M.B.

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
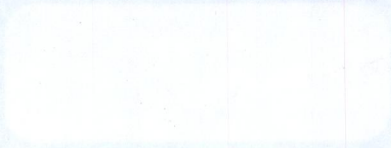
FASHION AND TEXTILES

FASHION DESIGN

Cristóbal Balenciaga, a 1950's couturier and Jean-Paul Gaultier a avant-garde designer of the 1980's, represent the different attitudes that exist among men, as regards woman and fashion.

PAULA ALICE HUGHES

Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and Complementary Studies in Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Fashion Design.

1993

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENTS

Men Do Dominate

A discussion as to why men have tended to dominate the fashion industry for more than a century.

Balenciaga and Gaultier's different attitudes towards women and fashion.

Balenciaga used women as 'hangers' for his architectural garments, while Gaultier used the female form as inspiration, exaggerating it in areas.

Society has a profound effect on fashion and its various trends.
During the 1950's there were a handful of designers who dictated fashion, thirty years on, this saw a great change, as male and female designers erbelled against the orthodoxies of that time.

A woman's choice or a woman's dilemma?
Images and perceptions of women and their clothes who are faced with a 'catch-22' situation, to dress in relatin to men, or as their own woman.

Introduction

Woman are irrefutably different from men. Sadly one of the more enduring comments/concerning this fact is that of the Frenchman who observed "vive la difference!" Is this statement designed to make a serious observation about half of the human race?

The barely hidden assumption inherent in this quip is that men are somehow superior with women being at best, decorative and mindless sex objects put on this earth for men's convenience. It is the degree to which women's clothing supports, reinforces and perhaps helps to ensure the perpetuation of this view of women, (and therefore the continued dominance of men) which is central to this dissertation.

My intention will be to explore this question in broad terms, referring to two designers Cristóbal Balenciaga and Jean-Paul Gaultier. Both known for their achievements in Paris, Balenciaga will represent the attitude that existed among men towards women and fashion during the 1950's, and Gaultier representing the attitudes that existed in the 1980's up to the present day. This dissertation will be undertaken in four chapters.

The first deals with the question, why men dominate the fashion industry and have done for more than a century, looking at Balenciaga's and Gaultier's work, and referring to other designers of their time. Seeing what they had to offer and why exactly were they so successful.

The second chapter covers examples of work from both designers but most importantly, how they saw women, - as equal or as second class citizens. It is interesting to see how these views affect the design of their clothes. Balenciaga used his women to act as 'hangers' [1] for his architectural garments while Gaultier used the female form as inspiration, playing around with it and exaggerating it in areas.

Chapter three is a discussion on how society has a profound effect on fashion and its various trends. During the 50's there were a handful of designers who determined what people wore, thirty years on male and female designers started to rebel against these fashion ideals, and women were given a choice on what to wear.

The final chapter looks at the situation women are in as regards fashion. It deals with images and perceptions in general terms, that people have of women and women have of themselves. Do women really choose how they dress and how they project themselves, or are they 'locked in' to a system which offers only a carefully structured and (in reality) a very limited choice?

Chapter One

MEN DO DOMINATE

- A discussion as to why men have tended to dominate the fashion industry for more than a century, looking at the work of the spanish born designer Cristóbal Baleniaga, greater known for his achievements in Paris during the 1950's and Jean-Paul Gaultier the Avant-Garde designer of the 1980's.

It is true, men do dominate women's fashion. A recent study, found that approximately 65 percent of famous 20th century fashion designers have been male and 30 percent female. Out of all the big names designing today those who immediately come to mind, would be - Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Oscar de la Renta in America, Yves Saint Laurent, Karl Lagerfeld, Giogio Armani and Jean Paul Gaultier in Europe, women have only two top names to boast about, Vivienne Westwood and Donna Karan. There are many different arguments and views as to why this is so, but mainly women seem to dress to please men and therefore prefer to be dressed by a man "whose taste and expertise they respect"[1]. It is a common belief among women that men design clothes that are more flattering to the female body, either because men know how they like women to look or because men don't like the way women look, so they work at changing their appearance.

However, women's participation in the world of fashion has changed considerably over time. Up until the 19th century , women were the vast majority of dressmakers and people were shocked as men were professionally employed in dressing and undressing ladies.

"Would you believe that in the later half of the nineteenth century there are bearded milliners, "wrote charles Dickens," authentic men ... who with their solid fingers , take the exact dimensions of the highest titled women in Paris - robe them , unrobe them and make them turn backwards and forwards before them."[2] Charles Frederic Worth (1825 - 95) was the most famous of the

new couturiers. Within a few years of his career he had established a new stereotype, the male fashion dictator. Not only did he enter the fashion industry but profoundly altered it. Couturiers like Mme Vignon collaborated with individual clients to create one-of-a-kind dresses. But however skillful she was, the dressmaker was essentially a hireling, who deferred to her clients wishes. By contrast, Worth made a series of models, which he then presented to his clients. Worth professionalized the craft of fashion, transforming it into big business. He redefined dressmaking as high art, playing two roles simultaneously, as an artist and an industrialist, something women were unaccustomed to doing. He helped establish a new and powerful image of the couturier as a fashion dictator which contrasted with the ordinary position of the traditional female dressmaker.

In the early twentieth century, women made a comeback as Cecil Beaton observed "sandwiched between two world wars, between Poirets harem and Diors New Look, two women dominated the field of huate couture."[3] The two women were Coco Chanel and her arch-rival Elsa Schiaparelli, followed by many other female designers such as Mme Gres, Jeanne Lanvin, Madeline Vionnet and Nina Ricca. Unlike the male designers of the early 20th century these designers Coco Chanel especially took into consideration the female body and how uncomfortable and impractical clothes can be. As observed by Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton in their book Women and Fashion,[4] Chanel invented her own personal style, based on the attire of her male protectors - clothing that represented the masculine power and aristocratic independence that she craved. In the process she ruthlessly destroyed many of the traditions of feminine fashion, while forcing high society to accept her as a power in her own right.

Nowadays many believe that there is a distinctively female sensibility in fashion design, but at the same time, there are no clear female tracks marching through history. What criteria would we look for? Comfort? Practicality ? But certainly there are men who have designed comfortable,

practical clothes, just as there have been women designers who have created physically restrictive and overtly sexual styles. If a female designer like Jhane Barnes can successfully design menswear, why should the reverse not be true as well? Through the power of imagination, a male designer like Yves Saint Laurent may think himself into a woman's situation. Virgina Woolf believed that the greatest artists were "androgynous in that they could through empathy and imagination express the insights and experiences of both men and women"[5]. Coco Chanel is always mentioned as an exceptional woman in the male dominated history of fashion, known for her style represented by the union of male and female principles. This female revolutionary style has now in the 1990's ironically been taken over by the 'male' designer, Karl Lagerfeld and as Vivienne Westwood has observed - "has frozen in a mold" and become "very trendy." She believes that Channel herself "would not be doing anything of the kind if she were alive today."[6]

In the 1950s besides Mme Gres and Chanel the industry was mainly dominated by male designers such as Dior, Fath and Balenciaga. Women's Wear Daily referred to the spanish-born designer Cristóbal Balenciaga, saying that he "dominates the world of fashion just as Picasso dominates the world of Art, and fashion bends to his will."[7]

Oscar de La Renta has suggested that women designers tend to be less "objective"[8] than men designers, because women design first and foremost for themselves. This is a common belief and not only among men as Sharon Tate suggests in Inside Fashion Design, that men are more successful because they do not impose their "personal design restrictions on their products."[9] Another popular explanation for male dominance emphasises the role of sexism, as Dahl Woolfe, the fashion photographer believed that businessmen are more inclined to back a man. Dianne T. Meranus in her review says "men get easier entrée into the field because of prejudice toward women."[10] This belief may start to change as according to a recent article in The New York Times, businessmen are increasingly "interested in investing in women."
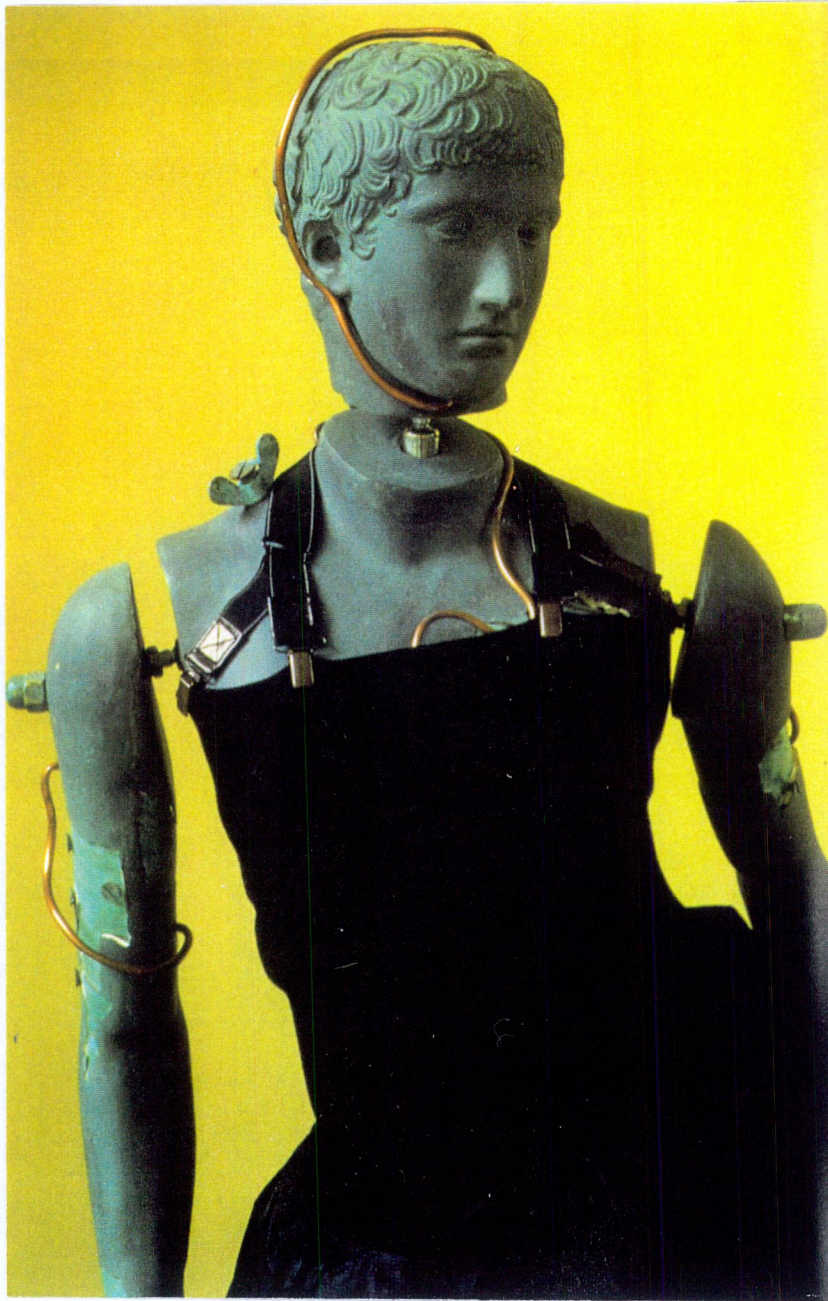
**Gaultier
Mannequin 1986
Fig. 1**

Unfortunately this is not because they now recognise that women can also be creative but because the AIDS epidemic has devastated the fashion world. Investors are now reluctant to back male designers because "they don't want their money to drop dead."[11]

"Fashion is Art" instead Jacques Fath in 1954. "Art is creative and men are the creators."[12] Men fitted this stereo-type of the great Artist much more than women. When fashion wasn't considered as Art but merely an Artistic endeavour (before the first male couturier Charles Frederic Worth in the late 19th Century) dressmaking was an expression of feminine taste and love of beauty, it was then regarded suitable for women. But when it was seen as a business, businessmen increasingly took over and left the less responsible jobs to women. Throughout the 1950's the fashion trade still employed and was a stronghold of careers for women. But cultural assumptions about femininity influenced their work. It was mainly female assistants that worked in the couture houses around this time, such houses like Christian Dior's and Balenciaga's. The female designer Mariuccia Mandelli founder of Krizia in 1954 who admits to have been influenced by Cristobal Ballenciaga and the art deco artist Erté said that "women's clothes are more witty and amusing simply because there is more freedom and an increased willingness to accept changes just for the fun of it. A man usually does not like to provoke fun"[13].

This may not necessarily be true today with designers like Jean-Paul Gaultier who thrives on "futuristic and artificial things"[14]. Fig 1. He emphasises the body as a construction, posing interesting questions about the meaning for today's women, of actively asserting her sexuality and by doing this, playing with the female form.

Ceil Chapman the American sportswear designer of the 1940's argued that a man draws pictures and assumes that "he can take his sketch and drape it around a figure and any woman can wear it,"[15] whereas a good woman

Vionnet, 1936
Fig. 2

designer works directly with the cloth to make a dress," she isn't thinking of a drawing she is thinking of a live person wearing it."[16] At the end of the day, a male designer must go to a woman for the fitting and final judgement on whether the creation works or doesn't work. Claire McCardell, another American sportswear designer of the 1940's said that someday "all designers will be women."[17] Opposing this statement in 1954, the male designer Jacques Fath predicted "some day all great designers will be men."[18]

One of the most successful male designers of the 1950's was Cristobal Balenciaga. Originally from Spain he moved to further his career in Paris and showed his first collection in August 1937. As an artist he reached new heights by using architectural shapes and mastering cut to such points, as to begin to play with it in relation to the human form, Balenciaga and his male colleagues used cut and construction to create altogether new forms.

During the nineteenth Century cut and construction constituted a highly complicated problem . Bits an pieces of fabric were stitched together to make a dress, probably boned, that provided its wearer with the typical silhouette of that time - 'small waist, big hips'. But in the twentieth century, thanks to such female designers as Chanel, Vionnet and Mme Gres the corset was discarded and clothing began to be relatively easy fitting and flowing, but at the same time elaborate construction did not disappear. These female designers, designed with the live moving body in mind, making the clothes look fluid-like and even simple. While they may have looked like any piece of cloth on the body, they were so carefully conceived mostly cut on the bias that on the body they vividly recalled classical sculpture and have been called 'sculptural.' Fig 2. Fashions change but precedents for quality craftsmanship and the visible presence of a creative mind at work, had been set during the 1940s with rising competition between female realists and male architects. Couture clientele had always appreciated clothes that had been beautifully made inside and out. Thanks to these female designers, they also began to appreciate construction as an intellectual concept.

Gaultier
Corset Dress 1986
Fig. 3

Balenciaga, among the greatest of couturiers treated the bodies of client's with sympathy . But it is important to realise that it was not the individual bodies that mattered to him - but his treatment of the bodies as a jumping-off point abstracting its form until construction became an art in its own right. In 1954 the New Look appeared with creative and innovative fashions such as the' 'Y-line, the A-line and the H-line set by designers like Balenciaga and Dior. Hemlines went down, skirts became full, then they narrowed. The press loved it, so did a large segment of the public, but Chanel angrily dismissed the extravagness of "those gentlemen" and of Diors New Look, she said "was he making fun of women? how dressed in that thing could they come and go live or anything?. . . . And that other fellow with his Velazquez style" -referring to Balenciaga. "They can't barely walk - I made clothes for the new woman. She could move and live naturally in my clothes. Now look what these creatures have done. They don't know women. They've never had a woman. Men were not meant to design for women"[19] ... She was forgetting the era of the 30's when Poiret created loose and comfortable clothes that she revived with great success in the 50's.

Between 1979 and 1980 women's fashion underwent a sea of change. Suddenly the ideal silhouette of the female form metamorphosed waists, breasts and buttocks were 'de riqueur' in a way they had not seen since the 50's, the glory days of the female objectificatrion: A French style corset tightly laced up the front of a dress by Gaultier, or in a rock video Grace Jones sports an Issey Miyake metal bostier. During the 1980's, Jean-Paul Gaultier "exemplified the breakdown in contemporary fashion"[20] from high street fashion, disassociating himself from the high seriousness of the rest, for example, Yves Saint Laurant and Karl Lagerfeld, proving people like Mandelli wrong, who believed that a man does not like to provoke fun"[21] in fashion. Although Gaultier creates clothing to give a feminine and sexy look, he also gives the image of impractical clothing. Fig. 3. His first few collections were a flop and it wasn't until 1981 after being in business five years did he begin to get recognition, rising to his current status as the name
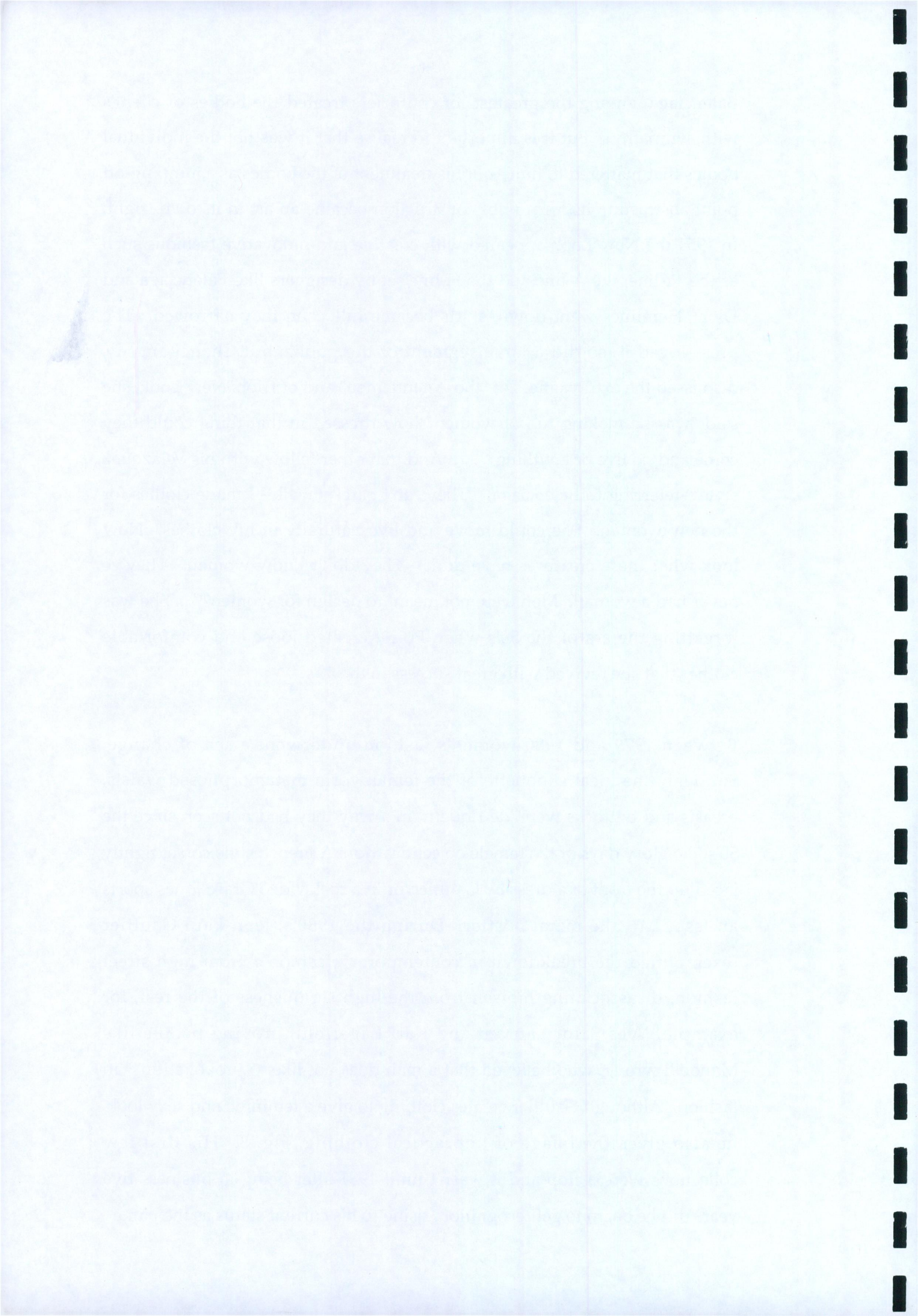
on the label every sub-cult groupie covets most. In an article in the Gaurdian News paper 1986, he disclosed that he has learnt by his mistakes, stagy and riotous as his catwalk shows may seem, his success has been in providing such items as a perfectly cut blazer alongside the wilder excesses. "Fashion must not be an abstraction, it must not be Art for museums. You can't go on doing outrageous things just to be known. Fashion must be worn. In some ways its a compromise but life is a compromise"[22].

In most feminist circles (in the art world and without) Gaultiers clothes are objectionable because they appear to imply female second class status. He is accused of being a typical male designer, incapable of understanding the inconvenience of sexual clothing , in that it might prevent the woman from carrying out everyday chores due to either her high heels, her metal bustier or a micro-mini skirt. But one tends to forget that it was the English Fashion designer Vivienne Westwood in the 1970's who was the original creator of revolvtionary fashion (ripped T-shirts, bondage clothes and fetishist accoutrements). She believed - "Chanel probably designed for the same reason that I do really : irritation with orthodox ways of thinking and a certain perversity. She was a street fashion designer"[23].

In observing Gaultier's clothes one is able to understand him as a homosexual designer, by this I mean he is obsessed with the feminine qualities, of big breasts, small waists, big hips and therefore indirectly designing for himself. In wearing his clothes, the woman can feel feminine but strong through the sexy way they emphasise the body and make women more aware of themselves. Many women believe that to become strong in their look they must dress in masculine clothing, by doing this they are only becoming a second rate man. It may be true to say that it is more important for a male designer like Gaultier to challenge old conventions set by previous male designers like Balenciaga. He uses the "semiotic playfulness and wit of subcultural fashion",[21] in a couture context. He makes more women aware of their sexuality as a homosexual designer, and at the same time making
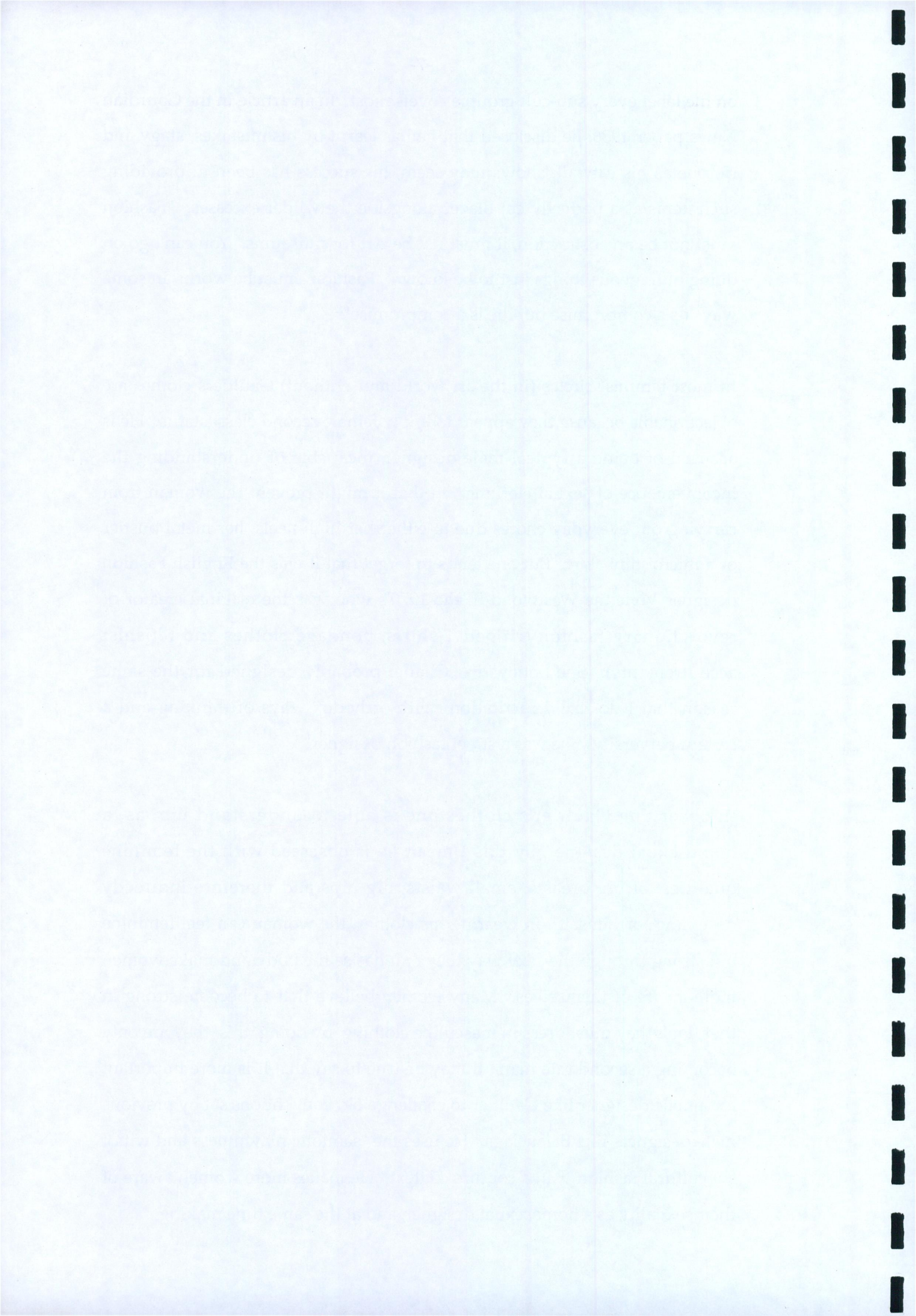
women realise and appreciate the power of being feminine or should I say Gaultier's version of femininity.

Balenciaga
Tunic Dress 1955
Fig. 4

Chapter Two

BALENCIAGA AND GAULTIERS DIFFERENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN AND FASHION.

- Balenciaga used the woman as a 'hanger' to exhibit his architectural garment while Gaultier used the female form as inspiration exaggerating it in areas.

On the 21st January 1895, in Guetaria, a fishing village on the Cantabrain coast in Spain. Cristobal Balenciaga was born. Introduced to dressmaking by his mother, he discovered this to be his passion which was to last a lifetime. 1913 saw the real beginnings of his career in a shop known as the 'Louvre,' San Sebastian. It was here that he had his first fitting, in replacement for the tailor. His urge for independence, was as strong as his confidence in his own talent. In 1919 he opened the first couture house to bear his own name. His first commission just like his last creation in 1972 was a bridal grown. He widened his circle of acquaintances but with the Civil War in 1931 this golden age came to an end. He managed two more houses after this before moving to Paris, where he showed his first collection in 1937. It did not create a very strong impact but by 1938 rumour spread quickly about this new designer and clients flocked to the new salon. As Balenciaga's career progressed he became known as The Master among other designers, journalists were to describe him in turn as the King, the Mystery Man, the executive Prince, the magnificent, the Empower , the Napoleon and the Garbo of fashion.

He was a reserved man, yet he may be recognised in any one his creations. Without exception all were executed with a lack of ornamentation, a simplicity and an obsessive attention paid to the harmony of line and shape which results from an impeccable cut. Fig 4. Parisian influence shows itself in his modernism and his feel for luxrary and elegance. He should be seen

GAULTER

WINTER 84
BEARDS

Gaultier
Velvet Dress 1984
Fig. 5

first and foremost, however, as "Basque, courageous, painstaking, obsessed with the need to push himself to his furthest limits."[1]

The 1980 avant-garde designer, Jean-Paul Gaultier sees himself as the "agent provocateur of Paris couture,"[2] taking his inspiration from the street and from pop fashion. He is audacious, often lurid and sometimes even grotesque. This is the man who put men in skirts and knitted cones on women's breasts, clearly not someone who suffers from taking himself too seriously. Born in 1952 Gaultier was brought up by his grandmother and his attitudes towards women were formed by her -"my grandmother that I love!"[3] She censored nothing on television and through visual images he learnt what was important to him. "He continued to doubt, to question and to challenge absolute truths throughout his childhood, as he does in his adult years"[4] It is that enthusiasm, the boundless energy, usually found only in very young children, together with his naughtiness, in refuting the beliefs of fashion orthodoxy in France, that have earned him the title of "l'enfant terrible."[5] Through his sometimes wild and quirky ideas, there runs a solid back-bone of technique. If he deliberately chooses to bunch a seam or to ignore conventional methods, it is done with knowledge and not like some young designers who learnt only the excess and not the discipline of fashion. The first break in his career was to work for Pierre Cardin in 1970, - "he liked what I did, he showed that anything was possible."[6] He then went on to work for Patou in 1971. Now as an established designer he occupies one of the peaks of french fashion along with Saint Laurant and Karl Lagerfield. During the 1980's he became a star, a legend and a hero to a generation for designing clothes in rebellion against the orthodoxies of that time. Fig 5.

In the 1950's during the time in which Balenciaga was designing there were two conflicting fashion trends evident in the immediate post was period, "the narrow line vied with the fuller shapes".[7] The A-line was popular among designers such as Dior and Balman but Balenciaga's alternative in his day wear, was the H-line - the long jacket sometimes reaching to the knees over
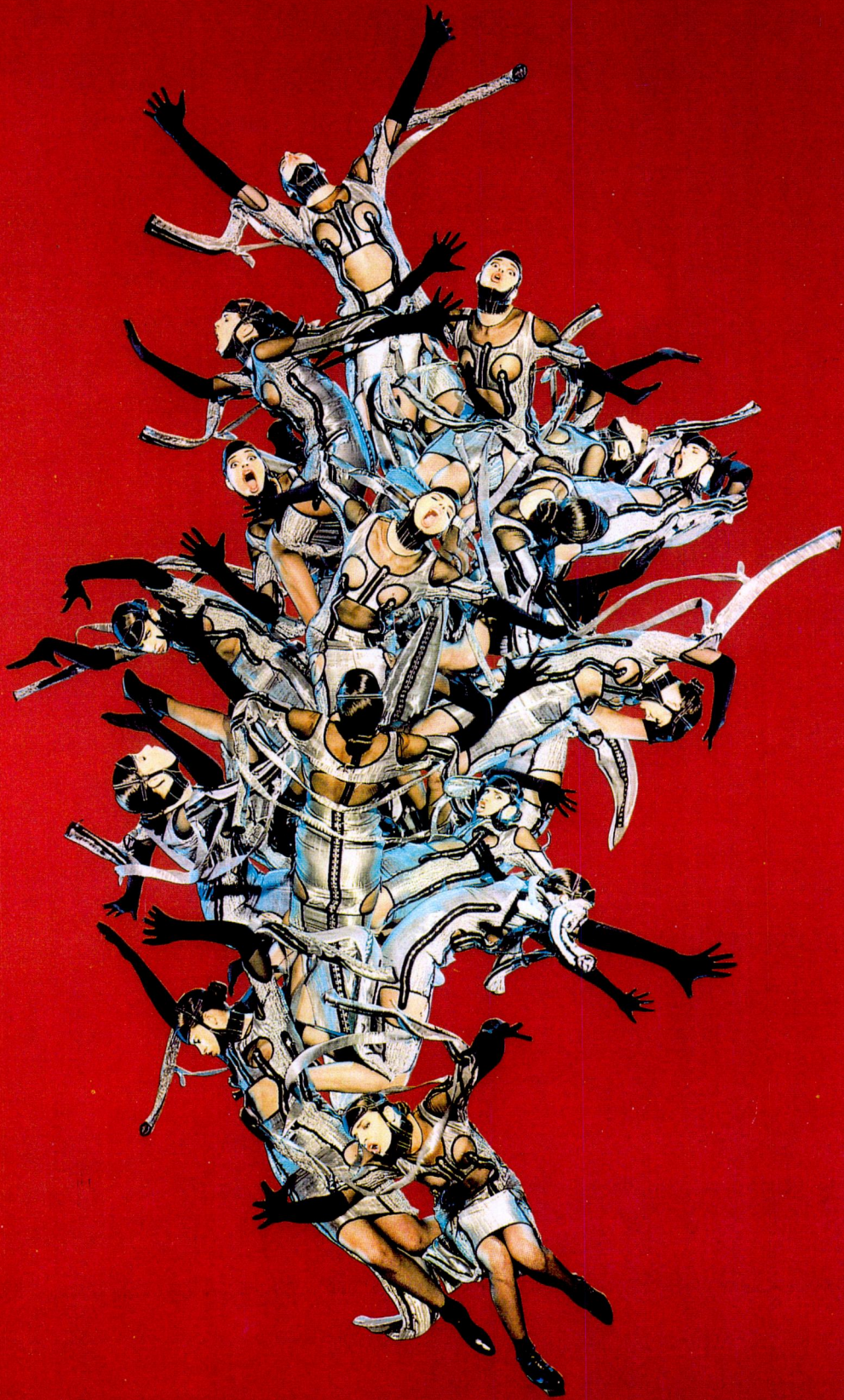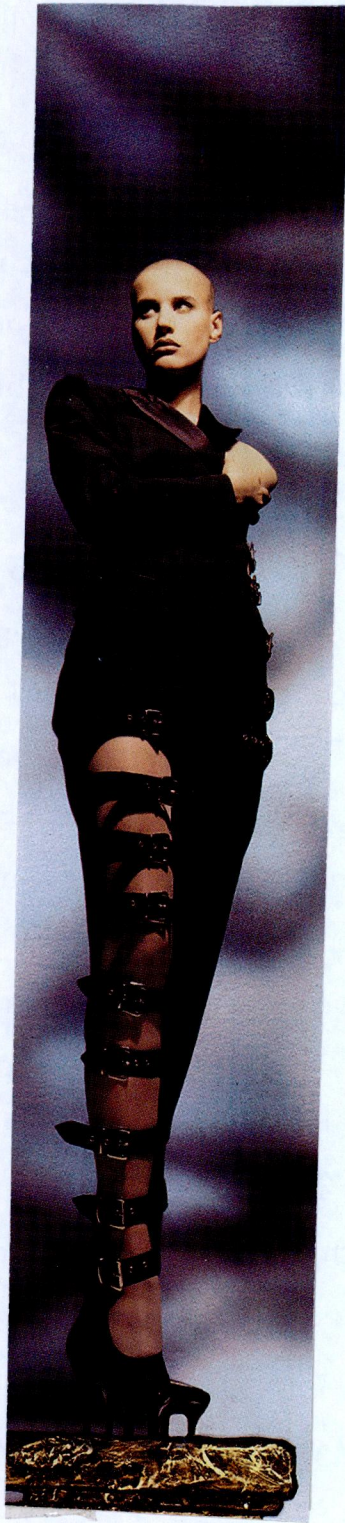
Gaultier 1989
Fig. 6

the ever slimmer skirt. This look had the value of novelty, and must have seemed the epitome of chic in comparison to the gathered styles. Balenciaga swathed close-fitting creations in draping to combine fullness with a more willowy look. Through his shapes and designs it is evident to see that he never sought to create a strong impact on the media. After the war he went so far as to voice his clear opposition to any idea of dramatic innovation in fashion. "No sweeping changes should be made until this period of transition has settled,"[8] he declared.

It isn't hard to see that Gaultier designs to shock, showing 1950's style brassieres and corsetry as outer wear; one of his girdle dresses was prominently featured on the cover of several important fashion magazines from his spring collection of 1988. "My best collections are I think in rebellion against the other french designers."[9] He proclaims to being a hero to his generation not only in France but Britain, Japan and Italy, he is not just another fashion number. Unlike Balenciaga who was dedicated to simplicity of form, Gaultier became fascinated with gadgets and unusual fastenings and fabrics and even unattractive or unappealing things. Fig 6. This is evident to see in any of his shops, whether its a Jean-Paul Gaultier or a Junior Gaultier. The interior is "jokey self parodic and lavatorial. The running methophor is the french street, set against an epidemic of metal Ivy and the colours of cornfields and summer skies."[10] Stagily drag-painted green fake metal 'pissoir' changing cubicles and columns carrying display shelves sit amongst patches of pavé cobbles and cast-iron gratings in the stained oak floor.

Gaultier has a meaning and a reason for everything he designs, by this I mean that its not just visually appealing but also has a psychological meaning. For instance he started to revamp the corset in 1982 and release the original stigma related to it; that men wear enforcing women's bodies into shapes their fantasies desired, compressing the waist and by doing so increasing the breadth of the bust and hips. The effect was linked to giving
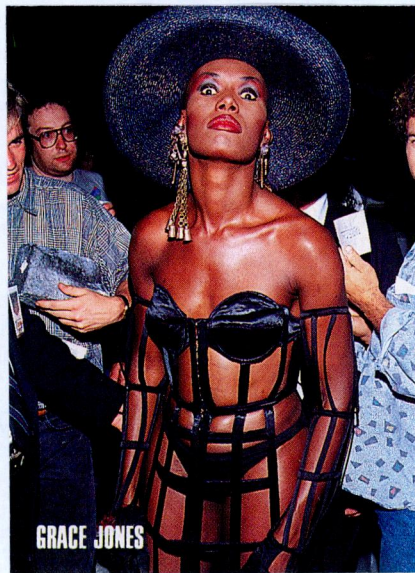
Gaultier 1993
Fig. 7

connotations of youth and physical leisure due to the raised breasts, firm torso and slender waist, but most of all the corset created a dynamic between movement and restriction and this restriction is what has influenced many of Gaultiers collections each year. He has taken various themes for example his 1984 winter collection had a strong influence of the 1950s fashion. The 1986 collection was influenced by mechanical and technical aspects and images from "star track" the futuristic T.V series. The 1991 spring-summer collection had an 'Adam and Eve look of innocence, this image along with all the rest was combined with the influence on design, by the prostitute and her attire therefore using underwear as outwear.

"To accept a corset does not mean that you accept a degraded notion of feminintiy",[10] This is what Gaultier plays on, the fact that the corset does not have to hinder the women but she can use it to assert her sexuality. From the beginning of Gaultiers career he has always taken fashion to extremes by opening the way to humour, playing with the freedom to reconstruct and thus redefine the terms of what it means to be a women. Fig. 7. For example in 1984 Gaultier used the bust as a playful erogeny as well as an analytical view of structure. I am not a genius I am a couturier, I look around me all the time to see thee B-movie things that happen and I eat them all in."[11] It worries him that he is no longer able to travel on his beloved metro the inspiration of most of his ideas, that he should loose touch with the streets,with reality. His work is very serious however, no one can say its a joke, amusing-yes, playful-yes, a joke-never. Can a womens dress of highly fitted velvet, the breast shaped in circular peaks, be anything other than a joke? Is a dress, the bodice of which is fashioned like a corset in rubber and elastic serious, serious enough to influence fashion worldwide? Gaultier is a stylist an innovator of images, a couturier, not a simple fashion designer.

It was said that "Balenciaga alone is a couturier in the truest sense of the word. Only he is capable of cutting material assembling a creation and sewing it by hand, the others are simply fashion designers"[12] - Coco Chanel.

GRACE JONES

Gaultier 1988
Fig. 8

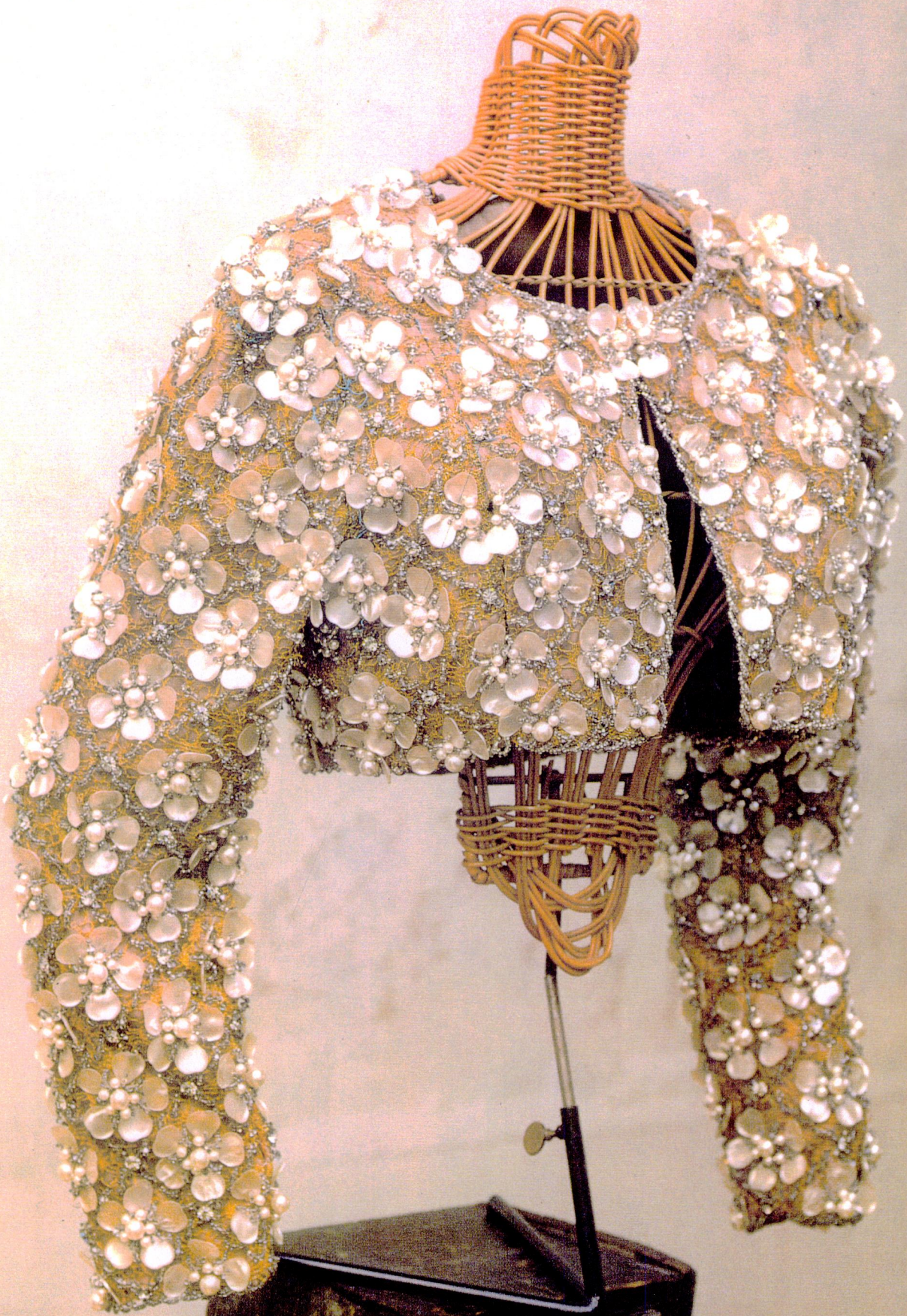**Gaultier 1993**
Fig. 9

Gaultier 1993
Fig. 10

129

Sept 1, '50

Balenciaga
Balloon Dress 1950
Fig. 11

Balenciaga
Pearled Bolero, 1966
Fig. 12

However these two couturiers, Balenciaga and Gaultier have very different meanings of what fashion for women actually means. Balenciaga is obsessed with achieving a look of simple form and cut in his creations, hanging on the body like a sculpture. Gaultier, on the other hand breaks up the body and elaborates on the resulting fragmentation with a deliberate and manic glee. It is not necessarily the conical breasts of 1984 or the tightly laced leather corsets of 1991 that should be taken seriously but the spirit behind in which they have been done. Gaultier first began to question conventional expressions of sexuality in dress when he was working as an assistant at the house of Patou. He was 19 years old when a model was waiting to be fitted for a dress. Her breasts wear bandaged. Gaultier approached her, concerned as he thought she had been in an accident. She explained laughingly that it had been done for the fitting; that they bandaged her breasts flat so the dress would hang properly. "I was shocked" said Gaultier. "It is like torture it is very aggressive and stupid to do that to women. It is the same with hips, everybody wants to have small ones... I wondered then why do you have to do contrary to what is reality just because its fashion.... I have always been in rebellion against that which is 'nice', and that which is 'elegant.'"[13]

Chic is not a word that springs immediately to mind when Gaultier is mentioned. But at the same time his clothes have a raffish elegance that of Paris. Fat women, thin women, and old women, model his vision of beauty. "There is no single idea of beauty" maintains Gaultier. "there is no age. It is all attitude or movement. Fig. 8. There are a thousand ways, to be sexy, to be beautiful to have elegance".[14] In his collection of 1992/93 not only did he have some haute couture models, but also models whose physical beauty was not their best quality such as an obese women and a transvestite but they were all bursting with individual character. Fig. 9.

Youth, slimness and sexual attraction were not the qualities that were important to Balenciaga either but for different reasons. It has been said that he picked slightly unattractive girls so that their personal appearance should

Balenciaga 1963
Black petersham evening coat
Fig. 13
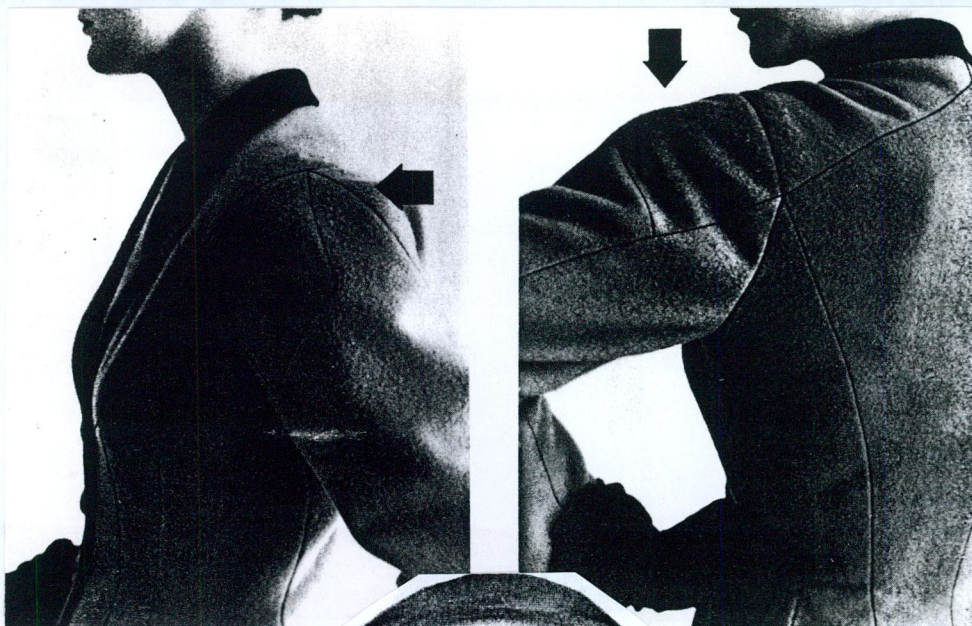
Balenciaga 1951
Mustard coloured woollen suit
Fig. 14

Balenciaga 1952
Collarless yoke in charcoal shantung
Fig. 15

not detract from the designs. "We must dress only thoroughbred's"[5] and from time to time he would quote Dali "A truly distinguished woman always has a disagreeable air."[16] His clothes "extrapolated"[17] from the body instead of following it. He could square the shoulders straighten the back, wasp the waist, bustle the bottom until a stout dowager turned into an hour-glass, if that was his intention - but he was more likely to turn her into a pillar of jet, a walking bow or two balloons of taffeta. Fig. 11 His models for his shows each held a number and walked haughtily through the salon without casting a glance at spectators. There was no hip swaying in their movement and no pause. This seemed to imply that stopping to strike a pose would have been too much of a concession. This in itself showed Balenciagas attitude towards women and fashion. Fashion to him, was like a painting - the woman is but a woman like the canvas is but a canvas, then carrying a Balenciaga she may be seen as an "unattainable being, her superb elegance bordering on insolence if not arrogance"[18] on the other hand she may be almost completely overshadowed by a magnificent garment which has become a work of art in its own right, the woman merely acting as a hanger. Fig. 12

At the Gaultier show in Paris 1982 his models 'flashed' their silk raincoats to disclose garter belts and stockings underneath. Each show has a strong image and the models are allowed to portray their own personality. For the 1988 Autumn/Winter collection, the show was held in a giant old meat market hall, a conveyor belt acting as a catwalk which caused the models to concentrate harder than usual. For the Autumn/Winter collection 1991 the show was held in a circus and this image influenced the clothes of the collection. In each collection Gaultier plays with femininity and is influenced by the prostitute 'look.' In his latest collection 1993 spring - summer Madonna makes a guest appearance, nearly revealing all, in a pin-stripped pinafore. Fig. 10. His models offer free female sexuality which is of course problematic to say the least. however, he developed rather obvious tactics to make a (complex) statement about the construction of sexuality and sexuality as a construction, binding and compressing the body to accentuate the

secondary sexual characteristics. He loves the play of closing - zipper's, lacing, buttons, belts and by implication what might happen when these are undone.

While Gaultier enhances and exaggerates the curves of the female form, Balenciaga created a sense of harmony between the clothes and the body - 'the abstract and the real'. He was both a designer and a craftsman; he refracted and remoulded the outlines of the female form to create his own perfect system of proportion, like his petersham evening coat of 1953 - rejecting all unnecessary detail in favour of simple lines. Fig. 13. Throughout his career he was to move increasingly towards the concept of pure form. He was best known for his evening wear and his coats which were a pure luxury of fabrication. The deceptively simple shaped coat yet dramatic in style could be achieved only be the expert clothing and calculating seeming of Balenciaga in 1950-55. The sweeping cape collar which frames the face and the full shorter sleeves, are part of his legacy to the world of fashion. His coats made a major impact in the 1950's the value of such a Balenciaga coat is in the balance of the concupiscent collar,the texture of the fabric and the sharpness of the cut. It was Art and Art alone. Fig. 14. He created shapes like the Smock suit of 1952 where he put stiffening into his jackets, cutting them to curve like shells over the body indicating the waist with a loose bow or an indented curve and thus transforming the woman's figure by concealing any less attractive points, i.e. the waist or the hips. Fig. 15.

Josephus - Melchior Thimster, the present head designer of Balenciaga, said that Balenciga himself "used to compare the female body to a flower pot, as a flower pot is nothing without a flower, the women is nothing without a Balenciaga."[19] On the other hand Gaultier, not only sees fashion as art or an art form, but an extension or expression of the wearers own character and sexuality. He creates various shapes, images and themes inspired not only by historical costumes like his leopard evening bodice, from his spring-summer collection 1988 which was reminiscent of the 1530's (fig. 16) but also

**Gaultier 1988
Leopard Evening Bodice
Fig. 16**

entertainment, like films and music, for example he took the film 'Clockwork Orange" and cabaret music, teamed off with circus chic, to influence the costumes he designed for Madonna's world tour in 1989. The result was strong and sexy. The striped jacket and coned bra which she wore for the song "express yourself" was a "mix of masculine and feminine, suit and sex."[20] Fig. 17.

Both designers have various attitudes towards women and fashion. Balenciaga treated the woman as a hanger to exhibit his wonderful creations. In relation to fashion in the 1950's he is one of the best examples to have given women the opportunity to dress femininely with a difference, and at the same time flattering and concealing what was there to hide. While Gaultier also gave women the opportunity to dress femininely and with a difference during the 1980's, this difference wasn't like in Balenciaga's case a four-sided dress in black gazer (1967) (Fig. 18) or a strapless "Balloon" dress of 1958 (Fig. 19) but a difference in that all his clothes expressed the character and most importantly the sexuality of the wearer.

Gaultier 1989
Sketch Form
Fig. 17

Balenciaga 1958
Strapless Balloon Dress
Fig. 19

Balenciaga 1967
Four sided dress in Black Gazar
Fig. 18

Gaultier 1993
Skirts for men
Fig. 20

Chapter Three

SOCIETY HAS A PROFOUND EFFECT ON FASHION AND ITS VARIOUS TRENDS.
- During the 1950's there were a handful of designers who determined what women wore and how they wore it. Male and female designers started to rebel against these fashion ideals and thirty years on, during the 1980's, fashion saw a great change.

"And the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons, unto Adam also and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin's and clothed them".[1] The bible thus informs us of one possible reason why clothes were originally worn. Some modern writers like Alison Lurie in The Language of Clothes[2] believe that deliberate concealment of certain parts of the body originated not as a way of discouraging sexual interest but as a clever device for arousing it.

Through the history of fashion, clothes of the two sexes were as different as possible. For example witness the monstrous crinoline and hoop skirt of the 1860's for women versus the strict tailored suit of the male. In the 1960's the look of Marylin Monroe and Bridget Bardot with the pointed bust and voluptuous body emphasised the rectitude of the male, when set against his grey flannel suit. During the 1980's unlike many other designers of that time, Gaultier dealt with the female body in the same terms as the male in that I mean he also played with male sexuality in the same way as he did and still does with female sexuality. He started to design skirts for men in the early eighties, the result being a great success among the gay community in London, Paris and New York. In his latest collection they reappeared as simple wraps worn over trousers. Fig. 20. In 1987, his winter men's collection, with a rock star influence, had backless t-shirts and biker jackets which portrayed a conflict between the 'macho image' and a feminine display - 'the backless dress'. "My work has never been provocative simply to shock.

Balenciaga 1958
Strapless Dress in Silk Brocaid
Fig. 21

Its just a freer way to play with fashion. Just because a woman shows her brassiere it doesn't make her a prostitute"[3]. The danger of the male gaze, which sexy clothing is expected to solicit, is the implied right of possession of the female by the active male but Gaultiers clothes offer a possible means of self-possession. In the snugness of their fit and the resolve of their shape they offer the comfort of self-protection as well. Gaultier refers to those men saying, "men like that still think a mini skirt is provocative. If women dressed like nuns, they would think their ankles or their necks provocative"[4]. Although the apparent connotations attached to tight lacing and fitted clothes still exist, and always will, Gaultier gave women the freedom to express themselves and be proud to be female. His clothes were designed to enhance the lines and curves of the female body but in a different way to the fashions during the 50's where it was artificial with exaggerated forms that amounted to a burlesque of feminine curves in a parody of male defined 'femininity.'

Balenciaga one of the few designers in the 1950's, who was better known for his architectural shapes, was definetly no exception to this. If he wanted a women to hold herself a certain way he would design the dress so that her stance would have to change. For example his strapless dress of 1958, modern silk brocade, reminiscent of certain saints painted by Zurbaran, was designed in a way that would make the women stand with her shoulders back and her hips thrust forward. Fig. 21. Pauline de Rothschild a client of Balenciaga for 20 years said that in wearing one of his creations" a women walking would displace the air so that her skirt would billow out just as much in the front as in the back and the sides would round out each in turn imperceptibly like a sea-shell"[5] During the 50's and even present day fashion the attitude that exists among men towards women and fashion is that women should dress femininely or should I say their version of femininity no matter how uncomfortable it is. Susan Brownmiller suggests that "feminine clothing has never been designed to be functional for that would be a contradiction in terms. Functional clothing is a masculine privilege and
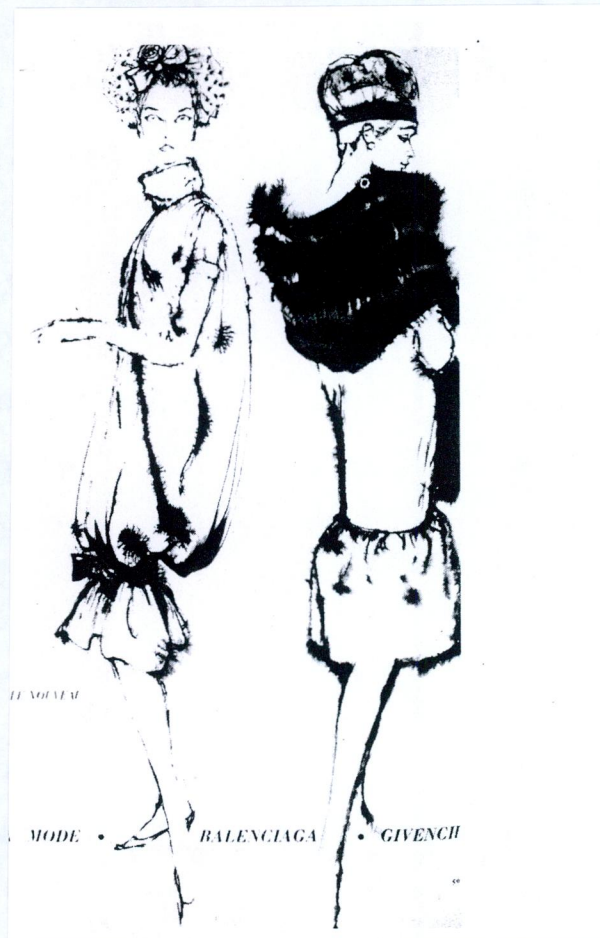
Balenciaga 1957
Leggy unfitted line
Fig. 22

practicality is a masculine virtue. To be truly femine is to accept the handicap of restraint and restriction, and to come to adore it"[6] It is widely held hypothesis that rich men of any era choose to 'purchase' and maintain a women who dresses femininely, as a sign to their own economic and sexual power. In order that the status of this symbol may be maximised, such a woman must be of no practical use and be or at least appear to be, without a 'brain'. It is ideally the clothes that this woman wears which will mark her out as a luxury item. Clothes which make a woman's life difficult and handicap her in competition with men, are usually thought to be sexually attractive. The wearer of Balenciaga style clothes during the 50's being so abstract they hindered or seemed to hinder the woman from everyday activities were announcing to everyone that she is willing to be handicapped in life, in relation to men. For example the 1957 leggy look - the unfitted line gathered just above the knee being a complete reversal of the hour-glass shape of a few years before, gave an impression of restriction. Fig. 22

In Gaultiers designs he releases the under garment from its hidden role as manipulator of shape, making it the "strident overt carrier of his erotic message."[7] Gaultier has been playing with this message throughout his career. At the beginning of the eighties women refused to wear such provocative clothing, simply because of the danger of the male gaze and the interpretations that went with it. With Gaultier's clothes the female is carrying a different message, one of confidence and independance and at the same time proud of their sexuality. This message came across very strongly during the 1980's especially when it is remembered in the context of couture which is traditionally elegant and polite. Subculture infiltrated designer fashion, in so far as the designing of clothing as statements became legitimate practice and the division between the identified women, and the masculine male disappeared. Designs were introduced for the new independent individual and clothes for men became more exciting as far as fabric shape and colour were concerned.

Gaultier 1990
Sharp Contrast
Fig. 23

One general trend which has typified fashion direction in the twentieth century is a move towards more 'masculine' attire and bifurcated garments. Whereas functionalism has always been a major motivation in clothing design for men, it has become more important this century for women. It is interesting to see how difficult it was for trousers to become standard female wear, considering their innate practicality and the fact they permit the greatest freedom of movement. In the 1920's there was much disapproval of the new style, women were told they looked ugly in what, from time immemorial had been the symbolic badge of male authority. Thanks to disigners like Chanel, by the late 1960's trousers for women had become elegant as well as respectable, "she took the English masculine and made it feminine."[8]   A disciplined refined and "austere elegance replaced old-fashioned, ostentatious luxury,"[9] and at the same time modernising the masculine uniform. Her style asserted that any nouveau-riche social climber, or high priced prostitute could appreciate rich elaborate dress, but it took a sophisticated, modern sensibility to see that less was truly more. Elegance for Chanel, was the rejection of anything extraneous.

By the 1970's the trouser suit began to be worn for work, to parties, theatre etc. I wonder, however if in a typical day-to-day situation, trousers do or if they will ever have the same smart status as skirts. How many women would attend an interview, an important function or even go to their own wedding dressed in trousers, however white and smart they may be? This may have something to do with the fact that although women today are more independent than they have ever been, they still dress in relation to men and their ideals regarding feminine fashion.

Gaultier along with Chanel has softened the potentially masculine effect of wearing trousers by various devices. In his case its direct contrast - a sharp navy pin-striped suit gaping at the crotch and breast area revealing a pink all-in-one corset was designed for Madonna, reducing the functionalism of the male suit, and emphasising the sexuality of the wearer. Fig. 23. His aran

dresses of 1983 presented a more extended commentary on the female body. There were variations on tubes of creamy Aran Island knitting in which the traditional bobbles became nipples on knitted-in-breasts, a piece if folksy genetic engineering. The Aran dresses made fun of canonical distinctions of women's fashion, the distinctions between country and town, chunky knits and sexual provocation. Gaultier used tactics of subculture fashion to make jokes at the expense of fashion orthodoxies.

In Marxist terms the fashion world became a capitalist gold mine with virtually unlimited possibilities. All a big businessman has to do is to change the fashion often enough and he can become richer and richer. According to Evelyn Reed 'in - Opposition - Not adoption"[10] this is how under capitalism the sale of women as commodities has been displaced, by the sale of commodities to women. "High fashion became identical with beauty and all, women were sold on their common 'need' and 'want'." [11] We are manipulated into standardised fashion sizes and moulds and she believes that this causes great suffering to women who vary from this "assembly line" ideal.

Women's magazines are one among many other mediums, through which we see what is actually idealised. Whatever views may be held about women's magazines, perhaps their importance lies in the fact that they provide what can be described as 'mirror images' for women, that is, public images of femininity, against which women measure themselves, men judge women, and which are therefore formative in the actual shaping of women experiences. Even if these images are not welcomed they are nevertheless pervasive and persuasive. Fashion photography in women's magazines, rather than liberating our perception of the body , has helped to tie it closer to traditional conceptions of fashion, relating to the ideal figure, skin colour, hair style, and clothing. Through a biased choice of models and poses, it seems to offer scientific proof that women are, or at least,ought to be, the right shape for contemporary clothes. Fortunately or unfortunately human anatomy does not always conform to the dictates of current fashion trends.

In general, the media traditionally has not been very kind to the images of women and has rather chosen to emphasise a narrow interpretation of women's roles. They are under-represented in advertisements depicting people in the work place. Instead women are more likely to be found in adverts relating to personal attractiveness or those selling fashion or beauty products. The media perpetuates the image of women as sexual objects to be found in decorative roles. They are used as alluring instruments to manipulate men. This theme may take the form of women selling cars or other products on the strength of the appeal of women's sexuality to men. Fortunately more and more women are appearing on adverts as independent people. This depiction of the women's role in everyday life may be typical of advertisements during the 1950's but has it changed much, even with the help of designers like Chanel? "Once I helped to liberate women, I'll do it again"[12] - Chanel. There were still the male designers like Dior and Balenciaga who although they had a good concept of form and beauty they failed to understand that what they were making beautiful was in its own right beautiful - 'the female body'.

With the help of designers through the history of fashion like Chanel in the 1920's-30's, Pierre Cardin in the 1960's, Jean-Paul Gaultier in the 1980's up to present day along with the English fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, the fight against the existing attitudes of society has been a long hard struggle. In conclusion it would perhaps be fitting to cite a more panoramic view of the future concerning the image makers and women, as given by Toffler (1980) who contends that, "The future is not likely to see the end of sexism. However, a Kaleidoscopic variety of role arrangements is inevitable. Social change is likely to favour greater equality as new cultural values arise and as the economy increasingly becomes based upon mind power, a democratic basis for power."[13]
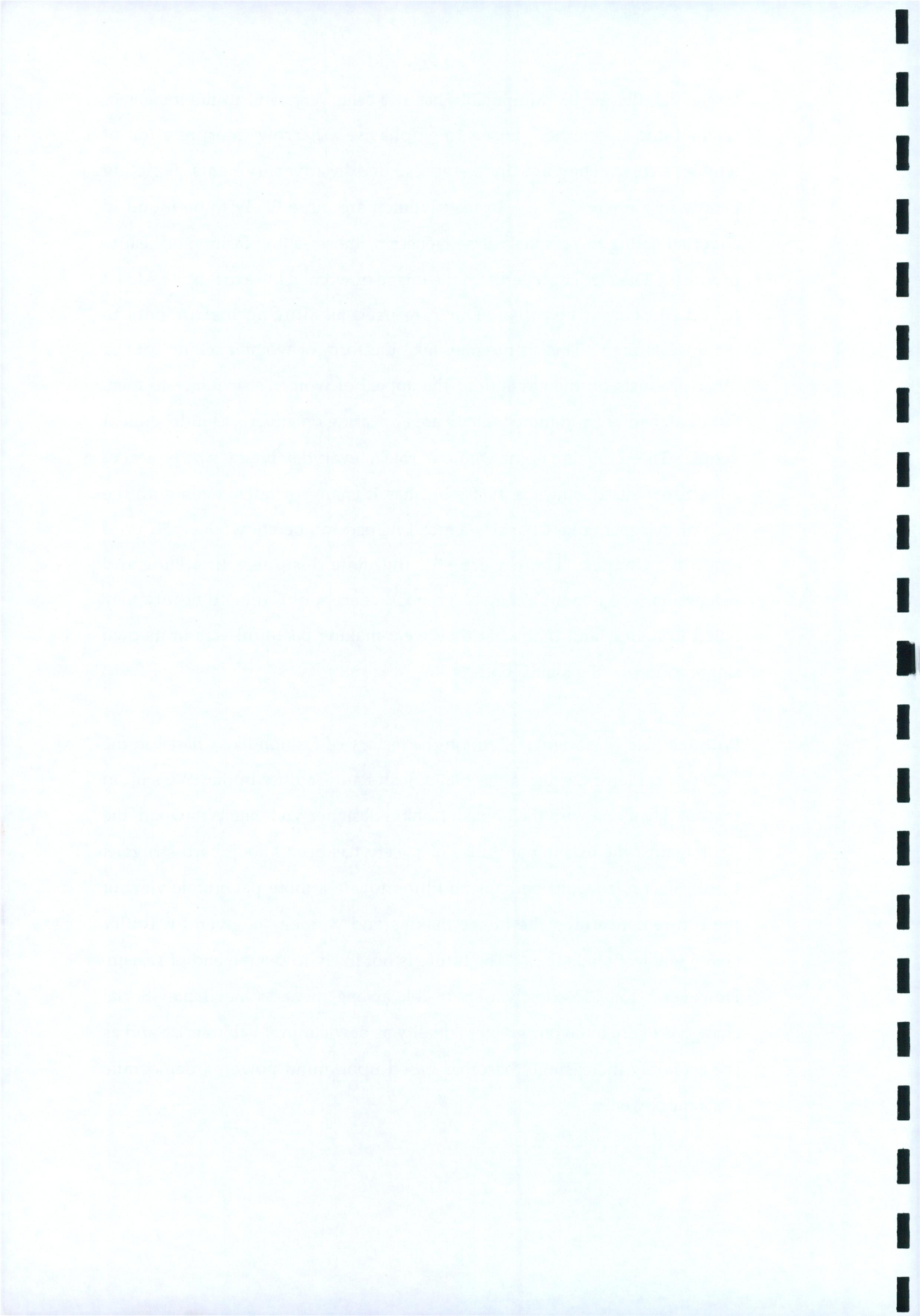
CHAPTER FOUR

A WOMAN'S CHOICE OR A WOMAN'S DILEMMA?

- Images and perceptions of women and their clothes who are faced with a 'catch 22' situation.

Particularly in the social climate of today women seem to be faced with 'a catch - 22' situation. If women decide to immerse themselves in the following of feminine fashion and opt to conform to many of its dictates and rules, they inevitably become obsessively involved in inconsequential details something they didn't really have a choice about in the 50's. If one does not care about famine fashion, one consequently runs the risk of looking eccentric and peculiar or sloppy and uncared for, or (as is sometimes the case) mannish and man-hating, or even all of the above.

In this chapter I would like to conceptualise images of women, to examine how women view themselves and how clothing affects self image. An attempt will be made to view these issues in the light of results from my questionnaire, designed to explore the reasons why women dress as they do,what influences and images women receive and how these elements affect buying behaviour. So how do clothes we wear affect the way we see ourselves and others? Many women have been disillusioned by the fashion-following rat-race, and tired of the stereotyping that is so prevalant and inherent a part of being a women, these women have rebelled and become feminists. Susan Browmiller ("Feminity" Palladin 1986) herself wears exclusively trousers but explains how this choice has led to criticism that she is "a hold out, a stick-in-the-mud," a fashion reactionary with no sense of style. She is saddened by her acquaintances who wear skirts for their careers "because it is after all still a mans world, and they are but feminists in it ."

It seems that there are certain pre-requisites in the minds of a good few men and women about how to qualify as a 'Women's Libber'. These include

wearing men's clothing, having short spiked hair, wearing no make-up, being a Maxist, lesbian, extremist and being considered as unattractive or even ugly. How do women escape from these stereotypes? Does she have to be a feminist just because she doesn't conform to wearing what men see as respectable clothing. During the 50's there seemed to be few alternatives to fashion, for example the trends were set by the top designers like Balenciaga, Dior and Chanel. Women dressed in what was considered fashionable for that year, rather than wearing what would suit them. They wore what was available to them and what was thought to be respectable. With female designers such as Chanel and Schiaparelli, alternative clothing for women was introduced. They tried to change the fashion system and liberate women. They fought against what Anne Fogarty wrote about in her book Wife Dressing (1959). "The first principle of wife dressing is complete femininity, where the independent bachelor girl might dress to please herself, a wife should always remember that its your husband for whom you're dressing."[2]

Even though we are four decades on these opinions still exist among many men and even women. Clothing is viewed as an extension of the body and the person within it. Questions 8 and 9 of my questionnaire sought to look at the pressure on women to conform to specific physical ideals and constraints of fashion. There was almost a unanimous response from the 67 replies, that these pressures and the levels of advertising which promote these "ideals" are not welcomed by women themselves. To depart therefore from the premise that women follow fashion, (by conscious choice or not) clothing can be used to express or at least come closer to women's own perceptions of what is ideal.

In a photograph taken in 1985 a strikingly tall model in a 'Jean-Paul Gaultier' suit walks towards the viewer holding a cigarette in one hand, she elegantly pushes a pram with the other which suggests she is a mother. The photo gives her a hard lean edge, and in emphasising her height and her silhouette

Gaultier 1990
Revamped Corset
Fig. 24

Eugene Adeba

the image constructs her as a phallic presence. Yet the picture does not produce the stale terms of hackneyed male fantasy, rather it generates a whole new scenario in which the woman is an active subject by her own choice, her phallicism is counterposed by the pram, a symbol of maternity. The garment she wears is tailored with big houlders and narrow hips, stressing the triangularity of the ideal masculine silhouette, but in contrast to this is a gold chain attached onto the jacket linking one nipple to the other. This is a typical example of Gaultier playing around with male and female sexuality. In combining both roles, that of the father and the mother, Gaultier creates a whole new look, the 'independent individual'.

It must be said that although many criticise women's fashion from the 50s and designers like Balenciaga with his architectural forms, inhibiting women from the activities that are considered normal today, women then didn't have as many roles to play. If we examine what roles women are expected to play in any given 24 hours nowadays we would probably find that they are very varied. This plurality has probably arisen or been heightened by the fact that women's status has changed quite dramatically over a relatively recent space of time, due to women proving themselves in the business world. Consequently, women perhaps experience some confusion over the roles forced upon them by the pressures and dictates from all corners of society; from feminists to very traditionally minded bosses and from conflicting desires to be their own woman, but be attractive to the opposite sex (indeed are theses later elements in opposition?). The variety of clothes women wear today may well be symbolic of the different roles they are expected to adopt and the qualities which are associated with these.

We may segregate and stereotype our clothes for different occasions so that we may conform to these images and perceptions that others have and we have of ourselves. Although men are becoming more adventurous with what they buy and wear, there is not the same pressure to conform to societies ideals of fashion. High fashion is often dismissed as a narcissistic

Gaultier 1990
Classy Lady
Fig. 25

preoccupation, something men are "above" at the same time this can be seen as an advantage to women, as design develops, there are more styles and different looks available for the woman to use dress as a form of play and a means of expressive fantasy. A typical example for this is madonna, who has revealed some facets of hers, through various styles of dress, from the seductive look, using lingerie, (Fig. 24) to the classy lady inspired by Marlin Monroe. Fig. 25

Back in the early 1960's the generation gap was closing, mothers were even borrowing their daughters tee-shirts. At this stage Balenciaga's designs were well on the way to becoming museum pieces, "his clothes were so overpowering that any woman wearing one of his creations was completely obscured by the outfit."[3] There was an imbued notion that fashion was a sign of feminine weakness or masculine exploitation between. Between 1968 -1970, fashion on one hand and politics ideology and philosophy on the other began to interlock. Rene Koning gives an example of the Radical Chic movement that swept the modern west at this time. "The situation began to contradict the conventional assumption of historians, which is that fashion is but the embriodey of history. It is true that Radical Chic would never have become a fashion if certain political ideas and emotions had not already been in the air, but once Radical Chic became fashionable it took on its own momentum. It had the power to create political change on its own"[4]

Women in the 1950s were not only expected to conform to the ideals of feminine fashion, but were also expected to act in certain ways to suit the clothing they wore. Diana Vreeland referred to Balenciaga by saying "His clothes were made for triumph and spectacle drama not for ordinary life of ordinary women."[5] Fig. 26. This sexual symbolism blurred out in the mid sixties due to political, social and economic gains, made by women. "Women are no longer slaves to fashion and the fashion press. They have chosen their own styles but have continued to dress as women"[6] Emmanuelle Kahn, now a designer once a model for Balenciaga, expressed a total rebellion against

Balenciaga
Four sketches showing
designs from 1954 - 1966
Fig. 26

the designs imposed on women by Haute Couture. She went so far as to declare that Balenciaga was responsible for the success of Prét a Porter. "His sophisticated creations were designed with complete disregard for the realities of the female form. I never design clothes to conform to a particular line" she stated "I always take a women's bodyline into account"[7] Feminists criticised the 50's style of clothing that evolved pointy bras, plugging necklines and the like. The difference this time around with Gaultiers style of clothing is the "self consciousness of the display,"[8] as the woman chooses to wear this type of clothing when their are many other styles available. The women can play the role and then disregard it or amend it if a more pleasing and suitable one comes along.

It seems nowadays there are fewer expectations for the woman to present herself as an object of desire. But regarding women's self-esteem, the need for social approval motivated us to pay attention to "feedback" from others in order to help us in formulating a self image and to assist in determining how we want to appear to others. Therefore it is difficult to turn away from the approval of men regarding our image and become totally our own women. Many would believe that Madonna has become her "own women" but by no means has she turned away from the approval of men but simply playing with what men would like to see. Fig. 27

This leads on to the questions relating to self esteem figured in my questionnaire in numbers 3,4,6, and 7. Most respondents tended to follow a general psychological pattern when asked in question 3 about their buying behaviour. Either they bought clothes when feeling happy, beautiful, when they needed clothes or when they had money, although it should be pointed out that 48 out of the 67 asked, said they bought clothes when they were feeling ugly, depressed, when they didn't need them and when they had no money, proving that women dress to make themselves feel better and more attractive to men. Question 4 relating to flattery and its effect on clothing consumption gave a result as follows:
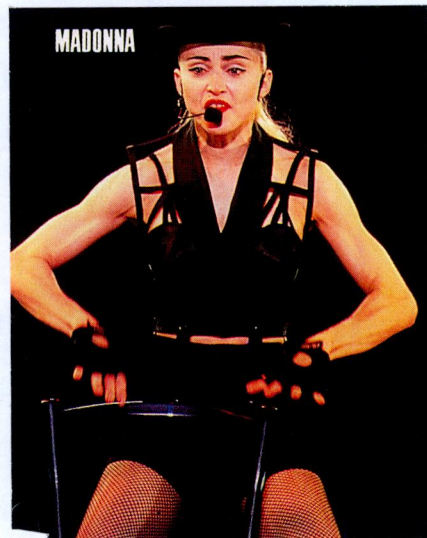
Gaultier 1990
Revamped Male Jacket
Fig. 27

YES - 11   NO - 17   Not Particularly - 39.

Question 6 on whether the women felt that clothing directly affected her confidence provided an unequivocal 100% answer in the affirmative. This fact links to Gaultier's main inspiration and motivation to design clothes. The garments worn should express a character within, one of confidence and independence.

The two remaining questions in the survey (questions one and two) were designed to analyse why women dress as they do and what elements are influential in their choice of dress. Statistically, pleasing oneself proved the most important element, followed by comfort and warmth. 'Attracting men' seemed to be something which produced somewhat oscillating answers. When first asked the question, a cross would be put in the "not important' box, but if expressly asked for an honest answer the cross would usually be changed into the important category. Perhaps women are reluctant or even ashamed to admit that they dress to please men.

In the questionnaire, influences used to shape how women dress, tended to vary according to age and type of employment. Young people (15 - 19 years) most frequently chose their friends and peers as the type of person they aspire to emulate in their pattern of dress. Mass media, Hollywood, television and sports celebrities also appeared to have some impact upon adolescent dress behaviour. Magazines and friends ideas, appeared to be added important factors for young women and female students , and for female secretaries, celebrities and royalty also play their part in fashion influences.

For the likes of Madonna, who is influenced by many images and different celebrities, and has also a strong influence on young women of today "says she wanted to shock audiences out of their homophobia", just like Jean-Paul Gaultier. There is an unspoken principal that being a celebrity is about maintaining a certain level of mystery and revealing the mystery is

shattering the myth that you've created but Madonna as an exhibitionist and one who expresses herself strongly through her clothes and music has created an even greater myth. Fashion being a woman's choice or a woman's dilemma does not seem to be an issue with her, but fashion merely acting as an expression of her inner self. This inner self just happens to be a type of person who likes to confront situations and be in the limelight, to shock people and most of all stay at the top as one of the worlds most famous female icons. This is not to say that every woman should dress like Madonna, but dress for the 'reasons' she dresses - to 'express oneself'.

Having said this, technology being as advanced as it is today, it is difficult to avoid being influenced by the media, e.g. fashion magazines. Many women are happy to look elsewhere for inspiration as they do not want to depend on their own ideas, otherwise such fashion magazines as Vogue, Elle and Harpers Bazar wouldn't be as successful as they are today.

Conclusion

In concluding this dissertation, I find it necessary to say that as a woman I have a predisposition to be attracted to the 'militant' analysis of why women are not equal. Although I recognise that as a women I am a 'victim' of an historical and current debate, I recognise that so too are my father and brothers. So therefore, if I see an injustice in the way whereby the world arranges it affairs between men and women, than I would hope that the men in my family will also examine and re-examine their own position in this regard.

Having stated these qualifications I will try as objectively as I am able to consider the conclusions that I drew from my studies.

In the first chapter I would conclude that men do dominate the fashion industry and have done for more than a century. There are various reasons and suggestions as to why this is so. Women seem to dress to please men and therefore, would prefer to be dressed by a man. Many believe that men design clothes, that are more flattering to the female body either because men know how they like women to look or because men don't like the way women look, so they work at changing their appearance. Another substantial reason would be, that companies back men lot quicker than a woman, as they feel it will be more profitable if they back a businessman rather than a businesswoman.

During the 1950's male designers such as Balenciaga, dominated the fashion industry keeping women in clothes that hindered them form doing any activities that would be considered normal today. Thirty years on, Gaultier among other designers like Vivieene Westwood introduced fashion as a form of expression of ones inner-self, but even today men still dominate women's fashion, and women still dress in relation to men.

In the second chapter I discuss how Balenciaga among others, dominated the fashions of the 1950's. He designed clothes as one would design a building or a sculpture, the women merely acted as a base of his creation. It cannot be argued that these creations were beautiful in their own right, most of them when taken off the body could stand upright. It was a great investment then to buy a Balenciaga as it would never go out of fashion. At the same time this fashion wasn't always practical, along with many other design that have come from male designers of that era.

Taking into consideration that Gaultier started to design thirty years later when practicality was more of an issue, he offers women a choice in clothing. Along with his more outrageous garments he always provides practical, tailored trousers, jackets and coats along with well designed knitwear and blouses. Gaultier sees his woman as an independent person, but at the same time very aware of her sexuality.

In the third chapter the evidence presented demonstrates how society has a profound effect on fashion and its various trends. The trouser suit proving this point, that having gone through seventy years since Poiret first introduced them in the 1920's for women, they still don't have the same status as skirts. Gaultier has attempted again in his latest collection to switch the roles around and put men in skirts and women in pin-stripped suits with braces. We have yet to see if society will accept this look of exchanged roles, which Gaultier keeps producing.

The media also plays a big part in this argument, as fashion magazines and television are one of the major influences, against which women measure themselves. Through a biased choice of, models and poses, the media offers the right shape for the contemporary fashion. It is impossible to avoid or escape from this but only face it and unfortunately a lot of people accept it, as being the 'perfect look'.
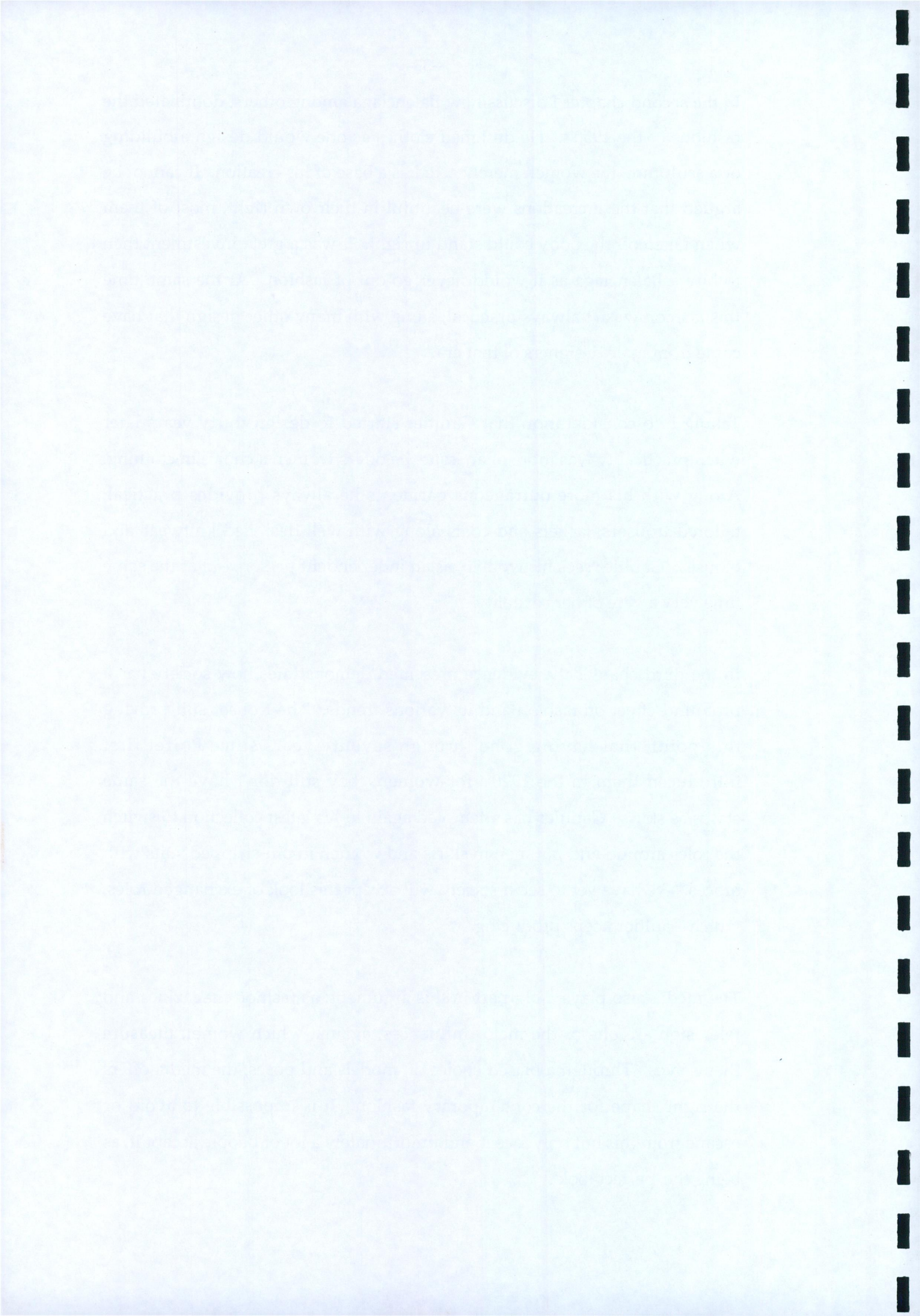
The last chapter looks at fashion, as a women's choice or a women's dilemma. If women reject the conventional wisdom, they run the risk of adopting 'protesting' fashion, which may connect them with being an extremist or feminist. For many women the struggle is that of balancing the desire to gain the approval of the male with that of dressing to express their own feelings as an individual. With the clothes of Balenciaga it was impossible to express an inner-self as the garments said so much on their own. As regards Gaultier's style of clothing, one can be assured of approval from the male and yet express one's feelings as on individual, a typical example for this is Madonna.

Perhaps one day in the future a Frenchman may say, as comment to the fact the men and women are different "Vive chaque-un".
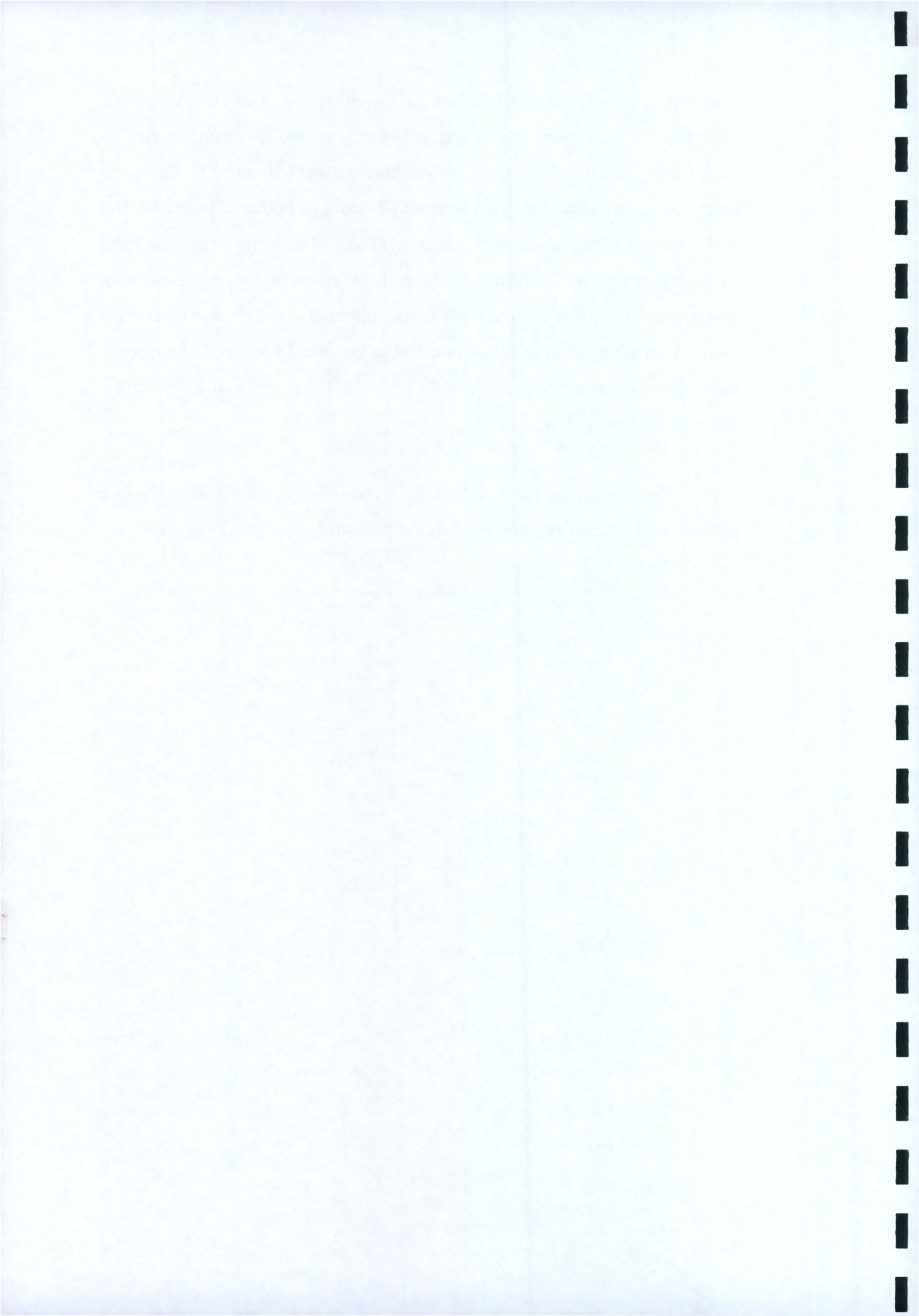
Appendices

INTRODUCTION

1.   Interview with Josephus-Melchior Thimster, 20 December, 1992, Paris.

CHAPTER ONE

1.   Diane T. Maranus,

"Fashion Design: Men Do Dominate",

The F.I.T. Review (Sprint 1989), 18-20.

2.   Charles Dickens in,

"All the year round"

(Feb 28, 1863),9.

3.   Cecel Beaton,

"The glass of fashion"

(London : Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1954), 161.

4.   Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton

"Women and Fashion" (London and New York Quartet 1989)

ch: The New Woman as Dandy

5 & 6. Valerie Steele

"Women of fashion"

(New York, Rizzoli 1991) 16/36.

7.   Marie-Andree Jouve

"Balenciaga"

(London, Thames and Hudson 1988), 58.

8.   "Fashion: the inside story".

(New York, Rizzoli 1985), 61
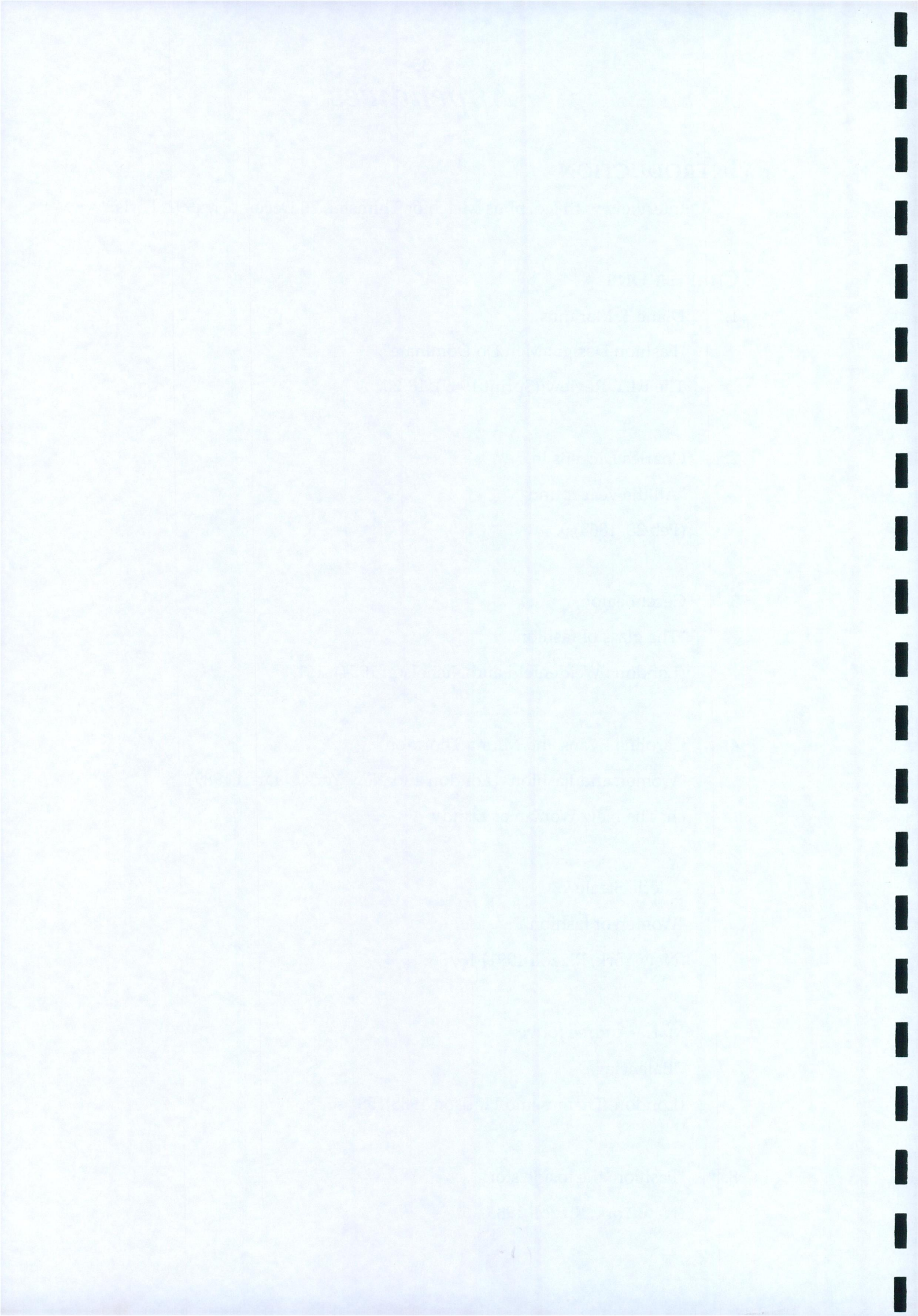
9. Sharon Lee Tate

    "Inside Fashion Design"

    (New York: Harper and Row 1984), 49.

10. Meranus p. 29

11. Woody Hochswender

    "Aids and the fashion world: industry fears for its health.

    (New York Times Feb 11 1990), 42

12. Hope Johnson

    "Are men best dress designers?

    " World-Telegram and Sun.

    (New York Jan 18 1954) - Women of fashion.

13. Women of fashion, 171

14. Guardian Newspaper 1986 Dec 4, p. 32

15-18 Women of fashion 114, 103.

19. Charles Roux"Chanel and her world," 204

20. Art in America (Vol 75 Sept 87) 47, 49, 51

21- 22 Guardian Newspaper (1986), 36

23. Women of fashion - Caroline Evans

24. Art in America (Vol 75 Sept 87), 47, 49, 51

CHAPTER 2

1.   Marie-Andree Jouve

        "Balenciaga"

        (London - Thames and Hudson 1989), 10

2-3   Elle London 1988 Nov

4-5-6   Arena Magazine

        (Nov 14 Mar/April 1989), 82 - 89

7-8.   Marie-Andree Jouve,

        'Balenciaga' 98, 102

9.   Gaurdian Newspaper 1986 Dec 4, p. 32

10.   Valerie Steele

        "Women of fashion"

11.   Gaurdian Newspaper 1986

12.   Coco Chanel in

        "Women of fashion," p.45

13.   Elle London 1988 Nov

14.   Guardian (Monday Oct 18 1991), p.38

15.   Marie-Andree Jouve -'Balenciaga' 78

19.   Interview with Josephus-Melchior Thimster, 20 Dec 1992

20.   Face Magazine (Jan 1990, Vol 2, no. 21), 40

CHAPTER 3

1.   The New Bible

2.   Alison Lurie 'The language of clothes'

3-4   Gaurdian Newspaper (1991 Mon Oct 28), 38

5.   Marie-Andree Jouve 'Balenciaga,' 125

7.   'Art in America' (Vol 75 Sept 87), 47,49, 51

8-9   Slavadore Dali - Andre Parinaud
      Unspeakable confessions of Salvadore Dali
      in 'Women of fashion,"212

10-11 Evelyn Reed 'Opposition - Not Adaption'

12.   'Women of fashion' 142

13.   Tofler 1980

CHAPTER 4

1.   Susan Brownmiller "
      Femininity"
      (Palladin Books 1986)

2.   Anne Fogarty "
      Wife Dressing" ; the Fine art of being a well dressed wife.
      (New York : Julian Messer, 1959), 154

3.   Marie-Andrée Jouve 'Balenciaga'126

4.   Roene Konig 'Radical Chic'

5.   Diana Vreeland Milbank New York, fashion, 162
      Women in fashion

6.   Alison Luris - Language of clothes, 97.

7.   Emmauelle Kahn -'Balenciaga,' 84

8.   Art in America (Vol 75, Sept 87) 47,49, 51

9.   Face magazine, June 1990 (No 21, Vol 2), p. 36

Bibliography

Arena Magazine, Jean-Paul Gaultier

No 14, Mar/April 1989

Art in America Magazine,

The Defiant Ones

Vol 75, Sept 1987

Brownmiller, Susan

Femininity

Palladin Book 1986

Beaton, Cecil

The glass of fashion

London : Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1954

Dickens, Charles,

All the year round

Feb 28, 1863

Elle Magazine,

Enfant Terrible

London 1988 Nov

Evans, Caroline and Minna Thorton

Women and fashion

London and New York Quartet 1989

Face Magazine

Madonna

June 1990, No 21, Vol 2

Face Magazine

Madonna

June 1991

Fogarty, Anne

Wife dressing : the fine art of being a well dressed wife

New York : Julian Messer 1959

Guardian Newspaper,

In Paris people are 'orrible, London gives me energy

4 Dec 1986

Gaurdian Newspaper

The wonderful world of Jean-Paul Gaultier

Mon, Oct 28, 1991

Hochswender, Woody

Aids and the fashion world : industry fears for its health

New York Times, Feb 11, 1990

Johnson, Hope

Are men best dress designers?

World Telegram and Sun

New York Jan 8 1954

in 'Women of fashion'

Jouve, Marie-Andree

Balenciaga

London, Thames and Huydson, 1989

Koing, Roene

Radical Chic

Meranus, Diane T.

Fashion Design: Men do Dominate

The F.I.T Review Spring 1989

Reed, Evelyn

'Opposition - not Apadtion'

Pathfinder Press 1980

Steele, Valerie

'Women of Fashion'

New York Rizzoli 1991

Tate, Sharon Lee

Inside Fashion Design

New York : Harper and Row 1984

Vreeland, Diana

Millbank, New York, fashion

in Women of fashion