

Please cite the Published Version

Atkin, Susan (2023) Nostalgia, myth and memories of dress: the cultural memory of Madchester. In: Memories of Dress: recollections of material identities. Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 76-96. ISBN 9781350153790 (hardback); 9781350153806 (ebook); 9781350153813 (ebook)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350153820.0013>

Publisher: Bloomsbury Academic

Version: Accepted Version

Downloaded from: <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/630542/>

Additional Information: This is an Accepted Manuscript of a chapter which appeared in final form in Memories of Dress: Recollections of material identities, published by Bloomsbury

Enquiries:

If you have questions about this document, contact openresearch@mmu.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in e-space. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/policies-and-guidelines>)

CHAPTER FOUR

Nostalgia, Myth and Memories of Dress: The Cultural Memory of Madchester

Susan Atkin

'Madchester,' on its surface, describes the reaction in Manchester, England, to the "rave revolution" which was the focus of British youth culture from the mid 1980s to mid 1990s (Haslam 1999: 142). Madchester is now seen as a seminal period in the city's cultural history, though there is much debate about exactly when it began and ended.¹ Manchester, located in north west England, is a post-industrial city that in recent years has had a strong popular leisure sector built upon associations with urban youth, street-style, market stall entrepreneurship, and counterculture.² These characteristics reflect a rebellious stance toward mainstream society that appear to be infused with working class, left-wing cultural and political roots. Madchester is central to Manchester's contemporary city's civic identity; beneath the surface of its popular memory rave-related image it references its working-class heritage and opposition to the mainstream. Subsequently, Madchester itself has contributed to the city's mythology fed by continued popular media attention and local legend. This chapter focuses on the inception of Madchester where groups of people,

¹ Haslam believes that it may have begun as the use of the recreational drug Ecstasy became more frequent in nightclubs around 1985, although he also suggests a start in 1987 with the first play in public of The Stone Roses' *Elephant Stone*. Haslam (cited in Robb 2009: 237) confirms that the crucial time was certainly December 1987 to March 1988, with Madchester ending by Christmas 1990. Luck (2002) suggests that there are potentially many dates for the end of the movement: May 1990 (the Stone Roses concert on Spike Island, Widnes, Cheshire), September 1992 (the release of The Happy Mondays' *Yes, Please*), December 1994 (the release of the Stone Roses' second album, *The Second Coming*), or beginning in 1993 with the hiatus in New Order's band activity. He asserts that the end was certainly by The Reading Festival in August 1996. This date coincides to a certain degree with the bombing of Manchester that caused widespread damage to the city center on 15 June 1996. This ambiguity of the period contributes to the mythological sense of Madchester, and historical accuracy may no longer be possible, nor even welcomed by former participants in the scene.

² Manchester was the world's first city of the industrial revolution with machine-based cotton manufacturing at the heart of its industry from the mid-eighteenth century. With the decline of the cotton industry after the First World War and other manufacturing industries declining from the 1950s, Manchester was unable to revive its economic base in an increasingly competitive post war world despite the introduction of service and technology industries (Williams 1996). Williams, writing in 1996 at the end of the period studied, notes Manchester's renewed optimism and confidence as the regional capital and an international city as it embarked on a number of regeneration initiatives and civic and cultural enterprises in partnerships with the private and public sector. This reflects the city's cultural timeline as it moved from the greyscale, industrial-inspired late 1970s through the psychedelic-inspired late 1980s and early 1990s to the confident, European city of the late 1990s.

including football fans, fans of particular bands and regular attendees of particular clubs began to hang out in particular locations and show allegiance to them through their dress.³ Oral history has been used as a method for this research, gathering testimonials from key members of the movement on their memories of dress from 1985 to 1996.

Madchester was a turning point where there was a shift in attitude away from traditional subcultures, identified by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) as a form of working-class resistance due to a less tangible dominant culture and lack of a need to resist it (Atkin 2016).⁴ Despite this shift from traditional subcultures, there is agreement by cultural theorists that an alternative to mainstream culture remains, albeit with more eclectic style and taste sensibilities, and is relevant in the actions of establishing individuality while still needing to belong to a group. Sociologists Diana Crane (2000), Sophie Woodward (2008), and Jennifer Craik (2009) perceive a tension between the desire to display individuality alongside belonging to a social group as inherent in our human psyche. Joanne Entwistle (2000: 133) uses the term “connective tissue” to describe the heightened sense of connectedness to a particular group, distinguishing them from other groups and the dominant culture. Madchester straddled the change from subculture to post-subculture. A number of alternatives to ‘subculture’ have been proposed within post-subcultural theory to reflect the shift away from its traditional definition.⁵ The term ‘movement’ is preferred in this chapter to define the less-tangible, loose social coalitions, with shared activities and geographies that reflect the fluid, multi-faceted, dynamic, and rapidly shifting culture of Madchester – and of postmodern culture as a whole (Jenks 2005). ‘Movement’ also acknowledges the relationship with political, economic, and socio-cultural contexts that it has been suggested post-subcultural theory sometimes overlooks (Ogersby 2014). These

³ Woodward (2009) and Wenting, Atzema, and Frenken (2011) highlight the importance of this act to be part of a vibrant local scene.

⁴ Seminal work on subcultures at the CCCS by Hall and Jefferson (1976), Melly (1972), and Hebdige (1979, 1988) established the traditional notion of subculture being a form of working-class resistance against the previous generation’s conformist attitudes seen against the dominant culture in post-war Britain.

⁵ For example, Straw (1991) suggests ‘scene,’ Crewe and Beaverstock (1998) and Woodward (2009) use ‘taste constellations,’ Woodward (2008) also suggests ‘creative of individuals.’ Polhemus (1994) uses ‘supermarket of style,’ Maffesoli (1996) both ‘neo-tribes’ and ‘aggregations.’ Evans (1997) suggests ‘lifestyle,’ Jenks (2005) ‘standpoints’ and Hall (2007) ‘syntagms.’ Halberstam (2003) also suggests ‘alternative temporalities’ and Maria and Soep (2005) use ‘youthscape’ to describe what subcultures have evolved into.

contexts, and the advance of creative industries, were all integral to a thriving youth culture that was inherent in Manchester from 1986 to 1996.

In a series of photographs of four men showcasing their flares on the pages of the style magazine *i-D* (see Figures 4.1-4.3), photographer Ian Tilton captures the dress of a group of friends (Steve Cressa, Lee Daly, Martin Prendergast and Al Smith), who were central to the beginnings of the Madchester music scene in the mid-1980s. The four are presented as initiators of a specific sartorial look comprising of loose tops and flares that the London-based magazine recognized as originating in Manchester with links to the city's music and burgeoning club scenes.⁶ In an air of swagger, confidence and defiance – Prendergast is smoking (Fig. 4.2), Cressa is eating a chocolate bar (Fig. 4.3) – all are making a statement and showcasing the flared trousers (Fig. 4.1) that eventually evolved into the 'Baggy Look' synonymous with the 'Madchester' era (Atkin 2016).



Figure 4.1. Baldricks, Martin Prendergast (left), Lee Daly (back center), Steve Cressa (front center), Al Smith (right), the Hacienda, Manchester by Ian Tilton © Ian Tilton, 1988. Reproduced with permission.

⁶ The plural is used here to denote that Manchester had more than one music and club scene, including those that came together as 'Madchester', existing in tandem with one another during the period, 1986-1996: see Atkin (2016).



Figure 4.2. Steve Cressa, the Haçienda, Manchester by Ian Tilton © Ian Tilton, 1988. Reproduced with permission.



Figure 4.3. Martin Prendergast (left) and Lee Daly (right), the Haçienda, Manchester by Ian Tilton © Ian Tilton, 1988. Reproduced with permission.

A combination of factors encouraged the relaxation of traditional boundaries of subcultural dress and styles in the Madchester context: coming together in opposition to Thatcherism,⁷ the rise of the recreational drug Ecstasy, the egalitarian attitude promoted through the eclectic music choice available, and the open door policies of nightclubs such as the Haçienda and Venue.⁸ Hence, an amalgamation of looks arose at local sites where styles were broken down and re-combined which marked a shifting in attitude: the point at which identities became less fixed. In earlier research, photographer Ian Tilton used his own photography of a Haçienda organized road trip to Paris to highlight the varying looks and their reference points (see Atkin 2016). Rather than mere eclecticism, emphasis was placed upon the clothing items' origins and how they were combined, bought or acquired because

⁷ Thatcherism is a political ideology named after Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher, who was Prime Minister for the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990 (BBC 2013).

⁸ The Haçienda was a nightclub and music venue on Whitworth Street, Manchester, which was intrinsic to the inception and evolution of the Madchester movement. It is also central to the cultural memory of the movement. The Venue was another nightclub on Whitworth Street.

of their meaning to the individual and their local networks.⁹ This referencing of multiple cultural sources reveals cross- and counter-cultural ideals, a more tacit understanding that is inspired by locale, tastes still associated with class background (Bourdieu [1979] 2004), and a continuing interaction with the commercial environment.

Oral History: Spoken Memories of Dress

This chapter utilizes oral testimony collected through active interviews (Gubrium and Holstein 1995, 2002) to gather memories of dress during the Madchester movement. The research recognized the value of oral history is a research tool for accessing first-hand experience of fashion, while also having the potential for uncovering hidden, neglected or marginalized aspects of the past (Lomas 2000; Taylor 2002). Though such material is often undervalued, interviews can capture information that might otherwise go unrecorded, recovering lost areas of experience from respondents with a variety of backgrounds and treating their recollections as valid evidence for research into aspects of living memory, in this case dress. In this study, interviews were sought with figures who appeared to have played key roles in the interplay of Mancunian fashion and music,¹⁰ including fashion label owners, employees of fashion firms or retail outlets, band managers and photographers. Participants had to have been directly involved in creative output in Manchester during the time period studied, and contributed in some recognized way to the look and style of Manchester from 1985 to 1996. The interviewees' responses highlight experiences from everyday life in a rich and immediate way. Their spoken memories highlight and reflect important social and cultural experiences, ranging from individual to community.

It is important to note that "oral histories are works in progress, as individuals cognitively and emotionally grapple with the contradictions and complexities of their lives"

⁹ See Hebdige (1979), Evans (1997), Calefato (2004), and English (2007) based on the work of Levi-Strauss (1962) and de Certeau (1988). Although limited to what these items will signify because of their history and original use, the heart of subculture bricolage is where the original meanings are subverted, to represent their own ideals and place, in opposition to the dominant culture.

¹⁰ Mancunian is an adjective or demonym of Manchester that refers to anything that is from or relates to the city.

(Green 2004: 41), regardless of how many times they have recounted their memories. Overall, nine interviews with men and women took place that involved thirteen interviewees in total. Some of the interviewees for the wider research project had been interviewed many times prior to this research for television, books and magazine articles and reshaping had taken place on numerous occasions as they reviewed their memories each time.¹¹ The three interviewees cited in this chapter were not as familiar with sharing their memories of the subject and by contrast presented a tone of reflection where they revealed fresh accounts that they had not discussed, or perhaps even thought about since the event occurred. When using interviews as a source of historical evidence, the uncertainty of the individual's memory and the articulation of that memory in the present is a concern identified by oral history researchers (Suterwalla 2013). In the case of this project, interviewees were recalling events from the recent past (1985 to 1996), which made some aspects more verifiable. However, the use of alcohol and recreational drugs no doubt affected the interviewees' memories in some circumstances.

There is also the possibility that the interviewee may try to embellish or over-play their role in a situation. This is an issue that Shehnaz Suterwalla recognized in her interviews with women who were part of sub- and counter-cultural movements, in particular British Punks and Greenham Common protestors, where:

the self-reflective perspectives of the older self can romanticize the younger self, and that as one grows older the tendency to over-invest or over-connect with particular experiences of youth can become stronger, creating a web of deeply subjective emotional memories (Suterwalla 2013: 28).

Mythologizing is used by historians Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (1990) to show that memory is continually reshaped to make sense of the past from the perspective of the present. As the creative reshaping of the past within memory is an inherent part of human experience, this cannot be seen as a fault as if there existed a single objective viewpoint.

¹¹ For example, interviewees Phil Saxe and Leo Stanley have both been interviewed on and around the subject of Manchester in a number of popular discourses such as Haslam's *Manchester, England* (1999), and Robb's *The North Will Rise Again: Manchester Music City 1976 – 1996* (2009).

Samuel and Thompson posit that even while the facts being recalled may be true, the omissions and shaping of the stories told are what develop them into myth. Thus, even recent history can be mythologized with certain facts being omitted, displaced and re-shaped as they are recalled both individually and collectively. As fact and fiction become blurred, active searching for corroboration between independent sources becomes an essential part of the research process to ensure academic rigor.

Paolo Jedlowski describes collective memory as “a set of social representations concerning the past which each group produces, institutionalizes, guards and transmits through the interaction of its members” (2001: 33). Vik Loveday (2014) made links with the participants’ individual stories to collective forms of nostalgic remembrance with a common set of cultural reference points that formed a key role in articulating their current classed identities. Taking his cue from Susan Buck-Morss (1991), Loveday (2014: 732) uses “cultural memory reservoir” to describe a metaphorical collection of myths and symbols that is used to construct identity. This chapter explores the clothes worn by initiators in the Madchester movement and the collective memories portrayed in the style of clothes themselves that the movement’s members used to preserve traditional working-class identity and reflect a love of 1960s psychedelia.

Working-Class Identity

The male interviewees in this research all self-identified as working class. As Alison Slater (2011) remarked in her PhD thesis on working-class women in the north west of England, the term ‘working class’ is both ambiguous and complex.¹² This is particularly so for the time frame of this research as Britain in the 1980s saw de-industrialization under successive Conservative governments (1979 to 1997), which resulted in the loss of traditional working-class occupations in steelworks, mines and factories. Sociologist Ken Roberts’ (2011) study of class in contemporary Britain clarifies the term in relation to work and social arenas and shows insight into the appeal of associating with or claiming to belong to it.

¹² See also Slater’s chapter in this book.

According to Roberts (2011), in urban, industrial communities a culture of working-class comradeship originated in the interdependence of the workers which was necessary to ensure safety in the workplace. With the exception of the textile industry, the workforces were mainly male and involved arduous, and at times dangerous, labor. This spilled over into leisure time as workers lived side by side, close to their places of employment, frequenting working men's clubs, pubs and football grounds. In contrast, the home and neighborhood was the domain of women with an equally strong but different sense of community (Roberts 2011). This traditional pattern of women at home and men either going to work or 'hanging out' in their leisure time reflects the academic discourse on subcultures.¹³ There is an appeal, particularly for men, to associate with the sense of comradeship and community instilled in traditional working-class identities. Despite changes, including the decline of skilled manual (mainly males') jobs and trade unions, this identity has been kept alive in the present by remaining rooted in the past (Roberts 2011; Loveday 2014). Nostalgia, when integrated with the creative process or remembering, actively synthesizing memory and imagination, defined by Emma Keightley and Michael Pickering (2012) as "mnemonic imagination",¹⁴ can be "associated with the desire for engagement with difference, with aspiration and critique, and with the identification of alternative ways of living in modernity or of the ways of living which modernity lacks. At the same time nostalgia represents an attempt to grapple with discontinuities and abrupt shifts in time" (Keightley and Pickering 2012: 137). A nostalgic attachment to the past, such as that experienced by members of the Madchester movement, fusing memory and imagination ensures working-class identity is recognized and valued (Loveday 2014).

Football Terrace Culture

It is widely agreed that music and sport play an essential part in Mancunian culture: Haslam (1999) marks Manchester's pop music and football heritage as engaging, inspiring, and

¹³ Polhemus (1994), Woodward (2009), and Wenting, Atzema, and Frenken (2011) highlight the importance of the act of hanging out with particular people in a particular location.

¹⁴ See also Jenkinson and Webb in this book.

often obsessing people. This he expresses in terms of a collective consciousness: “the dreams and imagination of Manchester people have always needed sustenance” (Haslam 1999: xxvi). Football culture is intertwined within the foundations of northern England’s post-industrial identity, its cities allied with strong football fanbases, such as Liverpool and Manchester. Following such teams, attending football matches on a weekly basis, standing at home games in the same vicinity on the football terraces with other fans,¹⁵ where others had stood before them, formed part of the collective memory of the working class as a “a set of social representations concerning the past which each group produces, institutionalizes, guards and transmits through interactions with its members” (Jedlowski 2001: 33). The cultural practice of standing on the terraces and sharing the highs and lows of their club’s successes and failures itself contributes to the social communication and exchange of memories (both first and second-hand). Keightley and Pickering explain that “we look to the past of others, particularly family members or members of our community, to explain how we have come to be who we are, or more simply, to construct our personal lineage and the story of our forbearers” (2012: 91).

Football culture, class identity, and dress are seen here to be intimately interwoven. This is key to the evolution of the Madchester movement and its dress. Anthropologist Ted Polhemus (1994) states that the northern manifestation of Rave, found in Manchester and Liverpool, came from the football terraces: in Liverpool this group was called ‘Scallies’ (a term to describe a roguish self-assured young person, possibly an abbreviation of ‘scallywag’), in Manchester, they were ‘Perries’ (derived from the Fred Perry polo tops they wore). Collectively, these groupings were later called Casuals, a term which appears to have stuck.¹⁶ The dress of Casuals evolved in the 1980s when northern football fans, travelling to Europe to support their teams, returned with European sportswear brands. Steve Redhead (1991: 19), in his work on football culture and football fanzines, sees in the “flash and

¹⁵ A terrace is part of a football ground that is used by spectators to stand and watch the game. Terraces are the cheaper end of the price range within the ground and as such defines class-watching of live football.

¹⁶ The origin of the umbrella term Casual is unclear. It includes sub-groups, with subtle differences in their look according to their geographical location and football loyalties. The Casuals wore expensive designer sportswear, which could be seen as both a means of disassociating themselves from stereotypical football hooligan looks and subverting perceptions of wealth by wearing expensive designer garments for working-class activities, such as football and fighting (Hewitt 2002).

defiance” of this style of dress a celebration of its working-class roots: a form of dressing for impact.

The Manchester football terraces bore witness to a change in the way Casuals dressed, a new silhouette evolving out of a shift from the smart, clean-cut Casual look towards a more relaxed feel: flares, loose t-shirts, hooded tops and page boy haircuts. The clothes were a response to the music, dance and drugs scene found in the nightclubs that they were now attending, such as the Hacienda. Despite what could be superficially perceived as a sharp turn away from the dress of the Casuals, there is a logical connection between the type of detailing found on European sportswear brands and those worn during the Madchester movement where there remained great attention to the detail of dress. Redhead (1991: 87) describes the Madchester bands as “street/terrace models getting on stage.” Indeed, many of the musicians came from working-class backgrounds and frequented the football terraces, themselves tapping into the collective memories of those attending matches, woven within the foundations of northern England’s post-industrial identity. Noel McLaughlin (2000: 264) defines the relationship between popular music and fashion as one in which the music plays a powerful role in “shop windowing” the clothing. The clothing, in turn, is a central to providing an image for the music. There is a sense of empowerment in being able to wear what the musicians and performers (working-class heroes) are wearing.

Interviewee Lee Daly (see Figure 4.3), a Londoner who moved to Manchester in the early 1980s,¹⁷ came to know the city initially through his support of the London football club Tottenham Hotspur, following them across the country to watch them play away fixtures and often remaining in the football towns and cities overnight to partake in their nightlife.¹⁸ When he moved to Manchester in the mid-1980s, he made fast friends with the men he saw on the football terraces and in the nightclubs afterwards, including Steve Cressa (also in

¹⁷ Daly, L. (2012), interviewed by author, 7 May, 8.00pm, The Bar, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, UK. Daly was a friend of band members from The Stone Roses and The Happy Mondays. Daly is credited with initiating the Baldrick / Madchester look and was one of a group of young men photographed by Ian Tilton for the *i-D magazine* photo shoot in October 1987 (Figs. 4.1-4.3).

¹⁸ A football fixture is the schedule of games to be played in a championship which informs when each game is to be played, and whether the team is playing at its home pitch or away at its opponent.

Figure 4.3), a main player in his circle of friends that included members of the seminal Manchester-based band the Stone Roses. With an interest in fashion and alternative culture, Daly observed a difference in the way Northerners, in particular Mancunians, dressed and was quickly able to see the wearing of flares as a cultural statement rather than dated fashion attire:

Susan Atkin - So everyone was wearing flares?

Lee Daly - That's a good question. When I started coming up for football. I'm a Tottenham [Hotspurs] fan. We were more skinheads, but we noticed that some of these lads were wearing flared trousers, to us in London, that's what Northerners did anyway. Look at those Northerners still wearing sheepskins and flared trousers! Then I started realizing that they were kind of like Scallies, what we call the Perry boy, Punk call it Casuals and I realized they were doing it on purpose ... I thought that's a statement, a guy wearing flares in 1981 and 1982 was daring ... There was these kind of individuals but with a common love for garage psychedelic Punk. When I first mentioned it to Steve [Cressa] I said it was a cult statement and he said 'you are the first one to get it'.

From his encounters with Manchester football fans, Daly identified that rather than wearing an outmoded garment hence reinforcing the stereotypes that Northerners are behind the times, the flared trousers were associated with the Scally or Perry Boy look, broadly termed Casual, and were worn to reflect the wearer's taste in music.

SA - So you were basically making a statement that you wanted to be different or was it referenced to the sixties psychedelia?

LD - With Steve [Cressa] it was. Phil Saxe sold the flares that the Scallywags used to wear out of the shop. He had a shop at the bottom of the old Arndale.¹⁹ Carl Twigg was near Quay Street.²⁰ Steve first got his trousers from there. When I first spoke to Steve about it, everything was Hendrix. He was a massive Jimi fan and I guess it was a culture reference as he was a mixed-race lad. He was mad for Jimi and that was kind of like

¹⁹ Phil Saxe co-owned Gangway, a market stall on The Arndale Market, Manchester which sold casual wear. He was also the first manager for seminal Manchester band The Happy Mondays and the head of Artist and Repertoire (A&R), a role that scouts for and develop musical talent at record labels, for Manchester-based music label Factory Records during the 1980s.

²⁰ Carl Twigg was an independent clothing store in Manchester at the time.

seen as mainstream. We were all into the garage psychedelic stuff, but Steve was true to his belief and he would ape Jimi, not in his regency dandy clothes, but in his mannerism. The Manchester scene, fashions, musicians at the time, it was all studied, it wasn't an innate upsurge or natural momentum, it was something that came from looking at pictures of The Byrds,²¹ bear in mind this was before the time of internet and before we had access to this kind of media. We had to go to library to find a picture of Byrds. You had to track down the book in the library.

As Daly explains, the manifestation of flares can be traced to an interest in the psychedelic musicians of 1960s America. The sense of nostalgia for this era is understandable when considering Keightley and Pickering's (2012) stance that nostalgia and mnemonic imagination together can be linked to a desire for alternative ways of living, while also dealing with abrupt shifts and discontinuities, such as the changes to working class identity faced by members of Madchester. However, many subcultural movements have also looked to the counter-culture movements of 1960s Europe and America for inspiration, a time when being conventional and participating in the capitalist economy became linked to a sense of phoniness. This can be interpreted as the beginning of authenticity in counter-, or sub- culture, a view that supports Lionel Trilling's (1972: 12) concept of "originative power," as the foundation of authenticity.

Daly's observations concur with Polhemus (1994) who states that the flared look came from the football terraces, positioning it as a logical progression of the Casual movement where "an emphasis on brand labels such as the Manchester-based Joe Bloggs was clearly in the same aspirational, Dressing Up tradition" (176). The wearing of flares at football matches identified by Daly as early as 1981 or 1982 is a clear example of individuals communicating allegiance to a group, which in this case can also indicate a geographically based arena; a Manchester-based football club who were subverting the Liverpool-originating Casual subculture. Here, the nostalgic collective memory of 1960s American counter culture was shared and its memory enriched as it was brought into a new social context of the football terraces. As football sociologist Dave Russell (1999: 19) writes, the allegiance to local football teams has provided a "symbolic citizenship", renewing the sense

²¹ The Byrds were a 1960s American psychedelia band.

of belonging to a certain place since the late nineteenth century as towns and cities grew too big to be knowable to their inhabitants. At a time when working-class identity was being undermined by government, such allegiances became ever more important, with attending football matches tapping into the cultural memory of working-class Mancunians.

Workwear

Daly also acknowledged workwear as an integral part of his wardrobe, worn alongside the flared trousers:

SA - What sort of things were you wearing with the flares, what did you wear on top?

LD - It was a kind of overlap with workwear and Phil Saxe was kind of responsible for that. I remember I went and picked up this knitted thick cardigan jacket thing, which I would never have worn in a million years, but seeing it in his shop in concept [context] with all the flares it seemed like the best thing in the world. I think I've got it on in that picture that Ian [Tilton] took.

The photograph (see Figure 4.3) shows Daly wearing the thick knitted jacket. It has a button front, collar and revers joined and rounded to present a kind of shawl collar, rounded shoulders and a slightly baggy shape, appearing to be tapered or gathered at the top of the hip. While it is unbuttoned in the photograph, it can be assumed from the style that it would billow up slightly at the waist when fastened. The photograph is in black and white and this may be why the characteristics of the jacket do not immediately strike the observer as workwear. However, Daly wore the garment with this interpretation from seeing it marketed in Gangway (Phil Saxe's market stall) as such.

During his interview, alongside Terry Kane, photographer AJ Wilkinson also identified influences of workwear, sold and worn alongside garments inspired by the 1960s:²²

²² Wilkinson, A. and Kane, T. (2012), interviewed together by author, 10 April, Mid Cheshire College, Northwich, Cheshire, UK. During the time period studied, AJ Wilkinson was a photographer for *City Life* magazine, Terry Kane was a Disc Jockey (DJ).

AJ Wilkinson – I remember, because I used to work for, do some work for Big Banana [in Affleck’s Palace],²³ and he was one of the first people to start to bring in Carhartt when it was workwear.²⁴ So, workwear was a big thing and everybody used to wear dungarees, dungarees were a big thing. And I used to wear Carhartt. And of course, there was no internet then so you used to have to wait for someone to go to the States and get it for you, you couldn’t get it. So, I used to have to wait for someone to come back with bales of workwear which I was quite into Red Wings and all that sort of thing.²⁵

SA – So when you say dungarees and workwear, what was the shape of it? Was it fitted?

AJW – No. They were baggy. They weren’t like 1970s dungarees, they were like – sort of – you looked like you were in *The Waltons* really.²⁶ It was that sort of look, you know, check shirt thing and errr dungarees with er ... Not everyone did but a few people did, sort of, definitely that wider legged, and I remember I had a few pairs by Dickies,²⁷ Carhartt, American, I was really into Americana, it was a big thing for me, at that point.

Wilkinson observed the influence of what he termed ‘Americana’: American workwear labels, such as Carhartt and Dickies, together with Red Wing work boots. These were all brands whose products were designed for workers (mainly men) who worked in heavy industry in the United States, such as logging, mining, and farming. When describing the fit of the clothing, in particular the dungarees worn, it is worth noting that the dungarees and

²³ Once the department store Affleck and Brown, Affleck’s Palace is an indoor market in Manchester with independent stalls, small shops and boutiques selling music, music memorabilia, clothes and accessories. The vendors range from traders of second hand goods to designer-makers selling their own wares. Affleck’s Palace has a reputation for being a center of counter-cultural retail experience (Butler 2016).

²⁴ Carhartt was established in 1889 in Detroit, Michigan, producing denim and cotton duck workwear. During the late 1980s, Carhartt goods found their way to Europe in small imports by independent companies. A distribution network for Europe was not formed until 1994 (Carhartt 2022).

²⁵ Red Wing was established in 1905 in Red Wing, Minnesota producing leather work boots.

²⁶ *The Waltons* was an American television series (aired 1972-1981, and continued by film sequels) set in rural Virginia between 1933 and 1946. Chopra-Gant notes that *The Waltons* offered an “anodyne” (2013: 3), tapping into traditional American family values, countering unease of the social and political volatility of the time (for example, defeat in Vietnam and political corruption). During the time period studied, re-runs of the series were aired in the UK on Sunday mornings on Channel 4 where watching it may have been a soothing source of comfort, this time easing hangovers and come downs from substances taken the night before.

²⁷ Williamson-Dickie Manufacturing Company was established in Texas in 1922, making workwear and uniforms. In 1989 Dickies (UK) was formed. The brand became popular with skateboarders as well as several top music acts (Dickies 2022).

checked shirts mentioned by Wilkinson have a loose fit, rather than the baggy fit popularly associated with Madchester, suggesting the baggy look has alternative origins. These references were worn by individuals taking a bricoleurian approach, inspired by cultural references, with subverted and transformed meanings as they were re-appropriated into casual wear in Manchester, England to communicate individuality. Journalist Tim Walker (2008) describes an individual's creation of their own look from a range of eclectic influences, such as 1960s psychedelia and workwear, rather than buying into one concept or trend, as a DJ re-mixes music. This is an appropriate metaphor for this chapter.

In addition to *The Waltons*, Terry Kane and Wilkinson, cite other, more cult American film and television programs as a source when considering their influences for dress during this time:

Terry Kane – The mid '80s. One thing that I would say influenced later on was *Twin Peaks*.²⁸ Because that's when the jeans went looser, the [Levi's] 501s, the checked shirts ... I remember buying a black leather biker jacket in '89 after watching *Twin Peaks* actually.

AJW – Yeah, the influences were different. I think the influences came from... for me, the same, from film, like all that dungarees thing, it came from film... Like with [Levi's] 501s, you'd find out information. It's different because there wasn't the internet so you'd find out about a little something that someone had worn and think, 'oh, I like that,' like Red Wings. I remember them coming over and it's only because of a certain film and someone wearing Red Wings, it could have been *Deer Hunter*.²⁹ A semi-cool Di Niro wearing Red Wings. And you had to get someone to get them for you. So the influences were probably very subtle.

The references for Wilkinson and Kane can be interpreted as characteristically American. Wilkinson cites actor Robert Di Niro as his character hunts deer, a popular sport throughout the United States. For Kane, inspiration came from the 1990s television series *Twin Peaks*,

²⁸ *Twin Peaks* (1990-91), [TV program] American Broadcast Corporation. American television serial drama by Mark Frost and David Lynch, aired 1990 -1991 and followed by a feature film in 1992. *Twin Peaks* is a fictional small logging town in Washington State.

²⁹ *Deer Hunter* (1978), [Film] Dir. Michael Cimino, USA: EMI Pictures.

whose characters' costumes feature styles that are quintessentially Lynchonian,³⁰ referencing the local logging community in lumberjack shirts and jackets alongside classic Americana. Such contemporary cultural discourse offer representations of the past as popular memory which the viewer can draw upon. Films and television programs are used as a resource for our imaginations where it works in partnership with our memories, becoming interwoven with our own social and historical experiences, both at the time we are immersed in them but also afterwards (Keightley and Pickering 2012). Popular memories are not just passively accepted, but are responded to in accordance with the individual's reflections on their own experiences and memories, and even rejected if deemed inauthentic (Lummis 1987; Mills 2016). Anna Green posits "surely the interesting issue is not that individuals draw upon contemporary cultural discourses to make sense of their lives, but *which* ones, and *why*" (2004: 42 [original emphasis]). The dynamic negotiation between popular discourse and authenticity of personal memory enables individuals to assert where their experiences fit into popular memory but also where they were different. For Kane, it was the workwear of Lynch's nostalgic 1950s-reminiscent Americana rather than the Dean and Brando-esque biker jackets featured in the series that resonated,³¹ reflecting his identity as a working-class Mancunian male at a time when working-class identity was in a state of flux.

Denim jeans are also traditional workwear garments, although since their origins they have been adopted by various groups, gaining not just an identity of American workwear but also of American counterculture. Hence, for the Manchester scene, the sense of authenticity lies not just in the original workwear but also, as with the wearing of flares, in the links to and nostalgia for American cultures. This nostalgia can be understood as part of the gaze across the Atlantic towards American culture through the lens of music, film and photography but also mirrors British subcultures' and post subcultural movement's desire to

³⁰ Film and television director David Lynch is renowned for a unique cinematic style with reoccurring themes, include surrealism, violence or the criminal underbelly, industry and Americana, in particular reminiscent of the 1950s. These themes are reflected in the costumes worn in *Twin Peaks*.

³¹ Images of the American actors James Dean and Marlon Brando wearing leather biker jackets in influential 1950s films such as Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955, Dir. Nicholas Ray, USA: Warner Bros.) and Brandon in *The Wild One* (1953, Dir. László Benedek, USA: Columbia Pictures) became iconic imagery representing youth disillusionment and rebellion.

subvert the mainstream. As Keightley and Pickering (2012) state, “[nostalgia] can be about keeping alive certain alternatives open within the public domain and keeping alive certain counter-narratives that rub against the grain of established social orthodoxies and political pieties” (115). As mentioned when discussing the influence of *The Waltons*, Wilkinson observed the importance of jeans, in particular Levi 501s:

AJW – I think for me it was different, I suppose – I remember 501’s being a big thing, but original 501’s with the red selvedge which were slightly wider on the leg than your standard 501’s being quite important at that time. I remember seeing the [Stone] Roses on one of those programs which ... can’t remember who it was now, but it was on one of those late night programs they were on and I remember Ian Tilton photographing them [see Figure 4.4], which they used the photos for the cover of their album and ermmm ... and John Squire, I was knocking around with Matt Squire, his brother, we were all into looking for those jeans that were a slightly bit different than the very straight legged, horrible late eighties, where all the jeans seemed to be exported over to the Czech Republic, bleached, horrible, you know, that sort of look. Yeah, that look was looking for, sort of a nod to Americana, slightly fifties Americana coming through as well, which was quite interesting.

SA – This is something that you remember John Squire wearing?

AJW – Well I remember John Squire wearing those sort of original 501s, they were all looking for those original 501s shrink to fits ... But, original shrink to fits, not the low cut that you could buy – you see you couldn’t get – you had to really search for them, you had to get them from London, or wherever you could find them.



Figure 4.4. Stone Roses in the set of *The Other Side of Midnight* at Granada TV, 1989 by Ian Tilton © Ian Tilton, 1989. Reproduced with permission.

The look of the original Levi's 501s shrink to fit jeans was due to a specific cut with higher waist and straight leg, sought out by the members of the Stone Roses, who also appreciated its historical styling. Figure 4.4 shows the jeans worn by lead singer Ian Brown, wearing straight-legged jeans that appear almost flared at the bottom due to the straight leg of the jean and the shape of the leg. The jeans vary in color/wash and it can be seen that two of the band members have rolled up hems, which is explained by Kane below:

AJW – But 501s and slightly bigger 501s belted up was big. [...]

TK – And they were so much harder to get then because there wasn't all the different leg lengths and such that you can buy now. You could get different waist sizes.

The difficulty in acquiring these garments with American heritage and workwear references, identified by both Kane and Wilkinson, was undoubtedly part of their appeal. Limited access to these styles is the opposite of the mass market, which is deemed inauthentic. As Kane mentions, sizes were limited. This includes leg lengths, so rolled up hems would frequently be a feature (as shown in Figure 4.4), but waist sizes would be limited too (imports to Britain were usually only even-sized waist measurements). This led to the style of oversized jeans being worn belted, gathered at the waist, the baggy clothing style to some degree dictated by availability as it is by choice.

The authenticity of 'workwear', in particular American workwear, here could be questioned, as the wearers did not undertake heavy manual labor and therefore did not wear the garments and footwear for its original intentions. However, when worn in a city whose heritage is steeped in industrialism and thus a working-class culture, there is a near mythical status in which workwear has an authentic aura and thus relevance to the Mancunians wearing it. With any cultural artefact or product the memory of how it was made and was/is used is carried in its extended meanings and feelings the user, in this case the wearer, invests in it (Keightley and Pickering 2012). Original garments convey ideas of authenticity that can be appropriated to construct a 'credible' self, with a status of uniqueness and originality that merges with the wearer. This status is also enhanced by garments that were difficult to acquire, such as footwear from the United States, with the

difficulty in obtaining such items undoubtedly part of their appeal. The nostalgia for workwear is helpful for the wearer (Blunt 2003), where what is remembered is, while done with a sense of loss, also with a great sense of pride. Alongside this is the need to assert a sense of communal belonging and place in the context of rapid deindustrialization and social change (Smith and Campbell 2017). Heike Jenss (2004) argues that dressing in garments with history produces a feeling of individuality and sophistication; distinction as Pierre Bourdieu proposed ([1979] 2004). Referencing her research using jeans, Woodward (2016) highlights “how the material properties of things are central to understanding the sensual, tactile, material and embodied ways in which social lives are lived and experienced” (359) and it is worth noting that there is a different wearing experience with original garments as the textiles and cut are different to contemporary garments: they *feel* different. This research has shown that this is as much the case for men as women, with their memories of dress offering insight into the decisions and contexts of the time of wearing.

Conclusion

Madchester marks the point where there was a shifting in attitude, a point at which subcultural identities became less fixed. This fits with the change from subculture to post-subcultural theory where subcultures evolved from their traditional sense into less tangible, more eclectic style and taste sensibilities. The term ‘movement’ has been used in this chapter to acknowledge the relationship with political, economic and socio-cultural contexts as well as the more dynamic, thriving youth culture that was inherent in Manchester from 1986 to 1996. The men interviewed in this chapter were initiators of the Madchester movement. They revealed that rather than mere eclecticism, emphasis was placed on the origin of clothing and how it was combined because of its meaning to the individual and their group, referencing cultural memories of American 1960s psychedelia and workwear to support their stance. The interviews also revealed that this bricoleurian approach brought a tacit understanding to dress choices, arising from shared experiences inspired by locale.

As working-class roles, in particular male roles, changed due to the de-industrialization of the North during the late 1970s and 1980s, previous symbols of class solidarity were

challenged. Football culture emerged as the focal point of a new sense of pride in coming from a working-class background with expressions of class solidarity manifesting on football terraces in the unified wearing of flared trousers. This was a Manchester-centric subversion of the Casual subcultural movement with its roots in 1960s American psychedelia. The American workwear that was also a popular look during this time was a nostalgic combination of mythology and lived experiences where garments associated with workwear were adopted as tokens of cultural memory as a strategy for working-class identification. This cultural memory acted to reinforce the pride in working class origins during the transitional phase of class identity in the 1980s. It is unclear from the interviews why American rather than British references were adapted, but with roots in a sense of cultural authenticity these industrial references were filtered through a nostalgic consumption of American film, television and music.

The garments worn by the original members of the Madchester movement transport ideas of authenticity that can be appropriated to construct a 'credible' self, with a status of uniqueness and originality that merges with the wearer as part of their subcultural capital (Bourdieu [1979] 2004; Jense 1992; Miles 1996; Thornton 1995). This is also the case for garments that have been appropriated in the spirit of history (here, the case of psychedelia and original workwear) satisfying the wearer's sense of bricolage and nostalgia while referencing the city's cultural memories of working-class heritage and opposition to the mainstream. Utilizing nostalgia, myth and memories of dress, the cultural memory of Manchester enabled the initiators of Madchester to exert their identity as 'Manchester Men' and their symbolic citizenship (Russell 1999) at a time of flux for working-class identity and the city itself.³² As the Madchester movement evolved, so too did the city, with a new found confidence, still rooted in its heritage and cultural memories of subversion and creativity.

³² *The Manchester Man* was published in three volumes in 1876, and tells the story of the rise of Jabez Clegg, the 'Manchester Man' of the title, mirroring the economic growth of the city of Manchester during the early years of the nineteenth century (Chetham's Library 2022).