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National College of Art and Design

Faculty of Design, Department of Fashion

"The Female Body in Fashion in the 1990s"

by

Lucy Klitz

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## II

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### III

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## "The Female Body in Fashion in the 1990s"

### Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to examine the female body in fashion in the 1990s, how it is treated by designers, and how it is represented by the media. I wanted to analyse how the female silhouette in fashion now differs from what has been seen previously this century, and whether designers are now more sympathetic to the natural shape of the female body.

Fashion designers have always been influential in defining our society's 'ideal' image of the female body, but I wanted to find out whether they were still as influential in the 1990s, or whether other forces were now more controlling. As our society becomes more and more influenced by the mass media, do they distort their interpretation of fashion in order to satisfy their advertisers?

The 1990s are a significant decade, closing a century which has seen many improvements for women in their role in society, and yet women are still filled with anxieties and insecurities about their appearance and body shape. The fashion industry is often blamed for causing these anxieties, by only designing for an 'ideal' body shape and by using a very narrow variety of models. I wanted to see whether this was a fair representation of the fashion industry in the 1990s, or whether they had improved in their treatment of the female image and body.



Due to the topicality of this subject, my primary research has come from contemporary magazine articles which are addressing this subject. Their view not always being objective, I have also conducted my own original research, in the form of questionnaires, observing women around me and examining many areas of the media such as television, advertising and magazines.

I gave my questionnaires to women varying in age and occupation, in order to get a broad opinion, and although I accept that this method is not always reliable, the results have confirmed many of the ideas which I have examined in this thesis.

Other research has come from books, including The Beauty Myth (1990) by Naomi Wolf, Women of Fashion, 20th Century Designers (1991) by Valerie Steele, Unbearable Weight (1993) by Susan Bordo and Women and Fashion, a New Look (1989) by Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton.

In Chapter One I have looked at the historical background of the female body in fashion through the twentieth century and particularly during the 1980s, with designers such as Gianni Versace and Azzedine Alaia, moulding the female body very strongly. I wanted to contrast this approach with the way designers are working in the 1990s.



The second chapter looks at the increasing variety of models used by the top designers in their recent collections. Fashion models have traditionally been unvaried in their looks, body shape and age, but in the 1990s this is improving. I also examine the accusation by the media that the use of 'waif' models such as Kate Moss and Celia Chancellor, has encouraged disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa.

Chapter Three looks at how a variety of top designers are now treating the female body in the 1990s. I looked at a range of ready-to-wear designers, both male and female, who are influencing the highstreet in the 1990s. This includes Donna Karan, Rei Kawakubo, John Rocha, Rifat Ozbek and Vivienne Westwood among others. I wanted to examine their approach to designing for the female body, to see whether they only design for an ideal, or whether they consider the body shape of all women.

The final chapter looks at the pressurisation of women in the 1990s. Our society seems to be obsessed with achieving the 'perfect' body, and our media constantly presents women in a narrow range of images, which gives women the impression that they are inadequate unless they fit this image. Most women naturally vary in their body shape, image and personality, and yet they are not able to exist happily in this way. The fashion industry is often blamed for causing these anxieties, but it seems that in the 1990s the media has a stronger influence through magazines, television and advertising.



The media has a lot of control over how fashion is presented to the general public and often misrepresents the ideas of the designers in order to please their advertisers. By juxtaposing advertisements for dieting and cosmetic surgery with fashion coverage, the media can convince women that they need to change their bodies to wear fashionable clothes.



## Chapter One

### "The Female Body in Fashion, a Historical Background"

An analysis of the Autumn 1993 fashion collections showed that a completely new attitude is being used by designers in their treatment of the female body. A new mood and aesthetic of the female form has quietly swamped the catwalks of Paris, Milan, London and New York, and is unlike that seen in previous years. No longer is the female body being moulded by designers to fit their 'ideal', but they are instead working from the natural female form and building clothes around it comfortably. This is unlike the traditional attitude which has been used by many designers in the past, and particularly during the 1980s. In this chapter I intend to examine how women's bodies have been treated by fashion during this century, as a contrast to the female body in fashion in the 1990s.



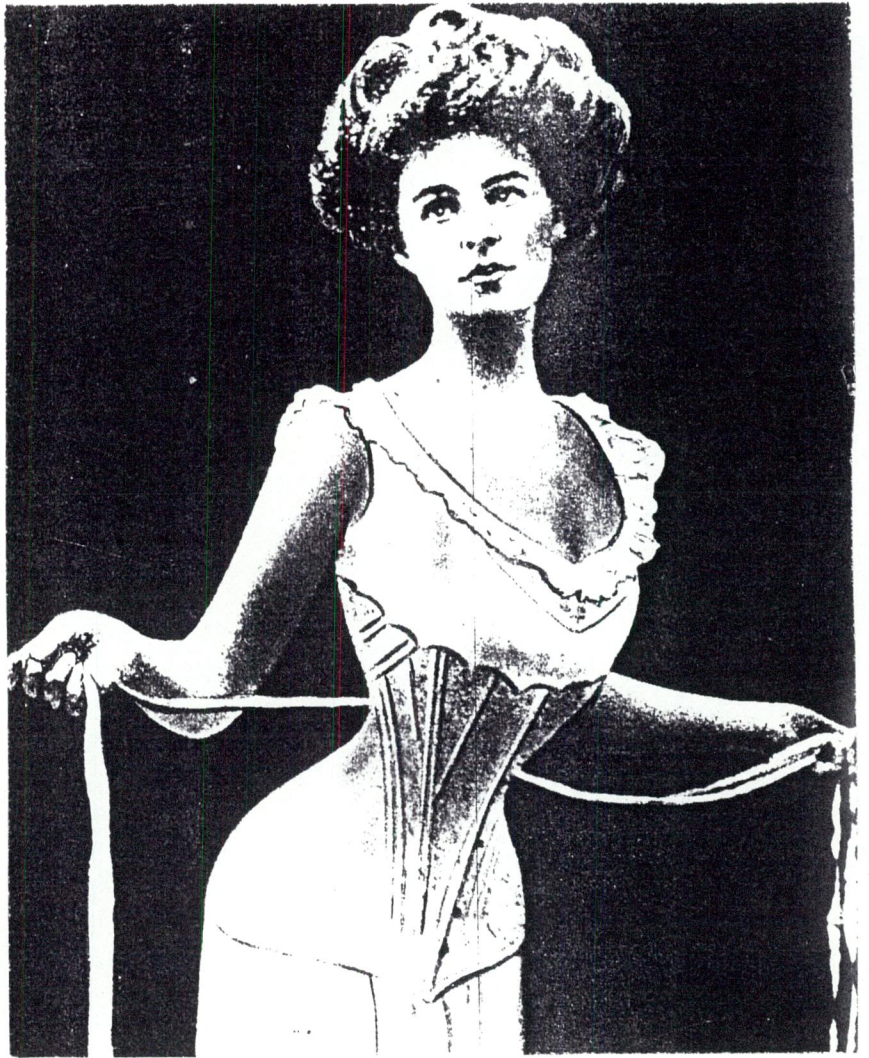


fig 1 - Corsetry of 1902

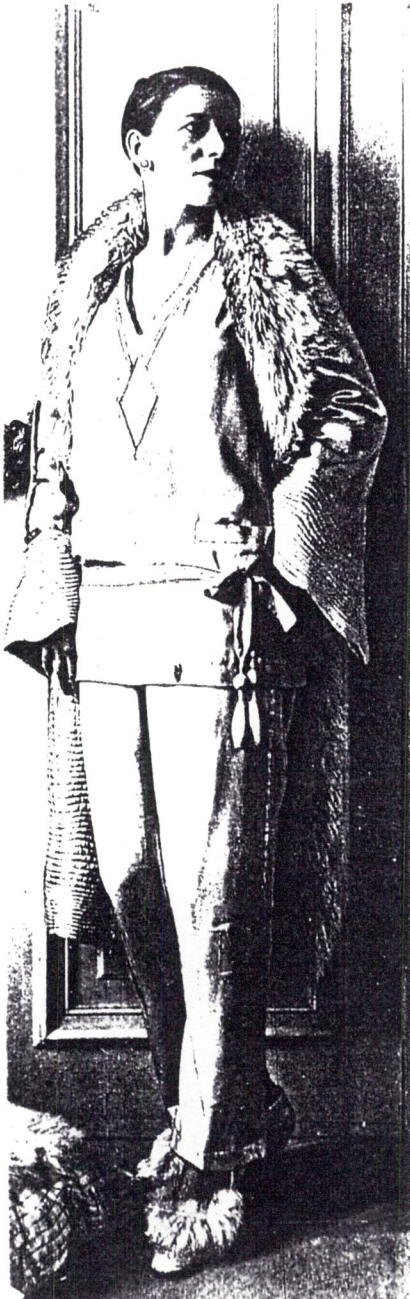


fig 1a - 1920's fashions



Throughout the twentieth century, the female body has been moulded unnaturally by fashion designers, into what they considered to be the 'ideal' of the time. Women have traditionally been treated as mere objects of beauty over the years, and due to the lack of control over their lives, they have found it difficult to go against the fashionable ideal reinforced by the society around them. Only at times when women had more independence, for example during the First and Second World Wars, when women had to replace men away at war, in the workplace, were they able to wear more comfortable clothing which allowed their bodies more freedom for activity.

But for the majority of this century, women have been repressed into changing their natural shape. Designers have continually worked against the natural rounded forms of the female body, which come from being built for reproduction. Society has tried to make all women clones of the ideal of the time, all fitting a silhouette which may be completely different to their natural shape.

In the 1900s women were forced into corsets to fit the fashionable ideal of that time ( fig 1 ), these distorted their torsos and caused internal damage and illness. Women at this time had little active involvement in society, which was reflected in the awkwardness of their clothing. In the 1920s the fashionable ideal caused women to bind





fig 2 - The League of Health and Beauty 1934

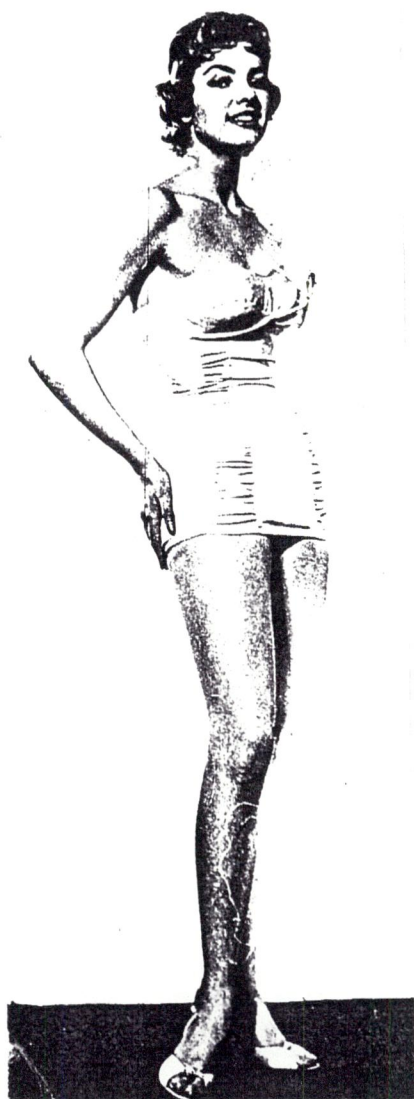


fig 3 - lingerie 1957



## THE SECRET ... of sane slimming

BY JANE ALISON

**WORKING** women—and that's most of them—often start a slimming regime, then give it up after a week or so because they feel that work and diets do not mix.

The secret of sane slimming, that will make you feel fitter than ever, is not to stop eating flesh-forming foods but to cut them down to safe proportions.

Here are two meals, one light and one heavy in calories:

6oz. steamed cod with 1lb. of sliced mushrooms simmered in a very little milk. That is approximately 155 calories. Add a slice of wholemeal bread with a scraping of butter for 120 calories, and for a filler, a salad of lettuce and tomato, approximately 25, and there is a sensible well-balanced meal for 300 calories.

Suppose, instead, you take 2 pork sausages, chips, and a roll and butter. That meal will cost you about 870 calories almost the whole of the daily allowance.

However, if you really long for those sausages and chips you may have them, but you must have only a couple of starch-free rolls and a small portion of sugarless marmalade for breakfast, with black coffee, and a salad and coffee for the other main meal. Sprinkle the salad with at least 2 tablespoonfuls of lemon juice. This will bring out the flavour of the salad, make it crisp and appetising, and add not a calorie. You may even spend another 100 calories, but you must knock them off tomorrow's allowance.

That is the point of our "Slim and Enjoy It" idea. Eat balanced meals, eat, to a large extent, what you like, but compensate on the other meals of the day.

Now here is our suggested menu for one of your meals:

VEGETABLE BROTH  
SPINACH OMELET (2 EGGS, 1lb SPINACH)  
COFFEE JELLY

**COFFEE JELLY.**—Make 1 pint of strong coffee. In it dissolve 1oz. of good powdered gelatine and four sugar substitute tablets. Whisk well and pour into a mould to set. Give yourself half of this quantity for one helping. The meal will cost 25 calories for one-third pint of vegetable broth, approximately 175 for the large spinach omelet and 25 for the coffee jelly. A total of 225, and you have your necessary balance. You may even add a slice of wholemeal toast for another 70, without breaking your calorie bank.

**Write TODAY for  
our slimming book**

**SLIM AND ENJOY IT**, the Daily Mail slimming book, has been specially prepared to fit your pocket or handbag. It is a complete guide to slimming—with a difference. Here's the way to take the misery out of slimming and enjoy your food. Send two 2d stamps and a stamped (2d.) envelope with your name and address written on it. Send to: Daily Mail Slimming Guide, Gough House, Gough-square, London E.C.4. The book will easily fit into a normal size envelope.



fig 3a - Slimming article 1957





fig 3b - Dior's New Look

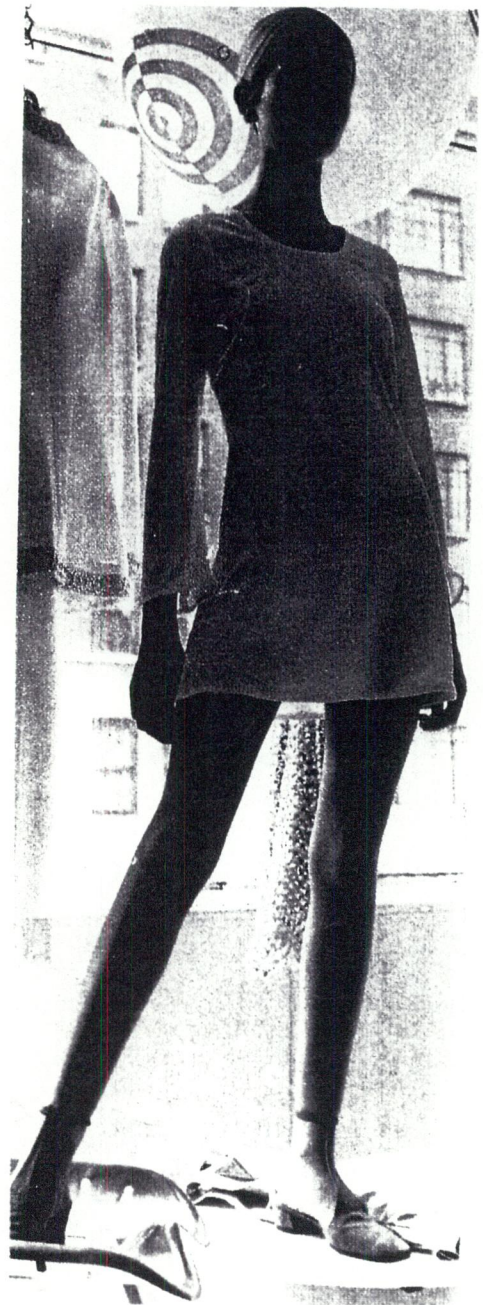


fig 4 - Twiggy 1960s



their breasts to appear boyish and flat-chested, and slimming became popular to achieve the desired pencil-like shape. The fashions of the 1920s reflected women's desire to be freer and yet in many respects they were denied their natural body shape ( fig 1a ).

In the 1930s, the fashions of the day also required slimness, especially around the hips, and slimming became a serious business for many women. Exercise was also seen as a way to achieve the fashionable silhouette, and organisations such as The League of Health and Beauty, provided classes for women ( fig 2 ).

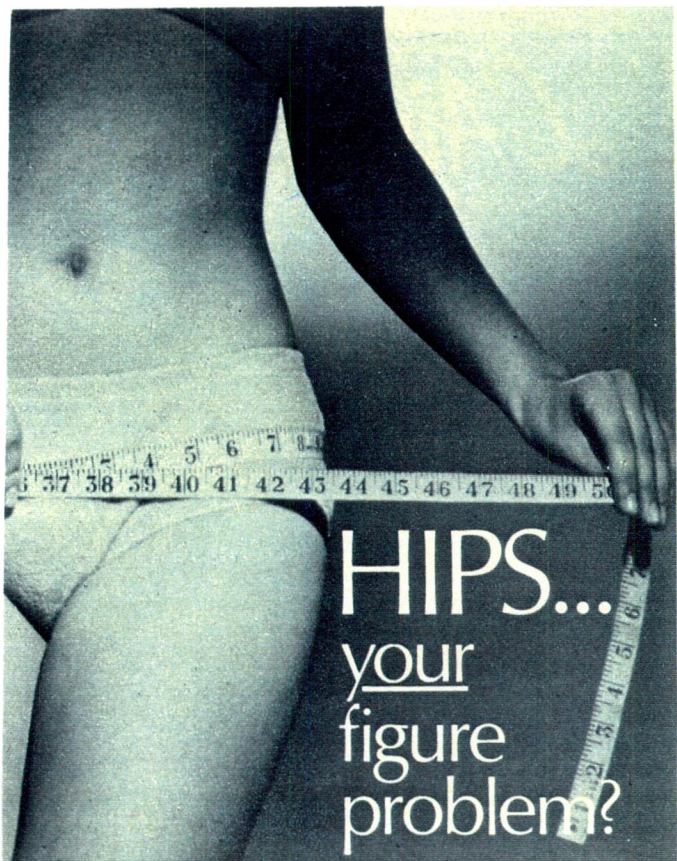
### The 1950s

After the Second World War, women returned to the domestic life and society expected them to look pretty and feminine again. Newspapers and magazines began to encourage women to change their natural body shape, with conical bras, girdles and dieting ( fig 3 and 3a ). In 1947, Christian Dior produced the New Look, which came to dominate fashion in the 1950s. It consisted of a fitted bodice, flaring at the waist into a full, calf length skirt ( fig 3b ), and in order to achieve this look most women had to alter their natural shape. Exercise was considered unladylike in the 1950s, and so diet and slimming pills became the 'easy' way of slimming, these later proved to be addictive. Coco Chanel, one of the few designers to attempt to free the female body through her clothes at this time, commented on the New Look saying " Was he ( Dior ) making fun of women? How dressed in 'that thing' could they come and go, live or anything? " (Evans and Thornton, 1989, p. 130 ).

### The 1960s

Twiggy represented the ideal female body in the 1960s, promoted by the media, with her skinny adolescent looks ( fig 4 ), and





HIPS...  
your  
figure  
problem?

TRIM HIPS, WAIST,  
TUMMY, THIGHS  
DOWN TO SIZE... with  
*slendertone*

Probably 9 out of 10 "Woman's Journal" readers are much nearer figure perfection than they've dreamed—now that SLENDERTONE has entered the fashion scene. SLENDERTONE is a completely new, scientific way to a healthier, more youthful figure. It works electronically, safely, to give vital muscle exercise that controls the size of hips, waistline, abdomen or thighs—without the need for strenuous effort. This natural "tightening in" of muscles can be controlled, so that the areas you choose usually reduce in size—in many cases, results are quite remarkable. What's more, SLENDERTONE is portable, transistorised and battery-operated... deals with those unwanted inches cleverly, gently... while you rest, read or watch television.

FREE: For this new form of figure control that really works, and benefits health as well, test SLENDERTONE yourself free—just fill in coupon.



It's as easy  
as this!

**slendertone**

SLENDERTONE LTD.

12 Baker Street, London, W.1. HUNter 4987

☐ Please send free booklet and BBC Broadcast on Slendertone Muscle Exerciser and details of a free private demonstration without obligation.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

WJ10/S .....

TEL. NO. ....

☐ Please send address of nearest Clinic where I can have Slendertone treatment.

# DEAL YOURSELF A NEW SLIM FIGURE

from this unique one-at-a-time dispenser



Saxin for slimmers—no fizz, no fuss, no in the slim new pop-out pack. Saxin—the calorie sweetener in the unique one-at-a-time dispenser. No fumbling about with a tin of tablets—just turn the wheel and out pop Saxin tablets one at a time. Each tablet as sweet as a teaspoon of sugar—but neater and completely non-fattening! You get 300 Saxin tablets in this new polystyrene pack (that's sweetness equal to about 3 lb of sugar!) Ask your chemist for Saxin in the new 300 tablet pack.

Recommended price: 300 tablets 4/-  
Other sizes available. From all chemists.

**saxin**  
A WELLCOME PRODUCT



fig 5 and 6 - slimming advertisements from Vogue 1969



**Most pantee girdles  
are for slim girls.**

**Not this one.  
This one is for curvy girls.**

It's not surprising that so many women think pantee girdles are not for them. Because, up to now, pantee girdles have been exclusively for the slim. The people who only need light control.

Now, Silhouette produce a firm-control Pantee Girdle! It belongs to our new ROSEBUD RANGE of foundations. Every one of them just that necessary step stricter than light control garments—yet marvellously free and comfortable.

It's all thanks to a won't-stretch panel in front and a downstretch panel at the back. And a new stretch fabric. Rosebud Range foundations keep you in—but when you want to move you can move!

And they're pretty, too. Like this Pantee Girdle. Roses, roses all the way. Why should the slim girls get all the goodies?

The Rosebud Range Pantee Girdle makes you a smooth shape for stocking tights. Attachable suspenders. Small to extra large. In White or Black. 56/11.

**The Rosebud Range**  
Firmer-control foundations.  
New from Silhouette. The makers of Little X.

fig 7 – girdle advertisement, Vogue 1969

although this was a decade of increased female liberation, most women still suffered to fit the fashionable clothes of the time. Barbara Hulanicki of Biba said " girls were prepared to suffer to look good. Our long sleeves were so tight they hindered the circulation " ( Steele, 1991, p. 134 ). And although the mini-skirt was seen as a symbol of liberation, it could not be worn comfortably by all women.

Fashion trends were rapid in the 1960s, and had a major influence on many women. Skinniness was the ideal, and as these were the days before aerobics and fitness videos, most women turned to dieting in order to change their natural bodies. Magazines began promoting dieting in a big way, and the number of diet-related articles rose by 70% from 1968 to 1972 ( Wolf, 1990, p.67 ). Historian Roberta Pollack Seid said in the Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf, that " Vogue began to focus on the body as much as the clothes, in part because there was little they could dictate with all the anarchic styles " ( Wolf, 1990, p. 67 ). Magazines were able to combine articles on fashion with articles on dieting and advertisements for slimming aids ( fig 5 and 6 ), and foundation garments ( fig 7 ), thus perpetuating the idea that you need a 'perfect' looking body in order to wear fashionable clothes.

### The 1970s

Although the feminist movement grew during the 1970s and women became more independent, the projected ideal of the female body was still very unnatural and stereotyped. Fashion designers such as Antony Price and Zandra Rhodes put women into glamorous and unnatural silhouettes, and 'Glam Rock' brought flares, hot pants and platform





fig 8 - Punk Women, 1976

heels. The ideal body was that of the 'California Girl', big bosomed, slim waisted and full bottomed. Television programmes such as Charlie's Angels and the Bionic Woman popularised this look and the first 'Page Three Girls' began to appear in the national newspapers, reinforcing a stereotyped image of the female body.

### Punk

As a reaction against the glamour and wholesomeness promoted during the 1970s by the fashion world, an alternative culture grew which for many young women allowed them to be more in control of their own body and image, rather than conforming to their society's ideal. The Punk movement was anti-stereotyping, unisex and aggressive. It allowed women to look shocking and threatening and to play with the traditional sexual imagery of clothing. Women could dress in all the traditional clothing of a prostitute, fishnet stockings, leopard-skin and plastic macs, and yet completely reverse all the accepted meanings of the clothes ( fig 8 ).

Any body shape was acceptable with Punk, it was the ideology which was most important. "Punk women were vehemently anti-naturalistic, in sharp distinction to the glowing good health of the Californian models on the fashion magazines of the 1970s." ( Evans and Thornton, 1989, p. 28 ). The Punk movement was a shock to the system, and showed women that there could be an alternative to the way society expects women to look. Granted it was too extreme for many women to copy,





fig 9 - Margaret Thatcher



fig 10 - The Power Suit, 1987



fig 12 - The Dynasty Look



fig 11 - The Power Suit, 1987

but the ideology has remained and resurfaced in 1993, with designers interpreting the Punk look in a 1990s manner. I shall discuss this in more detail in a later chapter, and also the work of Vivienne Westwood who came out of the Punk movement as one of the most creative and unconventional designers of the twentieth century, she continually challenges society's conventions about the female body and image.

### The 1980s

In the 1980s women became increasingly successful and active in society, with 50% of married women employed in the workplace in 1980 ( Hill, 1988, p. 1980 ). Many women earned executive positions in 'big business', and Margaret Thatcher became the first woman Prime Minister in Britain ( fig 9 ). But women were unsure about how they should dress for business, in what was traditionally a man's world. Women felt they had to imitate the way men dressed, and designers such as Gianni Versace, Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel, and Thierry Mugler, came up with the 'Power-suit' ( fig 10 ). This look was stiff and masculine with strong shoulder-pads and severe tailoring, the female body became a caricature with nipped-in waists, wide shoulders and high heels ( fig 11 ). Television programmes such as Dynasty and Dallas promoted this look, and portrayed women as 'high-gloss' with perfect bodies in designer clothes ( fig 12 ). Ordinary women aspired to achieve this image, and the diet and fitness industries boomed.



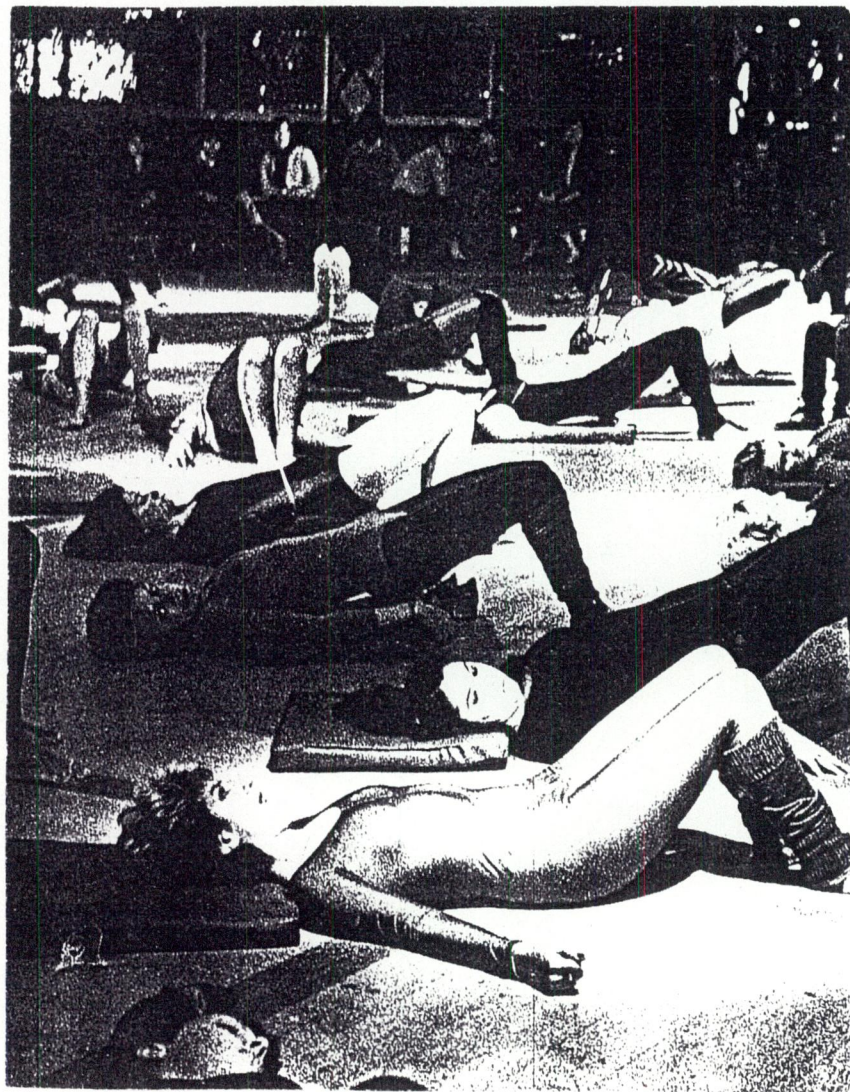


fig 13 - Aerobics class, 1986



fig 14 -body-conscious looks,1987



fig 15 - P.V.C. suit,Azzedine Alaia,1989





fig 16 - 'Perrier' advertisement, 1987

Jane Fonda's Workout Book sold 160,000 copies almost overnight when it went on sale in Britain in 1982, ( Hill, 1988, p.1986 ). By 1984 there were 300 diet books available, ( Wolf, 1990, p.68 ), each breakfast television programme had their own exercise slot and aerobics became a worldwide craze ( fig 13 ). Magazines were filled with articles on dieting, fitness and cosmetic surgery; in the April 1987 issue of Vogue one third of all the articles are devoted to health farms, pumping iron, cosmetic surgery and dieting. These are interspersed with the latest looks from the Paris shows of power-suits, figure hugging dresses and tight leggings ( fig 14 ). The over-powering message is that to look fashionable, women must have perfectly toned and supple bodies.

Most designers in the 1980s were obsessed with moulding and exposing the female body. Designers such as Azzedine Alaia, Thierry Mugler and Gianni Versace loved to portray women's bodies as hourglass figures squeezed into skin-tight leather and P.V.C. ( fig 15 ). Leotards, bodysuits and leggings became the most fashionable garments in body conscious Lycra fabric which required a perfectly shaped body. Designers became obsessed with dressing the 'perfect' body, and tended to forget that women come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

Advertisers also promoted the 'body beautiful' using models in leotards and bodysuits, to promote a variety of products. The advertisement in fig 16 is for Perrier mineral water, it sums up the use of women in advertising in the 1980s. The model's body is tanned, well-built, slim-waisted and clad in Lycra.





fig 16a - Versace dress, 1990

Two designers whose work represents the attitude of the fashion industry in the 1980s towards the female body, are Gianni Versace and Azzedine Alaïa. Their work in the 1980s and early 1990s contrasts hugely with what is now being seen on the catwalks from most designers.

### Gianni Versace

During the 1980s, Gianni Versace used a very stereotypical image of the female body in his designs. His ideal woman of the time was curvaceous, big-bosomed and long-legged, and usually squeezed into tight dresses and bondage-inspired styles. He claims to design for women with "a sexiness unqualified by irony or coyness. Women who are tuned into their times, who never let themselves be over-powered by anything or anybody" (Mower, 1990, p. 116), but his women also have to be a very specific body shape to wear his clothes.

For Versace's Autumn 1990 collection, Christy Turlington wore a full length black dress which from the front was high-necked and modest looking, but when she revealed the back it was, "slashed downwards from the nape, and upwards from the ankle, and held together by the merest sliver of fabric undulating over the Turlington rump" (Mower, 1990, p. 115). This type of dress is typical of the style Versace used during the 1980s, portraying women as sexual objects with perfect figures (fig 16a).

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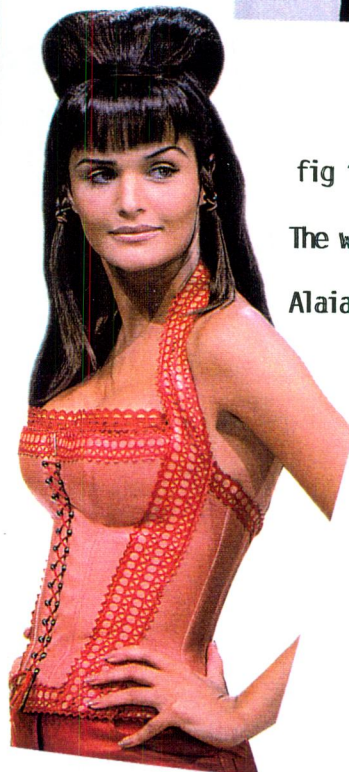
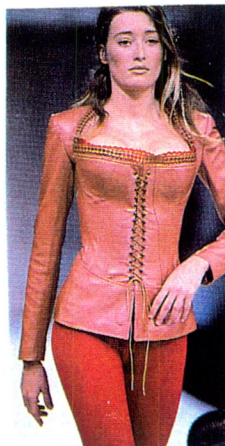
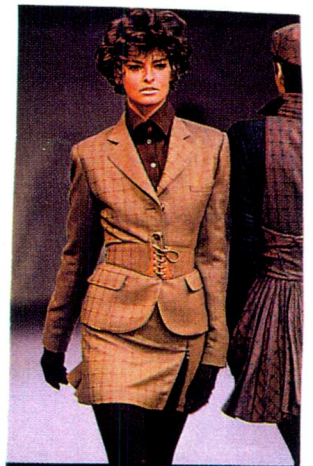


fig 17,18,19 –  
The work of Azzedine  
Alaia, 1990-1992



### Azzedine Alaia

Another designer who was concerned with the perfect female body during the 1980s is Azzedine Alaia. He became known as the 'man who loves women', but the women he designs for have to be a size 8 or 10 with tiny waists and full busts ( fig 17 ). He believes that he knows what women want, " They want dresses that whittle the waist and flatter their busts " ( Armstrong, 1990, p. 454 ). But the women who choose to wear his clothes are mostly the top models, who have the types of figures suitable for his clothes.

Georgina Howell in Sultans of Style ( 1990 ), calls Azzedine Alaia the ' Titan of tight ' and this title sums up his approach to clothing. He discarded under-clothes from his work and instead combined the corsets and girdles into one garment, " his clothes are a force of give and resistance " ( Howell, 1990, p. 158 ), ( fig 18 ).

Alaia continued to produce his figure-conscious designs in the early 1990s. His 1992 collection was a homage to Vivienne Westwood and her passion for eighteenth century corsetry, petticoats, and tutus. He showed " hourglass, tailored Monroe-style suits, wiggling on shoes complete with heels moulded in the shape of her legs " ( Hoare, 1992, p. 121 ). Alaia treats the female body as a caricature, compressing the female body into an 'ideal' unnatural shape. Vogue April 1992 describes

1911-12 130

1911-12 130

his 1992 collection as " corset jackets reinforced with boning to support voluminous bosoms, were carved from the softest kid leather, looking delicious enough to eat " ( fig 19 ).

Although Versace and Alaia are still popular in the 1990s, they are not representative of the general mood and image which most designers are now exhibiting. But one designer who was working in the 1980s has contributed to this new mood in fashion and has influenced many young designers. This is Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons. In 1990 an extreme amount of female nudity appeared on the catwalks in Europe, from designers such as Yves Saint Laurent, John Galliano and Gianni Versace, there was no more left to reveal and a new sensibility and attitude towards the female body began to appear in the next wave of collections. The Japanese sensibility of Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto and Issey Miyake has influenced the Western designers towards a purity and sensitivity in the way they approach the female body. Gradually a more relaxed and natural image of the female body is appearing, not just in the clothes but also in the choice of models used to exhibit them on.



## Chapter Two

### "New Mood and New Models"

The last chapter looked at the changing shape of the female body in fashion before the 1990s. Women have traditionally had to alter their natural body shape in order to fit the fashionable clothes of the time, which have also been presented on uniformly sized and shaped models, all similar in image. In the 1990s this is changing and we are seeing a wider variety of female images, shapes and ages in fashion models than ever before. Designers are trying to be more representative through their models, of their customer and are also becoming more sensitive in dressing the individual female form rather than a cloned ideal. In this chapter I intend to look at the variety of models now being seen on the catwalks in the 1990s, how individual and diverse they are becoming, and why designers have now decided to change their range of model types. I also wanted to address the question of whether using 'waif' models such as Kate Moss, can encourage women to develop disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa, or not.





fig 20 - Twiggy, 1960s



fig 21 - Brooke Shields and Rachel

Hunter, 1980s



Fashion models are often viewed by society as the perfect image of female beauty at any given time. Twiggy and Jean Shrimpton were the top models of the 1960s and yet they were not representative of the majority of women's figures at the time, each being skinny, adolescent and long-legged ( fig 20 ). In the 1990s, although we too have skinny and adolescent models in the form of Kate Moss and Celia Chancellor, this is no longer presented by the fashion industry as the one and only look for women to aspire too.

In the 1970s, the top models were Cheryl Tiegs and Christie Brinkley, blonde, blue eyed and voluptuous. They were seen as beautiful 'air-heads' and a perfect size 10, because this was the way the fashion industry presented them. In the early 1980s there was Brooke Shields and Rachel Hunter with perfectly toned bodies and glamorous images ( fig 21 ), again this was the only type of fashion model presented and did not represent most women.

In the 1990s designers are beginning to use a wider variety of fashion models, there is still some way to go before all women feel represented by the fashion industry but there has been some improvement in the recent fashion shows.

THE END OF THE WORLD



fig 22 - The 'Supermodels', 1990

The promotion of the 'Supermodels' in the late 1980s and early 1990s began the move away from models being seen as dumb and unintelligent, and only valued for their bodies. They insisted on being treated as intelligent, business women and became invaluable to each designer, in order to attract publicity. The models who became known as the Supermodels, each reckoned that they could not have made it in the early 1980s, as their looks were too diverse and individual ( fig 22 ).

Cindy Crawford said in Vogue in January 1990 that " Then ( 1980s ) you had to be blonde, with blue eyes, no breasts. As for my mole.....everyone told me to get it removed " ( Armstrong, 1990, p. 116 ). She refused and ever since it has become her trademark. The Supermodels are exceptional in their body shapes but they paved the way for other models who may not have made it to the catwalk otherwise, because of their individuality.

The fashion industry has gradually moved away from its traditional high-gloss and glamour image, towards a more understated and natural image. This is partly a reaction against the 1980s which are now viewed as a decade of greed and selfishness, when the fashion industry was seen as fickle and ostentatious, it is also due to the recession. With less money in circulation for luxuries such as designer clothes, the fashion industry has had to create a new style which is timeless and comfortable, rather than gimmicky and disposable. For the first time, designers are being dictated to by their customers, who will only buy what they consider to be valuable and wearable clothes.





fig 23 - Kate Moss, the 'Superwaif', 1993



The recession has also meant that designers must move away from designing only for size 8 and 10, and the under-30 age group. The women with money to buy designer clothes are generally older with mature bodies and personalities to match. According to U.S. government statistics, women aged between 35 and 54 will outnumber 18 to 34 year-olds by 10 million by the year 2000, creating a " demographic group that is impossible to ignore " ( Ellicott, 1993, p. 12 ). Therefore the fashion industry has had to address this market and use older models to promote the clothes.

### The Waif Models

The other market which has become more wealthy is the late-teenage market, who have money to spend on clothes. Although they cannot afford the top designer prices, many of these designers are now producing cheaper ranges for highstreet shops. Joe Casely-Hayford is producing a range for Top Shop, Bella Freud is producing for Stirling Cooper and Vivienne Westwood is producing for Littlewoods catalogue. This younger market has demanded a new type of fashion model which has resulted in the younger, 'waif-like' models such as Kate Moss ( fig 23 ).

The use of 'Super-waif' models have provoked a lot of bad press over the last year or so, and has been accused of encouraging Anorexia Nervosa in women, due to the slimness and petite build of these models. Kate Moss is the most famous of all the 'waifs' and when she first appeared on the catwalks she was a welcome change from the



traditional well-built, curvaceous women who had been seen on the catwalks during the 1980s. The press immediately sprung on the fact that she was skinny, accusing her of being Anorexic. In fact she is a perfectly healthy 19 year old, who reflects the way many young women naturally look.

Kate Moss is smaller than the average model, flat chested and looks like many other young women seen on the streets every day. She proves that you don't have to fit a stereotype to make it big in modelling and yet the press have treated her as a dangerous icon. An article in the Sunday Times in May 1993 called The Thin End of the Wedge, blamed the use of waif models for encouraging school girls to become Anorexic, ( Rogers, 1993, p. 10 ).

### Anorexia Nervosa

Anorexia Nervosa was first diagnosed in 1868 by W.W. Gull as a disorder, long before women such as Twiggy and Kate Moss were born. At this time it was called Hysteric Apepsia ( Bordo, 1993, p. 319 ) and although widespread at this time, the disorder received little publicity. Anorexia Nervosa is a condition caused by low self-esteem which is more likely to be caused by psychological factors rather than an interest in fashion. The sufferer refuses to eat as a sign of being in control, when other areas of their life may seem out of control.





fig 24 - Kim Basinger



fig 25 - K.D. Lang and Courtney Love

Sufferers from Anorexia may have a background of constantly being put down by family or friends, abused, ignored or unsuccessful in their careers. These psychological pressures build up and the Anorexic goes through a process of self-loathing which causes the eating disorder. As the disease takes over, the sufferer becomes increasingly irrational and illogical. They do not believe that they are underweight but insist they are fat, hating themselves even more if they do eat. The disorder is often blamed on vanity but it is a much deeper problem and cannot merely be the fault of fashion. The results of my questionnaire, which surveyed a variety of women, showed that 54% believe Anorexia to be caused by psychological factors, with only 12% blaming fashion. ( survey 1993 , see appendices ).

Most Anorexics have little interest in fashion, they are more obsessed with their own condition and therefore the blame cannot be put on the use of 'waif' models. Also the disorder has been around for over a century which proves that the modern fashion industry did not start the problem, there are other factors involved. Models like Kate Moss have in fact brought a new spirit to the catwalk, their looks are naturally honest and bring a fresh feeling to the fashion world.

It is interesting that Kate Moss has also become the latest pin-up for adolescent males. This is a welcome change from the traditional women who were perceived as pin-up material, the likes of Sam





fig 26 - Bjork

Fox, Kim Wilde and Kim Basinger ( fig 24 ). An article in the Sunday Times discussed how boys have now been released from the 'macho-straitjacket' of having to idolise a particular type of woman ( Forrest, 1994, p. 14 ). Boys can feel free to admire the more androgenous looks of Kate Moss without being teased as being less than masculine.

The Pop music world has presented many new female icons for the 1990s who are changing the preconceived ideas of male and female in our society. Women such as Bjork, K.D. Lang, Polly Harvey, Sinéad O'Connor and Courteney Love are all challenging the traditional stereotypes of the female body and image ( fig 25 ). Bjork was in fact voted Select magazine's 'Babe of the Year' and yet she is unlike any other traditional 'Babe'. She is not skinny, often goes without make-up, has unkempt hair and a tattoo and yet she is adored by men and women alike as being beautiful and talented ( fig 26 ). This shows that our society is ready to accept new female images.

### **The Tank Girls**

Another type of fashion model which has shown women in a more aggressive and powerful image than the 'waifs' is the 'tank girls'. Models such as Kristen McMenamy, Erma Balfour and Eve Salvail are representing another type of female body and image which has not been seen on the catwalks before.





fig 27 - Kristen McMenamy

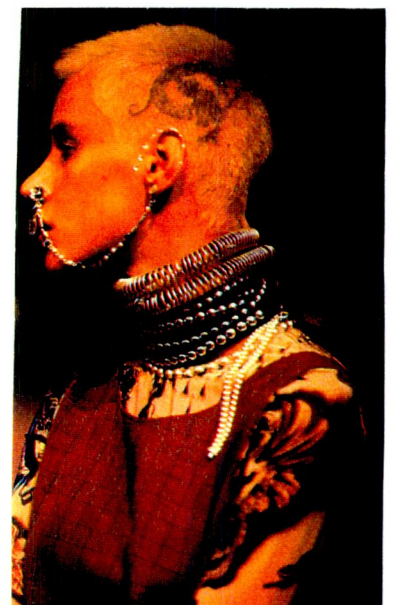
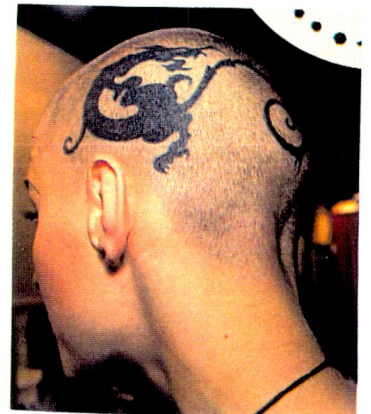
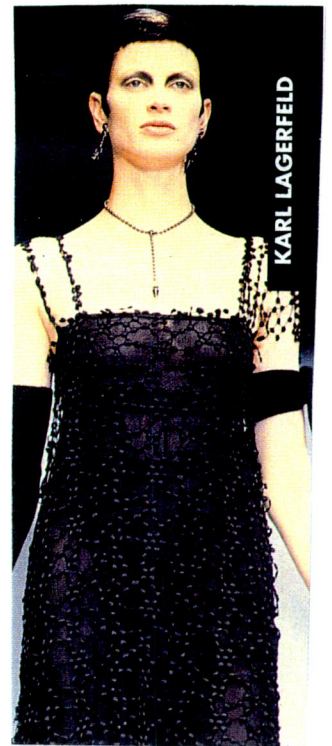


fig 28 - Eve Salvail

Kristen McMenamy describes herself as " gawky " and an " ugly duckling " ( Young, 1993, p. 117 ) and yet she is used by top designers such as Karl Lagerfeld and Claude Montana ( fig 27 ). She disproves the theory that fashion models have to be uniform in their looks and personality. She does not move like any other model, she stomps down the catwalk and scowls at the audience and says she wants " young girls to stop thinking that every model is perfect " ( Young, 1993, p. 118 ). She along with Emma Balfour and Eve Salvail have changed these rules.

Eve Salvail has a shaved and tatoored head, and yet has been used by many designers to present their latest collections. She is not particularly slim and is unashamedly lesbian. Her image is strong and individual, and yet designers have not shied away from presenting this type of female ( fig 28 ).

The use of models such as Eve and Kristen by designers ranging from Karl Lagerfeld to Jean-Paul Gaultier to Gianni Versace is a reaction against false glamour, breast implants and sunbed tans which are still promoted by the media through television and advertising which I shall discuss in Chapter Four. Using models such as the 'tank girls' is an invitation to other women to be more individual about their looks and not be dictated to by advertising stereotypes.





fig 29 - Punk Revival worn by Eve

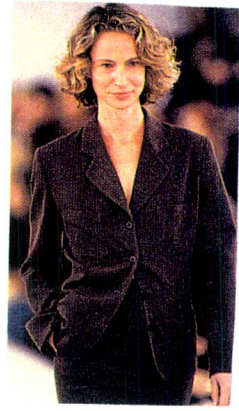


fig 30 - Lauren Hutton and other 'Mature Models', 1993



The Punk revival in 1993 has encouraged the more aggressive female look. Many elements of Punk dress have reappeared on the catwalks and require strong looking models such as Eve and Kristen to wear them ( fig 29 ). The look also borrows from lesbian imagery "with" " shaved heads, tattoos, big boots, a 'look but don't touch' image " ( Brown, 1993, p. 20 ), but you don't have to be gay to dress this way and the looks are appearing on the highstreet and are being worn. It is a positive step away from the passive female looks which have dominated fashion over the years.

### Mature Models

Another positive step seen on the catwalks in 1993 was the use of 'mature models'. Designers such as Calvin Klein, Helmut Lang, Jean-Paul Gaultier and Vivienne Westwood, have all used models over the age of forty, who would not usually be allowed on the catwalk. In business terms it makes sense for designers to use models who reflect the majority of their customers, as in the case of Calvin Klein, but it also helps to change attitudes about the type and age of women which our society considers ideal ( fig 30 ).

Many of the mature models seen in 1993 were models when they were younger, Jane Hitchcock, Patti Hansen, Rosie Vela and Lauren Hutton all modelled in their youth, and are proving that age and beauty can go hand in hand. It is only our society which implies that when you are over forty you are no longer beautiful.





fig 32 - Anna Pawloski at Gaultier

fig 31 - (above) Catherine Deneuve and (below) Isabella Rossellini, 1994



fig 33 - Vivienne Westwood



Catherine Deneuve and Isabella Rossellini are each under contract to Yves Saint Laurent and Lancome respectively ( fig 31 ), both are well over forty and proud of it. Jean-Paul Gaultier used one of Patou's models Anna Pawloski, in his 1993 show ( fig 32 ), and he also uses large models and models with unusual features to promote his collections. By being in the spotlight he can change attitudes towards body shape and age in fashion. Vivienne Westwood also uses older models and unconventional people to model her collections, and prides herself on being able to wear her own designs at over fifty ( fig 33 ).

Hopefully the next phase in changing the model types seen on the catwalks, will be to get an even wider range of body shapes presented. Economics has in the past caused designers to only produce clothes in sizes 8 to 12, even though 47% of women in the U.K. are size 16 and over ( Turner, 1994, BBC 1 ).

Women who do not fit the 'standard' shape and size which in fact only belongs to a minority, are still forced to feel left out of the fashion world. They have to go to specialist shops, instead of being able to choose from the wide range of highstreet shops, which reinforces their feeling of being abnormal.

The last few years have seen some increase in shops catering to larger and smaller women, Dawn French has her own range of clothing, Principles does a 'petite' range, and Evans and Blooming cater





fig 34 - 'Mature Model', Image magazine, 1993



to the larger figure ( fig 34 ), and yet these are the exceptions to the rule. What is needed is for highstreet shops to integrate styles for all shapes and sizes under one roof so everyone can choose together from the same range. This would reinforce the fact that all women come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and are not abnormal if they vary from the size 8 or 10.

With the fashion industry in recession, all markets must be explored and more designers will have to cater to a wider market. If top designers change the criteria through the clothes they design and the models they use, then it will filter down to other areas of society. Many top designers have now changed their attitude towards the female body and are becoming more sympathetic towards the natural shapes and sizes that exist in women.

Unlike the 1980s, when the use of stereotypical models reinforced a uniformity of female image, on the catwalk and in the magazines, designers in the 1990s are now attempting to represent the individual women who exist in society, and who are their customers. As well as using more varied models, designers are also changing their approach to designing for the female body in the 1990s, towards a more comfortable and sympathetic mood which can be worn by a larger variety of women, without changing their natural body shape.





fig 35 - 'New Mood' in fashion, Armani, 1993

### Chapter Three

#### "The Treatment of the Female Body by Designers in the 1990s"

The last chapter looked at the new models which are now being used by the top designers, as a more varied representation of the female body in the 1990s. Designers have also begun to change the silhouette of the female body in fashion in the 1990s, towards a more natural shape, unlike that seen in previous decades, and particularly in the 1980s. There is now a larger variety of looks and styles available to women, depending on their personality rather than their body shape. A new sensitivity and understanding of the female form has appeared on the catwalks, which indicates a more positive attitude for the future, that women will be able to enjoy dressing fashionably without suffering or feeling uncomfortable. In this chapter I have selected a variety of designers, both male and female, and examined how they treat the female body in the 1990s. Through the use of my survey, conducted in 1993, I have examined whether women appreciate this new mood and also whether they still feel as dictated to by designers than they have in the past.





fig 35a - 'New Mood' in fashion, 1993



The fashion industry in the 1990s is ruled by its customer, due to the recession it is experiencing at the moment. The buyers who choose what to take from the designers for their shops, know that women in the 1990s no longer want frivolous clothes which are only wearable by the select few, for a short time. Most women want clothes which are comfortable, timeless and casual. 81% of the women I surveyed said they now choose their clothes only due to personal taste rather than because of fashion trends. Designers still influence what is available on the highstreet but they are increasingly influenced by what their customer wants.

My questionnaire results showed that 52% of women are not as influenced by designers as they were in previous years and only 26% said they slavishly followed fashion trends. Designers have realised that in the 1990s women are not going to be dictated to by the fashion industry and in order to stay in business, they must listen to what women want to wear. ( survey 1993, see appendices ), ( fig 35 ).

The 'new mood' which has appeared on the catwalks as an answer to the customers, is more natural, comfortable and sympathetic than what was available to women in the 1980s. Women no longer have to mould their bodies with restrictive undergarments, dieting or surgery, and can be more confident about their own shape ( fig 35a ). There is no longer one 'ideal' body for women to imitate, but women can fashionably exist in a larger variety of shapes, sizes and ages, than ever before.





fig 36 - 'Grunge' from Perry Ellis, 1992

### Grunge

The first signs of a move away from the unnatural glamour of the 1980s was when 'Grunge' hit the catwalks in 1992 ( fig 36 ). At first Grunge was dismissed by the Media as a passing trend, not to be taken very seriously, but it allowed women to try a new way of dressing, to be anti-glamorous, comfortable and relaxed. It allowed women to give themselves a break from having to constantly look perfectly turned out and made-up. It was a reaction against the 1980s preoccupation with power-dressing, designer labels and perfect bodies. Although the Grunge looks shown on the catwalks were ridiculously over-priced, the idea which was presented was positive and could be interpreted by ordinary women in their own way.

The fact that many 'celebrity' women dressed in Grunge also helped ordinary women to be more confident about changing the way they dress. Cosmopolitan said in September 1992 that,

The Grunge look has an influence which reaches beyond the gossip columns. Each time Julia (Roberts) goes out in a sloppy khaki sweater, or Daryl (Hannah) is snapped with ratty-looking hair, we all move another teeny-tiny step away from the tradition of women being judged on their looks. ( Billson, 1992, p. 152 ).

Grunge changed the traditional ideas that women had to look perfect and glamorous in order to be fashionable, and allowed an alternative way of dressing which has liberated women in the 1990s. 25% of the women I surveyed said that Grunge was their favourite fashion look at the moment, and 45% chose 'Casual' as the way they like to dress ( survey 1993 ).





fig 37 - 'Deconstruction', 1993



fig 39 - Rei Kawakubo, 1983





fig 38 - 'Deconstruction', 1993



### Deconstruction

Grunge has now evolved into the more sophisticated looks of 'Deconstruction' in 1993 ( fig 37 ). This is the taking apart and reassembling of classic garments to produce a new more original one. It is an intellectual statement about clothing, allowing the wearers personality to be an interal part of the clothes they are wearing. The clothing is subdued, sculptural, distressed and textural and the body shape beneath is irrelevant. These looks can be worn by fuller figures, skinny waifs, petite and taller figures. It is an intelligent, confident and comfortable look where the wearer can feel free to combine clothes in their own way, wear no make-up and crop their hair, if they so wish. Deconstruction allows women to pull on a chunky old jumper with the elbows hanging out, and still be considered fashionable ( fig 38 ).

### Rei Kawakubo

Signs of the Deconstruction look can be traced back to 1983, when Rei Kawakubo, of Comme des Garçons, first produced assymetrical, slashed and creased designs which wrapped around the body , ( fig 39 ). She was unique in her treatment of the female body, and she believed that the body's movement could release the potential of the garment. As the wearer moves, unexpected features of cut and construction are revealed in odd places. Although her designs often reveal parts of the body through vents and holes, they are parts of the body that have " as it were, no names : the inside of the knee, a section of the ribcage, or the lower back revealed by an oblong window " ( Evans and Thornton, 1989, p. 157 ). Kawakubo invented a new way of dressing the female body which was intellectual rather than sexual, and now this





fig 39a - Rei Kawakubo, 1983



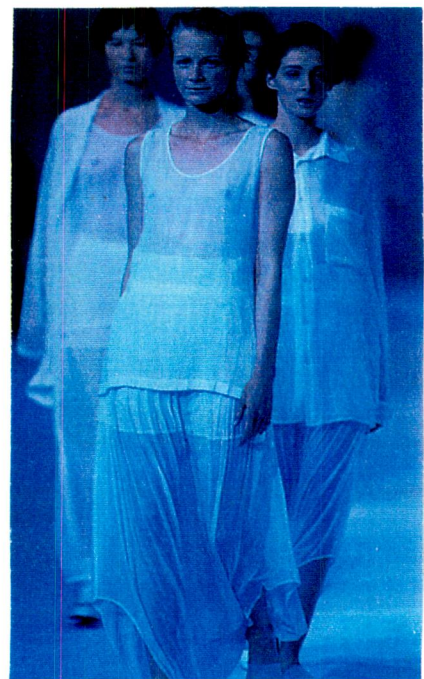


fig 40 – Issey Miyake, 1994

attitude is influencing other designers in the 1990s. " Kawakubo's influence is one of the driving forces in mainstream fashion " ( Reed, 1993, p. 24 ), ( fig 39a ).

Kawakubo's ideas come from a Japanese tradition in fashion which is shared by Issey Miyake and Yohji Yamamoto. They all design sculptural clothes which are loose and layered and subtle in colouring and detail. They are for intelligent and confident wearers who do not need to flaunt their sexuality. As Rei Kawakubo said " I design for women who do not need to assure their happiness by looking sexy to men, by emphasising their figures, but who attract them with their minds " ( Steele, 1991, p. 185 ).

### Issey Miyake

Issey Miyake is renowned for the comfort of his clothes, he " has a sensitivity to the comfort of the body that goes beyond the normal and which makes his clothes different from everyone else's , ( Howell, 1990, p. 46 ). The comfort in his clothes comes from the way he cuts them, " the comfort of the body derives from the volume of air around the arms and shoulders, the lightness of the fabric and it's sympathetic touch " ( Howell, 1990, p. 47 ) ( fig 40 ).

In the 1980s these Japanese designers were only popular with a minority, but in the 1990s their ideology about the female body





fig 44 - Highstreet Looks, 1993



fig 42 - Layering, 1993

fig 41 and 43 - Ann Demeulemeester, 1993



has influenced a new young breed of designers who have in turn influenced the mainstream designers and their customers.

In 1993, the designers Martin Margiela, Dries van Noten and Ann Demeulemeester are all using the Japanese influence with a 1990s twist, with clothes which are shrunken, creased, baggy and layered ( fig 41 ). Their clothes are subdued in colour, usually seen in tones of grey, black and white, and using traditional fabrics such as tweed, cotton and mohair. Their clothes cover the body completely, allowing the body to exist comfortably.

Layering is now fashionable and trousers can be worn under dresses, jumpers pulled over shirts and pinafores, aprons and long coats cover the whole lot ( fig 42 ). In Vogue September 1993 the ankle was heralded as the new focus of beauty, and often this is the only area of flesh left exposed. Covering up has become fashionable and the looks of Deconstruction present women as thinking, sensual and confident.

### Ann Demeulemeester

Ann Demeulemeester is one of the new breed of designers who believes in treating the body in whatever form it comes in. She considers the comfort and fit of every aspect of her clothes, " Take the sleeves, they are curved, because arms rarely hang down straight. The cut is based on the design and movement of the body " ( Williams, 1993, p. 11 ).





fig 45 - 1990s styles from Abe Hamilton  
and Dolce e Gabbana



Demeuleneester like Kawakubo does not believe in exposing the body to look fashionable, ( fig 43 ),

Personally I never understood the desire to expose everything. Why do women feel it necessary to live out cliched fantasies of what's sexy? I think it's sad. What disturbed me the most was the way fashion was presenting women as dumb. Now the ideal is something much healthier, more thoughtful and sensitive. At the end of my last show there were men who came up to me and said they were really touched by what they saw. ( Armstrong, 1993, p. 207 ).

Even men, who have been traditionally accused of liking women to expose their bodies, are willing to change their perception of the female body in fashion in the 1990s.

Deconstruction has filtered down to the highstreet and can be seen in most of the mainstream clothes shops ( fig 44 ). It is not just for the catwalks, and can be seen in a more dilute form worn by many women on the streets. Most importantly, like Grunge, it has given women an alternative to the traditional imagery which they are still presented with by the media and advertising. The fact that the looks have sold well on the highstreet shows that women want to wear a more comfortable and natural look, and other designers are also catering to this need.



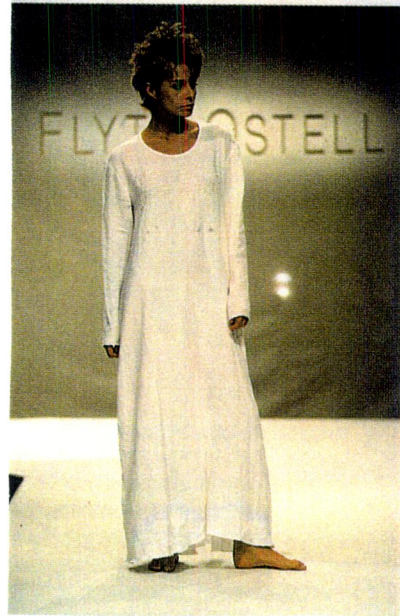
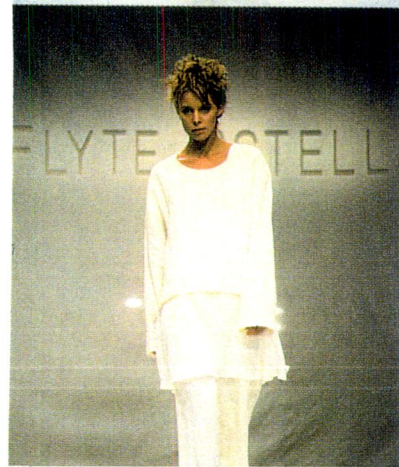
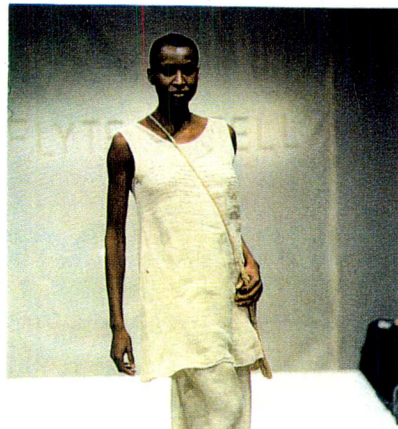
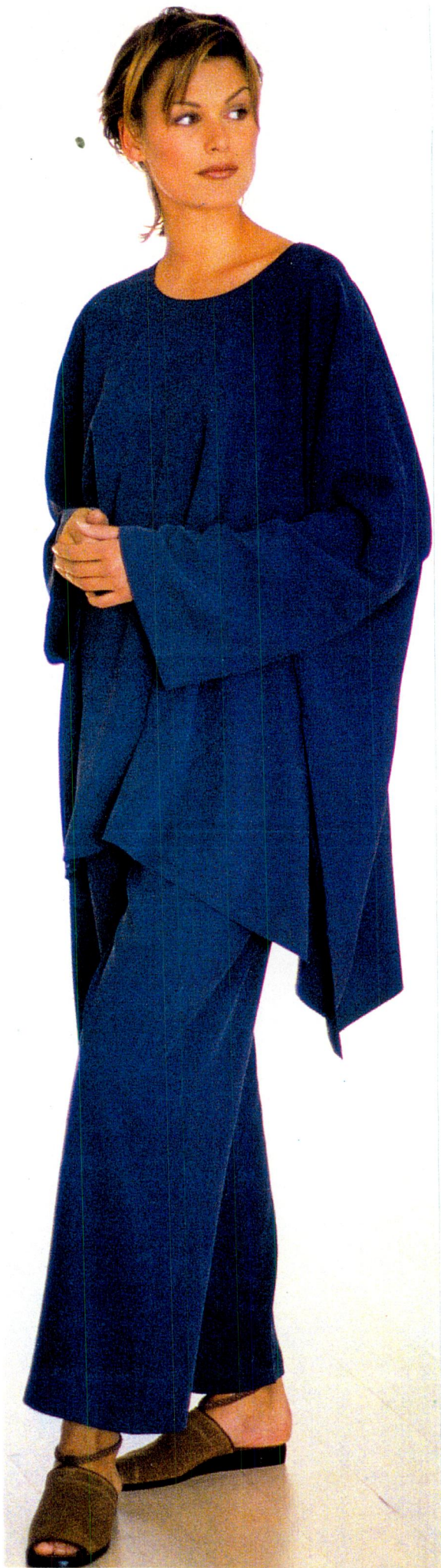


fig 46 - Flyte Ostell, 1994

Of the new breed of young designers, Nicholas Knightly, Sonnetag-Mulligan, Abe Hamilton and Flyte Ostell all have a pure and simple approach to the designing for the female form. These designers are not tied by the traditional stereotypes surrounding the female body, and can change attitudes for the future. They have a 1990s approach of simplicity, ecology, naturalness and political correctness which has contributed to the new mood in fashion at the moment ( fig 45 ).

### Flyte Ostell

Ellis Flyte and Richard Ostell, have a simplicity in their designs which has been compared to the work of Yohji Yamamoto and Zoran. Their collection for 1993 consisted of bias-cut shift dresses in luxurious silk crepe, topped with unstructured jackets, loose draw-string trousers and long cardigans ( fig 46 ). Marion Hume described their work in Elle magazine in February 1992 as follows,

In an age of fashion fascism, where designers rant on about choice and then offer one-million-and-one ideas for a skinny size 8 with a bosom, it is refreshing to see clothes that aim to be as flattering as possible to as many figures as possible ( Hume, 1992, p. 100 ).

Their clothes are uncomplicated, but sensitive to the natural shape of the female body, " Essentially we make comfortable, deceptively simple clothing for all different types of figure shape. The large sizes need to be large, although they look gorgeous on a size 8 too " says Ostell ( Hume, 1992, p. 100 ).





fig 47 and 48 – Rifat Ozbek, 1993



### Rifat Ozbek

Another designer who is showing a respect for the natural female form in the 1990s, is Rifat Ozbek, his 1993 collection swathed the female body in flowing layers of chiffon under softly tailored jackets. These ephemeral layers of fabric are being used by many designers in the 1990s to free the body from its previous constraints. American Elle in April 1993 described this new approach,

Designers have softened their mood, a state of grace has settled over the fashion industry. There is a freedom, a comfort, in wearing floating panels of chiffon or lace, these are pleasurable alternatives to clothes that squeeze the body into a casing of spandex, ( Horyn, 1993, p. 180 ).

The 1980s preoccupation with encasing the body in tight stretch fabrics has become completely unfashionable. ( fig 47 ).

Ozbek believes that it is " time to stop being confrontational. Everything hard edged is finished, and that includes blatant sexuality. Now maybe we can get back to a more womanly sensibility in fashion " ( Armstrong, 1993, p. 209 ). He believes in allowing women to dress more freely to please themselves rather than society. For spring/summer 1994, he has produced the shortest of short mini-skirts, but insists that these are only for some women who choose to wear them , " They are softer and more romantic than the old style short. That kind of sexiness is finished. But they're my way of saying that women don't have to be so rigid about fashion. They can do one thing one day, something else the next " ( Armstrong, 1993, p. 209 ) ( fig 48 ). The attitude of Ozbek is to offer as much choice as possible





fig 49 – Romeo Gigli, 1993





JOHN  
ROCHA



fig 50 and 51 – John Rocha, 1993

to suit a variety of women with different personalities as well as bodies.

### Romeo Gigli

Romeo Gigli also prefers soft femininity to hard sexiness in his clothes. He treats the female body as something to be gently caressed and swathed in beautiful fabrics. To him the female is sublime and sensitive but not weak. " There is nothing gimmicky about Gigli's creations, they are quite simply beautifully conceived pieces of clothing favoured by demure but sensuous women " ( Laxton, 1993, p. 37 ), ( fig 49 ). Gigli does not demand a perfect body, just a beautiful spirit and a gentle grace.

### John Rocha

Gigli's attitude towards the female body is similar to the work of John Rocha, who was awarded the British Designer of the Year for 1993. His clothes, like Gigli's, are timeless without glitzy or gimmicky details. His 1993 collection was filled with soft feminine layers of bias-cut shifts, floor length sweeping sheepskins and Aran sweaters ( fig 50 ). His clothes have a timeless feel with his cotton shirts, leather jackets and chunky knits, and can be worn by many ages and body shapes. Rocha's tailoring is loose and flattering with soft rounded shoulders and an androgenous fit ( fig 51 ).





fig 52 - John Rocha 1994



fig 53 - Quin and Donnelly, 1993

Lucille Lewin, owner of Whistles, says John Rocha has a " delicate almost poetic attitude " towards design ( Alford, 1993, p. 143 ). The most important thing about Rocha's clothes is that they are wearable and sellable, to a wide variety of customers, ( fig 52 ).

### Quin and Donnelly

Quin and Donnelly are another example of Irish designers who are sympathetic to the female body in the 1990s. Being working women themselves, with busy lifestyles, they understand that what women want in their clothes is comfort and wearability. They try all their clothes on themselves before they O.K. production and insist on their clothes being practical as well as stylish. " We're making clothes for women who don't have time to spend hours deciding what to put on when they're rushing out in the morning " ( Power, 1993, p.86 ).

Quin and Donnelly understand that women come in a variety of shapes and sizes, " Irish women arn't pear-shaped, like the English, but they do tend to be quite small, and you have to bear that in mind " says Liz Quin ( Power, 1993, p. 86 ). Their most popular suit this season was a wool-crepe outfit with a short embroidered jacket and short skirt, " specially made for the more abbreviated silhouette, was the fastest selling suit ever to appear on, or rather to disappear off, a Dublin store rail " ( Power, 1993, p. 86 ), ( fig 53 ).





fig 54 – Donna Karan, 1993

In America designers have always been more commercial in their attitude towards designing for the female body. They realised earlier than Paris and Milan that women want comfort and wearability in their clothes, and especially in their working clothes. Designers such as Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Donna Karan have each created a look for women in the 1990s which is practical and yet sophisticated.

### Donna Karan

Donna Karan invented a system of dressing for women that gave a new solution for the working woman, about how to dress for business and yet be comfortable and feminine ( fig 54 ). She is credited with understanding the female body, whatever shape or size it comes in. " I'm a woman with a rounded figure, I won't design clothes that can't be worn by a woman who is a size 14 plus " ( Steele, 1991, p. 194 ). The apparent simplicity of her clothes disguises a complex construction based on the natural curves of the body, ( fig 55 ).

Donna Karan works directly from the body to achieve her wearable clothes,

She pins and drapes and moulds timelessly, and is rumoured to design naked in front of a mirror. ' Is there a better way? I'm in front of that mirror all the time looking at my body and the clothes on me. That way I find out what works and what doesn't. I don't have a perfect body, who does? ' " ( Brampton, 1992, p. 157 ).





fig 55 - Donna Karan, 1994



fig 56 - Donna Karan, 1994

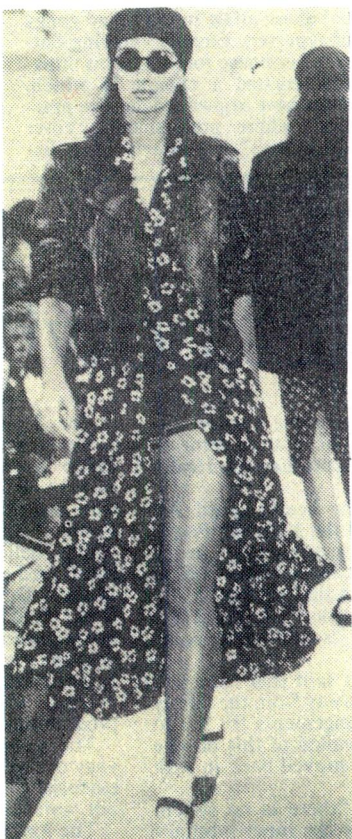


fig 57 - Donna Karan, 1993



fig 58 - Armani, 1993

Donna Karan respects the fact that women come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and doesn't just design for the 'perfect' body.

Donna Karan allowed working women to shed the powersuits of the 1980s and gave them a softer more comfortable working wardrobe ( fig 56 ). She is most famous for inventing the 'body' which used modern stretch fabric to smooth and tone the body giving support and flattering the body, it could be worn under suits instead of bulky shirts which rode up. In 1993 she still uses the body in her collection, along with romantic tea dresses under jackets that " look more like relaxed blouses or sloppy cardigans " ( Mulvagh, 1993, p. 9 ), as the new look for office dressing ( fig 57 ). No longer do women have to dress like men to be taken seriously.

It is interesting that Donna Karan was the most popular designer with the women I surveyed, along with Giorgio Armani, who also has a sensitive approach to dressing the female body ( fig 58 ). Also popular in my survey were John Rocha, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Paul Costelloe, all designers with a modern approach to designing for women. Although the women I surveyed varied in age and occupation, the majority agreed on liking designers who are sympathetic to their bodies. ( survey 1993, see appendices ).





fig 59 - 'The' dress of 1993 by Ralph Lauren



£29.99

£34.99

£49



£32.50

£16.99

£29.99

fig 60 and 62 - Highstreet versions of Ralph Lauren



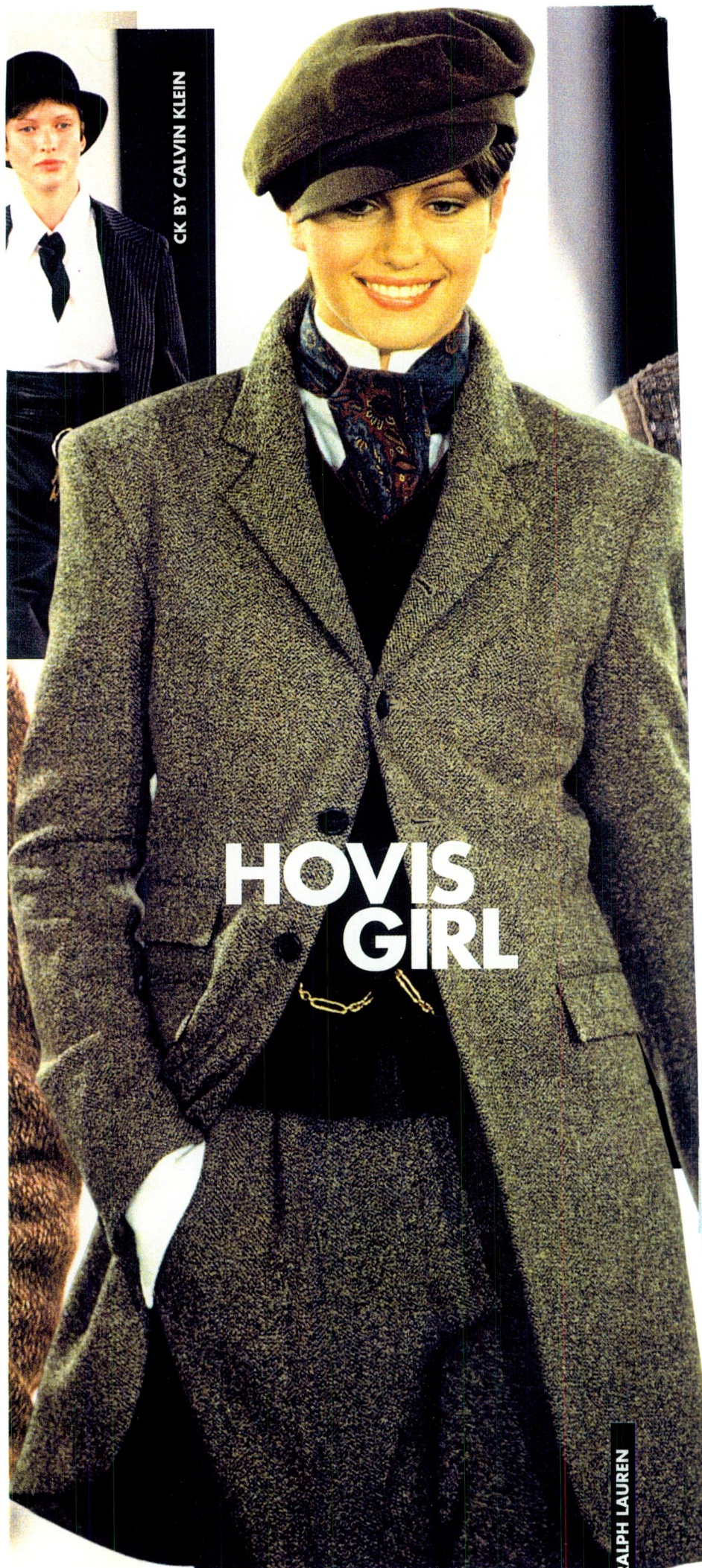


fig 61 - 'The Hovis Girl' look from Ralph Lauren, 1993





fig 62a - Ralph Lauren, 1993

### Ralph Lauren

Ralph Lauren is famous this season for designing 'the' dress which epitomises the new mood in fashion. Vogue September 1993 said ,

It appeared on the catwalk halfway through Ralph Lauren's winter collection, and just might signal the end of an era that became so blasé about letting everything hang out that it finally had to button it all back in ( Armstrong, 1993, p. 206 ) ( fig 59 ).

This dress was long, black chenille with a white collar and cuffs, in a puritanical style covering the whole body. The style was immediately copied by every highstreet shop, and sold in large numbers, ( fig 60 ).

Ralph Lauren is also responsible for another look which has influenced the highstreet with a wearable, comfortable style called the 'Hovis Girl' look. This consists of baggy tweed trousers and jackets, over-sized Fair Isle jumpers, 'baker-boy' caps and boots ( fig 61 ). This is a very relaxed and comfortable style for women to wear, and has also been successful on the highstreet ( fig 62 ). It shows women are prepared to buy clothes which are timeless and comfortable which do not restrict their body's movement. These styles also suit women of all shapes and sizes who want to look fashionable, ( fig 62a ).





fig 63 – Versace's Punk Revival, 1993

### The Punk Revival

In 1993 there has been a revival of the 'Punk' look by many top designers, which is influencing the highstreet at the moment. Although many of the catwalk styles will not suit all ages and sizes, the ideology is encouraging younger women to be more individual and confident about the way they dress. Many of the top designers have exhibited their own 1990s version of the Punk look including Gianni Versace, Karl Lagerfeld, Joe Casely-Hayford and Jean-Paul Gaultier. It is interesting that the originator of the Punk look, Vivienne Westwood, has moved farthest away from Punk in her latest work, towards a Haute Couture style.

For his spring/summer 1994 collection, Gianni Versace has embraced the Punk look in his own style, with leather and P.V.C. dresses and mini-skirts, slashed and pinned with be-jewelled safety pins. It seems he will always dress women in an overtly sexual way, but we must accept that there are many women who like to wear Versace because it makes them feel sexy. There is nothing wrong with this as long as women can make up their own minds about how to dress rather than be pressured by stereotypes. The 1990s are about choice and if women want to wear P.V.C. mini-skirts then that is available ( fig 63 ).

Versace has offered alternatives to his usual style in his Autumn 1993 collection, where he sent out models fully clothed in pastel sloppy jumpers and ankle-length chiffon skirts. He says ,





fig 64 and 65 - Jean-Paul Gaultier, 1993

Covering up is fun on women who've never done it before and therefore give it a fresh look, I don't think it has anything to do with the past because it's never been done with modern fabrics " ( Armstrong, 1993, p. 207 ).

Gianni Versace shows that he is capable of offering a variety of styles, increasing the choice for his customer in the 1990s.

### Jean-Paul Gaultier

Jean-Paul Gaultier's version of the Punk look has been much harder-edged and innovative. For his spring/summer 1994 collection he combined Punk with various ethnic looks of India, China and Africa and used tribal tattoos and body piercing as the accessories for the collection. The catwalk look may look over-the-top to some people, but as individual pieces the clothes are extremely wearable, ( fig 64 ).

Gaultier plays with the stereotypes of race as well as gender in the 1990s, and continually offers an alternative to the traditional looks accepted by society. His clothes are for individuals who don't want to conform to society's stereotypes, in the past he has put men in skirts and women in nun's habits, but Gaultier is always original and challenging in the clothes he produces, ( fig 65 ).





fig 66 - Vivienne Westwood, 1991



### Vivienne Westwood

Another designer who, like Gaultier, is always challenging and unconventional is Vivienne Westwood. She has always had a strong relationship with the female body through her designs. Her clothes can restrict and yet liberate the body, and are a statement about being in control of your own body and sexuality. Most of the women who wear her clothes are strong individuals who can carry them. She believes that by wearing her corsets and revealing styles that women can feel " grand and strong because of the sexy way they emphasise your body and make you aware of it " ( Steele, 1991, p. 157 ) ( fig 66 ). Although in the 1900s corsets were forced on women by society's ideal of beauty, in the 1990s many women choose to wear a Westwood corset as a sign of power and individuality.

Westwood's use of royal imagery, such as her 'Orb' logo, is intended to make the wearer feel " powerful and important as though you possess culture " ( Steele, 1991, p. 158 ). Westwood is preoccupied with sexiness, but it is about what feels sexy to the wearer rather than what looks sexy to the onlooker. In 1986 she commented on the look of the 1980s saying,

For the last ten years, clothes have had shoulder pads and tight hips - that's supposed to be the sexy look, the inverted triangle - but I think people want a more feminine fitting. Women want to be strong, but in a feminine way ( Evans and Thornton, 1989, p. 152 ).

She believes in dressing women to please women, and allowing them to show off their bodies if they so choose.





fig 67 - Westwood Glamour, 1993

Westwood is unique in her approach to the female body and has always been ahead of the rest of the fashion world, the new purity and Victoriana we are now seeing with other designers, can be traced back to her 1986 collection which borrowed from Victorian imagery. She has changed a lot of traditions about the female body and image over the years and has contributed to changing the stereotypes for both men and women.

Her Autumn 1993 collection was full of high glamour in a haute couture style, unlike what other designers are doing at the moment,

The silhouette was Dior's 'New Look' from the 1940s: just as he came along to lift the post-war gloom, here was Vivienne with her scarlet capes, nipped-in waists, curvy jackets, clashing tartans, floor-sweeping fake furs and huge lace ballgowns ( Reed, 1993, p. 3 ) ( fig 67 ).

Westwood is as usual doing something completely different to the rest of the fashion world. But she has already dealt with Grunge, Deconstruction and Punk back in the 1970s, when she had the original versions, and therefore she is probably years ahead of her time, in predicting a return to glamour and couture, ( fig 68 ).

When women are freed from the stereotypes put on them by society, then they will be free to dress glamorously at their leisure if they wish too. Equally they will be allowed to dress as casually and comfortably as they wish, when they choose to. The fashion industry is





fig 68 - Westwood Glamour, 1993



offering choices to women in the 1990s, they can dress glamorously, sexually, intellectually or casually, it is just a question of society allowing women to look and dress how they please rather than having to fit an 'ideal', as they have in previous years. But our society through the media is still pressuring women into feeling unhappy about their own natural bodies and appearance.



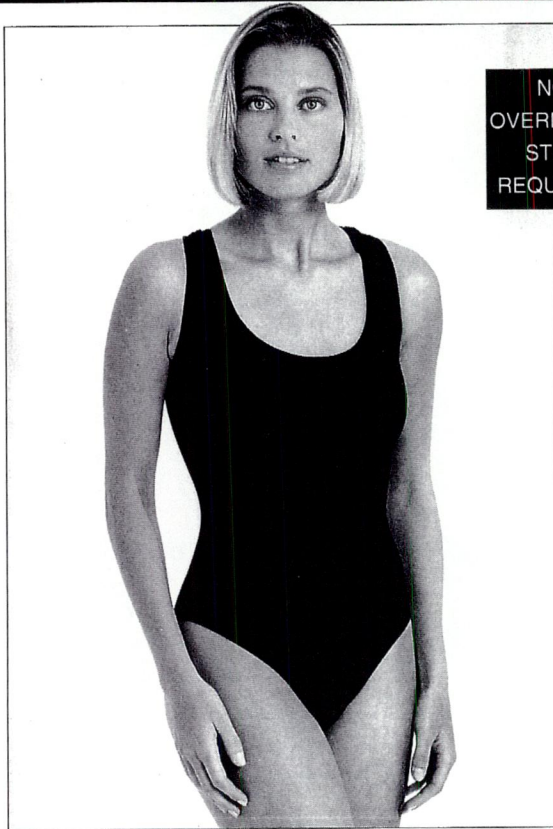
## Chapter Four

### "The Pressurisation of Women in the 1990s"

Chapter Three examined the treatment of the female body by a variety of designers in the 1990s, and has shown that women no longer need to change their natural body shape or size, in order to wear fashionable clothes. In the past the women have had to diet and use restrictive under-garments, in order to achieve the fashionable silhouette, but in the 1990s this is no longer necessary. But due to the enormity of the diet and cosmetic industries, the idea that women must change their bodies to fit an ideal, needs to be perpetuated in order for these big businesses to thrive. Therefore the diet industry encourages the media to promote the idea that women must change their bodies, through advertising, television and magazines, who influence women into feeling innadequate about their bodies. In this chapter I intend to examine how the media pressures women, and distorts fashion, in the 1990s, to satisfy their advertisers. The use of my survey results has confirmed many of the ideas which I have examined in this chapter about the pressurisation of women in the 1990s.



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Fashion designers have to rely on the media, in the form of magazines, television and advertising, in order to publicise their collections. Their fashion shows are not open to the general public and so they need the fashion editors, photographers and store buyers in prime positions at their shows, in order to advertise and sell their clothes and accessories successfully. Therefore the designers feel obliged to allow the media to present their work in whatever way they choose. This means fashion editors can choose what models to use, what trends to highlight, and what editorial and advertising to combine with the fashion pages.

### Fashion Magazines

Fashion magazines, such as Vogue, Elle and Marie-Claire, survive on the revenue from their advertisers, which consist mostly of cosmetics, beauty products, cosmetic surgery and dieting aids, ( fig 69 ), so naturally they reflect this in the content of their magazines. 74% of women I surveyed said they learnt about fashion from magazines, rather than any other source, but the magazines have a vested interest in the way they interpret fashion.

Flicking through any recent issue of the main fashion magazines, will reveal pages and pages of advertisements for liposuction, face-lifts, weight-watching classes and slimming treatments. Fashion magazines therefore have a dual purpose, they must inform and advise women on the latest fashions, but they also need to please their advertisers.



In Naomi Wolf's book, The Beauty Myth, she says " the beauty backlash is spread and reinforced by the cycles of self-hatred provoked in women by the advertisements, photo features, and beauty copy in the glossies " ( Wolf, 1990, p. 73 ). The juxtaposition of advertisements encouraging slimming and cosmetic surgery, with articles about fashion, reinforces for women the idea that to wear fashionable clothes you need to change your body shape to an 'ideal'. We have seen in the previous chapter how most designers do not expect women to change their bodies to suit their clothes, so therefore it is the media who perpetuate this myth.

The fashion magazines such as Vogue and Elle contrast greatly with magazines such as Collezione, which documents fashion accurately without any advertisements or beauty editorial. The impression given by Collezione, about fashion, is truer and more faithful than other magazines which are available to the general public. Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton say in their 1989 book Women and Fashion, a New Look, that " Magazines do not explicitly advertise or sell the clothes they feature in their fashion pages. The fashion magazine in fact seeks to sell only itself " ( Evans and Thornton, 1989, p.82 ).

According to the results of my questionnaire, 81% of women are not happy with their own body shape, and felt most pressure from the media, in the form of magazines, advertising and television, due





fig 70 - Gossard 'Wonderbra' advertisement, Elle ,1994



to the way they present women. Although women are now more involved and successful in all kinds of areas than ever before, it is still taking the media a long time to reflect this accurately, ( survey 1993, see appendices).

### Advertising

The female body has always been used as an object of beauty, but in the 1990s it is still being used to entice and attract people into buying products, watching programmes, and also to define what is the 'ideal' image for all women to aspire to, by the media. Advertising on television, in magazines and on bill-boards, constantly portrays women in a limited range of body shapes and images.

Most of the women used in advertising are models, who are supposed to represent 'real' women, but the models used are generally slim, tall and traditionally attractive, whatever woman they are portraying. Women are presented in a narrow range of social roles, as housewives, mothers, girlfriends or femmes fatales, which does not accurately represent the variety of roles women play in our society. We have seen how the fashion world is beginning to use a wider variety of models in the 1990s, and yet the media is still using the same old stereotypical models in their advertising.

The current advertisements for Gossard's 'Wonderbra' show women in an extremely stereotypical way ( fig 70 ). The bill-board





fig 72 - Women's insecurities



fig 71 - Vauxhall 'Corsa' car advertisement, 1993



and magazine advertisements which appeared in February 1994, portray a woman in a Gossard bra and knickers, with voluptuous cleavage, long blonde hair and a slim, toned body, kneeling above the caption 'Hello Boys'. The television advertisement features two women vying for a man's attention by thrusting their cleavage in front of him. The woman wearing the Gossard Wonderbra wins the contest by revealing that the other woman has stuffed her top with tissue. These advertisements portray women as sexual objects, using their bodies to win the attention of a man. The message is sexist and tells women that they should change their body shape in order to be attractive.

Other advertisements for chocolate, jeans, soap, soft drinks and cars ( fig 71 ), also portray women as beautiful objects with 'perfect' bodies. This constant barrage of stereotypical images of women in advertising, is extremely powerful in affecting our society's perception of the female body and image. They confuse women into believing that they are not fitting the 'normal' image of the female body. 70% of the women I surveyed said that advertising rather than fashion imposes our society's ideal of the female body.

Women find themselves constantly assessed in terms of their appearance by the media in the 1990s. Even intelligent and accomplished women such as Hillary Clinton or Princess Diana, are



constantly commented on about their appearance and body shape. Fiona Armstrong, a respected journalist, suffered constant criticism from the media when she became presenter for 'G.M.T.V', not on her merits as a presenter, but on the length of her skirts and her inability to come across as a sex symbol. As a result she was fired. Women are publicly punished for not having the 'perfect' body and image, and are constantly examined in these terms.

When Stella Rimington, head of MI5, the British Secret Service, emerged to be seen by the public and press, all " talk is of how soft her suits are, how approachable her hairdo " ( Armstrong, 1993, p. 194 ). This discussion would have been unheard of if the new chief had been a man. Important intelligent women are constantly discussed in terms of their appearance rather than their achievements. This in turn becomes acceptable in our society as the way to discuss women.

The media inundate our society with images of the 'ideal' woman, which only results in ordinary women feeling inadequate and abnormal,

When you are inundated with images of teenage, pre-pubescent slim bodies as ideal, it is difficult to be proud of your own perfectly healthy, mature woman's body, a rounded body with curves and bumps and flesh ( U magazine, Jan 1992, p. 29 ), ( fig 72 ).

Even fashion models in our society often complain of their defects, of being too fat when they are a skinny size 8, which can make ordinary



women feel even more inadequate. All women in our society are constantly pressured about their body shape and appearance.

Research from the U.S. shows that images of women in the media, have grown thinner and thinner, while life insurance statistics say that the average weight of women has increased ( U magazine, Jan 1992, p. 29 ), and the average breast size has increased from a size 34B to a size 36C, over the last twenty five years, ( Picardie, 1993, p.93 ).

### Dieting

The fashion industry in the 1990s is often blamed for promoting the skinny look by using 'waif' models, but as an industry they realise there is nothing to gain by designing only to fit a small market, especially during a recession. This is why we have seen an increasing variety of model shapes, sizes and ages on the catwalks this season. But the media is slower to vary the types of women it presents, as there are still some powerful industries who have something to gain by promoting slimness as the 'ideal', these are the diet, fitness and cosmetic surgery industries, who therefore encourage women to feel inadequate, to keep their businesses thriving.

In Britain in 1992 £1 billion was spent on slimming products, and in the U.S. dieting is the fifth largest industry with over \$50 billion spent in 1992 ( Young, 1993, p. 116 ). The more insecure



women are made to feel about their bodies, the more profit is made by these industries.

One of the industries which is booming due to women feeling inadequate is 'Weight Watchers'. This is now a world-wide organisation, set up in 1961 by Jean Nidetch, to encourage and help people to lose weight, and it is now a multi-million-dollar empire. There are Weight Watchers clubs in 24 countries, and there is even a Weight Watchers summer camp for children. There is a large profit to be made from encouraging men, women and children to lose weight, and in 1978, the company was acquired by the food giant, 'Heinz', which now markets calorie-counted products under the Weight Watchers label ( Shepherd, 1991, p. 3 ). As long as slimness is encouraged by the media, businesses such as these will thrive.

In Rosemary Conley's introduction to her Hip and Thigh Diet, she says of large women that " Clothes don't fit and all who exhibit such a shape look unsightly in swimwear or shorts. Being over-weight and over-sized is miserable for anyone " ( Conley, 1988, p. 8 ). Comments like these are typical of the attitude which exists in our society towards being over-weight, that being large means looking ugly. There is no logical reason why large women or men should not look good in swimwear or shorts, it is only our society, encouraged by the media, who says it looks ugly to be over-weight, and you must diet.





fig 73 - 'Ragga' women, 1993



fig 74 - Oprah Winfrey, 1992

In the 1990s, some cultures still accept largeness in women as being natural and beautiful. In the West Indies the culture which has built up around 'Ragga' music, has allowed large women to be adored and appreciated for their natural shape. The Arena programme on BBC2, recently examined how women in Ragga culture can show off their bodies in flamboyant and colourful clothes, at the dancehall, not in a degrading way, but in a positive and confident way. Women are allowed to enjoy their natural curves and roundness, without feeling pressured to change and diet. Their society allows women to exist happily whether they are tall, small, fat or thin. One explanation for this could be that the society in the West Indies is not as intensely media influenced as the society in Europe and the United States, ( Arena, 1994, BBC2 ) ( fig 73 ).

When 500 people in America were asked what they feared most in the world, 190 replied " Getting Fat " ( Bordo, 1993, p. 140 ). We are bombarded with images in the media which tell us being overweight, or even just plump, is ugly. Advertisements for 'Slimfast', 'Ryvita' and 'Special K' all tell us that fat is bad and show the perfect image which can be achieved by using their products. The advertisement for Special K used to say " if you can pinch more than an inch ", then you need to diet, this was a bizarre statement as most healthy adults, even slim ones, can easily pinch an inch of flesh around their waists.

Our society applauds people who lose weight, and particularly women. Celebrity women such as Elizabeth Taylor, Sarah





fig 75 - Cindy Crawford, 1993



fig 76 - Kate Moss, 1993



Ferguson and Oprah Winfrey are publicly praised for losing weight. In 1988 Oprah Winfrey ( fig 74 ), lost five stone, and proved it publicly by donning a pair of Calvin Klein size 10 jeans, on her television programme. This was her biggest dream come true, and the audience loved it, " Weight-watching has become the spectator sport " ( D'Souza, 1994, p. 5 ).

Ordinary women can also feel a certain satisfaction when even celebrity women are not perfect, because it takes the pressure off them. " Who hasn't bought a copy of Cindy Crawford's exercise video, not to get fit, but to see if it is true what they say about her thighs being really quite chunky ? " said Christa D'Souza in the Sunday Times, ( D'Souza, 1994, p. 6 ) ( fig 75 ). But overall women are constantly made to feel imperfect about their bodies, surrounded by bill-boards, television programmes, magazine articles and advertisements telling them that they must achieve the perfect look. When the women I surveyed were asked, " Do you feel pressure to have the 'perfect female physique' ? " , 67% said yes, and 52% said they dieted regularly, ( survey 1993, see appendices ).

Many women believe they are over-weight without real cause for concern, 56% of women I surveyed said they felt pressure from the media to diet. In reality 40% of men as opposed to 32% of women are in fact medically over-weight ( Wolf, 1990, p.186 ), and excess weight on men has been proven more dangerous than excess weight on women. Women



will in fact live longer and be generally healthier if they weigh 10 to 15% above the expected normal, and refrain from dieting ( Wolf, 1990, p. 187 ). Chronic dieting and the emotional stress caused by dieting are far more dangerous than being over-weight.

Severe dieting can lead to oestrogen deficiency, osteoporosis and heart attacks, according to Professor Howard Jacobs, of the Middlesex Hospital ( Hutton, 1993, p. 252 ). This can affect fertility in women and be damaging to the potential offspring of the dieting mother. Menstrual disturbances are common among dieting women which can lead to an early menopause with all the health risks this entails. Post-menopausal women who are lacking in oestrogen have twice the risk of heart-attack and brittle bones. Professor John Garrow says,

People who campaign against obesity need to be aware that any advice about how to lose weight will be avidly taken up by young women of normal weight who want to be unphysiologically thin ( Hutton, 1993, p. 252 ).

The media likes to blame fashion designers for encouraging women to lose weight but in fact it is the media who perpetuate the idea that being fashionable means being skinny. Only a small number of designers have used the 'waif' models ( fig 76 ), who are said to encourage Anorexia, and now when they are used it is because of their celebrity status, which attracts publicity for the designers, just as using the individual 'Supermodels' has done in the past.





fig 77 - A variety of female shapes



Most women do not aspire to look like fashion models, they realise that these are usually exceptional examples of the female species. But when the women I surveyed were asked who they compared themselves to, 59% said "women in the media" rather than fashion models. This is because most women in the media are presented to us as 'real' women, which misrepresents the true range of female bodies which exists in our society ( fig 77 ), and forces women to feel abnormal.

### Body Dysmorphic Disorder

The most serious side effect of a society forced to obsess about physical perfection is the increasing number of cases of a newly diagnosed disorder called Body Dysmorphic Disorder ( B.D.D. ) or 'imagined ugliness'.

Sufferers of B.D.D. are convinced that they have hideous deformities and ugliness which is either completely imagined or greatly exaggerated. Sufferers become completely obsessed with their imagined deformities, which leads to depression, phobic-type behaviour, constant intrusive delusional thoughts and compulsive rituals.

One sufferer, Christy Bridges, became a complete recluse in her parents house, not going outside for the next six years,



I even hid from my father for two years because I was so ashamed of my looks. Intellectually I know I look O.K., but it's like having two tapes running simultaneously in my head, one saying 'You're hideously ugly' and the other 'there's absolutely nothing wrong with you' ( Kirsta, 1993, p. 258 ).

This woman had no outstanding defects or deformities.

Our society in the 1990s, could be said to be suffering from Body Dysmorphic Disorder, encouraged by big business, through the media, to imagine that we all have imperfect appearances and must strive to change them. The fashionable female form in the 1990s is defined by economics rather than the ideas of fashion designers in the 1990s.

When I asked the women I surveyed " Is fashion purely for enjoyment, an artform, an important influence, totally unnecessary or dangerous? " , 59% said it was purely for enjoyment, 48% said it was an artform, 33% said it was an important influence, and only 4% said it was dangerous, while nobody thought it was totally unnecessary. Fashion should be there to be enjoyed and appreciated without the concentration, by the media, on the body shape. If the fashion industry is now catering to the female body in it's natural form than it is time for the media to start portraying a wider variety of roles and body shapes in advertising, television and magazines. ( survey 1993, see appendices ).

By concentrating on women's achievements and



accomplishments in our society, rather than their bodies, and by showing the diversity of women who naturally exist in our society, through the media, can we achieve a healthier attitude towards the female body. When this has been achieved then women of all shapes and sizes can feel free to enjoy fashion as a form of enjoyment and pleasure, if they so choose.



## Conclusion

For the majority of the Twentieth century, women have felt pressured by fashion, to fit the 'ideal' female silhouette of the day. This has often involved women dieting, using cosmetic surgery, or wearing restrictive under-garments such as corsets. But in the 1990s, a softer more sympathetic silhouette has emerged in fashion, which comfortably fits a more varied and natural female form.

Fashion designers have traditionally used models of uniform shape, size and image, on which to present the latest fashions, this reinforced the idea that only a specific female type could wear fashionable clothes. Now in the 1990s, there is emerging a greater variety of fashion models, ranging from young 'waifs' to the 'mature models', which shows a positive move towards achieving a truer representation of women who naturally exist in society. This allows more women to feel included in the fashion world.

But although the fashion world is now allowing women to be more natural and individual, women in the 1990s are still feeling pressure and insecurity about their body shape and size. The barrage of stereotypical images of women seen in the media, reinforces the misconception that women must be slim and flawless in order to be attractive and fashionable. This idea is perpetuated by television,



magazines and advertising in order to satisfy the businesses who thrive on women's insecurities. These are the diet, cosmetic surgery and beauty treatment industries, who can guarantee economic success as long as women are made to feel imperfect.

Although women are now more successful and active in society than ever before, they are still pressured by the media to conform to a rigid stereotype of the female body. Only by representing a wider variety of women in the media, can the stereotypes be changed. The fashion and pop music industry has begun this change in the 1990s but it will be difficult to encourage the media to continue this lead. Economics now define the fashionable female form in the 1990s rather than fashion designers.

Fashion should be a creative form of sensory pleasure for women, to be enjoyed and to add enrichment to everyday life, but it has become distorted by money and big business, into a social pressure, due to the concentration, by the media, on the perfect body needed to wear fashionable clothes. If the emphasis is taken off the body shape, as designers are beginning to do in the recent collections, then women of all shapes and sizes will be allowed to enjoy fashion as an extension of their personality and self-expression in the next century.



APPENDICES

1. Sample Questionnaire.
2. Questionnaire Results.



## APPENDIX 1

Sample Questionnaire

Please answer these questions as honestly as possible, and elaborate wherever you can. Thank-you.

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you take an interest in Fashion? \_\_\_\_\_
3. From where do you learn most about Fashion, Magazines, T.V., on the Street? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you ever purchased an item of clothing simply because it was 'in Fashion'? Elaborate \_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you ever slavishly followed a fashion trend, if so when and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you think clothes can change your personality in any way ? i.e. make you more confident, more sexy, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you change your image often or not at all?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you totally happy with your physical appearance or not? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What physical feature would you most like to change and why? \_\_\_\_\_
10. If it was free would you ever consider plastic surgery? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you ever diet, if so why? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you feel pressure to have the 'perfect female physique', if so is the pressure from family, boyfriends, magazines, T.V., friends or society in general? \_\_\_\_\_



14. What do you think of the idea that we are all created differently and therefore should leave our looks the way they are? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Who do you think imposes ideals of beauty on us the most, society, adverts, Fashion ? Elaborate \_\_\_\_\_
16. Would you like to change your race, if so why ? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Please tick any of the following which you have done or would be happy to do, Dye your hair \_\_\_\_\_ Perm Your Hair \_\_\_\_\_ Pluck Your Eyebrows \_\_\_\_\_ Wear a Wonderbra \_\_\_\_\_ Wear Platforms \_\_\_\_\_ Get a Real Tatoo \_\_\_\_\_ Get a Fake Tatoo \_\_\_\_\_ Shave your Head \_\_\_\_\_ Be Pierced \_\_\_\_\_ Wear a Corset \_\_\_\_\_ Wear Stilettos \_\_\_\_\_ Use a Sunbed \_\_\_\_\_ Get Hair Extensions \_\_\_\_\_ Wear a Wig \_\_\_\_\_ Wear False Nails \_\_\_\_\_ Wear No Make-up \_\_\_\_\_ Wear Fake Tan \_\_\_\_\_ Wear False Eyelashes \_\_\_\_\_. ( Please Tick ).
18. Do you think the Fashion world is to blame for eating disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa, or is it a deeper problem? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you think women are still as influenced by Fashion designers as they were, or can they take or leave their advice ? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you believe you dress for yourself, other women or for men ? \_\_\_\_\_
21. Do you think most women dress for themselves, other women or for men?  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you think you would still take an interest in your appearance if you were left totally alone, Why? \_\_\_\_\_
23. Do you always choose your clothes because of personal taste or are you influenced by fashion? \_\_\_\_\_
24. What Fashion designer's work, if any, do you most admire and would wear yourself, regardless of price? Explain why, and list as many as you like. \_\_\_\_\_



25. Do you think female designers design differently for women than male designers do, if so how? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Do you think Fashion is, Purely for enjoyment \_\_\_\_ An Artform like painting or theatre etc. \_\_\_\_ An important influence on society \_\_\_\_ Totally Unnecessary \_\_\_\_ Dangerous \_\_\_\_ ( Please Tick ).

27. Do you think fashion is only for the young or is it relevant to the older members of society, why? \_\_\_\_\_

28. What do you think of the trend to have older models on the catwalk ?  
\_\_\_\_\_

29. Do you think the Aids Era has affected the way we dress in any way? How? \_\_\_\_\_

30. Do you think men should be free to experiment with fashion as much as women, without being ridiculed by society? Elaborate \_\_\_\_\_

31. Describe your favourite fashion look of the moment and explain briefly why you like it, ( e.g.Dandy, Grunge, 1970s, Casual, Glamour, Deconstruction, Tailoring, Tank Girl etc. ) \_\_\_\_\_

32. Please give me any other comments you think may be relevant,  
\_\_\_\_\_

This Questionnaire was conducted during August 1993 and October 1993 and was given to women varying in age and occupation. ( Lucy Klitz ).



## APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire Results ( Collated October 1993 ).1. AGE

Range of Ages : 16 to 40 years old.

Average : 23 years old.

2. "Do You Take An Interest In Fashion?"

Yes : 89%

No : 11%

3. "From Where Do You Learn Most About Fashion?"

Magazines : 74%

Street : 48%

T.V. : 15%

Shops : 4%

College : 4%

Discos : 4%

4. "Have You Ever Purchased an Item of Clothing Simply Because It Was In Fashion?"

Yes : 41%

No : 48%

Maybe : 8%



5. "Have You Ever Slavishly Followed a Fashion Trend ?"

Yes : 25%

No : 74%

6. "Do You Think Clothes Can Change Your Personality?"

Yes : 96%

No : 4%

7. "Do You Change Your Image Often Or Not At All?"

Yes, Often : 37%

Not, Often : 37%

Never : 26%

8. "Are You Totally Happy With Your Appearance Or Not ?"

Yes : 19%

No : 81%

9. "What Physical Feature Would You Most Like To Change?"

Thinner : 22%

Longer Legs : 26%

Smaller Bum : 15%

Smaller Hips : 12%



9. continued

Taller	: 11%
Smaller Bust	: 11%
Bit of Everything	: 8%
Change Hair	: 8%
Larger Bust	: 4%
Darker Skin	: 4%
Whiter Teeth	: 4%
Smaller Chin	: 4%
No Stretch Marks	: 4%
Smaller Feet	: 4%
Nice Fingers and Toes	: 4%
None	: 4%

10. "If It Was Free Would You Consider Plastic Surgery?"

Yes	: 26%
No	: 70%
Don't Know	: 4%

11. "Do You Ever Diet?"

Yes	: 52%
No	: 48%



12a. "Do You Feel Pressure To Have The 'Perfect Female Physique'?"

Yes : 67%

No : 33%

12b. "Who Pressures You To Have The 'Perfect Female Physique'?"

Society : 30%

Media : 56%

Friends : 15%

Family : 11%

Myself : 11%

13. "What Women, If Any, Do You Compare Yourself To?"

Women in the Media : 59%

Women around me : 36%

Bit of Both : 7%

None : 11%

14. Comment Question



**15. "Who Imposes Ideals Of Beauty On Us?"**

Advertising	: 70%
Fashion	: 37%
Society	: 30%
Magazines	: 19%
Media	: 19%
Television	: 11%
Models	: 11%
Family and Friends	: 4%
Films	: 4%

**16. "Would You Like To Change Your Race?"**

Yes : 4%

No : 96%

**17. "What Have You Done Or Would Be Happy To Do?"**

Dye Your Hair?	Yes : 67%	No : 33%
Perm Your Hair?	Yes : 52%	No : 48%
Pluck Your Eyebrows?	Yes : 74%	No : 26%
Wear a Wonderbra?	Yes : 30%	No : 70%
Wear Platform Shoes?	Yes : 30%	No : 70%
Get a Real Tatoo?	Yes : 15%	No : 85%



17. continued

Get a Fake Tatoo?	Yes : 41%	No : 59%
Shave Your Head?	Yes : 41%	No : 59%
Be Pierced?	Yes : 56%	No : 44%
Wear a Corset?	Yes : 22%	No : 78%
Wear Stilettos?	Yes : 15%	No : 85%
Use a Sunbed?	Yes : 56%	No : 44%
Get Hair Extensions?	Yes : 26%	No : 74%
Wear a Wig?	Yes : 26%	No : 74%
Wear False Nails?	Yes : 33%	No : 67%
Wear No Make-Up?	Yes : 70%	No : 30%
Wear False Tan?	Yes : 74%	No : 26%
Wear False Eyelashes?	Yes : 33%	No : 67%

18. "Who Is To Blame For Anorexia?"

Low Esteem, Psychological Problems	: 54%
Society	: 22%
Fashion	: 12%
Models	: 11%
Media	: 8%

19. "Are Women Still As Influenced By Designers?"

Yes	: 26%
No	: 52%



19. continued

Some : 22%

20. "Do You Dress For Yourself, Other Women Or Men?"

Myself	: 89%
Men	: 19%
All Three	: 8%
Society	: 4%

21. "Do You Think Most Women Dress For Themselves, Other Women Or Men?"

Themselves	: 48%
Men	: 33%
All Three	: 11%
Other Women	: 8%
Society	: 4%

22. "Would You Still Take An Interest In Your Appearance If You Were Left Alone?"

Yes	: 63%
No	: 26%
Don't Know	: 11%

23. "Do You Always Choose Your Clothes Because of Personal Taste Or because of Fashion?"

Personal Taste	: 81%
Fashion	: 4%



23. continued

Both : 15%

24. "What Fashion Designers Do You Admire And Would Wear, Regardless Of Price?"

Donna Karan	: 58%
Giorgio Armani	: 58%
John Rocha	: 49%
Calvin Klein	: 49%
Ralph Lauren	: 46%
Paul Costelloe	: 46%
Chanel	: 42%
Jean-Paul Gaultier	: 32%
Vivienne Westwood	: 30%
Quin and Donnelly	: 30%
Ghost	: 22%
Karl Lagerfeld	: 22%
Katherine Hamnett	: 22%
Rifat Ozbek	: 22%
Romeo Gigli	: 18%
Comme des Garcons	: 15%
Joseph	: 11%
Louise Kennedy	: 11%
Maxmara	: 11%
InWear	: 4%



25. " Do Female Designers Design Differently To Male?"

Yes	: 33%
No	: 41%
Don't Know	: 26%

26. "What Is Fashion For?"

Purely For Enjoyment?	: 59%
An Artform?	: 48%
An Important Influence?	: 33%
Dangerous?	: 4%
Totally Unnecessary?	: 0%

27. "Is Fashion Only Aimed At The Young?"

Mostly The Young	: 15%
For Everyone	: 85%

28. " What Do You Think Of The Trend To Have Older Models On The Catwalk?"

Great	: 74%
Not Good	: 8%
Interesting	: 8%
No Comment	: 11%



29. "Has The "Aids Era" Affected The Way We Dress?"

Yes : 4%

No : 96%

30. "Should Men Be Able To Experiment With Fashion Too?"

Yes : 93%

No Comment : 7%

31. "What Is Your Favourite Fashion Look Of The Moment?"

Casual : 45%

Layering : 37%

Tailoring : 26%

Deconstruction : 22%

Grunge : 25%

Mixture : 8%

Glamour : 8%

1970s : 8%

Tank Girl : 4%



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