process is determined more forcefully in the analysis of its insignificant superficial manifestations than from the judgement of the epoch upon itself' (in ibid:6).

Simmel's work is also highly relevant. In Kracauer's discussion of Simmel, there is talk of the 'unmasking of the intertwining threads that exist between phenomena', and, as with Walter Benjamin, of 'constellations' of symbols, meanings and relationships (Kracauer in ibid:60-61). Frisby says that Simmel commenced from 'a regulative world principal that everything interacts with everything else, that between every point in the world and every other force, permanently moving relationships exist' (ibid:54). The object of Simmel's study is therefore 'structured interactions' (ibid:55), the snapshot, the fleeting

moment that illuminates those relationships. Frisby even goes so far as to suggest that even something as insubstantial as 'the way people look at each other' might be a suitable object with which to study modernity from Simmel's point of view (ibid).
He states quite explicitly the possibility… of finding 'in each of life's details the totality of its meaning' (ibid:6). For example, in the 'Philosophy of Money' (1964), his discussion considers not only how it works, but what it means, what it does to the quality of life and value and how it might affect social relationships and indeed the 'inner life'.

The subjectivity of Simmel's endeavour and his tendency to 'forgo ultimate decisions' (Frisby, 1985:119) was criticised (notably by Kracauer in spite of the obvious connections between their work) but was also attributed in part to his status as 'a wanderer between things' (ibid:118). The idea of the wanderer, the stranger or even the flâneur could be analogous to this method for studying culture, sacrificing embeddedness within a culture, or well defined perspective and parameter, for a peculiarly modern kind of knowledge. This approach offers both the promise of objectivity from its cool dispassionate gaze, and a heightened form of subjectivity where the individual critic's perception is primatised (who can argue with an account of a journey nobody else has made?) Benjamin's notion of the collector could also be considered here – selecting and reorganising related 'bits' from a culture to reveal patterns, tendencies, ways of seeing which, were all those bits to stay put, would never be revealed. There's also a sense in which the flâneur's openness to straying in a 'purposely purposeless' manner applies to this kind of study. As Aragon said, objects may be

> …unrecognised sphinxes which will never stop the passing dreamer and ask him mortal questions *unless he first projects his mediation, his absence of mind, towards them* (Aragon in Frisby, 1985:209, my emphasis)

The issue of what Simmel calls 'feeling' and what Frisby refers to as the intuitive, aesthetic aspects of these writers' works is significant here. In getting a 'feel' for and allowing individual sensitivity to the way things *seem*, intuitive responses to an object or the fleeting moment, they believe the depths of culture may be plumbed. Benjamin's notes demonstrate how this might constitute an acknowledgement of the critic's own mind as a similarly suggestive locus of 'apparently disparate ideas and concepts' (Gillich, op.cit):

> '…everything one is thinking at a specific moment in time must at all costs be incorporated into the project then at hand. Assume that the intensity of the project

is thereby attested, or that one's thoughts, from the very beginning, bear this project with them as their telos' (Benjamin, 2002:456)

The excavation of buried layers of human consciousness, is the task of Benjamin's 'archaeologist'. Frisby describes Simmel's' approach as a 'sociological impressionism… rooted in an aesthetic stance vis-à-vis social reality' (ibid:53). The value of these approaches is evident in enduring applicability of these authors' works. Both Benjamin and Simmel's essays have since achieved the status of classics, maintaining their resonance for contemporary readers, somehow managing to evoke and reveal qualities of contemporary existence that contemporary writing might fail to.

Aims and methods

Almost a hundred years later, many 'fragments' have been rescued for academic study. However there are still those which have slipped through the gratings. Studies of the objects of popular culture have become much more common, but curiously, sunglasses have evaded thorough analysis to date. Somehow their status as everywhere-but-never-quite-the-centre of a look or subculture (or designer's work or academic field) seems to have rendered them almost invisible (and I will discuss why this is as I evaluate the literature in a coming chapter). The idea of cool too, has been oft-hinted at but seldom attacked head on, sidestepped as something somehow dangerously superficial or transitory; too vague. Yet I suspect that what gets fashion writers, subcultural theorists, critics and analysts' juices flowing in the first place, more often than not, is in fact cool's elusive power.

My aim is to see whether, by studying sunglasses and images which feature sunglasses, I can add to what is currently understood about both the appeal of sunglasses and the wider cultural value of cool, thereby contributing in some small way to our understanding of the conditions of modern existence. In order to allow the object to 'stare back' (c.f. Elkins, 1997) I have adopted a reflexive process, whereby I collect and analyse images which feature sunglasses (and in certain cases, shaded eyes) to see what, if anything, 'feels' 'cool' about them (I use the term 'feels' here in the sense used by Simmel discussed above). At this point the open, intuitive and subjective responses to this idea do not require a defined notion of what cool is to use as a bench mark. In fact this would prevent the images from 'staring back'. It is more a case of 'does this image strike me in any way as 'cool'? What is it like? Connections between the properties of the images and the resonances of 'coolness' would start to reveal themselves, which might help to unpack the 'contents' of cool. These might relate to other features of the images such as

a non smiling mouth, or use of colour; but significantly I also focused on the wide variety of forms and seemingly dramatically contrasting connotations sunglasses have taken on, looking for extremes and generic types. Once these had been identified, I took my initial observation that 'sunglasses are cool' and pushed my analysis to test whether *all kinds* of sunglasses could be cool. Some connections seemed obvious, others obscure, but nevertheless, if I allowed my investigations of cool to be led by what design culture has unconsciously uttered through the forms of these glasses I believed I might be able to reveal something new. I interrogated the concept of cool with these varied forms and connotations at the back of my mind. How might 'play' or 'novelty' be cool, how might 'speed' be cool? In a similar way, as I began to research theories and models of cool I looked again at the sunglasses, this time applying the definitions derived from other authors' theories, which enabled me to see more in the images. I created a conversation or argument between the objects and the theories in which the assumption that 'sunglasses are cool' was the only determining factor.

This process, while to some extent fluid, subjective and initially intuitive, had to be undertaken meticulously and with very careful consideration of the signifying discourses within which the various kinds of images (i.e. fashion, advertising, art, film costume, film promotion, subculture etc) are situated. Martin Jay's definition of discourse is 'a corpus of more or less loosely interwoven arguments, metaphors, assertions and prejudices that cohere more associatively than logically' (Jay, 1993:16), another kind of 'constellation'; and this is the way I have approached my exploration. As with all multi- and inter-disciplinary studies, there is a potential risk of merely skimming the surface of lots of different things. But no other way has the same potential to follow those threads which might enable the untangling of this untidy spider's web, snowball, or cloud of magnetic dust.

In terms of the politics of sunglasses as part of commodity culture, my study does not set out to argue for one position in the way many do. Many studies of aspects of mass/popular culture have taken a stand in relation to the 'false needs' thesis of Adorno and the Frankfurt school. Some focus on the capacity for individuals and groups to 'make meaning' with the raw material of consumer culture (Willis 1990, de Certeau 1984 etc), and conversely, some focus on the capacity for the mass to have 'false meaning' imposed upon their existence via the pressures of modern capitalism. My study aims to acknowledge both of these as possibilities, seeing the object as a special point of intersection between a variety of discourses, and a material agent, which, once designed and made, begins its 'second hand existence', provides certain culturally shaped

affordances, and then, enters the realm of representation where its potential significance draws on all these aspects of experience and relationship with objects.

The life of the object, being designed, promoted, sold, used, represented, sold, worn, redesigned, promoted, sold, used, revived, through different cultural spaces and times encompasses a vast range of potential theoretical perspectives, yet all these phases of the object's life are resurrectable as signifieds within further representations. Hence in contemporary culture we might find that sunglasses could signify both resistance to and utter complicity with the forces of modern capitalism; the fact that their continued production and sale is inextricably linked to the exploitations of capitalism is an underlying assumption.

Original historical research

In exploring the development of associations between sunglasses and cool it was necessary to do some original historical work around the emergence of sunglasses as a fashion accessory since this is a poorly documented area. As mentioned previously, sunglasses have tended to fall between two stools, since fashion history tends generally to relegate them to the technical/medical field of optics, and optical history has been a bit embarrassed of them and relegated them to the field of 'frivolous fashion' (e.g. Corson, in Fashions in Eyeglasses 1967). This itself speaks of the strong dual associations of fashion and technology, but more of that later. I was particularly interested to see whether there were any associations with cool when sunglasses first became a fashion accessory; and how the quite dramatic change from the original connotations of blindness (or very weak sight) could have initially come about, especially given the continued negative potential connotations of spectacles. For this research I was able to use the archives of the British Optical Association which allowed me access to many early British and American journals of Optometry – The Wellsworth Merchandiser (US), The Keystone Magazine (US), The American Journal of Optometry, The Optician (UK), and the mid-century supplement to the UK journal Optical Practitioner, which was aimed at a more general audience, Vision. I was also able to view and handle glasses from the substantial collection of spectacles, sunglasses and optical antiques and discuss them with the museum's curator, Neil Handley. I scoured bound volumes of these journals from the period 1910 to 1935, then through the 30s to the 1960s (where possible). Most significant was the hunt for evidence of the emergence of something *called* 'sunglasses', and then their gradual development as a vehicle for Hollywood glamour. I also visited the archives of Nottingham Trent University library for their holdings of early Twentieth century women's magazines such as Woman and Home and French Marie Claire , and the National Art Library for their complete sets of Vogue and Harpers Bazaar; and had limited access to online archives of Life magazine.

Researching sunglasses' history was complicated by a number of things. The first of these is that spectacles with tinted lenses were in fact common from the late Seventeenth century (Drewry, 1994; Corson, 1967) so the main thing which distinguishes sunglasses from spectacles in imagery today is of little use in establishing the origins of sunglasses in the past. This actually means that in many collections glasses have been wrongly tagged as 'sunglasses' when in fact they are more likely to be tinted spectacles or 'protective goggles'. Secondly, many of the early Twentieth century frames were made of unstable plastics which have been difficult to preserve, so not many of those from the late 1920s and 1930s survive in collections (Handley, 2006). Thirdly, examining photographs and illustrations for evidence of sunglasses being worn was often unreliable because the pre-war quality of photography and reproduction can make a pair of spectacles look as if the lenses are tinted, and illustrative conventions for depicting glass can be equally ambiguous. And finally (and significantly) the conventions of photography may have mitigated against the appearance of sunglasses in such pictures at all. However, particularly useful were the American magazines which focused on the optician's business as opposed to the theory of optometry, which contained display ads, as were some of the unusually candid family/documentary photographs of Jacques-Henri Lartigue from the 1910s onwards.

Defining cool

In trying to establish the relationship between sunglasses and cool, there is of course the issue of defining cool itself as a more general set of behaviours, values and attitudes. I have already suggested that cool is elusive and attempting to define it is a risky business, not attempted by many. It is a word that is used occasionally within the history and theory of fashion and subculture; but has generally been avoided as a potential minefield (and a slippery one at that). However there is a small literature of cool which I have surveyed and drawn upon to create some criteria with which to approach the analysis. I have also searched this literature for references to sunglasses, which appear relatively often, in footnotes or as asides. There is potentially a much a wider body of literature which may not explicitly attempt to define cool but which nevertheless relates to its defining features, and perhaps of special interest are the modern 'types' which attract academics to this day with what could be termed their 'proto-cool' behaviours (for example the dandy and the flâneur).

Key theorists

As might be expected given the multi-and inter- disciplinary methodology, I have drawn on a wide range of theories, histories and images to explore modernity, the eye, light, shade and the contexts in which 'cool' behaviours and the wearing of sunglasses might be

situated,. It is worth highlighting some of these here. Of particular use to the development of my own definition of cool have been authors like George Simmel (1964,1971), Wolfgang Schivelbusch (1986.1988), Erving Goffman (1963, 1990, 2005) and Paul Virilio (1978, 1997, 1999), as well as Emile Durkheim's concept of anomie and its adaptation by Robert K.Merton (1967). These theorists' work emerged as relevant time and again in my analysis, providing an evocation of the broadly experienced conditions of modernity and modern subjects' adaptations to those. Though their work is different, Simmel, Schivelbusch and Goffman also saw these conditions and adaptations as productively observable in seemingly small specific examples, so as well as connection with the idea of cool in the content of their analysis there was also a similarity in what kind of cultural 'objects' were under study (for example, the experience of walking in the city street, or gazing out of a train window) which offered ready connections with the behaviours associated with sunglasses. These theorists are ideal for the consideration of modernity's challenges; to present a composed and believable self, to adapt to proliferating systems in an increasingly stimulating environment, to manage rapid change and motion. Their work also evokes the potential status in successful adaptations to these conditions – here Virilio's work was especially relevant - and therefore, the potential value of images and objects suggestive of them. Another value in using a range of theorists like this is in seeing the extent to which 'cool' behaviours have attracted academic attention. This last point also applies to the Merton, where the value is in the productive range of nuances to his taxonomy. Theorists of the self in late modernity such as Kenneth Gergen (1991) and Christopher Lasch (1985, 1991) have been useful for considering sunglasses in relation to the kinds of cool relevant to what might be called a 'fragmented' or 'mutable' self; their respective accounts offering more detailed consideration of the possible responses to late modern conditions, including, in Lasch's work, the burgeoning perception of risk identified by Ulrich Beck (1992).

Structure

In thinking about how best to structure something which is both history and cultural analysis, I have attempted to follow some worthy models like Wolfgang Schivelbusch's <u>The Railway Journey</u> (1986) and <u>Disenchanted Night</u> (1988), and perhaps Lencek and Boskev's <u>The Beach: a history of Paradise on Earth</u> (1998). These studies advance in a roughly chronological, thematic manner which allows a both coherent sense of historical process and an exploration of themes which may necessarily extend beyond their original time and place. I have constructed a brief chronological timeline for the emergence of sunglasses as utility, fashion accessory and signifier of cool which allows cross referencing if desired and which brings together the significant findings from the Optical Association archives in one place; this has been included as an appendix.

In the first chapter I will establish the context for the study, firstly by evidencing my initial observation, the widespread prevalence of images which unequivocally connect sunglasses with cool in contemporary British visual culture, focusing on some small but significant media events which reveal some of the popular connotations of sunglasses, as well as the perceived power of sunglasses to transform identity. In chapter two, I will review the existing literature about sunglasses themselves, demonstrating the lack of specific studies but highlighting Carter and Michael's taxonomy of gazes enacted by wearers of sunglasses (2004) and Evans' pictorial taxonomy of generic sunglasses forms (1996). Chapter three will consider the existing literatures of cool – in which there are studies focused on cool in relation to black American experience, studies which offer theories of cool as a response to the conditions of modern capitalism, and one which focuses on cool as a response to modern technology. Obviously this provides a context from which I can demonstrate my own argument, but it is also necessary to set these positions out clearly at the beginning in order to allow me to refer back to them later, especially when bringing together new combinations of theories and images.

The next two chapters set the scene for the emergence of a relationship between sunglasses and cool. Chapter four is entitled 'Cool Forerunners' and it describes mainly pre-Twentieth century (certainly pre-sunglasses) changes to emotional culture and personality which provide a range of historical reference points for the development of Twentieth century 'cool', among them the cavalier ethic, the dandy, romantics and bohemians and the flâneur, which again will provide defining conditions, behaviours and characteristics we might see manifested or mutated in Twentieth century images.

Although the first sunglasses in popular fashion were worn at the beach, the location for the emergence of modern fashion more generally and proto-cool types like the flaneur (and their theorisation) is the city. So the next part of this 'scene-setting' considers the modern city as a locus of intensified visual activity, 'onslaught' even, awareness of self and detachment from others in the crowd, and in the increasingly crowded world of visual media. I will introduce some of the key concepts for my analysis here – Goffman's 'involvement shield' (1963) and Simmel's blasé and neurasthenic attitudes (1967). I will explore the possibility that modernity and the urban 'state of mind' has created a context in which masking, protecting and attracting attention to the eye has come to have value for the city's inhabitants and visitors. At the same time, it should become apparent that those same conditions encourage and necessitate a 'cooler' demeanour than was perhaps previously needed in everyday life.

Having contextualised sunglasses and cool in the modern city, I will begin to outline the development of sunglasses and their significance in thematic but roughly chronological progression as suggested earlier. First I will look at speed and Schivelbusch's concepts of 'panoramic perception' and 'industrialised consciousness' (1986) as additional models for cool which are located in the experience of mechanised travel. I will demonstrate not only the encouragement or necessitation of a 'cooler' demeanour and a 'shaded eye' in these contexts but also the origins of sunglasses (or something like them) as a product for non-medical purposes in luxury sport, high-tech leisure and as fashion accessory, using archival material and some of the documentary photography of Jacques-Henri Lartigue. The strong links between the idea of modernity and the experience of speed/velocity will be explored also using Virilio (1998), helping to show how the status of being 'up-to-date' might merge with the idea of travelling 'at speed' linking speed, sunglasses, cool and modernity.

Closely connected to any discussion of modern speed is the theme of technology, since this velocity is in many cases afforded by mechanical means. The resulting fusion of human organism and technology is discussed in the next chapter which focuses on the forms of sunglasses and images of sunglasses which relate to the warrior, the cyborg and the alien. Chapter seven demonstrates how sunglasses are frequently used in visualisations of 'modern' or technologised forms of being in film, fashion and advertising, again confirming their capacity to connote modernity, but also allowing a further exploration of the power of the cool demeanour as a heroic or tragic condition and its production/necessitation through close association with modern technologies.

The fundamental function of sunglasses when initially produced was against harsh light. They are worn in the brightest of sunspots and the darkest of subterranean clubs. The remaining chapters all relate to the idea of light, dark and shade as both contexts for the wearing of sunglasses and wider implications of modern associations between vision, knowledge, light, dark and cool. Chronologically, the next stage in the development of sunglasses' associations, is the period in which sunbathing became popular, justifying the wearing of shades and cementing the forms of sunglasses expressive of leisure, frivolity and play. Chapter eight is called Life in the Light, the look of success and 'insider' cool. Firstly it will consider the relationships between modernity and the proliferation of light, moving on to explore images of the leisured elite basking in the glow of modern success and drawing together sunglasses' upbeat associations of aspiration, status, Hollywood and All-American democratised glamour. I will consider the celebrity within this chapter as initially functioning as the bearer of what I have called 'insider cool' meanings.

'Outsider' cool will be discussed in chapter nine. This cool is more suggestive of a life, not proudly participating in the light, but inhabiting the shade either through exclusion or choice. With the connotations of darkness intensified in forms with black impenetrable lenses, sunglasses could be seen to emerge as a kind of temporally and spatially 'portable night'. 'Life in the dark' will explore the meanings of 'darkness' in modern culture alongside highly influential manifestations of cool with a distinctly 'outsider' flavour of rebellion, struggle and opposition within the cultures of the underworld. Merton's essay on adaptations to anomie is here used to expand on the relation between this kind of cool and the experience not just of racism but of modernity more generally. Here the contexts of jazz, the nightclub, and black American cool come into play, drawing in Becker's 1963 essay 'The Culture of a Deviant Group', as well as consideration of the femme fatale.

These distinctions between the light 'inside' and the dark 'outside' are also asking to be blurred, and historically, by the mid-century, the uses of sunglasses even in 'mainstream' fashion and culture have become altogether darker. At this point, in chapter ten, I will introduce Goffman's ideas about risk-taking and management '(defence' against 'fatefulness' and 'character', 2005). I will also look to Lasch, Gergen And Beck to explore reasons for the dramatic spread of cool in recent decades, where the late or post-modern notion of a 'fragmented self' comes into play, exemplified in images of sunglasses and versions of cool with elements of Simmel's 'neurasthenic' attitude, in the context of a culture apparently proliferating uncertainty and risk. It is worth noting at this point that in this and the final chapters, the emphasis shifts from ideas predominantly discussed under the heading of modernity, to incorporate ideas which may be described as late or post-modern. To argue for the value of these terms is not within the scope of this study. However, the study does demonstrate that intensification of certain features of modernity and the increase in their dominance in contemporary culture associated with discussions of late or postmodernism.

The final chapter considers a shade of cool exemplified by the figure of Andy Warhol and his works, which seems to be neither/both 'inside'/'outside'. Paradoxically this is cool characterised by strong visual impact, but ultimate emptiness and a collapsing of categories and distinctions by which cool could have any meaning. This will be a minimal cool, a nihilistic cool of the eclipse, which will demonstrate sunglasses' potential to be seen both as evidence of a superficial or meaningless culture and as a poetic expression of the abdication of the struggle to know in certain modern/post modern philosophy.

Chapter one

Sunglasses are everywhere...and they are cool

Fig.1 Anna Wintour, editor of US Vogue at Donna Karen, 2009. With President Obama's 'social secretary'.

Fig.2 Karl Lagerfeld, designer famous for his 2009

Fig.3 Cover of Leon DVD,1994 one of many films to promote itself with shades

Fig.4 Barclays ad.c.1995, one of many uses by graphic designers to make a dull product sparkle

Fig.5 Pop fashion trend, 2009 for sunglasses prints

Fig.6 The Gorillaz, c.2000 by cult artist Jamie Hewlett – four ways with shaded eyes

As the small range of examples in figs.1-6 demonstrates, sunglasses are a significant part of fashion, film, subcultural images and mainstream advertising. Both Wintour and Lagerfeld are known for their shades beyond season or trend, although Summer 09 has seen a particular trend for sunglasses not only as accessories but also in fashion prints and graphics. To establish the extent of sunglasses' presence in visual culture and their significance I will begin by detailing some of my initial observations located in a range of cultural spaces in the last ten years. Then I will look at some of the ideas associated with sunglasses in mainstream media by making a short analysis of the coverage of some small but seemingly controversial incidents involving two well known figures; veteran rock star 'Bono' and Prince William.

Sunglasses have a long history of appearance in fashion and subculture. But one of the most telling examples of the reach of the relationship between sunglasses and cool is in mass-market greeting stationery. With its ambitions for easily comprehensible and widely applicable gender-stereotypical language, greetings could function as a useful 'polar opposite' of avant-garde fashion and music, sunglasses' more obvious home, showing the extent to which both cool and su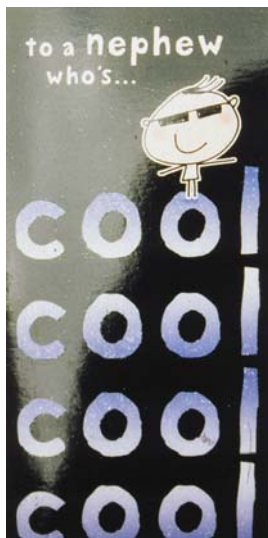nglasses have pervaded popular culture. Stationery and packaging is ephemeral, throwaway, and as such has seldom been studied with any seriousness even within the field of design – its status in the cultural hierarchy is already lowly, whatever its content, and the offerings of the biggest supermarket chains in the world are undoubtedly a lower end of that already lowly market. Products in this context aimed at young children are probably lower still. Cool and sunglasses made it to this level in the 1990s. (It is possible they made it there in the 1960s too, as evidenced by some brief attempts to incorporate cool into Disney animations of the time e.g. the Jungle Book). Since the 1990s, there have been numerous supermarket level images in gift stationery and packaging aimed at children and families which feature both sunglasses and often the textual anchor 'cool' (see fig.7).

Fig.7 'Cool nephew' greeting card c.2000

A 2001 Mintel report stated that promotion of 'after school snacks' tends to be 'character-led'. This means that they are promoted using licensed images of popular characters from TV. Alternatively brands create their own characters. It is common for sunglasses to be used on a surprising number of these characters. The sunglasses are often used to anthropomorphise product-related things and animals: the cow from 'Dairylea Dunkers', a cartoon 'Cheese String', an apricot from the Nestlé Munch Bunch yoghurt range, the cow from the 'Paula' chocolate dessert packaging (figs.8 & 9). Or, they may be an idealised consumer - a cartoon boy or girl. Sometimes there are additional references to gangsters ('Reservoir Dogs' style suits and ties), street sports like skate boarding, rap music or to pop music more generally. The 'Dairylea dunkers' cow has a tiny musical note, and the 'Milky Way Stars' include the character 'rock star' who wears sunglasses. Without the instant recognition of a familiar licensed character, these characters are relying on a strong face to create visual impact, and instantly suggest desirable characteristics.

In gift food and gift stationery a recent trend is the identification of 'types', which are illustrated and used to make a (usually favourable) comment about the recipient. For example, a card aimed at women might feature a cartoon drawing of fashionable girl

weighed down with bags from trendy boutiques, and bear the title 'shopaholic'. Cartoon boy in flash sports car suggests 'speed freak'. Carlton cards license a 'cool dude' cake for Tesco, another wobbly line drawing of a figure, whose main focal point is, of course, his shades. Many of the types identified feature sunglasses: princesses, 'groovy girls' and boys. 'Bang on the door' is a hugely successful range aimed at girls, in which each type wears shades, on the head or on the face. At Christmas there are references to a 'cool crimbo' featuring Santa in shades, and so on. This trend in gift stationery is narcissistic, instead of an image of 'something you like' you are offered an idealised image of 'someone like you'. The link between sunglasses and cool is reproduced and made explicit; simple character + shades = 'cool'.

Fig.8 Detail from a range of children's snack foods c.2005   Fig.9 'Paula' in shades 2009

This connection has become ordinary, something understood and enjoyed by the many. But this level of exposure had not yet succeeded in killing off sunglasses' appeal among the European cultural elite by the early years of the Twenty-first century. Frames and lenses can be used to signify distinction from the 'mainstream' and where it is felt sunglasses become too much of a cliché, (or simply too often used within the same publication or image to provide sufficient novelty for the disabused eye), I discovered that other intrusions on the eye take their place. In one publication , Dansk , I found no sunglasses, even where the functional opportunity presented itself (snow sports). However, I did find twenty-one fringes and fourteen other intrusions on the eye: masks, veils, hat brims. In a copy of Neo2, aimed at professionals in the fashion industry, I counted thirty-eight pairs of sunglasses, only one of which was an advert for sunglasses, plus another thirty-three instances of shaded eye.

Bono

Like many contemporary celebrities, Bono is known for his shades. He wears them all the time. But this was not always the case. In 1992 The Face published a striking cover image of Bono, lead singer of rock group U2, with the caption 'St Bono defrocked' (fig.10) He is

smiling, and wearing a shiny black leather jacket and the huge wraparound shades which are now, seventeen years later, mythically associated with him. (Journalists now speak of others 'trying to look like Bono' by wearing dark wraparounds - among the hundreds of articles I found featuring the terms 'Bono' and 'sunglasses').
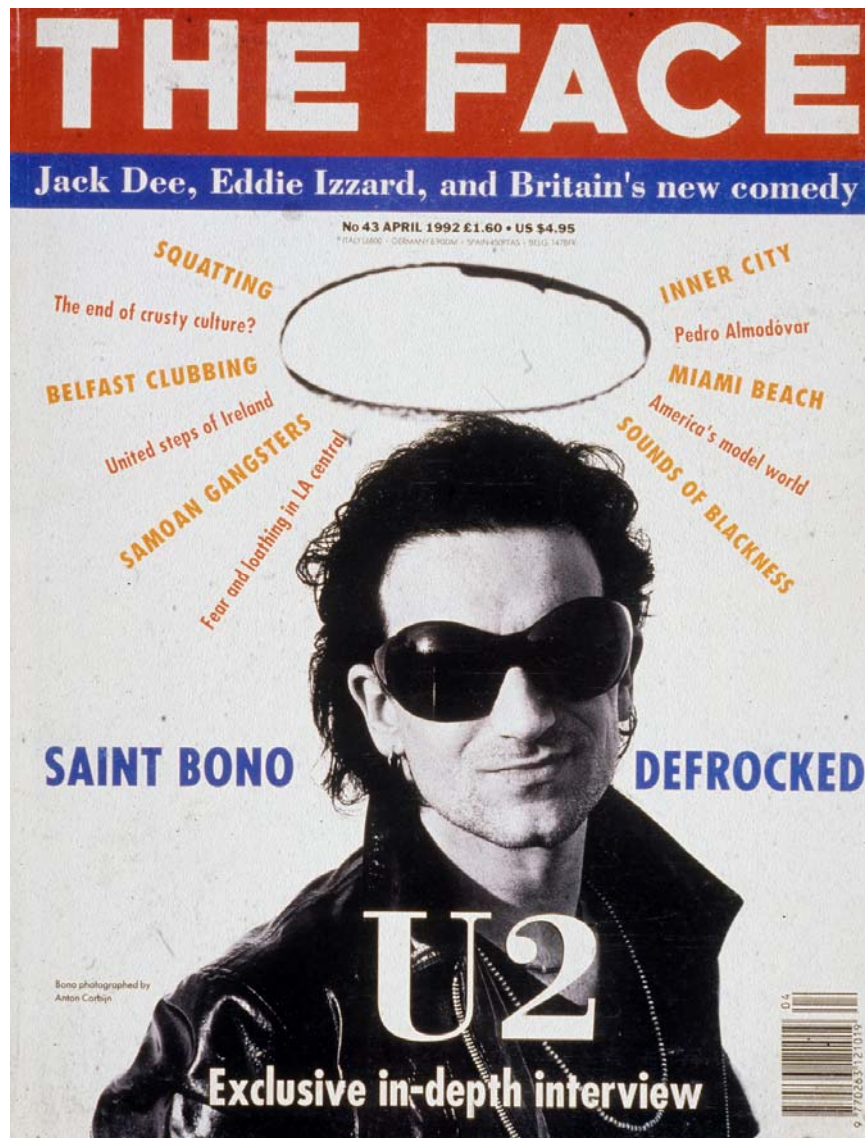
Fig.10 Bono 'defrocked' 1992

The halo and the reference to sainthood suggests Bono's 'goodness', but there is an amusing contradiction in the use of the term 'defrocked'. This image shows nothing removed from the familiar image of Bono, instead it shows him with an unusual addition, an unmissable and impenetrable pair of black sunglasses. Putting on the sunglasses therefore equated with the possibly shameful removal of the priestly title (and garments). Inside the magazine, O'Hagan described U2 as 'a band determined to do battle with their

own image' (1992:38) on release of a new and very different album. Similarly, in 1994, Kylie
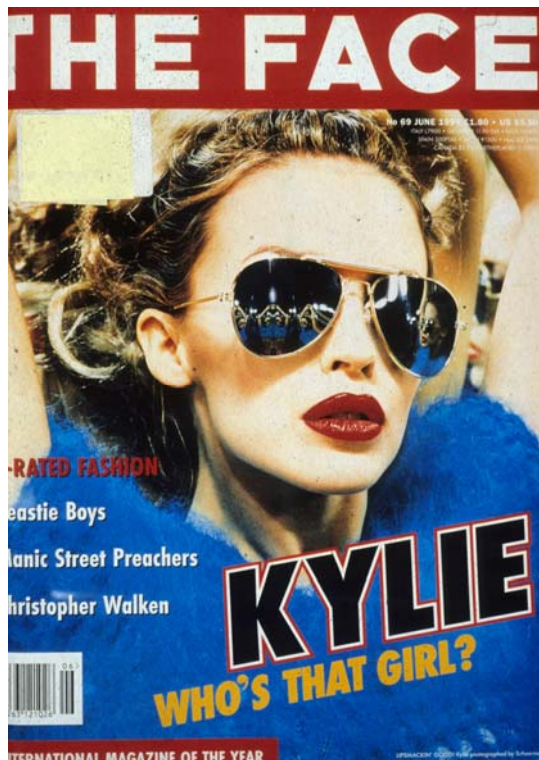

Fig.11 Kylie Minogue 1994 'after'

Minogue appeared on the cover of the same magazine, also with a headline suggestive of a transformation of identity – Who's that girl? (fig.11). In the same way, Kylie's image was in stark contrast to images previously published of her – and this too was an attempt to relaunch a career around a different approach to the music. For Kylie to appear on the cover of the Face was a connection with ideas and cultures outside her usual sweet mainstream pop., carried off by the dramatic absence of the toothy grin, and the welcoming, twinkly eyes (fig.12). As hinted by the Barclays ad in fig. 4, the sunglasses offer her 'instant cred' – or at least, they are willing to lend.

The identity of both the group and Bono 'before and after' their transformation was discussed by journalists at some length both at the time and in retrospect. For Jelbert , 'Bono was now portraying himself as a dapper rock star… all wraparound shades and shameless leering' (2000:13). And Sawyer claimed 'U2 discovered irony and sunglasses all at once…' (1997:12). The idea of sincerity had been key to Bono's media image and performance pre-1992, but this was destabilised by the change of image. Previously photographed by Anton Corbijn in grainy black and white, almost always outdoors (natural), and rarely if ever smiling (serious) made a stark contrast to the designer sportswear and dayglo make-up of mid-eighties pop. The apparent 'truthfulness' of the landscape image (nothing fake, everything real), was matched by sober clothing (sometimes strongly suggestive of Puritanism) and natural lighting (fig.13).
Bono sang about God, wars and politics. When performing, he made impassioned speeches (sincere) and displays of emotion but this was contrasted with a distinct modesty in much of the photography. Hennessy said in the Observer, 'It is … conviction or more specifically faith, that defines Bono…[he] exemplifies faith even if it means naffness. He has never tried to be that ridiculous cartoon creature, the rock'n'roll animal who just doesn't give a toss'(1999:27). Words like 'earnest' and 'preachy' feature frequently. But post 1992, the music is described as humorous, ironic and sexy, impenetrable and dense. Sawyer sums up

the transformation – 'where once there were chiming guitars and glorious meaningfulness, now there was splutter and slogan'(1997:12).

Fig.12 Kylie Minogue 1990 'before'   Fig.13 Bono c.1984 'before'

At the same time as this musical change of direction, the photography changed – studio shots, artificial colour, visual confusion, references to kitsch; there was also a very significant increase in the number of images surrounding the group and their performance. The sunglasses heralded other identity transformations in promotional videos and live performances – Bono as the devil, Bono as the Fly, Bono in drag. The felt and the brown weathered leather disappeared and was replaced by shiny black PVC (or perhaps it was leather that looked fake...) and body-hugging transparent fabrics with a deceptive print of taut chest muscles, frilled shirts like a 1970s variety show entertainer, gold lame. The sunglasses were part of a new range of identities *self-consciously performed* by Bono, replacing previous attempts to visually approximate the 'real' U2. McKay commented 'Bono is known as a sincere performer, sincerity being a quality which is almost laughable in a culture dominated by irony... [U2] became horribly unfashionable. Their response to this problem was to accept the terms of the cultural debate and retreat into irony' (2001:2). This indicates sunglasses' ability to mobilise the discourses of sincerity and irony, truth and lie, God and Devil, fashionable and unfashionable.

This example also raised some issues about cool. In the new sunglasses and shiny leather, Bono made it on to the cover of <u>Vogue</u>, but whether Bono's *self-conscious* pose was *convincing* remained a matter for debate, as Sawyer said, 'some rock stars exude knowing cool, [but] Bono looks like a trendy churchman in his first pair of sunglasses' (1997:12).

This time the issue of authenticity was raised not in relation to Bono's ability to be sincere in sunglasses, but to be *sincerely cool*. Caring and not caring are discussed too, Hennessy's article implies that Bono may not be wholly convincing as a rock star because he appears to care. Coolness is posited against sincerity. Jelbert attributes U2's appeal in the early days to their 'patent sincerity' in contrast with 'the studied cool of their peers' (2000:13) Ultimately what this reveals is that the choice to wear sunglasses threw Bono's ordered identity into chaos. It also coincided with the adoption of a different world view – which, whatever Bono's intentions now or then, allows us to see sunglasses as suggestive of a way of knowing the world within popular culture. Since sunglasses are a signifier of the rock star, and the rock star tries to look as if they don't care, the sunglasses are part of the appearance of 'not caring'. Bono's apparent desire to care, and to act as one who cares, intersects with his choice to be seen wearing sunglasses. On one hand, the sunglasses give him credibility in quite a subtle way – the acknowledgement of his ridiculous status as a celebrity rock star appeals to these journalists, for it is suggestive of his understanding that his attempts to 'do good' are fraught with contradiction. On the other hand, his actions and speech belie his appearance; he may look like a narcissistic, flash celebrity but these mainly sartorial significations are not borne out by the rest of what makes up his 'star text' (Dyer,1979). This allows some to read these contradictions as an unconvincing identity, and explains why some journalists call the irony in music and appearance unflattering and admit to hoping that Bono will 'drop the silly sunglasses'. What comes through most strongly (beyond the different associations of sunglasses, from devil to rock star to liar to 'try-hard') is the strength of impact they have on the construction of a convincing identity (it is hard to imagine similar discussions about the wearing of a pair of jeans, for example).

...and the Pope

Fig.14 The pope with Bono's gift.2000

In 2000, Bono publically met Pope John Paul II as part of the Jubilee 2000 campaign to drop Third World Debt. It was reported that Bono took this opportunity to give the Pope a pair of sunglasses. But although the novelty and sellability of this strange juxtaposition of worlds made it 'good copy' and powerful PR (resulting in the image still being in circulation on the net, see fig.14), the Vatican chose to edit out the key moment where Pope John Paul II tried them on, according to Jelbert resulting in an 'awkward jump cut' in the live TV coverage of the incident (Jelbert, 2000:13). The Vatican was already implicated in apparent attempts to reach youth by cultivating relationships with rock musicians, even holding a rock concert at which some well known (and not necessarily so church-friendly) musicians would play, but clearly, an image of the Pope in shades was believed to be

potentially damaging, even though he himself did not feel it was inappropriate to put them on. The Pope's decision to play with his image in this way humanises him; perhaps he wanted to look like Bono! At the very least, he wanted to please the crowd or the giver. This incident unwittingly mirrors the meaning of the cover image heralding Bono's transformation eight years earlier, and it highlights the signifying power of sunglasses, aligning them with a whole range of behaviours and meanings thought unbecoming to a prominent Christian leader. This highlights the importance of *image* in contemporary politics and religion (the current papal debate is whether the younger fitter model now in the Vatican really wears Prada shoes) as well as hinting at the extent of the broad appeal of both sunglasses and cool.

William

The third incident involves Prince William, the 'saviour of the royal family', according to the British press at the time, July 1999. Aged seventeen, William was snapped by a paparazzo at the Cartier International Polo Tournament, sitting in the Cartier tent wearing a blazer and a pair of wraparound shades. The Guardian called it a 'marketing headache' (Ahmed,1999:2). There was much media discussion around the reaction of the palace, the tensions in the public image of Prince William and its management. Journalists took up a range of positions: there was speculation on whether the incident merited this level of response (which traded heavily on the notion of sunglasses as frivolous, meaningless fashion accessory, unworthy of analysis). Some journalists questioned whether this was 'real news'. There was also some debate as to whether or not Prince William and/or the sunglasses were cool, and whether Prince William could carry a cool pose off successfully, similar to the discussion of Bono's image.

In many of these articles, the sunglasses are taken as a signifier of a lifestyle of privilege and leisure, Greenslade (1999) wrote in The Guardian that at the polo match he was shown caught 'consorting with a bunch of idle rich kids' and 'strutting his stuff', the latter phrase also suggestive of sexual display and glamour. Others said they suggested a lifestyle 'flash' and 'fast' (Hamilton, 2000 and Ahmed,1999:2), slightly louche, 'he can't swan around dressed like David Beckham', 'surrounded by beautiful people', 'players in the London party set', 'the new Pimms set' etc.. Greenslade comments on other journalists' use of the sunglasses as a hook or trigger for their pieces; '[the] polo image was still resonating, centred on [William's] supposedly cool wraparound sunglasses; "prince charming turns reservoir dogs bad guy" said The Sun' (1999:8). Another journalist says that 'the sunglasses are the most conspicuous part of his appearance; no sign of fusty old dad... (Ahmed,1999:2). In these articles, oppositions are set up; control/chaos,

traditional/modern, child/adult, young/old, cool/uncool, louche/nerdish, discreet/flash, posh/ordinary in which the sunglasses suggest moral chaos, modernity, adulthood, youth, cool, uncool, louche, flash, posh. These oppositions are made more explicit by reference to another set of images published in the same week, which was a PR set up at Highgrove, featuring Prince Charles and showcasing Prince William learning to

Fig.15 Prince William counteracts the effects of shades in a 'homely sweater' c.1999

drive in a new Ford Focus (fig.15). This time he is wearing jeans or cords, a 'homely' sweater and shirt with collars tucked in, and a 'toothy smile' (Ahmed,1999:2). No sunglasses. The details of this appearance are compared with those of the previous paparazzi shot in the terms of a 'discordant juxtaposition' a 'chameleon-like quality'(Walters,1999:4) attributed to William himself and an 'essential contradiction at the heart of the royal family's PR'. This is further evidence of sunglasses transforming power, but also of their usefulness as a signifier within popular culture. In journalism they are economically suggestive of a whole range of meanings which can be adequately anchored by the use of one or two other terms. In the case of Bono, the sunglasses highlight the split between gospel spreader and rock god, with William it is between 'high bred jet-setter and ordinary teenage lad' (Ahmed,1999:2). William has the potential to be like Diana, his mother, and this brush with fashion and glamour signifies this potential. To what extent royals can afford to play with fashion has long been a vexed question presumably because it signifies change at a pace set by someone else. Fashion also frequently suggests narcissism or sex, pushed boundaries which may alienate the moral majority or raise the question of the purpose of the royal family. The articles I studied all referred to the ideal of modern royals, not too grand, but in touch with ordinary people. The goal is to occupy a position of privilege which is not revelled in selfishly, a balance of duty and privilege. The homely sweater image refers to tradition and modesty.

But as celebrity images, the royals are awkwardly positioned, as this incident over the sunglasses very clearly demonstrates. Many of the so-called 'ordinary people' *want* to be flash like A-list celebrities, and they have the means to emulate them at least sartorially through mass fashion. Thus a large proportion of 'real' 'ordinary' teenage boys at the time are likely to have had a pair of wraparound sunglasses. Therefore if the royal family wished William to seem ordinary and 'in-touch', the sunglasses would have done this more effectively than the homely sweater. But they evidently also suggest all kinds of things that the Palace and some journalists believed the public better *not* think about when pondering the role, purpose and value of the royals. One of the issues raised by the journalists was the struggle for control of Prince William's image between the Palace, the

press and William himself, the sunglasses image significant of a loss of control for the Palace. Similarly fears of William's potential future behaviour got bound up in this, with the sunglasses seemingly suggestive of enthusiastic identification with a group of elite youths keen on wild and disrespectful hedonistic antics.

The tone of the broadsheets on this subject now seems slightly quaint, ten years later. In that time, the wearing of sunglasses has become acceptable for the Pope all the time. However, at the 2007 charity concert for Diana, William and Harry demonstrated caution where sunglasses were concerned. Meeting PDiddy and Kanye West, (two rappers termed

'Rap royalty' by the <u>Daily Mail</u>, who performed at the concert) Kanye is reported to have asked the princes if they would like to try on his shades, 'but they jokingly declined' (<u>Daily Mail</u>, 2007:online).

Trying on a pair of sunglasses may seem like a small thing. But in placing the sunglasses on the body, the visual copy would be frozen for ever,

Fig.16 Princes William and Harry at the concert for Diana, 2007

evidence of the Princes' 'embodiment' of hip hop values at odds with the desired public image of the House of Windsor. The very presence of an artist like Pdiddy, a proud misogynistic 'ex-pimp' and key figure of 'hip hop royalty' at this event hints at a collapse of distinction between the fictional and the real, the old and the new regime, in which the workings of cool may be implicated.

Altogether these examples demonstrate the ways in which the sunglasses/cool relationship is articulated within everyday culture. Thousands of other examples abound, not least the annual fashion articles in the newspapers and fashion magazines about 'the meaning of shades'; and the ponderings of hundreds of bloggers online. The ambiguous power of sunglasses as a signifier is greatly evident, as is their widespread appeal; which would seem to make them an attractive object for academic study. In the next chapter I will provide an overview of what has been done in this area to date.

Chapter two
Writing about Sunglasses

Serious writing about sunglasses is minimal, but there is enough to demonstrate their recognition as an object with potential for study. In historical surveys of the history of glasses a distinction between spectacles and sunglasses is rarely made, for example the most comprehensive history Corson's <u>Fashions in Eyeglasses</u> (1967), and the more recent Anglo/German book <u>Brillen</u> (Andressen, 1998), which is well illustrated. Both of these take a fairly traditional historical approach. <u>Brillen</u> does a little more to establish a contemporary (i.e. post-war) history for sunglasses but it offers very broad brush strokes. Acerenza's book (really for collectors) <u>Eyewear</u> (1997) is a useful addition to the pre-history of sunglasses, mostly annotated photographs of examples from a comprehensive Italian collection. These offer dates and good quality visual information but the lack of real distinction between spectacles and sunglasses is problematic. A transition from spectacles as a sign of wisdom or of weak sight to the 'cool' of sunglasses is not enabled in any depth, nor really is the emergence of sunglasses as a fashion accessory.

Sunglasses do occasionally catch the academic eye however. Sometimes this has led to the publication of a short article for a journal or newspaper – for example a renowned design historian pondered on them long enough to write for <u>New Society</u> (Banham, 1967). Banham's article notes how they enabled voyeurism (and hair control) for young women on Californian beaches, and suggests they create an appealing illusion of improving bone structure. Photographer Owen Edwards' 1989 article for <u>American Photographer</u> explores some issues for the use of sunglasses in the photographic image, and significantly this article credits Louise Dahl-Wolfe with the first fashion editorial to feature a model in sunglasses, for <u>Harpers Bazaar</u> in 1938. It interests me that quite often dark glasses get a juicy footnote or a throwaway line in academic books. Of the authors I have used to consider cool, virtually all of them living during a period of their popularity, even Erving Goffman and Marshall McLuhan, make a fleeting mention of them, as if suddenly delighted by the idea of what dark glasses have the power to do. For example, Stearns says 'It was no accident that by the 1960s, sunglasses became a badge of American Cool for they hid emotions the eyes might disclose' (1994:244). Pountain and Robins focus on them as a sign of detachment – 'the retreat from social entanglements, is expressed by ... that sartorial emblem of cool, the wearing of dark glasses' (2000:8-9).

Two mainly visual books 'Spectacles' by Samuel Mazza (1996), and Sunglasses by Evans (1996) offer a little more. Mazza's book is an exploration of the 'idea' of glasses, showing artists' works rather than 'real' glasses and offering three very short essays establishing some of glasses' history and their potential 'poetics'. Again, no consistent distinction is made between spectacles and sunglasses in these essays, which leads to some unworkable contradictions, such as the idea that glasses are both a loathed sign of 'the reasonable everyday' and mischievous, seductive myth. No exploration of a relationship of anything called 'cool' is offered. But glasses do emerge as 'a modern metaphor for sight', a 'fully-fledged prosthesis' (1996:19) and their lenses are established poetically as screens, mirrors and masks. Their power is noted – key to certain celebrity images, key to identity, to seduction and suggestive of the cybernetic 'body without organs'. The essays are lean and the artworks invited for the project eloquently visualise some of these ideas; leaving the reader with respect for the power and range of glasses' significance and in particular, some of the artists' altered glasses manifest contemporary perceptions of vision (and therefore knowledge) which are self-conscious, multiple and in some cases, disabled.

Evans' book Sunglasses (1996) offers a short pictorial essay which at first glance might seem to have little value for an academic study. However it does establish the idea of a transition to 'sunglasses' not direct from spectacles, but via protective goggles. I have found this to be important because it helps to account for the positive 'sign-value' required for sunglasses to make the leap from something suggestive of physical defect to something more heroic. The other valuable aspect of Evans' book is the grouping of images around certain generic designs which have emerged through the Twentieth century. As suggested in my introduction, it does matter what the sunglasses look like – because the form offers another layer of significance. Ultimately of course, my aim in this study is not specifically to a history of sunglasses' design, but to use design as one route into an understanding of how sunglasses relate to cool, and what cool might be. Looking at the way these have been grouped enables categorisation of what might otherwise seem to be a bewildering array of difference in terms of sunglasses' appearance. Indeed the generic term 'dark glasses' could range from something close to 'black spectacles' to frivolous and expressive 'pop' forms. Moreover, sunglasses need not necessarily be dark; the concept of sunglasses has been stretched to include rose and yellow lenses as well as forms which unite the lenses in one visor-like strip, where the bridge becomes part of the lens. Indeed, Reyner Banham's article referred to above is about an extreme departure from the classic form of glasses, the 'boywatcher'. This is more headband than spectacles, and the metaphor for eyes is reduced to the absolute minimum into a narrow tinted strip. However, his main point in the article is the extent to which this 'exception'

proves the rule that the dominant form for glasses remains one which emphasises *bi-nocular* sight. This, along with the essays in Mazza's book, helps to reinforce the notion that culturally glasses are more analogous to eyes than other kinds of 'shades'.

Evans' book groups the designs around the themes of glamorous play, military, jazz and beat, the criminal, the hippy, sport and the futuristic (albeit with slightly different wording). I have come across few sunglass models in my examination of illustrated books and archive examples that do not fit into one (or more) of these categories, not in terms of the cultural or social location for the glasses (because of course these are many and various), but in terms of design. Perhaps the only thing Evans misses is the form which has developed in order to unite the human soul with the luxury brand, where the glasses' form incorporates highly visible lettering or logo, often into the arms.

So from Evans book I take the ideas of sport, war and the futuristic under the umbrellas of *speed* and *technology*, and the *military*. Typically these designs make reference to engineering, aerodynamic forms and a functionalist aesthetic. I take Evans idea of sunbathing and Hollywood under the heading of *elite leisure* and *play* - where designs range from lighter, bolder plastics to the novelty forms of hearts, ice-creams and shells. The jazz, and the criminal styles overlap, tending to be the darkest of dark glasses, with heavy dark frames as well as lenses. These are considered in terms of the idea of the *outsider*.

A study commissioned by Dollond and Aitchison (Wilson, 1999), surveyed the academic literature from psychology in this field most of which attempts to determine the effects of glasses (including sunglasses) on how the wearer is perceived in terms of 'attractiveness' and 'intelligence' (Edwards, 1987; Terry and Stockton, 1993 cited in Wilson 1999). Wilson also conducted some focus groups to explore perceptions of others wearing sunglasses, use in social interaction, and comparisons with spectacles. Overall, the issues identified in these studies fit with the concerns expressed throughout the optical industry journals studied – that glasses make people seem more intelligent, but less attractive, and that this prejudice was more pronounced for female wearers. Also, that spectacles *could* be fashionable, however there is a consistent ambivalence to the idea of spectacles as fashionable or 'sexy', with the importance of fashion being reintroduced sporadically as an 'antidote' to the perceptions of 'imperfection' or 'ugliness'. Sunglasses conversely are derided in the optical journals at times for being *too much* an object of fashion, and in these later psychological studies sunglasses consistently increase the attractiveness of male and female wearers, where Wilson's focus groups identified predictable connections with film, pornography, celebrity, power, drug taking,

superiority, voyeurism, and cool (Wilson, 1999). Bartolini et al's 1988 study (cited in ibid) found that glasses played a role in perceptions of authority and honesty, with spectacles increasing this perception and sunglasses decreasing it, which supports what is suggested in the case studies I made of attitudes towards the wearing of sunglasses by Bono, the Pope and Prince William. Implicit in these studies is the idea that status is in some way affected by the wearing of glasses, and the relationship between status and 'goodness' is complicated, something that an exploration of cool might help to untangle.

Another significant analysis of sunglasses is contained within an article 'Towards a sociology of the Sun' by Simon Carter and Mike Michael (2003). It offers a useful analysis which situates sunglasses not in terms of psychological perception or history, but in terms of their 'material-semiotic' relationship to the 'cultural body'. They do not explicitly connect sunglasses with cool. But their analysis does make some interesting observations, for example they speak of sunglasses as enabling 'performances of distinction' such as the 'signifying of class or subculture' but, similarly to Mazza's essay, also as 'a figure by which to grasp the process of knowing' (2003:274). Within the article there are also some very useful categorisations of different kinds of gazes signified by sunglasses within contemporary visual culture which will be useful for my study. These help to distinguish what is otherwise a very complex mediation of the gaze, in which the situation, the relationship to the object of the gaze, the design of the frames (materials, shape) and the quality of the lens (mirrored, tinted to different shades of different colours) all contribute to what is being signified along with the relationship with other signifiers of clothing, bodily demeanour, and so on (and therefore how the meaning of cool may be constructed *by* or transferred *on to* the glasses).

Of the categories identified by Carter and Michael, three are of particular interest. The first is what they call the 'unhidden hidden gaze' (Carter and Michael, 2003:275). This is where a performance of what I would call 'diffuse surveillance' enables the wearer to project the idea that s/he may be focusing on anyone or thing in the scene, but that s/he is unwilling to let the direction of his or her gaze be known. This gaze has panoptic qualities, because it implies that perhaps everyone is under surveillance and its power is evidenced by the favouring of dark glasses by police, military, security guards, FBI agents, (and even, stretching the concept a bit, to Anna Wintour, the famous editor of American Vogue, who conceals her reactions to a new collection as the models pass before her, presumably to protect her 'product' (her assessment of the season's trends), but also instilling morbid fear and mythologizing her power in the process, as expressed in the popular book/film The Devil Wears Prada (2006). This gaze can be read from the glasses in

conjunction with a certain stillness; a calm, slightly wandering gaze, as well as the cues of setting, uniform, and body language surrounding the wearer.

The second is the 'fleeting partial gaze' (ibid). This is a gaze of seduction, which Carter and Michael illustrate with a scene from the 1960s Stanley Kubrick film of Lolita. In this instance, the wearer allows and denies access to the eyes in a move not dissimilar to the fluttering of eyelashes. It is partly the attraction of movement, and partly the attraction of an uncertain promise of intimacy, a fixating 'giving and taking away' of access, power. I would argue that the 'fleeting partial gaze' functions not as a form of surveillance but to attract and hold the gaze of the other, an expression of 'to-be-looked-ness'.[1]

The final gaze identified by Carter and Michael is the 'anti-gaze'. The example they use is the classic detachment of the rock star. In this instance, dark glasses block the gaze, as a performance of the idea that what is beyond the wearer is of no interest to them. They may be directed towards an audience but this demonstrates the unequal or asymmetrical relationship between audience and star. You look at me, but I do not look at you, 'as if the blasé attitude were grounded in self-absorption, where that self almost seems reflected back from the inner surface of the sunglasses' (2003:275) Again, other cues like lighting (the audience will be in the dark), arrangement of bodies around the star, help to anchor our interpretation. This gaze is associated by the authors with signification of both indifference and coolness.

Their list is not exhaustive, and it raises all kinds of questions about the powerful connotations of sunglasses, and how they might relate to cool, much of which will be explored in what is to come. But in defining these different 'enactments' of the gaze, these concepts will be useful reference points within what is to come.

What is clear from this literature is that there is very little which establishes how 'sunglasses' came into being, and in spite of frequent references to associations with coolness, nothing which sets out to explore this association in any depth.

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[1] The third, is what Carter and Michael call 'the communitas gaze', where sunglasses may be used to draw attention to the 'united-ness' of a group confronting a shared spectacle. Sunglasses can be a powerful part of a uniform, but this is not necessary in this case – frequently the protective aspect against some potential danger is what is being suggested by this communitas gaze, used mostly in film and advertising as a way of visually dramatising the anticipation of an unpredictable spectacle – the arrival of an alien, the demonstration of an invention, and so on.

Chapter three

Defining Cool - cool writing

As I have suggested already, cool is a fuzzy and slippery term, often avoided in the academic literatures of film, fashion and subculture, where it would seem to find an appropriate home until precise definition is required. It is used a great deal in contemporary vernacular speech and, as we have seen, in popular culture its use is so widespread it has become a general term of approval with very little specific content. Suspicion of the term perhaps comes from the assumption that because the images and objects considered to be 'cool' within these cultures appear to change so frequently (and to depend on subjectively applied criteria), its meaning must be similarly open. My analysis of examples of the use of sunglasses as a signifier within contemporary popular journalism has revealed something – but it does seem to be a term with a number of different meanings. For example, the Concise Oxford Dictionary (as good a starting point as any for a sense of the contemporary, widely understood meanings of cool) offers firstly the literal 'low temperature', moving on to 'calm', 'restrained or relaxed', 'lacking enthusiasm', 'unfriendliness or a lack of cordiality', 'calm audacity' and on to 'excellent' or 'marvellous' or 'fashionable' or having 'street credibility'.

There are three main ingredients to this definition - firstly a lack of or withholding of emotion; secondly, a refusal to accommodate others, to give them welcome or respect. Somehow this lack of emotion and/or concern for others is valorised to become a general term of approval. There's a sense of youth culture and fashion ('street cred' – of or relating to the culture of fashionable urban youth), but there is also a sense of impressive self-control, thereby defying age and class distinctions in some ways. How the lack of emotion, and lack of concern for others should come to be associated with urban youth and furthermore take on such positive associations in western culture is a significant question for my study, and one which I hope focusing on the associations between cool and one specific signifier may help to make sense of.

There is a small but significant literature of cool which mostly emerged during the 1990s. This was an era in which the specific use of the term cool once again became widespread, amidst significant changes in the branding and marketing of all kinds of products and

services. With Bill Clinton playing the sax and Tony Blair hob-knobbing with pop stars, even political figures seemed to need to be made 'cool'. Having surveyed this literature it is possible to identify some key approaches and authors, from which I hope to be able to draw out some defining features of cool. These will be applied, tested and developed in the rest of the thesis.

To some extent establishing parameters for an academic 'literature of cool' is complicated by the fact that even the term 'cool' may not always be used to describe attitudes and behaviours which seem substantively similar. Other terms (like 'hip') are sometimes used interchangeably with cool , and since what is deemed cool appears to be so changeable and has such a close relationship to youth culture and fashion, the term itself may be subject to updates, as Moore's article 'We're cool, mom and dad are swell'(2004) describes. To structure my review of the useful literature I have focused only on those works in which the term 'cool' is a principal object of exploration. There is a much greater body of literature in which the term 'cool' is not mentioned or barely mentioned, but useful thematic connections or relevant concepts are presented, and these I will draw in where relevant in the subsequent chapters.

Existing accounts of cool

Generally speaking the approaches to defining or exploring cool fall into three categories. First is that which emphasises cooler *emotions* as a widespread necessity in modern urban existence – part of the 'civilising process' – for example, Stearns' work <u>American Cool</u> (1999) is focused on changes to mainstream American emotional culture, demonstrating the value placed on the control of emotion in contemporary American culture. Secondly, there are those which emphasise cool as a form of symbolic rebellion against modern capitalism – here Thomas Frank's work <u>The Conquest of Cool</u> (1997) specifically looks at the context of marketing and advertising, seeing the incorporation of counter-cultural values and 'hip' ideals from the 1960s into a kind of self-deprecating form of capitalism which allows dissent and rebellion to be packaged and sold. Pountain and Robins' work <u>Cool Rules</u> (2000) originates from a similar premise, in an attempt to explore the idea that 'cool' might be replacing the work ethic in western societies as the dominant value, which has also been suggested by German author Poschart (cited in Mentges, 2000) and by Lilla (cited in Pountain and Robbins, 1997).

A third and very significant approach to cool is one which critically locates its emergence in the adaptations of black Americans coming out of slavery and seeing black American

cool as a survival tactic against racism to the present day. Some of this is largely focused on sociological and psychological perspectives. A key example of this might be Majors and Mancini-Billson's work Cool Pose (1992), which was drawn from contemporary ethnographic studies of young black Americans and which considers the 'positive and destructive effects of the cool pose', and there's also bell hooks' We Real Cool – black men and masculinity (2003) and Connor's What is Cool – understanding black American manhood (2005). Lewis Macadams' work Birth of the Cool (2002) offers a more cultural perspective, charting the development of cool in the American avant-garde from its roots in African tribal cultures, through slavery and to the black jazz musicians gaining recognition in the 1940s and 1950s. It offers a history of connections with and influences on white American 'beat' writers, actors and avant-garde artists. The cultural artefacts produced are referenced briefly but the emphasis is on the key figures in these movements, their appearance, values and behaviour.

Finally, a fourth, less well documented, aspect of cool is identified by Gabriele Mentges (2000), whose case study on the clothing and demeanour of German WW1 fighter pilots provides an exposition of the relationship between technology, modernity and cool.

Next I will provide a more detailed overview of the key ideas and concepts in each of these approaches, drawing out those most relevant to my project. Of all these studies, Pountain and Robins is one which attempts the broadest ranging genealogy of cool. It touches on ideas from all the above in varying degrees and makes some useful additions. For this reason, although their starting point sits well with that of Frank, I will discuss what their analysis has to offer to my study at the end of this section.

Stearns - Emotional cool and the 'smooth running of the machine'
Peter Stearns study of changes to emotional culture is based on the analysis of emotional advice, aimed at the American middle classes and found in Twentieth century magazines, self-help books and parenting manuals. Stearns says 'cool' becomes accepted as a useful 'emotional style' in America during the 1960s, its seeds having been sown in the 1920s and 1930s, and his main idea is that in the Victorian era emotion was repressed, but masked justifiable passions which drove civilisation forward (1994:93), but that in the Twentieth century 'far more frequently and systematically than in the Nineteenth century, emotionality took on unfavourable connotations, suggesting an inability to maintain proper control' (Stearns, 1994:244). His ideas relate to the concealment and control of emotion, as a response to the conditions of modern life for everyone.

Stearns argues that by the 1950s 'emotionality' had become a sign of immaturity to the point that 'to express [a] negative emotion... now became the symptom of individual fault, demanding no particular response except... a patronising tolerance' (1994:135) and by the 1960s open emotionality could be widely seen as conveying an 'embarrassing vulnerability' (1994:230). The driver for this new prohibition of display of emotion is seen as connected to the growth of bureaucracy and the service sector, saying that great emphasis was necessarily placed on the cultivation of 'smooth relations – including... customer relations' (ibid). Modern capitalism required its subjects to behave in a more rational manner. The anonymity and increasing number of fleeting relationships in the city demanded a more rational approach to one another, more rituals and greater detachment. Stearns' point about customer relations is important, as it highlights the extent to which this detachment was potentially both cause and cure in potential conflicts.

Stearns' view is not that emotions are disallowed, but that they must not affect behaviour in a way that might threaten the smooth running of the machine. Emotions are an issue for the self to deal with, not a spur to action. He demonstrates the status of cool as a heroic value – comparing great mythologised warriors of times gone as people whose passions lead them to victory – in comparison with Twentieth century heroes like Superman and Rambo (his examples) whose major skills are detachment and self control.

If this is the case, Stearns also notes the apparent rise of emotional intensity in certain popular cultural forms. Talking about emotions and acknowledging them is at times encouraged, but he describes this as a 'need for outlets' in the face of the demand to regulate and control them so much in everyday life. Emotions are also packaged and processed through consumption, as well as being used to fuel consumption. This may defuse the power of those emotions to inform actions other than consumption, a theme developed in Stjepan Mestrovic's book Post Emotional Society (1997) which sees emotions as an object for consumption in the pursuit of the idealised self.

Another sense in which detachment from and control of emotion is expressed is through irony. For example, Stearns notes the way intense vocabulary becomes more acceptable at the same time as anger becomes less so:

> ...the same people who were learning to mask their anger of even to claim that they had none, might now openly say 'hell' or 'damn' or even 'fuck'. These words were not intended to convey deep anger.... Strong words were meant to be divorced from strong emotion (1994:273).

He also notes that others reactions to such swearing was a 'test' – perhaps in the sense that if you are angered by someone else's swearing, you have taken it too seriously. The blasé user of unacceptable language demonstrates a number of things at once – an ironic use of language, a detachment from one's own expressive utterances, a rebellious behaviour that others may not 'comprehend'. There is a tension here in Stearns work which he does not explore which is the apparent contradiction inherent in the idea of cool coexisting as a both a means of keeping things 'smooth' and as a rebellious attitude – even the cited Snoopy character 'Joe Cool' is often coolly disrespectful of wider society and its rules.

However Stearns' account valuably evidences the growth of 'cool' as an ideal emotional strategy and widely accepted behaviour in mainstream culture from the 1960s onwards, specifically within the context of modernity, suggesting that a more thorough examination of the conditions of modern existence, and attendant changes to emotional culture would be beneficial.

Frank - Cool as the 'machinery of consent'
Where Stearns' work fails to consider the contradiction between cool as a way of oiling the machine, and as a spanner in the works, Frank's sets out to demonstrate how cool has been used as a means of reaching knowing consumers and successive generations of youth, putting most energy into showing how advertising and marketing changed between the fifties and sixties to counter the threats to identity and self-respect which mass culture was increasingly associated with. The relationship between the counterculture of sixties America and mainstream advertising tactics is most significant to his analysis, and throughout he tends to use the term hip interchangeably with cool. Perhaps the most important aspect of his analysis is that hip and cool are defined primarily in the sense of being against the 'establishment', against consumer culture, against the corporate, against the puritan.

His notes on method give most away about his definition of cool, or rather hip. In quantifying whether an advert could be defined as hip or cool he states five criteria: use of minimalist graphics (presumably because traditionally minimalism is a western cultural form which downplays emotional content), or the ambiguous 'graphic sophistication'; flippant references to products on sale, including them shown damaged or defiled (irony); a tendency to mock consumer culture more generally, use of counter cultural imagery (Frank,1997:238); and reference to more general notions of 'nonconformity, escape,

resistance, difference, carnival, and even deviance' (Frank, 1997:133). He refers to Marchand's assertion that advertising from the sixties onwards in America 'counselled consumers on maintaining individuality and purpose in a time that sought to deny individuality'(ibid). He suggests that contemporary marketing methods are drawn from the template of this period, 'cultural machines that transform alienation and despair into consent'.(ibid:235).

Frank's account is particularly interesting because it demonstrates the co-option of hip or of cool and its use as a tool of counter persuasion but it also acknowledges the tension this can produce for cool individuals. Cool, counter-cultural values were held by people who went on to become Madison Avenue executives. For 'cool creatives' to survive, some complicity with the system is inevitable. In one particular episode of the Simpsons, Bart admonishes his erstwhile hero 'Krusty the Clown' with the line 'I'd blush with shame if the name of Simpson were ever to find its way onto a shoddy product!' In spite of the evident desire to subvert the ideals of mass consumer culture, Groening's characters are themselves ruthlessly licensed. This demonstrates how an individual may express their discomfort with their own involvement in such a ruthless system, or how they may pre-empt claims of their own hypocrisy through ironic detachment.

Frank also shows how certain brands could in themselves be thought to be underdogs or outsiders, and how they used this and its currency to compete by attempting to undermine the 'rules of the game'; he cites a sixties campaign for '7-UP' which describes itself as an 'uncola' and which highlights the conformity of consumers who won't try anything else. A current example of a British product striking a similar note is the 'Innocent' smoothie brand, who sells the idea of their own non-competitiveness.

What Frank describes is an endless game of cat and mouse, which perhaps only highlights the pressures on identity that modernity and consumer culture have brought with them, pressure to survive and to forge identity that isn't (or doesn't feel as if it is) merely mass produced from materials of little value in exchange for your money. Frank's argument demonstrates the extent to which cool has pervaded mainstream culture but ultimately views this as an illusory form of rebellion against capitalism.

Macadams - Cool as Black American survival strategy; 'in but not of the world'
However, some contemporary authors (1990s) and some post-war (1960s) have documented cool not so much as a widespread cultural phenomenon but as a specifically Afro-American street-based performance of masculinity with a strong element of style.

Many of these accounts go back to the idea that a kind of coolness has its roots in African tribal cultures, referring to the work of Farris Thompson (1966) which identifies an aspect of African spirituality with connections to a cool demeanour. A philosophy of 'patience and collectedness of mind' expressed in traditional Yoruba dances (Farris Thompson, 1966 in Macadam, 2002:72). A number of nuances are present in the analysis of Black American cool , from the need to control the expression of emotion, which Connor says was necessarily developed in black slaves who knew it was critical they maintain an outward calm while suffering the sight of the women being raped by white men (in Macadams, 2002:20) to what Farris Thompson describes as 'masking' – something which also contains a suggestion of irony, defined as 'acting and role-playing as a defensive strategy' (in Pountain and Robins, 2000:148) of which 'shucking speech' is one aspect, exaggerating the expression of subservience to the point that it becomes almost insolent (ibid:27). A layer of self-exclusion and cultural superiority is offered by the analysis of jazz cultures in which modern usage of the term cool is suggested to have originated by Macadams (2002).

A key example of this would be Majors and Mancini's work, <u>Cool Pose- the dilemmas of black manhood in America</u> (1992), which focuses on the idea of cool as a defining feature of masculine identity for contemporary black Americans. Drawing on interviews with young black males and a range of sociological ideas, they describe aspects of cool behaviour in contemporary culture (1992) in relation to the idea of cool as a means of performing masculinity:

> … A ritualised form of masculinity that entails behaviours, scripts, physical posturing, impression management and carefully crafted performances that deliver a single critical message: Pride, strength and control (1992:4)

This pose can be used to achieve a number of things – as a mask it can obscure what may, to the white man, be unacceptable aspects of the black male's identity, opinions, ideas. As a mode of expression, it can display superior masculinity, suggesting 'competence, high self-esteem' and 'hiding self-doubt, insecurity and inner turmoil' (ibid:5). A visual emphasis on style as part of cool is explained mainly in the sense of power over the self – making the self highly visible in a culture where black males are made invisible. Cool in this context is seen to have positive qualities as a highly creative form of preservation of dignity and expression of independence, performed through the body as speech, gesture and clothing, but it is equally shown as a matter of concern in terms of its power to render the performer dependent on profoundly anti-social emotional detachment, which can impact on relationships with family, health, and behaviour towards others. These

studies focus on explaining the origins for the cool demeanour in terms of the position occupied by black males in American society, and do not really attempt to say anything about the wider presence of cool in white society, apart from to mention that white males do sometimes attempt to adopt black forms of cool (mostly unsuccessfully).

Two specific aspects of how the body is used in this performance are worth noting from Majors and Mancini – one is the exaggeratedly slow, strolling walk (of which there are many variations), and the other is the use of eye contact, which Majors and Mancini say is significantly different between 'black' and 'white' groups – where practises are different. For example, conventionally black Americans may make eye contact more while speaking than when listening; and a calm steady gaze into the eyes of a (white) authority figure can undermine that authority (1992:74-5). Their work is able to draw on a range of studies in the 1960s and 1970s which documented and analysed the highly visible black street cultures of America. To an extent, the cool pose described here sometimes has the hallmarks of a defiant 'subculture', and sometimes it has hallmarks of Stearns' notion of an emotional style necessitated by the need to survive as a part in a machine. Majors makes a link with Durkheim's concept of anomie as a condition of a society in which shared goals are unachievable, seeing black males as particularly likely to require alternative strategies. In this sense Majors briefly refers to Robert Merton's taxonomy of deviance (1967) as a potential way of understanding cool. Detachment from emotion is performed as strength, and control over the body and expressions of the self seem to have emerged as a substitute for the capacity of black American males to influence wider conditions of life.

Although he gives a very primary role to black Americans (not quite exclusively male), Macadams' (who draws on Majors and Mancini, among others) purpose is much more focused on cool as a cultural phenomenon. His account is exclusively of artists and musicians, and it seeks connections between the black and white mid-century avant-gardes. Although he also refers to Farris Thompson's discoveries, Macadams also makes a useful study of the origins of the use of the term cool, which shows it in use in print early in the Nineteenth century in Britain, with a sense of 'impudent, insolent, daring' (2002:14). He also finds it in use in the African Mandingo language, meaning 'gone out' in the sense of tripping, and in use by 1935 by African Americans, although not widespread enough in the language of jazz to be featured in bandleader Cab Calloway's 1938 'Hepster's dictionary' (ibid:17), nor in 'Dan Burley's Original Book of Harlem Jive' of 1944. The utterance of approval, 'that's cool' is attributed to the saxophone player Lester Young (ibid).

Here, the idea of cool as a survival strategy for the excluded or oppressed is again put forward, citing Clarence Majors identification of the 'first black slave submerging his emotions in irony and choking back his rage', (in Macadams, 2002:20) - 'the ultimate revenge of the powerless. Cool was the one thing that the white slave owner couldn't own... one thing money couldn't buy. At its core, cool is about defiance.'(Macadams, 2002:20).

Macadams doesn't systematically list the attributes of cool, but some strong themes emerge from the book, the first perhaps exclusion and counter exclusion (2002:46). A second idea is, (as in Mancini and Majors) the lack of effort or hurry – notably Lester Young is said always to have come in a beat behind, to show he was 'laid back' but also to demonstrate that he was in fact the pace setter. Garry Goodrow describes the 'outward appearance of easy competence', 'not frantic, not overblown' (Macadams, 2002:20). This apparent making of minimal effort is suggestive of having nothing to prove, as Macadams quotes Schjedahl's analysis of the French aristocracy, 'an inborn excellence you don't have to prove' (in ibid).

This sense of being outside or even above somehow is strong: outside the law, 'underneath the radar', outside of the dominant culture, superior even to those things. Beat writer William Burroughs was attracted to the idea of the gangster, the lone gunman (2002:112), and Kerouac and Ginsberg became interested in Zen Buddhism, offering transcendence from material concerns (2002:180). The idea of a shared cool code is significant too. Macadams says that 'Cool joined the aesthetic to the political. Cool was a militant act, a way of staying below the radar screen of the dominant culture without losing the respect of one's peers' (2002:46).

This state can also be reached via the use of drugs, and Macadams account is full of cool characters who were users, who also developed a quiet, unhurried, understated way of behaving; a theme he also picks up in relation to preferred behaviour in Andy Warhol's Factory scene of the late 1960s in New York. Preserving your sense of self, appearing unconcerned about others' opinions of you, but also inviting speculation, became a goal for some who recall the Factory years. Macadams analysis of Warhol also touches on the idea of emotionlessness, evident in his description of Andy Warhol himself, 'he aspired to become an emotionally efficient machine: "machines have less problems"'... suggesting that he surrounded himself with 'overwrought' characters because they 'allowed Warhol to put aside any personality of his own and coolly drain his life of all emotions' (2002:242).

Macadams' account usefully demonstrates connections between two quite different scenes where sunglasses were habitually worn, mid-century jazz, and the Factory scene of the 1960s, perhaps bridged by beat and the beatnik. The idea of cool as a survival strategy is also shown to have relevance beyond black experience, allowing a view of cool which has a purpose beyond mere emulation of black creativity. As Macadams says, 'after the atomic bomb, everybody felt powerless' (2002:23).

Pountain and Robins – the appearance of non-compliance

This is the broadest study of the phenomenon of contemporary cool to date. It has some shortcomings, one of which is that it is difficult to apply, taking in a truly bewildering array of periods, examples and related issues. But it does identify a very useful range of relevant materials, and it breaks down the cool personality into four aspects: narcissism, irony, detachment and hedonism (2000:26). They are looking for the possible threads that link the many manifestations of cool together, suspecting that although the specifics of *what* is deemed cool is of necessity always changing, the values these specifics seem to represent might have something in common. They also put forward the proposition that 'cool' is becoming a new dominant value: 'usurping the work ethic to install itself as the dominant mindset of advanced consumer capitalism' (1999:7-8). Finally, and importantly, they echo Frank in seeing cool as an apparently contradictory way of consuming which successfully incorporates notions of resistance to mass consumption itself, enabling young Americans to be 'holding down day jobs in the unfettered global market place – the Reaganite dream, the left nightmare - and spending weekends immersed in a moral and cultural universe shaped by the sixties' (Lilla in Pountain and Robins 1999:7). This for them presents a challenge to conventional politics which must be addressed.

Pountain and Robins account differs from the others in that it identifies a strain of cool's roots within the European aristocracy, highlighting renaissance Italy's 'sprezzatura', the unflappability of the British aristocracy, and the mythical nonchalance of the French aristocracy, even in the midst of the revolution.

In relation to 'sprezzatura', they refer to Lanham's study, calling it 'an attitude of aristocratic disdain, the cultivation of an appearance of effortlessness in accomplishing difficult actions' (Pountain and Robins, 2000:53) Here the idea of effortlessness is added to the idea of presentation of an emotionless exterior and it is interesting how difficult it is to distinguish the idea of a lack of emotion from a lack of effort or concern. Logically it follows that effort must be made to present a controlled face to the world, but the sense is in the idea that the aristocrat is so assured, so competent as to fear no adverse

reaction from thing or person, knowing that their superiority is unquestionable. They don't attempt to please or appease. The world and everything and everyone in it could not hope to unsettle them. If they succeed in a 'difficult action' it is not a surprise or relief, if they fail, it nevertheless cannot undermine them. Quoting Lanham

> Sprezzatura retains the force of its parent verb. [sprezzare means to scorn or despise] It involves disdain. It declares, brags about, successful enselfment, a permanent incorporation, in addition to, the self. It satisfies because it publicly declares an enlarged self... the self is enriched, amplified, and as sign of amplification comes the effortlessness, the sprezzatura.(Pountain and Robins, 2000:53).

Castiglione's book of 1516 (which appears to be the source for 'sprezzatura') refers to nonchalance (ibid), which derives from the French meaning to be unconcerned (OED; the literal translation presumably 'lack of heat'). The sense that this involves demonstrating a lack of concern for others may be extended to an apparent lack of concern for one's own behaviour. Pountain and Robins suggest that the leisure time available to aristocrats enabled them to rehearse their moves, cultivate the personality, thus increasing the confidence that their status already gave them, magnifying the appearance of effortlessness. (It seems strange that Pountain and Robins do not specifically refer to the 'dandy' at this point, since this modern figure emerges from this cultural milieu adopting many similar values).

The other significant group Pountain and Robins do identify is the modernist cultural elite of the 1920s, who they argue, exhibited detachment, irony and hedonism in the aftermath of the Great War. Here, they begin to make a point about the relationship between cool and the modern, noting that it was not until the end of the Second World War that most people really had access to a taste of modernity (2000:56).

They see the spread of modernism into mass experience and culture as located in the 1960s, the decade often most mythically associated with cool, and where they, as well as Macadams and Frank, start to see post-war values changing in such a way as to make cool a 'dominant mindset' for white middle class youths in the latter stages of the Twentieth century. They say cool went beyond black culture when others also 'lost respect for their society's dominant value system under pressure of war, persecution or corruption' (1999:8).They also make a connection with the quality of dignity: '... cool is a subcultural alternative to the old notion of personal dignity, since dignity... is a quality that is

validated by the established institutions of church, state and work' (ibid:153). If these institutions are no longer respected, other means of achieving dignity must be found.

They also identify new and increasing stresses in modern life which affect the middle classes; some of which arise from material affluence and the growth of media and consumer culture. There are changes to parenting, changes to work and government which emphasise individualism and autonomy, but decrease security.

There are changes to parenting – which result in less deep forms of support and shallow emotional guidance (here they refer to Lasch, who I will explore later). There is increased individualism and autonomy, but a decrease in job security and an increase in competition. Pountain and Robins note that cool is a set of shared values and behaviours in a much smaller community which allows a more manageable range of goals, and in a sense 'self-excludes' in a similar way to that identified by Macadams. Cool is a way of circumnavigating these pressures: 'By acting cool you declare yourself to be a non-participant in the bigger race, for if you don't share straight society's values then you can stop comparing yourself to them.' (ibid:152)

Detachment, irony, narcissism and hedonism
Most usefully Pountain and Robins identify four aspects which underpin cool behavioural strategies across the range of examples they touch on: detachment, irony, narcissism and hedonism. They describe detachment as 'the retreat from social entanglements' (1999:8). Narcissism is used in the sense of Christopher Lasch's work The Culture of Narcissism (Lasch 1991), from which they identify traits like charm, a 'protective emotional shallowness… avoidance of dependence… dread of old age and death' and giving 'priority to their own right to self-fulfilment' (ibid:9) (Lasch does not specifically discuss 'cool', but his ideas will be explored more in chapter ten, when I come on to look at personality changes in the late Twentieth century). Irony, which they define as 'stating one's thoughts indirectly, usually by uttering their exact opposite' (ibid:9) is described by Pountain and Robins as a strategy effective for 'aggression or defence [and] central to the protective cool persona' (ibid). They suggest that this has become so dominant in film and TV cultures that any display of directness or sincerity has become embarrassing (ibid), citing the scorn poured on unknowing participants in the popular British TV game show Have I Got News For You (BBC) as evidence.

They quote Adam Phillips' evocative description:

There is, then, a familiar type of composure that creates an appearance of self-possession... The mind creates a distance in the self – often in the form of irony – from its own desire.. and manages... a distance from everyone else. A sometimes compelling but ambiguous aura, by communicating a relative absence of neediness, renders the other dispensable.... At its most extreme neediness is evoked in the people around and then treated with sadistic dismay, as though it were an obnoxious stranger. Hell is not other people but one's need for other people. (in ibid:146)

The next criteria, hedonism, is identified with the drug taking associated with many cool cultures. There's a sense that the pursuit of personal pleasure is both a *moral* good for cool people and rebellious to 'straight' values. Similarly to the point made earlier by Macadams (op.cit) in many instances the drugs of choice also appear to enhance or produce detached behaviour – 'one could almost describe cool as the abstraction of opiate intoxication' (ibid); this reinforces what Macadams says.

The categories necessarily overlap but they are useful. They don't separately identify rebellion, but it features again and again throughout the book – 'anti-establishment', 'anti-authority', the 'criminal'. In a sense this is incorporated in the idea of detachment, since it is a detachment from the usual social rules, and in narcissism, because narcissism features the prioritisation of the self over society. Even hedonism can be viewed as rebellion against the dominant ideology of the protestant work ethic and deferred gratification. In fact this becomes the logic by which cool become the servant of consumer capitalism. They refer back to Frank and his exposition of how marketing uses cool to perform the double bluff. Basically 'cool' in its current form is, for Pountain and Robins, what post-war consumption has offered in return for our compliance – the appearance of not complying. Another value running through the book which is not fully explored is a highly noticeable aesthetics which in some way opposes a real or imagined mainstream or straight aesthetic sensibility.

The evidence they amass gives credence to the idea that 'cool' is widely significant. They show that it is powerful, that it has resonance beyond youth culture, and that it is connected to widespread modern processes influencing behaviour and personality. They highlight its position in tension with consumer culture, celebrity and aspiration, and in this way, they go some way to demonstrating why something which signifies cool so readily might have value for so many people.

Technological cool - Mentges

The aspect of cool most overlooked by the three approaches above is the ready association with technology. Since sunglasses are themselves a product of modern technology, I am particularly interested in Gabriele Mentges research which locates origins of modern cool in the behaviour, demeanour and dress of German world war one fighter pilots (2000:28-47). She begins by claiming cool is 'the outstanding quality, the highest value' and cites Poschart saying it is 'the ultimate defining technique for exclusion and distinction.' (ibid:28). But she situates cool in the realm of the modern body; 'coolness as a new sensual experience of the body, dress and its materials... that originates in the sphere of technology, war and sport in the early Twentieth century.' (ibid:29).

She mentions the almost equivalent German term – 'lassigkeit' which means 'casualness', offering James Dean and Marlon Brando as examples. This term dates back to the middle ages, where it implied sluggish or indifferent and according to Mentges had negative connotations in Germany until early in the Twentieth century. In the thirties it entered the fashion vocabulary, becoming, by the post-war period, a 'definitely positive characteristic, a certificate of assurance and superiority' (Maase, 1992 in Mentges, 2000).

'Cool' is used in German slang. Cool – implying cold – is stronger than 'casual', having the added sense of a profound ambivalence (ibid:28-29). She refers to related terms and meanings, for example nonchalance, highlighting the ambiguity and difficulty of accurate translation of these terms. She is interested in the frequent similarities in images which seem to connect with these ideas, and their frequent use in relation to youth cultures, 'always associated with a particular kind of dress, body language and bearing'. The particular focus for her study is the tendency for such manifestations to refer to the 'technical surroundings in which these attributes were commonly displayed' (ibid:30).

In particular, the term 'Lassigkeit' was used to describe German fighter pilots in the First World War. She says that it 'characterised a particular, non-military carriage' which author Ernst Junger found fascinating; their 'relaxed manner', their 'deliberate display of a civilian bearing' which constituted a 'provocation to and disruption of Prussian discipline in the German army'. Mentges notes how Junger compared the pilot with the 'dandy', and identifies their 'obvious contempt for danger and death' as a cause for great admiration (ibid:30-31), although they were 'simultaneously considered to be outsiders who defied army rules' (ibid:32-33). Mentges explains that this, and their unconventional clothing and demeanour springs from the fact that they were recruited from the ranks of 'mechanics' (automobile drivers, motorcyclists and airmen), and that their dress was yet

to be formalised as 'uniform'. One of the flying aces of the period recalls the shock in a superior's eyes when he removed his filthy, oily leather jacket to reveal a medal of honour. Mentges also mentions the 'ugliness' of the clothing worn by these mechanics, quoting a 1903 source (Zechlin in Mentges, 2000:36) who said that it was 'frightening' for pedestrians. They certainly embodied an 'unknown' aesthetic.

As well as the airmen's demeanour, their association with velocity and speed is seen by Mentges as key to 'cool'. She quotes Virilio saying that velocity is the distinctive equipment of the modern warrior (in Mentges, 2000). She says airmen were at the mercy of the plane as well as being transported by it – and that a 'cool' i.e., unemotional head was needed to control it, survive and be victorious. There's an important sense in which control, power and cool overlap, evident in the text of the 1903 motorists guide Mentges cites, apparently driving offers 'a consciousness of strength, power and a confidence in one's own value and superiority' (Zechlin in Mentges, 2000:36):

> The required control over a machine demands a controlled mind and a controlled set of senses, which have to be available every minute. At the same time, the machine supplies the operator with the feeling of power… as the machine becomes an extension of human force. (Mentges, 2000:36)

She refines her use of the concept of technology to include all that belongs to the 'culture of technical rationality' (ibid:31). The airmen's demeanour, clothing and skill demonstrate their admirable affinity with this culture. The hard materials used for their clothing contribute to an aesthetic which, as well as being ugly and unrefined, is suggestive of armour and renders the human body more machine-like. Mentges notes how leather and rubber, and even metal 'mechanise' the human body:

> The skin as surface, is in this view the greatest and most vulnerable organ and the ultimate limit of the body extension…Leather and rubber… have remarkable protective qualities that are necessary in technical surroundings, but clothing made of these materials also produces an assimilation to the… metal of the machines – and not only in a visual sense. Via clothing, the human body itself is reinforced and becomes as firm and as hard as iron. [These clothes must] protect the skin as the ultimate limit and definite frontier of the body. (ibid:34)

Understanding of the skin as a more generally vulnerable organ was increasing as knowledge of disease and hygiene developed. Mentges extends her points to consider the

idea of a more general protective aesthetic and demeanour which helps to account for the widespread valorisation of cool:

> In speaking of protection, I do not mean to return to the classical interpretation of dress as protection against the elements, but as a social protection against 'the alien' – the entire environment in its cultural, social and 'natural' dimensions. It is perhaps the case that the frightening ugliness of motorists' costumes …had already anticipated this idea.(ibid:36)

Her work is very significant to my study because it provides a context in which the construction of a 'new corporeal language' and 'an entirely new discipline of the body and the mind' is potentially meaningful for all those who engage with modern forms of technology and mobility (ibid:42). It demonstrates how the quality of coolness takes on a heroic status, and further enables a sense of cool as a victorious response to threat which is predicated on superior levels of self-control. Her work is focused on the first half of the Twentieth century and as such it tends not to explore possible modifications or additions to the contents of cool in the late modern period. But it clearly indicates the value of exploring the culture and clothing of the early decades surrounding travel, war and sport for me as I seek the earliest connections between cool and the shaded eye.

Summary

Some very strong themes emerge from these differing accounts which help to define some typical characteristics of cool. These are detachment from one's own emotions and from others, and others rules; 'private' or symbolic rebellion against dominant values; narcissism, hedonism, irony, highly visible style, control over body and mind, and evident links with modernity, including modern technology. Together, these elements provide a map of locations for connections between different nuances of cool and sunglasses – black style, the mid century American avant-garde, symbolic rebellion in subculture and indeed in advertising and marketing since the 1960s, and modern technology which I can use. These connect clearly with some of the themes observed in sunglasses designs and drawn from Evans (1996) in the discussion of sunglasses literature: namely technology, jazz and the outsider.

However, one very obvious theme derived from Evans book on Sunglasses (1996) and from my visual research does not relate so neatly to the cool values identified by these authors, and this is the brightly lit glamour of Hollywood and sunbathing, mass glitter and success. In fact, a broader tension can be seen between the extent to which cool either

belongs to subcultural, subordinate or outsider groups, or whether it is (or has become) a shared value widespread through western culture. Assumptions that cool might be located in rebellious or excluded cultures are challenged by its manifestations seemingly everywhere we look. It is hard to rationalise these contradictions within the frameworks provided by the existing literature, in which there are many overlaps but each is in some way incomplete; missing some vital component. Equally the consideration of the relationship between cool and modernity is patchy; obviously there, but worthy of closer attention.

In the next chapter I will make my own examination of some earlier idealised types (pre-Twentieth century, pre-sunglasses) whose behaviours and personality traits have been discussed and documented with similar fascination and admiration – in particular, the dandy and the flaneur. These help to establish a context for the development of 'cool' in Twentieth century western culture, and describe traits and behaviours which sunglasses – though not yet worn, could easily become a natural companion to.

Chapter four

Cool Forerunners

To examine the connections between cool and modernity, in this section I will outline some additional personality types of the modern era in whom it is possible to identify a kind of 'proto cool'. Their behaviour has attracted academic attention and at times, admiration, but the term cool has not necessarily been considered in relation to them in as much detail as in the case of black slave survival tactics. Although none of these forerunners wore sunglasses, some of them are likely to have used monocles, lorgnettes and possibly scissor glasses, all of which took on a pre-Twentieth century role in dramatising the gaze in social interactions. The monocle maintained a provocative role in dress well into the Twentieth century, outlasting its technological currency, and often seen a sign of superiority - assuming, that is, the ability to control them. Notoriously difficult to keep in, they had to be mastered. (Lehmann, 2000:367). Equally the lorgnette is shown to have had a social function – dubbed the 'scornyette' (Bennett:1963:26) enabling enactments of a powerful, superior gaze, and it is clear that many of these were made with 'plano' (non-prescription) lenses (B.O.A archives).

What we know of these personalities might relate to Twentieth century behaviours, types and values. In many cases, these forerunners could be seen to have embodied, before their time, certain changes which were going to become increasingly widespread through the Twentieth century. To contextualise this I will begin by establishing some of the changes to emotional culture in the preceding centuries.

Status, detachment and emotional control

The ability to control or to conceal emotion has conferred status on individuals, and been a signifier of status for members of certain professions, classes and groups throughout history. These historical precedents include the wise man, the guru, whose understanding and transcendence enables him to remain calm in the face of all kinds of physical and emotional disturbance – the respected and powerful ruler, whose unswervable conviction of their right to rule impresses their subjects, and make subjects of them; the enigmatic

beauty, whose expressionless features inspire awe and fear. In fact, Thucydides said 'Of all the manifestations of power... restraint impresses men the most' (in Gold, 1993:65).

The enlightenment period and industrial revolution, with it the growth of urban environments have all been theorised in terms of their rationalising effect – the belief in rational thought as the source of progress, and the experience of the world as something apparently working to increasingly consistent 'rules' (Weber, 1976).

Colin Campbell's work The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumption (1987) raises some relevant points about the changes to emotional culture in his attempt to provide an explanation for the growth of consumer culture in modernity that goes beyond the idea of a bourgeois desire to emulate the upper classes. He is looking for changes to notions of the self and its ideal form, particularly in relation to how the emotions are perceived and experienced.

Significantly he describes how previously (in the Middle Ages) emotions were thought to somehow exist outside of human beings and act upon them at relevant times:

> ...only in modern times have emotions come to be located within individuals as opposed to in the world. Thus, whilst in the contemporary world it is taken for granted that emotions arise within people and act as agencies propelling them into action, it is typically the case that in pre-modern cultures emotions are seen as inherent in aspects of reality, from whence they exert their influence over humans. Thus Barfield has pointed out how in the middle ages words like 'fear' and 'merry' did not denote a feeling located within a person, but attributes of external events.... 'merry' being a characteristic of such things as the day or the occasion (Campbell, 1987:72).

His work sets out how changes to emotional culture relate to ideas and practices of pleasure and pleasure-seeking in the modern era. He believes it is these kinds of changes which might help to explain the middle classes susceptibility to the world of goods as it emerged from the industrial revolution:

> The increasing separation of man from the constraining influence of external agencies, this disenchantment of the world, and the consequent introjection of the power of agency and emotion into the being of man, was closely linked to the growth of self-consciousness..... The new internal psychic world in which agency and emotion are relocated is that of the 'self' and this world is, in its turn, also increasingly subject to

the cool, dispassionate and enquiring gaze which disenchanted the outer, with the result that consciousness of the world as separate from man the observer, was matched by a growing *consciousness of the self as an object in its own right* [my emphasis]. This is revealed in the spread of words ... such as 'self-conceit', 'self-confidence' and 'self-pity' which began to appear in the English language in the 16th and Seventeenth centuries, and became widely adopted in the Eighteenth century.(1987:73)

So, the source of magic and meaning, increasingly becomes the self and the experience of the inner world, the classical conception of the romantic individual, but at the same time, a sense of realisation perhaps, that this meaningful and sensitive self, is likely to appear as just another meaningless object to the rational gaze of others.

Campbell argues that a crucial shift in religious thinking also caused a highly significant split between feeling and action. He says that Puritanism

> ...must be recognised as the primary source [of these changes to emotional culture]... because as a movement it adopted such a position of outright hostility to the 'natural' expression of emotion, and consequently helped to bring about... that *split between feeling and action* [my emphasis] ... (1987:74)

In doing God's will, puritans disobeyed or denied their own feelings and desires, but they also, crucially, spent time thinking about them, looking for evidence of salvation on an individual basis, which

> ...contributed greatly to the development of an individualistic ability to manipulate the meaning of objects and events, and hence towards the self-determination of emotional experience (1987:74)

This split between feeling and action seems highly relevant to the notions of cool discussed here so far. Your emotions do not affect your actions, your actions do not trouble your emotions. Your self-control is such that you do not display unwanted emotion. Emotion emerges as something which is integral to the self, yet seen as desirable to control to the point of divorcing it from action.

The metaphor of the modern machine is useful here too: regular, predictable, functional. Weber (1976) has described it most aptly as the 'disenchantment of the world'; the

removal of magic and the inexplicable, and with it, the idea of emotion as a guiding force. Western men's fashion went through what is known as 'the great renunciation' (Flugel, 1930) when masculinity came to be defined as the absence of feminine features of colour and decoration, men's clothing was to express sobriety, rationality and control, polarising women's clothing as the repository for emotion, expression and the sensual (Harvey, 1995). So you could argue that modernity favours the rational over the emotional, and that this has profoundly affected the development of culture since the enlightenment.

Norbert Elias's work (in Mennell, 1989) on the civilising process also provides a slightly different account of the modernising processes which affect experience and conceptualisation of the links between emotion and behaviour, which is relevant to the context in which cool may be seen to emerge as a significant value. He writes of the value of detachment, detour behaviour and 'increased foresight' showing how, with the growth of scientific knowledge and the increasing complexity of systems, detachment from emotion pays, increasing survival chances. Elias refers to the Edgar Allen Poe story <u>A Descent into the Maelstrom</u> (1845) to illustrate the changes to notions of involvement (ibid:164). Two fishermen caught in the storm die. But the third 'though terrified... began to look around him and distance himself sufficiently from his immediate plight to notice that some [objects sank faster than others]... he leapt into a barrel and threw himself overboard...he survived, the whirlpool subsided before he and his barrel reached the bottom'. This fisherman survived because he 'began to think more coolly; and by standing back and controlling his own fear, by seeing himself from a distance... it was then that he recognised the elements in the uncontrollable process which he could use in order to control its condition sufficiently for his own survival. In that situation, the level of self control and the level of process control were... interdependent and complementary.' (ibid).

The dandy in society
One of the most significant emotional and behavioural models for Twentieth century cool is contained in the much written about figure of the 'dandy' (for example Burnett 1982, Feldman 1993, Walden 2002). Of the authors I have considered in the previous chapter, only Pountain and Robins make a passing reference to dandyism, but even they don't develop the connection as much as may be relevant, and again, although many of the classic texts on fashion culture allude to it, nothing to my knowledge purposely exploits the potential of the dandy to theorising cool. The book about dandyism by George Walden <u>Who is a dandy?</u> (2002) also mentions cool, but again, this is in passing.

The dandy is one of the significant forerunners to Campbell's 'spirit of modern consumption' (op.cit). Campbell lays the foundation for dandy characteristics in the courtly behaviour of the Cavaliers and in the Nineteenth century ideal of 'neo-stoicism'.

According to Campbell, the Cavaliers were significantly influenced by the Renaissance gent and courtier (1987:162), who had already learned to control himself knowing that status may be achieved on the basis of what Mennell calls 'fine nuances of bearing, speech, manners and appearance' (1989:85) This relates to the civilising process, in which Elias notes the 'transformation of warriors into courtiers' as a key stage (in Mennell,1989:80).

The connection with cool is evident in contemporary language since the phrase 'cavalier attitude' is in common use to this day, meaning again (according to the OED) a 'lack of proper concern', obviously linking back to the 'sprezzatura' identified by Pountain and Robins and the idea of 'nonchalance'. Campbell says that the Cavaliers highly valued skills and accomplishments but that it was 'important for a gentleman to do [everything] with nonchalance' (1987:162). They avoided 'all emotional excess' and promoted 'civilised' behaviour. He describes the ethic which governed their behaviour as 'self-conscious', 'mannered' and 'stylised' (ibid:163). They 'distrusted the intense and over earnest, favouring the casual and off-hand'. They also existed within a small social elite and were highly competitive. A distinctive feature of the cavalier 'ethic' is their sense of their role as courtiers and supporters of the monarchy. Although they had their own noble status, they were very conscious of the importance of 'easing' the life of the monarch, and ensuring that 'all public occasions were free of all embarrassment.' (ibid:162). This form of 'coolness' perhaps presages the growing need for urban dwellers to develop at least the appearance of ease moving through and between ever increasing numbers of people, the 'laid back approach' becoming useful to aid social mobility. The combination of manners, visible style, nonchalance and wit invite comparisons with the dandy, who also 'courted' the aristocracy, albeit in rather a different way. The link between the dandy and this 'aristocratic ethic' as Campbell calls it, is also noted by Feldman who refers to Castiglione's work, (also the source for Pountain and Robins use of 'sprezzatura'); 'Baldessare Castiglione's courtier [displays that] disinvoltura a dandy's mix of ease, aplomb, and simplicity shading into coolness, impudence, hauteur.' (1993:4) Feldman also notes the similarities in the belief that the self is a work of art, 'subject first to ennobling development, ever after to painstaking polishing'. This perfection creates a qualitative distinction since 'most men are content to assume ready-made lives, blunted sensibilities' (ibid:5).

Another movement which valued the control of emotions and influenced the original dandies is Neo-stoicism. Neo-stoicism was a prevailing ideal, not merely a behaviour of a small select group, very compatible with the heroic masculinity of the period. He refers to Mark Roberts' assessment of Dr. Johnson's work in the Eighteenth century (1973). The goal was a state of 'apatheia' – a state of being detached emotionally to the point of total acceptance of the way things are. He speaks of 'invulnerability to distress' (Campbell,1987:164). Interestingly Neo-stoicism also manifested itself as a lack of concern for others since it disallowed compassion. As with the Puritans, acts are divorced from emotion (ibid:166). [2] It must of course be remembered that these ideas are developing against the backdrop of the age of reason, which was used to justify the stoic position – it was a rational position. [3]

The ideas of emotional control, lack of concern for others, elite aesthetics and enlarged self-hood come together in dandyism. As Campbell sums up 'each strove by means of dress, gesture, tone of voice, glance and overall manner, coupled with wit, to triumph over… all situational risks' (1987:168). What makes the dandy so significant to contemporary cool is the fact of their relatively humble status – these are not noble men or even gentlemen by birth but have somehow attained a place in society that is accorded to them largely through the cultivation and convincing presentation of tastes and manners.

Campbell says that stoic impassivity and impeturbility were key features of the ethic governing dandy behaviour, and quotes Burnett, who even employs the word 'cool' to describe them in his book The Rise and Fall of a Regency Dandy : 'coolness was all… coolness in the sense of effrontery, but also in the sense of impeturbility and reserve' (Burnett in Campbell, 1989:168).

Contrary to popular belief, dandies did not follow the novelties of fashion. It is true that they were enormously sensitive to quality and details of dress and clothed themselves in such a way as to place themselves somehow outside of, above, or ahead of fashion, and they exerted an influence on fashions in their social world. Beau Brummell's' mode of dress is sometimes credited with marking the foundation of the Twentieth century suit. They were the embodiment of the modern idea that manners and clothing could be the

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[2] Although ironically the cult of benevolence of the 18th century, which appears to have opposed stoicism's lack of feeling for others, also divorced emotion from action in the sense that it placed the emphasis on the feeling of compassion and not the acts arising from it. Although someone overwhelmed with compassion is hardly to be thought 'cool', there is a sense that emotions become narcissistic and linked to fantasies of an ideal self.
[3] The romantic period also saw extremely sensitive emotional cultures which opposed the repression. But interestingly even these emotional cultures began to think of emotion more in terms of qualities of selfhood.

means to social mobility, even perhaps demonstrating a form of elite culture that presents a significant challenge to those who have status ascribed by birth. The lack of emotion is significantly an expression of unshakeable confidence in the self, that in the iconic figure of dandyism Beau Brummell, even manifested itself in the disrespectful lack of awe for the Prince Regent.

> The dandies set up a rival aristocracy, one so arbitrarily exclusive that real aristocrats might seek to enter it in vain... [but they] had no power base [so] their tyranny could only be maintained by shame, by sheer nerve, by unconquerable self-assurance (Burnett, 1981:52)

Fig.17 Beau Brummell c.1897

A variety of sources (Millar, 2003; McDowell 1997) confirm that the Prince allowed Brummell to get away with such impertinence because of his social power and influence. The status Brummell had was worth something even to the royal family, something for which the prince was prepared to pay in terms of his own dignity at times. As Baudelaire stated 'dandyism is not... an immodest interest in personal appearance and material elegance. For the true dandy these things are only a symbol of the aristocratic superiority of his personality.' (in Entwistle 2000:126). As Campbell states dandyism significantly redefined the gentleman as 'he who possessed... an inherently noble self' (ibid:170). Entwistle emphasises the idea of the dandy's abhorrence of the bourgeois, and although dandyism was clearly about surface and artifice, the suggestion was of authenticity, and she also emphasises Campbell's point about the need to recognise that the dandy style was significantly expressed not just through dress but also 'all gestures and expressions of feeling' (Campbell in Entwistle 2000:128). A dandy himself, Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly's essay (2002, *1845*) about Brummell also demonstrates the issue of effortlessness, restraint and understatement in sartorial terms:

> He subdued the colours of his clothes, simplified their cut, and wore them without thinking about it (as though they were accidental! A dandy can spend ten hours dressing, but once it is done, he will put it out of his mind. It is for others to notice how well dressed he is)... (Barbey, 2002:110).

Millar says 'during a period of conspicuous consumption, Brummell's dress (see fig.17) was remarkably sober…. [his clothes] did not draw undue attention to themselves through extravagant details or garish colour' (2003:4). This sartorial lack of 'emotion' can be linked to the emerging rational notions of modern masculinity, but of course it can also be seen as an affront to the efforts of those who made efforts to consume fashion conspicuously. Barbey describes the impertinence of their dress behaviours with reference to the practise of 'distressing' clothes:

> … what constitutes dandyism is a particular way of wearing [clothes]. One can wear crumpled clothes and still be a dandy…. At one time, believe it or not, the Dandies dreamed up a style that might be called the threadbare look. It happened under Brummell. They had reached the very limits of their impertinence, they could go no further – yet the Dandies found a way: this was the dandyish idea… of having their clothes distressed before they put them on, rubbed all over till they were no more than a kind of lace – a mist of cloth. They were gods who wanted to walk in their own clouds! To do it they used a piece of sharpened glass, and the procedure was extremely delicate and time consuming (Barbey, 2002:80).

The disdain or lack of concern for others, or for accepted social rules, is evident in a number of other dandyesque behaviours. At the height of Brummell's influence, he would feel no compunction to stay at a social event, just to arrive and assess it was enough. Barbey says 'in society, stay as long as you need to make an impression, then move on' (2002:103) This relates neatly to the way status was expressed and maintained in court society – Elias quotes La Bruyere:

> Let a favourite observe himself very closely, for if he keeps me waiting less than usual in his antechamber, if his face is more open, less frowning, if he listens to me more willingly or accompanies me further to the door, I shall think he is beginning to fall and I shall be right (in Mennell 1989:85)

In accordance with this disrespect dandies made few commitments; Burnett quotes Ellen Moers saying 'the dandy… had no coat of arms, no ancestral portraits, no obligations, no wife, no child, no occupation and no obvious means of support' (1981:51). This reluctance to engage expresses disdain and enhances the dandy's superior mobility.

The facial expression of the dandy is also significant. His gaze attracts comments from a variety of sources; Barbey quotes Lister:

... he was neither handsome nor ugly, but there was in his whole person an expression of finesse and concentrated irony, and his eyes were extraordinarily penetrating'...Sometimes there came into those clever eyes a look of glacial indifference without contempt, as becomes a consummate Dandy, a man who bears within him something superior to the visible world... 'he did not pretend to be short-sighted,' says Lister again, 'but when those present were not of sufficient importance to his vanity, he would assume that calm and wandering gaze which examines without recognition, neither fixes itself nor will be fixed, is not interested nor diverted by anything.(2002:111)

There's a strong sense of the blasé about the dandy - and at one point Barbey's words do demonstrate a strong similarity with the later ideas of Simmel regarding the necessary response to the forces of modernity:

At the heart of the agitations of modernity, dandyism introduced an antique calm. Though whereas the calm of the ancients sprang from the harmony of their faculties and the fullness of a life freely lived, the calm of the dandy is the repose of a mind that, though acquainted with many ideas, is too disabused to get excited (ibid:93).

Throughout the detail of dandy behaviour, the appearance of effortlessness so idealised by the sprezzatura of the court is apparent, at times a lack of effort taken to anti-social extremes. Others are not accommodated, skills are displayed discreetly, no sign of the emotions stirred by physical or mental human effort is offered. Burnett's book about Scrope Davis, another famous regency dandy, highlights the irony of this in a way which calls to mind the words of Castiglione, 'the professional diner-out worked hard at his profession, albeit in secret' (1981:52). Burnett's book tells of Scrope's many notebooks, in which fragments of witticisms in draft form demonstrate the tough rehearsals for the nonchalant performance of supposedly 'inherent' superiority. Dandies frequently lived on others' wealth, trading the value of their company for the luxuries of life, allowing them to achieve and maintain status with no visible means of support.

As with other forms of glamour, the dandy's apparent perfection reveals the constructed nature of identity: Feldman says the hall of mirrors, place of artifice and play, is the dandy's 'ancestral home' (1993:5).

> The dandy's imperturbable and impervious demeanour, his encasement in flawlessly
> smooth clothing, announces to the world the inaccessibility… of 'essential' truth itself.
> Artificial, polished surface – cultural arrangements – he announces as primary, as
> constitutive of self. I am what I choose to appear to be. (Feldman 1993:13)

Another potentially interesting aspect of the dandy attitude is brought out by Entwistle quoting Finkelstein and Baudelaire – it emerged during a time of political instability, in an atmosphere where 'the fate of an individual could be decided because of his or her political allegiances' thus 'the individual could increase his or her social security by demonstrating a disinterest in any political questions' (Finkelstein in Entwistle 2000:129). Entwistle appears to imply also that the specific style of dandy dress was designed not to betray political ideals or allegiances in a period where dress was beginning to have the power so to do.

She quotes Baudelaire describing dandies as 'a certain group of men, detached from their own class, disappointed and disorientated… formed "a new sort of aristocracy" based on superior indifference and the pursuit of perfection' (Baudelaire in Entwistle 2000:129). This bears some resemblance to some of what Pountain and Robins and Lewis Macadam say about the political aspects of cool among those subjected to slavery or prejudice, its usefulness as a tactic to survive or even transcend unfavourable power relations. Even in relation to the courtiers of the Renaissance, Feldman describes a turning inward in response to political defeat, a 'defensive movement'.(1993:5) Perhaps, a state of unpunishable (because almost undetectable) rebellion.

The extent to which dandy behaviour could be thought to be truly rebellious is debated by Walden: he says that although dandies of the time like Brummell and dandies of contemporary culture present themselves 'as outsiders, aloof, superior, a living provocation' (2002:54), in actual fact these dandies court the system, rely on the system and no matter how radical the material all this rebellion really amounts to is a series of 'impertinences'. This echoes what Pountain and Robins say about the political emptiness of cool as a strategy – it may enable survival, but does nothing to change the status quo.

Finally there is a thread in the fabric of dandyism which is world weary, which is nihilistic. Walden quotes Barbey saying of Beau Brummell ' "Futile sovereign of a futile world!" The same self-cancelling characterisation could stand as a caption on the photographs of many a sulky rock star, TV personality, haughty fashion model or

billionaire style-guru today' (2002:59). This idea of self-cancelling is interesting, seemingly romanticised: 'Yes I am marvellous, but I am so marvellous I can confront my own futility without blinking'. In a sense perhaps the admission that you are pointless in the face of all your carefully crafted evidence to the contrary is the apotheosis of achievement in the realms of unshakability.

All the elements I have extracted from Pountain and Robins are here in the dandy: detachment, rebellion, hedonism, narcissism, irony and uncompromising style. Walden makes it plain too:

> A modern message leaps from the page. What could be more suggestive of our era than [a] description of Brummell as possessing 'a cold languor... Eyes glazed with indifference...A concentrated irony... The boldness of conduct, the sumptuous impertinence, the preoccupation with exterior effects, with vanity incessantly present'? There is no avoiding the term: in today's parlance Brummell would be 'cool'. (2002:16)

Lehmann speaks of a group he calls the dada dandies, avant-garde artists of the early Twentieth century who adopted a provocative stance of nihilistic ennui and disdain. These are known to have used the monocle as a 'perfect symbol for a position outside the pace of ordinary society... helping him maintain an ironic and malicious distance from the group in which he seemingly participates' (2000:367). The regency dandies may have been a tiny elite, but by the time sunglasses are a mass commodity, the notion of identity as something you construct, and the notion of achieved status (Rojek 2001) are mass phenomena. If dandy behaviour, albeit in mutated forms, is still idealised, the potential appeal of dark glasses becomes all the more comprehensible.

Romantics and bohemians
Another somewhat different proto-cool figure is the bohemian. In fact, Herbert Gold's book about bohemians is subtitled 'digging the roots of cool' (1993). Of all the proto-cool types, the bohemian is the one whose name has been heard most frequently in relation to a wide variety of Twentieth century subcultures and avant-gardes.

Early bohemians may not have worn sunglasses, but the suggestion of resolute and superior detachment from bourgeois rules, and the narcissistic tendencies of the bohemian seeking a true expression of the romantic self do suggest a link to the kind of

coolness sunglasses may be seen to have the power to express elsewhere, and which *can* perhaps be seen to materialise very visibly in the sixties, with the tinted 'granny specs' of the hippy (which incidentally, are similar in design to the tinted spectacles of the early period in optometry, and used in current representations of Nineteenth century bohemians for example the 2001 film, <u>Moulin Rouge</u> (dir. Luhrmann)). It is possible that at the time, dark glasses may have seemed much too modern, too industrial, too *high tech* to be part of the bohemian look which tended towards the look of faded glamour or gypsy rags (similarly to Lehmann's (2003) identification of the monocle as suggestive as disdainful for the pace of modern life in the early twentieth century). By the time hippies are adopting them in the 1960s, the old styles are available with which to signify another kind of detachment – from the present.

At the very beginning of Gold's book, a simple statement is striking - 'I realized I had fumbled my way into a very important corner of the universe' (1993:1). This statement is used to describe the occasion of the author finding a group of like-minded 'bohemians', accidental or lucky, a small group of people of magnified importance to one another, but occupying merely a *corner* of the universe, not centre stage. Indeed, Elizabeth Wilson's book on bohemians is entitled <u>The Glamorous Outcasts</u> (2003). The sense of apparently self-induced exclusion and the superiority of the cool group resonates with many of the 'cool' groupings, subcultures and types of the Twentieth century. Connections between certain bohemian values, subculture and the artistic avant-garde are easily made, as will be seen later in the analysis of Andy Warhol and the factory scene in chapter eleven.

However Campbell, whose work on the romantic ethic (1987) I referred to earlier, uses the bohemian as an archetype for the ideas and attitudes which have mobilised mass consumption more generally through the Twentieth century, with their emphasis on hedonism and sensitivity to pleasure as a sign of fuller, more authentic personhood. This creates a context in which sunglasses as a mass token of glamour, leisured lifestyle or endorsement of personality, may gain their symbolic power, connecting perhaps with a much more widely accessible notion of cool - one whose rebellion is nebulously set against the puritan ideals or social hierarchies which might exist, or once have existed, to stop you 'enjoying yourself' or 'being all that you can be'.

Bohemian as Youth
The attitudes and lifestyles of bohemia have also been identified as compatible with youth. Gold refers to Burgess's map of Bohemia which depicted provinces of 'Peace, Truth, Youth, Vagabondage, and ports on the Sea of Dreama, with enemy nations, such as

Sham and Vanity, surround[ing] the happy kingdom' (1993:188). Campbell also explains how the emphasis on play, emotion, pleasure can be seen to be strongly associated with childhood, and notions of childhood, particularly in the romantic period. He says that bohemia can be understood as an attitude of life-stage, especially since it is frequently the children of bourgeois parents who 'choose' to perhaps temporarily reject the values and comforts of their class. (1987:227) His work asserts the idea that modern culture actually advances as a result of this tension between the mechanism of the rational and the plasticity of the search for meaning, transcendence and play.

The rejection of the dominant value system, typified for bohemians by the bourgeoisie, is central to the bohemian attitude in the accounts of Gold, Campbell and Wilson, and is predicated on the notion of the bourgeois as fake, mannered, blunted and repressed in opposition to the authentic, spontaneous expression of the free individual who pursues the romantic ideal[4]. As Gold states:

> ...the arriviste imitates the manners of the class above him, the bohemian takes his stand imitating the manners of the class below him – grandly... Both arriviste and Bohemian choose new roles for themselves, hoping to become authentic. (1993:11)

In a sense this use of the notion of arriviste could be applied to the dandy, who occupies the manners of the class he has entered so fully as to begin to have his own influence from within. As for the dandy, the idea of authenticity is crucially important. The bohemian seems to seek authenticity in the appearance of poverty, although as the quotation suggests, there is an aristocratic sense to this poverty; a sense of a birthright to luxury and empowerment, which has somehow been stripped away, like the threadbare lord in his money-pit of an estate.

Wilson's work demonstrates this issue of authenticity as she critiques the bohemian myth. She explains how there were those who felt that 'bohemians' were fakers, whereas 'artists' were the real thing, or that some distinguished between true bohemians and mere poseurs. She also raises the issue of artifice as being a kind of acknowledgement of the performance of identity, of 'an approach which made of performance the truth of life... life was artifice, even ar.' (2003:38), which relates closely to the preoccupations of the dandy.

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[4] Interestingly, Gold talks about the difference between bohemian and slacker - the slacker seems like a stoic, in possession of a goal to live without desire (1993:95-96).

Anti-efficiency and rationalisation

As an expression of romanticism, there is within the bohemian ethic a rejection of the order and control of efficiency and rationalism that modernity brings. Instead there's a celebration of the senseless, the wasteful and the accidental, combined with a 'vastness of expectation', an earnestness of frivolity, a ferocious concentration on style (sometimes expressed as anti-style), eccentricity and pleasure. (Gold,1993:190)

> Originality has always required a fertile expanse of fumble and mistake. That's the beauty of the option. Your wastrel life might turn out to be just what's required to save the planet. (Gold, 1993:1)

Again, in a sense this is similar to the dandy's refusal to engage with the speed of modernity, or indeed to work (the 'antique calm' previously cited) which promises the status of being above, beyond or somehow outside its pressures. Although how this effects the expression of emotion embodies a key difference between the bohemian and the dandy. Much of what I have covered so far fits in with the idea of modern processes contributing to an 'even-ing out' of emotions, to use Elias's term. But 'bohemian' values appear to represent an *increase* in emotion as a value within western culture.

Earlier I used a quote from Gold, from which I deliberately cut the qualification in the next sentence. He seems to be saying that bohemian culture demonstrates a rejection of restraint and emotional control:

> Of all the manifestations of power, Thucydides said, restraint impresses men the most. This Greek notion has been slightly modified. Now yelling, screaming, crying, complaining and the spilling of guts impresses folks. We live in less aristocratic times. (1993:65)

And perhaps this search for authenticity and the embellishment and elaboration of the self in the face of the industrial revolution does seem to contradict the idea that culture is moving towards a position where emotional 'coolness' is becoming increasingly valued, but as already discussed in the work of Stearns and Campbell, control over emotion, detachment between feeling and acting is the critical characteristic quality.

It is interesting to me that in the person of the rock musician, both dandy and bohemian notions of coolness are present. The minimal behaviour of the band in interview is often

sharply contrasting to the aggression, passion or emotion evident in performance. It is not actually the lack of emotion which is central to cool but the control of it. In some manifestations perhaps the ability to turn it on and off is superior to claiming to have none. The more real and intense your emotions, the more impressive it is if you can conceal or control them, or prevent them from 'perturbing you'.

Detachment and mobility

This detachment from the power of emotions to affect your actions is also evidenced in bohemian values by the love of roaming. Like the dandy 'making an impression and moving on', Gold says one of the defining features of the bohemian was the sense of mobility, not in any sense of speed, but in the sense of rootlessness. Even though many bohemians did and do remain in one city, this idea is crucial to the bohemian ethos (1993:13). A sense of freedom and an unwillingness to be constrained or indeed to commit, betrays a cold side to the emotional intensity of the bohemian. Intense emotion does not necessarily mean commitment to act on its behalf. Gold also says that the wandering nature of the bohemian makes them close cousins of the 'flâneur', mythologised inhabitant of the modern city. It is the flâneur I will turn to next.

The flâneur in the city

The flâneur is a figure for whom identity and modes of engagement with others seem to have something in common with both the dandy and the bohemian. Also the flâneur is classically a romantic, a seeker of meaning. Inhabiting the city streets links the flâneur to the experience of modern mass society, facing up to his own anonymity. There are a number of different theorisations of the flâneur. Tester's book (1994) offers a range of interpretations, from the original writings of Baudelaire and Benjamin about the flâneur of the Nineteenth century, to Sartre and Musil, and contemporary applications by Smart , Bauman (1994) and others. It seems the flâneur can be adapted as a model for understanding contemporary modes of behaviour and subjectivity in the late or post modern world, in spite of the apparent passing of some of the original conditions for flanerie, some of which help to demonstrate further how the conditions of urban existence might influence notions of 'heroic' behaviour allied with cool.

Like the other figures I've mentioned so far, the group of men identified as flâneurs are not known to have worn sunglasses, but the conditions and associated behaviours are thought to be relevant to Twentieth century culture and contemporary culture, more generally. At the beginning of Tester's book he quotes flanuer Gerard de Nerval, saying, '...my former ennui had returned and I felt its weight even more heavily than before..

What I required was not exactly solitude, but the freedom to roam around freely, meeting people when I wished and taking leave of them when I wished.' (in Tester, 1994:1).

Literally flanerie is an activity of strolling and looking, set in an urban context, and celebrated by Charles Baudelaire as an exemplar of poetic modern existence. Many of the features identified in association with the flâneur especially emphasise this idea of perpetual movement, which enables a heroic form of detachment from the business of the city and its social webs, allowing the chance encounter, the unexpected event, the abdication of responsibility within the movement of the crowd. Similarly to the dandy who understands the importance of 'moving on' and living without obligation, the flâneur cannot dare to rest or take root. Once again modernity is connected with mobility which promotes detachment; 'the flâneur walks through the city at random and alone, a bachelor or a widower (or else… he thinks and acts like one or the other)… in society as he is in the city, suspended from social obligation, disengaged, disinterested, dispassionate.' (Parkhurst Ferguson,1994:26)

Parkhurst Ferguson says

> No woman… is able to attain the aesthetic distance so crucial to the flâneur's superiority. She is unfit for flanerie because she desires the objects spread before her and acts upon that desire. The flâneur on the other hand desires the city as a whole, not a particular part of it. Shopping… seriously undermines the posture of independence that affords the flâneur his occupation and raison d'être… the intense engagement of the shopper in the urban scene, the integration into the market and the consequent inability to maintain the requisite distance, preclude the neutrality and objectivity that the flâneur cultivates so assiduously. (1994:27)

Tester says that the flâneur is engaged in a search for meaning (a project of romanticisation), able to 'reap aesthetic meaning and an individual kind of existential security from the spectacle of the teeming crowds' (1994:2), that he is 'driven out of the private and into the public by his own search for meaning… only at home existentially when he is not at home physically' (ibid). In some sense this must be a response to the sense of bourgeois life as mundane and stifling. In the crowd there is freedom. Baudelaire (1964, *1863*) describes the flâneur to emphasise the idea of masquerade and incognito; that the flâneur is able to define and redefine himself in the crowd, within the anonymous space of the city he can reconfigure at will. This also connects with the

dandy's knowledge of himself as a construction, of identity as contingent, the urban context increasing opportunity for such flexibility with identity but also reintroducing the idea that some kind of social superiority may stem from the ability to self-reconstruct in the modern world.

Equally, and again in common with many of the groups and indeed theories of cool I've looked at so far, there is a strong element of rebellion against the rules of the dominant class. Flâneurs may not have been excluded (some were bourgeois of 'independent means'), but they occupy a kind of outsider status through their association with art, through their resolute lack of social ties or obligations, and through their refusal to 'look busy'. Like the bohemian, their apparent lack of purposeful activity is on the one hand misunderstood, as Tester says, 'the poet is possibly at his busiest when he seems to be at his laziest' (1994:3).

Because in spite of their perpetual movement, these men did not hurry. I referred earlier to the 'antique calm' associated with the dandies, and the flâneurs' deliberately leisurely approach to moving around the city is shown to have been cheekily at odds with the prevailing sense of the velocity of modern life, around 1840 Baudelaire describes a fashion for choosing to stroll at the pace of a suitably slow pet on a lead, like a turtle, or, in Gerard de Nerval's case, a lobster (Benjamin, 1985:129), 'display[ing] his nonchalance provocatively' (ibid). As Parkhurst Ferguson says, 'ostentatious inaction offers evidence of superior social status' (1994:26). Shields (1994:66) builds on this idea by describing the persona of the flâneur as 'a tortoise-like shell of artful indolence behind which the flâneur's agency and intentionality is hidden'. Again, like the dandy, the appearance of *effortlessness* is cultivated and self-conscious, setting the flâneurs apart. In Baudelaire at least, the flâneur is made a heroic figure, a prince, a poet, someone utterly suited to the modern world and capable of extracting its essence, sensitive to its qualities, chameleon-like in his ability to blend in. He has a special ability (Tester says it is defining, 1994:3) ... 'to be away from home and yet to feel at home anywhere, to be at the very centre of the world and yet to be unseen of the world' (Baudelaire, 1972:400)

The issue of vision is very significant to flanerie, another aspect which makes the flâneur potentially relevant to my study of sunglasses. Much is made of the idea of the flâneur as seeing but unseen, indeed Baudelaire says that he would not be able to see if he himself were visible (1964), yet he is aware of himself as merely another face in the crowd. The flâneur's gaze defines everything. The nooks and crannies of the city, the arcades and

open spaces are his for the taking. The profusion of visual information provides endless clues to as many mysteries as he chooses to see.

But however much the flâneur may need not to be 'caught looking', it does not make sense to assume that the flâneur was not aware of his own appearance. Turtles on leads are hardly inconspicuous (nor are lobsters). Some commentators also highlight this aspect of the flâneur's participation in the urban visual spectacle as much as his consumption of it. Shields says the flâneur was 'a poseur' (1994:65) and Parkhurst Ferguson says 'the flâneur is observed while observing. He is himself an integral part of the urban spectacle' (1994:27). A sense of himself as a stranger, a potential object of curiosity is indeed a prerequisite for understanding the potential of the role he plays as spectator; the anonymous crowd is also an *audience.*

Shields says that flâneurie 'is public and other directed... as an ethic it retrieves the individual from the mass by elevating idiosyncrasies and mannerisms as well as individuality and singular perspective of an individual's observations and point of view' (1994:65) This sense of threat to individual identity presented by the spectacle of the mass, highlights the possible anxieties of the flâneur. Parkhurst-Ferguson notes the particular context of Nineteenth century Paris, the 'forced promiscuity and potential unmanageability of the crowd', a crowd who despite 'devastating cholera' managed to double its population in fifty years. She says that their 'obsession with detachment' and their 'reduction of the city to a spectacle' enable them to be '...entertained, not distressed, by the ever changing urban spectacle…the city revolves around the spectator, who copes with urban diversity by reducing it to a marvellous show. The flâneur's ability to celebrate the unanticipated lies in his evident superiority to whatever challenges he may encounter.' (1994:31)

Many commentators believe the flâneur is doomed to failure, doomed never to be satisfied, forever restless. Whatever he is looking for, he won't find it. He will have to keep looking: '...satisfaction could be anywhere; but that only means that satisfaction is almost certainly not here... the self-defining ability of the Sartrean variant of the flâneur is not without a considerable measure of desperation and panic…. The flâneur senses …. that without him the world will lack meaning' (Tester, 1994:10) As Sartre said; 'I am full of anguish: the slightest gesture engages me. I can't imagine what is required of me. Yet I must choose: I sacrifice the passage Gillet, I shall never know what it held for me' (*1965* in Tester, 1994:10). Tester concludes that 'It is the fate of the flâneur never to enjoy being because of the relentless doing of flanerie. But… he could have achieved the

satisfaction of being… if only he had gone that way instead of this way. The flâneur is, to this extent, actually the victim rather than the prince of his own freedom.' (1994:10). Shields goes so far as to say the flâneur is the 'embodiment of alienation' (1994:77), a tragic, unethical, *triply* detached figure – from himself, from his environment, and from other people.

There is also a sense that the progress of modernity, its success, actually prevents the possibility of flanerie – when everything is ordered, overseen, recorded and defined by systems, photography… what can be left for the flâneur to find? Walter Benjamin argued in his reading of Baudelaire that the flâneur reflected the emptiness of life in the capitalist city. Flânerie can be seen as 'a *desperate* attempt to fill the emptiness even though it is actually a final resignation to it.' (Tester, 1994:13) It is an illusion; '…the flâneur only *seems* to break through this feeling isolation of each in his private interest by filling the hollow spaces created in him by such isolation, with the borrowed - and fictitious - isolations of strangers' (Benjamin, 1985:58)

It is interesting that the figure of the detective is frequently mentioned by commentators as a literary embodiment of the flâneur – alone, knowing but unknowable, seemingly unshockable in the potentially awe-inspiring tumult of city life. As Shields suggests, the flâneur is a 'mythological ideal-type found more in discourse than in everyday life' (1994:67), adding that finding one individual whose total behaviour conformed or conforms fully to the flâneur ethic would be impossible. Nevertheless, this figure and these behaviours, remain meaningful to successive generations of writers, theorists and audiences. My analysis shows that the behaviours of the flâneur have a good deal in common with those I have identified as components of 'cool'.

In addition, for my study the flâneur is especially interesting in so far as he is located specifically in the chaos of visual information the modern world produced. Even those who see the flâneur as tragically isolated must acknowledge that a form of mastery is at least suggested by such behaviour, no matter what the cost. The celebration of the flâneur is a prime example of how valuable the skill to conquer the confusion and chaos of urban existence may be, and indeed how important the gaze and its *management* may be within that. (A distinction is drawn between the flâneur whose curiosity does not draw attention to itself and the ignorant gawker, someone who stares too obviously, desires too openly, gives his own status, desires and vulnerabilities away.) As much as flanerie might be a celebration of modernity, delight in its spectacles whether organised or accidental,

high or low, for or against the dominant order, in some important senses the activity of the flâneur's eye emphatically creates a seductive illusion that he is 'on top'.

Summary

Themes present through all of these proto-cool figures are evidently similar to those identified in the contemporary literature of 'cool' in spite of apparent difference in terms of social position, occupation and modes of expression. Disdain for the bourgeoisie, and a desire to detach oneself from the dominant culture and/or authority is one. Detachment from, and control of emotion is another. Detachment from place and obligation through motion also features in them all, as do hedonism and narcissism. There is a valorisation of authenticity as well as highly visible displays of symbolic *rebellion, insolence or lack of respect.* Inherent superiority is a given. All of them have also been identified as specifically of the modern era, all versions of the romantic notion of self. The idea of each of these figure's values becoming more widespread as consumer culture develops is mentioned in every case, mirroring the concerns of Pountain and Robins and Frank. Equally, these types have been identified as embodying particular responses to the emerging conditions of modern life, new and influential forms of modern self-hood. I will move on now to consider the emergence of sunglasses in the context of Twentieth century modernity, starting with the most appropriate back-drop for this - the visual culture of the modern city.

Chapter five

Modernity, the Eye, and the City as a State of Mind

Although the city is not the first location in which sunglasses start to be worn in the early decades of the Twentieth century, I would like to contextualise the growing appetite for sunglasses there. Much of the writing which attempts to come to terms with the new scopic experiences, new forms of identity, sociality, communication and information associated with modernity was originally focused on the culture of the city. And as Robert Park said, as early as 1915; 'The city is a state of mind' (1997:16). The anonymity of the city, its transport systems, rules of exchange, and its constantly changing community and environment, requires new standards of behaviour and manners, new survival techniques, and it affords new pleasures, many of which, though originally located in the city, have been transferred through the Twentieth century to beach resorts, and ultimately to virtual environments.

I will consider the intense visual shocks and delights afforded by the modern metropolis in relation to theories such as Simmel's blasé and neurasthenic attitudes, some of Goffman's ideas about behaviour in public places, taking in an interesting historical case study by Christopher Heyl about the wearers of Eighteenth century 'vizzards' in early public parks. Then I will relate this to the burgeoning visual culture of modern media, initially focused in the city, but transforming perceptions of self and giving rise to the growth of celebrity.

The city is a state of mind

In an important sense, the city embodies modernity, focussing and magnifying its features. It has often been used to stand for the processes of modernity, either epitomising the shiny utopian future, or offering a nightmarish vision of unbridled 'progress'. In Austen's Mansfield Park (1814), for example, the city can be seen to be blamed for weakened moral and traditional values, to the point that visitors from the city are able to 'infect' the inhabitants of Mansfield Park with negative ideas. As I have shown already in the section on cool forerunners, some of the important behavioural models and styles for our present era, such as the flâneur, have their roots in the modern city. The city also affords some very practical contexts for sunglasses potential use, once they have become established attire.

One of the most significant emphases in differing accounts of the modern city is the lack of sympathy for the vulnerabilities of the human mind and body. Many writers and artists respond to its harsh, unforgiving qualities; the inhuman scale of buildings, the inhuman pace of change. As a locus of industry and commerce, cities can be characterised as machine-like, requiring machine-like obedience to their ruthless systems and rhythms – as in Lang's <u>Metropolis</u>, where the need to labour as a moving part in a machine has people injured and burned out (Minden in Timms and Kelly (Ed.s) 1985).

Fig.18 'Berlin' by Ludwig Meidner, 1913

 Or they can be seen as tumultuous, dangerous, unpredictable, a place of chaotic delight and fear, intense stimulation. Baudelaire celebrates the engulfing potential of the crowd – a crowd of strangers (1964). Elizabeth Wilson describes it as a 'maelstrom' (1985:137),

and quotes Engels' description of streets in 'turmoil' (ibid:135). Simmel writes of 'the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in a single glance, and the unexpectedness of on-rushing impressions' (1903 in 1964:780). Frank Whitford quotes German expressionist Ludwig Meidner, who wanted modern painting to reveal 'wild streets...*roaring colours* of buses and express locomotives... the harlequinade of advertising pillars, and then night... big city night... *battlefields* filled with mathematical shapes...triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons.. circles rush out at us... straight lines rush past us on all sides. Many pointed shapes *stab at us*' (Whitford in Timms and Kelly (Ed.s) 1985:48, my emphasis, see fig.18).

Whitford describes Meidner's paintings as 'ragged... windswept...splintered... heaving... shuddering... fevered' and 'dramatising the insignificance of the individual in the face of the vastness of the urban scene' and its 'superhuman forces' (ibid). Kirchner and Meidner both recognised the impossibility of representing the city in a still flat plane using existing techniques (see fig.18) Devices like exaggeration, distortion, brutal, clashing colours and violent gestural strokes were employed to convey the experience of attempting to 'take it all in'(ibid:54), and evoking a 'nervy' and 'hostile' atmosphere (ibid).

Simmel's view of the city - the money machine
Simmel's famous essays 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', written in 1903, 'The Stranger' and 'The Philosophy of Money' reflect on the impact of modernity on value, social relationships and behaviour. His ideas confirm the idea of the city as exemplary of modern existence, as influencing ways of imagining the self and others, and profoundly affecting the nature of exchange and interactions. Much of what Simmel has to say relates to a 'cooling' of attitudes and behaviours, in conjunction with both a need for protection against potential chaos, and the requirement for human beings to become adjuncts of the metropolitan machine, which relates closely to the image of modernity characterised by Lang's metropolis. Simmel relates this not only to the literal engagement with machinery and the tyranny of the clock and pocket watch, but with the mathematical reduction of human culture and survival to exchange value in the context of a money economy. He says the relationship between producer and market acquires an 'unmerciful matter-of-factness' (Simmel, 1964:779) where 'both parties need not fear any deflection because of the imponderables of personal relationships' (ibid). Even in relation to things, commodities and services, modernity encourages unemotional relationships as intrinsic value is rejected in favour of a value system based their equivalence in cold hard cash. This has a more pervasive effect on the way we think in general, according to Simmel

The calculative exactness of practical life, which the money economy has
brought about, corresponds to the ideal of natural science: to transform
the world into an arithmetic problem, to fix every part of the world by
mathematical formulas' (Simmel, 1964:779).

This adds to the rationalising effect of changes to emotional culture already
discussed in the section on cool forerunners. Simmel's point is that the complex
and multiple nature of modern existence will necessitate the development of a
blasé attitude towards others. 'Metropolitan man… reacts with his head instead
of his heart' (Simmel, 1964:778). This echoes Elias's points about the increase
in foresight and the even-ing out of emotions in the industrial age. But Simmel
also predicts a 'deadening effect' from over stimulation: the 'don't care'
attitude is also produced by the chaos and complexity of the external world,
and the inability of the human subject to relate to it in traditional ways. To
consider or to care deeply about what is encountered would leave a person in
an 'unimaginable psychic state' that Simmel characterises as 'neurasthenic'
(ibid:782). In the city the number of encounters is impossible to deal with
without developing a protective reserve. He speaks of the development of a
'blasé attitude' to events and people: 'In this phenomenon the nerves find in
the refusal to react to their stimulation the last possibility of accommodating to
the contents and forms of metropolitan life' (ibid:781). Simmel also writes of a
'slight aversion, a mutual strangeness and repulsion which will break into
hatred and fight at the moment of a closer contact' (ibid:782) which suggests a
latent fear of the anonymous other.

Status in immersion in modernity

But, it is significant that many of the works which characterise modernity so harshly are
produced by avant-garde thinkers who are in fact also enthralled by it. They acknowledge
the harshness of the conditions and yet they celebrate them. Simmel's ideas about the
neurasthenic and blasé personality types are no exception in my view – if you can 'take'
the intensity of modern visual experience you perhaps become blasé – if you can't, the
other option is neurasthenia, and in fact, around the 1920s there were remedies for (and
discussion in women's journals about) the peculiarly modern ailment of 'jarred nerves'
(Hackney, 2003:unpublished), which was considered to be something which afflicted city-
dwelling females in particular.

For persons requiring respite from this, whilst being in the middle of it, a pair of sunglasses has the power to tone it all down and blur the distinctions, numb the impact a little.[5] Here, and throughout this chapter, it is easy to see the value of 'cool' detachment in the modern world, a detachment easily enabled - and communicated to others - by the wearing of sunglasses. There is value in defence against the attack on the senses that modernity makes. However, protection is not all – for the seeing subject is also part of what is seen. Amongst all this tumult and stimulation to the eye is the increase in the number of encounters with unfamiliar sights who themselves possess pairs of eye with which to look back – strangers. The city offers so many more people to look at (and be looked at by) for the first and last time, people of whom you may have no knowledge of character or history. These conditions have produced a variety of responses relevant to my study of sunglasses – from very specific behaviours designed to assist in managing these encounters to generalised increase in awareness of self presentation, which has had profound effects on society in terms of changing values and changing conceptions of identity.

Seeing strangers

As I have hinted already, Simmel notes the right to distrust the stranger. He sees the sense of potential threat provided by endless encounters with anonymous others. That 'mutual strangeness and repulsion' which can suddenly be ignited into hatred, conflict or even violence, (a current example might be escalating road rage) may be shrouded in the manners and protective reserve of the city dweller, but it is there nonetheless. A stranger's intent is not known, and although visual information is all you have, intent cannot *necessarily* be judged from appearances. The city crowd is not a community – it is anonymous, alienated, fast moving and therefore hard to judge a situation as it arises. The conditions necessitate detachment, for even if you wanted to, Simmel says, to fully respond to each individual you encounter would be impossible; to empathise with everyone you meet, too draining. Therefore, finding ways of reading the stranger without engaging with him or her is essential.

Simmel's essay on 'The stranger' also shows how increasing encounters with unknown others can produce greater objectivity in relationships. A stranger is unaware of the peculiar histories of the places and people they encounter, and may observe without prejudice (in Simmel, 1971:146) Simmel also brings out the significance of the quality of

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[5] I have anecdotal evidence of people saying that when they wear sunglasses they cannot hear as clearly. I myself have to remove my sunglasses, to properly hear what someone is saying. This may be to do with the reduced access to the visual cues in verbal communication, but it demonstrates the protective, numbing effect.

mobility – the effects of being 'one who moves about' on relationships and on the sense of self. He suggests that the realisation comes, with great numbers with whom to compare, that the value of relationships is diminished, as the qualities of one person become acknowledged generalities – he says that the more universal a trait is understood to be, the less warm the connection based on such a trait may be – the contingent quality of this particular relationship become all too apparent (ibid). In these ways, detachment and objectivity are encouraged and reproduced by the city and the mobility of its inhabitants, fostering a 'cooler' approach to others. This clearly echoes much of the dandy's attitude to life as discussed in the previous chapter and possibly even the flâneur's, but becoming relevant to far greater numbers of people, perhaps moving from ways to stand outside of or above society, to ways merely to survive.

Eye contact

Heyl (2001) says that by the Eighteenth century , 'eye contact between strangers rapidly became a taboo', quoting from the London Magazine's advice of 1734. The public were advised not to stare at the faces of passers by and not to make eye contact with a stranger who enters a public room 'for fear of shocking his modesty and dismounting his assurance' (2001:128). Erving Goffman's mid Twentieth century work about behaviour in public places identifies some relevant social rules which have emerged more recently to help make encounters with anonymous others more predictable. One example is what Goffman calls 'civil inattention', where, say, two people crossing one another's path in the street would openly look at one another up to a certain distance, but then look away, 'so as to express that [the other] *does not constitute a target of special curiosity or design*' (Goffman:1963:83, my emphasis)

This requires a fine level of self-control and as the number of encounters increases. Goffman notes that fans and masks have fallen out of favour in European society but acknowledges the usefulness of such items as the rules of interaction become more complex. He says we might expect people to want to evade these complex rules, and cites dark glasses as portable 'involvement shields' which might circumnavigate the requirement for civil inattention(1963:39):

> By according civil inattention, the individual implies that he has no reason
> to suspect the intentions of the others present and no reason to fear the
> others, be hostile to them, or wish to avoid them…Dark glasses, for
> example, allow the wearer to stare at another person without the other
> being sure that he is being stared at (ibid:84).

With your sunglasses on, you may both detach yourself from the complexity of the situation - and gain an advantage. Bachelard's analysis of similar night-time encounters in cities pre-street lighting spells it out; putting out your lantern (or putting on your sunglasses) impairs your view of where you're going, but prevents you being 'exposed defenceless to the gaze of the other' (in Schivelbusch:1988:97) and enables you to weigh up a stranger without being seen. Making eye contact with strangers can be dangerous, can be the trigger for the sudden outburst of hatred and violence Simmel spoke of in his essay on the metropolis, since by default it implies that the stranger *is* a target of special curiosity, (as well as demonstrating a refusal to engage with the relevant social rules for the comfort of the other).

To become detached in some way, to choose not to engage, is therefore both a form of protection and a consequence of transitory encounters with increasing numbers of people, but it is also a *display* for others.

Anonymous gazing

The anonymity of the city, together with the crowding or other close physical proximity, emphasises the visual, allowing some kinds of looking perhaps thought rude in other contexts. Elizabeth Wilson's analysis of the development of fashion culture in the city cites Simmel's comments about public transport to make this point -

> Interpersonal relationships in big cities are distinguished by a marked preponderance of the activity of the eye over the activity of the ear. The main reason for this is the public means of transportation. Before… people had never been in a position of having to look at one another for long minutes, or even hours, without speaking to one another' (In Wilson, 1985:35)

To be briefly physically close to someone you do not know and have no intention of engaging with invites prolonged if surreptitious looking – to assess the level of threat this stranger poses initially perhaps, but also from a voyeuristic curiosity, or maybe to see whether they are looking at you. Goffman's concept of the 'involvement shield' is relevant here, warding off unwanted interaction – a book, a cigarette (or now, a mobile phone) – all give a sense of the individual's preoccupation. This can also be used as a bluffing device, enabling voyeurism. Or it can offer a convincing image of casual, blasé detachment within the tumult or panic of a busy station. All this chaos is going on around

me, but – look, I am unmoved. Equally, they could also be interpreted as staving off a sense of the single atom as a lonely or vulnerable figure.

Voyeurism and exhibitionism

Wilson discusses the eroticism of the city, following Baudelaire, suggesting that certain sexual desires and practices emerge in the crowd, among them exhibitionism (showing) and voyeurism (looking) which she says 'rejoice in the stealth and irresponsibility of the crowd' (1985:36). Sunglasses (fans, masks too) are particularly interesting in relation to this since there is an ambiguity to their purpose – are they meant to protect the wearer from the gaze, or to allow the wearer to look unseen? And how successfully do they achieve these? Sunglasses attract attention at the same time as they may deflect it and as such they dramatise the anonymous gaze. She also describes these as fetishes since they are single components of sexual behaviour which for some become critical. Fetishism implies the behaviours of a focused minority, but the increasing and often unavoidable opportunities afforded for surreptitious and anonymous looking and showing are surely part of the generalised growth of importance of the visual, indicating a transformation in how desire is produced and manifested in modern cultures. This relates back to the flâneur, and what Benjamin called Baudelaire's 'love at last sight' (1985:45): as well as the compulsion to watch others, and imagine being seen by the crowd. The flâneur's specialised activity of reading anonymous others to make sense of the spectacle, to complete the fragmented world, bears some resemblance to the far more generalised activity known now as 'people watching'; encouraged by café society. The fascination with anonymous others, people whose lives might normally never intersect, are observed, analysed, used to complete one's knowledge of the world. Desire and desirability, as well as status, become tied to what may be seen.

Being a stranger

The need to market oneself for employment is one of the key experiences underpinning this new sense of self as 'stranger' to others. To potential employers, your surface value ('good impression') is used to make a judgement which may lead to success or failure in ordinary life. (Williams in Ewen, 1992). This in turn leads to greater objectivity when assessing the self, because one becomes aware of those generalities which Simmel speaks of – within the mass your individuality is subjected to the profound and ever present sense of yourself as one of many similar people. This produces an environment where appearance, survival and identity become increasingly linked.

The increasingly significant role of fashion is obvious here. With little else to go on, people are increasingly taken at face value. Identity could be played with and fabricated through careful management of this newly important surface. The extent of challenge to what was perceived by some as the traditional order of society fashion could present is evidenced by the 'sumptuary laws' which had developed in Europe throughout the middle ages, where certain details and types of dress were illegal for the lower classes (Entwistle, 2000). However these could not contain the forces of modernity, expanding consumption and accelerating the change of fashion, and eventually these laws became unenforceable, as people used their 'strangeness', their anonymity, to their advantage – dressing up, down and sideways to change their identity.

Indeed, there are many stories from the modern period which illustrate the new potential for dress to affect a transformation in status. One good example is Mark Twain's short story 'The Million Pound Note' (1895), in which a poor young man is subject to a bet between two wealthy men, who wonder whether wealth alone could make a man a success. They give him a million pound note. The poor man encounters problems – no-one is capable of giving him change for the million pound note, and no-one 'believes' in him, until he manages to secure a good suit, after which all manner of goods and services come for free on the basis of his *apparent* status.

Elizabeth Wilson also highlights the way clothing acted as a form of disguise, secrecy and incognito. In cities today, young black males use caps, and the controversial hooded sweatshirt to protect them from identification by CCTV cameras. Wilson (1985) explains how middle class women once used veils, bonnets and cloaks of dark colours. These garments demonstrate modesty – not showing the 'private self' in public, not showing the codes of femininity in public to the same extent. Interestingly Wilson suggests this undermined the intensification of gender in the cities of the industrial world; it masculinised their dress to an extent, in public, making their clothing also less expressive, playing down the emotional content (making urban women appear 'cooler' emotionally, perhaps). The real need to protect fine clothes from soot, mud and rain legitimised this potentially playful behaviour.

Heyl's article (2001) on the use of the vizzard by women in Eighteenth century London parks usefully considers play and disguise, and the paradox of covering yourself up while being on show in public (see figs.19&20). The fashion began as a winter accessory for the well to do, covering the upper part of the face, but developed into a full face mask, sometimes semi-transparent (the 'cob-web' vizzard). Some unsettling images of these women were painted. Heyl refers to Marco Ricci's A View of the Mall from St. James's

Fig.19 !8ᵗʰ century vizzard   Fig.20 !8ᵗʰ century vizzard and hood

<u>Park</u> c. 1710 (fig.21), in which the masked woman stares directly at the viewer, daring a level of confrontation which registers as much more in keeping with Twentieth century images of women. While apparently an act of modesty to cover the female body in public, 'The mask assumed a dialectic function of repellent and invitation, its message was both 'I can't be seen, I am – at least notionally – not here at all', and 'look at me, I am wearing a mask, maybe I am about to abandon the role I normally play'. Heyl says that the mask could 'both endanger and protect one's respectability. On the one hand, wearing a mask, one might allow oneself to do things which would otherwise be unthinkable. On the other hand, however, one assumed a different persona, i.e. the mask at least notionally protected the identity and thus the integrity of its wearer' (2001:134).

Specifically, covering part of the *face* that is not normally covered, draws attention to the motives behind the act whilst obscuring expressions that might betray those motives, making the reading of appearance even more difficult than it already is - not to mention the appetite raised by merely 'covering the dish' as suggested in the Seventeenth century poem by John Cleveland '*When they are veyl'd on purpose to be seene*' (2001:127).

Fig.21 'A View of the Mall' by Marco Ricci, 1710

Criticality of surface to identity

Ultimately the sense of the self as a potentially alluring and mysterious visual object, anonymous and subject to the speculations of others, casts new doubt on the links between appearance and identity, and places new emphasis on the look, producing associated anxieties and pleasures. We now inhabit a world responding to the importance of surface with TV advice shows, 'makeovers' genuinely stressing the deeply felt impossibility of forming and maintaining relationships without the right appearance: for example What not to Wear (BBC1 c2000), and Would Like to Meet (BBC2 c2000), a show specifically focused on grooming to attract a partner, in world of possibility, a sea of bewildering choices. Whether the self or the other, we know we cannot trust the surface, but, it's all we've got.

This increased awareness and importance of image is not just an effect of the crowding of anonymous people but the presence of reflective surfaces, shop windows, and mannequins, all inviting the individual to consider their own and others appearances with an unprecedented level of intensity, as suggested by Atget's early Twentieth century photographs of shop windows (fig.22).

Fig.22 'Window' by Eugene Atget, 1927
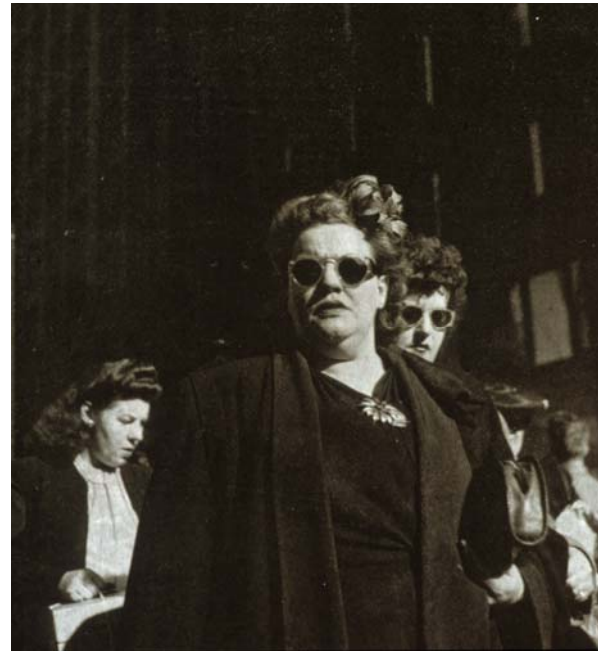
Fig.23 'Shoppers, Chicago' by Walker Evans, 1947

Walter Benjamin speaking of Paris as 'the city of mirrors' in the Arcades project –

> ...women see themselves more here than elsewhere, thus arises the specific beauty
> of Parisian women. Before a man looks at them they have already seen themselves
> reflected ten times. But the man too sees himself flashing up physiognomically....
> Even the eyes of passers-by are hanging mirrors (1999:537)

Fig.24 Head no. 24 by Philip Lorca di Corcia 2000

Fig.25 Head no. 5 by Philip Lorca di Corcia 2000

This could literally be the case when sunglasses are worn in the city. Photographs by
Walker Evans taken in 1940s Chicago show passers by protected by shades (fig.23), and by
2000, Philip Lorca di Corcia's series of 'staged snaps' caught passers by in a light that

commodifies them eerily (see figs.24 &25) Buck-Morss concludes that along with the distance from and desire for anonymous others, the city produces 'extraordinary narcissism and self-absorption'(Buck-Morss, 1986:128), suggested neatly by the use of dark glasses as an involvement shield. This connects modern urban visual experience with behaviours like those of the dandy in society, as well as with the narcissism identified as one of the components of the cool personality.

The urban context is also the centre for the growth of visual media. The city exaggerated the visual aspects of existence, stimulating the eye and placing emphasis on surface appearance to an unprecedented degree. Adding to the spectacle of the modern city were developments in the mass production and distribution of images. Schivelbusch describes the Parisian urban entertainment of panoramic and dioramic shows and gadgets which showed 'distant landscapes, cities… exotic scenes' (1986:62) to a public hungry for visual stimulation in the mid-to-late Nineteenth century. Printing, photography, and film, fuelled advertising and fashion media, disembedding the visual world and making it portable, reproducible, thin, light, mobile.

These technologies were crucial to the growth of mass fashion – alongside the means to mass produce garments, information and persuasive media enabled fashions to travel faster geographically and through the classes than before. Women's magazines, carriers of information about appearance, adverts, images of society women and later, celebrities also exploded during this period, with Vogue beginning in 1892, and Harpers Bazaar in 1867 in the US, but spreading to Britain by 1916 and 1929 respectively (White, 1967:325-7). Winship (1985) notes that in Britain, the number of women's magazines had more than doubled by the Twentieth century.

The growth of still photography provided another, more permanent dimension to the idea of modern existence being surrounded by mirrors. To have an image of yourself was a symbol of status – and in Giles' book on the psychology of fame he speaks of photography as a cultural form of reproduction offering illusions of immortality, mimicking the reproduction of our DNA (2000:53). Hamilton and Hargreaves highlight the modernity of the status implicit in photographic portraiture – not merely something only the rich could easily afford, in its early stages, but also 'emphasising that status in the radical new order of this capitalised, urbanised world' (2001:32). Braudy says that 'not even the railroad industry seems comparable to the image industry in the rapidity of its technological advance' (1986:493) The enthusiasm for photography during the Nineteenth century and beyond, professionally and by amateurs helps to demonstrate further the growing importance of image, its role in driving aspiration and consumption and, I think, adding to

the phantasmagoria of the world of images and things, the higher place in which the good life will be lived. Hamilton and Hargreaves say this was symbolised at times by the photographic studios themselves which were 'increasingly elaborate stage sets', and which provided 'domestic props that implied affluence' and suggested an 'independently prosperous and socially significant individual' (2001:32). They describe one studio as being a spectacle of satin, gold, gilt, chandelier with prismatic droplets reflecting and refracting light… 'all of which is multiplied by mirrors from ceiling to floor' (ibid). Braudy says that the explosion of interest in portraits was in fact the start of 'a great wave still rolling' (1986:493). For the self to be photographed offers a permanent reminder of 'how you appear/ed to others', but it also confirms your existence in the world of representation, your identity, fixes it for the moment on a sheet of glossy paper.

The first accessible, mass produced portrait photograph, established in France in 1854 by Dideras, was the carte de visite. Essentially an illustrated calling card, it was a means of self-promotion, thought significant in the development of celebrity culture by Hamilton & Hargreaves, and Braudy (1986) and Rojek (2001), since these cards were circulated and collected in albums, eventually mutating into the collectable cigarette cards. Historians of fashion photography also link the carte de visite with the display of fashionable dress, and the work of the early fashion photographers (Aperture:1991). This 'wave still rolling' now has its most widespread application yet – the webpage avatar or 'profile picture'.

Up close

Much of what I've said so far emphasises the unforgiving and inhuman scale and anonymity of urban life and culture. A step on from still photography was of course film, and in particular a hugely significant development in this context was the close-up, offering a commercially available, voyeuristic form of intimacy. Film's ability to provide a close up shot of a face invited audiences to gaze upon every detail of an actor's face at a wholly unnatural distance and scale, for example this image of Bette Davis (fig.26) where the camera lingers over the emotion expressed in the eyes:

> Looming over the audience, magnified, far larger than life…these strangers
> were seen with erotic narrowness and nearness. We do not see our closest
> friends so intimately, or the people who share our homes, or our lives, except
> perhaps in the act of making love (Schickel, 2000:35)

Fig.26 Bette Davis in <u>Of Human Bondage</u>1934

It seems likely that this intense scrutiny made cinemagoers aware of their own faces as objects of other's potentially similarly critical gazes in real life, as well as intensifying the link between desire and physical appearance.

The market for make-up increased dramatically under the influence of the early years of Hollywood, moving from being something associated with deceit, to an essential part of fashionable dress. Beauty products continue to be sold (by the brand most associated with film, Max Factor) on the basis of its use in film and its required flawless finish under such bright lights. A 2006 ad for shampoo, featured a well known film actress, Anna Friel. In it she is shown having make-up applied, being pulled into a tight corset for a period drama, and shocked by the photographer's lights. Her voice-over emphasises the effort and stress of having to be 'ready for the camera', and suggests that because she cannot be bothered with all of that, she uses the brand's shampoo. Light skips off her newly shiny brown hair as she saunters away from the set. Although it attempts to be effortlessly blasé about it, the message is the same – 'you must prepare yourself for close scrutiny'.

The other significant impact the close-up must surely have had is on the expression of emotion. WD Griffith is most associated with the exploitation of the close up in early film. Schickel says Griffith called his technique 'photographing thought' (2000:35). Theatrical representations of emotion have to make use of the whole body, since, at the distance an audience is likely to be, expression must be exaggerated. As Schickel suggests, without the close-up, any silent expression of emotion is necessarily 'pantomimic' (2000:35). Using the close up he caught a 'subtler play of emotions on his actors' faces, in their eyes' (ibid). Given that Griffith's films were still silent at this stage, facial expression was even more important, and although in early film the facial expressions now look overwrought, it began a trajectory in Hollywood film for expression to become more muted, until tiny flexings of facial muscles are enough to indicate deep inner struggle, as in the performances of somebody like Marlon Brando.

Apart from what that might suggest about the valorisation of subtler expression of emotions, it also demonstrates increasing popular understanding of the location of the 'inner life of emotions and personality' in the face and eyes, in a context where the 'truth' of such things was increasingly ambiguous increasing the potential allure of the image of the shaded eye.

Reproducibility

Equally, the technologies available for creating and reproducing images, and the modes in which these images are circulated and used, undoubtedly have an effect on the content of those images. Hence there are some material/perceptual reasons for the widespread use of sunglasses as a signifier within representation.

One of these in print media is perhaps their ease of recognition. Even at quite a small scale, they are still visibly sunglasses. Studies of perception demonstrate that human beings display a strong tendency to find pairs of eyes emerging from the chaos of pattern and colour (Deregowski, 1984:122) which obviously makes sunglasses both relatively easy to recognise and attractive. In drawn representations they can be shown without arms, they can be filled with flat colour, and they can be reduced to the symmetry of two approximately square or circular shapes and still be recognised as 'eyes', sunglasses. They are a very flexible visual form.

Considering the increasing impact of mass media on cultural values, it seems likely that what looks good on TV, in print, in a photograph, shapes and reduces the scope of visual culture more generally. The beauty of a woman in a drawing or photograph is not the same as the beauty of a woman physically present – yet increasingly we judge our own and others bodies not on the basis of how pleasant they are to touch or see, but on how *graphic* they are, how well defined they are in the two dimensions of the photographic image. Forms which are very graphic; which have well defined shape and tonal contrast; work better on a small scale. Much visual media reduces image to a handy portable size. Hence perhaps, the exaggeration of breasts, waist, hair, buttocks in drawn popular cultural forms such as comics, and in pornography, and through plastic surgery, hair extensions etc in the real bodies of women who work or aspire to look as if they work in the pornography industry. Tall, slender models can look freakish when spotted stooping down to a cash machine, say, but look perfect on the *page*. In a similar way, sunglasses, quite apart from the meanings they may suggest, are useful to a graphic designer: bold in tone, simple in form, easily recognisable, attractive on a very basic human level and flexible.

Summary

In this section I have how the modern city may be considered as a significant context for the growth of 'cool' behaviours as well as the emphasis on the visual in the modern world. The urban experience radically altered the number and quality of face encounters in everyday life, necessitating new forms of etiquette as well as survival tactics; Simmel's' work identifying 'blasé detachment' as a response to metropolitan life, Goffman's concept of the involvement shield relating especially well to sunglasses. Shading the over-stimulated eye from the visual onslaught characteristic of modernity could also, in this context, potentially come to stand for immersion in the most extreme of modernity's conditions which might suggest a certain kind of status. At the same time, the growth and proliferation of visual media offer the beginnings of celebrity culture, new models for self-presentation, new awareness of the self as a viewable object in an anonymous crowd of other viewable objects, with the film close-up cementing the idea of the face as the key locus for expression of emotion. Behaviours like that of the flâneur might therefore translate into more widespread behaviours as the city 'state of mind' becomes increasingly embedded in human consciousness. In addition, some practical and physical material reasons for the use of sunglasses as a signifier in print-based visual culture have become apparent – their small scale, readily recognisable form and ability to stand for that most irresistible human feature, the eye.

From this point on, I will begin to chart the emergence of sunglasses in fashion and popular culture and their various relationships with cool as well as more specific aspects of modern life, adding to what I have begun here. To this end, the next chapter will be focused around the idea of speed.

Chapter six

Modern Speed and Sight: cool as 'industrialised consciousness'

Fig.27 Still from '<u>Toxic</u>' by Britney Spears c.2003

The visual experience of modernity in the city was described in the last chapter as significantly affected by movement: the tumult of on-rushing impressions, people and goods in transit - the proliferation of chaotic forms and motion within the city. In many modern designs for sunglasses (past and present) connotations of speed are deliberately evoked using well known design strategies such as streamlining. Also sunglasses feature in many powerful images of sports heroes and speeding film stars. But the links between speed, modernity, cool and sunglasses reach much further than that, so in this section I will look more closely at the impact of the acceleration and celebration of speed on modern vision and visual culture in my continued search to understand what value shaded sight might hold for modern people. I will reflect on the possible relationships between these ideas and the theories of coolness I have already explored, and I will set out my findings regarding the associations between sunglasses and movement/speed, from my

research into their beginnings of production and use in the west in the early Twentieth century.

Modernity and speed

As Lista says 'the new man was a man of speed, able to rebuild space and time around his own power... [in] the era of machines entirely submissive to human desire' (2001:11). Enthusiasm for, fear of and perception of accelerating speed in modernity is evident in many authors' work, from the writings of the futurists, to that of Baudelaire about the fleeting and the ephemeral, to Walter Benjamin's recognition of change for change's sake, to Paul Virilio's theory of modernity focused on speed. It captures the modern imagination seductively in academic and popular discourses. Speed of warfare, speed of production (and consumption), travel and communication are thought to have accelerated dramatically in the period of high modernity. Even time itself appears to be speeding up. Through the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, experience of speed goes way beyond human or animal capabilities to the exhilarating and alarmingly limitless potential of the machine, with the development of first the railways, then the airplane and the car.

Speed is an advantage in modern capitalism. Efficiency drives increased the significance of the clock and heightened the awareness of passing time.[6] (As much as - for the individual - a ticking clock might seem to plod till lunchtime or home time, for capital, for industry, the clock is always there to be kept time with or 'beaten'). The competitive dynamic of capitalism of course drives the acceleration, delivering the goods more quickly and/or more cheaply being a primary means to beat the competitors. It is also a tyrant – it demands we keep up, and potentially transforms consciousness, our sense of our selves and the nature of our relationships with people, objects, places and ideas. Nietzsche made a strong connection between 'the haste and hurry now universal', 'the increasing velocity of life' and 'the cessation of all contemplativeness and simplicity...almost... the symptoms of a total extermination and uprooting of culture' (1983:148), hoping for a philosophy which would arm people against 'that haste, that breathless grasp of the moment, that excessive hurry which breaks all things too early from their branches, that running and hunting' (in Frisby, 1985:31).

A perfect example of this is the realm of fashion, discussed by many modern philosophers and early sociologists, among them again Simmel (1971) and Benjamin (2002), as an exemplar of modernity (Lehmann, 2000) where status is achieved by having the latest

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[6] As I have mentioned previously, this is commented on by Simmel in his essays The philosophy of Money and The Metropolis and Mental Life – in the sense that this also has a rationalising, detaching effect. Value is equated with time and money

look first, and where quick response to trends is crucial for commercial success. The succession of fashions, after centuries of relatively gradual evolution, speeded up incredibly at the end of the Nineteenth century with rapid and radical changes of silhouette and style.[7] This offered an additional sense of quickening pace, the semiotic redundancy of each look making the recent past into the irrelevant and stimulating new purchases, requiring the new to be assimilated ever more frequently, as we 'move with the times'. Today, catchphrases from fashion journalism such as 'so last season' and 'so yesterday' parody the 'fashionista's commitment to nothing but the now, with an ever-shrinking notion of how long 'now' is. So-called 'fast fashion' describes the current speeding up of the seasons, where three or more phases are offered during both spring/summer and autumn/winter for the very mainstream high street stores and new styles come in weekly, or even daily to those at the more trend-driven end of the market. The lead time from drawing to product in the store is reduced, allowing almost instant interpretations of new styles into the high street (Brown, 2005:24-6).

Fig.28 Fashion image by Munkacsi, Harpers Bazaar, 1933

The centrality of speed and movement to modern fashion is also evidenced by the remarkable preponderance of dynamic imagery and graphic techniques in photography and in magazine design. Brodovitch, the artistic director of American Harpers Bazaar for many years before and after the second world war, pioneered this graphic style, employing avant-garde photographers like German expressionist Munkacsi whose work was less focused on illustrating the detail of fashionable clothes but instead gave a 'feel' of fashion, a good example of this being the image in figure 28. Ultimately this kind of image promotes not specific clothes, but the ideal of movement, of change, of the modern. To stimulate and encourage readers to turn the page the design must create dynamism and rhythm, encouraging these dynamic images to be consumed fleetingly. More literally images of cars, bicycles, motorbikes, buses multiply through the Twentieth

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[7] Indicative of this is the dramatic change in the appearance of influential designer Gabriel Chanel, who went from the corseted, full length Edwardian clothing which was an incremental step from the Victorian sartorial norms for her class, to slacks and other modern separates in under a decade.

century as fashion photography moves out of the studio and into the street. In or out, Squires' article 'Slouch, Stretch, Smile, Leap' (1980) demonstrates the increasingly frequent requests by photographers not to remain still while being snapped but to move, often needlessly, to jump, leap, 'give us a twirl'. These images often - and particularly at key moments where modernity is celebrated in the Twentieth century, e.g. the 1920s, the 1960s – offer a view of a young independent female in an urban setting, glamorising the 'freedom' of modernity.

The digital revolution now brings us the possibility of 'immediacy' (Tomlinson, 2007), '24/7' services, we can pay for fast track, priority boarding. Speed is equated with winning, success and status. In Redhead's chapter on 'Accelerated Modernity' in his book about Paul Virilio, he quotes: 'Power and speed are inseparable, just as wealth and speed are inseparable' (2004:43). Virilio speaks of 'speed classes', a loose term used to indicate the hierarchy of access to life in 'the fast lane', but perhaps also to indicate the social status of engaging positively with mobility and speed. It seems that status comes not only from harnessing speed to your advantage, but from displaying the ability to cope with its tyrannical reign.

Thus in the popular imagination, speed and modernity are inextricably linked. And to be modern, is not only to keep up but to embrace change, to seek increased speed as a sign of progress towards the future. As Lista says of the futurist Marinetti, modernists 'called forth the future with all [their] might' (2001:10).

Modernity, speed and visual culture
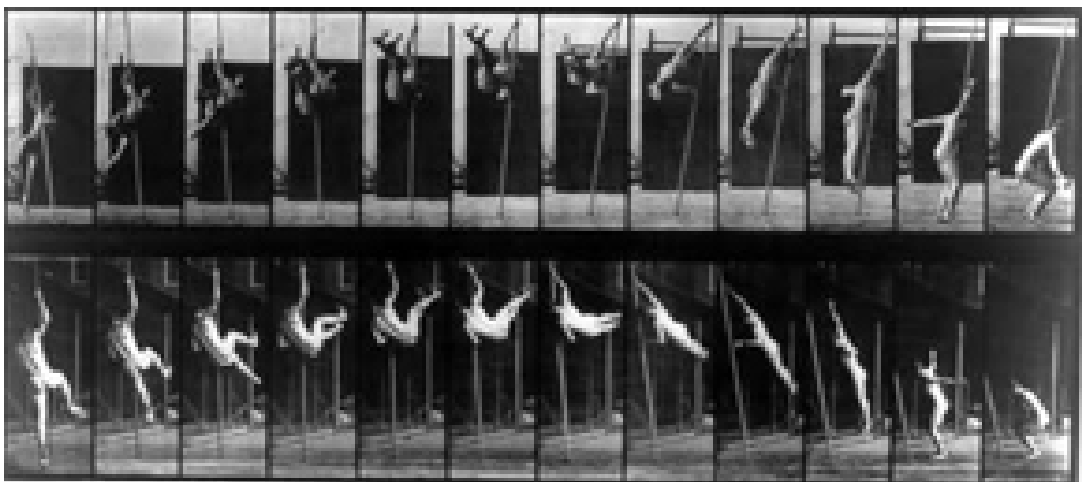
Fig.29 'Animal Locomotion, plate 165' by Eadward Muybridge,1884

To understand further how significant speed is to the experience of modernity and to shed light on the transformations it has brought to perception and consciousness, it is useful to look at the work of many modern artists and early photographers. As we've already seen in the section on the modern city, Impressionists, Cubists and Futurists all experimented with ways to capture shifting perspective, the chaos of the city (Osborne, 2000:160-161). Static, monocular perspective was rejected in favour of representational strategies which acknowledged the experience of sight affected by motion. Photographers like Muybridge had worked hard to capture an understanding of motion with freeze frame photography at the end of the Nineteenth century, (Lista, 2001) the resulting images in series giving a sense of slow motion animation (see fig.29). Some became fascinated with capturing the sensation of observing another body at speed. Futurist works of art celebrated many aspects of modern life, like artificial light, factory manufacture etc but stand out from other modern artists in their concentration on and depiction of the exhilarating, shocking sensation of speed. Marinetti, in the first Futurist Manifesto of 1909, explicitly stated 'We declare that the world's splendour has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed' (in Futurismo, 1972:25). Examples include Boccioni's 'Dynamism of a Cyclist'

Fig.30 'Automobile Speed' by Giacomo Balla, 1913

Fig.31 'Abstract Speed – the car that passed' by Giacomo Balla, 1913

(1913), Balla's 'Automobile Speed' (1913, fig.30), Balla's 'Abstract speed, the car that passed' (1913, see fig.31) and 'Lights and Speed' (1913), Pannaggi's 'Speeding Train' (1922). One of the very first subjects filmed by the Lumiere brothers (1895), was 'the arrival of a train' (Mirzoeff, 1999). Capturing motion, the sensation of speed, and ultimately creating moving images were key goals for artists in this period, indicative of the connection between speed, especially mechanised speed and the modern in the artistic imagination.

Perception of movement was even made possible in less literal ways, for example through the development of snapshot photography. Once the technology of the camera became

portable enough to take outside, and to be used on a moving subject, the quality of photographic images changes dramatically, no longer does the subject need to stay unnaturally still and expressionless in a studio, giving the final image an air of the timeless vacuum. Amateur photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue exploited this potential among his family to create images of the early Twentieth century which readily illustrate this idea, for example 'Ma Cousine Bichonnade' in figure 32. Virilio says the photograph became a signifier of the *movement* that caused the camera and its subject to collide in

Fig.32 'Ma Cousine Bichonnade' Jacques-Henri Lartigue 1905

history, he speaks of 'the dynamism of the hidden but nevertheless imagined sequence' (Virilio, 1998:22). We cannot help but consider the possible other images surrounding the single shot, as if there might be some Muybridge or even some film footage of the 'imagined sequence' somewhere, if only we could find it.

The blur - or Panoramic Perception
The images above, these attempts to depict the sensation of looking at the modern world highlight a sense of lack of focus, a blurred quality to all perception. Forms multiply; they disappear in a flurry of impressions, of dazzling lights. Where Muybridge harnesses light to show us, lumen-like, *how* objects move through space, the futurists revel in the pleasure of a confusing blur. Interestingly even where both viewer and viewed are static, in the case of a still life or seated portrait, futurist representational style indicates that this new mode of perception persists beyond the specific contexts of seeing in motion, as if somehow their perception had been changed forever by the velocity of the modern world.

Some more of Paul Virilio's ideas are interesting here. He claims 'speed illuminates' (1999:19), but what it reveals is a modern form of sight – a 'dromoscopy' (1978), an 'aesthetic of disappearance', where nothing is solid. Literally, in the modern world of the cinematograh, art works no longer exist as material objects, but depend on *retinal* persistence between frames to make 'sense'; to construct the work fleetingly in the viewer's mind. He also goes so far as to say that the dromoscopy we achieve through the car windshield or the train window is a new art, the 'art of the engine' (in Redhead, 2004), offering the example of a road movie by Wim Wenders as yes, a film, but primarily an aesthetic work which is made possible by the 'medium' of the engine of the car. This transformation of the visual through means of mechanised speed, has also been commented on by Schivelbusch, in his work on the railway journey using a concept (borrowed from Sternberger) similar to Virilio's 'dromoscopy' which he calls 'Panoramic perception' (1986:61)

Obviously travelling faster increases the number of those 'on-rushing impressions' in the modern city of which Simmel spoke. It also produced a strange sense of detachment from the landscape, and a new mode of experience which enabled travellers to engage with place purely as spectacle. In fact, Schivelbusch suggests that Nineteenth century technologies created a whole new relationship with the visual world analogous to the experience of looking through a window on a train.

One of the significant factors identified by Sternberger (in Schivelbusch, 1986) is the loss of the foreground caused by velocity:

> ...velocity blurs all foreground objects, which means there no longer is a foreground…. the traveller was removed from that total space which combined proximity and distance: he became separated from the landscape. (ibid:63)

Sternberger adds to the notion of separation with the effortless entertainment offered:

> The railroad transformed the world of land and seas into a panorama that could be experienced. Not only did it join previously distant localities by eliminating all resistance, difference, and adventure from the journey: now that travelling had become so comfortable and common, it turned the travellers eyes outward and offered them the opulent nourishment of ever changing images (Sternberger in Schivelbusch 1986:62)

This echoes my points in the section on the developments of spectacle in the modern city. One consequence of this form of travel is the offering of spectacle to a *passive* body. Although the body moves through space, because the body itself exerts no effort, it is almost as if the world is moving past the body at speed. Sternberger sees the decadence of this in his choice of the phrase 'opulent nourishment' - each one of us flattered by the modern promise of a world increasingly perceived as organised around our visual pleasure. This contributes to the glamour of speed, the status of travel.

Schivelbusch speaks of the different kind of attention required for this kind of perception. A bit like Simmel's blasé attitude, very few objects can be taken in with any degree of concentration. Instead of attempting to properly perceive the discrete, it is better to accept the pleasure of the blur. This requires a 'novel ability', identified by a travel writer, Gastineau, as 'the ability to perceive the discrete... indiscriminately' (in Schivelbusch,1986:60-61); to learn not to try to focus, to accept the detachment and revel in it.

Obviously the relevance of these points is not confined to a moment in the past, since mechanised travel has proliferated experiences of detachment in the modern world, ultimately offering the car as the ultimate physical detachment from other road users, and the motorway as a 'non-place' (Auge,1995), a place calling for no attachment from anyone, where the blur is made up not of villages and towns but merely of tarmac, signage, and the rest of the architecture of transit, or even the internet where the culture of the immaterial and the immediate transcends the need for physical motion in order to experience the sights of another part of the world.

Gastineau also says that in fact 'it is the *velocity* that made the objects of the visible world attractive' (in Schivelbusch, 1986:60-61, my emphasis). A correlation is even drawn with the world of goods, and the experience of shopping in a department store, showing how movement was encouraged around the store and indeed, how the succession of changes brought about by fashion and the search for the new and for novelties underlines the velocity inherent in the system of fashion, with its ever faster flowing stream of images and goods. Sternberger's remarks about the views from the windows of Europe are also telling: '[they] have entirely lost their dimension of depth and have become mere particles of one and the same panoramic world that stretches all around and is, at each and every point, merely a painted surface' (ibid).

What these writers are suggesting is that speed and velocity subject us to an onslaught on the senses, an exacerbation of what I have already described in terms of the assault on

the eyes made by the modern city's chaos and its proliferation of lights. It can also be seen as the tyrannical setter of a mechanical, superhuman pace. This furthers my argument that modernity presents a set of circumstances where the human eye 'feels' vulnerable and could benefit from some real or symbolic 'protection'. Again, this is not simply experienced as something to be feared or avoided, since as with modern light, encounters with this onslaught could even suggest superior status or heroic qualities, as there is also an important sense in which to be part of this dromoscopy, this panoramic vision, is to 'be modern'. Virilio speaks of 'speed classes' – as I said at the beginning of this chapter, access to speed being critically linked to wealth, and therefore, not only a suggestion of how modern you are, but how much status you have, how able you are to participate in the latest, most advanced forms of modern technology.

I will return to fashion and the emergence of sunglasses soon, but first I want to pick up on the themes of detachment and effortlessness which are emerging strongly in the ideas I have just outlined, as a transition to considering ways in which speed might perhaps relate to 'cool'.

Detachment

The detachment running through the idea of panoramic vision is not only the product of the speed at which the viewer travels but also the qualities and conditions of the railway. Physical detachment from the earth and the foreground was increased by a comparative lack of physical sensation. The sensation of rail travel was perceived to be like *flight*, so immaterial did the connection with the ground seem in comparison with the living, breathing power of the horse (Schivelbusch,1986:23). Schivelbusch notes that this was thought to have a positive impact on the emotions and concerns of the passenger. S/he need not dwell on the possible misadventures of travel. For the passenger, the motion was effortless, and it the uniformity of the performance of the engine eradicated the requirement to manage or to be aware of excitable and possibly vulnerable horses. Schivelbusch cites an anonymous source from 1825, which extols the benefits of this for the 'sensitive man' who may relax in the carriage without fear of nervous excitement (ibid:14).

Equally, the conditions inside the carriage promoted detachment from others. Schivelbusch notes many writers who realise what is now obvious - the impossibility of engaging with anonymous others meaningfully in mass, public contexts. Very quickly, losing yourself in a novel became a way of being not only detached from the place you travelled through but also absent from the carriage you were in (1986:67), reducing the risk of uncomfortable encounters with strangers, also achievable by feigning sleep. Again

this calls to mind the modern value of Goffman's concept of the 'involvement shield', which I cited in the chapter about modernity and the city, and it echoes the points about the increasing voyeurism and awareness of self in the modern city where brief but potentially intimate and/or threatening encounters with strangers multiplied in cramped and crowded spaces.

Industrialised consciousness

There is the added dimension of the bravery of facing the possible risks associated with all this speed, and Schivelbusch's work provides another idea useful to my exploration of the development of cool – and he calls this 'Industrialised consciousness', which could be roughly summarised as a technologised version of Simmel's blasé attitude. For as much as rail travel may have presented the sensitive man with a way to appear less 'excited', modern speed brings with it greater than ever risks and anxieties (air travel made another leap in this regard, where even the sensation of movement is lost). Paul Virilio's ideas are relevant here again. He theorised the disaster 'inherent in modernity' (Redhead, 2004:72) with his theory of the accident (1999:92); the recognition that with every modern increase in mechanical speed comes an increase in potential catastrophe; 'no technical object can be developed without in turn generating its specific accident … the accident is thus the hidden face of technical progress' (ibid) The apparent unlikelihood of the accident (when the motion is so consistent, so seemingly effortless, and the stewards are so able to pour tea without spilling in the dining car) makes the accident - when it happens - a shock of an unprecedented severity. As human beings we become accustomed to the risks and shocks of modernity with repeated exposure – here Schivelbusch uses Freud's concept of the 'stimulus shield'(1986:164) which is not an object like Goffman's involvement shield, but a psychological outer 'crust' which gets 'baked' through experience, protecting the soft inner core. However, Schivelbusch also says that this relies on a kind of 'forgetting' that the potential for the catastrophe has not in fact gone away – a repressing of the fear, since the possible damage to the human body does not become less:

> …the original fear of the new technology has by no means dissolved into nothingness during the period of habituation… it has only been forgotten, repressed, one could even say, reified as a feeling of safety.' (1986:163)

We do not become 'better' passengers, more able to withstand the effects of a crash, and our skills cannot help us, because as we have already seen, our efforts are not required, which also means they cannot be galvanised to help in the event of calamity. Schivelbusch

demonstrates how the recognition of post-traumatic shock came partly via recognition of a condition called 'railway spine', which was characterised by a lack of physical manifestations – thus recognising that these catastrophes which occur very suddenly, at speed, and in a context where there was little or no warning, give rise to psychological injury which goes far beyond the physical (1986:138), and which does not necessarily emerge immediately, giving the impression of bravery or calm in the immediate instance.

Schivelbusch moves on to describe a form of industrial consciousness which no longer pertains to mere railway travel but to modern conditions more generally. He uses Freud's recognition of the need to develop a shield from stimuli together with Simmel's concept of 'intelligence' and 'the head'(ibid:167), and Elias's work on the civilising process. What is novel about Schivelbusch's argument is the dominance of technology which requires new levels of stimulus shield and which he argues *permanently* change the way we perceive (ibid:165). A painting by someone like Gerhard Richter would seem to suggest this detached, speed-altered manner of consciousness towards the physical world, where this 'administrative building' as solid and monolithic as it sounds, is rendered blurred (fig.33).

Fig.33 'Administrative building' by Gerhard Richter 1964

Speed and Cool

I see three consequences of this which are relevant to cool – firstly, it is worth noting the extent to which speed and technology are seen to affect modern consciousness and visual perception. Secondly, the potential increased survival chances, power and status inherent in being able to develop this unshakeable demeanour, this 'shield'. Some people accrue experience of modern speed technologies or develop the crust mentioned above faster than others, and these people will undoubtedly seem 'cooler' than their nervous counterparts. Finally, in spite of us becoming 'comfortable' with modern technologies, and often finding previous generations' worries amusing, in fact the potential catastrophe and its fear have not gone away – decade by decade, we add new kinds of catastrophe with every new gain but we keep these fears behind the protective crust. This adds both to the sense that pace of the modern world is dangerous, and therefore a place from which a human body might need protection *and* to the heroic status of being immersed in its latest, least known, fastest moving manifestations.

As we have already seen in the sections on cool theory and cool forerunners, detachment is a common component of all kinds of cool – every author I have studied lists detachment among the qualities of the cool demeanour, and many of the celebrated personality types in the cool forerunner section also exhibit unusual levels of detachment, from the jazz musicians and drug addicts of Macadams' account, to the cavaliers and courtiers , the flâneurs and the bohemians. The section above shows how the speed of mechanised modern travel enabled, encouraged and necessitated a more detached form of consciousness. The rail passenger can appear to be aloof, effortless, relaxed, superior, and rational in their ability to overcome the fear of new technology's power. In the historical scenarios I have outlined and the theories of cool I have examined, social superiority is often apparent in the ability to control emotions by detaching the 'head' from the 'heart' and to appear not to be 'stuck' or securely attached to any person, situation or thing. Mass, mechanised speed and travel enable increasing participation in a life of less commitment to people and places, more frequent and easier goodbyes, and it necessitates this too. If you linger too long at your departures, you might miss the train or plane, if you stay home instead of venturing further afield (with promises of returns made possible by new motorways, high-speed connections etc.), your career, wealth, and social standing may suffer. Detachment is evidently a quality increasingly useful in modern societies, in order to survive the tyranny of the rule of speed and, if you're lucky, to cash in on its benefits. There's one more very significant sense in which speed promises detachment – detachment from the humdrum, the limitations by which others live their lives, the limitations of the human relationship with the natural world, and this brings us

right back to the excitement of those modern types seeking the world speed record, to the futurists, and to the early pioneers of flight,.

The *effortlessness* of mechanised travel speed is worth considering too, as again it has a special connection with many of these cool theories and forerunners. To be mobile is good – but none of the models I have considered so far let the effort involved be displayed. The cavaliers believed a gentleman should do everything with nonchalance, the dandy courtier exhibiting aristocratic 'sprezzatura' did everything with ease (Feldman 1993:4, op cit), Goodrow links cool with an 'outward appearance of easy competence', never to appear 'frantic'(in Macadam, 2002:2 op cit).

This has mythically entered Twentieth century pop culture in the form of heroic figures like James Bond (c.1960-). As the film flickers before the audience, the edits enable Mr. Bond to hop in seconds from far flung train to speed boat, to concealed plane, to motorbike - traversing the globe and doing away with assailants as he goes, all without breaking a sweat. James Bond possesses 'sprezzatura' – the aristocratic form of cool, but with a democratic, dandyish twist – he is an ordinary man whose 'inherent nobility', social ease, quick wittedness and calm demeanour makes him equal to anyone anywhere. His superior access to speed and technology significantly enhances his ability to do things with greater ease than others, and his confidence both with and in the technology is critical to his heroic status. This is further underlined by the dandyish 'impertinences' provided for him in the accompanying dialogue, light hearted quips delivered nonchalantly as a baddie plunges into a vat of acid or falls from a cliff as bond escapes in a helicopter.

Of course the work of Gabriele Mentges first discussed in my survey of writing defining cool is especially relevant to a discussion of speed and technology, since her ideas bring together the notions of coolness, speed, modernity and the 'protective' aesthetic in clothing. Her ideas bear some resemblance to those of Schivelbusch, and she cites Paul Virilio. She bases her analysis on the interaction between human and machine in the earliest fighter planes of the First World War where the human is not merely carried by but is in control of the machine, but she reaches very similar conclusions - that the power, and the velocity of the plane requires detachment, acting with the 'head not the heart'. The speed at which this very dangerous machine flies necessitates quick decision making and nerves of steel – no time to dither. Interestingly these pilots' competence with such dangerous high speeds was contrasted by a 'relaxed manner' and a 'non-military carriage' that suggests a slow, lazy way of walking which was described as 'lassig' by commentators at the time, which Mentges translates as casual or cool. This indicates

that it is not just experience of speed and velocity which could be cool but a sense of competence with or control of speed which can be seen in the 'antique calm' of the dandy and the aimless *strolling* of the flâneur amidst the haste and hurry of the city – unhurried enough to take a turtle for a walk. To be in control of speed – to be capable of keeping up, yet sometimes choosing to oppose its momentum, suggests a capacity to detach yourself from the prevailing order. In another context for the origins of the use of the term cool – jazz musician Lester Young always came in a beat behind. This signified his status – he sets the pace (Macadams, 2002).

In order to become capable of withstanding the physical extremes of high speeds pilots and drivers literally required a 'tougher skin', made of leather, rubber, even metal - initially to literally withstand the 'coldness' of high altitudes, or rushing through the open countryside (as in fact all forms of modern travel were initially open – rail carriages, automobiles and planes). Similar to Freud's stimulus shield, Mentges dwells on the developing appreciation of the vulnerability of the human skin in the early Twentieth century, the generalised awareness of just how much may be out there to attack. On one level her work describes a historical style of dress and behaviour centred around speed which bears remarkable resemblance to a cool youth subculture of the post-war years, and she notes how many of the later 'cool' fashion garments had their origins in these technical surroundings of the early Twentieth century. In another, she is putting forward the idea that perhaps these kinds of garments continue to be meaningful throughout the modern era to civilians because the offer of protection resonates on a far less literal level, that the modern sensibility is one which is increasingly aware of potential threats, and which sees a generalised value in the look and feel of protective clothing.

Speed and sunglasses

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, some of the connections between speed and sunglasses today are self-evident , but in the context of Schivelbusch's and Mentges' work, it seems especially interesting that my research with the British Optical Association's archives reveals that apart from those for weak sight, the earliest popular uses of tinted lenses in the west were not for sunbathing, but for modern technologies of travel and production, protecting the eyes from airborne hazards like dust, soot, sparks, and wind as well as the obvious possibility of uncomfortable levels of light. In the early days of rail travel (show examples) carriages were open, and many of the 'd' framed glasses which reside in collections today are described as 'railway glasses' (see figs. 34&35), and these date from about 1830 until about the 1890s (Handley 2005:8).
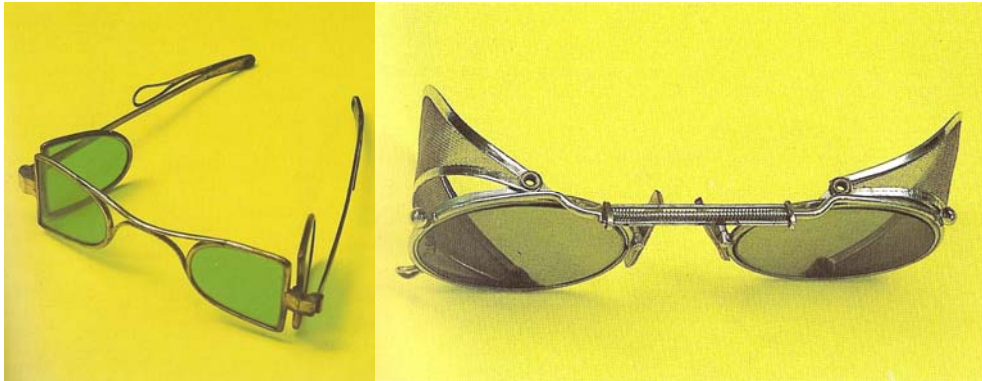
Fig.34 'D'-framed spectacles c. 1900 left, and Nineteenth century, right.

These were like spectacles but with the addition of lateral shades, sometimes made of glass, sometimes gauze. These had very strong industrial associations and continued to be used in industrial settings beyond their more general popularity. Interestingly some portraits of significant men of the era have been painted including the d-specs (see fig.35), which is potentially suggestive of the status their connection with modernity may have implied (another example, William Ball of the Coalbrookdale Iron Works, who is frequently depicted in his) (ibid). In an application for patent in 1905, similar glasses are described as 'Eye Protectors' from 'dust and glare' (Optical Association archives) An advertisement for the 'Albex Eye Protector' from Keystone Magazine in 1912 claims the product is 'perfectly adapted to the needs of automobilists, locomotive engineers, drivers, motormen, grinders and stone cutters'.

Fig.35 'Spanish Gentleman' by Jose Caceres 1832

Indeed spectacles and glasses of all kinds are themselves important products of the industrial revolution reliant on advances in engineering, for example in the use of steel where innovation and experimentation enabled the development of glasses more likely to stay on a moving head. (Many early spectacles were handheld, like the lorgnette, relied on gripping in the eye socket like the monocle, or on an engineered but precarious grip on the nose) Gafforio and Ceppi say the pinc-nez 'demonstrate[d] [spectacles] modernity as a place for experimentation with new materials and technologies' (1996:32). Significant advances were made in the mid Eighteenth century with Scarlett's 'riding temple glasses' – a frame with

rigid arms which clung to the temples, and eventually was extended to rest on the ears (1996:31, see also Drewry 1994), which in spite of the popularity of the pinc-nez, monocle and lorgnette eventually became the generic type for Twentieth century glasses and sunglasses. Even the forerunner of the d-specs was referred to by its inventor as a 'machine' (Handley, 2005:3). So modern technology was harnessed to enable glasses to be worn while moving, and these glasses were developed further to protect eyes from the ravages of experience of modern mechanised travel, but perhaps also functioned as a token of involvement with modern technologies.

Thus the first stage of change to tinted glasses' significance from 'weak sight' to 'cool' was through association with powerful symbols of modernity's power over nature, its preoccupation with speed, and with the hazardous conditions for the human body who engaged with it. British and American optical trade journals, The Optician, The Wellsworth Merchandiser and Keystone Magazine contain evidence that this was a gradual transition. Although the market for non-prescription tinted glasses seems to be small, it clearly develops between about 1910 and 1940. Initially protective glasses are called 'eye protectors', 'goggles', and 'auto glasses'. In the publications I studied the earliest mention of 'sun' glasses is 1916 (see figs 36-38), and it does not become the dominant

Fig.36 1912 ad for motor goggles from the Keystone Magazine

Fig.37 1916 ad for a range of motor goggles and sun glasses for driving and sports

term in use until the mid twenties and beyond. Certainly a 1912 article in the <u>Keystone Magazine</u> about the use of tinted glass, demonstrates that this was a little written-about aspect of optometry, and that tinted glasses – even for those who ordinarily wear spectacles – should not be used merely for protection against sunlight, but extreme conditions such as reflection from snow, water, chalk cliffs or industrial applications. (Harcombe Cuff, 1912:637). The lack of specific reference to sunbathing at this point is telling, but there is a suggestion that perhaps people are wearing them for protection against sunlight (hence the need for advice).

However, early goggles for fighter pilots (as discussed in Greer and Harold 1975) and for civilians in editions of the American optical trade journals <u>Amoptico</u> and <u>The Wellsworth Merchandiser</u> from 1910 to the mid 1920s, show that many of the well established fashion styles of the later Twentieth century – such as 'aviators' and 'wayfarers' - are clearly descended directly from the functional innovations for very specific contexts. The classic aviator style we know today defined by the 1930s American Ray-Ban is a much lighter, thinner, more elegantly proportioned version of the Triplex Safety Goggle (fig.39). These begin to conform to some of the conventions of jewellery, of the fashion accessory, becoming more 'feminine' and leisurely through codes of delicacy, curvaciousness and smallness as the activities become more commonplace, and the sense of the glasses as a 'safety device' lessens, possibly in conjunction with the growth of the 'stimulus shield'.

Fig.38 Launch of a wider range of goggles and sun glasses by Wellsworth, 1918

Fig.39 'Triplex' Safety goggles for WW1 pilots

Fig. 40 The range grows, and associations with speed, travel and sport are uppermost. Wellsworth, 1918.

Alongside this process of thinning, lightening, and feminising, some of the connotations of the context of their original function can be seen clearly in the designs on offer in the Wellsworth Merchandiser and in the text used to anchor their interpretations. Although the designs become easier to wear, the names given to different styles in the period 1910 to 1919 show the connotations of speed and travel proliferate. Earliest examples are

merely advertised as 'Motor Glasses' and 'Auto Goggles',(fig.38) but as model styles refine, develop and multiply, we get 'Overland', 'Roadster', 'Speedster', 'Traveller' and 'Biplane'(fig.40). The biplane glasses are not flight goggles, yet the name has been selected to appeal to a group of potential consumers the editorial refers to as 'would-be speed kings' (1919:212).

This makes the connection between the purchase of tinted glasses and the aspiration to speed absolutely clear. These models hardly differ, suggesting that they are not in fact solely designed for the purposes the model names imply, but that the model names are chosen simply to enhance their positive connotations..

My research in women's magazines like <u>Vogue</u>, <u>American Vogue</u>, <u>Marie Claire</u> and <u>Harpers Bazaar</u>, revealed no sunglasses in editorial fashion images until the late 1930s. The snapshots of French amateur photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue are among the earliest documents of people wearing these goggles and visors. Lartigue was later credited for his exceptional ability to shoot the off-guard, the informal, and the 'not to be photographed', the improper or unflattering, and he delighted in capturing his family and friends wearing a variety of goggles. The earliest is a ridiculous shot of a family member in waders and sunglasses (c.1911), which he entitled 'impeccably dressed as usual' (Lartigue,1978), typical of Lartigue's warm and humorous commentary (fig 41). Lartigue's

work documents these fast-moving, modern leisure pursuits, playing in cars, as in 'route de gaillon' (fig.42), and often he captured them at speed, or photographed cyclists at the velodrome, echoing the subject matter of futurist paintings. 'Bibi in 1921' shows his wife casually feeding their baby in the back of the car in full driving gear (fig.43). These are images of the young elite of the period, exuberantly welcoming the machine age. His images predate the appearance in professional fashion images, which began to emerge in the mid 1920s. Women with androgynous silhouettes are depicted driving or by the side of their cars, with goggles or

Fig.41 'Zissou, impeccably dressed as usual' Jacques-Henri Lartigue 1911

Fig.42 'Route de Gaillon' Jacques-Henri Lartigue 1912

visors either on or in their possession (fig.44). It is evident that the display of participation in these mechanised forms of travel was thought to be appealing by fashion editors of around the same time – signifying modern luxury leisure pursuits and suggesting the new active, mobile, androgynous woman. The goggles suggest associations with the latest technology, with the public, masculine sphere. The modern woman of fashion in the 1920s, is one whose body functions not primarily for childbirth, but for movement, with the development of sportswear, more casual daywear, and the pared down modernist 'functional' aesthetic. Fashion illustration especially, for example in the work of Georges Lepape, demonstrates the masculinised ideal body, as the freedom of drawing as opposed to photography allows liberties to be taken with the female form: flatter chests, narrower hips and wide, square shoulders accompany these images. The shocking behaviour of some fashionable women seems to have involved a number of traditionally masculine traits and activities such as smoking, driving, and sexual promiscuity, many of which clearly relate to aspects of cool considered elsewhere in this study: rebellion, hedonism, lack of concern for others.

Fig.43 'Bibi feeding the baby' by Jacques-Henri Lartigue 1921

Fig.44 Cover illustration for Vogue by Georges Lepape 1925

What I wish to draw out here is the emergence of the shaded eye in fashion as a signifier of technological modernity around the nineteen twenties, the evident heroic and desirable status of the modern activities early 'sunglasses' take their connotative cues

from. Being equipped for these modern pursuits becomes fashionable, in spite of the strange, masculine, perhaps even industrial appearance they create. Prosthetic and safety equipment is rarely fashionable – we do not tend to see cycling helmets on carefree girls on bikes, nor seatbelts carefully fastened, nor indeed spectacles, nor hearing aids in fashion images. Perhaps this is why in spite of my insistence that conditions were perfect for modern people to respond to the functional and symbolic potential of the shaded eye it takes ten or twenty years for sunglasses to make it into popular fashion imagery –

Fig.45 'Renee driving' by Jacques-Henri Lartigue, 1931

Fig.46 Unofficial uniform for WW1 pilots, cobbled together by the pilots

perhaps the connotations of blindness and weakness were too strong. However, strangeness or ugliness is not necessarily to be avoided in modern fashion. Elizabeth Wilson speaks of the modern 'aesthetic of the ugly' (1985) where something considered to be strange or ugly presents the perfect opportunity for the avant-garde to rebel against
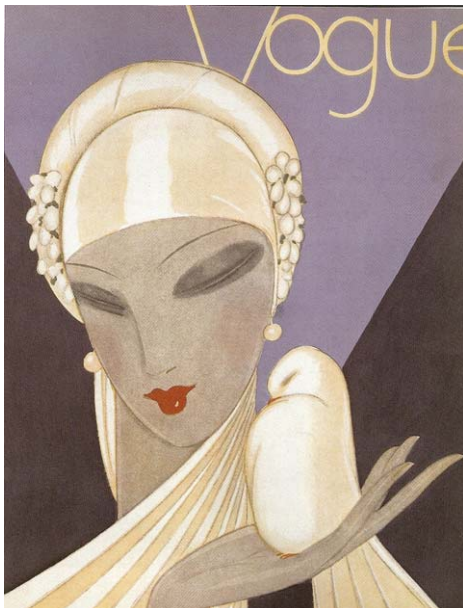

Fig.47 Fashion for black-socketed eye make-up in Vogue 1926

norms of fashionable appearance and satisfy their unquenchable thirst for the new. Often this ugliness connects with the socially unacceptable – coincidentally Wilson's example is the fashion for the tan, which suggested dangerous cross race and class desires and identities. The androgyny of these glasses may have aroused similar sensibilities, and looking at the earliest images of the fighter pilots with their make-shift face protection, there is a sense of the inhuman, the cyborg, even perhaps of bondage or fetish clothing (fig.46). Mentges barely discusses the goggles but she does cite an early guide for automobile drivers which mentions the goggles and leathers being 'so frightening that pedestrians ran off in fear.' (2000:34)

What is abundantly clear is that through speed technologies, the shaded eye was emerging, since not only were these goggles and visors being depicted, but there was also a fashion for hats which cut across the eyes, and even for intense black eye make-up

applied to the whole socket, as in this illustration for a Vogue feature on bridal wear (fig.47), and in painting and illustration a preponderance of heavy, blasé eyelids. The self-portrait of Tamara de Lempicka of 1929, entitled 'auto-portrait' (fig.48) shows her at one with her machine, her automobile, her heavy lids and flat irises, painted to seem the same in colour and surface quality as the material of her hat, with tiny pupils directly challenging the spectator, cut across by the dark slashes of kohl and mascara: unworried, unimpressed, unconcerned – and barely human. This could be the painting of the industrialised consciousness or the blasé attitude. In this case, not only the skin or the

Fig.48 'Autoportrait' by Tamara de Lempicka, 1929

psychological outer layer has been hardened, baked, but the most liquid and vulnerable organ – the eye. I think that these visors, goggles, heavy lids and so on resonate within the fashion image not just because they assist the depiction of a new leisure pursuit but because they illustrate a new form of consciousness brought about by the conditions of modern existence, significantly shaped by awareness and experience of speed.

Fig.49 Ski-wear on cover of Harper's Bazaar 1946

Summary

This examination of the relationship between modernity, speed, cool and sunglasses demonstrates a number of points beneficial to my argument. I have shown the extent of the associations between sunglasses and modern speed, discovering that the transition from prosthetic which makes up for a physical defect to accessory which offers the body additional or even superhuman capability took place through the development and adaptation of goggles designed for high speed pursuits in the early part of the Twentieth century. I have discovered numerous connections between coolness and speed which help to demonstrate how sunglasses initially accrued the significance of cool in the US and Western Europe, and how this association remained semiotically available through the Twentieth century. The strongly

masculine associations with these pursuits and with certain aspects of the cool demeanour also reveal an element of androgyny to the look of many sunglasses when worn by women. Building on my analysis of the modern city, I have shown that speed also adds a series of new experiences, challenges, risks, and threats to the human mind and body in the modern world. These alter modern consciousness and perception to enable, encourage and require increased levels of effortlessness and detachment, key components of cool, which can be usefully aided by shading the eye, or symbolised by a shaded eye. Given the status of involvement in speed, by association sunglasses signify modernity, speed and high status.

I have also explored the relationship between speed and fashion, not only in terms of the literal usage of references to speed in fashion imagery but in terms of the fashion system itself as a dynamic force in the modern world which inherently requires increasing pace of change. If sunglasses signify speed and fashion frequently wishes to evoke a sense of speed, this provides additional justification for the developing relationship between sunglasses and fashion.

In my discussion of speed I have touched on the image of the warrior, and indeed the merging of human and machine but there is more to say. Many images of military figures, both real and fictional, feature sunglasses and expressionless or shaded eyes as do cyborgs, robots and aliens. The power of many of these images is worthy of exploration in its own right, demonstrating the extent to which the shaded eye has become a mainstream code for a heroic or tragic technologised mind and/or body within popular culture

Chapter seven

Modern Technology and the Eye – the warrior, the cyborg and the alien

To an extent the previous chapter has already demonstrated the ways in which modern technology produces an increasing need for eye protection and a context in which the shaded eye might have special cultural associations, since speed depends on technology. It has also substantially dealt with relevant theories building towards an understanding of how modern technology engenders 'cool' forms of consciousness. In this section I want to explore further the associations between sunglasses and modern technology through the Twentieth century; and in particular as a signifier of the potential cool power of the technologised mind and body or even of a cyborgian identity. To do this I will look at how modifications to the representation of the eye in depictions of figures with enhanced levels of engagement with latest or future technology (like military heroes, sci-fi figures, robots, cyborgs and aliens) are used to suggest certain super- or sub-human qualities which connect, as we may begin to expect, with elements of coolness.

The concept of the cyborg (attributed to Clyne and Klines, in Farren and Hutchison 2004:463) offers an additional way to understand the transformations I began to consider in the last chapter in terms of Schivelbusch's, Mentges' and Virilio's ideas. Although initially perhaps the cyborg model was based on the notion of a permanent fusion of organic and inorganic 'live' matter in one body, Donna Haraway in the 1980s (2003) and later others have broadened the concept to include the vast array of dependencies and interrelationships modern people have with technology. Grey says our lives are 'intimately shaped by machines' and that 'some of them we merge with almost unconsciously' (Grey in Farren and Hutchison 2004:463) Farren and Hutchison put forward the idea that in fact all clothing is technology which extends the function of the body for physical and expressive ends, but that it is so commonplace to us that we have forgotten. They argue that an 'understanding of garment as technology, and then of humans as cyborg due to their dependence upon clothes, leads to a reconsideration of all of the other artefacts and devices with which we are in close contact…. hair extensions, wigs, spectacles, and sunglasses, also [fit] easily into the category.' (Farren and Hutchison, 2004:464). So sunglasses can be considered as technology which gives the human subject

some level of cyborgian status. But I will demonstrate that unlike the many examples of clothes and accessories which allow us to forget this idea, sunglasses seem – in their arming of the windows to our very souls – to be especially suitable for the job of signifying this cyborg status in visual culture, and potential future transformations to identity.

Sunglasses as signifier of modern technology

As well as being for early forms of mechanised war and transport, protective goggles and visors were manufactured and worn by the workers in the harshest activities of the industrial revolution, those engaged with machines and technology at the sharp end. I mentioned William Ball of Coalbrookdale earlier in his protective d specs, and welders wore tinted goggles with mesh and velvet cushioning around the frame for added protection (held by the Optical Association archives). Although there is not the same level of connection between the goggles for activities like welding and the

Fig.50 Lee Miller modelling a welder's mask for <u>Vogue</u>, 1944

development of sunglasses, the potential cool of these industrial items is suggested by a highly memorable article in wartime <u>Vogue</u> which features an image of Lee Miller (see fig.50), the avant-garde model, muse and artist, with another young woman, each gazing blankly at the camera in industrial masks (in <u>Vogue</u>, 1944). The context for this image is evidently <u>Vogue</u>'s decision to document women in the war effort, but nevertheless it acknowledges the compelling power of the contrast between the hard, masculine visor and the delicate female skin. Their eyes, though masked, arrest the viewer's attention, instantly demonstrating that these women are doing something masculine, powerful and dangerous. Even though they appear to have been taken by surprise whilst in the midst of their activity, their gaze is uncomfortable for the viewer [8] where the reassurances of

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[8] Since Lee is known for having been a bohemian who drank, partied and had many lovers, the ugliness of this image easily connects with avant-garde sensibilities and even hint of unconventional sexual practices.

feminine softness, welcome and beauty have been replaced hard, cold, expressionless armour.

The technologised woman is a theme recurring in modern fashion, and in some ways the sunglasses of the sixties fulfil the promise of the 1920s' goggles, with renewed affluence and optimism for a high tech future. The pop movement, underpinned by developments in plastic technologies, undoubtedly affected this with its playful and expressive approach to youthful fashion and design, where futuristic novelties in eyewear define the distinctive looks of collections from Andre Couregges, Paco Rabanne and Pierre Cardin (see figs.51-53). One of the optical journals, The Optician, published a special edition about

Fig. 51 Slit-type shades by Courreges c.1967

Fig. 52 Visor-type shades by Cardin c.1965

sunglasses in 1967, which featured many styles similar to these designer looks, demonstrating that these images had widespread appeal. Strongly geometric and emphasised by frames sometimes in black and white, they return to and exaggerate the unavoidably odd appearance of early goggles, celebrating their inhumanity, looking like

Fig.53 Op art shades by Correna c.1967

bugs or aliens, or bits of plastic engineered as squares or tubes for some other utilitarian or industrial purpose. Model names for some of these glasses are similarly alien, for example 'the seez' and 'the oy', or they refer to new media – 'the TV screen' (fig 54). Many of the designs seem suggestive of different kinds of eyes – The Optician bemoans the

'unfortunate' influence of Courreges, with glasses which allow vision 'only through a narrow slit in a solid opaque "lens" ' (1967:13). These glasses are not designed for human eyes, they are designed to *replace* them, a fact which is remarked upon in another Optician article about advising selection of sunglasses – 'sunwear … cannot be fitted to enhance natures own props of attractiveness in the upper facial area; they must be introduced as a substitute' (Dowalisky, 1961:61). The look of something unnatural is desired, something which declares its newness; its alien-ness to human eyes and skin, announcing enthusiasm for new ways of being with its unified clean simplicity.
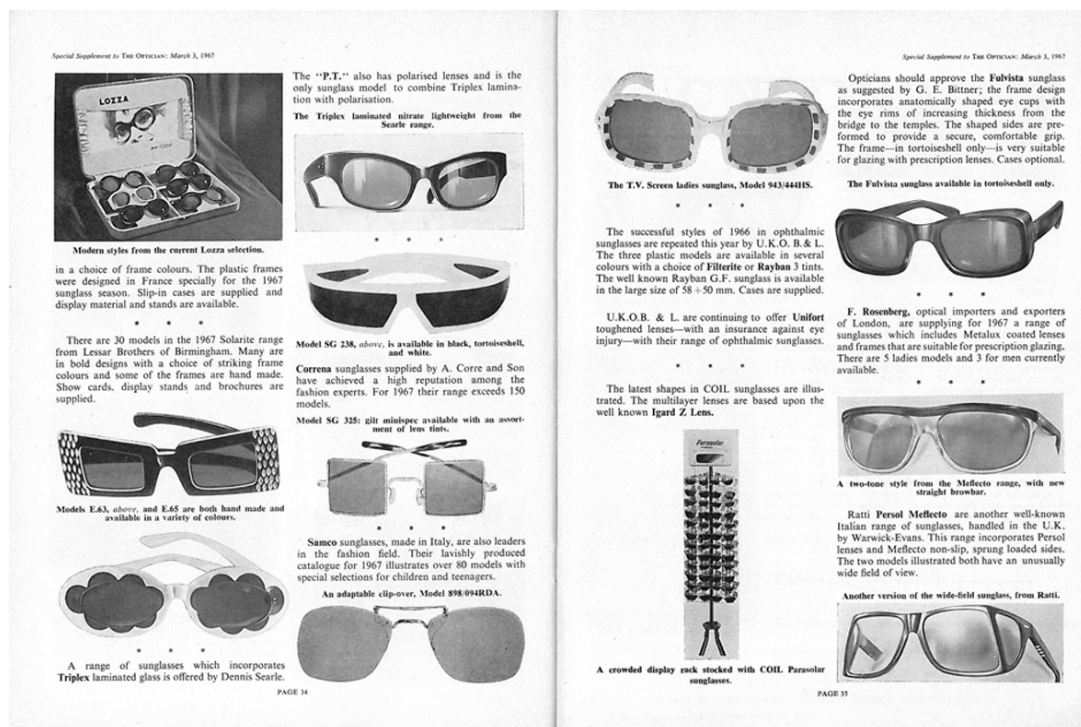

Fig. 54 Pop/tech in 1960s designs, Special sunglasses supplement to <u>The Optician</u>.1967

Sub- and super-human – the shaded eye and the cyborg body

Mid-century developments in popular science fiction would have been playful reference points for these designs, with illustrators and costume designers taking on the task of visualising what 'other life forms' might look like. Many mid-century representations of aliens suggest that what we should fear of that which 'came from outer space' is more advanced technologies, ray guns, x-ray vision and so on. Interestingly, images of robots, and aliens repeatedly emphasise expressionless eyes – sometimes by shading with dark lenses – a fly eye, or a visor strip or by making them empty like skeletal eye sockets, or by either giving no eyes at all or by giving a lid-less, brow-less bug- or fish- eye (see di Fate 1997). This implies emotional deadness or blankness and can therefore imply superior

rationality, like that of the machine, and perhaps somehow suggestive of the technologies enhancing their power.

These expressionless eyes may be interpreted in positive or negative ways, but their power is undeniable. They prevent the other from identifying the direction of the gaze, disconcerting them. Edwards says that an image of someone wearing sunglasses won't let the viewer rest their eyes, that 'their eyes shift, disconcerted' (1989:57-9). A blank face also invites projected fantasies. This image of a world war one fighter pilot (fig.55) is
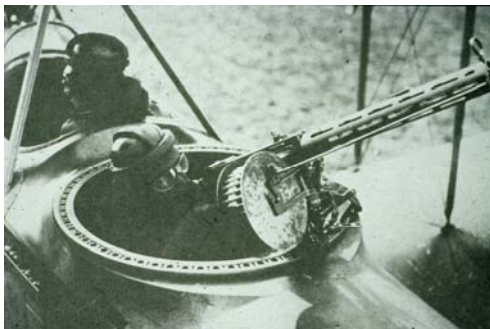

Fig.55 German fighter pilot taking aim, WW1

perhaps all the more powerful because we cannot see where he is looking – we cannot read the situation (making space for the fear of a steely accurate 'unhidden hidden gaze'), nor do we see something about the eyes that might allow us to appeal to their shared humanity. Indeed, Stearns history of cool in America discussed in the chapter on cool theory, suggests that the power of aggression fuelled by 'righteous indignation' which may have featured in many ideal descriptions and images of great warriors of the past, is replaced by the power of the invulnerability of the warrior untroubled by emotions. For *blood-thirsty*, read *cold-blooded.*

In place of regalia which draws attention, which openly displays confidence and aggression, from war paint to regimental colours, Twentieth century warriors rely on stealth, camouflage, and on the collective shock produced by 'not seeing it coming'(Schivelbusch, 1986). Virilio says that the modern battlefield 'is first a field of perception. Seeing them coming and knowing they are going to attack are determining elements of survival' (in Redhead, 2004), placing 'seeing without being seen' at the centre of military power.

Necessarily the equipment used to protect warriors from their technology also disguises their humanity, preventing any potential weakness being betrayed by fearful delicate eyes, and enhancing the perception of the power of up to date technology. Evidently, the status and glamour of being a notorious war hero intersects with other associations, particularly evident in countries where sunglasses may operate as a signifier of western modernity and where sunglasses will be an expensive luxury beyond the means of most ordinary people, e.g. for images of Qadaffi, where the dictatorial status merges with military might (figs.56-57).

Fig.56 Qadaffi portrait   Fig.57 Qadaffi in negotiations, 2009

In the military context, other signifiers of weapons and uniform work to suggest that the wearer of sunglasses is not narcissistically in their own world behind the shades, but has potentially aggressive intent towards others, which is not openly being revealed; in accordance with the 'unhidden hidden gaze' in Carter and Michael's taxonomy, and as visualised in the film Cool Hand Luke (1967). In fact, the key character who habitually

Fig.58 'The man with no eyes'

wears mirrored sunglasses to enhance his power is nicknamed 'the man with no eyes' (see fig.58). This makes the gesture of *removing* sunglasses for an encounter analogous to the handshake of long ago, where the open hand extended demonstrated lack of ill intent. This is evidenced by a number of incidents in film, where they are removed for more 'human' or 'vulnerable' moments, and in a TV government recruitment ad for the British Army c. 2005, sensitivity and diplomacy is suggested by the military officer's decision to remove his sunglasses in the midst of an escalating argument with a middle eastern local.

In spite of the discreditation of the theory of 'extramission' (light emanating from human eyes), the idea of the gaze as a weapon in its own right has also gained momentum in the Twentieth century, building on the Medusa myth with hi-tech laser eyes belonging to robots from outer space in the 1950s and to the disembodied 'eyes' of the drones, unpiloted planes equipped to scope out territory. Virilio highlights the power of this robot eye with an anecdote about the end of the gulf war:

> ...forty Iraqi soldiers isolated in the desert saw a drone arrive that was circling around them. They left their trenches and surrendered to the drone...Surrendering to a flying camera is a terrifying image.... they knew the highly sophisticated artillery of the Americans would blow them up. With the eye flying over them, they had no choice but to surrender to this eye (in Redhead, 2004:69)

Though this is extreme, it poetically underlines the fear of the power of the eye enhanced by technology which is an eye almost always stripped of its function as a gauge of emotional response. It sees but it does not care, neither does it have the physical vulnerability of the human eye.

In popular films from the end of the Twentieth century like <u>Bladerunner</u>, <u>Terminator</u>, and <u>The Matrix trilogy</u>, compelling visions of a cyborgian future illustrate the power of the shaded eye to signify particular kinds of human relationship with technology and the cool demeanour it requires and enables – exaggerated in the context of these tales where the very nature of humanity is at stake.

In <u>Bladerunner</u> (dir. Ridley Scott 1982), the central problem of the film is the control of technology and its effects on human identity. Robots have become so sophisticated that they are only distinguishable from human beings via the 'Voigt-Kampff empathy test', which monitors emotional reaction to hypothetical scenarios and questions by focusing on and enlarging the image of the respondent's eye (which calls to mind the magnifying lenses used in courts in the Seventeenth Century, (Heyl, 2001:131) to more easily discern the guilt or innocence of the accused). This test is critical because these 'replicants' are illegal on earth, and a small group of them have become organised to rebel against their fate only to live for a few years. They want to force their inventor (Tyrell) to extend their life. For this reason they must be 'retired' by the hired killer, the 'bladerunner', who we assume to be human, but who has to exhibit unflinching control of emotion in order to be willing to kill beings so very like humans in every other respect. Indeed, the reason the small group are rebelling is because they have begun to develop emotions, two of them are in love. Deckard, the bladerunner (played by Harrison Ford), himself becomes attracted to Tyrell's experiment, a replicant who has been invested with memories and belief of herself as human.

The film is peppered with visual devices which draw attention to the eye and reveal the unreliability of the image as an index of reality or truth. <u>Bladerunner</u>'s cityscape mobilises the hazy, illusory confusion of lux-like light (Jay, 1993), flickering from screen to screen. As Rushing notes 'veils, mirrors, rain, smog, smoke, and neon lights define a mise-en-scene that clouds human vision and distorts sight' (1995:152). Several authors focus on the film's proliferation of eye and vision motifs describing it variously as suggestive of paranoia, unstable identity or soullessness (ibid).

Emotion may emerge as the defining feature of humanity, and the eye's movement its visible sign, but this is the film that made Harrison Ford famous, his burned out,

'sushi/cold fish' masculinity, his blasé competence, his understanding of the technology, his suitedness to the postmodern dystopia the film offers as mise-en-scene - make him desirably cool. Rushing describes him as 'the films central image of human mechanisation' (1995:151). Bladerunner plays with the idea that perhaps the replicants *are* 'more human than human' as the Tyrell corporation slogan goes, since as Rushing notes 'no human cares about any other human, [but] the replicants care passionately for one another' (ibid:150) For her, the humans in the film represent 'mechanised somnambulism' (ibid). Perhaps there is some idea here that the old human race has become too cool for its own good, and these fresh beings who value life deserve it more than we do. What interests me though is the way the appeal of these characters is achieved through their emotionlessness. Rachel, the experiment so like a human Deckard falls in love with her, embodies the cool demeanour of the 1940s film noir Hollywood actress. Heavy lids, a heavy fringe, veils, expressionless face, often shaded. Pris, a rebel replicant, has an androgynous appearance made memorable by the scene where she blacks out her eyes

Fig.59 'Pris', rebel replicant from Bladerunner

with make-up, creating the illusion of a mask, not unlike the fashion of the 1920s described in the chapter on speed (fig.59). Unsmiling and combative, whatever 'meaning' the narrative may give to her character, the *image* functions as desirable – to be further along the path with technology creates the more impressive, desirable creature.

A key example of such a representation of cyborg warrior power is The Terminator (dir.Cameron, 1984) and Terminator 2: Judgement Day (dir. Cameron, 1991). Emotionlessness is the Terminator's defining feature, shown as especially useful in combat. In addition, Arnold Schwarzenegger as the Terminator is one of the most

enduring cinematic images of sunglasses, and they signify in the film in some interesting ways for my discussion as we shall see.

As Balsamo says, <u>Terminator</u> represents 'the extreme of technological rationality' (2000:150), and that this is aligned with specifically masculine cultural associations of rationality, technology and science (ibid). Nothing deflects the terminator from his purpose and this gives him an advantage – never distracted or worried, his pursuit is relentless. He has no fear of killing the wrong person – he kills all the women with the name of his target in the area. Fatigue and frustration are meaningless to him, as are all cultural boundaries; when he cannot succeed in a specific scenario he utters the iconic deadpan line 'I'll be back', going off to retool. He is *exaggeratedly* casual since he has no human *fear* of death and he *objectively* knows he has superior strength. The film showcases the power of this technological rationality, offering it as the key to invincibility. Part of this is demonstrated in relation to his own mechanical body – in the original film his fleshy 'eye' becomes badly damaged, and he coolly takes out a knife and removes his own eye ball, revealing the evil red mechanical glow which powers it (fig.60).

Fig.60 The terminator's inhuman eye   Fig.61 More or less human

He literally 'does not batter an eye lid' at this necessity. But he does, significantly, make good his disguise using a pair of sunglasses, which thereafter become the film's trademark, disguising his robot identity and doing a better job of expressing his emotionless mechanised power for cinema viewers (fig.61).

In the film poster, sunglasses are used in conjunction with leather jacket and gun – all three rendered hard, shiny and reflective, drawing on their tough, technologised, military connotations. Facial expression is set hard, and laser beams emanate from behind in rays, also suggestive of technology and heroism. Future moments when the Terminator begins his mission or returns with renewed purpose following injury are often marked by the final putting on of sunglasses, signifying his readiness for battle.

Cameron's fairly low budget film was a surprise hit, and in the sequel the Terminator has switched allegiance to the human race, so is no longer to be feared by the human viewers of the film. That this character can be so easily redrawn as a saviour/hero supports my points that these apparently inhuman, emotionless cyborgian traits could be seen as desirable, powerful, something to aspire to. This demonstrates the power of cool but also its close relationship with superior affinity with newest technologies. In Terminator 2, (fig.62) the familiar dark glasses are appropriated within ten minutes, along with motorcycle, boots and leather jacket, drawing a parallel between the cool of the hi-tech robot and the cool of the outlaw motorcycle gang, and satisfying our desire for 'more of the same'.

Fig.62 From villain to hero, Terminator 2.

In The Matrix (dir.Wachowski Brothers, 1999), sunglasses are used very literally as a code signifying knowledge of the computer system which simulates reality (see figs.63&64). The film has to distinguish between the 'real world' and 'the matrix'; between 'rebels' and 'agents' within the matrix. The matrix is shown to be a comforting illusion, where nothing is real, the rebels choosing instead to be 'reborn' into the mess of the post-holocaust world, choosing to experience real life with the hope of defeating the cyborg powers by learning to 'see through' the illusion and to control the matrix itself. When the rebels go in to the matrix they all always wear small black oval sunglasses with wire frames, but when they are out their eyes are naked. The agents (those seeking to find and kill the rebels within the matrix) wear smoked lenses. This easily identifies the 'goodies' from the 'baddies' and it works with connotations of FBI uniform for the agents and military/subcultural cool for the rebels.

The central character Neo only receives his sunglasses when he has learned to *ignore* the apparent threats of the simulated world around him and is *ready* to go into combat and ultimately, control the matrix displaying apparently super-human capabilities of defying both gravity and time. The film itself uses image-making techniques which allow the illusion of a different kind of sight, much copied afterwards, The matrix allows us to see a still image from the action from a point of view which moves 360 degrees around the object - to see more and to give the illusion of being able to slow down the more spectacular sights. The way the matrix uses slow motion demonstrates the heroic quality of control over both technology and speed - in the end Neo moves so fast he is able to catch the agent's bullets effortlessly, but we mortal viewers have to be shown this slowly

to enable us to perceive what is going on, which further enhances the apparent lack of effort.

Fig.63 Rebel Neo in control, from The Matrix

Fig.64 The Agent falters, The Matrix

Although all these films offer dystopian visions of the future and their narratives demonstrate the challenge of cyborg power to human identity, the appeal of the central characters is based in their control over emotion and their competence with these threatening technologies, not in their opposition to them. As I have shown, sunglasses and other eye-shading techniques are consistently used to signify the cyborg element. Balsamo says that the cyborg '...is a hybrid, but the specific traits which mark its human-ness and machine-ness vary widely... [functioning]not only as markers of the 'essences' of the dual natures of the hybrid but also as signs of the inviolable opposition between human and machine (2000:149). Sunglasses in the Terminator and in K-Pax (fig.65)

Fig.65

ambiguously suggest the cyborg status of the central characters. Within the film, they function as a normal part of human dress. But in the genre, the sunglasses signify the merging of human and inhuman matter. Sterling felt that mirrored shades are so emblematic of cyberpunk fiction that he named his anthology after them (1988)[9]. I would argue that in fact the eye is almost always the prime site for demonstration of cyborg identity in science fiction, with sunglasses/shaded lenses emerging as the dominant signifier. They may warn of fragmentation, confusion and mal-functioning complexity in the broken and twisted form of the cyberpunk imagery of the end of the Twentieth century, or they may demonstrate

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[9] Mirrored shades are a newer technology (referenced in US journal Popular Mechanic, 1949) and they seem to suggest superficiality - unlike dark shades which might invite speculation into the abyss, these simply reflect the gaze of the viewer. This also makes them especially useful for advertising imagery because they can be used to depict a landscape or alternative reality within a close up, offering information about character, setting and the nature of the drama but retaining visual impact.

salvation as in The Matrix. But in many, many examples, introducing engineered, inorganic matter or shading into the eye area functions to draw our attention to the technologically-altered state of human-being.

Many, many of these examples also trade on the shininess I discussed in the section on modernity and the eye, showing the gleam of a hard polished surface in artificial or blinding natural light as a signifier of a high tech future. Dark glasses reflect this light, making them excellently economic graphic devices, capable of communicating many ideas about the setting and genre of the film whilst simultaneously enhancing the appearance of the hero(ine).

The form of hi-tech glasses took on a more sinewy, Geiger-esque aesthetic in the 1990s which suggests the mutation of the object into something skeletal if not fleshy (fig.66). As technology merges with the organic increasingly seamlessly, we might expect the need for glasses and sunglasses to recede, and their poetic currency as a signifier of technology to become limited to the signifying of Twentieth century technologies. However the shaded eye motif continues, with Minority Report (dir. Spielberg, 2002) advertised with an

Fig.66 Oakley organic, Geiger-esque frames,c.2000   Fig.67 Pixelation as shading, 2002

image of the hero with bandaged eyes, one of which is visibly pixelated and perceptible through the bandage (fig.67). This is partly because truly integrated technology is too *invisible* to signify itself - as is needed in representation where technology is to be celebrated or discussed. And since the real world still just about exists, new technologies are being incorporated into sunglasses to offer better protection – some Oakley models for the military boast bullet proof lenses at ten metres (Oakley, 2009:online) – which perpetuates their ability to signify at least military power. Furthermore, because sunglasses are a familiar prosthetic, they are suitable for adaptation of a number of new wearable digital technologies, for example at the time of writing there are several models

emerging (see figs.68-70) which incorporate tiny video cameras, mp3 players, phones, and 'heads up' display (which projects information from the internet directly onto the retina).

Fig.68 'Cyborg chic' heads up display c.2000

Fig.69 Solar glasses to power gadgets, the upturned gaze of one who can 'see the future', reflecting the white light of technology

Fig.70 'Informance' by Rodenstock, heads up display in development for sports 2009

Oakley's design and marketing even of standard sunglasses demonstrates clearly sunglasses' continued ability to function as a symbol of access to superior technology and to appeal to the heroic masculinity associated with this, as is evident in this ad (fig.71) from Blueprint (2002), which even refuses the name of sunglasses (three times). It shows the frames hovering in mid air, literally defying gravity (another common visual metaphor for hi-tech modernity) and rewards the committed reader of the light, pale copy with reassurances of '23 precision-engineered components' constructed from 'the lightweight titanium alloys of fighter jets and nuclear submarines', which have been subject to 'half a million watts of metal-vaporising electricity', 'bombarded by x-rays' and so on. The implications in this ad are remarkably similar to those made by the ads from the optical journals of just under one hundred years ago – hyperbolic references to the technologies of war, sport and speed. The idea of progress is unquestioned – in fact in the Oakley website the idea of the brand pushing design technology to the limit is equated with the

consumer pushing themselves; 'Never stop exploring. If you are not constantly pushing yourself, you're leading a numb existence'(d.a. 08/08). This is apparently a

Fig.71 Refusal of the 'feminine'/'leisure' associations of sunglasses via technology: ad for Oakleys in Blueprint, 2002.

quotation from one of Oakley's sponsored athletes, aligning the pursuit of masculine identity with the modern challenge to 'keep up' with technology.

Summary

In this chapter I have focused in showing how through the Twentieth century sunglasses have been used to signify futuristic technology, how they have been a vehicle for technical experimentation, and a token of desire for new, modern forms of consciousness characterised by the invulnerability and rationality of the machine. I have also shown how pervasive the use of the shaded eye has been within science fiction as a signifier of cyborg identity, of the challenge to the human soul presented by technology's increasing dominance. The resulting images of superbly-equipped warriors, invincible robots, and transcendence, offer an impressive view of the power of modern technology and the enhancements it may offer human beings. The images of tragic mutants, and deadened human psyches also feature shaded eyes. Perhaps the shaded eye can in these context either signify protectedness and readiness, or alienation, refusal to engage, partial or damaged emotions, either too much or not enough knowledge.

This begins to account for the longevity of sunglasses appeal through the Twentieth century, signifying (as they evidently do) an advanced level of engagement with modern technology and the power and status that brings, from being both up to date and fearless of the new risks it presents. It also underpins the strongly masculine set of associations for sunglasses I identified in the section on speed, which dovetails neatly on to the changes in ideal emotional behaviour through the Twentieth century associated with coolness.

Considering all I have done so far in terms of the modern city, speed and technology, it becomes clear that the modern eye is over stimulated on all sides, with little time to perceive. The pressure on the eye is enormous, as is the growing perception of risk more generally. Not only does the eye see – it is also increasingly seen and aware of being seen and judged – by the anonymous eyes of anonymous crowds and mechanised vision (whether military drone or high street CCTV) interrogating, questioning it, placing it as a target. What modernity has also brought with it is a proliferation of light – the white heat of technology, the illumination of artificial lighting, reflective surfaces and architecture designed to maximise all kinds of light, not to mention the flashbulbs of paparazzi and studio lights of Hollywood; nor the seeking of sun in pursuit of a tanned body. In the next section, I will consider the idea of modern life 'in the light'.

Chapter eight

Life in the Light –
the look of success and 'insider' cool

In this chapter I will begin to examine the context for the development of sunglasses in their contemporary form as a widely available fashion accessory, from the popularity of sunbathing which emerged in Europe and the US during the twenties and thirties, to the associations with celebrity, glamour and aspiration. I will explore the idea of 'life in the light' as suggestive of both status and success within modernity, taking reference from Baudelaire's poem 'The Eyes of the Poor' (1964, *1869*) and Berman's appraisal of it (1982). I will plot its progress from the glittering cafes of Nineteenth century Paris, and beyond, into the arena of international sun-seeking, media representation, luxury and indulgence enjoyed by modern elites like the avant-garde of the Riviera set of the 1920s who established the fashion for the tan, the sun-drenched fashion photography of the 1930s, and the gods and goddesses of Hollywood who populated the Via Veneto in Rome in the 1950s as the first major locus of paparazzi activity. The growing association between celebrity and sunglasses even beyond the context of leisure will also be explored, amidst the expansion of celebrity images, in particular through the growth of paparazzi photography, and to the point where any aspiring celebrity knows that sunglasses are an essential tool of the trade. This chapter will also consider the extent to which any or all of these glamorous images might relate to the conceptions of cool so far discussed. But firstly, I want to draw out some links between proliferating light and the modern world, demonstrating how light might itself potentially function as a metaphor for modernity.

City of light

Following on from Benjamin's idea of Paris as the 'city of mirrors' cited in chapter five, is the notion of the modern city as a place of light, both natural and artificial. Light enables vision, but it can also dazzle, as implied by some of the comments of writers and artists trying to depict the experience of the modern city. Developments in modern cities increased the amount of light its inhabitants and visitors were exposed to through architectural design, clearance projects, plate glass, mirror and lighting technology (see fig 72).

The clearance of the boulevards in Paris in the mid-to-late Nineteenth century had a variety of political motives behind it but is nevertheless a key example of modern attempts to offer city dwellers civic spectacle, an impressive view. Haussman's project 'blasted' a 'vast network' of boulevards through the dense, dark heart of Paris (Berman, 1982:150).

Fig.72 'Sur le Boulevard' urban glitter c.1895

Lighting the industrial city would conquer its problematic darkness, dirt, chaos, ill-health and squalor. This project 'wrecked hundreds of buildings, displaced uncounted thousands of people... but it opened up the whole of the city, for the first time in history, to all its inhabitants', where 'great sweeping vistas were designed with monuments at the boulevards ends, so that each walk led to a dramatic climax' (ibid:151). Berman describes the resulting cityscape as a 'uniquely enticing spectacle, a visual and sensual feast' (ibid). A cat may look at a king, and in the new boulevards of Paris, spectacle was free for the first time, democratically offering everyone the kind of symmetry and classical perspective once available only to the inhabitants of a grand residence. And eventually this model was copied throughout the globe as the blueprint for modern urban space (ibid).

An artificial sun, artificial stars

Schivelbusch's fascinating study of the invention and application of artificial light, Disenchanted Night (1983) is full of significance. He shows how street lighting in cities, which underwent a series of developments during the Nineteenth century further advanced the scope, scale and quality of what may be seen (Schivelbusch, 1983) amidst plans and ambitions to obliterate night altogether with artificial suns, the most resonant of which, for me, is the unsuccessful bid for the project which is now the Eiffel tower, the 'tour du soleil' (the sun tower). Technically the proposal was flawed, but as Schivelbusch suggests, it was a recurring utopian notion, that the industrial age could rid us of night, and all its inefficiency and unknown quantities.

Other uses of artificial light were less about making things visible than about obscuring and romanticising them, like the illuminations of the baroque period. The ability to 'mass

produce' light opened the door to this kind of night-time festivity for successive social strata, laying the foundations for contemporary urban 'nightlife' (1983:138). Schivelbusch describes the allure of night time pleasure as being founded in

> ...the qualities and states that, since time immemorial, [which]had been associated with night as the antithesis of day: at night, regions that remained closed to people during the day were open to them; night-time brought one into a more direct relationship with the cosmos; it dissolved the distinctions between reality and fantasy. When the night was magically lit up during a festive illumination the removal from reality – almost as though through the effects of a drug – was complete. The 'scene of a second, symbolic life'... was created (ibid:138)

Access to this kind of light was of course associated with social status, since only the aristocracy could afford this kind of luxury in the baroque period. Equally, only those who either do not need to work, or who are able to pay for artificial light can afford to stay up late. To be up for pleasure after dark is a sign of the modern age. So in two senses this light offers a transformation – in the sense of that second symbolic life, where cosmic relations and fantasy are set free, and in a much blunter sense that to be up late, gives you a taste or veneer of superiority, through emulating the aristocracy or the leisure class.

For the glamour

The design of galleried department stores based on the panoptican design – and of course, the later shopping centres and malls, gave interiors too a sense of giant spectacle, reflected of course in the structures and interiors of the 'world's fairs', the Crystal Palace of 1851, for example, in Britain (Hvattum and Hermansen, 2004) The capacity to mass produce glass and other reflective substances, real or fake, enhanced the explosion of light and glitter. Early shop windows had become display windows, with increasing areas of glass - around 1850 saw the first floor to ceiling glass store fronts - providing the streets with a theatrical sense of fantasy, encouraging browsing and beginning to break down the architectural barriers between interior and outside (Schivelbusch, 1983). In these urban forms we can also see attempts to make the city and the consumer the centre of the universe, by lighting everything for the consumer, and arranging the spectacle around him (or her), a sensation well expressed by the experience of travelling on an escalator in the centre of a department store or mall, even today. Equally the power of mirror and glass inside the shop had already been recognised, in the early-to-mid Eighteenth century (ibid:146) As Schivelbusch notes, the 'uninterrupted transparent,

sparkling surface acted rather like glass on a framed painting' (p146) and quotes Hirth saying at the turn of the century, 'glass makes [paintings] appear better than they really are… confers on good copies an element of deception. The plate glass of shop windows, too, has an improving effect on some goods' (in Schivelbusch 1983:147).

Kracauer was particularly sensitive to the power of glitter (1995), showing how it functions as a metaphor for a transformed life, a bettered identity, speaking of the 'comforting influence, that the flood of light exercises not merely on the desire to purchase but also on the personnel… sufficiently bewitched by it that it can drive away the pain of the small, unlit apartment. The light deceives more than it enlightens' (in Frisby, 1985:169). Most significantly he speaks of shop workers' 'aspiration to higher strata' which ,as Frisby says, is 'not for its content *but for the glamour*' (ibid, my emphasis).

Marshall Berman's retrospective account of modernity <u>All that is Solid Melts into Air</u> also highlights the significance of light and glamour, saying that in the writing of Baudelaire 'modern life appears as a great fashion show, a system of *dazzling* appearances, *brilliant* facades, *glittering* triumphs of decoration and design' (1982:136 my emphasis). He focuses on a passage where Baudelaire describes a café on one of the new boulevards, whose '…most splendid quality was a flood of new light' (ibid); '…The café was dazzling. Even the gas burned with an ardour of a debut; with all its power it lit the blinding whiteness of the walls, the expanse of mirrors, the gold cornices and mouldings' (Baudelaire in Berman, 1982:149). Berman even uses the idea of access to light as a driver for aspiration, to conclude his description of the collision of rich and poor in Baudelaire's tale 'The Eyes of the Poor' (1964), he says 'they too want *a place in the light*' (ibid:153, my emphasis).

Harsh light
Schivelbusch does make a distinction between the pleasure and persuasion of commercial lighting and the lighting of the state, which suggests surveillance and the keeping of order (1983: 134; also Boyd-White in Hvattum, 2004:49). Some of the responses to the idea of perpetual light from such structures as the sun tower show fear of modernity's attempts to know and control, which demonstrate how the presence of lighting might add to the *threats* of modernity to the individual. Schivelbusch quotes Michelet in 1845, describing large, gas-lit factory buildings, saying 'here, there are no shadowy corners in which imagination can indulge its dreams…. Incessantly and mercilessly, it brings us back to reality.' (ibid:134), and refers to the 'glaring and shadowless light' permeating the dystopian visions of H.G.Wells as evidence of the harsh, industrial, unnatural quality of

mass produced artificial light, demanding 'too much' from the human organism. Even the pleasurable commercial spectacles would contribute to Simmel's idea of over stimulated senses, possibly even without taking into account the stimulation of the goods and messages illuminated.

Lux and lumen

These last points, taken together with Kracauer's point above that these lights 'deceive more than enlighten'(op.cit) highlight the multidimensional and contradictory possibilities for the 'meaning' of light. Martin Jay's work <u>Downcast Eyes</u> locates these contradictory meanings in Greek thinking. To understand the appeal of sunglasses as protection from and celebration of immersion in light, it is helpful to grasp the ways links between sight, light and knowledge have been characterised historically. According to the '...Greek optics model, the straight lines of reflection and refraction where the essence of illumination was perfect linear form; [was] known as *lumen*. Another model was more about the experience of human sight, emphasising colour, shadow and movement – known as *lux*. Both speculation (the eye of the mind) and observation (real experience of sight) could be seen in both ways. The eye of the mind could either function by virtue of 'irrational, ecstatic bedazzlement by the blinding light of God' like a seer, or by unclouded purity of perception like a rational scientist who refuses to be fooled by appearances or emotions. Similarly, observation could be pure sensation and emotion or it could be given primacy as Cartesian perception of that which actually exists (1993:30). Jay says these conceptualisations of vision are the foundation of modern thinking about sight and knowledge. The use of light to seduce and distract in commercial and ideological displays fits well with the idea of *magical lux*, whereas the use of light to reveal and to survey, and perhaps to control, fits neatly with the objective purity of *scientific lumen*.

Many of the examples I've given so far are developments of the state and of commerce, but it is well known that light, vista and clearance were also highly valued in avant-garde architecture. Much of this kind of use of light seems to celebrate objective clarity - a house or habitation by le Corbusier perhaps, who recommended that a person 'demand a bathroom looking south, one wall to be entirely glazed, opening if possible to a balcony for sun baths' (in Sparke, 1995:116). Amongst modernist architects there was also a passion for white, light-maximising paint; le Corbusier declared that 'every citizen is required to replace his hangings...

Fig.73 Le Corbusier's 'city of tomorrow'c.1925

with a plain coat of white ripolin. His home is made clean. There are no more dirty, dark corners. Everything is shown as it is' (again in Sparke, 1995:117). To see is to know, and similarly to Haussmann's boulevards, le Corbusier and others like him blasted the walls and dark (or cosy) corners from the home and the city (see le Corbusier's 'city of tomorrow, fig.72). The motivations of Haussmann and le Corbusier may have been vastly different, but the solutions bear striking resemblance, as do even some of the more lux-like modes in modern expressionist architecture where light is blurred and refracted (e.g. the 1914 Glashaus of German architect Bruno Taut) to offer a more spiritual gloss on the realities of modern times. [10]

My aim here is to demonstrate how closely associated with modernity an excess of light is, how it is both problem and solution. All this newly created light further emphasises appearance, encouraging greater scrutiny but offering transformation too. Control by the state and by the capitalist providers of such light and spectacle creates a modern form of pressure, and the intense and disorientating experience of visual chaos is exacerbated by proliferation of light. Modern 'belief' in the power of light suggests it promotes health, morality, suggesting scientific knowledge and objectivity (Jay, 1993:30). Indeed light works as a *metaphor* for modernity, repeatedly used by Berman and concretely stated by Schivelbusch: 'gaslight, like the railway, reigned supreme as a symbol of human and industrial progress' (1983:152). What seems clear, is that to be immersed in light, under pressure or for pleasure or both, is a profoundly modern experience.

In relation to sunglasses then, all this light in the modern city produces a potential literal need for eye protection - there may be/have been a real requirement for sunglasses in modern cities, indoors and out – eventually they do get worn in clubs, restaurants, casinos. Without doubt, the conditions I've described so far have contributed significantly to the growth of fashion culture, of which sunglasses are undoubtedly a part. But perhaps more importantly, the connection between modernity and light may have helped to make sunglasses *poetically* expressive of modernity and exposure to its intense and even unforgiving glamour, or enabling its transformative effects. Not only are they 'useful' as a shade from light, they also reflect it, like so many of the products which embrace the modern age - It is possible to chart a trajectory of an aesthetic of gloss in modern culture – one which is occasionally interrupted by a retrospective fashion for matt, but nonetheless - the shine keeps getting shinier. Glass display cases in boutiques and department stores, mirrors, shiny metal trims, metallic ink/paint finishes, electric lighting, neon lighting, blonde hair, brilliantine, oiled, hairless skin, nail varnish, lip gloss,

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[10] Jay says that Cartesian perspectivalism is a neat way of imagining modern conceptions of sight. This suggests a confidence in the objectivity of knowledge afforded by sight, guided as it is by the authority of geometry.

screens, glossy paper, tooth whitening, use of the 'twinkle' in graphic design which gives those teeth the illusion of polish, or that bicycle the shiny new feel...airbrushing, filters in Photoshop... the list goes on. Sunglass lenses promise the human face the same smooth reflective quality as a mirror, shop window, windscreen or skyscraper. Here I am, they say, *immersed in modern light*.

Twentieth century light

Fig.74 Mary Sykes in Puerto Rico by Louise Dahl-Wolfe, 1938

What is thought to be the very first fashion photograph to feature sunglasses is an image of model Mary Sykes in Puerto Rico, photographed by Louise Dahl-Wolfe in 1938 for American fashion magazine Harpers Bazaar (fig.74). This arresting image has been discussed by some other authors as significant in the histories of fashion and photography (Arnold 2002 and Edwards 1989), and it indicates the extent to which sunglasses may have

related to notions of 'cool' in their pre-war history, and it will also provide a framework for considering many aspects of the broader cultural context for sunglasses' emergence in the Twentieth century as the ideal signifier of 'life in the light'; for example, the development of the culture of sunbathing and the fashion for the tan, holidays in the sun, the increasing opportunities for experimentation with the looks and styles of other classes and cultures, as well as the promise of achieved status independent of the determinants of class, led by the democratic promises of American ideology and culture.

Dahl-Wolfe's model sits wearing a simple cotton dress and headscarf in the near midday sun, casually fanning herself with a postcard. As contemporary viewers, we note the convention of attractive model in exotic location, the clear depiction of the clothes. Unlike Munkacsi, whose work was featured in my section on speed, Dahl-Wolfe always maintained that her work was not art, it was for showing and selling clothes and therefore, should offer a clear image of the garments (Dahl-Wolfe,1984). Rebecca Arnold's study of Dahl-Wolfe shows how her work may be seen as representing an idealised, modern American female identity whose appeal lay in democratised, accessible style, breaking free from the cultural dominance of Europe. She states that Louise Dahl-Wolfe's images 'provided scenes of warmth and light that welcomed the viewer in' (2002:59) and that they were 'never intimidating' in terms of form nor content (2002:46) These interpretations do not appear to support the idea that sunglasses emerged in fashion images with the connotations of cool they were evidently to develop later – in my discussion of theories and definitions of cool earlier, and my developing ideas about modernity and speed, terms like relaxation, warmth, welcome and accessibility are nowhere to be seen. So could this image have been cool – does it bear any connection with ideas I have encountered so far? Arnold's analysis would seem to suggest not.

Relaxation, informality and cool

It is true that she is at leisure, she is relaxed. Her pose is spontaneous and casual, skirt ruffled by having rested one foot on the other knee; this is not an image of someone flustered or overly concerned by decorum. There is an important literal sense in which her appearance of being relaxed is afforded by the sunglasses and the protection they offer from the discomforts of heat and glare in the South American midday sun. The sensual experience of 'cooling' offered by sunglasses was reported in the same year by a reviewer of what was then the new 'Ray-Ban' sunglass (Dickinson,1938:417-8). The reviewer (who describes himself as initially sceptical about the need for sunglasses) states that behind Ray-Ban glass 'one experiences a coolness only to be described as delicious' (ibid:417). Significantly he concludes the article by saying they are 'cool as an income tax demand note' (ibid:418), which suggests that there was already a sense of something

more to sunglasses coolness than merely the physical affordance of lowering the temperature of the eyes.

Edwards, who identifies this as the first fashion photograph to feature sunglasses suggests that sunglasses were used by Dahl-Wolfe to give the models a more 'informal' or human air (1989:57). This is contradictory to the connotations of the prosthetic and its 'inhuman' connotations as explored in the section on speed and technology in relation to the image of the cyborg. However it is possible that what Edwards means is that in the context of the conventions of fashion photography (and indeed, portraiture) of the time, perhaps sunglasses, with their residual connotations of the prosthetic, had been a 'rogue element' which might previously have been tidied away from the composition. Sunglasses had been featured in fashion magazines before just this – one year previously some fashion/society reportage in the same magazine featured two princesses on the beach in what they were still referring to as 'goggles', but this was presented as a 'snap', as opposed to fashion editorial. Hence allowing sunglasses into Dahl-Wolfe's shot may well have seemed more 'real', less 'staged', less bothered by convention – fitting in with the mood of avant-garde photography at the time.

Harper's Bazaar, where Dahl-Wolfe's images were published, had a strong association with the modernist avant-garde (Grundberg, 1989). Its reputation was at a high point in this period, ahead of Vogue in its pursuit of the modern under the art direction of Alexey Brodovitch, who Grundberg says favoured a 'radical and controversial' style (1989: p119). Dahl-Wolfe and, possibly the most radically modernist fashion photographer of the period, Munkacsi, were used by Brodovitch consistently. Techniques favoured by modernist photographers as somehow more 'natural', 'real' were employed by Dahl-Wolfe; for example, using only available light, and snapshot techniques (Grundberg, 1989; Squires, 1980). So any sense in which we view the presence of sunglasses as part of informal or even 'democratic' meanings has to be contextualised within the challenge to the existing aesthetic order presented by the avant-garde. This problematises Arnold's interpretation of these images as simply 'welcoming'.

Furthermore, to be relaxed more generally, is not necessarily to be welcoming. The process of 'informalisation' in fashion I described above has to be traced back a little further to the European avant-garde who visited the French Riviera in the late 1920s, including Picasso, Chanel, and some notable Americans, for example the Scott-Fitzgeralds (Turner and Ash, 1975). This group initiated the shocking fashion for the tan, which Dahl-Wolfe's work often (very beautifully) depicts from the late thirties when she became a fashion photographer until well into the 1950s (Globus, 2000). The tan would not have

been a new trend in 1938 but it was new to fashion photography, as was the *nudity* in Dahl-Wolfe's composition published in the July 1939 issue of Harpers Bazaar. There is also a suggestion of the modern and daring ability to experiment with identity in this image - the fresh flower in her pocket, the peasant headscarf and the utilitarian cut and fabric of her dress suggesting the playful borrowings from other cultures and lower classes initiated by Chanel in those early days of Riviera dressing.

These associations with the avant-garde suggest modern rebellion against convention, and commentators now refer to her work as 'blasé', and 'ahead of its time' (Goldberg, 2000:4). Linda Nochlin describes her work as 'effortless' and 'modernist' (in ibid:1). The blasé, the effortless, the modern, the unconventional - not to mention the immersion in light – all demonstrate the potential for Dahl-Wolfe's work to be considered cool. In addition, the way Dahl-Wolfe represented women can also be viewed as challenging. Squires actually suggests that Dahl-Wolfe's photographs can be read as progressive, in allowing her women a form of autonomy (1980:48). The almost empty spaces they often inhabit have a sense of the wilderness about them; locations, Wright claims, associated with "strength, independence and freedom" (in Rojek,1985:198). What adult woman gets to stand alone in a landscape in real life, even today? These women are not afraid to be alone. Nor are they bound by the ties of children (figs.74-76). Dahl-Wolfe's work also raises the question of lesbianism– many of her images feature twins (fig.76). Visually twins are unsettling, surreal maybe, but twinning has also been known as a lesbian tactic for dressing (Ash & Wilson (eds.), 1992).

Fig.75 Woman outdoors alone by Louise Dahl-Wolfe, 1940   Fig.76 Twins by Louise Dahl-Wolfe, 1940

In many of Dahl-Wolfe's images, sunglasses draw our attention to the eyes but we are unable to read them, raising the question of what the model might be thinking. We cannot read them – she will not offer the open expression and gentle smile of conventional femininity. This destabilises the conventional power relationship between viewer and viewed in images of women, and similarly to the images of women in protective goggles as typified by the driving aesthetic of the 1920s, allows us to see sunglasses as a disruption to conventional images of women in this period.

Even if we go beyond Arnold's analysis to accept that this image, and perhaps Dahl-Wolfe's work more generally could be read as avant-garde, as progressive or challenging to the ancien regime, it might be tempting to read these tendencies to abandon conventions like preservation of skin-tone and formalities of dress in terms of the common sense understanding of 'leisure' and 'holiday' as 'letting go', as denials or abdications of status, but, this would be a mistake. The informal/relaxed analysis fails to notice powerful connotations of glamour, speed and modernity and the status that comes with that *ability to abandon*, not to mention the cheeky impertinence of 'casual' behaviour seen both in habits of the Riviera set and in this particular image of a woman basking in her modern light, blasé in the face of the heat, the scrutiny of the camera and the loneliness of her hard, geometric setting.

'Polar inertia' as luxury afforded by modern speed

For as much as this is an image of a moment of repose, the composition works to make this a dynamic image with an intense impact. The contrasting chequered tiles recede sharply, making the figure appear to rush forward towards the viewer, almost filling the frame, the viewer's notional field of vision. The high-contrast geometrics of the setting relay with the black circular lenses edged with bright white (a tonal reversal emphasising the 'unnatural' interpretation of the eyes) and the tanned skin on the face, with an aesthetic that foretells 1960s 'op art' with its illusions of movement and the sensation of an over stimulated eye. This woman may be sitting down, but there is enough of the snapshot about this to invoke Virilio's theory of the 'imagined sequence' (1998:op.cit).

In addition to this dynamic quality, she plays the *role* of the tourist - who has evidently travelled and is now at leisure. At the same time, this place in Puerto Rico, this old, tiled garden or square, (in fact it is the Escambron Beach Club) has been landed in by model and crew and colonised for the photograph. We see no locals, no fellow travellers, no family, no children, no staff. This space has been cleared for her, to act as her backdrop for the few hours it may take to stage and shoot this apparently casual photograph. Indeed this image seems brilliantly suggestive of Virilio's concept of 'polar inertia' (1997:69) – this privileged moment of 'doing nothing' is utterly dependent on the

energetic technologies of speed, and, I would argue, this is semiotically underlined by the presence of the sunglasses with their connotations of modern technology and protection in travel (which remain, in spite of being impacted under later layers of meaning).

Virilio uses Howard Hughes, film producer and aviator of the 1920s and 1930s, as a prime example of someone who 'lived' polar inertia. His career and status depended on speed; he had apartments all over the world, but his existence was ironically characterised by an acute lack of interaction with place, and an acute lack of human physical effort (in Redhead, 2004:42-43). The status, and speed required to construct this photograph and all the others like it produced through the Twentieth century is not lost on the viewers of fashion magazines, who began to aspire to the lifestyle of the fashion model as well as that of those wealthy enough not only to buy magazines but the clothes as well, to renew their appearance on an increasingly frequent and seasonal basis, or even to play with differently nuanced versions of themselves through different clothing.

The new world against the old
The classical symmetry of the composition of figure against terrazzo also evokes the statuesque. In place of a Venus, centred in her own universe, we have beautiful, tanned Mary, nonchalantly crumpling her minimal cotton frock. Perhaps this represents a triumph of the modern over the ancien regime. Since this is an American image, perhaps it's a triumph of the American dream over European high culture and class – certainly American fashion, aided by Hollywood and Carmel Snow's editorship at Harpers Bazaar, was breaking away from Parisian dominance at this time (Arnold 2002; Globus:2000). The fabric of her dress is cotton; signifier of democracy, utility, authenticity and as such it marks the status of expensive simplicity, 'dressing down' which was in tune with Chanel's approach to fashion but very much against the traditions of Parisian haute couture. The model herself, not a member of the aristocracy displayed as a woman of status for admiration by others, but an ordinary woman elevated *by virtue of this image*.

As well as the associations with the avant-garde and with the modern and with speed, there are numerous moments in this analysis where dandyish qualities spring to mind. The impertinence of failing to properly acknowledge the presence of others, the strategy of dressing down – here utility and suggestions of peasant clothing take the place of the 'old fashioned' country attire or the 'threadbare look'. The self-sufficiency, the apparent stillness here in place of the 'antique calm'… even the apparent effortlessness of this look, this image; for this is *not* a snap; Dahl-Wolfe's images are elaborately staged and then crafted after the event to *appear* to have been superbly spontaneous. Just like the dandy's cravat tied a hundred times until what you could call the 'perfect accident'

occurs. The illusion the dandy's status relied on was that perfection came naturally, from within, from an 'inherently noble self' (Campbell in Entwistle, 2000:170, op.cit). And this is what makes fashion photographs like this potentially intimidating - almost regardless of the specifics of their content.

And finally, the sunglasses. The epicentre of the visual quake in this image, the viewer's eye is repeatedly drawn to and away from the white edged, dark flat discs that mask her eyes. Our encounter with this woman is demeaning. The photographer is close up, and Goffman's work (1963) describes the rules of face to face encounters - in focused interactions we are to give one another 'civil attention', to recognise the other's presence by preparing ourselves to be seen - sitting up straight and offering attention. But in spite of this photographer being the only other human being around, perhaps even intimidatingly close, Mary fails to register. As we seek some connection with her, searching her expression, all we keep getting is a metaphorical smack in the face from the blunt weapon of her dark lenses. She is utterly unphased by both her solitude and the presence of the camera, again calling to mind the independence, status and the composure of the dandy. Edwards even talks of 'the implied *insolence* of the direct sunglassed confrontation' (1989:59).

So sunglasses entered the world of representation, fashion and glamour with strong associations of rejection of the old world, of existing authority and social rules and conventions. A sign of being 'in the light' and a sign of dynamism, in protecting those eyes they also suggest insolence and the power of knowing without being known, or even more powerful perhaps, *not caring to know*.

The analysis of the Puerto Rico image gives a good insight into the context for sunglasses emergence but opens the way for more exploration of the subjects of sunbathing and the tan, as well as the influence of the 'jet set' - Hollywood and the development of celebrity culture, as well as considering the forms taken by sunglasses in this era. So firstly, I will consider sunbathing and the fashion for the tan, as the first popular rationale for sunglasses' purchase and one of the dominant connotations of sunglasses to this day in mass culture.

Sunglasses... for Sunbathing

As I have already shown, the earliest widespread trend for goggles/sunglasses were those bought and worn by the leisured elite who had the time and money to engage in modern outdoor sports. The modern belief in the health benefits of light and fresh air would have been a factor in the growing popularity of these sports, and the notion of the

Fig.77 Saltdean Lido1938

emancipated female helped to draw activities like golf, swimming (with the development of lidos like fig.77) and ski-ing into the fashion arena with the attendant development of sportswear and more casual, more active fashions in the twenties and thirties. Graves and Hodges (1961) trace tanning's initial connotations back to the Weimar republic where sunbathing was part of a wholesome outdoor, mostly proletarian form of leisure.

The first mention of sunbathing in the optical journals is in a list of potential customers for 'goggles' defined as 'autogoggles' and 'sun glasses', with 'the girl who sits on the sands' alongside driving and sports, in 1919 (Wellsworth Merchandiser, July 1919:6). A cover of the optical journal Amoptico (fig.78) of July 1915, offers 'Crookes lenses for the vacationist' which shows an illustration of people sitting in the sun, fully clothed under a parasol. (The lenses are said to be tinted but the tint is not depicted in the drawing, in fact the glasses are kept very slight).
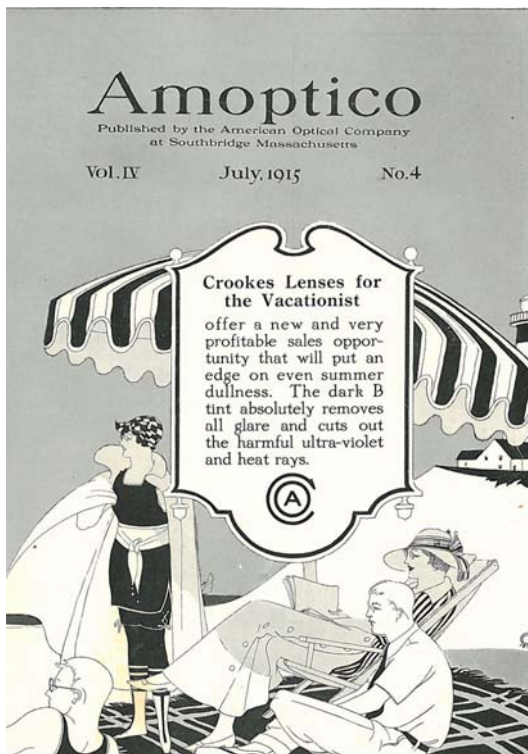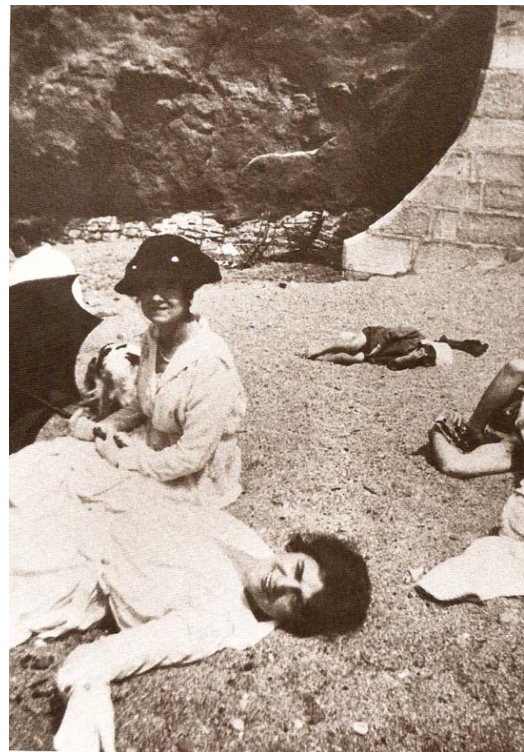

Fig.78 Crookes lenses ad, 1915

Fig.79 Chanel sunbathing hatless but with gloved hands and no sunglasses, 1918

The trend for sunbathing and tanning is generally said to have emerged during the 1920s; although Chanel was photographed sunbathing hatless as early as 1918 (see fig.79), but

still wearing gloves to protect the genteel connotations of her hands (Charles-Roux, 2005:144). Charles-Roux said this would have remained the case until about 1923 (ibid).An image by Jacques-Henri Lartigue shows his wife Bibi sunbathing in sunglasses in 1924 (see fig.80). In a 1925 article from American journal <u>The New Republic</u> about the 'flapper' of the mid 1920s, the desirable complexion for the face is evidently still white - nick-named 'Pallor Mortis'; but there is also mention of the shock of scanty bathing costumes and brown, stocking-free legs, a trend attributed to 1923 chorus girls (Bliven, 1925:65), a potential half way house between the celebration of natural and/or artificial light – since the pallor mortis of the face contrasted with heavy black eye make-up seems to have been especially suited to the bleaching lights of black and white filming techniques of the time.

Fig.80 Bibi at Royan, by Jacques-Henri Lartigue 1924

Fig.81 Suggestion of dark lenses for leisure in Riggs marketing, 1938

(Louise Brooks was one of these flappers, also known to have associated with F.Scott Fitzgerald and the Riviera set). Ultimately Chanel's influence made the tan part of a fashionable look for the very first time-and it has shaped and dominated popular representations of wealth, leisure and happiness ever since. Around the late thirties, business is encouraged in the optical journals with confident depictions of evidently black lenses (see fig.81) In fact, the desire to sunbathe and tan is also argued to have fuelled the rise of mass tourism (so much so that Turner and Ash called their 1975 analysis of tourist culture The Golden Hordes).

The tan

Nigel Clark describes the tan as a 'corporeal technology' which 'enabled privileged bodies to inscribe the characteristics of the iconic cinematic body onto their own superficies' (1995:117). This comment immediately dismantles the common sense view that the tan is 'natural' and that the holiday taken to achieve the tan might be an 'escape' from modern life. Of course both the holiday and the tan can function as a signifier of nature and escape, but we have already seen that the sunglasses in any image of such basking, bring with them multiple layers of modernity. Just as for the photo shoot in Puerto Rico, the expensive leisure of the elite of the early Twentieth century depended on brief breaks in busy studio schedules, high speed travel and all the resources required to support the desired lifestyle on arrival - the international hotels, telephones and so on and so forth. Today, the tourist does the same, now demonstrating the irony of escape by hoping for internet access on Thailand beaches or mobile coverage in the depths of rural France. So, in spite of the lure of the idea of 'lazing around on the beach', part of the appeal and status of sunbathing lay in its profound modernity, the luxury of 'polar inertia' perhaps something sunglasses are ideally placed to signify.

Seeking the light, seeking more light, requires control over nature, which costs money; something I discussed a little earlier, where aristocratic illuminations enabled glamorous nightlife for the lucky few. In the industrial age this can be done through technology - to create more artificial light as discussed in the chapter about light in the city - or through travelling, using that technology to transport the body to open spaces and sunnier climes. In a sense industrial speed provides ordinary people with a superhuman power - that of controlling the shining of the sun.

So as much as the tan might be a sign of leisure, of time off work, which we know to be significant in theorisations of status (for example, Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class (1994, *1899*) the Twentieth century tan is the visible sign of this superhuman speed and power. In fact the young avant-garde cultural elite who made tanning fashionable were

centred around Sara and Gerald Murphy, American heirs with the means and the confidence to choose to visit the French Riviera during the summer when it was very hot, as opposed to the winter as was the convention for people of their class (Turner and Ash, 1975:73). This made their tans both a signifier of their enviable capacity to choose their climate and of their desire to rebel against conventions for their class. The modernity of the tan was also initially connected with left wing or at least democratic provocations to the status quo, in keeping with numerous aspects of Chanel's style (such as the using of lowly fabrics like knitwear, previously only used for underwear) (Charles-Roux, 2005:108) Symbolic allegiances were made by this young 'left wing intelligentsia' not with the history and tradition of the aristocracy but with the perceived freedom, simplicity and honesty of the peasant, as Turner and Ash state 'when [the] aristocracies and their empires began to collapse, [the] hierarchic attitude to skin-tone also began to collapse' (1975:79). The only aristocrats admitted to the Murphy's circle were 'those who had rejected to some extent the moral values and ritualised social habits of the ancien regime in favour of more unorthodox, Bohemian models' (ibid:77). Turner and Ash state that 'Americans who joined the Riviera set, did so in flight from ... philistinism and Puritanism' (1975:73).

Elizabeth Wilson claims that in the late 1920s the tan actually signified proletarian pleasure (perhaps evidenced by the modest reference to the mere 'girl who sits on the sands,' in the early ad for sunglasses), but also racial impurity and a *lack of concern for the prevailing ideal* of pure white skin (1985:130). The tan struck at the conventions of class and race distinction in middle class society, whilst also being a magnificent and literal badge of 'life in the light' as the working classes grew pale from factory work and unhealthy smog-ridden cities (Turner and Ash, 1975:80). This makes a useful set of connections between the agendas of the European artistic avant-garde and the emerging American onslaught on Europe's historical cultural dominance where the tan can emerge as both taboo, rebellious and a sign of modern travel, wealth and success, as well as health and youth.

As well as being a sign of having been in the light, the resulting darkened skin provided an ideal background for light reflecting fashion aesthetics. Wilson says the tan enhanced the brilliance of pearls, satin shoes and oiled hair, quoting from two descriptions of fashionable women from literature of the period (1985:131) - not only does sunbathing give you life in the light, and a semi-permanent sign of it, but also it provides a deeper contrast against the youthful sparkle of eyes, teeth and accessories designed to reflect (demonstrated by another Louise Dahl-Wolfe image in fig.82).

Fig.82 The tan on the cover of HB,1942

So a number of different factors gave the tan its currency and popularity, from modern immersion in light, to modern travel, to newly discovered health benefits and to rebellious left wing or democratic ideas – ideas which though coming from different places had in common a rejection of old hierarchies and behavioural rules. Even the specifics of baring flesh in public in order to tan, as well as the indulgence in sensual pleasures of exposing skin to the sun and the air, and the application of tanning oil give tanning connotations of liberation from sexual limits. This is a very interesting milieu in which to site the emergence of sunglasses as fashion accessory, as it bolsters the argument that sunglasses were part of an avant-garde, rebellious youth-orientated trend, which may have given them additional associations with modern values of behaviour and personality. The tan undoubtedly fuelled the market for sunglasses - which by the late 1920s had, in America reached a point where it could be said (in an application for patent), that 'large quantities are sold' and that they are available at 'ten cent stores' (Frank Spill, 1928:2). By 1929, Foster Grant were selling them 'in number' in a Woolworths on the boardwalk at Atlantic City (Foster Grant, 2009:1).

However, although sales of sunglasses were up, they certainly were not part of the 'look' in late 1920s/early 1930s fashion – for beachwear or anything else . As I have already shown, they do not feature in fashion images until much later. In images of sunbathers on cruise ships in women's magazines, and photographs of Riviera beach life in biographies of people like Chanel, they are also notably absent . Given that driving goggles were being featured on the cover of Vogue in 1925, it seems likely that hats were still fulfilling the function, and that in the 'idealised child-like state' of sunbathing, connotations of weak sight , the 'prosthetic' , masculinity and technical 'ugliness' were too strong. Lartigue's image of Bibi in 1924 does not necessarily contradict this idea because although they were part of a fashionable set, he is known for those 'off guard' shots which playfully undermine notions of propriety and dignity.

What coincides with the next leap in sunglasses sales and their eventual emergence in fashion images at the middle/end of the 1930s is a change in the flexibility of their design. Into the 1930s, there were developments in plastics, and more variety was

introduced regarding the shapes, forms and colours of sunglasses which seem to have enabled them to become less weighty and more 'feminine', something which begins to be used as a selling point for frames in the optical journals, especially in the American Journal of Optometry (c.1935). Not many of the early plastic sunglasses from the 1930s remain in collections as the celluloid used to make them proved to be quite unstable (Handley, 2005; interview), but many of them were white as in the Dahl-Wolfe image – contrasting with the dark lenses and emphasising the darker skin tone of the new, tanned body. By the late 1930s these developments had enabled sunglass designs to become more varied, as well as 'gaily coloured' (Corson, 1967:225), and the popularity of them was described as a 'craze' with the market in the US expanding from 'tens of thousands' to 'millions' in US journal Popular Science Monthly (Corson, 1967:225). And by the 1950s, similarly to other products (Ward, 1997) plastics were used to create designs which were cheap, expressive, playful and essentially throwaway.

Going native – playing with identity

Developments in beach/holiday wear (hinted at in the Dahl-Wolfe image via the peasant scarf and casual bloom in the pocket) in this period were also significant. Again, the Riviera set were influential. Although there's no evidence to suggest they made sunglasses part of their innovative beachwear (as I've already mentioned, photos of this are not common if they did), their beachwear practices were characterised by flirtations with the boundaries of identity which laid the foundations for Twentieth century holiday dressing, within which sunglasses could play a highly accessible and effective part.

Instead of the demonstration of a simply a 'best' or 'bettered' self , a pleasingly altered self was achieved through temporarily rejecting the normal rules for their class - dandyish in its impertinence and suggestive of escape from the 'culture' of the modern city to the 'nature' of the beach. Turner and Ash comment that holidays increasingly offered escape from adult responsibility to an idealised child-like state (1975). This has something in common with both the 'dressed down' style of the bohemians and the deliberately casual (country) or faded (the threadbare look) of the dandies. The idea of 'effortlessness' so evident in the connotations of these looks relates back to the tan – the tan is only 'cool' when it appears effortlessly 'natural', hence the anxiety around strap lines, sunburn etc. Hence, meticulous care and effort has often been taken to ensure the coverage looks 'authentic', as if you are naturally slightly darker skinned.

Typically the Riviera set picked up on the clothes of the local peasants and workers (see figs.83-84). These garments do not look earnest – they do not look like attempts to

become a local, to live like a peasant. They *play* with the idea of poverty, authenticity, boundary crossing and so on in the context of a lifestyle which was glamorous, frivolous and hedonistic, with what the Murphys called 'bad' parties on the beach, costume balls and masquerades (Turner and Ash, 1975).

Fig.83 Chanel's beach clothes inspired by fishing clothing, 1913

Fig.84 Renee's Breton stripes captured by Jacques-Henri Lartigue, c.1930

This approach to holiday clothing becomes apparent on a broader scale (since about the 1930s) as modern holiday clothes and accessories tend to be more playful in terms of colour, more open to novelty, more casual, more revealing, and/or to emulate the idealised cultures of holiday destinations. Increasingly as mass production enabled more and cheaper fashions, and the modern world offered greater freedom from the determinants of place and class, holiday clothing became a primary locus of experimentation with identity – especially significant for those on stricter budgets. This is not a widely acknowledged view in fashion history (possibly because the specific looks of holiday fashion didn't necessarily exert a strong or particularly 'tasteful' influence on popular fashion) but social history documents certain facts which would seem to support this view (Hudson 1992). The *bettered self* was already part of holiday dressing since(in the UK at least) it initially took the same form as 'Sunday best' for the lower classes – formal dress which emulated the clothing of the class above. Smart clothes equivalent to the 'Sunday best' (usually the newest clothes), were worn by most at the beach at least until the thirties; something which strikes us now as comical and inappropriate.

Hudson's work (1992) on the beginnings of holiday culture in Britain describes how during the 1920s 'going off clubs' enabled workers to save, and once paid holidays became common, they presented a more significant opportunity to emulate the leisured classes, the self being temporarily relieved of definition primarily through work and from quite so much financial restraint. Hudson's interviewees recall feeling 'flush'. Local outfitters exploited this by using the holiday as focus for advertising and 'special displays'. One of Hudson's interviewees - a woman from Burnley - is recorded as saying 'I got the pay-out on the Thursday - and by the time the shops had shut that night I hardly had more than a bob of it left, because I'd needed some new clothes and had just gone mad with this few quid in my pocket…In the weeks before the holidays the local papers were always packed with advertisements for the dress shops in town.' (1992) The level of experimentation for this group was undoubtedly nothing like that of the Riviera set, relying mostly on the signification of 'newness', but nevertheless it provides a context in which sunglasses could eventually emerge for the masses as an obvious, ready and accessible sign of the new, bettered, freer self (fig.85). Two ideas emerge here – to appear to be more affluent, to *afford* the holiday in the sun and its paraphernalia, and to be equipped with the means to play with identity in numerous ways. (Many of the identities toyed with also seem to connect with 'cool' ideas of rebellion, hedonism, narcissism).

Fig.85 Ad for holiday clothing, 1953

As design historian and cultural critic Reyner Banham noted in the 1960s (1967: 959), sunglasses impose structure on the face which can redefine perception of its shape, making it an effective 'disguise' or enhancement of face shape and bone structure (he mentions looking like a 'horse-faced aristo' in a pair). Sunglasses, whether cheap or expensive, have the potential to be a hugely economical token of a lifestyle or mask for identity. They are small, portable, *relatively* cheap and worn on the area of the body most connected to identity and the self – the eyes.

Novelty… and cool

Many sunglasses associated with first period of sunglasses' mass appeal took on novelty forms as I mentioned above. Shells, stars, hearts, decorative, even tribal mask-like (see figs.86&87). The temporary and playful aspects of these glasses underpin the idea of more fluid identities and the focus on the self. These were predominantly for women, perhaps reflecting a certain kind of femininity which was centred around being light hearted,

decorative, more child-like. These glasses are so far from the dark and masculine 'cool shades' that might easily spring to a reader's mind, that they appear to offer a significant challenge to the theory of cool so far explored – either these sunglasses cannot be viewed as cool, or cool will have to be expanded. In fact, in spite of such 'happy' and 'cute' connotations, these glasses still cannot help but have potential to suggest refusal and cool

Fig.86 Playful novelties c. 1957

Fig.87 Pop novelties c.1980

detachment in the context of women's wear. In blanking those eyes with frivolity; *not caring to know* about the serious, the sensible, the adult; the novelty refuses to engage with parental or traditional ideas of thrift, the protestant work ethic, the feminist call for women to assert their adult intelligence; these glasses represent a heightened state of feminine narcissism which I think could be considered cool by some according to the theories I have examined and which popular films like Legally Blonde and Marie Antoinette (which very recently celebrate the idea of *heroically resolute* 'girliness') would seem to confirm, and which can perhaps also be seen in similarly within contemporary 'cute' subcultural styles, for example Japanese 'kawaii' culture (McVeigh, 2000). There is also potential for a hint of more traditional aristocratic hauteur here, in the sense that the privileged female may flaunt her ability to focus on frivolities. But for popular culture, the idea that holiday was a time for aspiration, play and disguise could be advanced through the purchase of a new pair of specs, enabling you to see differently (through the tinted lenses), and look different.

Seeing yourself there – tourist gazing

Since sunglasses have this connection with both how you see and how you look to others, there are a number of additional relevant points to be made about the holiday (and tourism more generally) and the experience of the visual in modern culture. Urry's book The Tourist Gaze (1990) explains that tourists are invited to look in specific ways. Destinations are transformed to satisfy these anticipations, with holiday beaches and promenades offering a similar kind of spectacle to Haussman's boulevards in Nineteenth century Paris. Urry states that one common aspect of the tourist experience is '…a much greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape than is found in everyday life' (ibid:3). These remarks about 'visual sensitivity' (and I think he means anticipation of visual pleasure) could, I think, reasonably be extended to include the person's own presentation of self and belongings, especially given role of snap photography in the development of tourism (Urry says elsewhere in the book that the development of popular photography cannot be separated from the development of tourism). The fashion industry continues to reproduce the 'need' for different clothes and accessories for holidays, and the fashion media have been offering advice to women about what sort of self to present and how, since the earliest days of mass tourism. Numerous features about holiday clothes in spring/summer editions of Vogue throughout the Twentieth century and a range of contemporary women's magazines emphasised the idea of the woman becoming part of the visual spectacle[11] or enjoying a new or different sense of self made possible through holiday clothing, diets, tanning, sunglasses etc.

This emphasis on looking at the self, the other and the other place also points towards sunglasses' suitability as a signifier of the holiday, not just for sunbathing but for tourism in general – if viewed as an altered spectatorial state. Indeed, sunglasses and camera are the tell-tale elements of the enduring stereotypical tourist image. Culler (in Urry 1990) says that the tourist sees everything as a sign of itself. These factors, together with the contrasts between 'home' and 'away' work to place the tourist in an especially self-conscious relationship with his or her own personal style, belongings and appearance. As well as causing greater attention to be paid to clothes and personal objects, the small number of objects required for use over a relatively short period of time creates an exciting potential for exercising enough control to create a temporarily quite different or more idealised self-image. The tininess of the sunglasses and the large impact they can

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[11] References are frequently made to being seen in women's magazines and advertising through the 20th century - from the optimistic 'be the beach babe to be seen',' be the hippest babe on the beach' to the diets and exercise plans designed to make you fit to be seen on the beach, and columns describing the embarrassment of being seen among the 'babes'. To imagine yourself as the object of someone else's admiring gaze is also easier if your image is unfamiliar enough for you yourself to be surprised by its exotic allure.

have on appearance make them ideal for the smallest capsule wardrobe, in the most compact of flight cases.

On the beach

The beach space of much sunbathing and many holiday destinations is in itself a fitting place for this combination of identity play, masquerade, exhibitionism and voyeurism, rule-breaking and pleasure seeking. The modern pleasure beach is a place of abundant natural light during the day, and at night, industrial illuminations, and glittering distractions. Self-conscious urban dwellers (who know they are observed by thousands of anonymous others) abandon the dark cloaks of Victorian respectability described by Elizabeth Wilson and lay themselves increasingly bare to scrutiny. They also scrutinise others. This space is like a giant railway carriage or lift, with hundreds of relatively motionless, anonymous bodies racked up against one another with little to do but look, and be seen. 'At the beach, the body becomes a spectacle, put on display according to elaborate unwritten codes' (Lencek and Boskev, 1998:xix) The prom is a stage for organised flanerie, 'aimless' strolling, displaying and looking, desire for 'love at last sight'; the masquerade. Similarly to the seductions performed by the wearers of vizzards in early London parks (Heyl, op.cit), in this context sunglasses finally came into their own as attraction of and protection from the gaze, enabler of voyeurism and exhibitionism. To be more sexually active, promiscuous and to take greater risks has been identified as part of the tourist experience (Turner and Ash, 1975) typified in late Twentieth century Britain by the popular image of the 'Club 18-30' holiday, and seemingly boosted by the anonymity and freedom from habitual identities and roles. As highly portable tool of both seduction and disguise, sunglasses were well placed to become indispensible in such contexts, functioning as both mask and involvement shield in the context of the crowd. The experience of wearing sunglasses at the beach was commented on by the focus group conducted by Glenn Wilson for Dolland and Aitchison. One of the young males in the group commented that he felt women in sunglasses on the beach were more attractive and more likely to be viewed by him as a 'sexual object' since he said the lack of access to the woman's eyes encouraged him to think less about her personality and to focus on her as 'body' (he said he felt this effect was 'almost pornographic') This contrasted with the women in the group, who had already agreed that they only felt able to expose their bodies on the beach because of the (evidently illusory) sense of protection and privacy afforded by sunglasses (Wilson, 1999: 5-6). Perhaps the women feel able to display their bodies because they are 'not themselves'; perhaps the sunglasses merely complete the feeling of being 'dressed' in the expected manner – Edwards noted something similar in his article about sunglasses in photographs – that there might be a correlation between

the increasing display of women's bodies and the covering of their eyes, as an inverted form of veiling (Edwards, 1989:58). The type described by Reyner Banham (1967), called 'Boywatchers' which were on sale in the US in the 1960s, imply the voyeuristic function as a pleasure for women. Ultimately the ambiguities of identity and the gaze in this context heighten sunglasses' capacity to encourage the pushing of the usual social boundaries whilst appearing to afford some protection from the same.

Lencek and Boskev's work The Beach (1998) shows that the range of meanings historically attached to the beach makes it especially appropriate for identity play and transgression. They say that 'since deepest antiquity' the beach has been understood as 'a site of transformation, releasing us from the straightjackets of routine and repression' (p30). Shields calls the beach a 'liminal zone' (in Rojek, 1995:88). Geographically it is liminal since it marks the edge of the land, and Rojek says this is a place where it is believed you can 'be yourself' because it appears to be 'beyond the control of civilised order' (ibid:88).

Beaches have only really been brought under 'civilised control' during the Twentieth century; historically they have been 'unsafe' places. Lencek and Boskev identify several ideas crucial to contemporary understandings of the beach and its emergence as a leisure space par excellence: first, it has consistently been represented as a location for and symbol of spirituality, the powers of nature and God, from classical myth to medieval Christianity, through romanticism to the present. This helps to account for the sense of authenticity at work in ideas of 'being yourself' or escaping from constraint. Second, and connected to this, a place where boundaries are renegotiated. This happens literally in the case of invasions, the tides and shifting coastlines, but in classical myth it is also the place where the boundaries between humans, animals and gods are apt to change, resulting in the birth of hybrid creatures. Most importantly for my analysis, the beach has been seen as a site of transformation of the self, a place where gods assumed different forms or exerted transforming power over mortals, as Lencek and Boskev say, 'typically a place where identity itself is imperilled and the self becomes unrecognisable' (1998:30). The ideal place for a Sara and Gerald Murphy party, temptingly paralleled with the Greek and roman phase of sensual and wild beach partying. Interestingly beaches remain frighteningly dark in spite of attempts to light the proms and piers, the sea merges with the sand and the limitless power of the edge of the earth is revealed.

In Hesiod and in medieval Christian literature, Lencek and Boskev say the limitlessness of the sea has also held signification of the infinite unknown, of hell, of the space beyond Eden, life without parameters, morality or controls. But in the Twentieth century, when

the belief in a judgemental God is contested, these ideas no longer seem so frightening. Instead they open up a space for unfettered hedonism in the service of capitalism, and infinite unknown becomes infinite possibility, instability and change a sign of progress and future self-fulfilment. Beaches became likely locations for fairgrounds and fantasy constructions, wax museums and other novel spectacles of the industrial age designed for sensation and carnivalesque pleasure outside the usual rules.

Lencek and Boskev attribute the growth of beach leisure spaces in part to the growth of industrial towns and cities, both as beach towns developed as spaces for consumption, but also as crowded living conditions prompted the desire for open space. Along with anonymity, numerous encounters with strangers, and the importance of outward appearance comes the possibility of disguise and role-play previously mentioned, and with the idea of flanerie. Zygmund Bauman's essay 'desert spectacular' describes a version of the flâneur who can exist anywhere, not just in the physical location of the city, but who is '…out on vacation – from reality. In reality, he is overdetermined; he wears his determination as the beast of burden wears its yoke. Out there in the desert or the city, he plays the game of underdetermination…. for a moment deem[ing himself] free from the reality [he] detest[s]' (1994:141).

Bauman also calls this flâneur a 'travelling player' (ibid:142) Whether performed at home, at the beach, in the city or even in the desert, to be a flâneur is 'to rehearse the contingency of meaning; life as a bagful of episodes none of which is definite, unequivocal, irreversible; life as a play' (ibid). Although Bauman insists this could happen anywhere, he calls holiday beaches 'the high temples and cults of the creed' (ibid); the spaces where identity-play through consumption becomes a seductive illusion of mastery and freedom which sunglasses continue to be sold in the service of.

Cool and the global traveller
The idea of the beach as a no-man's land also strikes a chord with the colonial aspects of tourism, the appropriation of space. In spite of my comments about how the technologies of travel may engender a cool demeanour, in fact to be cool as a tourist or traveller on arrival is very demanding. Encounters with the unknown and the unrehearsed obviously abound, unknown threats. Fashion images like these from 1950s <u>Vogue</u> (fig.88) demonstrate the status in not just being in a glamorous location but in appearing 'unperturbed' by the strangeness around. Following the trend begun by Chanel for borrowing local styles in holiday wear, these fashions make the literal connection between the traditions of the locals and the playtime of the global tourists, appropriating and adapting their styles. But these photographs render the locals in a curiously flat and

Fig.88 Stages on which to play, 1955

superficial way, focusing so much on the white western woman in the foreground and beautifully illustrating Bauman's phrase 'stages on which to play' (1994:141), as well as the detachment from place, history, obligation etc. required.

The conflation of coolness and global social and economic status of western travellers and tourists is evident in images like these, especially in those which feature sunglasses to further detach the subject from its background and to make that tangible link with western technology, fashion and privilege. As tourist/traveller clothing develops the adoption of styles from locals has been globalised and homogenised – with Bermuda shorts and Hawaiian shirts for example now a staple of western holiday fashion irrespective of the destination. But sunglasses (and camera) offer tell-tale signs of western progress, and of a particular detached way of viewing the world, protected by relative wealth and the 'bubble' of western culture that travels with most westerners. It is no accident that sunglasses are a sign of this high-speed, sun-seeking leisure, since they provide a shield against involvement with the other, while connoting the heroic and the adventurer. The theory of the tourist 'bubble' (Craik in Rojek & Urry, 1997:115) which describes the cushioning effect of the package tour, the 'English spoken here', the international hotel, the tour bus, could be equated with Goffman's notion of the involvement shield, (already discussed in the section on modernity and the eye with reference to urban existence) which perhaps gains additional value in encounters with the foreign.

An image from the cover to a supplement of the Financial Times ('How to Spend it'; 2003) demonstrates the power of sunglasses to connote success, glamour, status, wealth and the western traveller (figs.89&90, overleaf). Only the desert and the sunglasses are required to suggest the ultimate glamour of bespoke travel to remote destinations. The brand of the sunglasses – fittingly they are Chanel – has been left in the image by the designer as a ghostly presence – not by accident since the rest of the arms have been removed to make the image more defined, and the view of the various destinations added behind the glasses using image manipulation software. From imagining these elites who are able to afford to trot the globe playing these enviable and exclusive games it is a short step to thoughts of the gods and goddesses of mount Olympia, a historical reference point for many writers on the subject of modern celebrity. The Riviera set were
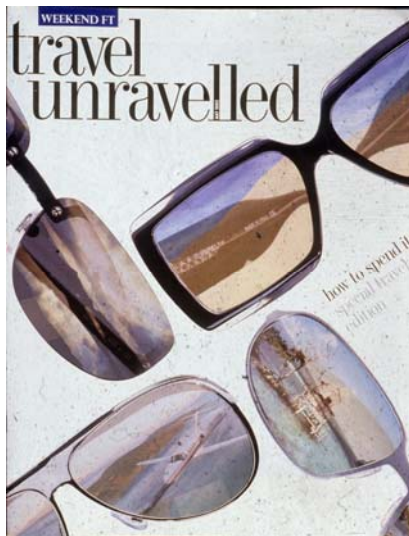
Fig.89 'Bespoke travel', 2003   Fig.89 'Bespoke travel', branded (detail), 2003

celebrities to an extent – but with nothing like the exposure and power that was soon to come as Hollywood became established and celebrity media culture emerged, and the contrast between the lives of the 'atoms' and the 'stars' created a highly visible gap to be filled with imitative desires. Sunglasses not only connote wealth, leisure, status, identity play – since about the 1940s they connote *celebrity*.

Celebrity - only some deserve a close up
At this point it is useful to go back briefly to the idea of panoramic perception. Amidst the onslaught on the senses supplied by modernity, Schivelbusch suggests that one of consequences of panoramic perception was the creation of a new appetite for the *discrete*:

> ...the intensive experience of the sensuous world, terminated by the industrial revolution, underwent a resurrection in the new institution of photography. Since immediacy, close-ups and fore-ground had been lost in reality, they appeared particularly attractive in the new medium. (ibid:63)

This quotation is actually about the popularity of still photography in the Nineteenth century, but it seems that a useful correlation can be drawn with this and the cinematic close-up. For as much the modern self might be offered the possibility of being - or becoming - the centre of the universe, sovereign spectator, the evidence is everywhere that the self's fate may equally be to become just another 'mere particle' in someone else's panorama. The sense of the 'self under scrutiny' encouraged by the film close up in

a previous chapter, could equally produce a sense where *significance* is defined by how long a camera lingers over your every facial expression . In the modern world, you could say that everyone is part of the panorama, but only some deserve a close-up. (Schickel 2000:10) claims that it was the close-up which created the phenomenon of celebrity. In separating the individual features from the other players and from the role, and cues of setting, the mystique of the actor's identity could be elaborated on by viewers attempting to read the nuances of face and facial expression. Viewers knew the actor was acting, but as the same face appeared in film after film, the question of the actor's private self was raised. Initially Hollywood actors remained anonymous and were paid little, but it was not long at all before salaries began to increase dramatically and out of all proportion with the work (2000:46-7) and an international 'fellowship of the accomplished' (ibid:48), a glitterati, was possible - a group of rich and influential people whose international community relied on emerging technologies of communication and travel and whose lifestyles (real or imagined) were to become the commodity purchased in celebrity magazines from Picturegoer to Heat. At a similar time to Chanel's Riviera set, Douglas Fairbanks cultivated such a group in the late 1920s and early 1930s, with an annual trip to Europe to collect society connections from the English peerage and the elites of culture and industry. During the war effort the influence of Hollywood was understood and courted by Lloyd George (ibid:44). The power of glamour was gaining momentum.

In the modern world, to be seen, to be the subject of these close-ups, affords a person a sense of significance, status and power. But sunglasses have the potential to conceal a significant aspect of what these close-ups reveal. This raises questions about the connection between celebrity and sunglasses - the very obvious one is that celebrities are increasingly the group in society most visibly able to access modern, expensive leisure, and this is surely very significant; but it is evidently not quite that straightforward. So, in this section I will consider how and why celebrities began to wear sunglasses in contexts beyond those of sport and sun protection, as well as the extent to which Hollywood might have more broadly influenced popular Twentieth century notions of cool, using a small selection of examples.

Violent light – sunglasses, celebrity and the growth of the paparazzi
As might be expected from what I have said already about the emergence of sunglasses in fashion images, not many pre 1950s images show celebrities in sunglasses; perhaps the occasional early morning shot of someone arriving on set without their eye make-up – for example Joan Crawford; in which case these images are 'snaps' not portraits, which would suggest that the subject need not heed the conventional rules of self-presentation

for a photograph since they are really 'off duty' and 'off stage'. Joan Crawford did appear in Vanity Fair (with husband Douglas Fairbanks) with sunglasses on as early as 1932 (fig.91), but again the look, though this is a pose for photographer Edward Steichen, is 'relaxed', and 'off duty'. Another early example is a shot of Marlene Dietrich backstage at Paramount studios, eating, which appeared in Life Magazine in 1938 (fig.92). None of

Fig.91 Joan Crawford and husband Douglas Fairbanks, 1932

Fig.92 Marlene Dietrich offset at Paramount, 1938

these images show the subjects looking directly at the camera, suggestive of the idea that they are being 'caught'. This seems to be consistent with documentary evidence of sunglass wearing in civilian life too, as American documentary photographer Walker Evans caught city dwellers unawares in shades while going about their business on the city streets circa 1946, but very few if any posed photographs show the subjects in them from this period. It seems that they were generally removed for photographs out of respect for the conventions of photographic portraiture. The studio system is relevant to this, since while the studio system 'owned' the stars, publicity images were very much controlled and kept in line with the studio's idea of the star personality. However, once the grip of the studio loosened and stars began to demand more independence in the industry, their private lives could begin to be commodified to promote the celebrity outside of and beyond the films they appeared in, bolstering their desirability to film producers. This happened in conjunction with developments in photographic technology which enabled shots to be taken in a range of atmospheres and at speed, creating the conditions for the emergence of the paparazzi in the Via Veneto in Rome during the 1950s and 1960s, where

erstwhile tourist photographers would snap Hollywood stars among the Italian elite who went there to eat, drink and parade (Howe, 2007:57).

The Via Veneto was favoured because it was close to Italian film-making studios used by American companies, but apparently also because it was a wide, open avenue which easily accommodated celebrity cars (ibid). This was clearly a locus of modernity, velocity, light and privilege. Barillari, one of those very early paparazzi, recollects in interview with Howe that the best month for this was September, 'because all these famous people were just coming back from vacation, so they were tanned, looking smart, and they went there to show off – you know, just to look beautiful' (ibid:59). Outdoor shots of 'off duty' stars there and elsewhere were available, giving more frequent insights into their leisure wardrobes, more glimpses of 'actresses in their beach bikinis', in other words access to images of' that 'sacred space' or parallel universe, inhabited by celebrities'

Fig.93 Via Veneto in La Dolce Vita, 1967

(Giles, 2000:99); as Schickel describes it, that 'place of beauty and freedom from life's ordinary ills that [press] pieces about famous people seem to imply that the favoured enjoy' (Schickel, 1985:15); a truly modern mount Olympia (fig.94, still of the Via Veneto from La Dolce Vita). The casual clothing, and the 'unaware' poses featured in these images will of course have been fetishised in the process.

(Interestingly, a type of sunglasses peculiar to Venice which was worn in the late Eighteenth century, the Goldoni, was named so because of associations with the theatre[12]

Fig.94 The Goldoni style, Venice c.late 1700s

(Handley, 2009)). But for the celebrity, the potential of being photographed will also have blurred the distinction between being on and off stage. Even before this, some insightful stars were aware of a lack of ability to escape their celebrity role – as Myrna Loy said to a journalist; 'I daren't take any chances with Myrna Loy, for she isn't my property... I couldn't even go to the drugstore you see without looking 'right' you see... I've got to be, on all

public occasions, the personality they sell at the box office' (in Giles, 2000:22).

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[12] namely the commedia dell arte, The Goldoni style, though of the same period as the railway glasses, has a far less technical look, and seems not to have had much influence outside Italy. Nevertheless Goldoni was a celebrated figure with modern associations; Nicoll says he was instrumental in the development of a theatre across Europe 'founded on rationalism' (Nicoll,1976:214)

And from the very earliest days of the paparazzi, there was a sense of 'attack' about the paparazzo's 'shots'. They would work together to set up little incidents which would create drama, or show a celebrity in a surprising light. In the recollections of these men in Howe's book, there is evidence of a strong sense of desire to overcome the gap between the often deprived backgrounds the photographers came from and the elevated position of the celebrities. There is an anecdote about Dali, who apparently only tipped the doorman on exiting Maxim's in Paris, if a paparazzo were there to notice. The paparazzi delighted in this ability to manipulate the stars' behaviour. One key incident featured Ava Gardner, early paparazzo Secchiaroli and actor Walter Chiari. This happened in 1958, at the end of relatively drab evening's work for the photographers. Four of them got in position while Chiari was parking his car near an apartment, Secchiaroli 'went up to Gardner and exploded his flash right in her face' (Howe, 2007:30). Shocked, she screamed, and Chiari, who was just returning, attacked Secchiaroli while another photographer got the pictures. These were widely published, and crystallised the realisation that by creating confrontations they could get more valuable pictures.

The habitual wearing of sunglasses by off duty celebrities whilst in public places seems very likely indeed to have stemmed from this point. The portable 'back stage' privacy of shades, also provided protection against the sudden and violent glare of a paparazzo's flash. The rolleiflex cameras used by these men at the time required very close range for the flash to get a quality picture (ibid), so in this period, there was a very literal sense in which the celebrity benefitted from shading their eyes when in public.

What is interesting is that Hollywood celebrities deliberately attempted to avoid being photographable by wearing them, and in so doing visually communicated their extraordinary status; that of a particle so significant as to be focused on to excess. Here is a person who is so immersed in the light they now crave shade from it. This may be experienced as a negative thing by the individual celebrity – but importantly such images are still read as highly evocative signs of success and status.

Giles (2000:90) says Greta Garbo was among the first to revolt openly against the pressures of dealing with the general public, so much so that she spent many periods of her career 'in hiding', and even took to donning disguises to avoid recognition (figs. 95&96). 'The story of my life is about back entrances, side doors and secret elevators'.

Chaplin too struggled with attention in public – 'I had always thought I would like [it], and here it was – paradoxically isolating me with a depressing sense of loneliness' (ibid:91)

Giles has noted the problems of fame in his book Illusions of Immortality, interestingly he picks up on something Simmel spoke of in metropolitan existence as leading to the blasé or neurasthenic state – the innumerable encounters with others. As Giles says

> ...probably the single most important cause of unhappiness reported by celebrities is the effect of having to deal with so many people all the time. The loss of privacy is one aspect of this... But fame forces us into so many new relationships that the sheer numbers of these can be stressful in itself... It is estimated that in the middle ages the average person only ever saw 100 different individuals in the course of a lifetime... (Giles, 2000:92)

Fig.95 Garbo caught off guard in Athens, 1966   Fig.95 And again, same occasion Athens, 1966

Sunglasses enable the off duty celebrity to protect the 'real' self but simultaneously to project the effortlessly desirable self through the associations of lifestyle and glamour. This makes them very useful. The sunglasses also withhold access to that intimacy promised by the cinematic close-up, increasing desire. The role of sunglasses in the cycle of seduction and rejection celebrities enter into with paparazzi for mutual financial benefit is now so well rehearsed that minor celebrities (and 'wannabes') parody the look of these early Hollywood stars in hiding as part of the performance of celebrity identity. The level to which this has become mythologised is evidenced by the legend that Jackie

Onassis eventually took to going out without her sunglasses because she was *less likely to be recognised without them*.

Pressure on celebrities' own sense of access to backstage regions was exacerbated during the 1960s when long-focus lenses enabled the paparazzi to use stealth and to snap without being seen. (Howe, 2003)The feeling of being potentially photographable even when no photographers appear to be present will have increased the background sense of risk, not only the risk of being photographed, but also the possibility *no* photographers will come. Maybe no photographers will want your picture – a constant measure of your star rising and falling. Jackie Onassis was one of the 'bread and butter' stars of the sixties for American paparazzi, and her name now stands for a style of sunglasses she favoured. Even today, type her name into a web browser and you get numerous instances of round black glasses being described as 'Jackie Os', and many references in blogs to 'looking like Jackie O' in such glasses. Ron Galella, who pursued Jackie for many years and was eventually outlawed from doing so, said that Jackie's mystique was enhanced by the fact she 'wasn't co-operative and didn't pose or stop' (Galella in Howe,2003:114), he says '... her glamour was a mystery. Most stars expose everything... Celebrities sort of pull out their souls, leaving little to the imagination. Jackie was soft spoken, but she was very alive. She created an aura, a mystery.' (ibid)

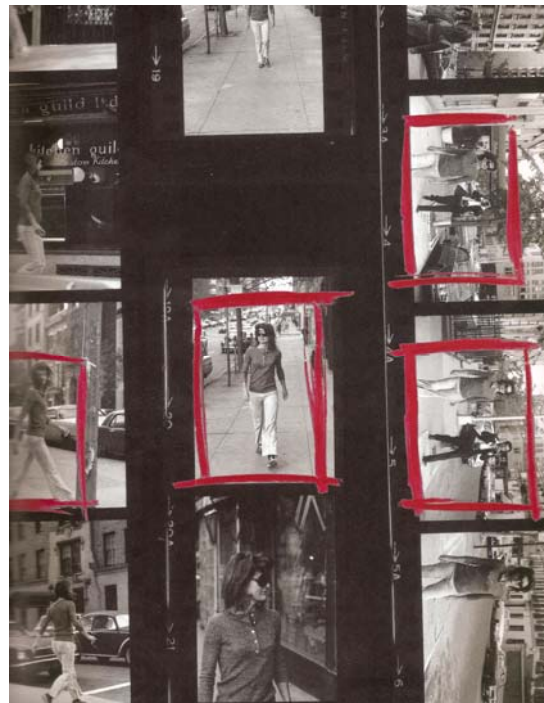Fig.97 Jackie Onassis without shades by Ron Galella c.1970

Fig.98 The contact sheet showing she has them on before and after

His most famous photograph of Jackie (fig.97) was taken 'without the ever present sunglasses that she used to hide behind' (Howe, 2007:116) though my examination of the contact sheet shows that she was wearing them moments before, in takes 5 and 6, as she came down the street (fig.98). Apparently, she has removed her sunglasses, turned towards his camera, 'not away from it as was her wont' (ibid), and smiled at the man she had been followed by for three years, who she would take to court in the next year. Galella insists in the book that Jackie 'liked being pursued' and that she 'protested too much' (ibid:119). The desire the paparazzo has for the face of the celebrity gives the celebrity impressive power, to 'give' an open face, a smile, and with it, respect and financial prosperity to the paparazzo. Many of the accounts in Howe's book point to the teasing element of the game of showing and hiding, especially when discussing the 'relationships' between male photographers and female celebrities like Jackie, Liz Taylor and of course Princess Diana. (It is perhaps worth noting the semi-transparent styles favoured by some contemporary celebrities as a concession to the modern publicity-hungry celebrity's desire to 'look like a celebrity' and be photographable.)

Emulating celebrity looks – sunglasses as a token of celebrity status

Alienated communities and mass culture both require personalities 'everyone knows', as hooks on which the sale of cultural images and artefacts may be hung, models of success which can function as a form of guidance through an increasingly bewildering and fast-changing sea of choices for identity. Emulation of celebrity fashion is surely now at an all time high, with most fashion magazines now devoting a substantial portion of their content to the coverage of celebrity style (Pringle, 2004:29), but it began in the early days of Hollywood when styles worn by American actresses would sell out, like the puffed sleeve dress worn by Joan Crawford in Letty Lynton (1932), or fall out of favour as did the vest when Clark Gable appeared without one in the 1934 film It Happened One Night (Bruzzi, 1997:5) Although the relationship between Hollywood *costume* and fashion trends is not straightforward (because costume is not fashion, and the fashion industry can respond far quicker to fads than Hollywood can), the immediacy and 'authenticity' of the apparent glimpse into the privileged world privately inhabited by the star offered by paparazzi images, has developed into the stock-in-trade of most fashion trend reporting in women's magazines, certainly during the lifespan of popular fashion/celebrity weeklies Heat and Grazia. The influence of celebrity on the currency of sunglasses both in images and as objects for consumption has extended their connotations of elite leisure activities, to include connotations of fame, prestige and desirability, both of which are tightly connected to notions of coolness.

The link with celebrity was capitalised on by manufacturers with numerous designs of sunglasses which emulated those worn by celebrities, names for models and advertising. The earliest connections made with celebrity in the optical journals I studied were seen around the same time as the 'craze' for sunglasses and the Dahl-Wolfe fashion image - 1938. In the American Journal of Optometry, an ad for Autoform Spurlock frames announced new decorative options with the slogan 'a star is born'. By the early-to-mid 1940s the same journal contains references to 'fame and fortune' and 'important people' listed as 'a sheik, senators, Hollywood actors and actresses' (ad for Continental brand, May 1944). By 1952, Vision (the popular supplement to the British optical journal The Optician) was able to feature an article in which readers were invited to guess the star from the spectacle frames. By circa 1960, a catalogue for the Rodenstock brand

Fig.99 Loren endorsing Rodenstock, 1960

Fig.100 Koch endorsing Rodenstock (detail), 1960

Fig.101 Bardot endorsing Rodenstock, 1960

'Clear Vision' featured Sophia Loren on the cover, as well as Marianne Koch and Brigitte Bardot as celebrity endorsements on the inside (figs.99-101).In 1967, a celebrated campaign for manufacturer Foster Grant (Duffy and Shanley, 2008:online), with images of a range of popular celebrities with different kinds of appeal in off guard snaps to suggest 'they really wear them'. Each ad bore the strap line 'Who's that behind the Foster Grants? (fig.s102&103)

In 2007, a similar campaign by Duffy and Shanley relaunched the brand with 'Who could you be?' (fig.104), trading on the idea of sunglasses offering instant transformation to a different and better self. In a report in the marketing company's promotional website, the creative director explained:

> This isn't about models or celebrities or rock stars...It's about regular people and
> how, with a couple of pairs of stylish, affordable sunglasses, I can be a model or a

celebrity or a rock star or a hundred different versions of myself, without spending a couple hundred bucks (de Silva, 2007:online)

Fig.102 Woody Allen, 1967

Fig.103 Vanessa Redgrave, 1967

Fig.104 'Who could you be? 2007

The apparent contradiction in this assertion could be viewed as desperation to dress an old marketing idea up as a new one. But perhaps it reveals the difference between idealising celebrities and the increasingly widespread contemporary belief (heavily traded in by 'reality' television) that somehow star quality is not particular to those well-known individuals, but something pre-existing inside all anonymous individuals, that is waiting to be revealed – in this case by a pair of shades. The power of the appeal of celebrity as the ultimate endorsement of modern selfhood shows no sign of diminishing – and the connection between celebrity and sunglasses is robust and widespread.

It is interesting to consider what is 'cool' about the modern celebrity perhaps beyond merely my assertion that it is cool to be bathed in modern light and speed, and that celebrities possess enhanced access to both. It is quite possible, looking at Hollywood celebrities, especially those associated with sunglass wearing, to discern modes of behaviour in their portrayals of characters and/or in their 'off stage' behaviour as

reported and mythologised through auto/biographies, media images and so on, which relate closely to some of the ideas about the cool demeanour already discussed. In particular, coolness as a way of behaving is also idealised in Hollywood films and related representations, reproducing and spreading the aspiration not just to cool activities and cool looks but to cool behaviour too – Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, James Dean, Cary Grant, Garbo, Marlene Dietrich – the heavy eyelids, the calm demeanour, the lack of concern for authority, the impressive control over both emotions and circumstances. Stacey's study of women's para-social relationships with stars reveal that the object of consumption for women who copied stars looks was not merely their appearance - 'respondents had deliberately modelled their appearance and behaviour on their idols… even pretended to be the star in certain social situations…' (Stacey in Giles 2000:61). This would be difficult to achieve, further marking out the star and their qualities as desirable but out of reach. There is a dandyish quality to the conditions of the film star's work – freedom to experiment with identity in playing different characters and roles, opportunity to painstakingly rehearse the appearance of effortlessness which increases their power - and this is enhanced by cinema technology, since even after rehearsal scenes can be re-shot, edited and so on to give the actor the literally superhuman power to act and to 'know what to say', to appear unperturbed by all situations. The labour is concealed in much the same way as were the secret notebooks and rehearsed gestures of the regency dandy's chambers.

Fig.105 Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck by Steve Ginsburg - 'being under glass has an improving effect on some goods'

Glamour

As this chapter comes to a close, some threads can be drawn together around the theme of 'glamour'. Glamour is a similarly slippery but commonly used term which has recently been studied by both Gundle (2008) and Wilson (2007), and it is interesting to consider the extent to which it might overlap with my conception of 'insider cool' as 'life in the light'. Gundle's introduction contains numerous metaphors relating to light; 'glow, dazzle, display, theatre, flashy, glitz, burning bright'. Wilson cites the OED definition of the original meaning of glamour as a deception of the eye ' where devils, wizards or jugglers

deceive the sight, they are said to cast a glamour over the eye of the spectator' (Wilson 2007:95), immediately suggesting Jay's reference to 'lux' – the deceptive hazy glow or sparkle. There are evident connections with cool as I have defined it ; status achieved through style and personality – Gundle mentions not only the dandy but also the courtesan as a forerunner in this regard - rebellion against bourgeois values with a power that raised those who could achieve glamour 'into a realm beyond the reach of the guardians of

Fig.106 Ad for PanAm Airlines, 1959 – speed, detachment, light, modernity, leisure, success

social order' (2008:230) The idea of speed and travel is put forward too, 'a world perennially in motion, leisured, stylish and beautiful... seemingly on a permanent vacation', as well as the idea of coldness, a protective coating or crust. Gundle calls it 'a weapon and a protective coating, a screen' (ibid:4). Wilson refers to 'the sheen, the mask of perfection... untouchability' (2007:106); (see fig.105). For Wilson, it seems 'true glamour' is also cool - against the desperation of the contemporary celebrity she posits Garbo's iconic 'icy indifference' (ibid). Gundle also highlights glamour's paradoxical qualities, that while seeming magical and almost otherworldly, it 'contained the promise of a mobile and commercial society that almost anyone could be transformed' (2005:7), that it traded in 'accessible exclusivity' (ibid:64) .The connections here between glamour and cool, modernity and sunglasses are self-evident, allowing us to see sunglasses at the centre of the Venn with the capacity to suggest that an atom can glow like a star, and therefore a signifier of positive values for all kinds of advertising (see fig.s106&107).

Fig.107 Ad for Potterton Boiler, 1967 – leisure, technology, and glamour for a product that struggles for visual appeal.

Summary

This chapter has shown how sunglasses entered fashion and became a popular sign of 'life in the light' - modern 'insider' cool which built on the idealised relationship with modernity through speed and technology with notions of achieving status and significance through access to modern light and leisure based on glamorous, aspirational identity play. Exploring these ideas revealed connections between modern leisure and the flâneur, and between the dandy and the modern celebrity. It also demonstrates how certain aspects of the qualities of detachment, rebellion and narcissism are at work in the images and behaviours of some quite diverse examples, and in spite of the fact that these images are seemingly images of success within the goals and means provided by modern western capitalism. This kind of cool is perhaps best understood as an American cool, where a large part of the sense of rebellion required comes from the process of breaking free of European cultural dominance, where an imperfect but indefatigable alliance might exist between American ideals and those of some Europeans equally keen to undermine the dominance of the ancient regime.

The desire to emulate successful modern celebrities has evidently influenced fashions for sunglasses, but it does not really help to explain how and why they are also used in ostensibly negative constructions within popular culture – for example, to complete the image of a modern-day Satan in a mainstream Hollywood film - nor does it explain why so very many sub- and counter- cultural groupings have adopted them since the 1950s. Indeed, the confident, blasé snub to European cultural dominance presented by, for example, the sunglasses in Dahl-Wolfe's work is a far more optimistic form of symbolic rebellion than some. Many of the uses of sunglasses the Twentieth century has engendered take place not in the light, but in the shade; in the murky side and backstreets, indoors, and underground, rather than in the bright, expansive beaches, squares and boulevards. If the optimistic promise of modernity realised in the lives of an affluent elite can be suggested by the idea of 'life in the light', then surely life in the dark will call to mind the margins, the excess, the uncontrollable, the modernity experienced by those 'outside'

Chapter nine
Life in the Dark - 'outsider' cool

To darken your vision in conditions where light is already scarce, minimal or deliberately lux-like (Jay, 1993:30 op.cit) seems to go against all the modernist purposes of optometry – to illuminate, to free, and to uphold the singular value of clear sight. In fact, many of the most evocative images of sunglasses show them worn in the dark, indoors, because in these images we are forced to acknowledge their more oblique functions. Evidently these uses imply alternative kinds of sight – characterised by a deliberately muted, detached perception of the world beyond the lenses.

I will set out some of the broadly shared cultural associations of night, breaking it down into connotations of temporal space of 'night', shadows and the colour black, then looking at the development and connotations of urban 'nightlife' and the 'nightclub' as the context for many of the iconic instances of sunglasses use. This will help to indicate the kind of personality traits, approaches to selfhood and knowledge implied in images of 'outsider cool' individuals and groups.

Exclusion from 'life in the light' is not an unusual aspect of rebellious cool. Powerful and highly memorable images of subordinate or marginalised groups in modern society have frequently featured dark glasses, which spring to mind just a readily as the images of glossy celebrities. I will explore the relationships between notions of what is 'cool' and what is 'dark', thinking through a selected range of iconic images, beginning with the influential use of both sunglasses and the word 'cool' by jazz musicians of the 1940s and 1950s, to the use of dark glasses in by the Black Panthers in the 1960s, and from outsider women in dark glasses, in film noir from the 1940s, to Lolita in the 1960s and beyond, considering sunglasses role in the construction of female sexuality as both potentially empowered, threatening and deviant, and the relationships with theories of cool, (which have tended to focus almost entirely on male behaviour). What links these together is the frequency with which matters of visibility and invisibility have been seen as having political significance for individuals and groups in the struggle for liberation, and the tendency for constructions of black identity and female sexuality to be 'naturally' associated with the dark. Within this section I will also consider the criminal, and to some

extent the avant-garde artist, as types on the edge of society, often willing to deviate from the respectable rules of the day.

To help me with this I will refer to the 1949 essay by Robert K. Merton which offers an explanation of deviance deriving from Durkheim's concept of anomie. He identifies a number of what he calls 'adaptations' which could help to shed light, in particular, on 'outsider cool'. Anomie itself is a useful variation on Simmel's blasé or neurasthenic attitude in consideration of the idea that modern subjects may become 'detached' by virtue of the conditions of their existence. Merton's explanation of anomie focuses on the lack of social and psychological support, perceived indifference of leaders, lack of clarity in terms of goals and how to achieve them, and a general sense of pointlessness mirrored by an 'infinity' of wanting. Merton says that if a society's goals do not match up with the means to achieve them, anomie is the result, and that it can take various forms (1967:219). Three of the adaptations he identifies have potential for considering the outsider as in some way cool. The first is the 'Innovator', who believes in the goals, but does not have access to the means. Merton suggests that means unsanctioned by society will be used to uphold the goals. Typically, in the context Merton was writing about, the innovator will resort to crime to achieve wealth. In naming this type the 'innovator' we are led to see this criminal as ingenious – having the wherewithal to find alternative means to achieve the goals he or she has been given. Another type of interest is the 'retreatist' who lacks both the goals and the means. This kind of character will very likely be an outcast, alcoholic or drug addict, 'hobo' or 'bum'; crucially Merton says they are '*in* but not *of* society'. (ibid:209) 'Defeatism, quietism and resignation' are the means by which he absents himself from society. But in spite of this apparent failure to function, Merton's retreatist turns out to be an unlikely hero: '… if this deviant is condemned in real life, he may become a source of gratification in fantasy life…' (ibid). Here he cites Kardiner's speculation that

> …such figures in contemporary folklore and pop culture bolster 'morale and self-esteem by the spectacle of man rejecting current ideals and expressing contempt for them'… 'he is a great comfort in that he gloats in his ability to outwit the pernicious forces aligned against him if he chooses to do so and affords every man the satisfaction of feeling that the ultimate flight from social goals to loneliness is an act of choice and not a symptom of his defeat.' (Merton, 1967:209)

Merton's final outsider is the rebel. The rebel is in the same boat as the retreatist, but instead of giving up on both the goals and the means, he or she substitutes both for completely new ones. The inference is that this is a real rebel – someone who truly does

reject the entire system. Merton does not fix these categories rigidly, a person may move between them, and he even makes space for the artist or intellectual, suggesting that these are 'potential deviants' who can at least conform to a 'somewhat stabilised' system which substitutes prestige for financial reward within an 'auxiliary' set of values (ibid:211). To some extent, it could be argued that this auxiliary set of values should be encompassed within the rebel, since they are certainly not conformist, nor are they fully in retreat. A further point of interest in Merton's taxonomy, is the ritualist, who seems to fit beautifully with the idea of the 'square'. The ritualist has given upon the goals, but sticks doggedly to the means.

As much as anything, it is Merton's subjectivity here that strikes a chord – there is no objective reason to believe that all criminals are ingenious, nor that all those who try to be 'good' without hope of reward are necessarily to be pitied as creatures of futile obedience, yet in his language the valorisation of those who go against what is prescribed for them is insistent. A comparison with 'Bohemia' can be made here where the bohemian stands anywhere between the glamorous 'bum' and the artist. (Gold 1993, Wilson 2001) In fact, admiration for the qualities of those underneath, outside, is a thread running through studies of cool, bohemia, subculture, even in writing about the dandy (who forces his way all the way in and creates 'a rival aristocracy'). Academics are not immune to the allure of cool, especially that which, like them, exists somewhere on the edges, revelling in the counter-order of night.

A Portable night

In putting on dark glasses, we willingly engulf ourselves in night. Everything goes black. At least, to onlookers it appears as if it has. The expressive potential for this is great, since the 'meanings' of night are ancient in origin and many are widely shared, as Schivelbusch says 'In... most cultures, night is chaos, the realm of dreams, teeming with ghosts and demons... the night is feminine, it holds both repose and terror' (1995:81). Associations with status, glamour and even technology may push themselves forward, but these meanings are old and deep. Equally, this night is obviously of human design – we invoke night, we choose it. In some circumstances nature's night is not night enough – to wear sunglasses in the dark, is to invoke another layer of night. In contrast with my points about light as a metaphor for modernity, and sunglasses as a badge of immersion in that, darkness has been seen as modernity's enemy – the past, the unknown, nature to our culture, death to our life, and disease to our health. The enthusiastic ridding of dark streets, dusty corners and so on by architects and town planners has been a modern pre-occupation. Night is the home of the irrational, the unproductive; the home of 'moments excluded from the histories of the day, a counterpoint within time, space, and place

governed and regulated by the logic and commerce of economic rationality and the structures of political rule' (Palmer in Peretti, 2007:8).

I have identified a number of recurring themes in discussions of the connotations of night, building on Schivelbusch's comments; and these are: absence, death, blindness, evil, rebellion, sex and magic or enchantment. Night equals *absence* because of the great cosmic nothing 'from which our world was extracted' – Mauri says this sentiment is not only common in Judaeo-Christian religious thought and that culturally we 'relive this story every time night turns into day' (2007:64).This seems to suggest also an absence of history – ancient times, or even the place before time. In western representation, these ideas relate closely to certain functions of black, as a 'background' (Fer, 2007:77). Scientifically black is described as an *absence* of colour, because it absorbs all light. Mauri also identifies night as 'the natural habitat of evil', in the ancient Greek concept of the gloomy Hades, in contrast with the white light of goodness from above, with Jesus as 'the light of the world' (2007:64). It can also be an absence of life; death. As Fer says, the 'entwining of night and death is so culturally and psychically embedded that it appears nothing short of primordial' (Fer, 2007:74) Blackened eyes are themselves a sign of this. Fer describes an artwork, 'Night' by Jeff Wall, in which she misreads the representation of a very small figure as either blind or dead. The fact the eyes are open is only discernible from very close up – as she steps back and forth in front of the image, the figure's life and sight is given and taken away. Black sockets can be skull-like, two black holes connoting an *absence of sight*.

The meanings of black relate to modernity in ways which suggest detachment and refusal of 'ordinary' concerns . Black is the colour of interiority – it implies depth, seriousness and has long-held associations with thinkers – the 'habit noir' of the clergy, academics, formal legal attire (Lehmann, 2000). Black embodied the new, rational world, the machine age. The most visible tone against white, it is hard and uncompromising. Futurists wore black, so did Stalinists. Henry Ford painted all his model Ts black, Chanel did the same to her tubular dresses. The sense of detachment, withdrawal from vulnerable, human concerns, from the association with rational industrial masculinity makes it an ideal colour to be 'cool'. But there is a contradiction at the heart of these meanings; in the co-presence of rationality and irrationality, masculine and feminine, nature and sophisticated culture.

Blindness

Fig.108 'Victim of an explosion' by A. Sander, 1930

For the earliest wearer of dark glasses, life was literally, in the dark. Used to shade oversensitive eyes and to mask unsightly ones, in this context, as for the Terminator, shades can restore the appropriate image of human-ness to a creature without appropriate eyes (see fig.108). How the negative connotations of weak sight or blindness could be transformed into connotations of the 'highest modern value' (Poschart in Mentges, 2001) is a conundrum that I have already gone some way to answer. But the potential 'cool' values of being sightless or of diminished sight are worth exploring a little further.

As I have already explored in the section about modernity and the eye, the relationship between vision, perception and knowledge is not a straightforward one. The common sense, long established western idea is that 'to see is to know' has been the dominant way of understanding vision in the modern era, summed up by Jay as 'Cartesian perspectivalism' (1993:70) – the belief in the solid objectivity of a sight whose characteristics owe more to the functionality of the camera obscura than the workings of the human eye. Sight functions as the noblest of the senses, and to be excluded from the world of the visual in the modern world excludes from an ever increasing proportion of information and culture.

But in conjunction with the distinction between different kinds of light in the form of 'lux' and 'lumen', the way we think of the knowledge afforded by sight is also contradictory. The blind person may be perceived as at a physical disadvantage but the potential spiritual advantage is in immunity from the distractions and visual chaos of 'worldly' existence. This has value in religious discourse as well as in modern philosophy which Jay says increasingly came to denigrate vision (1993). As he says 'often the third eye of the soul is invoked to compensate for the imperfection of the two physical eyes. Often physical blindness is given sacred significance' (ibid:12). Paulsen (1987) traces this back to Brueghel's painting of the blind leading the blind, and to an 1856 literary reference to the idea that a superior second sight is signified by the blank gaze and upturned face (1987:205). He appears to see, but he does not focus. The logical conclusion is therefore that he sees something we do not. The blank, upturned gaze can be seen in images of transcendence, from the musician's performance of being 'lost in

music' to the raver's ecstasy-induced 'trance (figs.109-111)'; blindness can signify that superior detachment from the risks and distractions of the world implied in the aristocratic ethic, but it can take it one stage further, into a realm of knowledge accessible only to the few – possible only to those who are denied conventional vision. The poet, intellectual or artist can be viewed in this way as well as the guru; Paulsen cites Balzac's description of one of his characters (Lambert); 'in the dark chamber of his interior sight, the textual order of signs replaces the spatial order of sight, only to produce the impression of a clearer and more intense sight than that of the eyes.' (ibid:143).

Fig.109 Stevie Wonder c.1960   Fig.110 DJ James Lavelle 1994   Fig.111 Raver's 'altered vision' 1996

The definition of hip, a word sometimes used in close conjunction with cool from the mid-Twentieth century – is 'wise or knowing', about things unknown to 'the square'(Macadams, 2002), in other words to those inside straight society. This, along with Sarah Thornton's conclusion that hip or cool is status through 'subcultural capital' (1995:207) confirms the relationship between cool and exclusive knowledges. This can be seen even in an example like The Matrix, where the dark glasses are used in costume to signify 'raised consciousness' - they distinguish between those in the simulated world who know it is a simulation, and those who still believe it to be real). Hence, the tradition of the blind visionary may be mobilised through dark glasses to suggest a modern form

Fig.112 Shiva Saduh models Porsche sunglasses in Untold mag., 199 9   Fig.113 Shiva Saduh models for Oakley sunglasses in Untold mag., 1999

'second sight' which, through the associations with elite leisure and technology, could break free of the connotations of physical disability and dependence (see figs.112&113).

Night vision
In the city at night, the control over light (its presence and absence, and the resulting visibility and invisibility) has been the focus of power play between its inhabitants and its governors. To some extent, night's blanket of blindness gives anyone with a light an obvious advantage, but in fact, *not* to carry a light after dark has been seen as the more powerful position. Schivelbusch states that in medieval times, 'anyone who did not carry a light after dark was considered suspect and could immediately be arrested' (1995:82). This is because the light which lights your way, also lights *you* for the purposes of surveillance. Hence, to revel in darkness, appears to delight in the idea of undisclosed intent, disguise and subterfuge. Not to be lit, implies deceit and concealed identity. In medieval cities, the gates were locked, lanterns lit and it was expected that all good citizens would remain indoors until morning. Schivelbusch explains that the lights of the city were as much an instrument of rule and order as anything, and were viewed as such by city inhabitants, evidenced by the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth c practise of 'lantern smashing' in Paris and in Vienna, where plunging part of the street into darkness became an 'act of rebellion against the order that [the lantern] embodied.' (1995:98) Schivelbusch says that in Victor Hugo's novel Les Miserables 'darkness is the counter-order of rebellion' (1995:109).

Night can also be suggestive of loneliness and alienation – in the urban scene, a lone figure features as a sign of the anonymity and harsh conditions of modernity; 'being lost in the night is an index of the modern subject's alienation'… night reveals 'some unknown danger… beneath the veneer of modernity' (Fer, 2007:79) Nadar and Brassai both photographed Paris at night, the underground spaces and the 'demimonde' (ibid:76) Film noir emerges in the Twentieth century as the aestheticisation of the dreadful allure of modern urban night, the antithesis of the 'All American' dream, which is surely a dream of *day*.

Darkness can also be oppressive, heavy, black walls or curtains – it has 'interiority'. Black as absence, void (black hole) can also become black which stands out and pushes forward. (Fer, 2007:77) In the vast and impersonal city, away from the 'bright lights', darkness merges with tall empty buildings to add claustrophobia to alienation. As Schivelbusch concludes in his analysis of the meanings of light emerging from the industrialisation of the Nineteenth century, 'every lighted image is… the light at the end of the tunnel'. The tunnel is what I am interested in here, since the journey down this tunnel is usually

perceived as one you take alone. As Schivelbusch says 'social connections cease to exist in the dark' (1995:221)

However, like the beach, night is also a place for confusions and transformations of identity. In fairytales, for obvious example Cinderella, night is the time of the magical transformation, as I began to suggest in the chapter on modern light, where artificial light enables the night to become the scene of that 'second symbolic life' (Schivelbusch 1995:138, op.cit). The enchanting effect of light in the dark, whether by flames, candles, fireworks or fairy lights, enables illusion. Peter Greenaway says that as soon as candles were available to the many 'You could see the shadows and the glooms; you could in fact create them, engineering the lights and the half lights… reveal and obscure, emphasise and shade away and dramatise life like never before' (2007:71). So to exercise control over light in the darkness, to 'create' darkness, offers the route to an alternative reality, one with more drama, more significance. Schivelbusch: 'the power of artificial light to create its own reality is only revealed in the dark' (1995:221). Interestingly this can be viewed as site of greater 'authenticity' – Brassai said the Paris of night was 'at its most alive, its most authentic' (1976). In the modern era, night - just like the proliferation of light – can be viewed as a confrontation with the least forgiving, harshest experience of industrialised, urban life,(as Fer says, a sign of modern alienation) or it can be viewed as a relief from modernity's pressures. As Peretti says 'The bright lights are "a tonic light bath" for Poe's "man of the crowd". Everyday life is "almost intolerable" so a great deal of New York night life is purely escape from New York' (2007:19); an escape from the weight and relentless demands of industrialised life.

This again enables us to see the night-time wearing of sunglasses as both a heroic relationship with the forces of modernity *and* as an escape from a predetermined 'role' to the freedoms to play with identity in a way that 'feels' more 'real'. Fashion may have enabled this during the day, but the cover of night, and the low light, gives even greater capacity to create a convincing illusion. The putting on of budget glamour, passing, or even cross dressing in the conventional garb of the opposing gender, is helped not only by the anonymity, but also the enchanting light that softens the distinctions between one thing and another, the real and the fake.

Night is also strongly associated with sex, especially illicit sex. The demimonde of Brassai's early 1930s photographs is packed with what he calls 'night people' , who belong to the world of 'pleasure, of love, vice and drugs'… 'pimps, whores…. and inverts' (sic;

Brassai, 1976[13]). The abandonment of ordinary personal and sexual boundaries made much easier in the dark, as pondered over by Proust in reference to the homosexual practise of meeting at night in Parisian 'tearooms' (urinals) for anonymous sex (ibid). In New York, Peretti states that the presence of homosexuals and prostitutes was the most blatant indication that the night was a culturally alternate, liminal or inverted time (2007:8). The strength of these associations, can be seen in interpretations of night time images. For example, the connotations of a lone female, photographed by Brassai in an unforgiving

Fig.114 'Night Walker' by Brassai, 1932

urban space (fig.114), contrast sharply with those of a lone woman in a sunny, wholesome landscape (such as those photographed in the same decade by American photographer Dahl-Wolfe). In my analysis of these images earlier, there was a sense of independence, strength and freedom. But a woman standing alone in a dark, urban street is more likely to be read as a victim, or as a *'lady of the night'*. As Palmer suggests of the Manhattan of Georgia O'Keefe's 1929 painting, there is a 'heavy air shadowing the explicit acts, daring desires and unconscious mediations of a multitude of night wanderers' (Palmer in Peretti, 2007:6).

According to Peretti, these associations were key to the growing notoriety and popularity of the urban New York club scene as it emerged in the 1920s. And for Twentieth and Twenty-first century urbanites, the notion of 'nightlife' has added a different nuance to the connotations of the dark, which is significant to my concept of sunglasses as a 'portable night'. The nightclub has of course also provided the black backdrop for many iconic images of key figures associated with cool whose images have become synonymous with the wearing of sunglasses.

The night club's relationship with modern urban existence is highlighted by Peretti's assertion that they became 'an encapsulation of Americans strongly ambivalent feelings about modern life'. (2007:6) As much as there may have been concern about changing sexual attitudes and leisure behaviours, this also related to fear of crime. The idea of night as a time of evil has ancient and superstitious associations with demons, magic and witchcraft, but in the modern era this maps, for my purposes, on to the idea of the

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[13] Brassai 1976 does not contain page numbers

excluded, the criminal or the feared Other. Criminal activity is associated with night because of the greater vulnerability of the victims (sleeping or relaxing) and the greater invisibility of the criminals themselves. Shading the eyes with a hat brim, or later on with dark glasses, is an additional barrier to recognition, which has the benefit of detaching the criminal from the victim. Lack of concern for the victim is suggested by the presence of the glasses, exaggerating fear and therefore the power of the wearer. In Brassai's memoir (1976), he recalls the 'extra flat cap worn down over the eyes' by members of the underworld, 'as necessary for them as the gentleman's top hat'. He recounts a moment where he was attacked at knife point by a known mobster he had photographed, who he notes, pulled his cap down further over his forehead, just before pulling the switchblade. (ibid) The practise of wearing flat or peaked caps in violent street gangs seems to have occurred elsewhere – Pearson's essay 'Victorian Boys, we are here!' (1983) mentions them in relation to British turn of the century 'Hooligans', 'Scuttlers' and 'Peaky Blinders'; gangs identified with different cities but who wore quite similar clothing, which featured 'a cap set rakishly forward, well over the eyes' (Daily Graphic, 1900 in Pearson 1983:288), linking sartorial innovations to the 'Innovators' oeuvre. (In this case, they changed the sartorial goal as well as the means).

Fig.115 'Lucky' Luciano, 1947

The nightclub is identified as a locus for both criminal activity and criminal glamour (whose looks frequently derive from the overt display of achievement of the goal of wealth; e.g. fig.115), the pimps and drug dealers of course, but also as Peretti states 'confidence games… entrapments.. and other risks for [the] gullible' (2007:9). The idea of trickery and deceit, the risks of gambling and the important of 'face' in these environments is interesting for two reasons.

Firstly, I have found evidence to suggest that dark glasses were worn indoors even before the 1920s by some American poker players, who apparently used them to prevent others from reading their facial expression during the game, which experienced players knew, could reveal information about the cards (Harcombe-Cuff, 1912:637). The still facial expression, as I have already discussed, is a sign of inner resources or power, but the choice to *cover* a facial expression is different, because it always 'reveals' the fact that the truth is being concealed. When worn out of the legitimate 'functional' context, (i.e. outdoors in bright

light), or combined with other cues, this provides sunglasses with the power to signify *the lie*. In popular film, as you might expect, removing sunglasses has been used to signpost a moment of 'sincere communication' (as in Double Indemnity 1944), but it has also been used as a 'double bluff' where the cue of removing the sunglasses 'for sincerity' is used to manipulate and disarm (for example, in The Matrix 1999). This capacity to invoke the discourse of sincerity is central to the connection between sunglasses and dubious moral values.

The second aspect of this is what Peretti describes as a kind of urban superiority in terms being wise to the tricks and risks of this attractive but dangerous nightlife (2007:9), adding to my account of the risks to self and senses abounding in the modern city, begun with Simmel's idea of innumerable encounters ; in the nightclub, where you rub shoulders with the underworld, these encounters are more fraught than usual with the idea of being tricked or hoodwinked, perhaps making the need for 'protection' more acutely felt. As Peretti states, '...almost every kind of club customer harboured some fear of losing face and lucre to con artists in a treacherous corner of nightlife' (ibid). I will go on to explore some more of Goffman's ideas in connection with cool, 'face' and the management of such risks in the next chapter.

The material qualities of the nightclub are also worthy of consideration. In the same way that dark glasses detach the wearer from their environment, the club carves out a secluded space within the urban night, and the aesthetics of early clubs in New York worked hard to construct a further layer of detachment from the forces of day. Peretti says this was effected by features distinctive from the traditional restaurant or tavern – in the clubs there were either no windows at all, or blacked out windows, and overall they were 'dark, closeted, and different' (2007:10). They aspired 'to cut patrons off from the outside world' (ibid). As well as aesthetic and physical barriers (alleyways to pass through, stairs up or down) there were rituals of entry which highlighted the transgression of a boundary into a 'different' space – code words, door staff etc. During prohibition much of this was necessitated by the possibility of raids. Fear of detection will of course also have forced the exterior of the speakeasy itself to be 'in disguise'; and together these factors of detachment and self-exclusion seem to have enhanced their popularity and it continued to influence the design of clubs subsequently. The idea of the nightclub itself as a protective barrier against dominant forces is apparent in Peretti's statement that a suitable place for a speakeasy was 'any *enclosed area that might evade the gaze of law enforcement*'. (2007:10)

Another significant fact for cool, sunglasses and the nightclub is their role in the development of a cultural scene that allowed the cultures of white society to mix with the cultures of the black urban population and begin the process of what Kobena Mercer has called 'modern relations of interculturation' (Mercer in Gelder and Thornton 1997:430). The clubs of Harlem and the likes of the Bal Negres and the Cabaine Cubaine in Paris (Brassai, 1976; see fig.116) became very fashionable in the 1920s and 1930s, in fact

Fig.116 'The Cabaine Cubaine' by Brassai, 1932

Harlem became the centre of New York's club scene; adding to the anxieties and sensation of boundary-crossing about nightlife. Many clubs, certainly in New York, catered only for white people but in the black run clubs white audiences were common, even more so once curious celebrities like Charlie Chaplin started to attend. In Paris, Josephine Baker was the focus of a more generalised Orientalist fascination with the exotic other; Brassai recalls elegant automobiles spilling out high society women desperate to dance with black men (1976). The Riviera set (who I discussed in relation to the tan and other kinds of identity play against the values of the dominant class) were also involved, abandoning the elegance of parties and restaurants for the vibrancy and presumably apparent authenticity of the new night club culture. Scott Fitzgerald explained 'we go because we prefer to rub shoulders with all sorts and kinds of people' (Peretti, 2007:12) . Many members of the underworld and the elite, and artistic/bohemian groupings became virtually nocturnal in this period; Brassai himself one such example in Paris, the Mayor of New York another. The status of participating in nightlife was contained in the access to leisure time, expendable income and in the lack of concern for bourgeois or protestant values of hard work, thrift and sobriety. This blasé attitude to such concerns could be afforded both by those who have much more than enough, and by those who have nothing to lose.

The whole scene is 'outside' of something, outside of 'respectable' society; but perhaps some are more outside than others. Peretti also describes the interiors of 1920s clubs which traded in 'racist representations' of African cultures and 'jungle stereotypes'. He

says that this gave a 'new face to the traditional identification of black people with private, covert, and illicit urges and behaviour' (2007:19). The power relations in these clubs are complex and are important to my analysis because they exemplify some ideological associations between 'people of colour' and the idea of blackness, darkness, of night, and of the nightlife, in a physical and historical space where cool became significantly linked with sunglasses, among jazz musicians.

Outsider Cool, Shades and Jazz

Fig.117 1957

Fig.118 1957

Fig.119 Miles Davis on stage, 1958

According to Macadams (2002) and Pountain & Robins (2000), the origins of contemporary meanings of 'cool' are located in the culture arising out of the jazz scene in America in the first half of the Twentieth century. This coincides with the earliest examples of sunglasses being worn as part of a distinctive 'look' in the nightclub setting (I have found no evidence that the earlier examples I found in Poker playing ever functioned as part of a known or desirable group aesthetic). Given the history and development of popular music, clubbing and subcultures, jazz musicians seem to be the first of many to use sunglasses as an expression of oppositional, outsider (as in subcultural) cool. Macadams' work

describes a strong trajectory of connections in 'cool' attitudes and values, as he says, within bebop, beat and the American avant-garde. The frequent use of the word cool as a term of approval in America is first seen within jazz, so it seems highly significant that jazz musicians should have been the innovators of the wearing of dark glasses when performing at night, and indoors. Jazz is also the location of the iconic connection between dark glasses and cool in the form of Miles' Davis 1957 album, 'Birth of the Cool', whose cover features an extremely dark photographic image of Davis playing in shades (see figs.117-119), although Macadams states that they were worn by Charlie Parker in an image of Hines' band on stage in 1943. Macadams identifies the dark glasses as functioning as a marker of his difference to Dizzy Gillespie (also featured in the image); saying that they are at '...opposite ends of the life-style spectrum. Gillespie is on Hines' extreme right, and looks earnest and clean cut. Parker, on the extreme left, is the only guy in the ensemble wearing dark glasses' (2002:41). Gillespie is described by Macadams as having a stable family background and marriage, Parker as a heroin user (the 'supreme junkie' of jazz) and sexually promiscuous, if not deviant (ibid).

Heroin

Macadams' discussion of the cool demeanour is frequently connected to illegal drug use. A significant number of jazz musicians on heroin who described the effect of the drug as 'cooling', and who, Macadams notes, had to rehearse their cool behaviour while trying to score: 'Junkies have to be cool, because junkies can't afford to attract attention. Everything has to be understated, circuitous, metaphorical, communicated in code. Loud voices are uncool. Hurried, overstated behaviour is "too frantic, Jim", as the junkies used to say'(2002:56). A connection between sunglasses and drug use begins here, through association with celebrity drug addicts like Bird (Charlie Parker) and Davis (link with Merton's retreatist?). This may have been reinforced by one potential rationale for the wearing of sunglasses in the musician's desire to obscure the visible evidence of illegal drug-use (the glazed expression, dilated pupils), but in the process of obscuring eyes with dark glasses, the *evidence* is replaced with a *legitimate* representation of a similar 'glazed' expression, blankness. This has the potential to both conceal and display the engagement in illegal activity.

If to be cool is to be detached (from potentially threatening conditions, from the vulnerability of emotion, from the dominant culture) nothing expresses this as effectively as both the knowledge and pursuit of illegal drugs, and the transcendent state of being 'high' when having scored. In fact Macadams cites Clarence Major's tracing of the root of 'cool' in the Mandingo word for high, 'gone out'. (2002:14) This connects with the ideas of spiritual transcendence in the idea of the blind seer discussed above, as well as the

idea of sacred knowledge – knowledge which others cannot share. In this context, and in a slippery way, dark glasses invoke a wealth of potential meanings all of which point to superior detachment from the 'ordinary world' and its rules. This is confirmed by their use on stage and in the promotional poster for a controversial off Broadway play called The Connection of 1959 – in which jazz, drug addiction and cool are explored, including the appeal of this scene to disenchanted members of white society. The dealer's portrayal is apparently based on Miles Davis. (ibid)

As well as drug use, there are two other main themes which can be usefully teased apart in relation to the outsider cool of the jazz musician in dark glasses. The first is the issue of black history and politics. Much of Macadams' account emphasises the development of cool as a survival tactic for black people, especially males, in response to experiences of slavery and racism. This raises some questions about the role of dark glasses as worn within the original clubs but also in the images which would go on to become iconic, and which would ultimately take the style of the jazz musicians out into the area of mainstream pop culture. These questions relate to the in/visibility of black masculinity. Secondly there is the issue of culture and the status of the musician as artist, and the artist as outsider. (It is interesting to consider that while some visual artists have become associated with the wearing of sunglasses it is nowhere near as prevalent as it is within late Twentieth and Twenty-first century popular music.)

A 1963 essay by Howard S. Becker (1997) entitled 'The culture of a deviant group: the "jazz" musician' describes the circumstances in which musicians may become deviant, and what he terms isolated or even 'self-segregated' (1997:62). He describes the culture of the jazzman in the terms of the hip (or even just 'musician') versus the square, downplaying somewhat the issue of race, and emphasising the way jazz musicians uphold the value of 'the artistic individual' (ibid:58). Becker's essay is obviously insufficient to fully explain cool and the wearing of dark glasses among black jazz musicians but it does contain some ideas unexplored elsewhere, which potentially give some different historical reference points for the choices made by jazzmen to wear sunglasses in nightclubs, and to raise the idea of the personality, the dandy's 'inherently noble self' as an aspect of jazz formations of cool.

Becker does not situate the exclusion or deviance of the jazz musician entirely in the idea of 'racial otherness', nor is it contained in the law-breaking of drug taking. For Becker (ibid:55) it is 'unconventional' cultural values which mark them out as deviant (which perhaps aligns them most closely in Merton's terms with the rebel/retreatist artist). It is the musicians' status within a 'service occupation' (1997:57) which is most significant to

Becker. A worker in a service occupation 'comes into more or less direct and personal contact with the ultimate consumer... of his work' (ibid). He says this means that often 'the client is able to direct or attempt to direct the worker at his task and to apply sanctions of various kinds, ranging from informal pressure to the withdrawal of his patronage' (ibid:57). He says that people in service occupations tend to believe the clients incapable of judging the quality of their work, therefore they 'bitterly resent' the clients power, hence 'defence against outside interference becomes a preoccupation...and a subculture grows around this set of problems' (ibid:57).

His research includes some interviews with both what he calls 'jazzmen' and 'commercial musicians'. Although the commercial musicians are more prepared to bend to client demand, he demonstrates how both share a commitment to the ideal of the artist within jazz. Musical ability is seen as a 'mysterious gift' which sets him apart from others – this 'sacred' gift should therefore render him 'free from control by outsiders who lack it' (ibid:58) Even among jazz 'colleagues' the strongest code is the one against interfering with another musician's work 'on the job' (ibid). It seems the aesthetics of jazz are highly individualistic; the emphasis on improvisation and therefore diversion from the original tune puts the individual musician in control; the only one who knows what is going on. However in the live performance within the club environment, squares in the audience ultimately have the power to pull the plug; as one musician said 'Sure, they're a bunch of fucking squares, but who the fuck pays the bills?' (1997:61). The tension in performance seems to have been very real for the musicians Becker spoke to. One of them defended his willingness to play commercial music by saying 'at least... when you get off the stand, everybody in the place doesn't hate you' (ibid). This indicates the audience's resistance to the avant-garde, or at least the common differences in aesthetic values between musicians and audiences which have the potential to create antagonism.

Although Becker does not mention the wearing of dark glasses as an 'involvement shield', or as an instrument of the 'anti-gaze', he does goes on to describe some other attempts to isolate and self-segregate in the performance space: 'Musicians lacking the usually provided physical barriers [the platform or stand] often improvise their own and effectively segregate themselves from the audience' (ibid:63). One of his interviewees, Jerry, recalls shifting a piano at a wedding reception gig so it would cut him off from the audience. Asked by his colleague to move it, he refused, saying 'No, man. I have to have some protection from the squares' (ibid).
Furthermore Becker found that:

Many musicians almost reflexively avoid establishing contact with members of the audience. When walking among them, they habitually avoid meeting the eyes of the squares for fear this will establish some relationship on the basis of which the square will then request songs or in some other way attempt to influence the musical performance. (1997:63)

Evidently the artistic independence of the performer is preserved by avoiding communication with the audience. Becker says 'patterns of isolation and self-segregation' are expressed not only in the act of playing, but also in 'the larger community' which 'intensifies the musician's status as an outsider, through the operation of a cycle of increasing deviance' (ibid:63). The wearing of an accessory which enables detachment makes the 'barrier' mobile – the portable barricade. At the same time, it expresses the artistic 'difference' or 'specialness' of the musician and expresses the idea that there is something about them that 'ought' to be guarded (in much the same way as for the celebrity).

The jazzman, the dandy and the flâneur
The desire for physical detachment from the audience on aesthetic grounds is not the only aspect of Becker's respondents' behaviour which relates to the notions of cool I have considered so far. The disdain for others of more 'blunted sensibilities' inherent in aristocratic and dandy forms of cool is already evident but there is also evidence of a tolerance towards traditional discriminatory factors of difference within the group. In Becker's essay it seems that the distinction between the insider (of the musicians' world) and the outsider (in this case, the square) is made on the basis of the rejection of the dominant culture in favour of a shared set of aesthetic signifying codes. The iterant lifestyle of many jazz musicians and the capacity to observe the changing crowds from the distance of the stand, Becker says further intensifies their outsider status.

This could draw the jazz musician into a conception of the flâneur, with his potentially tragic 'triple detachment' (Shields,1994:77). Becker's respondents expressed wonder at what it felt like to live a life up on the stand, they implied great tolerance for all kinds of others *and* disgust, which often concluded with a detached statement such as, '...When you sit on that stand up there, you feel so different from others... you learn too much being a musician... you see so many things and get such a broad outlook on life...' (1997:65). Another said 'It don't mean a fucking thing to me. Every person's entitled to believe his own way, that's how I feel about it.' (ibid) Just like the flâneur, the detachment of 'the poet' can be seen as unshakeable superiority to or acceptance of the chaos of modern life. Thus, elements of jazzmen's cool derive from their status as artists

in the modern world, courageously exploring the outer reaches of culture. As Baudelaire said, marked by a special ability 'to be away from home and yet to feel at home anywhere, to be at the very centre of the world and yet to be the unseen of the world' (1972:400, op.cit)

Black visibility and masculinity

When applied to the black male, the idea of the flâneur as 'the unseen of the world' takes on an additional resonance, as of course does the whole business of the gaze, and therefore, the signifying potential in both the act of wearing dark glasses and in representations of jazz men in their shades. It is already apparent from what Peretti and Brassai desribe of the emerging club scenes in New York and Paris, that black men and women were subjected to the white gaze in club spaces, and reproduced as spectacle, fetishising the black body or demonising it, potentially reproducing gazes of ownership, dominance, fear and desire. (This will be especially significant to black masculinity, since to be the object of the gaze is traditionally a feminine position). Yet at the same time a theme running through much writing about black experience is that of 'invisibility'. A novel of the period, Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man (1947) dramatises this idea with the figure of a black man who lives underground, amid dazzling illuminations he has installed, hundreds of light bulbs powered by energy illegally tapped from the corporation. This allegorical illustration of black experience suggests a rebellious retreat into a space where the world can be remade according to different rules, where visibility can be achieved. As Macadams puts it '...like Shakespeare's Coriolanus telling those who would send him into exile, "I'll banish *you*. There is a world elsewhere," they traded their invisibility in the known world for the enhanced power of vision and exploration in an as yet undiscovered but more compelling world of their own invention' (2007:46) Hence, the notion of vision, the gaze and in/visibility has been a key idea for modern black cultural history and theory, as well as a focus for 'cool' practices. This helps to account for the continued resonance of the image of a black musician in dark glasses. Although the political power of cool is contested by many – among them Frank, and Pountain and Robins, Kobena Mercer says that in the 1940s context 'where blacks were excluded from... "democratic" representation', subversive style enabled a 'sense of collectivity among a subaltern social block' (1997:431), and 'encoded a refusal of passivity' (ibid).

Miles Davis, perhaps the jazz man most famous for wearing shades is described by Gray as a 'modern innovator' in the aesthetics of music and in personal style' who 'challenged dominant cultural assumptions about masculinity and whiteness' (1995:401). Gray, who writes from a personal perspective, says that '...for many of us,[he] articulated ... a

different way of knowing ourselves and seeing the world' (ibid). He 'explicitly rejected the reigning codes of propriety and place' (ibid). It seems sunglasses indicate this 'different way of seeing and knowing the world', but in the figure of the black jazz musician the possible 'cool' connotations of sunglasses are ambiguous and multi-layered, as I will demonstrate.

Black on black

The glasses favoured by jazz musicians are all black – dense black frames and lenses. There are many ways in which dark glasses have the potential to signify when worn by the 'dark-skinned': the signification of gleaming blackness is doubled, by layering more black on top of black. This has the potential to invoke the complexity of all I have explored about the meanings of night, blackness and the nightclub in terms of what they may be to be feared, but also the sense of freedom and sensuality. This intensifies the mystique of the 'exotic body'. The agency implied in innovating this unconventional style calls to mind Pountain and Robins' useful expression of the tendency for the excluded to exaggerate and highly stylise the very things which are used to marginalise; 'I make a virtue of what might exclude me' (1999:8). If you say I am black, I will make myself gloriously and noticeably blacker. If you will not see me, then I will make myself gloriously and noticeably invisible. If you say I have no right to knowledge, I will make myself gloriously and noticeably blind.

Absent presence, avoidance and self-possession

They also enable the black musician before a white audience to be both displayed and hidden, present and absent, which may offer a sense of protection from or circumnavigation of the problematics of being a black performer paid to entertain not just philistines or squares but in fact the people who oppress him. In Goffman's terms this could be seen as a form of avoidance – 'the surest way for a person to prevent threats to his face' (2005:64). He cannot avoid the context, but he can circumnavigate it. The resulting 'absent presence' has a self-possessed mystique.

For, in cutting yourself off from the other, you deny your need for them. By excluding yourself from the possibility of communication, there is an implication of self-sufficiency which it seems is ideally suited to the musical genre of jazz, allowing the dark glasses to function as a sign of a 'jazz' sensibility. In fact, Jafa states

> Classically, jazz improvisation is first and foremost signified self-determination...
> For the black artist to stand before an audience, often white, and to publicly
> demonstrate her(sic) decision-making capacity, her agency, rather than the

replication of another's agency i.e. the composers, was a profoundly radical and dissonant gesture... There is no 'self-determination' without 'self-possession'. And 'self possession' is *the* existential issue for black Americans.' (Jafa in Tate, 2003:249)

Insubordination

The capacity for wearing dark glasses to be an affront already explored (for example in the analysis of the image of Mary Sykes) is also given a more urgent expression in the live jazz context. Even between men of the same rank it is an affront, because it fails to offer the 'open hand', to declare you have no 'ill intent' towards them. It radically alters the balance of power in the exchange. As Goethe had said, a hundred years before the jazz musicians, to be the wearer of glasses in an exchange with another is to 'penetrate my most sacred thoughts' and, with his 'armed glances...destroy all fair equality between us' (1830, in Flick,1949:29). Dark glasses also impede your view – especially when worn in the dark, which gives an additional sense that what lies beyond the wearer may be of little interest to them. It is the subordinate's role to care what the superior is doing and thinking, which of course the glasses disrupt, saying, 'I am not really paying attention to you'. So if there is already an assumption of hierarchy, this will be reversed. In his notes on deference and demeanour, Goffman points out that 'between superordinate and subordinate we may expect to find … the superordinate having the right to exercise certain familiarities which the subordinate is not allowed to reciprocate' (1967:64). The anti-gaze of the dark glasses blocks this right to an extent, enabling the musician to appear to comply whilst 'insinuat[ing] all kinds of disregard (ibid:58). For a black musician of the 40s and 50s to wear dark glasses is to refuse the interrogation of the white viewer, while simultaneously trading on and displaying the fetishised body, and inviting the taboo question of what the black man or woman behind the glasses might be thinking – taboo because it is not the object's job to think, it is just to be.

Avant-garde

This in turn again raises the connections between bebop and the intellectual avant-garde, where berets and glasses 'signalled not only the musicians' personal rejection of their own all-too-recent rural roots, but an affinity with the European cultural avant-garde'. (Macadams, 2002:45) The love affair between Miles Davis and Juliette Greco, meetings between Charlie Parker and Jean-Paul Sartre created a milieu in which both spectacles and dark glasses could function as a signifier of the outsiderhood of the intellectual. In many ways, Black musicians were responding to the conditions of modernity, which for them, were frequently experienced in an exaggerated way, what Jafa calls 'the

unprecedented existential drama and complexity of the circumstance' requiring 'new forms with which to embody new experiences' (in Tate, 2003:249) The residual imagery of slavery in the popular imagination may connect black Americans with those 'all too recent rural roots' (op.cit) but in fact, Coleman reminds us that 'Slavery had been a preview to what its like to be a machine' (in Tate, 2003:74).

Hence it is also important to acknowledge the growing currency of sunglasses as a signifier of modernity and of 'life in the light'; the sign of status and achievement within modern capitalism. For the black jazz man at the time, the associations with technology, speed and glamour could function as evidence of distance from the 'rural past', from the ideological association between blackness and 'nature' and as evidence of having transcended the conditions of being 'shut out of access to illusions of 'making it''' (Mercer, 1997:431). The possibility of achieving significance in the modern world, to move from the position of atom to star, is all the more elusive for some.

This wealth of potentially useful meanings of dark glasses for the jazz musician goes a long way to explaining the iconic status these images went on to have, as well as the subsequent uses in later representations both of musicians and of black males. We can only really guess at the meanings of the dark glasses in the jazz context based on what was possible, but in particular later use of dark glasses in imagery of the radical Black Nationalist group the Black Panthers, there is more concrete evidence to suggest a self-conscious strategy at work.

In 1969, Black Panther education minister George Murray was photographed delivering a speech in dark glasses to university students by Stephen Shames (see fig.120).

Fig.120 George Murray, Black Panther by Stephen Shames, 1969

Documentary images frequently show numerous members of the group wearing the same shades, including Kathleen Cleaver (fig.121) , along with black beret and military jacket. The Black Panthers were very aware of the power of the media and the need for strong visual messages to promote their ideas and enhance their political presence. The graphic impact of dark glasses in print and their wealth of connotations mean that dark glasses in a newspaper or broadcast instantly create curiosity. As an organised but unofficial political group, operating with violence outside the law, the shades take on a different significance from the images of the jazz musician.

Fig.121 'Kathleen Cleaver' by Stephen Shames, 1970

Though virtually identical in design to those worn by jazz musicians, the warrior/military significance of the glasses is mobilised by the presence of the gun in many pictures. The wearing of dark glasses also goes against the traditional necessity for political leaders to communicate sincerity or trustworthiness with an apparently open face. It seems the Black Panthers sacrifice the ability to communicate with live audience in front of them, for a statement which is in fact aimed at the American audience at large, in a use of sunglasses which suggests Carter and Michael's 'unhidden hidden gaze' (2003:275). Political activists are defined by *intent* to do or change something, but the masking of the eyes states clearly that the Black Panthers disallow their audience to fully read it. For a group to do this en masse, in a uniform, indicates that this unknown intent is shared by the group; (Carter's 'communitas' gaze). It seems that this image self-consciously joins the fear of the modern warrior and the power of detachment from emotion to stereotypical fear of the black other, with all the connotations of criminality, the 'black beast' thrown in. Hughey's essay on the contents of the Black Panther newspaper indicates that what he calls the 'counter-hegemonic gaze' was a major preoccupation of numerous articles (2009:online), that there was a conscious effort to subvert the white patriarchal gaze 'which tended to 'see' the black male as emasculated victim or monstrous, hypermasculine threat' (ibid). The other principle of the black panthers' approach to representation was the notion of self-determination. Hughey says they represented themselves as 'industrious, productive, adaptable' and as 'wielders of intellectual ideas' (ibid). As well as blocking the objectifying patriarchal gaze, I have already argued that sunglasses carry connotations of the flexibility of identity, a superior involvement in or 'adaptation' to urban industrial modernity and, (in the particular context of mid-century interculturation between jazz and avant-garde philosophy) the capacity to suggest 'outsider intellectualism'. The recognition of black heritage, with an insistence on new forms of black identity seems to have been the thinking behind the logo for a black arts movement begun in the 60s called 'africobra', which featured a tribal mask in a pair of dark shades.

The 'improvised' uniform (similarly to that of the early fighter pilots studied by Mentges) was unofficial - borrowed bits and pieces from other modes of dress. The choice to use shades demonstrates how by the 1960s, dark sunglasses had accrued a complex range of meanings which had the capacity to suggest not only the general idea of detachment or transformation, but specifically where black people had come from (exclusion, demonization, stereotypes of darkness and night, pre-civilisation), where they were going (modernity, wealth, status, glamour, self-exclusion or exclu*siveness*), and the heroic struggle or battle (connotations of military, armour) it would take to get there, which continued to resonate through the latter decades and musical innovations of the Twentieth century (fig.s122&123) .

Fig.122 'Public enemy' c.1980   Fig.123 LLCoolJ c.1990

The Femme Fatale

Another hugely significant cultural figure in the construction of modern cool and its relationship with dark glasses is the femme fatale. Unlike the jazz musician or the black panther, there is no social 'centre' or 'ground' for the femme fatale which has readily attracted attention as a scene of 'cool' subculture (in spite of the potential to see the femme fatale as a relation of the powerful courtesans of the Nineteenth century) . She exists, in the flickering lights of the cinema projection, the embodiment of the fear of female power in the modern world (Snyder, 2001:155). The femme fatale of 1940s film noir, has been the focus of substantial critical attention – but none of the attempts to theorise cool per se I have been working with have recognised her as a type of modern cool. But she is certainly an 'Innovator' in her substitution of means to reach shared goals, she displays the narcissism identified by Pountain and Robins.

In film noir, the associations between the dark and the feminine occupy a space in opposition to healthy, democratic, bright modernity. The femme fatale's enduring attraction to audiences and critics alike, trades on her command of the activity of the

eye. Laura Mulvey's work about the male gaze in Hollywood cinema famously demonstrated the objectification of the female body for heterosexual male spectatorship – but it has also been acknowledged that the ability to draw the male gaze can be a source of power for female performers (Bruzzi, 1997). The art of seduction has long included the batting eyelids, the fluttering of fans, and as we have already seen, the wearing of masks. The appearance of Barbara Stanwyck in <u>Double indemnity</u> (1944), in a pair of dark glasses in a supermarket (fig.124) is an early example of the use of shades to

connote the 'evil woman' in film. The associations with female sexuality and defiance are particularly strong in film noir and although 'dark' uses of sunglasses do not occur much in film culture until the fifties, the femme

Fig.124 Barbara Stanwyck in <u>Double Indemnity</u>, 1946

fatale's eye is frequently shaded, with either heavy lids (Dietrich/Bacall/Garbo), veils, long shiny fringes, hat brims, cigarette smoke and the shade of venetian blinds in the classic noir aesthetic (fig.125). In masking the eyes, the suggestion of having been rendered blind could intensify the objectification, removing the woman's power to

see and know. But in film noir, the woman is not passive enough to make this a preferred reading.

In <u>Double Indemnity</u>, the sunglasses are part of Stanwyck's character's attempts to 'evade the gaze of the law' – as they are already on her trail, but they also seem to feature as a signifier of her 'inauthenticity' and 'insincerity' – as noted by Naremore (in Snyder, 2001:159) ; 'blatantly provocative and visibly artificial [with] lacquered lipstick, sunglasses and chromium hair.' ; 'cheaply manufactured'. In noir, mirror shots abound, as Snyder says, functioning as a sign of duplicity and

Fig.125 Lauren Bacall – cool noir glamour with shaded eye aesthetic

that 'nothing is as it seems' (ibid:160), calling to mind the notion of glamour as deceit (Wilson, op.cit).

Although these images are attractive, given my analysis of how sunglasses can function as an affront in face to face interactions, the shaded eyes of these women not only situate

them in the grim alienation of the modern city at night, but in their refusal of the male gaze they also resurrect the threat of castration to both the male 'victim' within and the male spectator of the film. Given the historical connections between the dark glasses and masculinity through war, sport and industry, as well as the specific qualities of the glasses (plain, relatively free of expressive decoration in both form and surface) dark glasses *could* function in the image of the femme fatale as a taking up of the masculine position of the voyeur, enabling us to see the wearing of dark glasses as a threat to conventional codes of gender within visual culture.

Discussions of the femme fatale have focused on the interpretation of her as a 'woman'. But it is interesting to consider her not only as a woman but also as a modern subject in relation to my discussion so far. She is virtually a machine whose shaded eyes contribute to her cool in the senses of detachment, narcissism and uncompromising style, for she is always polished, flawless, in clothing that speaks of a powerful ability to play the semiotic system of fashion to create a convincing image of self. Her modernity (again, going against the ascribed role for women to be guardians of tradition, hearth and home (Sparke, 1994), is expressed through her ability to be blasé in the night spaces of the city, through independence (unlike so many Hollywood heroines, she makes herself the creature she is, she does not simply appear fully formed, like the commodity fetish, we see the labour in her self-production as she sits before the mirror) and her competence with technology; since the femme fatale is frequently also holding a gun.

The femme fatale is cool. She is a figure with a superior adaptation to certain challenging aspects of modernity. The mythic power of the femme fatale is in the seamless, detached mastering of contexts, relationships and image within the modern environment but and even outside of the law. She may be evil, and she may end up disgraced or even dead in order to uphold the law of the 'good woman', but the value of cool is also upheld in these narratives, since her demise frequently occurs after a lethal 'loss of cool' – becoming desperate, uncontrolled, emotionally overwrought - in the narrative's resolution. And this dangerous, rich and complex mix of associations between the feminine, the dark, the duplicitous, androgyny and the play of power within the alienation of the modern city can be economically conveyed in an image of a woman's shaded eyes. The use of sunglasses in film imagery also frequently narrates pathological emotional detachment from 'the act'. This can be the case as in a typical film noir moment of Leave Her to Heaven (1946) where the femme fatale watches expressionless as she allows a small boy to drown (fig.126), or, as in a neo-noir film like Nikita (dir. Luc Besson,1992), where her newly

Fig.126 Still from <u>Leave Her to Heaven</u>, 1945

discovered sensitivity must be masked from herself in order to fulfil her life or death obligation to act as an assassin). The dehumanising of the character through the detachment may also enable us to view certain scenes without feeling the same level of involvement. (In a sense we, as voyeurs, may often be similarly detached from the act).

Fille Fatale

The extent to which sunglasses, by the early sixties, could function as an indicator of a particular kind of sexualised femininity is evidenced by the case of Stanley Kubrick's film <u>Lolita</u> (1962), originally written by Nabokov and first published in America in 1958. The book and its original cover exercised the literary right to refrain from defining the appearance of the young girl in terms of shared cultural codes of attractiveness, sexuality or seductive power, and apparently this was Nabokov's express intent, since he was 'not in the business of objective sexualisation'. (Vickers, 2008:8) Kubrick's film, however, places Lolita herself far more squarely in the role of 'fille fatale' (Hatch, 2002) – it was 'her fault'.

In the film, she wears sunglasses, which can be used to underpin this idea by suggesting the femme fatale's 'evil seduction' but also her independence and self-control. Carter notes the way she looks over the top of the glasses, identifying the 'fleeting partial gaze', which he says invites the viewer in beyond the barrier of the glasses. The sunglasses function in this way as a metaphor for the possibility of transgression of the boundaries of the body. By the aesthetic of the appearance and disappearance of her eyes, Lolita gains Humbert's erotic gaze and beckons him to cross the threshold.

The film poster, photographed by Bert Stern 1962 (fig.127), adds a further layer of meaning to the image of Lolita in sunglasses – as Vickers says, his image is 'an entirely bogus Lolita' (Vickers, 2008:8); her sunglasses are now heart-shaped while she licks a red lollipop. The connotations of the femme fatale merge with both the 'cheap and tawdry'; the demonic, and notions of girlish pop culture - love hearts, dressing up and sweetie eating, in an image which displays the memorable intensity of the quintessential pop image – red, shiny, close up. The film poster, like the advert, is forced to reduce an epic voyage to a schematic map and an anchor; and in so doing, this iconic image evidences
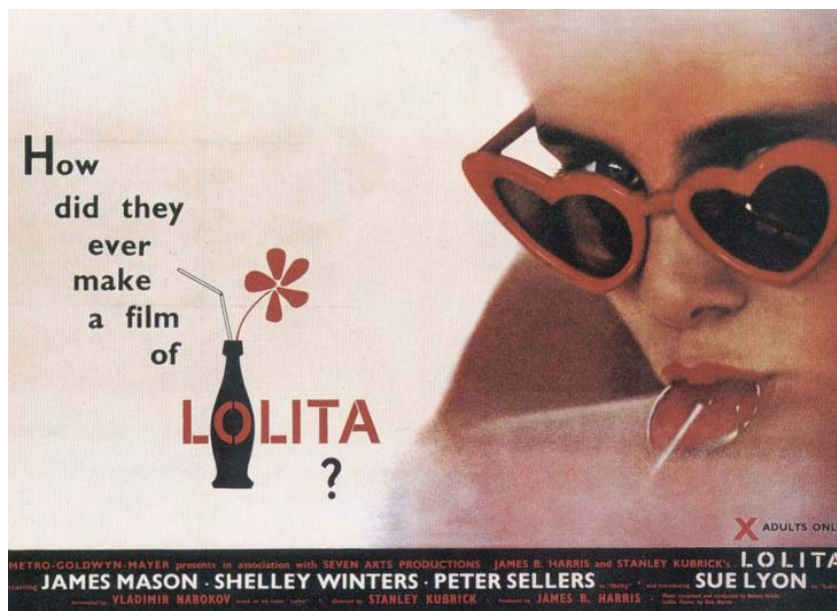
Fig.127 Poster by Bert Stern for Stanley Kubrick's film, 1962

sunglasses' emergence in the early 1960s as a visual sign of a precocious and potentially dangerous female sexuality, which also displays the cool of the nonchalant disregard for rules and traditional virtues suggested by frivolous sunglass forms (discussed in chapter eight).

Summary

I have necessarily focused here on a small range of examples, but enough to demonstrate the extent to which dark glasses became associated with a whole range of dark and outsider values, from blindness, to black identity, to the avant-garde artist and the femme fatale. This happened at roughly the same time that sunglasses were emerging as a sign of elite glamour, democratic leisure and healthy modernity, moving from lighter frames and more feminine forms to the double dark of frames and lenses which became the iconic look of the 1950s and 1960s. Cool as a politicised stance may be seen in the visual self-presentation of the Black Panther movement. But comparing the cool traits previously explored with Merton's taxonomy of adaptations to anomie, reveals some striking resemblances to all but his conformist type, suggesting that cool might be a useful adaptation for anyone in modern society who may feel that the goals and means provided do not match up.

The association between cool and violence, deceit and narcissism is evident in many of these images of shaded eyes, necessarily glamorising these traits and behaviours. This has been seen as problematic for some of those studying cool as an attractive and persuasive

force in modern life, suggesting that cool is at best impotent to change anything and at worst destructive and anti-social. However, this chapter shows the extent to which it is not necessarily the power of violence, deceit and self-love which is at the heart of cool's attraction. Instead, it is the ability to successfully manage modernity, to somehow transcend the insignificance and instability of atomised existence.

In the next chapter I will consider this in more detail, looking at the intensification of the risks and instabilities of modern life as a justification for the increasing signifying potency of sunglasses and the increasing applicability of the contemporary cool demeanour to ever-widening sections of modern society.

Chapter ten

Head for the Shade: the spread of cool

In this chapter I want to look at reasons for a mass audience to 'head for the shade', both in the sense of aligning themselves with or aspiring to 'Life in the dark' and in the sense of seeking protection or relief. I will begin by briefly acknowledging the historical movement of sunglasses wearing from the black jazz musicians into white avant-garde/subcultural groups.

Then I will consider the value of Goffman's 1967 concept of 'composure' as a defence against what he calls 'fatefulness' (risk), as a possible conceptualisation of cool which can be seen as especially useful to those whose activities are high in 'problematic consequentiality' (2005:175), but which is also useful to the 'socially vulnerable' (ibid:227). This theory does not locate cool in a particular social grouping (although his essay is ostensibly about gamblers); nor as a response to anomie; it focuses on the benefits of being 'composed' to those involved in any kind of face to face interaction. But it does introduce a relationship between cool, risk, physical control of 'small movements' (like the eye) and what he calls 'character' (ibid:217), but which also relates to status and personal dignity which I think could provide a useful explanation of the desire in the mass, to emulate the 'outsider'.

Following on from that, I will begin to consider a variety of theories contributing to what Lasch calls a self 'under siege' (1984), as perhaps the connotations of dark glasses I explore become bleaker. From this, we should begin to see the ideas of tragedy and heroism becoming blurred in images of sunglasses, as what could be termed a 'postmodern' way of viewing the world elides the distinction between nihilism and glamour, rebellion and complicity, and I move on to the final chapter, Neither/both: 'ecliptic cool'.

To understand how the use of sunglasses goes beyond Hollywood celebrities and beyond the black American jazz musicians and activists, strong arguments based on emulation or appropriation can be constructed. I have already shown how sunglasses could emerge as a sign of success in modern American culture, and made cheaply available as a token of

lifestyle through the fashion industry. And in a number of significant accounts of cool, the same is done in respect of the appropriation of other aspects of black American culture by white western people, for example in Macadams (2002), and in Tate's collection of essays, Everything but the Burden (2004). Since sunglasses' - *dark* glasses' - appearance in pop culture ties in neatly with their appearance in jazz clubs, and the adoption of the word 'cool' as a term of approval, the connection is easily made, especially in the context of white avant-garde art and music's fascination with both African and black American culture.

Beat writer Jack Kerouac remembers '...wishing I were a negro, feeling that the best the white world had offered was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music. Not enough night' (in Macadams, 2002:202). Dark glasses could be suggestive of this ecstatic night, of desire to be in that world rather than this. Even when worn in the plain view of a well lit space, there's evidence to suggest they conjure up the idea of a 'portable night'; where night culture values may be invoked during the day, or even, as some areas of nightlife became increasingly regulated, resurrected amidst a 'tamed' night.

Fig.128 William Burroughs with shaded eyes c.1957

Macadams' work in documenting the emergence of cool among black jazz musicians, and among certain writers and artists of the beat generation, usefully charts the interculturation process, demonstrating how members of the white avant-garde might recognise admirable characteristics in jazz and align themselves more comfortably with the 'unseen of the world' than the conformists or the ritualists of Merton's taxonomy, or what Macadams calls 'the faceless strivers' (2001:82). What motivated these artists and writers could be seen in certain outsider characteristics they themselves lived with – for example, William Burroughs (fig.128) was gay, with an obsession with the self-sufficient image of the gun-slinging frontier man, the gangster (ibid:112). Ginsberg was also gay, and there were alternative political ideas among the beats, and experimentation with Zen Buddhism, which Macadams says suited them as it was 'indifferent to privilege, dogma, and attachment, in but not of the world' (2001:180). The

beat, heroin use and jazz had all come together in the off-Broadway play <u>the Connection</u>, in which the drama derives from cool as a desirable attribute, displayed

Fig.129 Poster art for play 'The Connection', 1959

firstly by the black members of the cast, and emulated and admired by the white (see fig.129, the poster for the play – which in this period may well have suggested a taboo 'connection' between black and white). Mailer's essay 'The White Negro' (1957) is frequently cited as an indication of this appropriation of black style. Macadams says that the beats exerted a huge influence; they were 'the shock troops in a cultural war that would continue for decades' (2002:180-181) and their impact was worldwide (ibid).

Within beat culture there was a conscious recognition of black culture as superior in terms of 'style and attitude', but equally there was a sense of admiration for other outsider types, which is felt not only by the avant-garde, but by the increasing number of people who bought into the image of the cowboy, the gangster, even the femme fatale. Goffman's theory could be used to advance a slightly different perspective on cool which is a useful starting point for understanding the broad appeal of these types.

His essay 'Where the action is' discusses the ideal of activities which are fateful – occasions where chances are taken which could have problematic consequences. He says basically we aim to avoid danger, but that there are some occupations where this is unavoidable or even sought as a 'practical gamble'. A theme of cool bubbles up to the surface of the essay from early on:

> When we look closely at the adaptation to life made by persons whose situation is constantly fateful, say that of professional gamblers or frontline soldiers, we find that aliveness to the consequences involved becomes blunted in a special way (2005:181)

He lists the kinds of occupations which might qualify as those involving high financial risk-taking; industrial/physical danger; contract to contract work ('hustling'); performers, for example politicians, actors and other live entertainers; soldiers/police, criminal life, professional sports, high risk recreational sports like parachuting/surfing (ibid:175). This

list involves speed, technology, military, celebrity and criminality – perhaps in considering what Goffman has to say about the fatefulness in these occupations and how it is managed, we can gain further insight into the value of cool. It is apparent from his remarks about the hierarchy among such occupations that the greater the fatefulness and therefore the more demanding the successful management of these risks. Goffman calls any practice to manage anxiety, remorse or disappointment in the fateful event is called 'a defence', and the one it turns out he is most interested in is composure, a theme which runs through his essay wherever an example is called for, in the bungled bank job, the stress of managing a table in a casino, in the demeanour of the bullfighter. Goffman defines composure as 'self control, self-possession, or poise... a capacity to execute physical tasks (typically involving small muscle control) in a concerted, smooth, self-controlled fashion under fateful circumstances' (2005:223) He adds that composure also has 'an affective side, the emotional control required in dealing with others' but concludes that 'actually what seems to be involved here is physical control of the organs employed in discourse and gesture.' (ibid:224). This can be critical in terms of betraying nerves and therefore, a weak hand (in gambling, where we have already seen dark glasses used) or guilt (in the case of a criminal who must 'act natural' when trying to escape from a crime scene or evade capture even when that 'naturalness' slows them down) or a lack of talent (for a performer). Goffman notes it takes special levels of composure to be 'under the observation of others while in an easily discredited role' (ibid:226)

He also speaks of an 'ability to contemplate abrupt change in fate – one's own and by extension, others' – without loss of emotional control, without becoming 'shook up'' (ibid:225) and the expression of this through 'smooth movement' and dignity, which he defines as 'bodily decorum in the face of costs, difficulties and imperative urges' (ibid). To be composed is to be your own master (Goffman:224); and critically, it is also considered by Goffman to be an index of character; 'evidence of marked capacity to maintain full self-control when the chips are down - whether exerted in regard to moral temptation or task performance – is a sign of strong character' (ibid:217). This connection between physical composure, management of 'fatefulness' and strong character enables us to see more clearly the widespread attraction to the kind of cool often associated with outsiders and their frequently risky pursuits. These 'risk managers' demonstrate 'character' in the face of forces which are actually uncontrollable.

Goffman seems to sense that his points on composure need to be considered in relation to the new emerging cool, which he realises is something 'raffish' and 'urban' in addition to the traditional aristocratic ethic. He adds a footnote, part of which admits that cool seems to be a defence not merely against involvement in 'disruptive matters' but

'involvement in anything at all – on the assumption that for those whose social position is vulnerable, any concern for anything can be misfortunate, indifference being the only defensible tack' (2005:227)

Images of cool management of specific fateful events may be read as exemplars of ways of managing more general vulnerabilities; vulnerabilities which were becoming ever more apparent, certainly to the beats. Beat culture can be seen as a conscious rejection of the idea of mainstream sunniness in the face of a world unleashing untold risks and horror in the form of atomic weapons. Response to the facts of the bomb form a significant part of Macadams narrative, in fact at one point he hints at the idea that the absurdity of American prosperity and confidence in the midst of the cold war had, by the mid fifties created a 'nadir of American paranoia' prompting 'hipsters [to] put on dark glasses to protect their eyes from the nuclear flash' (2001:185).

But the choice of dark glasses as opposed to another, perhaps more effective protective garment indicates that Macadams detects here a poetic *stylisation* of doom, a gothic sensibility taken to an ironic height in the wearing of a signifier also aligned to the upbeat glow of the 'American tan'. That these dark, dark shades became a fashion, in the 'beatnik' look, could be read as a Frank-style mainstreaming of cool, a disarming of whatever oppositional power it may have had[14]. (Audrey Hepburn turns up in dark glasses (see fig.130), not only in the glamour of <u>Breakfast at Tiffany's</u> (1961), but also in her escape to the cool nightclubs of 'the empathicalists' (a fictional group presumably based on the existentialists) in <u>Funny Face</u> (1957) But it could also be read as a negotiation of proliferating risk, and cool as an aestheticised protection for

Fig.130 Still from Breakfast at Tiffany's, 1961

an increasingly vulnerable self. I have already considered the 'onslaught on the senses' provided by modernity in some detail – now I intend to explore the fruition of that promise as it punctures the outer crust, and begins to strike at the coherence of existence.

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[14] As Alan Watts described the beat mentality, cool more broadly could be described as 'non-participation...a revolt which does not seek to change the existing order but simply to turn away from it' (in Macadams, 2001:180). At the base, to wear sunglasses, can effect the appearance of non-participation whilst not only 'not seeking to change' anything but actively participating in not only consumption (which is pretty much impossible to avoid on some level) but the language of insider success, style, fashion and glamour.

Towards of the end of the chapter about life in the light, I began to explore the possibility of the celebrity's discomfort in being viewed when 'off duty', or when unable to live up to the expected standards of beauty or composure. I have also discussed the discomfort of being gazed at experienced by those in society whose position is unstable and whose relationship to the dominant order is oppressive or problematic. But the problems of achieving and maintaining a viable identity are not peculiar to these groups, as increasingly the life of every atom is also a life of scrutiny by the self and by others, both in 'real life' and in representation. Broadly speaking, the conditions of modernity which allowed greater flexibility with identity, and which encouraged detachment, are described by some later authors as reaching proportions which question the very goal of a coherent self, or indeed the goal of knowledge. Some of these ideas have been explored under the umbrella of *post*modernism, or *late* or even *super*modernity. So I am going to start by looking more closely at how identity has been understood in the later decades of the Twentieth century, building on some of what I covered in the sections on the modern city and the changes to identity and emotional culture.

Troubled Identity

The experimentation and increasing flexibility of identity was discussed in the section on life in the light and focused on the idea of sunglasses as a cheap and effective means to self-transformation. This was presented as a sign of freedom and status for those able to afford such narcissistic play. Theory of identity more generally in the Twentieth century has acknowledged (sometimes passionately fought for) the slipperiness of the very idea of the self. Identity has been a preoccupation of a wide variety of writers and artists, and the conditions of modernity have exacerbated and advanced these ideas, not just through consumption as already discussed but also through migration and education. In my earlier discussion of the modern city, I touched on some of these ideas, mostly in relation to the idea of a growing awareness of self and anonymous others as 'stranger' and as 'spectacle' – the increase of the visual in relation to identity.

But at this point in my argument, having thought about the emergence of Hollywood, and some of the issues of colonial or hybrid identity it is already clear that the idea of the self might not just be flexible, it might become fragmented in modern culture. For example, various authors (Rojek, 2001; Giles, 2000) note that celebrities tend to speak of themselves in the third person, or to speak of more than one operational 'self' – I mentioned Myrna Loy earlier in terms of the pressures of presenting the star self in

public, but the examples continue to the present day, with Chris Eubank, Kate Moss and Katie Price (Jordan) all reported to use different names for their different selves, and to detach their 'image' from their 'self' in some way. This is also discussed as yet another problem for celebrity psychic survival and it resonates with certain images of stars looking uncomfortable in their shades under the gaze of the paparazzi and the implied public audience (example Garbo, especially in later life). In spite of the seductive game of showing and hiding played by celebrities, there is a difference between being 'veiled in order to be seen', and making a genuine attempt to hide, where the private self wishes *not* to perform as the public self, or even experiences a sense of disjuncture between those different selves.

The ability to *change* your identity as a celebrity has also become essential to many celebrity careers – either sequentially as in the case of stars whose appeal starts to wane, or who need to demonstrate change in order to overcome a public relations debacle such as Jade Goody, a reality TV star whose naïve appeal was lost when she became the focus of a racial bullying row, and resurrected as bravery during her illness with cancer; or Hugh Grant, whose slightly passé 'English gent' image was rejuvenated when he was caught with prostitute Divine Brown. To re-brand or repackage can be necessary, or just desirable, enabling the same star to reach a wider audience. Since Madonna made 'self-reinvention' and 'multiple identities' a business strategy in the 1980s (Schwichtenberg, 1993), just about every manufactured pop phenomenon does the same, and a significant industry of semiotically skilled stylists and public relations professionals has evolved to support them.

Images in campaigns like the most recent for Foster Grant now celebrate the flexibility of identity (within certain accepted boundaries) for atoms too. Indeed you could argue that this self transformation is made an imperative by such campaigns and by the ideology of the fashion system more generally. Kenneth Gergen, author of The Saturated Self (1991) sees this flexibility, by the latter half of the Twentieth century, to be far deeper and broader than merely a requirement of the fashion industry: 'It is not the world of fashion that drives the customer... but the postmodern consumer who seeks means of 'being' in an ever-shifting multiplicity of social contexts' (1991:155). So, the phenomenon of fragmented identity is not restricted to the modern celebrity. In fact, this 'ever shifting multiplicity of social contexts' makes the demands of the modern, urban environment Simmel spoke of seem predictable and relatively easy to manage. We go from one city to another, from a home town or village, to a workplace, or several workplaces, to a family environment that may cross class, 'race', cultural, geographical boundaries.

As a response to this Gergen speaks of an emerging conception of self he calls 'the pastiche personality', '... a social chameleon, constantly borrowing bits and pieces of identity from whatever sources are available and constructing them as useful or desirable in a given situation.'(ibid:150) This is interesting for my thesis because it emphasises not merely a hybrid or fragmented self but a sense of detachment from an authentic self altogether - a set of circumstances in which increasing numbers of people realise the requirement to adapt quickly to a variety of different situations. (There is a foretelling of this in Goffman's emphasis on the performative nature of identity).This is slightly distinct from Stearns' interpretation (where the more obviously 'cool' response is an unemotional and tolerant demeanour that oils the wheels of modern society) but the results are similar: Gergen says 'if one's identity is properly managed, the rewards can be substantial – the devotion of one's intimates, happy children, professional success, the achievement of community goals, personal popularity and so on.'(1991:150)

Gergen refers to several other authors who note the emerging value of the ability to 'shift shape' in this way. For example, Mark Snyder's comparison between 'high self-monitoring' and 'low self-monitoring' groups (Gergen,1991:154), similarly defined to Riesman's 'inner and outer-directed personalities' (1950), but perhaps with the valorisation reversed. A person who displays a cool demeanour would seem likely to be a 'high self-monitoring' type, emphasising as it does, self control and the civilised ability to see yourself dispassionately in order to judge how best to deal with threatening situations. Qualities which Gergen says might once have been condemned like 'incoherence, superficiality, and deceit' are interpreted by Snyder as necessary survival tactics, enabling a person to 'cope quickly and effectively with the shifting situational demands of a variety of social roles' (ibid). Louis Zurchner's concept of 'the mutable self' develops this idea in relation to the speed of cultural change, which works to 'remove the traditional goal of "stability of self (self as object)" and replace it with "change of self (self as process)"' (in Gergen,1991:154).

In the 1920s, Claude Cahun, a lesbian artist on the fringes of the surrealist movement was using masks and disguises to present different, multiple versions of herself in her artworks, which announce the untrustworthy power of image and the fluidity of identity as a lesbian. Cahun photographed herself beautiful, ugly, masculine, feminine, conventional, religious, as surreal circus performer. It has been argued (by Millar, 2003) that Cahun could be one of few female 'dandies', although the dandy's performance of identity as polished surface was nevertheless quite singular and integrated – Cahun's work is perhaps ahead of its time. In the latter decades of the Twentieth century sunglasses

become a key prop in the work of a number of artists like Cindy Sherman whose work
deals with issues of gender and representation and Samuel Fosso (see figs.131-134), whose
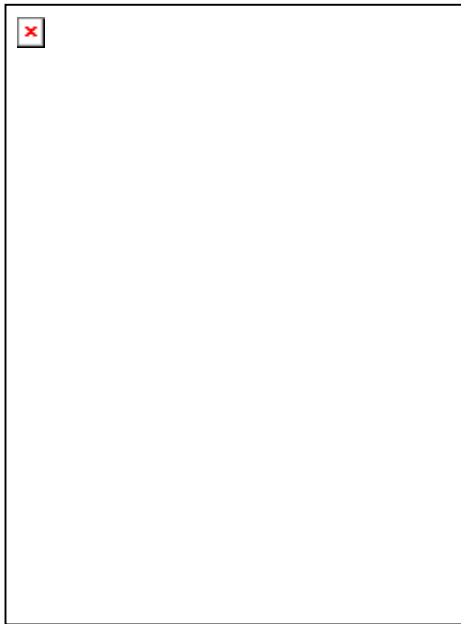

Fig.131 'Bus riders' by Cindy Sherman c.1976

Fig.132 'Untitled film still' by Sherman c.1978

Fig.133 'Le chef' by Samuel Fosso, 1997

Fig.134 Self portrait by Samuel Fosso, c.1970

work plays with 'race' and ethnicity, making hybrid statements of tribal and western
identities. Even on a pop cultural level, Madonna's 'chameleon' self is iconically
associated with the re-issued black Ray Ban wayfarers of the 1980s, worn in the film role
which many critics believed to be the most 'like her' – Susan, in Desperately Seeking
Susan (1985). In the film, her glasses are used as a sign of her uncompromising and defiant
style, but more importantly as a sign of her unknowability, echoing the theme of the film;
the pursuit of this elusive flaneuse (fig.135).

Fig.135 Madonna as 'Susan' 1985

This need for mutability does lend itself to people really buying and wearing real sunglasses. But my main point here is how this fluidity, this sense of the self as unstable, might impinge on consciousness in a more general in a way that might have us seeking our sunglasses, (sometimes in the real, but more often in the symbolic realm) not for the purpose of aspiration, but in terms of the notion of a self 'under siege'. A self who needs protection, not merely from the onslaught modernity unleashes on the *senses*, but on the integrity of self, perhaps beginning to see sunglasses less as confident armour or aspirational costume, and more as neurasthenic or retreatist *barricade*, where the goal of an integrated self cannot be achieved.

It will already be apparent that the self is subject to increasing scrutiny, from the beginnings of the puritan soul-searching and sin-counting to the 'postmodern' polishing of ever-changing surface. Gergen's work reminds us that 'since the rise of the modernist world view beginning in the early Twentieth century, the romantic vocabulary [of the self] has been threatened' (1991:6) He suggests that through the Twentieth century both romantic and modern vocabularies of the self are still available for use. Gergen makes a distinction between the modern self and the postmodern, in which the modern self is perhaps viewed more rationally, but which nevertheless can have an integrated centre. He says that in the same period, there has been a tremendous expansion in 'the vocabulary of human deficit' (ibid:13). This indicates that a number of discourses of the self are at work in western society which suggests the potential for inner conflict.

Gergen says we live a condition of widespread 'multiphrenia' – a term with a ring of Simmel about it. He says 'For everything we 'know to be true' about ourselves, other voices within us respond with doubt and even derision.' (1991:6) We also have less clear markers of success or well-being – survival is no longer enough. (James in Pountain and Robins, 2000:152) says that media and consumer culture encourage a 'maladaptive comparison' where those we compare ourselves to are unrealistic models, simulations perhaps. The proliferation of shop windows, self-help books and TV, Hollywood films, makeovers, educational opportunities, adverts, magazines, all offer suggestions for temporary or permanent improvements, updates, inviting us to 'play such a variety of roles that the very concept of an 'authentic self' with knowable characteristics recedes from view' (Gergen, 1991:6). However, I would argue that the status we place on being

able to 'manage' changing technologies, fashions and social environments reveals that the goal of authenticity in identity is stronger than ever in these conditions. A person who too readily and too wholeheartedly adopts trends is sometimes known as a 'fashion victim'. Not all re-brandings or celebrity reinventions work, because sometimes the public will not accept the change as believable. So in fact, it is not only the imperative to be capable of multiple adaptations, but to do this whilst upholding the notion of remaining on some level 'true to yourself' or 'self-possessed'.

Another way to deal with the need to adapt to the many different social contexts is to refrain from expressions of individual opinions or emotions more generally. To accept or *appear* to accept others' differences (who are dealing with the same pressures on their identity) will be socially beneficial. This is very close to what Stearns says about American cool, and implies tolerance. But of course tolerance's less benign cousin is relativism, with its inability to feel concern for others. This makes some connection with Christopher Lasch's concept of 'the minimal self' (1984), which describes strategies of 'psychic survival' in what he terms 'troubled times'. As for Gergen, there is a problem with reality, with truth about the self: '…the replacement of a reliable world of durable objects by a world of flickering images… make[s] it harder and harder to distinguish fantasy from reality.' (1984:19) He says we all face 'the danger of personal disintegration' (ibid:16).

The idea of sunglasses here merely reflecting back the viewer, suggesting a void, an absence of information - where the *greatest* revelations should be being made (i.e. in the eyes) makes it apparent that perhaps they are the ideal expression of the high self-monitoring type, and the impossibility of an authentic self – identity as something you 'put on'. It is interesting to compare some of the connotations of spectacles with sunglasses at this point. Where spectacles have functioned as a sign of knowledge, intelligence and wisdom, and still do, sunglasses with their ring of superficial glamour, functionlessness, their masking of the windows to the soul, their impairment of clarity of vision seem ideally placed to suggest a loss of belief in the possibility of final truth about the self or anything else. Like the irony implicit in emotions expressed in a deadpan tone of voice, shading our most expressive organ usefully casts doubt over whether we mean what we say.

Risk: Invisible, irreversible
Lasch's work describes a self besieged by a sense of instability and risk who retreats, detaches themselves from the world in order to survive. He says 'Everyday life becomes

an exercise in survival… Under siege, the self contracts to a defensive core, armed against adversity. Emotional equilibrium demands a minimal self, not the imperial self of yesteryear' (Lasch:1984:15) Rather than hoping for society to be improved, he says people aim for a much more modest goal: to 'hold one's own life together in the face of mounting pressures' (ibid:16)

Lasch's work also relates to a broadening sense of risk. He wants to acknowledge the impact on consciousness made by the knowledge of uncontrollable and incalculable levels of threat. Ulrich Beck's work (1992) has helped to give shape to the increasing awareness of the precarious interconnectedness of systems and processes that support human life in the Twentieth and Twenty-first centuries, and the 'generally invisible… often irreversible'(1992:23) consequences of industry and technology in the late modern era. Lasch says people 'have begun to prepare for the worst, sometimes by building fallout shelters [physical protection] …commonly by executing a kind of emotional retreat from the long-term commitments that presuppose a stable, secure and orderly world' (1984:16). People are becoming more aware of what Nietzsche described long ago as 'the uncanny social insecurity' of modernity; having understood that everything in our modern world is so dependant on everything else that 'to remove a single nail is to make the whole building tremble and collapse' (in Frisby, 1985:31) Lasch identifies a tendency toward 'cosmic panic and futuristic desperation' (1994:17), and speaks of a culture characterised by 'protective irony' and 'emotional disengagement' (ibid:18).

Fig.136 Ad from Woman's Journal,1929

Fig.137..Stills from banned 'Boots Soltan' ad, 2006

One particular 'invisible, potentially irreversible' risk (Beck, 1992:23, op.cit) has created a new set of ideas around sunglasses – the threat of skin cancer. That most natural act, of walking out in the sun, feeling warm and happy – the source of health, well-being, modernity and even glamour, is now an invisible threat. The joyful scenes of bonnie babies in women's magazines of the 1920s playing happily in a shaft of wholly natural sunlight (fig.136) have been replaced by warnings to cover up, protect, seek shade. Children get sunglasses from a very early age now, along with hat, factor 50 sunblock, and UV proof bathing suit. Parents are advised to apply the cream all over, several times a day, better still, not to go out in direct sunlight at all. A recent TV ad for Boots Sun protection products (2006, fig.137) shows eerily still, burnt children's bodies and a piercing relentless sun. The traditional image of young children on the beach, idealised and reproduced through travel brochures, family photo albums and so on, can function as the epitome of escape to nature, away from smog, dangerous sharp corners, humanity-sapping computer games. But simultaneously, there is now awareness of a danger that parents cannot 'keep an eye out' for, or feel the relief of knowing did not come to pass at the end of the day. Hence sunglasses now literally operate in popular culture as a sign of fear, reconnecting them with black, with death.

Sunglasses do literally relate to this specific risk, but perhaps more significantly, their suggestions of both protection of the vulnerable body and the 'soul' give them a special ability to suggest this beleaguered or diminished self, for whom a diffuse sense of unquantifiable danger is ever present, fuelled by news media, cultural representations and education. This capacity is readily demonstrated by an ad for the Renault Megane c. 2003 (see fig.138).

The page is dominated by the typically attractive, blonde woman, with long hair flowing. Her forearm shields her brow, her eyes are closed, face expressionless, but perhaps there's a suggestion of extreme heat or sunshine. The strap line says 'Stay Beautiful', and the graphic representation of the cross hairs of a gun positioned over her temple, indicates that she is a potential victim. Her languid pose, her bare arms and loosely held shades show she is not prepared, not looking, nor braced. The text (on the opposing page) alludes to dangers she is perpetually subjected to - for example genetically modified foods, ultra violet rays - but raises the issue that there is a worse risk than this; not a lone gunman, but a car crash that is someone else's fault. At this point, you realise the ad has borrowed the yellow and black aesthetic of the crash test dummy, (which fortuitously also happens to be the colours of the Renault brand) and the product description is
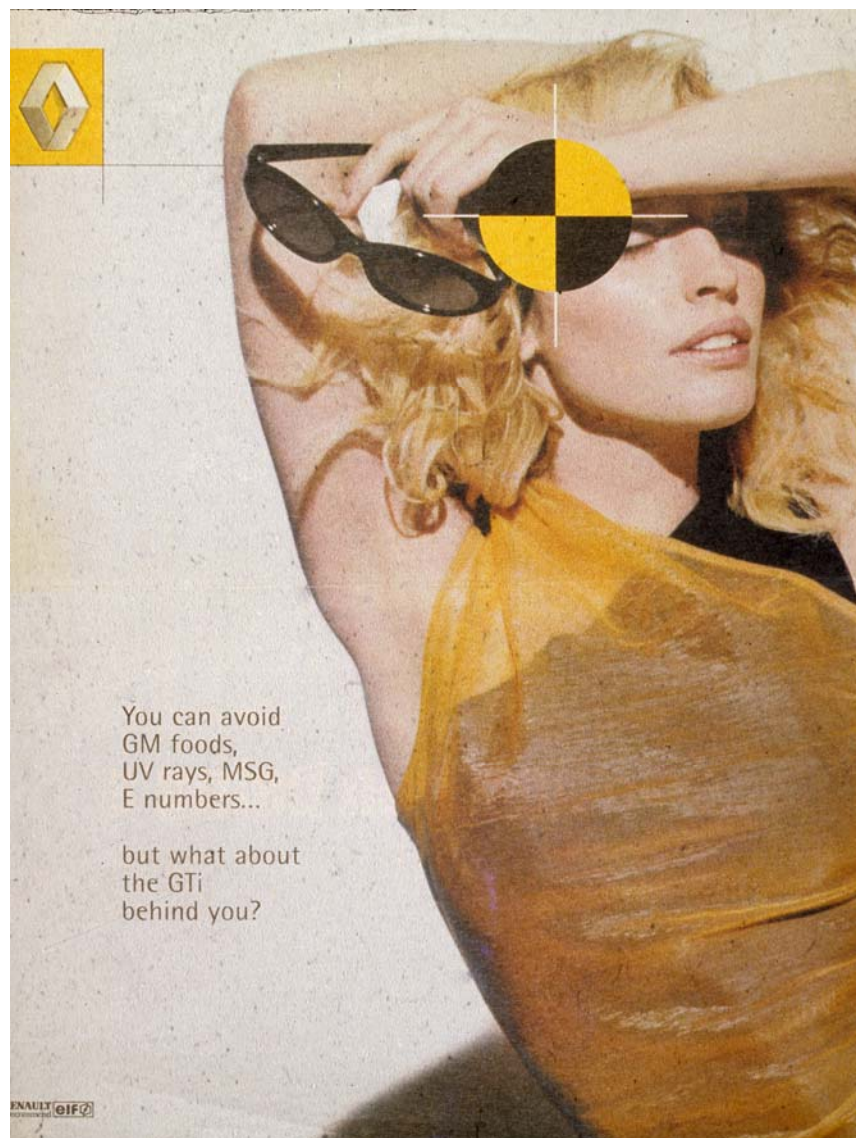
Fig.138 Ad for Renault Megane(detail), 2003

entirely couched in the terms of safety devices which dramatise the risks (down to the mystifying 'anti-submarine seats'). There's 'impact', 'shock', 'tension', 'head restraint', 'fortification', dramatically contrasted with the delicate fabrics and fragile beauty of the young blonde woman. In the face of such exaggerated risks, a *lesser* woman might decide not to drive at all.

Like the ads for sunblock, this mobilises sunglasses as a sign of something incalculable, uncontrollable to fear, to need protection from. But because sunglasses have so many positive and glamorous connotations they can stimulate purchases related to protective functions by blurring the distinction between the fearful (neurasthenic) self and the heroic (blasé) self. (Schivelbusch (1987) makes a point that people prefer to forget the

risks of travel; hence, visible safety measures, like seatbelts, are unpopular). Somehow, she is cool in spite of being a potential victim. Sunglasses can be aspirational as well as suggestive of both risk and protection. Her glasses also remind us of images of people with 'strong character' those who have the self control to manage risks with smooth actions and dignity. This is obviously very useful for advertising or other mass cultural productions, because certain kinds of negative experience can be positively glossed – an image of fear or grief could be simply depressing, but with a decent pair of shades, these states are romanticised, processed and reshaped as eye-candy. A woman truly frightened of being shot or scarred in a car crash may not be appealing. The resulting images bring together a strange mix of fear and narcissism, in which the 'self at risk' becomes heroic in its ability to simply 'stay beautiful' in the face of it all. Something similar can also be seen in images as early as those implied by Macadams, where the hipster dons shades against the nuclear flash.

Another layer of risk derives from the growth of surveillance culture. At the same time as atoms increasingly offer themselves up to scrutiny in the form of anonymous work and leisure spaces, 'reality TV', social networking sites and so on, the sense of being watched and possibly recorded by anonymous and potentially powerful others is ever more intense through CCTV, speed cameras and the panoptica of modern shopping spaces and offices. It is difficult to quantify the sensation of risk or simple unease caused by this potential observation for as Rosen, author of The Unwanted Gaze (2000) notes 'it is the uncertainty about whether or not we are being observed that forces us to lead more constricted lives and inhibits us from speaking and acting freely' (2000:19). The panoptican works by giving the subject no option but to police him or herself in precisely this way, we internalise the all-seeing eyes, just like the Iraqis who surrendered to a flying eye in Virilio's illustration (op.cit).

Again, this can relate to sunglasses in a number of ways; literally some people do wear them to evade the CCTV cameras (along with hoody and/or baseball cap), they can be worn to *suggest* the evasion of surveillance, but also the sunglassed eye functions in a manner not dissimilar to the dead eye of the CCTV camera or the distant security guard in the shopping centre. In creating uncertainty as to whether or not a person is being observed, sunglasses themselves are a portable panoptican and therefore a very ready signifier of this state in popular imagery.

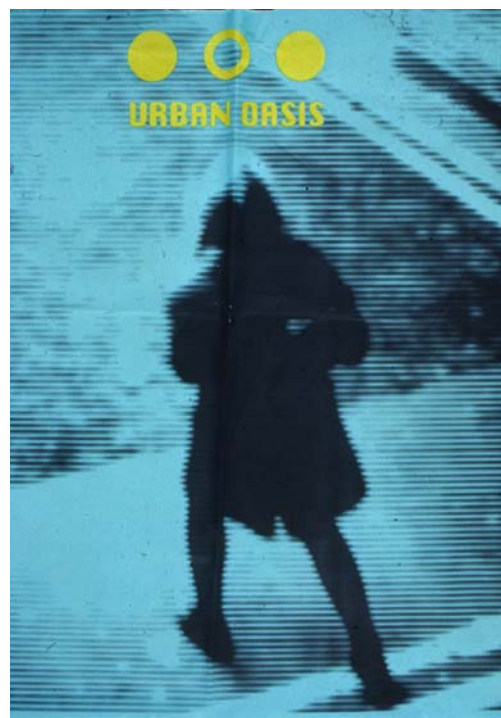Fig.139 Lucy Orta's refuge wear, featured in I.D magazine, 1998

Fig.140 'Urban' Oasis high street branding c. 2000

Although this invasion of privacy might seem to be a negative thing, there are hints in popular culture, similar to the car ad above, that in some way to be observed by a CCTV camera could be both frightening and somehow aspirational. Around the millennium, a protective aesthetic emerged in western fashion which repeatedly drew on the idea of the need to camouflage yourself, protect yourself, come prepared (see fig.139). One particularly striking image from this era is the branding for British (mainstream women's wear) high street store Oasis (fig.140). In this image the idea of the up to date visual technology creates the sense of successful immersion in the latest modernity. The cool gaze of the CCTV camera was the latest detached mode of seeing. The model in this image is just caught on camera, walking away, alone. Like many a broadcast of footage in a murder enquiry, the significance of *this* woman out of all the hundreds or thousands of women caught by that camera, is dramatised by her vulnerability. For this image to be used to sell fashion products to women, there must be some belief that to be in the midst of high tech, hard, cold modernity is desirable, even if you put yourself at risk; perhaps *because* you are at risk.

Or perhaps because the 'fame' of being on CCTV is better than none. The atom can be a star, albeit for a much smaller audience (unless that atom becomes notorious through the CCTV performance as a wanted criminal or deceased victim) Social networking sites and 'blogs' are emerging as a micro scene of celebrity among those with the means to participate, where endless self-taken photographs offer different versions of the self

(with sunglasses, without sunglasses, with the Lolita shades, with the hippy granny shades, see figs.141-143). The desire to emulate the look of wealth, success and status of

Fig.141   Fig.142   Fig.143

the celebrity is obvious here, but Lasch and Zurchner both indicate that it is also the escalating sense or experience of risks to mind, body and sense of self are encouraging a narcissistic approach to life. Zurchner says 'Daily life becomes suffused with the search for self-gratification.' At worst, 'Others merely become the implements by which these impulses are served' (in Gergen, ibid:154). The romantic ethic, as described by Campbell (1987), encouraged narcissistic consumption in pursuit of a more idealised self, and the pressure on identity requires us to equip and present ourselves for survival as we have already seen. But what Lasch's work adds here is the sense of narcissism as a form of turning away from the uncontrollable complexities of the world 'out there', again something sunglasses are ideally placed to signify. Narcissus gets bewitched by his reflection. Becoming enthralled to the illusion of the self, he can no longer see anything else. Literally, to show yourself wearing sunglasses implies concern about your self above others, because social rules suggest you remove them in conversation or for photographs, to show an open expression. But equally, what Carter and Michael call the 'anti-gaze' of dark glasses (2003:275), creates the effect that the wearer 'does not want to know', as if the reflective surface of the inside of the lens were a comforting mirror.

A prime example of the way sunglasses have been implicated in narcissistic irony as a form of defence against modern risk is an ad for fashion brand Moschino (fig.144). This is a serious, blacker-than-black image of something between the femme fatale, the androgynous beatnik and the mafia widow. It's perfect, glossy, polished and detached. A scrap of paper in the corner sends an 'unofficial' message, in tiny type. This doesn't anchor the image, it deconstructs it. 'You watch too much fashion – protect your eyes'. This is typical of the kind of 'cool' marketing Frank is talking about, for obviously it is 'Moschino himself' speaking to us, basically telling us we consume too much. His antidote
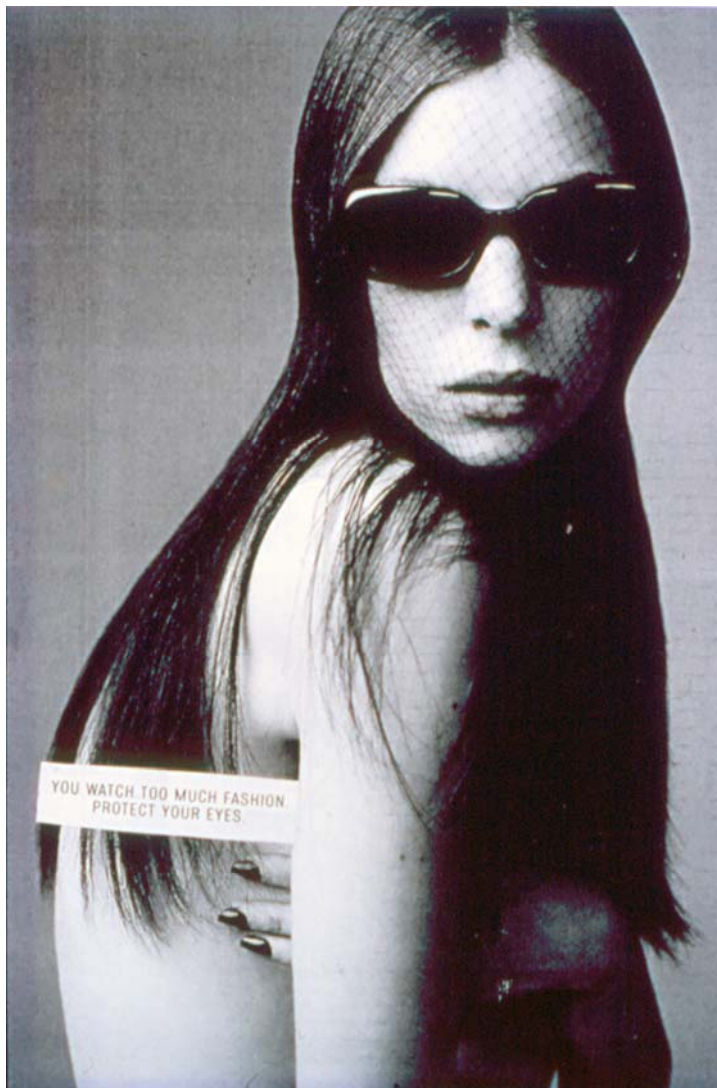
Fig.144 Moschino Ad, from <u>The Face</u> magazine, 1999

to this over consumption is... more consumption; of the right kind of thing. In this image we can not only see evidence of knowing awareness of the idea of fashion as a visual onslaught, and confidence that this is an ironic joke which viewers will get and prepare to be complicit in, but it also reveals in a single image the capacity for sunglasses to be viewed as both a symbol of fashion culture and a protection against its ravages. What better way to hide.

Summary
This chapter has shown how the intensification of modernity's threatening conditions adds a new urgency to the display of composure. Goffman's work on composure had previously identified its critical importance for those who engage in 'fateful' occupations or leisure activities; this chapter demonstrates just how much relevance Goffman's ideas on this

bear to certain aspects of cool previously discussed. The narcissistic detachment of the outsider becomes a strategy for increasing numbers of people affected by anomie, the 'impossibility' of stable identity and belief in truth.

This chapter also adds a layer of anxiety and tragedy to the potential meanings of sunglasses in later modern popular culture (aided by the tragic fates of so many of the cool heroes listed in Macadams' book, whose shaded eyes do ultimately speak of death by overdose, suicide). Sunglasses as *barricade* indicate not the desire to be immersed in modern light, but the urgent need to head for the shade, to hunker down in the terms of Lasch's minimal self, perhaps. This also has a literal manifestation in the dramatic challenges to the discourse of the sun and sun-bathing as 'health-giving' related to the increase in skin cancer, attributed to both tanning and the globally disastrous destruction of the ozone layer which once helped to filter UV light. In certain contexts, sunglasses now indicate invisible, unknowable threat. Image makers may now choose to mobilise sunglasses' connotations of both glamour *and* risk either to indicate the status of remaining composed in the face of such fatefulness, or to help produce anxiety which can be offered a desirable, high status solution, as in the case of the Renault ad.

The distinctions I have drawn between 'insider' and 'outsider' cool up to this point have been necessary in order to clarify the accumulation of sunglasses' signifying range, and the contradictions (and possible connections) between conceptions of cool which are located in the whole culture (like Stearns), and those which are most definitely constructed as oppositional (like Macadams). The categories in my study should be viewed as flavours, rather than locations with rigid boundaries, since, in reality, concrete distinctions between one example and another are often difficult to make. In fact, many authors' narratives of bohemian and sub- or counter-cultural cool conclude with the recent flooding out, collapsing and incorporation of such categories within contemporary capitalism. Equally, for every Hollywood star basking in modern speed and light as a vision of success and status in their dark dark shades, there's one checking into rehab in the same pair. And for every struggling urban youth in his, there's a rapper dressed as a pimp, rubbing shoulders with a prince.

Moving towards the next chapter, this also raises the question of the vanity of visual information. We could question whether these images now indicate anything other than postmodern play. Black hole or blind alley though it may be, this is an important issue for sunglasses: not least because perhaps sunglasses, of all signifiers, are most apt to suggest a nihilistic, late or post-modern form of consciousness, best explored via an image of a blonde man in dark glasses.

Chapter eleven

Neither/Both: 'ecliptic' cool

Fig.145 Andy Warhol at Duchamp by Nat Finkelstein, c.1966

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The light is artificial and mirrors are provided, but not windows, because the characters must be protected from bleak, bruising reality' (Cecil Beaton, 1956:62)

Andy Warhol and numerous others among the Factory people (including the Velvet Underground) habitually wore sunglasses in all kinds of photographs and indoors, day and night. This chapter will explore the person and work of Andy Warhol as a case study which demonstrates an extremely powerful form of cool which trades not just in retreat or detachment but also in absence and emptiness. This will completes my account of the various bases on which contemporary meanings for sunglasses in western pop culture are generally constructed.

Andy Warhol's own enigmatic fame and his desire to document and record the details of his life provide a rich source of visual material and insight into the personality, demeanour, values and behaviour surrounding these influential images, as well as the context of the Pop movement of the 1960s – pivotal for so much cultural history but certainly for sunglasses and for 'cool'. To some extent Warhol and his work perhaps also raises questions which were to become more pressing and more widespread in the decades towards the end of the millennium. The designs of sunglasses themselves, just like the rest of fashion culture, begin to proliferate and refer back to previous Twentieth century looks, as the cultural trajectory begins to take on the 'rhizomatic' quality associated with a late- or post-modern culture, where signifiers start to be thought of as 'floating' or 'empty' (Jameson, 1992) and the surface, not merely critical to identity, but perhaps, its primary content.

Some authors say that bohemia or the outside, collapses at this point since it no longer has a set of rigid bourgeois values to set itself against (Gold, 1993; Frank 1997). There may or may not still be such a rigid set of bourgeois values, but as the theories of Lasch, Gergen and James demonstrate, unreachable goals proliferate as does the sense of ourselves as being in what Goffman called 'easily discredited roles' and 'fateful circumstances' (as discussed in the previous chapter). Cool continues to matter - as evidenced by the body of literature discussed in chapter three which emerged in the 1990s; both Frank and Pountain & Robins, and possibly even Macadams, see the cool demeanour (in a variety of guises) becoming increasingly pervasive in black and white youth culture and reflected in mainstream marketing, with shades of the rebellious seamlessly incorporated into images of glamour, status and success and increasingly consumed across traditional inside/outside distinctions.

Warhol himself defies such categories. So for this chapter, I will explore the idea of him him as a model of 'ecliptic cool'. In searching for a metaphor that might indicate something both inside and outside, above and below ground, both dark and brightly lit, the eclipse springs to mind. A dark circle, like a sunglass lens, passes across the sun, producing a dazzling ring of light at its circumference, and a black hole where the sun once was.

Warhol and light

The tan, that sign of modern success, still holds its popular appeal to this day in the majority of mass images of glamour. Healthy modern bodies, glamorous celebrities and immersion in all kinds of light flood the pages of the still-growing celebrity press. Fake tan solutions abound, demonstrating the resilience of the dominant connection between

tan, glamour, modernity and health in spite of the risks of skin cancer. But the tan disappeared in imagery of the mid-century avant-garde, passing through into many urban subcultures of the subsequent decades. Warhol, whilst being enamoured of many other things Hollywood, was never tanned.

Warhol's pallor was not the Audrey Hepburn kind, the kind that recollects the gentility of the European aristocracy; it was a sickly, subterranean pallor. He had poor skin, but Warhol glowed nonetheless. Descriptions of him from those who knew him, such as Nat Finkelstein and Stephen Koch, are filled with references to reflection and light. He is spoken of as 'shining' like the sun, sometimes as a mirror. He sprayed his hair silver, if not it was bright blonde, the walls of the Factory (his studio, business headquarters and social space for his entourage) were painted silver; there were silver helium-filled pillows, girls in mirrored dresses. Finkelstein, the Factory photographer, repeatedly evokes the idea of reflection in his memoir: 'cellophane... glass... plastic-wrapped bodies', 'showers of silver foil to deflect the radar', 'speed and delirium, reflected light of aluminium foil stars' (1989[15]). The materials and techniques may be more advanced, perhaps suggestive of rocket science and space travel, but these reflections are still analogous to the glittering cafes, department stores, portrait studios of the early Twentieth century in their enthusiasm for romanticising the world with the technologies of modern glamour. This makes an immediate connection between Warhol and the dandy. Metaphors of the mirror also abound in discussions of dandyism – Millar compares Cecil Beaton's photographs of Stephen Tennant in the 1920s with some of Warhol, both of which use foil backdrops and mirrored surfaces (Millar, 2003:3-4).

In fact the only light Warhol was interested in was artificial – to the point where Finkelstein jokes about an incident where he tricked Warhol into going into the streets of New York during the day – 'an environment... I knew he was trying to avoid', saying to Andy 'Here, let's see what you do in the sunlight' (Finkelstein, 1989). Warhol's lights are *inside.* They are the lights of the studio, the nightclub, the cinema, the flashbulb, the mirror. Warhol pursued heavy weight mainstream Hollywood glamour – evidenced by his fascination with Liz Taylor for example. But there is a less healthy, all American side to Warhol's image that his 'subterranean pallor' points towards. A further suggestion of this is implied in his nickname 'Drella' (coined by Lou Reed of the Velvet Underground), derived from 'cinderella' and 'dracula' (both of whom only come out at night). Although he sought and achieved fame in the mass media, and in the upper echelons of New York society, Warhol is also inextricably linked with the cool of the outsider, the bohemian,

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[15] Finkelstein 1989 does not contain page-numbers

deviancy, the underground. (This I think is key to sunglasses' widespread appeal, that they have the flexibility to be symbolic both of success within the dominant system of modern western society and of resistance to or rebellion against it: a paradox not dissimilar to that suggested by the Moschino image of the previous chapter, and one which Warhol's more well-known image beautifully illustrates). At the same time, there is a sense of Warhol rejecting and rebelling against certain bohemian values. To make this clear, Koch distinguishes between different bohemian strata, identifying the art establishment as part of 'middle bohemia'. Warhol quietly but powerfully took issue with his exclusion from the serious art scene. *If you say I am superficial, I will make myself gloriously and visibly superficial.* His love of what Koch calls 'upper bohemia – very monied, very fast, very famous; the capital of vanity, unabashed narcissism...the key is fame' (1991:xi) might almost have been calculated as a provocation. He felt that the 'real men' in the serious art scene were just as vain; 'not the vanity of fame but of opinion' (ibid). Warhol's refusal in this context was the 'refusal to refuse' – if art was about saying no to things, Warhol made a virtue of saying yes to everything; 'all is pretty' (ibid:xiv). Koch states

> In the early days, it was quite common to hear intellectuals denouncing Warhol as mindless, decadent, dehumanised, the enemy of art. In these complaints one could sometimes hear protest against the insult to them obscurely felt in Andy's presence. It was correctly felt: the snub was Warhol's vengeance, born in his passivity, for the humiliations of the Cedar Street tavern. And it was central to Warhol's entire strategy as an artist in the world. (Koch, 1991:xii)

Lower bohemia however was the breeding ground for Warhol's gang of 'superstars'; the 'more or less inspired outcast[s]... intensely romantic... [with] hopeful dreams and a narcissism of doom... interesting people who see themselves as excluded from everything desirable except their own forbidden ecstasies' (ibid:xi-xii) Koch goes on to say that forging links between upper and lower bohemia was Warhol's central social enterprise in the 1960s (ibid). This demonstrates the extent to which Warhol, himself, existed on the 'outside' of the outside, his response to which was not to try to break in to any existing scene, but to create a new one which confounded categorisation, mainly because of his refusal to take up the 'responsibility' for meaning, for ideas within the context of modern art, which was in the throes of 'Expressionism'. Warhol's image reveals a new wave of connotations for sunglasses in the 1960s: not the oppositional cool of the jazz musicians or the beats, or the blatant masking of ill intent in the femme fatale, but the *absence* of critique, emotion, indifference to all distinction between truth and lie.

Ecliptic vision

Since Warhol is an artist, perhaps we can also examine *what* or *how* this man sees through these shaded eyes. We cannot only see his dark glasses as the 'anti-gaze' because we know he sees something, because unlike the musician, his product is visual. I will consider Warhol's image and his artistic vision, in relation to modernity and some more of the cool forerunners – the aristocratic ethic, the dandy, the flâneur, the impact of 'industrialised consciousness,' to explore the particular flavour of cool signified by his shades.

By the 1960s, the visual culture of modernity is truly a mass phenomenon in the West. Film, television, photography, colour reproduction of images, affordable fashion, plastics – all of it is in place and accessible to the masses. Culture is being democratised through technology and mass consumption, and the movement Warhol is most associated with, Pop Art, acknowledges this development. As a cheap, plastic, widely consumed symbol of the pleasures of consumption and the modern world, sunglasses are an ideal signifier for Pop. The media Warhol uses are mechanised processes, allowing multiple reproductions, advancing the speed of production and famously suggestive of the 'cheap' and the 'mass' in both form and content, (whether a coke, a tin of soup, it could equally have been a pair of shades from the dime store). Many portraits of Warhol show him behind a camera, emphasising the idea of him as an observer, or perhaps an operative of a mechanical eye. The idea of the industrial is captured in the setting of his studio, named the Factory, and in his willingness for others to assist in the mass production of his art: the perfect artist for the age of mechanical reproduction.

In many ways Warhol's own image works as a 'pop' product, the plastic sunglasses are immediate, graphic and an obvious part of mass glamour. The visual components of Warhol's iconic look from this time are the previously mentioned bleached or silver sprayed side-parted hair, jeans, Breton stripes and dark framed round sunglasses. In spite of Warhol claiming not to have been very interested in clothes (Warhol, 1975), this look is a very reproducible, printable 'trademark', high tonal contrast, and well defined form which makes it memorable, and recognisable at quite a small size. His eyes are not naturally well defined – so like a cartoon, the sunglasses give oversized eyes which create impact and appeal in print, intensifying visual impact in a world increasingly populated by visual communications, images vying for attention. Warhol's pursuit of media attention is recalled by Finkelstein: 'Andy would do anything for publicity… eat Danone yoghurt…fuck King Kong if it paid' (1989). Warhol used his own celebrity and that of others as a subject matter and as publicity, famously fusing the pursuit of art and fame as one outcome very difficult to untangle.

As already noted in the example of the Eighteenth century wearers of vizzards in London parks, some go 'veiled in order to be seen' (Heyl, 2000: op.cit), sunglasses attract attention whilst hiding part of the face. Warhol's sunglasses certainly make a connection with celebrity glamour. But the context in which they are worn demonstrates that this is no mere emulation of existing celebrity style. What Andy Warhol does with our attention once he's got it is complex.

A large proportion – maybe even more than half of the photographs I've seen of Andy Warhol feature dark sunglasses, very few show even a hint of a smile. The numerous writers who have discussed his enigmatic and contradictory persona all note his 'affectless gaze' (e.g. Koch). Koch refers to him frequently as the 'tycoon of impassivity' (1991). Many of these photographs from the Factory years before Warhol was shot, (1964-7 , depicted in Finkelstein, 1989) were taken by Nat Finkelstein, a documentary photographer who was central to the publicity for the Factory. Many shots are 'snapped', seemingly spontaneous; but many, especially those with the Velvet Underground, are posed with Warhol, in shades, square to the camera, or side-on – deliberately 'expressionless' in body as well as face (fig.145). The square to camera pose, evident also in Finkelstein's double portrait with a tambourine, almost has a regal quality, suggestive of stamps, coins and royal portraits, but also of criminal mug shots, passport photographs.
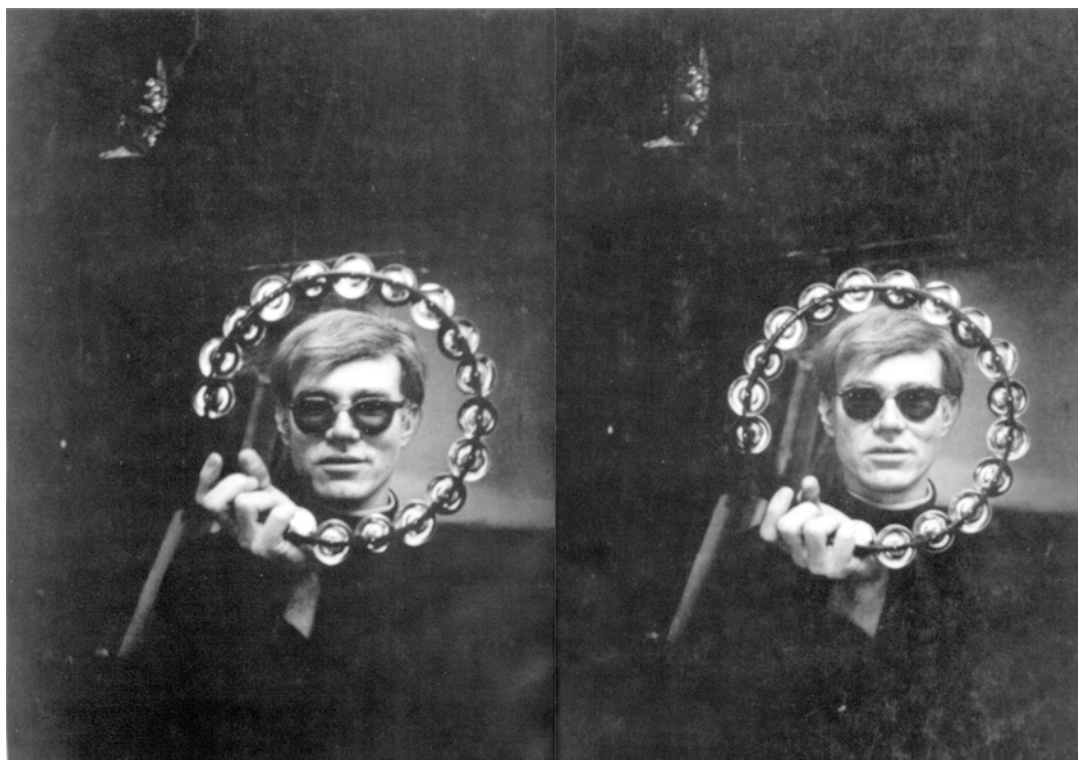

Fig.146 Andy Warhol double portrait by Nat Finkelstein, c.1966

'You need to see what I look like clearly'. Frequently there is no hint of narrative, often no conventional signs of profession, and certainly no emotion or relationship to others (fig.146). This is not someone 'doing their thing', or 'being themselves'; it is someone making no effort but to be recognised. As Carlyle said, dandies want to see and be seen and to be known for what they are – their own greatest invention. The dandy aspires simply to be 'a visual object or thing that will reflect rays of light. Your silver or your gold... he solicits not; simply the glance of your eyes... [Do] but look at him and he is contented' (Carlyle in Millar, 2003:3-4).

In the double portrait Warhol emerges from the blackness of the suggestion of the studio. The tambourine is held for the picture, its silver rings resembling lights, like the lights of a backstage mirror, the flames of a circus hoop, a crown, a halo. This image celebrates Warhol. But there is an evident emptiness about the image, the eyes create those hollow sockets of the skull, drawing your eye into and away from them by virtue of high tonal contrast between the very light skin and very dark frame and lens. The Factory was a scene – and as such is almost exclusively photographed as a place of bustling activity, of visitors, hangers on. In this image, the composition offers a black, empty space, and in place of the 'incidental' Warhol who seems somehow 'out of place' even in posed shots, we see Warhol as the clearly demarcated focus; 'actually, I am the star of this show'. This is the anti-gaze. There is no hint of personality, no purposely 'relaxed' demeanour, no musical instrument. Warhol's books indicate a quirky sense of humour, charm, a certain child-like wonder and wisdom, intelligence. But these images make no attempt to 'express' Warhol's 'personality'. They indicate the presence of a powerful object or surface. A facial expression gives you back a sense of what the person in front of you might think of you. But these glasses suggest – I see nothing, I know nothing. Just look at me. Finkelstein, interviewed in 1988, selected this photograph as the most significant of the Factory years, saying 'it says all about that period... Warhol in the spotlight, in the centre' (1989).

The effect of doubling the image is reminiscent of Warhol's own prints of iconic celebrity images – instant destruction of the 'aura' of authenticity as Benjamin noted (1999) on the one hand, whilst proof of the superhuman presence of the reproduced image, identified by Giles as a major motivation for the pursuit of fame, in its promise of immortality, biology-free pro-creation (2000:53). The sunglasses function in a similar way in connecting with the status or admirable personal qualities of the star, while refusing or denying the existence of those special qualities. It is all aesthetics, to the point that Warhol felt it was possible to send someone else in his place on a lecture tour in 1967, appropriately

decked out in leather jacket and sunglasses. He is quoted in a newspaper as having defended this with the line 'He was better than me' (Warhol Museum, 2004:134).

A bit like the later Moschino ad, Warhol's relationship with visual media in the modern world is well illustrated by wearing sunglasses indoors. He appears to be empowered to be stoic in the midst of a man-made visual onslaught, signified in our imaginations by being surrounded with his own work, which itself speaks of the proliferation of attention-seeking graphics and imagery. Interestingly the Velvet Underground, who were so closely

Fig.147 Andy Warhol & The Velvet Underground by Nat Finkelstein, c.1966

connected with Warhol, literally demonstrated the same idea; they were the first rock band to wear their sunglasses on stage – they claimed this *not* to be because they were 'trying to look cool', but because they were playing in a chaotic, hi-tech visual environment (Morrison in Bockris, 1983:36). As one of the band said, 'We just played while everything raged around us without any control on our part' (ibid). This included

'blinding' light shows and Warhol's films which were projected onto and behind them. Their display of being blasé, unperturbed by this perhaps demonstrates that superior adaptation to the sensory demands of modernity and makes them look 'cool'. The influence of the Velvet Underground on the predominantly white rock star image has been far reaching, with generations of subsequent bands adopting a remarkably similar demeanour, look, and of course, the very dark, often wraparound shades. The wearing of black accompanies this look, with its alluring associations of 'night' and its denial of emotion, anchored by every low key instrumentation and deadpan vocal delivery in the Velvet Undergound's musical aesthetic (fig.147).

The power of this 'neo-stoic' composure, hinted at in the semi-regal posture, the lack of expression, the generally minimal behaviour, has also been commentated on by biographers and scholars of Warhol's work. Referring back to the proto-cool behavioural styles I identified from Campbell, the notion of an aristocratic ethic – innate nobility which does not need to be proved – is evident not only in images of Warhol but also in anecdotes about his behaviour and demeanour. The Factory was in some way analogous to the royal court, with extremely subtle behaviours articulating a hierarchical system. It was open to anyone, according to Warhol (in Warhol Museum, 2004), but as Koch remarks he was 'the stilled surface of power… a reversed mirror of wanting' (1991:xvii). Although Koch is not talking about sunglasses, the way he expresses this lack of need of others is remarkably appropriate to the wearing of shades. The eyes, instead of being active, expressive, vulnerable become a 'stilled surface', and the mutual gaze is transformed into 'a reverse mirror'. In the same way that 'open-ness of face' toward others indicated the rising and falling of a courtier's status (La Bruyere in Mennell, 1989:op.cit), in the Factory 'When Warhol arrived, usually in the late afternoon, one's whole house of cards might fall if the master didn't smile his 'oh, hi' as he drifted by' (Koch, 1991:7).

But the court had a very clear set of behavioural rituals and rules. One of the characteristics of the Factory that seems to have added to Warhol's ability to evade and to exert power with what was essentially a very slight presence was its informality. In considering how Goffman might analyse Warhol's interactions with others in the factory, I realised that his first challenge might be to establish which of his theories to use – those that relate to focused or unfocused interaction. This matters because the 'rules' in these scenarios are somewhat different. Much is made in writings about this scene, that the factory was a place where everyone was welcome, but no-one was specifically *welcomed*. People drifted in and out, took up residence, seemingly independently of Warhol's invitation. Warhol allowed it to go on around him, financed it, invisibly orchestrated it - part youth club, part waiting room, part studio.

How would a visitor initially gain Warhol's attention? Fields' comment that 'if you weren't sure what was going on, it was very important to behave minimally, let other people wonder what was on your mind' (in Macadams, 2002:42) is telling: you cannot assume that your arrival is an 'initiation of an interaction'. Not only the wearing of dark glasses, but also the mode of socialising within the Factory, mitigates against 'focused interaction'. This calls to mind Elias's point that the formalising of informality as part of the civilising process whilst appearing to relax the rules actually creates a more subtle and demanding set (in Mennell, 1989). In this context, the order and reciprocity of one of Goffman's focused interactions (2005) seems positively quaint. From here it is tempting to see how elsewhere in social life this erosion of the distinctions between - and commitments to - different kinds of interaction is increasing, as not only dark glasses but phones and laptops enable us to evade involvement even where we are already 'committed' (say, seated at a table in a group in a bar or café), and force us to draw on our cool composure to indicate that this has not perturbed us, when we are on the receiving end of it.

Warhol's ability to affect other people's status also connects him to the dandy, with whom he shares a number of characteristics. He was self-made, not just from outside the aristocracy as the regency dandies were, but the son of a Polish immigrant coal-miner. Koch's description of the incredible power of Warhol's arrival at a party (Koch, 1991:21) bears a remarkable resemblance to Barbey's description of Brummell's arrival at a society gathering (2002:80), where the whole busy scene is instantly energised by one man's quiet arrival. So, he had social power that was based on his personality. Unlike the dandies though, he worked, and he had money; but from a dandyish profession where individual style expressed through a variety of means was all. In a sense he was able to achieve more enduring status because conditions allowed him to commodify the activities of the dandy, frequently through technological means[16]. His image was not just perfected for print to function as publicity, but also sold in portrait form, his appearance at events exchanged for money (even when it wasn't him).

In the dandy, part of this impression superiority was based on the ideal of effortlessness. It is already apparent that Warhol's stillness and lack of expression in images, as well as his low key sartorial style, indicates an unwillingness to make efforts. This is furthered by his work, which in many ways articulates a sensibility based on the valorisation of effortlessness, often made possible by modern technologies. Finkelstein comments that

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[16] Also, by taping and later publishing his conversation, in which charming and clever witticisms and conceits merge with observations about taste and culture in an apparently 'effortless' authoring.

Warhol '...was a very hard working artist, a workingman. He hid this very carefully, creating the myth that his products just kinda (sic) appeared... He didn't want to get paint on his hands.'(1983). Equally, Koch reveals '...it was a closely held secret...that he was a constant habitual reader of books; in fact, he was one of the best-read visual artists of his generation.' (1991:xvii) The Warhol museum holds some of the ephemera of his creative process, for example, hand cut stencils used for the lettering on some of the soup cans (2004), which look shockingly earnest and even earthy in contrast with the slick flatness of the finished prints, an almost touching visual equivalent of Scrope Davis's notebooks.

Fig.148 by Nat Finkelstein, c.1966

Effortlessness is also present in the choice and application of media. Prints are mis-registered (it takes a lot of effort to register a screen print exactly, so that all colours are precisely mapped on to the image as a whole with no unintended gaps or overlaps), films use the most basic of techniques; Warhol does not push the media, he goes with it. As Koch says, Warhol never, under any circumstance, tried (Koch, 1991:xvi). Sunglasses as a sign of narcissistic leisure may be at work here. It is hard to take someone engaged in any practical or energetic activity seriously if they are wearing shades (unless welding or outdoors, see fig.148).

But there are some more significant differences to the dandy's demeanour. It would be hard to describe Warhol as displaying 'sheer nerve' or 'unconquerable self-assurance' (Burnett, 1981:52, op.cit). Nor does anyone describe his eyes as 'extraordinarily penetrating' (Lister, in Walden, 2002:111). This aspect of dandy behaviour seems distinctly ardent in comparison with Warhol's cool. To affect a superior posture displays a confidence and a presence that seems too positive to be Warhol. It seems the regency dandy's occasional 'glacial indifference', or the 'calm and wandering gaze which ... neither fixes itself nor will be fixed' (ibid) is more likely to have been a deliberate performance of 'ignoring', to explicitly show that lack of respect. Warhol was just impassive, hardly there at all.

Detachment

This 'detachment' can also be seen in his work. In a similar way that the railway decreased human effort, and increased detachment, modern production methods also

create a distance between the 'artist' and the 'work'. But what kind of distance? Perhaps Warhol's sunglasses do also function as a metaphor for a particular kind of artistic vision, but one which differs from the 'second sight' of the blind poet. 's view is that what defines Warhol's work is a paradox -'the obsession... with human presence' which 'he invariably renders as a cool velvety, immediate absence'(1991:29). You can see this in the screen prints of Marilyn and Liz Taylor (figs.149&150). The flat, thick crisp-edged ink of the screen print, is both immediately arresting and

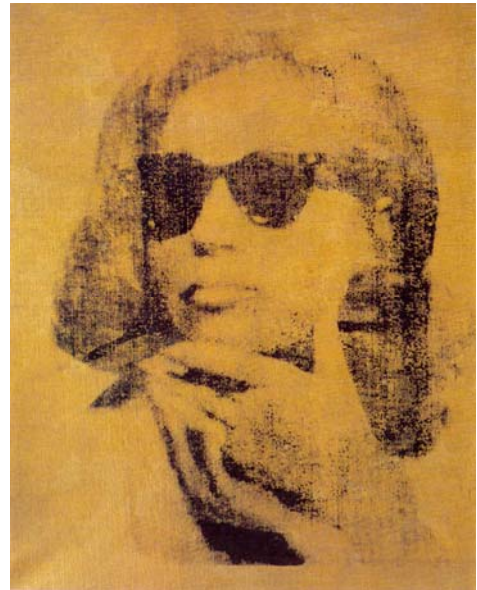
Fig.149 Liz Taylor by Andy Warhol at, c.1964   Fig.150 Ethel Scull by Andy Warhol at, c.1963

uninformative. No trace of human gesture in the manipulation of paint, no attempt to 'capture' something 'within' the star. Art critic Donald Kuspit has concluded something not dissimilar, which locates Warhol in the discourse of the fragmented self: 'Broadly speaking, Warhol's work symbolizes the postmodern rejection of the unconscious dynamics of the self...and its replacement by the idea that the self is a social construction'. Basically, 'a sphinx without a secret' (2005:35).

Although Koch doesn't make the connection with his dark glasses, he says Warhol 'is a way of looking at the world... a style that renders the presence of the real absent... that castrates the gaze' (1991:30-31). Interestingly he speaks of the way human vision ordinarily darts about in order to perceive space and says that Warhol's 'gaze' dulls this process. There is a neat conceptual rhyme here with the function of tinted lenses – they distance you from the environment, they even out the contrasts, flattening the space to some extent. Koch describes the movie camera as a 'dead unblinking eye' and the way it is used in Warhol's film, to display a spectacle of stillness in films like 'Sleep'. How can an eye that evidently looks (because it keeps a record of that looking) be described as

'dead'? It can be described as dead because this is an eye that perceives without discernment, without an aspiration to knowledge. This could be summed up in his knowing assertion against the Expressionists that 'All is pretty' (Koch, 1991:op.cit), or alternatively, it could be seen in the compression of background and foreground in Schivelbusch's 'panoramic perception' (Schivelbusch, 1986:op. cit). Because of the detachment, because of the speed and the sheer volume of imagery we encounter, the point of knowing disappears. Similar to Warhol, Richter, whose work I used to suggest panoramic perception in the chapter on speed, is described by Poser as creating images 'blurred to the point of anonymous immateriality...no expression, no depth, no invention, no life.' Poser quotes Kuspit on Richter: 'He seems to have no self; that is, no inner profile.... He is a blank, and his blankness infects everything he touches, as though it, rather than he, was empty.' (Poser, 2005:21-33) The lack of confidence in knowledge implied by blank vision is perfectly captured by Michael Serres; 'the eyes of the all-seeing God... have been transferred to the plumage of a peacock where sight looks blankly on a world from which information has already fled' (in Jay,1994:593).

Too hard to care

In images depicting Warhol with others, for examples in the Factory setting or in images of him with the Velvet Underground, his posture displays a lack of relationship with others, which is somehow suggestive of his inhumanity; he looks like a waxwork, or a mannequin, so stiff are his poses, and so deliberately out of synch with others in the group. Often the flash bounces off the dark lenses, emphasising their impenetrability and he appears detached from the group. He remains behind them, not touching anyone, his head straight instead of inclined like the others.

Finkelstein's memoirs reveal a specific photographic moment in which sunglasses were deliberately used to signify this detachment along with the vanity of the desire to be photographed. Bob Dylan visited the Factory once, was there very briefly, photographed, then left. It seems Dylan was not entirely welcome there since the Velvet underground disliked his work and his attempts to poach or to influence Nico, their 'chanteuse'. Finkelstein was critical of the vanity of this staged meeting; 'I suddenly flashed that these people were there only for my camera. They were sitting together, but their existence was predicated on being recorded. Children of darkness, vivified by my lights.' (1989) He seems to have used the shades as a means of visualising this perception;

> I ... put the spots directly on them, obliterating all shades and background... Did these people want exposure, boy, would I give them exposure: all the exposure that the floods [lights] would allow. I told Andy and Bobby to put on shades and look

directly into the camera. I told Gerard to look at the side… None related to the other, and I shot them that way. (Finkelstein, 1989)

Warhol did have relationships with others but he was seemingly not keen on intimacy, using not only his sunglasses, but also the phone, his tape recorder and Polaroid camera as what Koch calls 'baffles' (tricky 'involvement shields') in social situations. He is quoted as saying 'I think once you see the emotions from a certain angle, you can never think of them as real again' (Warhol in Koch 1991:vi). Much has been written about Warhol's personality which suggests he had no empathy, no sense of responsibility. This oscillates between vulnerable childlike qualities and monstrous inhumanity, (as Finkelstein said (1989) he was liked a black widow spider 'fucking them over, sucking them dry and spitting them out').

What connects these two extremes together can only be the profound sense of detachment. The fates of the others within the Factory were nothing to do with him. At this point, Warhol's cool connects directly with the idea of risk. Warhol's cool was not Goffman's composure, strong character shown by smooth movements in fateful situations (unlike the dandy), but the narcissism of Lasch's minimal self. Looking out at a spectacular view of the Manhattan night, he said to Koch 'Think about everybody down there getting held up' (1991:26). Koch says Warhol was fearful to a point that was 'scarcely credible' (ibid).

> [his] glamour is rooted in despair, meditating on the flesh, the murderous passage of time, the obliteration of the self, the unworkability of ordinary living. Against them he proposes the momentary glow of a presence, an image, anyone's, if only they can lap out of the fade-out of inexistence into the presence of the star. (1991:12)

Modernity, the impossibility of knowledge, the struggle for significance, threat of death, fear of loss, stoic acceptance, crime, and the redeeming power of glamour: '…a shabby world seemed redeemed and, in Warhol's mirror, image and object got interchanged, both vanishing into the sparkling light' (ibid:13). Bockris notes that Warhol was even buried in his sunglasses (1998:492).

Ecliptic cool beyond Warhol
Further evidence of sunglasses involvement in the evocation of a certain 'ecliptic cool', a nihilistic worldview is contained in the film by Jean-Luc Godard, <u>A Bout de Souffle</u>. Though made in 1959, it has become known as the epitome of cinematic cool, and in its

highly stylised 'light' treatment it has also been seen as a very early example of a 'postmodern' aesthetic of play. The trailer for the film was constructed around a series of near stills, crudely introducing each character, and voiced over with a label; for example, 'the nice man', 'the cruel girl'. Many of these little takes from the film show

Fig.151 Still from A Bout de Souffle, 1959

characters wearing sunglasses which demonstrates the range of meanings for sunglasses but also invokes the discourse of play and disguise, what is meant and not meant which runs through the film – . Sunglasses appear in support of the following labels: 'the little American girl', 'the villain', 'the novelist', 'the photographer', 'lies', and, finally, to describe a scene where the two ambivalent lovers lay kissing, *both* in their sunglasses, 'the devil in the flesh'.

The playfulness of this film is expressed in the constant putting on and taking off of the sunglasses, amidst light or heavy conversational remarks. Mirrors feature, as do shots of each posing, practising their various 'looks' even down to Belmondo being shown looking imitatively into the face of Humphrey Bogart. The film is described as being 'absolutely modern' by Thompson in Sight and Sound, (2000) for, and has been regarded both as 'trashy pastiche' of film noir and other American crime thrillers and as 'the moment when self-consciousness dawned in the cinema' (Lucas, 2007). The main characters are

described as 'jazzy, show-off kids... unimpressed, defiantly insolent', and the ideas of emotional disengagement permeate the film. The dialogue is casual, and there is what Thompson describes as an 'artful, cool dodging of any feeling of monumental embrace' (2000). Where strong emotions are referred to, for example in Seberg's dilemma, as to wanting Belmondo both to love her and to stop loving her, there is a detached delivery and a thoughtful pose which indicates this is an intellectual dilemma, something to be pondered over rather than *felt*. Ultimately the nonchalance of the film's 'slight' narrative emphasises a celebration of style, of the pose, of play, and although some serious questions are raised by the various existential dilemmas, these could be viewed as hints at the futility of taking life seriously, so nonchalant is the delivery and so easily is everything dispensed with. The idea that we might see these characters, these dilemmas as anything other than entertaining poses is made ridiculous by the constant mirror gazing and obvious posing.

The huge range of connotations sunglasses have the capacity to mobilise makes them ideal again for this postmodern play of surface and meaning (as in the masquerading of artists like Samuel Fosso, Cindy Sherman and Nikki S. Lee). In the same way that a valorised detachment from 'the rest' (whoever that may be perceived to be) has become a cliché of marketing for brands and a widespread psychological position for individuals, so the appearance of sunglasses in the fields of celebrity, hip hop music, rock music, science fiction, sport and extreme sport, police, military, fashion, fashion photography, film, greetings, advertising, social networking sites and blogs, and even 'second life' proliferates. Images of prestige brands like those created by Terry Richardson for Tom Ford at Gucci (fig.152, overleaf), are now suffused with the hard, cold glamour of pornography, celebrating the shiny surface, where the flesh is rendered as rigid and smooth as the sunglasses' lens worn to objectify the models.

Hip hop musicians and 'Gangsta rappers' (fig.153) very evidently merge black panther strength with the 70s pimp aesthetic of individual financial success, power and violence in images of lavish rebellion, but these images can no longer be as easily placed in the 'outside', when many black hip hop artists have achieved not only wealthy but also a level of dominance in the contemporary music industry. Cool, for these artists, is hard to read now as an urgent set of tactics for survival. Wannabe celebrities now check in to

Fig.152 Ad for Tom Ford at Gucci by Terry Richardson, c.2008

Fig.153 P.Diddy by Piotra Sikora, 1998

Fig.154 Neo-mod in The Face magazine, 1996

Fig.155 Quentin Tarantino in Reservoir Dogs, 1992

rehab in baseball hat and Sunglasses, confirming the scale of their celebrity as surely as securing a table at an 'a-list' restaurant. Fashion consumers may select from a history of established cool looks, as has this 'neo-mod' (fig.154). Among the knowing, sunglasses can even be worn *with* or beyond irony; as their links with cool reify, the hip can even detach themselves from commodified 'cool' by wearing their glasses with the air of someone wearing dark glasses to mock the idea of trying to be cool. And still look cool, and still feel that little bit less vulnerable (fig.155).

Although there are many fascinating specific instances of how sunglasses articulate which I have not had space to consider, this chapter completes my exploration of the range of discourses I have found to be at their disposal.

Summary

This chapter has argued for another shade of cool which sunglasses have the capacity to articulate potently – the ecliptic. The images of Andy Warhol and his artworks revealed qualities which went beyond those considered already in relation 'insider' or 'outsider' cool, though certain elements of both could be seen, along with the criteria of effortlessness and detachment. Significant parallels with the dandy may be drawn, however his 'minimal' and 'fearful' behaviour could in no way be described as a performance of 'unconquerable self assurance' (Burnett, 1981:op.cit). The defining quality of Andy Warhol's cool which sets it apart from others discussed so far is an absence of commitment to meaning or knowledge, and a detachment fully supported by the use of a variety of technological props (including sunglasses) as involvement shields, leading some to conclude that he was amoral, incapable of intimacy or empathy. This quality was also discernible in his artworks, which seemed to describe a world increasingly prone to spectacular emptiness. Glamour and spectacle is even offered as a fleeting from of redemption from emptiness. To demonstrate the use of sunglasses as a signifier (and potential redeemer) of such emptiness beyond Warhol's work, I used the example of Jean-Luc Godard's A Bout de Souffle, as well as briefly considering the presence of many 'empty' and 'ecliptic' cool images in contemporary popular culture, demonstrating the final layer to be impacted in sunglasses' significance.

Conclusions

Before I begin drawing together my conclusions I would like to note one or two issues highlighted by the thesis which would benefit from significant further investigation beyond the scope of this present study. The first is the relationship between gender and cool. My examples demonstrate that cool images frequently feature women whose femininity is in some way unconventional, often marked by the way the gaze is blocked or enacted through the presence of sunglasses. Since it is often assumed that cool types are usually masculine and male, as in the works about black masculinity, this raises questions of whether there is an androgynous quality to cool, something hinted at in some of the studies of the dandy, for example Feldman's Gender on the Divide, and considerations as to the existence of the female 'flâneuse'. I have considered gendered identity within my examples to a limited extent as one aspect of modern selfhood which must be negotiated; but to focus on gender and its articulation in relation to cool might reveal some neglected histories and interpretations.

Another thread that might bear further investigation is the relationship between cool and the material. For example, smoothness as a material quality has been mentioned in a variety of contexts – smooth movements of the body, smooth 'outer casing' of clothing, smooth hard surfaces. The principles guiding 'modern' design and body styling could be considered in new ways if related to some of 'cool' traits this study has identified.

I have also discovered an admiration for cool among some important theorists, who have not explicitly set out to explore this phenomenon. This alone would bear further study, focusing for example, on the presence of cool themes in Goffman's work, or Simmel's.

Now, to my conclusions. The first relates to my aim to discover why sunglasses are so enduring as a signifier in popular culture since the mid- Twentieth century. Existing histories (for example Corson 1967) do not focus on sunglasses, tending to attempt to deal with spectacles and sunglasses together as one kind of object. Hence my study has contributed a much more accurate and detailed account of the emergence of sunglasses

and the reasons for their popularity (in contrast with the ambivalence shown towards spectacles throughout the literature I studies). As I have demonstrated, sunglasses have the capacity to suggest overwhelmingly desirable or admirable qualities in popular culture including superhuman physical and emotional strength in popular culture – something spectacles just cannot do. Most popular histories have assumed that sunglasses did not enter fashion until Hollywood and sunbathing had become well established in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and whilst it is true that they did not enter fashion images until even later than is generally suggested (1938), My work with the B.O.A archives showed that they entered the British and American markets in the form of goggles for driving, cycling and rail travel which surrounded them with the status of engagement with the most advanced and exclusive forms of travel and leisure. Their materials were also modern and had the capacity to integrate a token of those innovations into the wearer's body. The study revealed that in shading the eyes, sunglasses have potential to articulate some of the most significant issues in modern culture: vision, knowledge, the gaze and appearance, the struggle for survival and a coherent identity, rapid developments of fashion and technology. They offer both connotations of immersion in modernity, and preparedness for its onslaught. Hence, I conclude that a very significant reason the enduring appeal of sunglasses is their special relationship with modernity.

My detailed analysis of images from a wide range of cultural and historical contexts has also revealed a remarkable variety of meanings and functions for sunglasses. This alone might be enough to promote their widespread and continued use. However, many of these are especially relevant to the issues of modernity: as masquerade, tough armour, neurasthenic barricade, castrator, blindfold, mirror, 'death mask', beacon, and commodity fetish. and depending on the point of view the wearer of sunglasses could be seen to represent a variety of modern types: the 'star', basking in the glow of modern success; the cold, alienated, floating 'atom'; subcultural 'style surfer', 'cyborg', even Serres' blind (but glamorous) 'peacock' (in Jay, 1993:op.cit). I have argued throughout the thesis that this range of possible meanings and functions makes them ideally suited to visualise the conditions of modernity and the search for significance and status within it, whether tragic or heroic. My discussions in chapters five and ten show these are conditions which are enduring, intensifying and widely shared. This is why, in spite of saturating all markets, sunglasses have retained their currency.

Another very significant factor in the widespread use of the sunglasses image, which is already hinted at above, is the connection between sunglasses and eyes. This connection makes sunglasses appeal to producers and consumers of images in the modern world on a variety of levels. Some of these are to do with the very basic human predilection to seek

out other eyes. As modern people perceiving 'panoramically', as I have argued throughout, attention must be fought for. Image makers know that eyes are attractive and big eyes are more attractive, big reflecting eyes even more so. This is of special importance in representations at small scale, where recognition of subtle or complex forms is more difficult. Their presence in images helps us *perceive* those images speedily and efficiently, (as well as themselves being a *sign* of speed and efficiency through their associations with technological surroundings and rationality). In graphic design, another very common device was to reflect one or more images within the sunglass lenses, allowing a bold 'close-up' of a face to attract attention, but enabling inclusion of other relevant images which might otherwise have been difficult to incorporate in one frame. This ability to attract attention is, of course, not only the case in representations, but also in what we may still call 'real life'; though the distinction is increasingly blurred where we see aesthetics emerging in street fashion whose exaggerations derive from what makes 'good visual copy', from the gigantism in hip-hop dressing to the 'air-brush effect' mascara and fake tan, to the sharp diagonal fringe of the naughties 'emo kid', creating a dynamic composition when foreshortened in a self-taken photograph for their band's 'Myspace' site. Needless to say, sunglasses are found as part of all these looks and the popularity of sunglasses as a relatively affordable but highly portable and visually striking 'transformer' of identity has also been shown.

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The eye is also simultaneously under unprecedented attack within modernity's onslaught, the panorama is not kept moving past us at a constant, comfortable speed. It is of utmost importance to sellers of images of all kinds that we are brought up short, to force us out of our potentially blasé relationship with the distractions of modern capitalism. Simultaneously the eye is a focus for modern concerns about belief in truth, identity, authenticity, knowledge. As a 'window' to the soul, shading (and un-shading) the eye by wearing or removing sunglasses has potential to visualise an invitation to look inside it for some clue to meaning within the self. Shading the eye also has the capacity to suggest Jay's 'downcast eye'; a tragic or modest abdication of the self as sovereign (I don't pretend to be able to see or know). In nuancing the gaze, sunglasses have the ability to communicate a variety of inner states in an immediate way.

At the same time as communicating states of rebellion, self-exclusion, success, anxiety, threat, knowledge, truth, intimacy etc., we cannot ignore the obvious fact that these glasses are themselves a commodity. They could be seen as the ideal symbol of Thomas Franks' idea that if cool was once set against capitalism, it has been colonised and conquered. In certain powerful contexts sunglasses may have been worn as a sign of

refusal or rebellion – but they may now 'stand for' a refusal or rebellion which is merely the consumption of a sign.

This brings me on to the next major aim: to explore the relationship between sunglasses and cool. Identification of certain types of sunglasses mapped fruitfully on to some of the different notions of cool and forced me to push the definitions further. For example, sunglass styles which emphasised the aerodynamic and futuristic invited me to question the relationships between speed and cool, and which underscored links with modernity and Schivelbusch's ideas of industrialised consciousness and the detached, blasé form of 'panoramic perception'; overlapping with those emphasising the 'technical' or military, which led me to consider the cool of the cyborg's sub and/or superhuman physical and emotional capacity.

The lighter frames and lenses of the 1930s associated with sunnier contexts invoked the most obvious historical locations for sunglasses – Hollywood and the beach. I explored the values and ideas associated with light in modernity, demonstrating its function as a metaphor for modernity's ambitions and success within that. This was one way in which cool, modernity and sunglasses were shown to relate. Some of the designs of sunglasses in this category derived their form from the original more technical functions. The full modernity of these kinds of images became apparent by analysing them for potential residual associations with speed and technology, demonstrating that concepts like 'panoramic perception' and Virilio's 'speed classes' (1999:19) could be used to illuminate the status of the Riviera set and the elite leisure of the celebrity, seeing the sunbather as one in an enviably modern state of 'polar inertia'. Other designs became self-consciously playful and frivolous, drawing on the tribal, and on natural forms. These forms are hardly ever mentioned in the rare instances cool and sunglasses are discussed. (These styles tend to be more 'feminine' than others so this may relate to the bias in the literature towards cool as a predominantly masculine trait). However, my investigation shows how these forms highlight the cool status of freedom to play with identity and detachment from the serious concerns of life, rebelling against protestant values of thrift, sobriety and hard work, as well as a specifically American rebellion against European high culture and the ancient regime.

The dark frames and dark lenses associated with the typical 1950s Ray-Ban are perhaps the most iconic form of the sunglasses/cool relationship with strong associations with refusal and deviance, as well as the provocations of the avant-garde. The literal sense of retreating into the dark afforded by sunglasses (especially when worn indoors at night) led me to explore relationships between cool, darkness and blindness, as well as Merton's

idea of the 'retreatist', which revealed the potential of his 'adaptations to anomie' to theorising cool. Sunglasses were shown to have afforded the interruption of the subordinate relationship between black and white in the jazz clubs, and to have been a significant part of a collective and heavily politicised use of cool in Black Panther imagery. Scouring Becker essay about the jazz musician to references to detachment and eye contact led to a further way of considering the cool of black jazz performers – as a defence against the 'philistine'. Becker said this was to preserve artistic independence but he compared their strategies (of avoiding the gaze of audience members) to those typical of workers in service occupations (1997) - which widens the possible location for emerging cool strategies beyond black culture to the kind of contexts identified initially by Stearns. Sunglasses emerged as a 'portable night' of invisibility, pleasures and vices; the connotations of darkness and the relationships with the excluded, the criminal and the outsider more generally.

As I had hoped, using images of sunglasses which I had, with the help of Evans, grouped into certain generic styles, and/or located in certain popular figures (the war hero, the sunbather, the jazz musician) forced to me to consider the outer reaches of the cool demeanour. By selecting my images based on the presence of sunglasses within them, I was able to discover cool in figures not generally used as examples in discussions of cool (for example, the Hollywood celebrity, the robot, the femme fatale). The consistency of cool behaviours, attitudes and aesthetics in these varied examples was remarkable and telling. Though they all make valuable contributions, no existing theory of cool has managed to account for this range of manifestations. Even those who chart the spread of cool tend to see it as the adoption of a model with its roots in black survival tactics (Pountain and Robins, 2000; Macadams 2002) or a counter-cultural movement against capitalism (Frank, 1997). These accounts fail to acknowledge the significant body of evidence linking cool to technology, as well as the many drivers in modern life towards 'cooler' behaviours (as focused on by Stearns, 1994). Mentges' account focuses purely on cool as form of protection against the 'culture of technical rationality' (2000:31, op.cit).

But the evidence demonstrates that the conditions for the emergence of cool values are there from the beginnings of modern society, from the cavalier at court to the flaneur in the city, to the composure of those in Goffman's 'fateful' occupations. What draws all the examples I've looked at together, in spite of their different positions within culture, is the profound connection with the idea of a *superior adaptation to modernity*. The theories of Simmel, Goffman, Merton and Becker may be applied to cool to provide an extended view of cool which shows that what bridges the gaps between the cool of the jazz musician outside and the cool celebrity inside is the fact that they *both demonstrate*

self-possession in the face of extreme encounter with modernity's challenges to the self. The achievement of this is undoubtedly more difficult and therefore perhaps all the more heroic, for some; there is no doubt that the cool of black Americans has been highly visible and influential, with a great cultural legacy, and has been forged in strongly adverse conditions.

Adaptation to modernity is a way to look at cool which is less dependent on the idea of rebellion against capitalism, or against white oppression and which manages to incorporate the ubiquitous connections with technology without primatising them. Neither does it depend wholly on the idea of simply 'being in fashion', or 'having the latest kit' (both popular understandings of 'cool'). Being perceived as on top or ahead of trends in fashion or technology could indicate self-composure in the face of change; but so could a deliberate indifference or oppositional stance to such dictates. Neither is it determined by a bleak, nihilistic or ironic position. It can incorporate all those things. Evidently, different aspects are uppermost in individuals and groups experiences or preferred nuances of cool. But as I have shown at every stage, the challenges modernity presents to the self are proliferating, even as they may be experienced as liberations (so well expressed by Bauman's 'exhilarating freedom' versus 'mind-boggling uncertainty',1992). Inhabitants of the late or post-modern world contend daily with the demands of technology and fashion, the anomic properties of a life lived increasingly alone in pursuit of increasingly unattainable goals, in an overwhelming sea of conflicting and often content-free information, which also populates the back (if they are lucky, the forefront if they are not) of their minds with incalculable, irreversible risk. In this context, any person who can adapt to these conditions whilst displaying composure, self-possession and dignity has surely achieved something others would aspire to, and possibly spend money in pursuit of.

Other authors who have approached cool acknowledge how desirable it is in contemporary culture, often expressing concern for potential to offer illusory forms of rebellion and self-possession (Pountain and Robins, 2000) or anti-social behaviours (Majors and Mancini). Cool can allow you to be a retreatist, rebel or a bohemian, with a sense of independence and freedom, without intent or ability to change (or even really provoke) anything; in some cases perhaps perpetuating the status quo (ibid). My findings do not contradict this but they do emphasise that increasing attraction to cool does not necessarily suggest increasing valorisation of destructive or anti-social behaviour.

Modern cool

Following the logic of my argument, what attracts mass audiences to images which suggest cool ironic nihilism, narcissism and 'deviance' might rather be the fact that these are exaggerated and highly visible models of enviable composure. To be thoroughly immersed in modernity, whether 'inside', 'outside', or somewhere in between, but not to be engulfed by it, suggests superior adaptation to its conditions and enhanced capacity for survival which translates into prestige, which I suggest is best described as 'modern' cool. Sunglasses have become a ubiquitous fetish object of this elusive form of prestige.

If we conceptualise cool less as a shallow, depoliticised 'rebellion' and more as part of the struggle for a sense of composed self-possession against anomie and perceptions of global risk, we can see the interconnectedness of modern fashion, technology, inclusion/exclusion in contemporary cool as well as its relevance to increasing numbers of people. This would do more to explain the *spread* of cool as a value, as well as the appeal of sunglasses, than any other interpretation has done to date.

Sunglasses timeline

> 1967

This appendix enables a chronological perspective on the thematic developments discussed through the chapters. It focuses on the developments of use and association in the formative period between approx 1910-1970. Key moments in visual culture for the development of sunglasses' connotations are identified alongside the industry's own developments in defining and marketing sunglasses.

ancient history Use of stone, bone etc – slivers of onyx, an emerald, masks made from bone or coconut shell used by ancient cultures including Egyptions, Aztec/inca, Inuit

< **Non western cultures with extreme exposure to strong sunlight develop opaque eyeshades.**

13th century Acerenza claims the geographical origin of eyeglasses is Venice (glass making capital) but that they appeared more of less contemporaneously in different locations' as 'an instrument that served to restore normal vision when placed in front of a defective eye' (1997:134)

< **Beginnings of corrective spectacles, dependent on quartz mining and glass manufacture.**

Initially glasses were hand held, attached to wigs or later gripped the bridge of the nose metal springs (Acerenza, 1997, p137)

Mid 15th century – Nuno Fernandes, Portuguese horseman is described as using tinted lenses as a 'precurser to modern sunglasses' (Ilardi, in the Optician 1912:127)

< **Early references to tinted glass as relief from sunglare**

16th century 'For relieving dazzle, the patient must look steadily at green colours' Guillemeau in Hamel, 1955:349

Late 17th to mid 18th century Enduring fashion for lorgnettes: hand held glasses worn by nobles emerged in Venice and at the court of France. Notably these were also worn as jewellery/fashion accessory where no correction was required to vision (Acerenza, 1997:137) Later described as a 'dirty look on a stick' by Bennet, (1963:26), it seems insolence and glasses are first connected here also as Bennet describes the 'insolent intent' of the quizzing glass as favoured by the regency buck, and the 'spurious superiority of the monocle' (ibid). The monocle continued to be worn in the first two decades of the twentieth century by some for predominantly seemingly 'countercultural' reasons (Lehmann, 2000).

< **Social uses of spectacles – non-corrective lenses became fashionable with suggestions of insolence.**

c.1723-30 Edward Scarlett – the first 'riding temple' glasses (those which stay on via rigid bridge and arms resting on the ears, as is the convention to this day) – this made it more possible to be active outdoors while wearing glasses, and enabled the glasses to become an extension of the body. Drewry (1994)claims there was reluctance, especially on the part of ladies, to accept glasses which were not hand held as these had the connotations of a prosthetic rather than a fashion accessory or sign of education.

< Riding temple glasses developed

1752 Ayscough's double hinged glasses – some were tinted as Ayscough believed green or blue lenses to be more beneficial as white glass produced 'an offensive glaring light very prejudicial to the eyes' (ibid)

< Corrective spectacles advised to be tinted

c.1750 – 'Goldoni' sunglasses with lateral sunshades made of fabric, Venice (Acerenza, 1997:33) these were worn by Goldoni of the Commedia dell Arte (Handley, 2009) and presumably available to other wealthy passengers and lucky gondoliers.

< Early sunglasses very like later forms but seemingly these remained a localised trend.

c 1750 – Chinese produce glasses with tortoiseshell frames 'supposedly worn during an audience with the emperor, so as not to be dazzled by the light of the sun king' (Acerenza, 1997:108)

1802-11; Scarpa refers to 'those who have the intention of only wearing tinted glasses when they are exposed to the sun's rays or when travelling in the snow' (in Hamel, 1955:350)

< Early reference to tinted lenses for travel purposes

c. 1825 (and 1890) Handley describes two pairs for overseas expedition (2005:7) and says these are an 'early form of sunglasses'.

< Military/expedition uses,

1830s onwards tinted d-framed spectacles were known as 'Railway glasses' – protection for early rail passengers (Handley,2005:7)

< Industrial/travel purposes.

1832 'Portrait of a Spanish Gentleman' by Jose Buzo Caceres depicts a man wearing tinted d-spectacles (held by The B.O.A). The glasses may have been needed for medical purposes (Handley, 2005:6), but the established association between railways and tinted d framed glasses suggests it is possible that this gentleman was announcing but his modernity. Portraits of Victorian industrialist William Ball (ibid:8) may support this possibility.

1867 – Horne described the available 'protective glasses' against flies, dust, glare of sun, but recommended for the purpose 'simply a strip of brown crepe' (in Corson 1967:136). This suggests tinted protective goggles had not become fully established.

< Protective glasses available but not established

1870 Spectacles with awnings as sunshades – examples of these are kept by the B.O.A archives.

1879 – Patent for celluloid (early plastic) spectacle frames (Acerenza, 1997:139)
These became well established only after the end of WW1 (ibid:140)

c. 1900 – 'Maisette' style sunshades in use (Handley, 2008). These were wooden, with embroidered facades, shaped to the brow, to be held like a peaked cap – suggestive of upholstery as opposed to engineering.

< Attempts at other solutions to the need for shade

1910s Keystone Magazine notes improvement to the line of 'driving and shooting spectacles' with reference to 'usual objections to these goods in the past being their weight and unattractive appearance'. (May 1910:489)

< Goggles and autoglasses sold in US for driving and shooting

1911 Jacques-Henri Lartigue photographs his cousin Zissou in waders, shooting attire and goggles. He calls the image 'Impeccably dressed as usual' indicating an absurd aspect to the presence of the glasses (Lartigue, 1978)

1912 Display ad in the Keystone Magazine for the patented 'autoglas' (Feb 1912:66)which is described as 'suitable for motoring and all outdoor sports' features an illustration of the goggles being worn by a woman in genteel day wear. The goggles aesthetic bears no relation to the aesthetic of the clothing, being identical to the model for the male.

1912 Display ad in the Keystone Magazine (May 1912:328) refers to tinted goggles as 'Shooting and Motor glasses 'suitable for ... shooting, hunting, motoring, golf, tennis' with an illustration of a rugged man in sports clothes.

< Tinted non-corrective glasses sold for golf and tennis

1912 ... the same article in the Keystone Magazine (Aug 1912:637) describes use of tinted lenses indoors among gamblers. Referring to a report in The Columbian, a specific player's tactic is described whereby the glasses enabled him to 'read the expressions of other players...[yet]... conceal any signs of delight or disappointment that he might feel after a glance at his own cards. The author states that 'many players who display emotion too readily resort to smoked glasses to conceal this weakness'. Another device was to mark the cards in such a way that could only be detected if wearing the tinted glasses.

< Early example of use indoors, association with 'night cultures' and protection against display of emotion

1914 Fashion apparently started to accept spectacles and affect their design by just before ww1, when Drewry quotes a seemingly shocked commentator remarking that people actually seemed to be proud of their spectacles. (Drewry,1994:online) However, this theme recurs throughout the 20th c., where the relationship between spectacles and fashion is evidently in constant tension –

spectacles have never fully made the transition.

1915 American Journal <u>Amoptico</u> publishes a cover which promotes 'Crookes lenses for the vacationist'. Figures are clothed and shaded by parasols and hats, and the glasses are rendered very lightly.

< **Early reference to shading eyes on holiday**

1916 Crookes publish one of the 'first large scale brand name advertising schemes' for what <u>Manufacturing Optician</u> later claimed was 'never intended to become the world's first mass sale sunglasses' which were 'later sold for bazaar prices' because the brand name was 'not secure' (Manufacturing Optician, July 1966:67). The glasses had been design for 'furnace men'.(ibid). However the Amoptico cover of 1915 suggests the market was being tested for holiday wear.

May 1916 <u>Wellsworth Merchandiser</u> cover promotes their goggle range: Auto glasses, Sun glasses, Shooting glasses, Tennis glasses and Golf glasses

< **Earliest mention of term 'Sun glasses'**

July 1919 <u>Wellsworth Merchandiser</u> display ad refers to leisure uses of 'goggles' (autoglasses and sun glasses), which states 'grow in popularity with the rising thermometer'. Motoring enthusiasts, golfers and 'the girl who sits on the sands' are identified as potential customers. However model names mostly refer to speed, cars, aviation, sport and travel (July 1919:6).

< **Model names indicate positive connotations worked by manufacturers primarily of speed, aviation and sport**

Nov 1919 Article in the <u>Wellsworth Merchandiser </u>refers to potential customers of winter goggles as 'speed kings of motorcycle, automobile or air' (Nov:212).

June 1920 'For the present... we could hardly expect spectacles to become the rage among the ultra modernists... True it is that some sorts of eyewear have occupied a recognised place in society... the 'scornyette'... has been socially popular for years, although not used... for social purposes' (Wright, 1920: no page no.)

< **Indication that sunglasses were not fashionable**

June 1920 <u>Wellsworth Merchandiser</u> refers to the potential sale to civilians of the 5468 'Liberty' and 5368 'Victory' frames 'which went through the war and came out unscathed' (Wright:31).

< **Military connotations**

March 1923 Goggles aimed at 'protection of children's eyes' suggest leisure/family applications and represent 'a new field for profits' (<u>Wellsworth Merchandiser </u>)

< **Earliest mention of potential family markets for sunglasses**

August 1924 – <u>Wellsworth Merchandiser </u>– 'display ad states 'every officer of the Chicago motorcycle police' wears an autoglas.

< **Earliest reference to sunglasses as Police uniform**

August 1924 - Wellsworth Sport model goggles 'for sun glare dust and wind' display very similar design to the triplex safety aviation goggle.

Summer 1924 – Jacques-Henri Lartigue photographs wife Bibi at Royan in swimsuit, hat and sunglasses

< **Extremely rare image of sunglasses worn for sunbathing for this time – but JHL is known for taking photographs of the informal, and the oddity.**

1925 Models in driving goggles appear in and on cover of Vogue

< **Driving goggles fashionable**

1928 American patent no 1739696, applied for by Frank Spill, for an adaptation to sunglasses engineering includes the justification that large quantities are sold' and that they can 'be purchased at ten cent stores', but that the public demands they are 'neat in appearance'. (patents online)

< **Sunglasses becoming an object of mass consumption**

1929 Foster Grant sold sunglasses in number at the Woolworths on the Atlantic city boardwalk (Foster Grant, 2009:online)

1932 Joan Crawford in sunglasses with Douglas Fairbanks at leisure on the beach, photographed by Edward Steichen and published in Vanity Fair (online)

< **Very early promotional image of a celebrity in sunglasses. Fairbanks and Crawford were part of the 'glitterati' which succeeded the Riviera set.**

1936 – Article in <u>The Optician</u> entitled 'Spectacles for Everybody' cites not sunbathing but the invention of 3D cinema as the 'golden opportunity' which has 'at last' presented itself for the 'optician to supply practically the whole population with spectacles' (12/2/36:331). Only reference to sunbathing in this edition is an exhortation to push 'sunspecs for holiday' through the 'slack season'.

< **Evidence that sunglasses had not reached popularity in the UK to the same degree as the US by mid-thirties.**

1937 Society Reportage in American <u>Harpers Bazaar</u> pictures Princess Helen in 'enormous goggles' and Princess Ruspoli in 'a hand knit and glasses' (Morel, 1937:62-3).

< **First appearance as fashion trend in high fashion magazine.**

1938 Sunglasses appear in fashion editorial photography in <u>Harpers Bazaar</u>. Photograph by Louise Dahl-Wolfe

< **First appearance in fashion editorial**

1938-9 References to lighter frames, decorative 'straps' (which hold the lenses) and the idea of glamour and celebrity in the <u>American Journal of Optometry</u> (Oct :38).

1938 Rayban sunglasses launched (reviewed in <u>The Optician</u>, August 1938:417-8). Dickinson (who describes himself as initially sceptical about sunglasses) states that behind ray ban glass 'one experiences a coolness only to be described as delicious' (p 417), and sums the article up by saying they are 'cool as an income tax demand note' (p418).

< **First reference to cool and sunglasses was in relation to the new 'Ray Ban'.**

1939 US <u>Popular Science Monthly</u>: 'craze for gaily coloured sunglasses that swept the country last year, and is booming again' (in Corson, 1967:225). 'Tens of thousands had been made and sold each year… [but] the new fad sent demand sky-rocketing to millions'

< Novelty/leisure sunglasses a 'craze'

1939 First special supplement to <u>the Optician</u> published about sunglasses

< Three years after 3d cinema had been discussed in the same publication as the route to 'specs for all'.

1943 Macadams states heroin addict Charlie Parker wore suit and dark glasses on stage, suggestive of unconventional, hedonistic lifestyle (2002:41)
July 1944 Ad in <u>American Journal of Optometry</u> for 'Continental' brand glasses, which refers to 'important people' such as 'sheiks, senators, Hollywood actors and actresses',

< Early associations with jazz, black masculinity, music and 'night' cultures
< Sunglasses a sure sign of international status

1944 Worn by Barbara Stanwyck as disguise in <u>Double Indemnity,</u> and by the female protagonist in <u>Leave her to Heaven</u> 1946

< Early Femme Fatale in dark glasses

1947 Lucky Luciano photographed being deported in suit and sunglasses

< Early Gangster/drug dealer icon

1948 <u>Vision</u> the supplement to the <u>Optical Practitioner</u> notes that 'the wearing of dark glasses can easily become a habit, almost a phobia' (Summer1948:24) and that this does not promote eye-health. (In the same article it is noted that now 'most people own some form of sunglasses' (ibid)).

< Early evidence of trend (habit) for sunglasses being worn indoors, in the dark by non-performers.

< Established as a mass commodity in the UK

1957 Miles Davis featured in dark glasses in sleeve art for <u>Birth of the Cool</u>.

1959 Sunglasses worn by lovers while kissing in Jean Luc Godard's <u>A Bout de Soufflé</u>,

< Early example of sunglasses suggesting absence of meaning

.
c. 1960 catalogue 'Clear Vision' refers to Sophia Loren and Marian Koch, her preference for a certain brand for leisure activities and their usefulness when filming. It seems they were worn against the bright studio lights when out of shot, and this has become a desirable association by the time of publication.

1962 Photographer Bert Stern gives Nabokov's Lolita pop shades for the poster of Stanley Kubrick's film.

Winter 1963 Much discussion around this period about wearing dark glasses for driving and for TV viewing, e.g. in <u>Vision</u> magazine.

July 1966 <u>Manufacturing optician</u> refers to a 'recent US estimate' of 'almost one pair per US adult' in an article entitled 'Sunspecs the big volume business sector'(1966:67).

< **Saturation of market**

1967 Warhol era

< **Use in Pop Art and rock music(Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground)**

1967 Stephen Shames photographs Stokely Carmichael, Kathleen Cleaver and George Murray of the Black Panther Party delivering political speeches in dark shades

< **Use in organised black politics**

1967 Second special supplement to <u>the Optician</u> published about sunglasses

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Film

Title	Year	Director
<u>A bout de Souffle</u>	1959	Dir. Jean-Luc Godard
<u>Bladerunner</u>	1981	Dir. Ridley Scott
<u>Breakfast at Tiffany's</u>	1961	Dir Blake Edwards
<u>Cool Hand Luke</u>	1967	Dir. Stuart Rosenberg
<u>Desperately Seeking Susan</u>	1985	Dir. Susan Seidelman
<u>Double Indemnity</u>	1946	Dir. Billy Wilder
<u>K-Pax</u>	2001	Dir. Ian Softley
<u>Leave Her to Heaven</u>	1945	Dir. John Stahl
<u>Leon</u>	1994	Dir. Luc Besson
<u>Lolita</u>	1967	Dir. Stanley Kubrick
<u>The Matrix</u>	1999	Dir. Wachowski brothers
<u>Minority Report</u>	2002	Dir. Steven Spielberg
<u>Moulin Rouge</u>	2001	Dir. Baz Luhrmann
<u>Nikita</u>	1990	Dir. Luc Besson
<u>Terminator</u>	1984	Dir. James Cameron

Terminator 2	1991	Dir. James Cameron
The Devil Wears Prada	2006	Dir. David Frankel

Exhibitions

Crafts Council Exhibition	1996	Spectacles and Sunglasses at the MAC, Birmingham

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Discussion with B.O.A. curator Neil Handley	Several Visits between 2005-2009	The College of Optometrists 42 Craven Street London
The Wellcome Institute	2008	Wellcome Collection 183 Euston Road London NW1 2BE, UK

Miscellaneous

Different Together	Summer 1999	Premiere Vision trend prediction film

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25	<u>Head no.5</u> by Philip Lorca di Corcia	c.2000	Nooderlicht.com; d.a. 07/09
26	Bette Davis; still from <u>Of Human Bondage</u>	1934	Dir. John Cromwell, RKO

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30	<u>Automobile Speed</u> by Giacomo Balla	1913	Lista 2001
31	<u>Abstract Speed – the car that passed</u> by Giacomo Balla	1913	Lista 2001
32	<u>Ma Cousine Bichonnade</u> by Jacques-Henri Lartigue	1905	Lartigue, 1978 (pages not numbered)
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34	'D-framed' railway spectacles with tinted lenses	Late 18th/early 19c	Acerenza, 1997:77
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36	The "Autoglas" by Hardy&Co.	August 1912	Display ad found in <u>The Keystone Magazine of Optometry</u> vol 4, no 8:562
37	Ad for Wellsworth goggles and Sun Glasses	May 1916	Display ad found in <u>The Wellsworth Merchandiser</u>
38	Display cabinet launch for goggles and sun glasses	May 1918	Display ad found in <u>The Wellsworth Merchandiser</u> May 1918:192
39	Triplex Safety Goggles	WW1	In Greer and Harold, 1979:28
40	Wellsworth Goggles	July 1919	Display ad found in <u>The Wellsworth Merchandiser</u> July 1919:6
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Jacques-Henri Lartigue

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73	Le Corbusier's 'City of Tomorrow'	1925	http://grandtextauto.org/2007/10/07/high-museums-high-modernism-and-activist-games/&usg d.a.13/ 07/09
74	Mary Sykes in Puerto Rico by Louise Dahl-Wolfe	1938	Harpers Bazaar US in Goldberg, 2000:150
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76	Twins fashion image by Louise Dahl-Wolfe	c.1940	Harpers Bazaar US in Dahl-Wolfe, 1984
77	Saltdean lido arch. Herbert Jones	1938	http://www.architecture.com/HowWeBuiltBritain/Images/TwentiethCentury/arrivalOfModernism/Saltdean%2520Lido_530x475.jpg&imgrefurl d.a. 11/07/09
78	Crookes lenses for the vacationist	May 1915	Amoptico magazine, cover art
79	Coco Chanel sunbathing	1918	Charles-Roux, 2005:145
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81	'What will summer mean to you?' Ad for sunglasses	March 1939	American Journal of Optometry
82	Travel Fashion	1942	Harpers Bazaar US; cover art
83	Chanel's fisherman-inspired beach clothes	1913	Charles-Roux, 2005:109
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85	Ad for "Ship 'n' Shore" blouses	1953	Heimann, 2001(no page numbers)
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89	'Travel Unravelled'	May 2003	Financial Times, cover art for supplement 'How to Spend it'
90	'Travel Unravelled' (detail)	May 2003	Financial Times, cover art for supplement 'How to Spend it'
91	Goldoni style glasses, Venice	Late 18th c.	B.O.A archives

92	Joan Crawford and Douglas Fairbanks by Edward Steichen	Feb 1932	Vanity Fair magazine @ http://www.condenaststore.com/Actors/Douglas-Fairbanks-Jr-and-Joan-Crawford/invt/102350 d.a. 07/04/09
93	Marlene Dietrich backstage at Paramount	1938	Life magazine, @ http://www.life.com/image/72386641.d.a. 07/04/09
94	Via Veneto, still from La Dolce Vita	1967	Dir. Fellini
95	Greta Garbo, caught by paparazzi in Athens	1966	http://www.corbisimages.com/Enlargement/Enlargement.aspx?id=U1525575&caller=search d.a. 01/07/09
96	Greta Garbo, caught again by paparazzi in Athens	1966	http://www.corbisimages.com/Enlargement/Enlargement.aspx?id=U1525575&caller=search d.a. 01/07/09
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104	'Who could you be?' Foster Grant campaign by Duffy and Shanley	2007	http://duffyshanley.com/pride_fostergrant.html d.a. 13/07/09
105	Jen Lopez and Ben Affleck by Steve Ginsburg	2003	Howe 2005
106	Ad for Potterton Boiler	Sept 1961	Good Housekeeping magazine
107	Ad for Pan Am Airlines	1959	Heimann, 2001(no page numbers)

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110	DJ James Lavelle	Oct 1994	The Face magazine:164
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112	Shiva Saduh modelling branded sunglasses, by Nigel Christian	April 1999	<u>Untold</u> magazine:42
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135	Madonna as Susan in	1985	Dir. Susan Seidelman