

**Vivienne
Westwood**

T1453

NC 0020881 7



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF FASHION & TEXTILES

"VIVIENNE WESTWOOD PAST AND PRESENT"

by

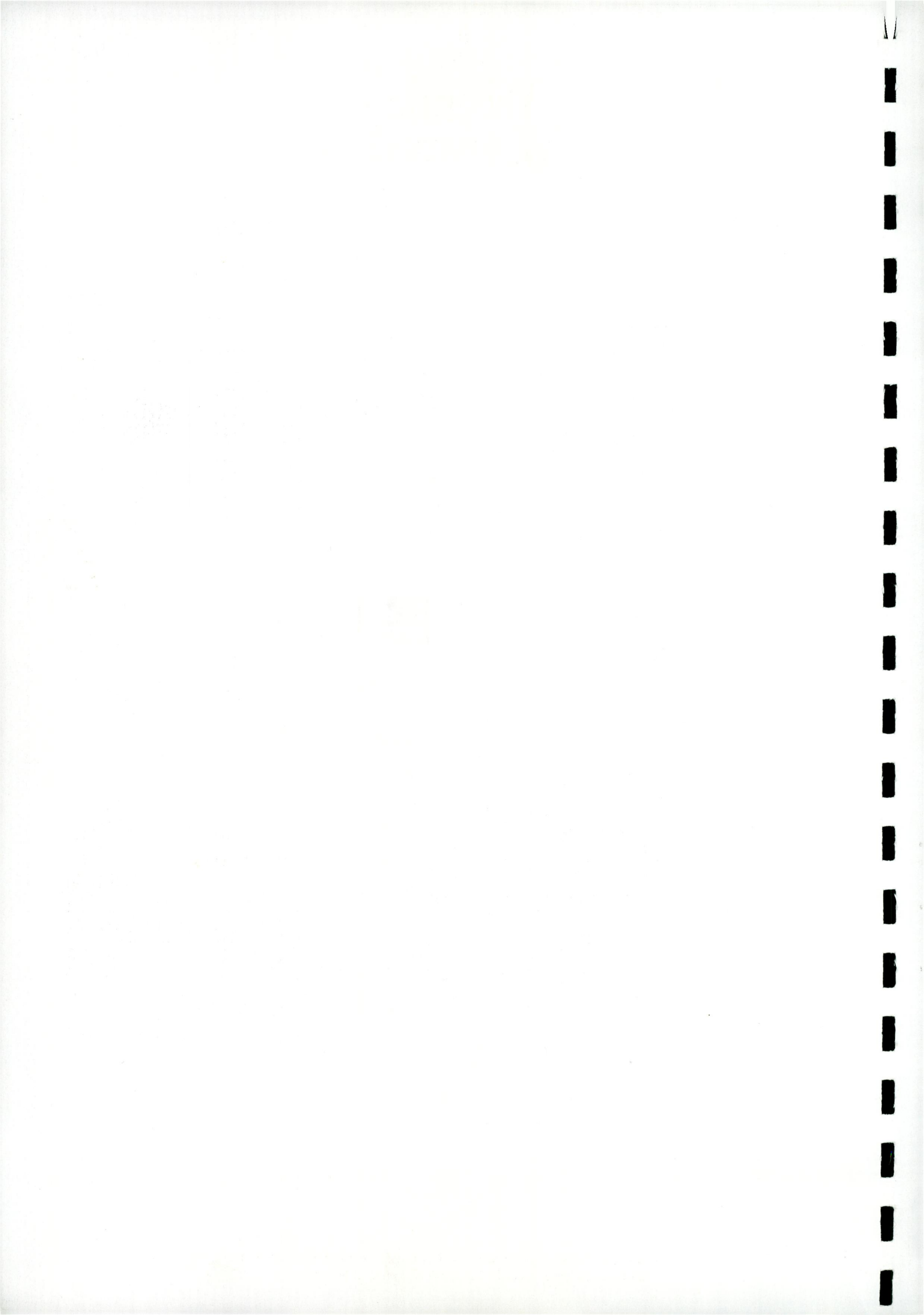
WENDI HOEY

"Submitted to the faculty of History of Art and Design and

Complementary Studies in candidacy for the degree of"

B. Des Fashion Design

1995





Vivienne Westwood

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	6
Chapter 1 Development of Vivienne Westwood	16
Chapter 2 Entrance into the Fashion World	18
Chapter 3 Effect Malcolm McLaren had on her life	25
Chapter 4 Inspirations	30
Chapter 5 Business of Fashion	46
Chapter 6 Who buys her clothes	59
Chapter 7 Intellectual Vivienne	71
Chapter 8 Conclusion from the findings and assesses the future direction of Vivienne Westwood	74



Vivienne Westwood

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1	Queen with pin through her nose	9
Plate 2	Vivienne in transparent dress that she wore to dinner at Kensington Palace	12
Plate 3	Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren	19
Plate 4	The Sex Pistols	20
Plate 5	Bow Wow Wow	21
Plate 6	Adam Ant	22
Plate 7	Outfit from Vivienne's Pirate collection	28
Plate 8	Cut, slash and pull collection	32
Plate 9	Naomi Campbell wearing the crotch mini skirt at the Grand Hotel Paris	34
Plate 10	British traditional dress - the tweed suit	35
Plate 11 & 12	Vivienne starts garment from scratch pulling cloth around her body and chopping at it! The experienced cutter who shows her what is generally done before she works out her own approach	37
Plate 13	Harris Tweed - Royal Crowns	39



Vivienne Westwood

Plate 14	Some of the fabrics Vivienne uses in her cafe society collection	40
Plate 15 & 16	Vivienne's autumn/spring collection 1993 for Brintons Carpets of Kidderminster, Worcs	41
Plate 17	Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols wearing one of Vivienne and Malcolm's Marlin Monroe pornographic T-shirts which led to prosecution of its wearer	42
Plate 18, 19 & 20	Behind the scenes at Vivienne Westwood's cafe society collection the Grand Hotel Paris	46
Plate 21	The crotch mini worn by Kate Moss	47
Plate 22	Jean-Paul Gaultier and Madonna wearing a costume from her 1990 Blond Ambition tour	49
Plate 23	News paper cutting of Vivienne Westwood after winning British designer of the year award 1990	50
Plate 24	Designer collection Vivienne Westwoods Littlewoods home shopping catalogue	52
Plate 25	Vivienne Westwoods sock shop designs	54
Plate 26	Suit with matching crown and a design featuring a displaced armhole	56
Plate 27	Her latest collection inspired by the bottom	58



Vivienne Westwood

Plate 28	Vivienne Westwood caused a stir at Buckingham Palace when she went to collect her OBE from the Queen wearing a grey tailored suit with no underwear	60
Plate 29	One of Vivienne's designs for her award winning 1991 collection	61
Plate 30	Jibby Beane	63
Plate 31	Lady Henrietta Rous	64
Plate 32	Kara Harris Heavy	65
Plate 33	Vivienne Westwood in her proto salon at the D & D building	68
Plate 34	A print from one of Vivienne Westwood's T-shirts	71
Plate 35	Sarah Stockbridge one of Westwood's muses	73
Plate 36	Vivienne Westwood	76

INTRODUCTION

Ask any French, Italian or Japanese couturier whom they consider the most important British fashion designer and the answer will almost certainly be Vivienne Westwood. John Fairchild, editor of the influential American magazine *Women's Wear Daily* in spring 1990 called her one of the six greatest designers of the twentieth century, along with Yves St Laurent, Karl Lagerfeld, Armani, Ungaro and Lacroix, and of the six, he said, Vivienne Westwood was the greatest. Yet the British regard her as a "fringe" designer at best.

Why? Perhaps it is because she came to fame as the queen of punk and has never lived down the fact that she dressed the Sex Pistols and Adam Ant. Then there is the problem that she has never been as commercially successful as her rivals. Fairchild remarked somewhat patronisingly:

"The poor woman is so understated - she hasn't been a success financially, but other designers are strongly influenced by her."

Obviously not everyone is a fan of her anything goes (as long as it's beautifully cut) school, but even the most reluctant have to concede that she is queen of the original: bustiers, men's kilts, cone-shaped bras as day wear, classical paintings on underwear, the mini-crini, fake-fur trains, woolly "royal crowns". We mock, then we buy - mostly a bastardised high street version.

Originality, she believes, exists only in communication, whether in art, literature or fashion design. She feels the most important factor lays in how something is expressed. It can be something so similar to something else, but its the way the different elements are emphasised and when the thing is finished the form becomes the idea.

"When I did the Pirate collection I'd seen the a picture of a man whose trousers were too big and they were all kind of rumped around the crutch and all the pockets were baggy. I wanted to do that, but I couldn't pull that trouser off until if found a book which showed how people make breeches in those days splurged off a whole thing of English terrible cutting."

(WESTWOOD, quoted Blitz, May, 1986)

This is probably why she has never sued anybody, despite the number of Westwood-influenced ideas that have arrived in mainstream stores long before the original goes on sale in her own shop. Vivienne herself

“..... takes features which she wants and can see potential in them and then completely twists them around and makes them into something new and quite modern.”

(MENDES, The South Bank Show interview, 1990)

There is actually a perversity in her uniqueness. She delights in being different, she is aware that she is different.

“I am shy, but one of the things that makes me most shy - as well as this sense of injustice - is that I delight in being perverse”

(WESTWOOD, quoted FALLOWELL, Duncan, Mirabella, November 1991)

She is also aware that people often respond to difference with laughter. Not that she minds being laughed at, so long as people laugh after they have listened to her rather than before. She thinks most people are deaf anyway; they hear only received wisdom. Once fashion editor of Harpers Bazaar, former editor-in chief of US Vogue, Mrs. Vreeland has been bestowing wisdom by telling women what to wear for half a century. Women love to be dictated to.

“They yearn to be told. They want to know that they should wear their skirts three inches above the knee. Even if they can't afford the skirt, even if they'll never afford another stitch of clothing in their lives, they love to know.”

(VREELAND Diana, Folio)

Westwood also suspects that women are being dictated to - but believes that many are being misled and she is not too impressed by some of the leaders in fashion.

“I don't ever think Princess Diana looks terribly elegant.”

“Fergie comes over as a big blustery hooray woman.”
“George Michael’s look is the most unfashionable look it’s possibly to have today.”

(WESTWOOD, quoted FEINSTEIN, Sharon, Daily Express, 11 October, 1990)

Westwood herself is a woman of no obvious glamour whose accent would not be out of place on Coronation Street. She is an unwitting unconventionalist, a reluctant rebel who wants to be mainstream and held in esteem. She takes her own work very seriously indeed and cannot understand why everyone else does not do the same.

And partly, of course, it is because she made remarks like the latter which sound immodest to the ears of the general public. Her relationship with the British fashion establishment, for example, has always been abrasive and

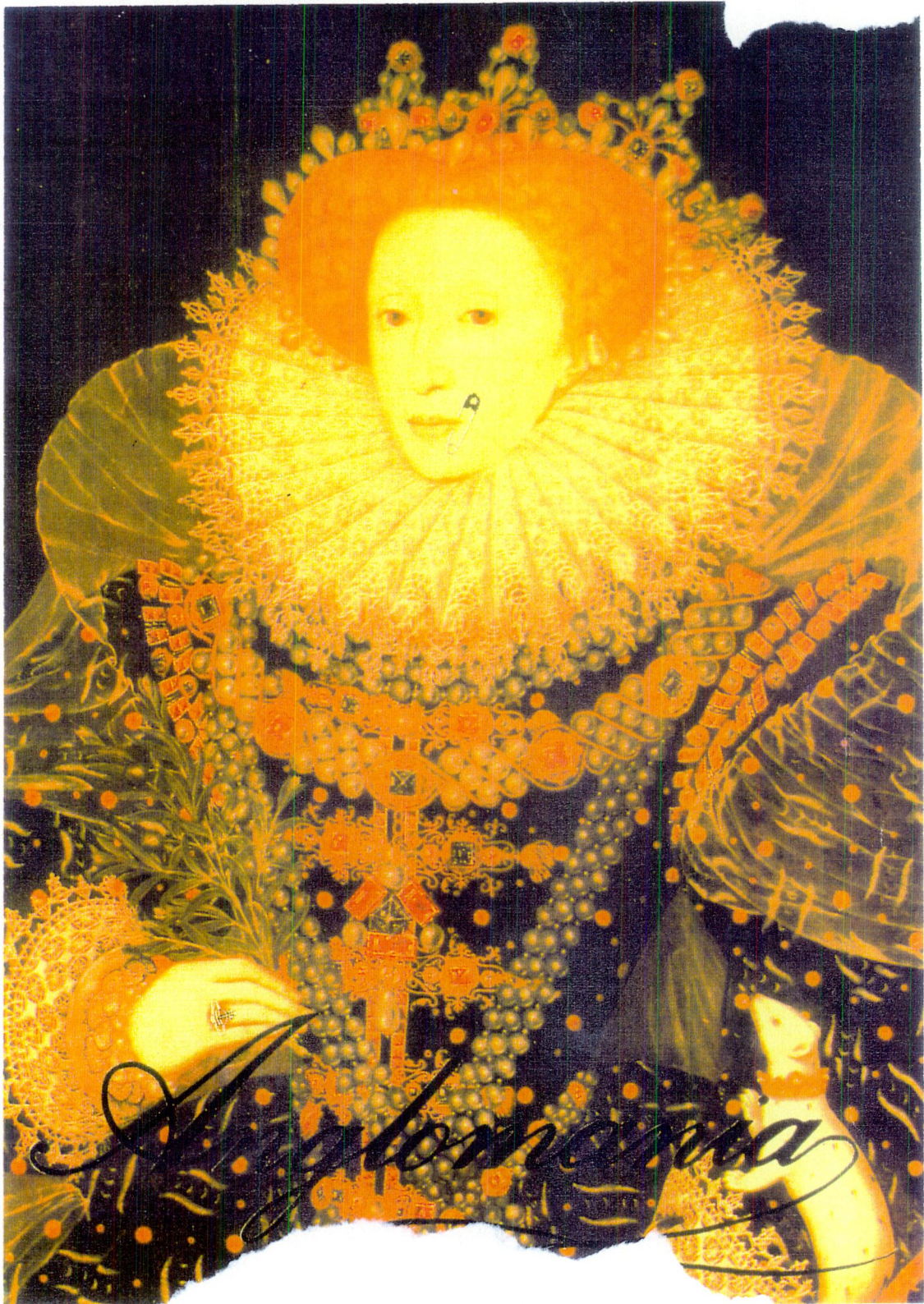
“Romeo Gigli is talented, but I find him quote boring. John Paul Gaultier has been good: his innovations consisted in working with terrible tacky fabrics”

(LOTT Tim, The Sunday Correspondent, 19 November, 1989)

However, other designers look, they see, they are inspired. Westwood has been imitated more often than the Mona Lisa. So why isn’t she rich?

One reason may be that while other designers in her generation were building careers by exploring colour, hem length and fit, Westwood was exploring anarchy and the image of the Queen’s nose (Plate 1) with a safety pin which was printed on T-shirts in 1977, the Jubilee year. Also the public remain baffled by her clothes - bizarre and extraordinary clothes which the average person cannot get their minds around, let alone their bodies into. She does not intend to shock; nothing would make her happier than if rocking-horse boots and flesh tights with fig-leaves were normal supermarket wear. She wants to be mainstream, but there are problems.

Let us look at the facts. One factor that hinders her success is the price of her clothes. Her clothes are far from cheap.



Queen with pin through her nose

“Clothes should be beautifully made, and craftsmen should be paid for their work. If clothes are made to last they will be expensive, but people should be prepared to pay £2,000 for a really good suit, because that’s what it’s really worth”.

(WESTWOOD quoted folio)

People who buy expensive clothes usually want them to be wearable on a repeat basis, not just once in a blue moon.

The next thing, if you analyse the facts, is that the clothes seem to appeal exclusively to two groups of people, those who know Vivienne - streetwise, money-burning and often Japanese people who are in search of the high fashion voltage.

“,,, those Westwoodites, people who think, breathe and, if possible, wear nothing but Westwood.”

and then the second group - those who love Miss Westwood.

“They may not understand her collections, but identify with Westwood in the way that a fan identifies with a great star. Westwood is a hero to some people.”

(DAVIDSON, John, The Scotsman, 11 August, 1993)

Those who love her clothes are also the media; fashion editors, stylists and the like who simply thrill at the chance to photograph are clothes which are extreme enough to be visually exciting.

Also, don't forget, Westwood is hardly a heavy credit, such as Valentino or Versace. In other words, she won't fuss about how her work is portrayed, scarcely advertises, and, if she's honest, will be grateful for the publicity.

“What I've got in my hand as far as business is very little, but I've gotten a lot clearer in my head.”

(WESTWOOD, quoted ALAI, Susan Women's Wear Daily, 27 January 1986)

This comes from the lips of the woman who is commonly thought to be mad. Does she mind being considered mad?

"I don't think I'm mad, of course not. I'm probably more sane than anybody I can think of. I think George Bush is a lot madder than I am."

(KEMP, Mary, The People, 20 October, 1991)

Her work is, at least on a mass scale, mocked and derided, and her opinions, personal and passionately held, have often been a source of fun for the media who call her:

"The Wild Westwood".

(TURNER, Lowri, Evening Standard, 16 October, 1990)

"Westwood, fashions queen of outrage."

(ROLFE Gail, Daily Mail, 16 October, 1990)

"Way out Westwood."

(KEMP Mary, The People, 20 October, 1991)

Interestingly, this latter category of Westwood devotees (the fashion sorority) is rarely to be seen, the house or out, sporting Vivienne's publicity - laden wares. Would you?

I'll tell you why not. Women, whether Miss Westwood likes it or not, want clothes to flatter (flattery, the noun the creative love to rate) and it is generally agreed that Vivienne's stuff doesn't. When she arrived at Kensington Place in June 1992 to launch the Court Couture 1992 Exhibition wearing a transparent tube dress without underwear (Plate 2) the headline read:

"Dare you wear this at 51?"

(WEBB, Gervase, Evening Standard, June 1992)



PLATE 2



Vivienne in transparent dress that she wore to dinner at Kensington Palace

And then, flattery aside trussing yourself into thigh-high fake leopard and sheepskin platform boots, heavy bondage gear a metallic corset and a gold cardboard and rhinestone crown, brave though it undeniably is, is hardly going to attract men. Not so, according to Vivienne (who wears Westwood).

"I've amazing confidence in the way I look. I think any man is either mad or stupid who wouldn't prefer me to every other woman in the room."

(WESTWOOD, quoted, ROSATO, Stella, Daily Express, June 1992)

Women, gain whether we like it or not, feminist, rich, poor, employed or out of work, like to attract and appear attractive. Being insulted at a bus stop because of what you're wearing, having an empty taxi cruise by you or having strangers laugh at you is not a sane person's idea of favourable attention.

"It depends what you want. If you want all the men on a building site to whistle at you, just wear it and you'll get a reaction."

(WESTWOOD, quoted The South Bank Show, April 1990)

The combination of this unshakeable seriousness with her outrageous clothes can make her seen unintentionally funny - as when she appeared on a pre-Christmas Dame Edna show dressed in a sweet little sweater and pearls, with nothing below the waist except flesh-coloured tights adorned with a fig leaf. She appeared unfazed while the audience tittered.

Take also the Wogan Show. Both the presenter and the audience responded as though she was a stand-up comic.

"Are people supposed to laugh. I mean they are laughing."

(LAWLEY Sue, quoted The South Bank Show, April 1990)

"I think she feels great and I don't think they should."

(WESTWOOD, quoted The South Bank Show, April 1990)

Not only do Westwood's clothes not flatter, nor attract (in the conventional sense of the word) but they are also murder to wear: uncomfortable, temperamental and frequently designed with the specific intention of throwing the human body in the state of conscious imbalance. For example, two ordinary "girl on the street" volunteers were asked to put her skyscraper platform shoes to the test.

Student Skye Bronnit, 18 years of age:

"Excellent", she said, brightly clinging to some railings. "I've got better things to spend my money on. It would be easy to break your neck."

Style consultant Charlotte Frimand, 30 years of age:

"These things", she giggled, "should come with a health warning."

(MELLOR, Karen, Today, 19 March, 1993)

To wear Westwood and get away with it requires a defiant attitude of mind with a certain up-yoursness thrown in and a masochistic willingness to suffer physically and financially. So who is laughing at whom?

In this thesis I will be examining how Vivienne Westwood has adapted and changed to meet modern day demands, her ability to deal with past crises and relating this to the present situation: How she panders to the establishment she once tried to tear down without backing down from her original ideas: how every creation has to have a theory and how she changes her mind as often as her clothes. Is she secretly trying to get back at Malcolm McLaren who was middle-class, dominant and generated publicity and produced large quotable quotes better than she did. She is interested in protecting genius - is she trying to fool fools or is she a genius which is on the brink of insanity or is she a media myth.

Chapter 1 looks at the development of Vivienne Westwood from her initial beginnings. Chapter 2 looks at her entrance into the fashion world. Chapter 3 looks at the effect Malcolm McLaren had on her life. Chapter 4 looks at the inspirations Vivienne draws on to create her collections, Chapter 5 looks at the business of fashion leading into Chapter 6 which asks - who buys her clothes. Chapter 7 deals with the intellectual Vivienne. Finally, Chapter 8 draws

conclusions from the findings and assesses the future direction of Vivienne Westwood based on the available information.

CHAPTER 1

Q Exactly who is Vivienne Westwood?

A *“The first thing to say is that Westwood is not really my name. My real name is Swire. I was married for a short time and he was called Mr. Westwood. I kept the name because I had a boy, Ben. We divorced two or three years later, but I just kept the name. When I did the Pirate collection I thought about changing back to my real name S-w-i-r-e, but there you go, I’d always have to spell it. It’s not so easy. Malcolm (McLaren) said to me Westwood sounds really English, you should keep it. I relate to Vivienne, but Westwood I don’t know. It’s sort of a professional name I expect”.*

(FEINSTEIN, Sharon, Daily Express, 11 October, 1990)

Vivienne Westwood was born Vivienne Isable Swire in Glossop Derbyshire on 8th April, 1941, the eldest of three children. Her father came from a long line of cobblers and during the war, built aeroplanes. Her mother worked in the local cotton mill.

“They were not well off, but they had a lot of initiative so we were not exactly poor.”

(FALLOWELL, Duncan, Mirabelly, November 1991)

She spent her childhood reading voraciously “mostly Enid Blyton and stuff” and making things.

“At the age of five, if someone had told me to make a pair of shoes, I would. I had great spatial intelligence. That’s why my clothes have such a rapport with the body. I don’t think I’ve met anyone with such a degree of what I call spatial intelligence. I’ve always been able to make something in three dimensions.”

(WESTWOOD, quoted Modlinger, Jackie)

Westwood recalls that she first really became interested in clothes at the age of 14 when, almost overnight she found herself dressing as a woman rather than a child, which opened up for her a whole new world of romance.

When she was 17 her parents bought a post office in Harrow and they moved down south.

My father though moving might give his children a better start.

Westwood wanted to be a painter and enrolled at Harrow School of Art.

“I was worried about how I was going to make a living until I became successful as a painter. I could not see any way around it, and on the tube was an advert for a secretarial college so I thought I’d better earn some money to go there. I left art school and went to work in a factory. It was there that I realised I couldn’t do a job which didn’t stimulate me mentally, so I decided to go to teacher training college. I did art as my main subject so I could have two throws. If I didn’t make it as a painter, then I would be a schoolteacher. Of course, I became a schoolteacher.”

(WESTWOOD, quoted FRANKLIN, Caryn, November 1992)

She taught for a year in the London suburb of Willesden before getting married to Greek Westwood, a local club manager, but stopping working for a while after become pregnant with Ben, her eldest son. She lived with Westwood for three years before the marriage broke down and she went to live with her mother. She carried on teaching and made jewellery, which she sold in Portobello market part time to help make ends meet.

CHAPTER 2

Q How did you start working as a designer?

A *“Well, I got into it by accident, by helping Malcolm McLaren (Plate 3), and I got left with it when he went to America and started in the music industry. Working with Malcolm was the only inspiration. He helped me to see that it wasn’t any mystical process. That you didn’t have to really have an idea, but that it was the way you do something that is the idea in the end.”*

(O’DWYER, Thom, October 1992)

Malcolm McLaren was a close friend of Vivienne’s brother. He came along when she was still pushing little Benjamin in his pram and feeling, as so many housewives do, a lack of excitement in her life.

“She came from the snake pass, she was terrified of the phone, and would only wish to join forces that were going to get her out of being a housewife in the suburbs.”

(McLAREN, Malcolm, The South Bank Show, 8 April, 1990)

She felt McLaren was

“... fascinating and mad, and it was a though I was a coin and he showed me the other side.”

(Westwood Vivienne, quoted, Turner Steve, May 1984)

She became pregnant with her second son, Joseph, and carried on teaching on and off. It was through her association with McLaren that she gradually slid into the world of fashion. Since McLaren wanted to be a pop manager, Vivienne was put to work making clothes for his protégés, the Sex Pistols (Plate 4), Bow Wow Wow (Plate 5) and Adam Ant (Plate 6).

With no formal fashion training Westwood and McLaren started producing clothes together. They dressed the Sex Pistols in varied-looking bondage clothes and torn T-shirts held together by safety pins, and produced, among others, a collection



Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren



PLATE 5



Bow Wow Wow

PLATE 4

PLATE 6



Adam Ant



The Sex Pistols

inspired by pirates which was worn to swashbuckling effect by Adam Ant. They had two shops, one in the King's Road which changed its name with the sub-cultural mood of the time and another called Nostalgia of Mad which had a bubbling brown ornamental cesspit as its centrepiece.

Every way out trend can be traced back to the shop she ran together with Malcolm McLaren in the Kings Road, Chelsea.

In its time, the shop had many names, including Let it Rock; Too Fast to Live; Too Young to Die; Rock n' Roll; Punk Rock; Seditonaries and Worlds End ... with clothes to match each era.

The 21-.... salute of their early success came in 1978 when their shop was called Sex. McLaren's motto was:

"Rubber wear for the office."

(MUSTO, Michael, The Soho News, 2 March 1982)

and they supplied everything for your modern, go-anywhere punk.

When the shop changed its name to Seditonaries, the stock began to have hard-core, sadomasochistic and anti-establishment overtones. Porn squad detectives raided the shop and took away bundles of T-shirts printed from The Sex Pistols record God Save The Queen, a nude Marilyn Monroe accompanied by obscene sexual references, and one showing two cowboys naked from the waist down. A court hearing ensued, where tape measures were employed to ascertain whether their penises were actually touching.

She and McLaren are credited with inventing the punk movement from their Kings Road shop. According to Malcolm the partnership worked because:

"Vivienne was totally craft and I was very art, and so formed an alliance ..."

(DOKTOR, Terry The Soho News, April 1983)

Westwood claims that she finally became disillusioned with punk when she heard "The Clash", one of the movements premier bands say that they had never lived lower than the fifth storey of a tower block.

"They seemed to think that was a great badge of working class credibility, but I didn't want to be stuck in a tunnel with this kind of dull attitude."

(DAVIDSON, John The Scotsman, 11 August 1993)

She did, however, realise the influence of punk on the fashion world and decided to carry on designing. It was the Pirate collection of 1980 that launched Westwood as a designer in the true sense of the word. Shortly afterwards McLaren and Westwood broke up, and it was generally assumed at the time that Westwood would not be able to go it alone. However, she is now recognised as one of the foremost international designers. All this, from the woman who once thought

"I was so working class, I couldn't cope with the idea of how I was going to make a living, so I decided to be a secretary."

(WESTWOOD, quoted, SHELLEY, Jim, Blitz 1991)

CHAPTER 3

Q When you and Malcolm parted and you had to produce both the concept and the design yourself, did you find it difficult?

A *“No, I really do believe that ideas came out of the technique itself. You start with something you want to do and when you begin work its the form that dictates, you find things that trigger other things that you become interested in.”*

(BRAMPTON, Sally, The Times Review, 12 October 1991)

Westwood has still not shaken off the Queen of the Kings Road label she acquired in the seventies when she and her then boyfriend, Malcolm McLaren founded the punk movement sending forth a generation with safety pins through their noses to spit at the Queen. Miss Westwood, is generally labelled as the instigator and creator of punk.

Vivienne “... found fame as the Queen of Punk.”

(MODLINGER, Jackie, Daily Express, 16 October 1990)

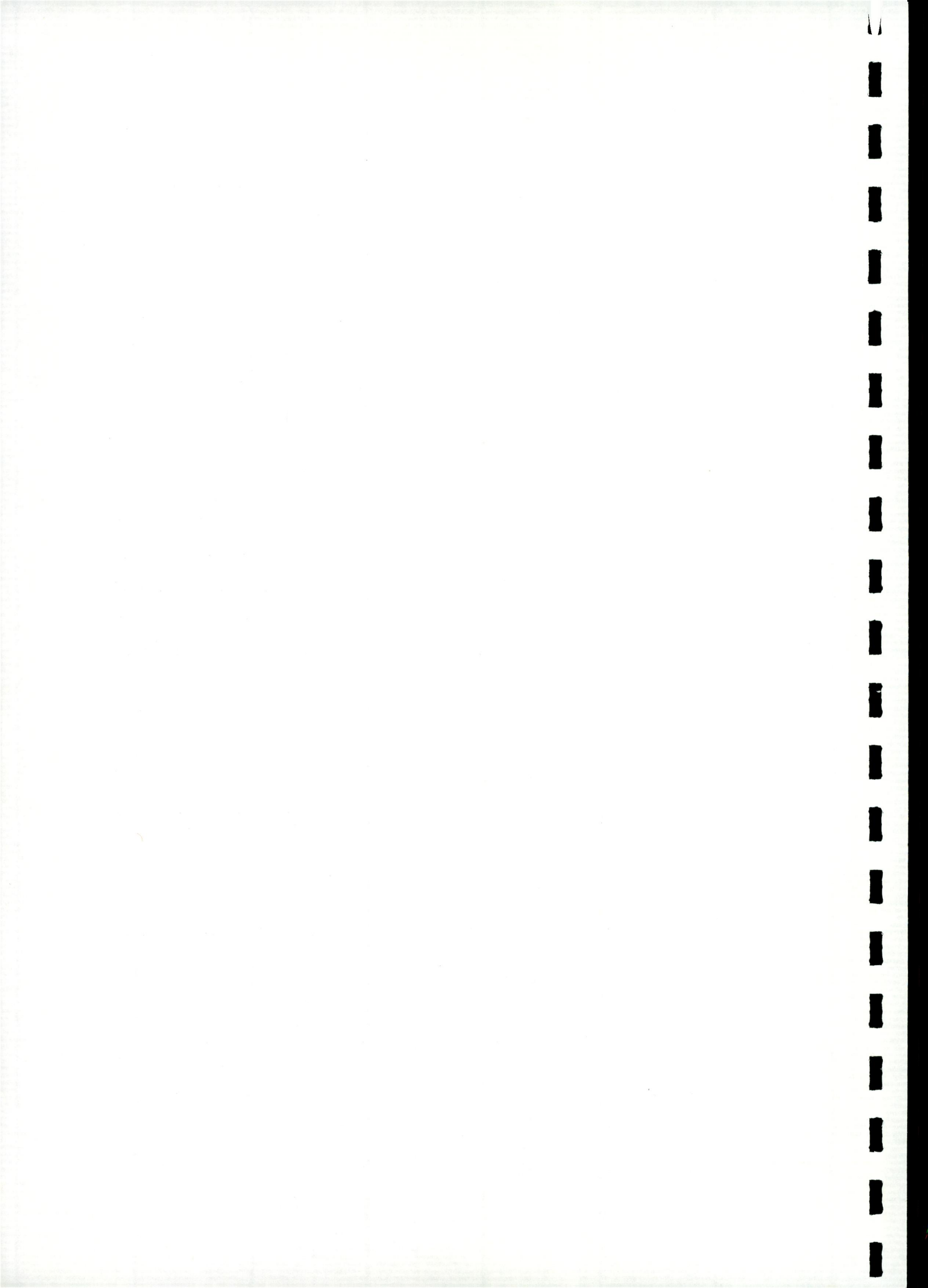
“... the former High Priestess of Punk.”

(WORTHINGTON, Christa, Womens Wear Daily, 16 January, 1985)

As the designer who dressed The Sex Pistols, Westwood became the infant terrible of fashion and Britain's most influential style warrior since Mary Quant. She shot to fame in the summer of punk by turning bondage gear and torn garments into the fashion of the dispossessed. Art school daring and tower block alienation.

Vivienne and Malcolm worked as a team - she on the actual designing and making of the clothes, he on the “literary” and “cultural” concept. Malcolm's involvement with English rock music (he formed The Sex Pistols in 1974) is part of the sociocultural aspect of their story.

“Like the musicians of our time, we want to visually step out and break the class barrier.”



(McLAREN, Malcolm, quoted, DOKTOR, Terry, The Soho News, April 1993)

“In traditional England, land of the suit and the, the uniform, and the true eccentric, the climate is right for creating a new “classlessness” via fashion.”

(DOKTOR, Terry, The Soho News, April 1983)

“We plunder the world for ideas, usually from the “underdogs” or ancient civilisations. We like to shock - break the rules.”

(McLAREN, Malcolm, quoted, MENKES, Suzy, The Times, 7 April 1981)

When the Westwood - McLaren partnership ended in 1984, Westwood was left with little other than her name, and a great number of people muttered darkly that she would never make it on her own, that McLaren had always been the brains, the originality behind the work. It seems, certainly in the beginning, back in the early seventies, that he was. McLaren exploited trend after nostalgic trend. He would have an idea, but Westwood would realise it. And over the years, without him every appreciating it, she evolved to become a designer of real originality, entirely self-thought, as she is in all things.

On Malcolm she says

“He taught me everything. When I met him I had hardly read a book and never seen a play.”

(DAVIDSON, John, The Scotsman, 11 August 1993)

One has the uneasy feeling from Vivienne that Malcolm McLaren is somehow hovering over her. She lived with him for 12 years and had a son with him. She only became a designer in the first place because he took the lease of a shop in the Kings Road and told her to make some clothes to sell in it. Although she was nearly ten years older than him, and already a wife and mother, he was always the dominant partner. He talked, she served, he was front of house, she was backstage.

“I always thought all the ideas came from him but I soon realised that getting the job done was the job”

(ALAI, Susan, Womens Wear Daily, 27 January 1986)

“I want to make it clear that in looking back I don’t wish to give Malcolm the credit. I was the person doing the things, and its the craft that makes the garment.”

(Turner, Steve, 1984)

Before the split buyers from Bloomingdales and Macy’s showed great interest in Vivienne’s “Pirate” collection (Plate 7) and it seemed that “the next move in the Westwood world is to go “up west”. Vivienne is moving into the territory of the Miss Selfridges and the Wallises of the world and is opening a shop soon in St. Christopher’s Place, just off Oxford Street.

The World’s End Shop will become more upmarket carrying expensive merchandise like sheepskins and leathers while St Christopher’s will be more mainstream.

(DOKTOR, Terry, The Soho News, April 1983)

After the split with Malcolm, Westwood signed a deal with Sergio Galeotti, Armani’s business partner.

“I was approached by two Italian production companies, Galeotti and Zamosport, which went on to back Romeo Gigli. Unfortunately, I chose the former, and unfortunately Galeotti died.”

(MODLINGER, Jackie, Daily Express, 16 October 1990)

The company deal then fell through and Westwood was left high and dry.

The Vivienne Westwood mini crini first appeared in October 1985 and looked like having little chance of earning mass appeal, especially at a time when the majority of other designers were exploring the concept of fitted, clinging clothing.



PLATE 7

PIRATES, 1981-2

4-5



1981

Outfit from Vivienne's Pirate collection

It was pronounced unwearable, an embarrassment by years later there was scarcely a designer who didn't include a crinoline shape into his/her collection for Spring 1987.

After the split with Malcolm, Westwood had no sounding board for her ideas.

Nowadays she has to do her own talking in lieu of Malcolm; she has to expound the concepts and generate the publicity and produce large quotable quotas, but she does not have the dazzling flare for it that McLaren always had, but she'll always have the last word when it comes to being asked about Malcolm.

"What strikes me now, despite that long time together, is how little interest we have in each other we bore each other now."

(WESTWOOD, LESSER, Guy, "Style international", Herald Tribune, 12 August 1990)

CHAPTER 4

Q How do you gather ideas for a new collection?

A *“At the back of it all there has to be some general conviction - that what I’m doing has some interesting basis in intellectual culture ... So, that’s my sort of platform .. an intellectual one. I often look at something from the past and think how wonderful it is and how I could use it.”*

(O’DWYER, Thom, October 1992)

On Tuesday, May 1990, according to Claire Haggard of the Independent the sixth form art class of Peebles High School had a new teacher, Vivienne Westwood, dressed to educate in a gold rococco printed ankle length lycra dress with heavy tweed jacketed and grecian platform shoes, gave them an explanation of her approach to design in fashion. Ranging from ancient Greek philosophy to Bertrand Russell, she finally told her audience:

“What fashion is about, more than anything is sex ...”

Imagination is something Vivienne has never lacked. She had gold-capped teeth in her collections before the idea was even a gleam in Madonna’s mouth. She removed and repositioned eyebrows in her “Always on Camera” Hollywood tribute before jet-setting models began erasing their own. She was asymmetrical before the Japanese “destroy” before Martin Margiela, had unfinished seams long before Jean Colonna and spoofed Hollywood glamour before the trendiest transvestites.

“My ideas come from the manipulation of fabrics combined with restrictions of the human body.”

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, Vanity Fair, 1989)

This reply to the question of inspiration indicates that fashion is not just life and death for Vivienne Westwood.

Her love of cloth, particularly traditional English fabrics such as wool and tweed is explained at great length with reference to subjects as diverse as the Industrial Revolution and the British Empire.

“For instance there are hundreds of different types of wool and these have a story in the creation of the British Empire, whether they are created for uniforms or killing tigers in or whatever - thinking like this fires my imagination and in turn leads to ideas.”

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, Vanity Fair 1989)

Westwood maintains that her fascination for tradition is perfectly in keeping with everything she has done before.

“English tailoring and tradition has been a big influence on me. It’s my mark, my roots. It’s not possible to have a technique without tradition. Technique is always a borrowing form what other people have done.”

(The Sunday Independent, November, 1989)

“The creative process is someone looking at something, understanding it and adopting it to come up with something new.”

(KEMP, Mary, The People, 20 October, 1991)

Take her collection “*cut, slash and pull*” for example. As she describes it;

“Cut with wool so light and with an absence of padding and structure; these suits have to be well cut and well made. The finish is highly unintentional. Slash: in the history of costume there was a fashion craze that lasted 100 years - slashed and pricked cloth, based on the torn garments in which soldiers returned from battle. Pull: It is possible to wear one dress in so different ways just by pulling.” (Plate 8)

(WESTWOOD, quoted *falio*)

It was punk in 1974 which made her name and McLarens. Mainstream feminism, rejecting conventional femininity, the lipstick, high heels and underwired bra, argued for the inherent beauty of “natural”, bare-faced, hair-legged women. Punk perceived naturalness as passivity and powerless; it preferred to confront and intimidate.

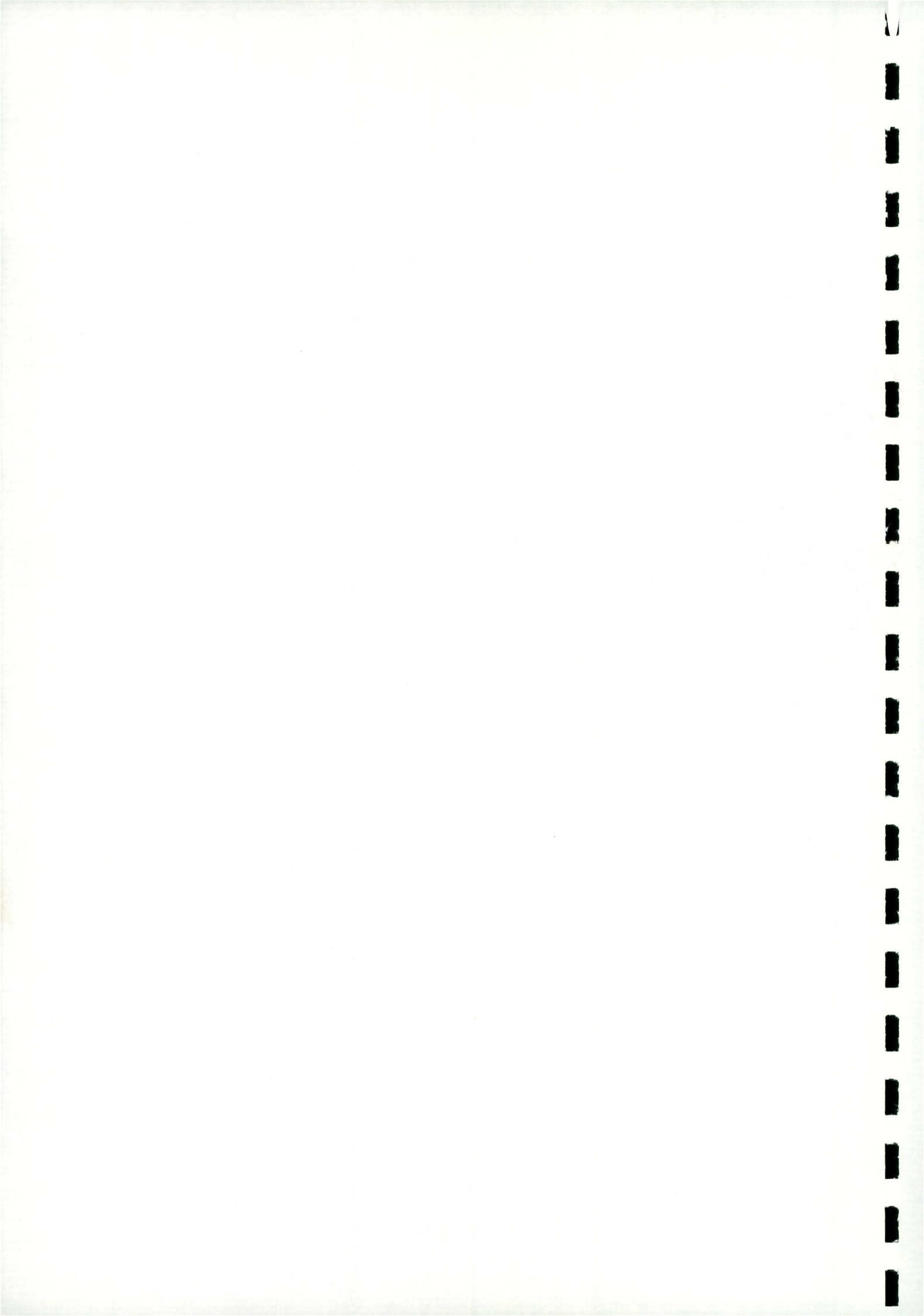
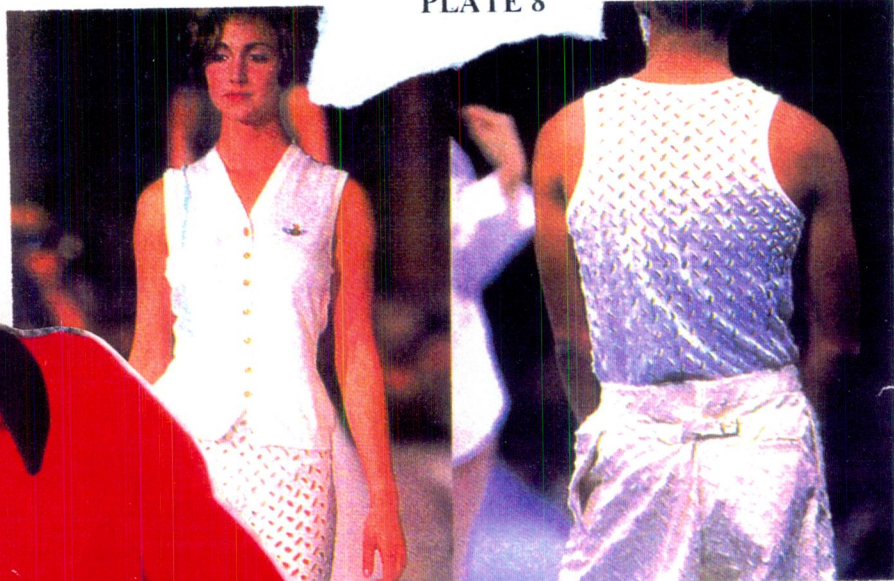
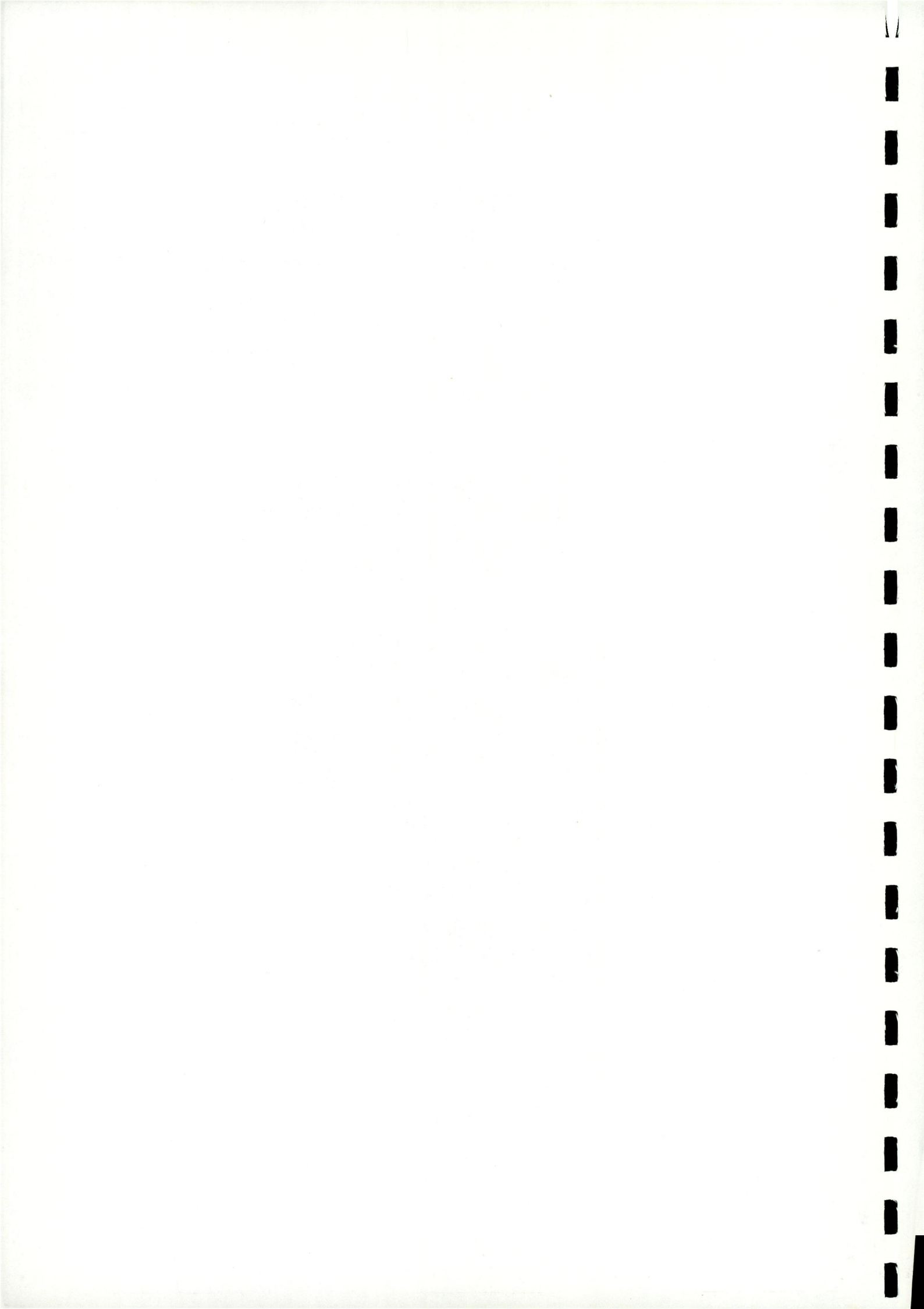




PLATE 8



Cut, slash and pull collection



"A lot of my designs are based on old ideas ... they have that lack of restriction that makes you aware of your body and defines your sexuality."

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, quoted The Times, April 1981)

Westwood believes sex is an essential element of fashion.

"Looking good is about being sexually potent. It's about dressing to preen."

(DAVIDSON, John, The Scotsman, 11 August 1993)

This philosophy was certainly the case when:

"Cheeky Naomi bared her rear on the catwalk to present Vivienne's latest bizarre fashion design - the crotch mini skirt ... All Naomi had to preserve her decency was a tiny g-string which left little to the imagination." (Plate 9)

(VENESS, Alison, Today, October, 1993)

"I've got this in-built perversity, I go the way people least expect me to. But it genuinely is time to come back to a classic point. I want to establish myself as English."

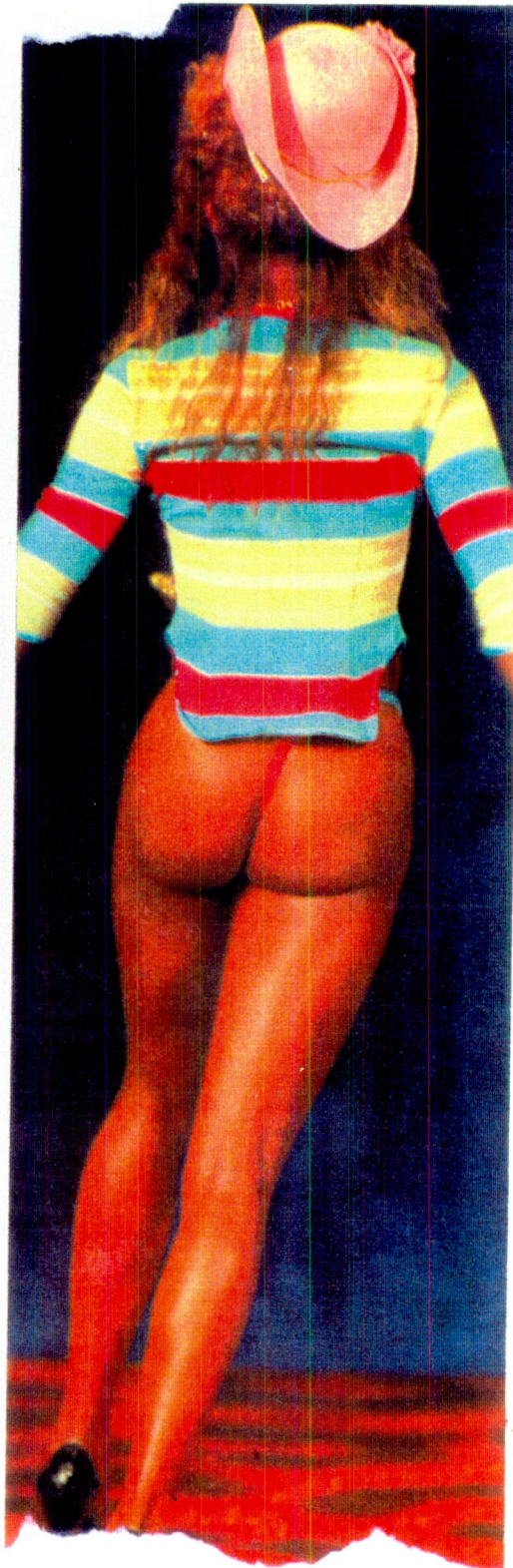
(FEINSTEIN, Sharon, The Express)

In recent years Westwood has been playing with British traditional dress - the tweed suit (Plate 10). The turn-set, the guards uniform - and presenting them with new meaning and wit. Long dismissed as frumpy forms of dress, they have been restored to the wardrobes of the young by her designs. Using the clothes as an introduction, Westwood can cast the mind and sensibilities of today's youth back to a time when gallantry and gentleness, rather than money-making and pumping iron were admired.

Westwood based her "savage" collection on the realisation that "primitive man" may be in fact more civilised than given credit for, and less barbaric than "civilised man. This collection was a search for this primal seed of change, which encompassed these feelings.



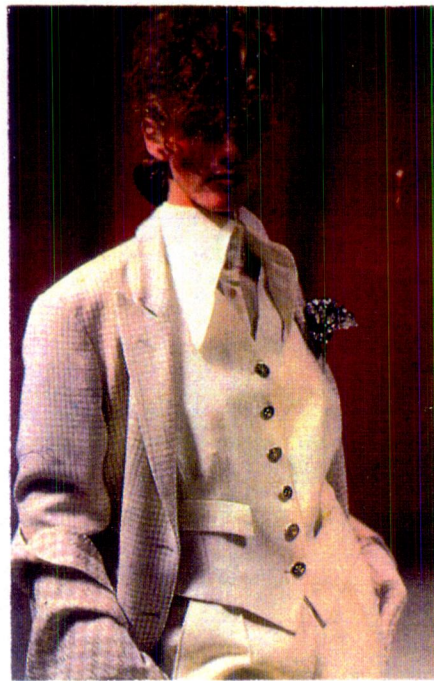
PLATE 9



Naomi Campbell wearing the crotch mini skirt at the Grand Hotel Paris



PLATE 10



British traditional dress - the tweed suit

“The form is the idea. You build it up slowly, and every decisions you make, every detail you consider is part of the form you’re evolving when the thing is finished, the form becomes the idea.”

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, Drapers Record, 31 October)

Cut is at the core of the new Westwood philosophy.

“There’s some very nice cutting in my clothes. Creativity comes from technique, and technique is fundamental to my way of working.”

(WESTWOOD, WARK, Penny, Today, 15 October 1993)

She starts each garment from scratch, pulling cloth around her body and chopping at it from there. She then uses an experienced pattern cutter to show her what is generally done before she works out her own approach (Plate 11 & 12)

Another keyword in Vivienne’s philosophy is elegance.

“We need to rediscover elegance; its the only radical alternative. Jeans and trainers are the clothes of unthinking consumerism. We are at a stage in fashion where elegance is more unorthodox than wearing jeans.”

(MENKES, Suzy, International Herald Tribune, October 1993)

“I don’t think Princess Di looks terribly elegant ... “

(WESTWOOD)

One royal that does inspire Westwood is the Queen. Westwood has always been interested in her.

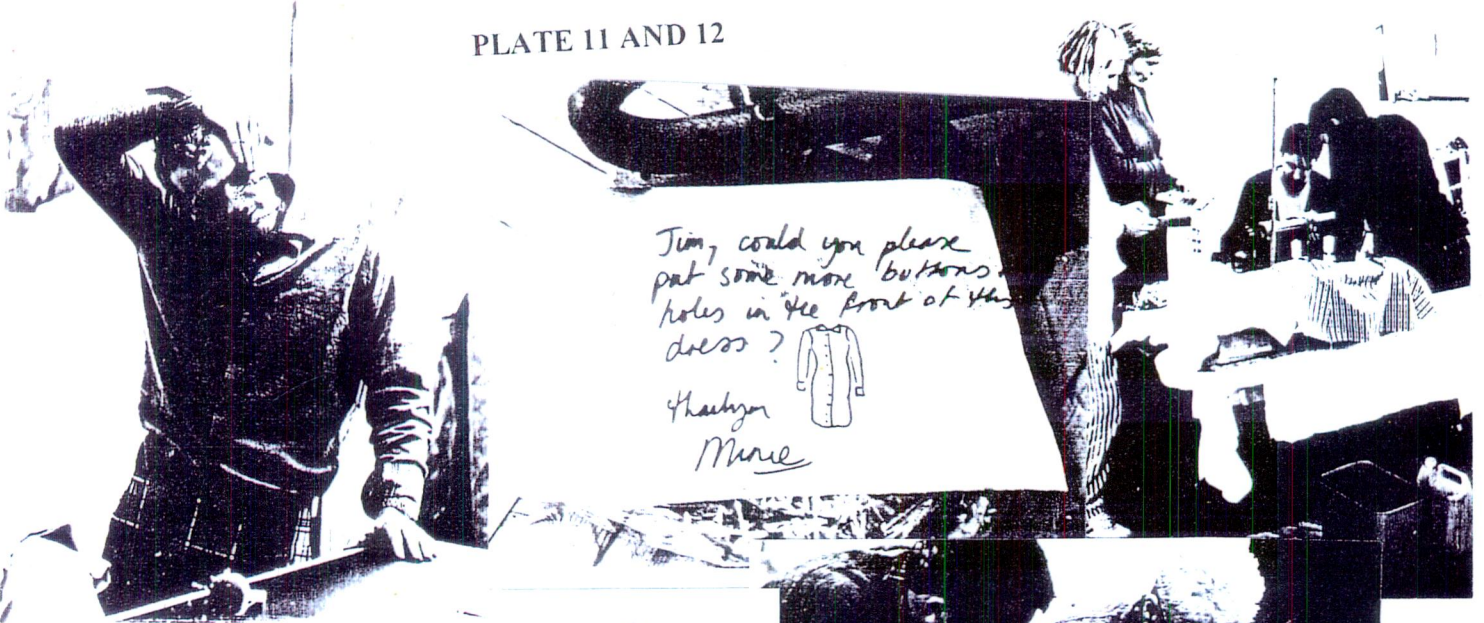
“After all, I was involved with the Sex Pistols and the Queen with a safety pin through her lip.”


(HEGERTY, Anne)

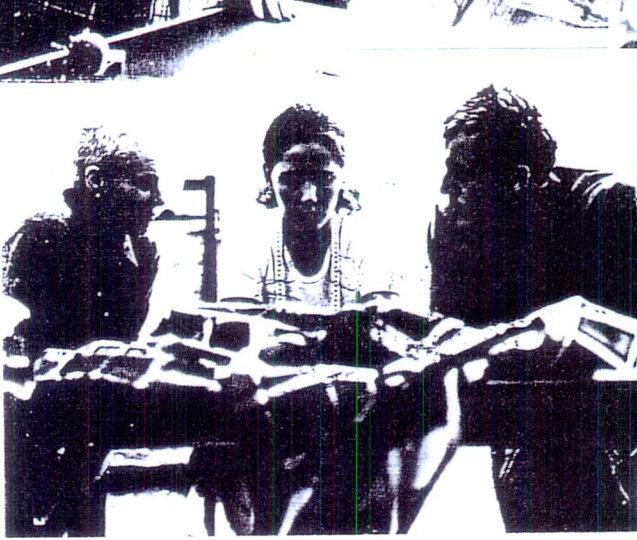
Since then, however, she has viewed the Queen’s dress as a source of inspiration.

“The Queen is now at the height of fashion. In fact she is at the avant-garde of fashion.”

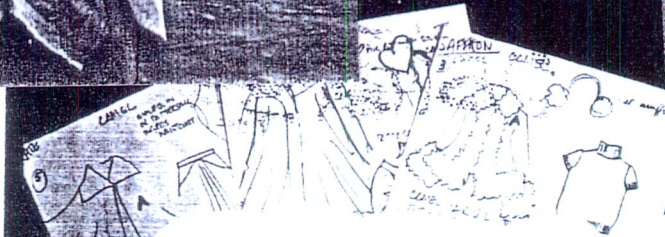
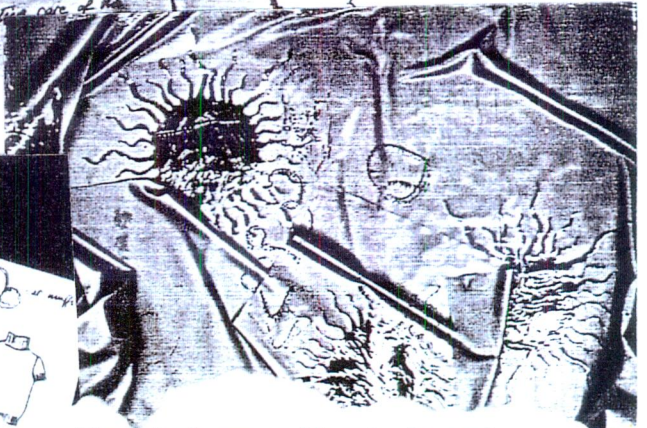
PLATE 11 AND 12



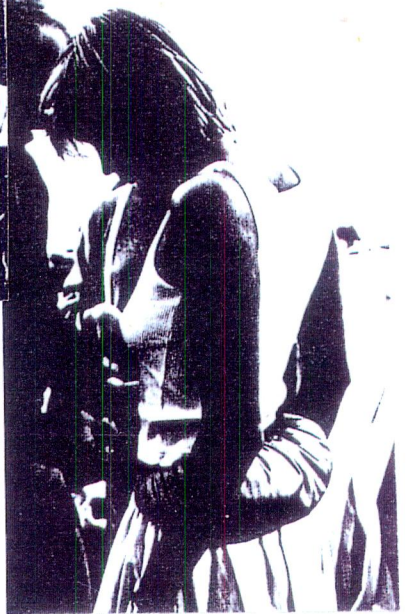
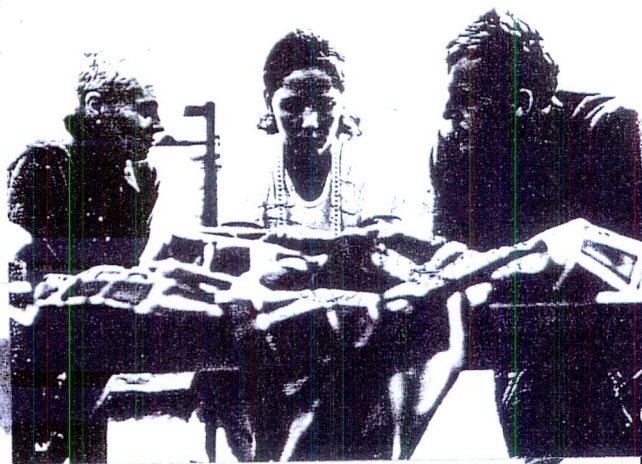
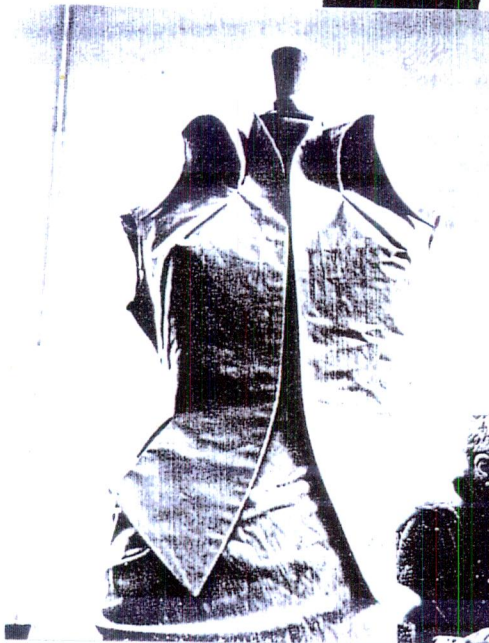
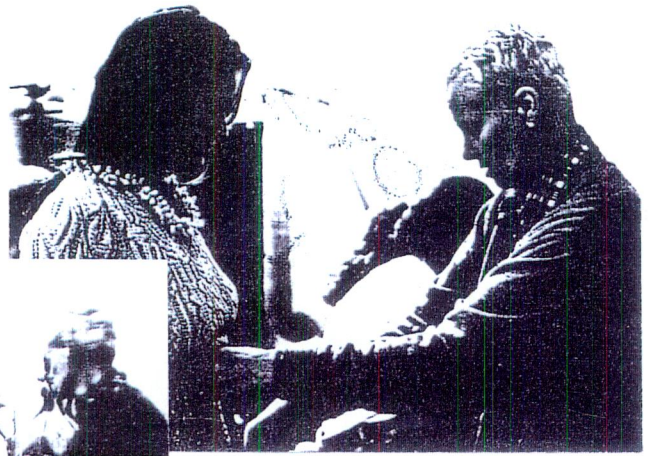
Jim, could you please
put some more buttons
holes in the front of the
dress? 
Thankyou
Munne



Dear Munne - here is
the decision a) keep the rose
the actual size & cut off
leaves as indicated - Or!
very exciting result: b) Can
Sowa (through his computer?) or
through re-photographing produce a
fish-eye effect where the head of the
rose looked-up big & the leaves recede
so that the rose seems to come toward
you from the corner.
Take great protective care of the
original rose print



Vivienne starts garment from scratch pulling cloth around her body and chopping at it! The experienced cutter who shows her what is generally done before she works out her own approach



(BARBER, Richard, Mirror Women, 3 November 1993)

A photograph of the Queen as a little girl in a traditional Princess-line coat provided the inspiration for an early collection, and more recently Westwood made direct reproductions of the royal crown in Harris Tweed, worn with traditional tweed suits and ermine-trimmed regal robes (Plate 13).

One thing that does inspire Westwood is British fabric, particularly tweeds which she loved.

“Apart from their quality, the reason that I, being English, like to work with them is that they all have something to say ... Every fabric I use has a change of content.” (Plate 14)

(ARNOLD, Sue)

British carpets also inspire her collections as was seen when Vivienne teamed up with British Carpets of Kidderminster, Worcs, to produce six colourful outfits from her autumn and spring collection in 1993. It was the family firm's first stab at advertising in 200 years (Plate 15 & 16).

“I am an artist and to be one you have to explore magic to get all the right ingredients together with communicate the essence of something.”

(WEBB, Gervase, Evening Standard, 3 June, 1992)

She began this exploration through clothing of various lifeline cultures with rock-n-roll in the 50's - a stimulus that still fascinates her. In the 70's Vivienne and Malcolm invented a lifetime culture of their own, punk. When one of their T-shirts resulted in pornography prosecutions for its wearers, *“We really thought we were on to something.”* (HEGERTY, Anne, (Plate 17)). Then came the Pirate/Apache, Indian/French collection of 1980 /she continued this constant classification of the theme in that she incorporated all the most emotional and warm ideas through the ages.

PLATE 13



HARRIS TWEED, 1987-8

Harris Tweed - Royal Crowns

PLATE 14



Some of the fabrics Vivienne uses in her cafe society collection

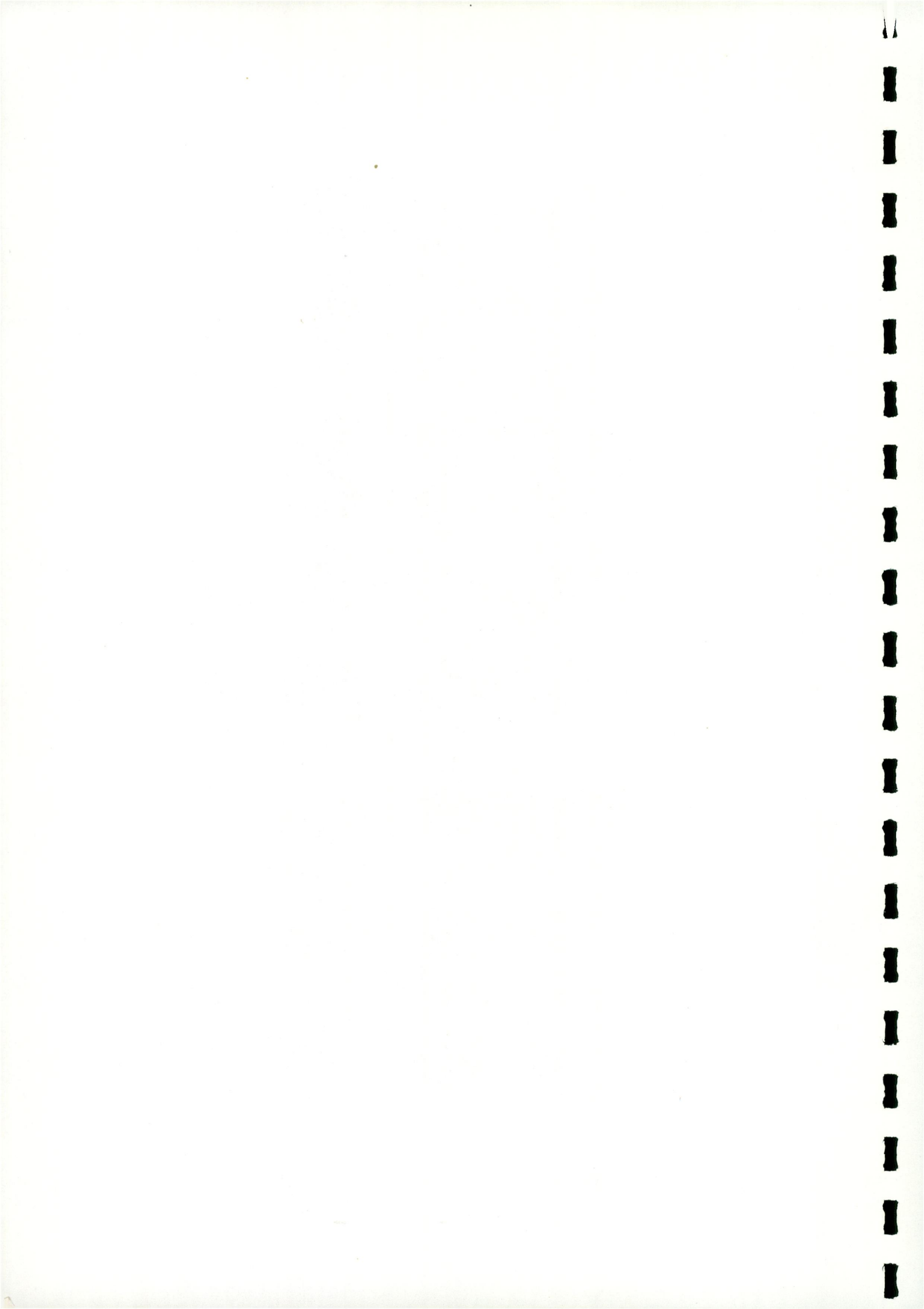
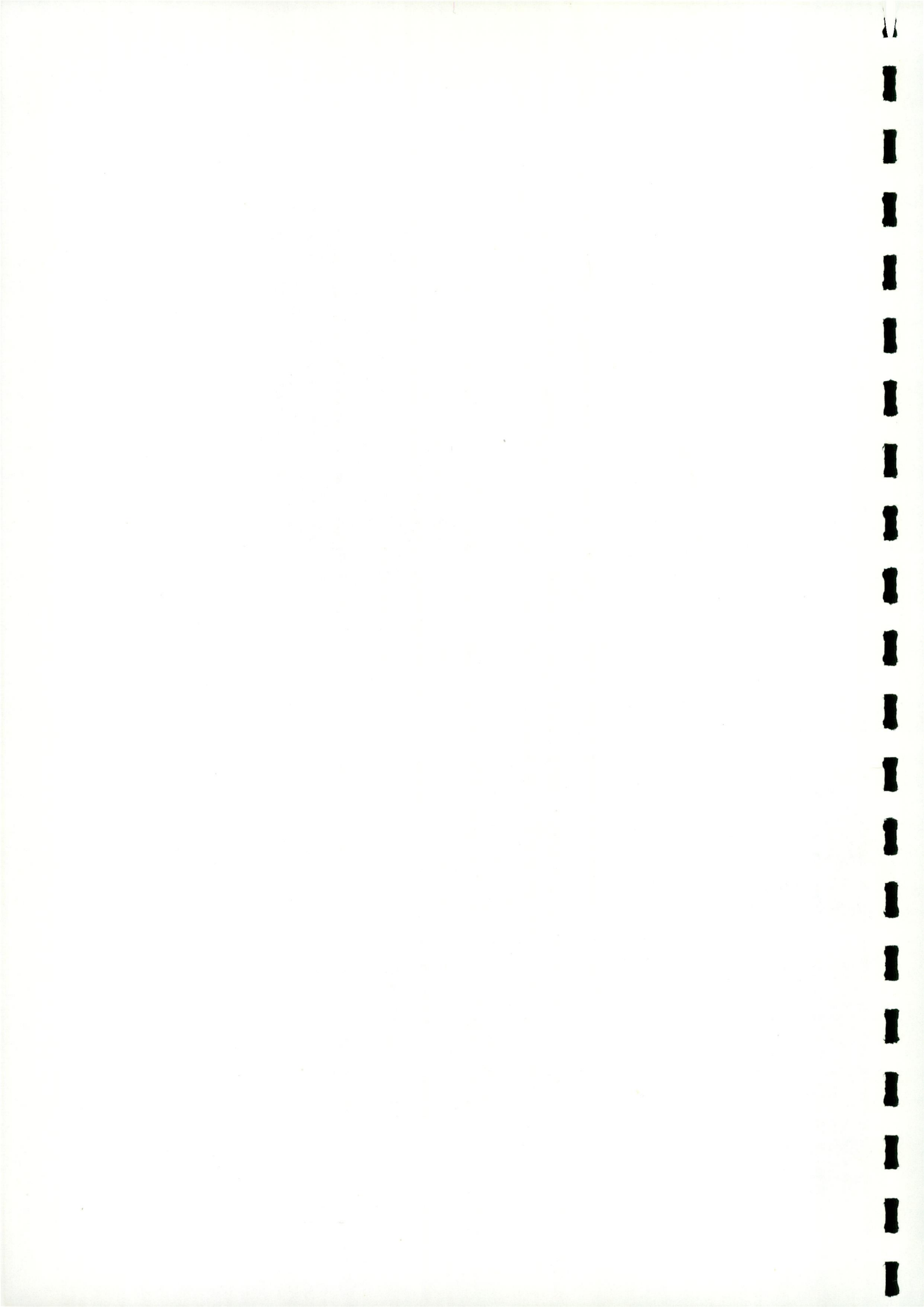


PLATE 15 AND 16



Vivienne's autumn/spring collection 1993 for Brintons Carpets of
Kidderminster, Worcs





TROUSER SUIT
from the
BRINTONS
CARPET
COLLECTION

*Coat, waistcoat and
trousers, made in wool rich
hand finished carpet
from the*

Brintons Marquis collection.

*Suit design by
Vivienne Westwood.*



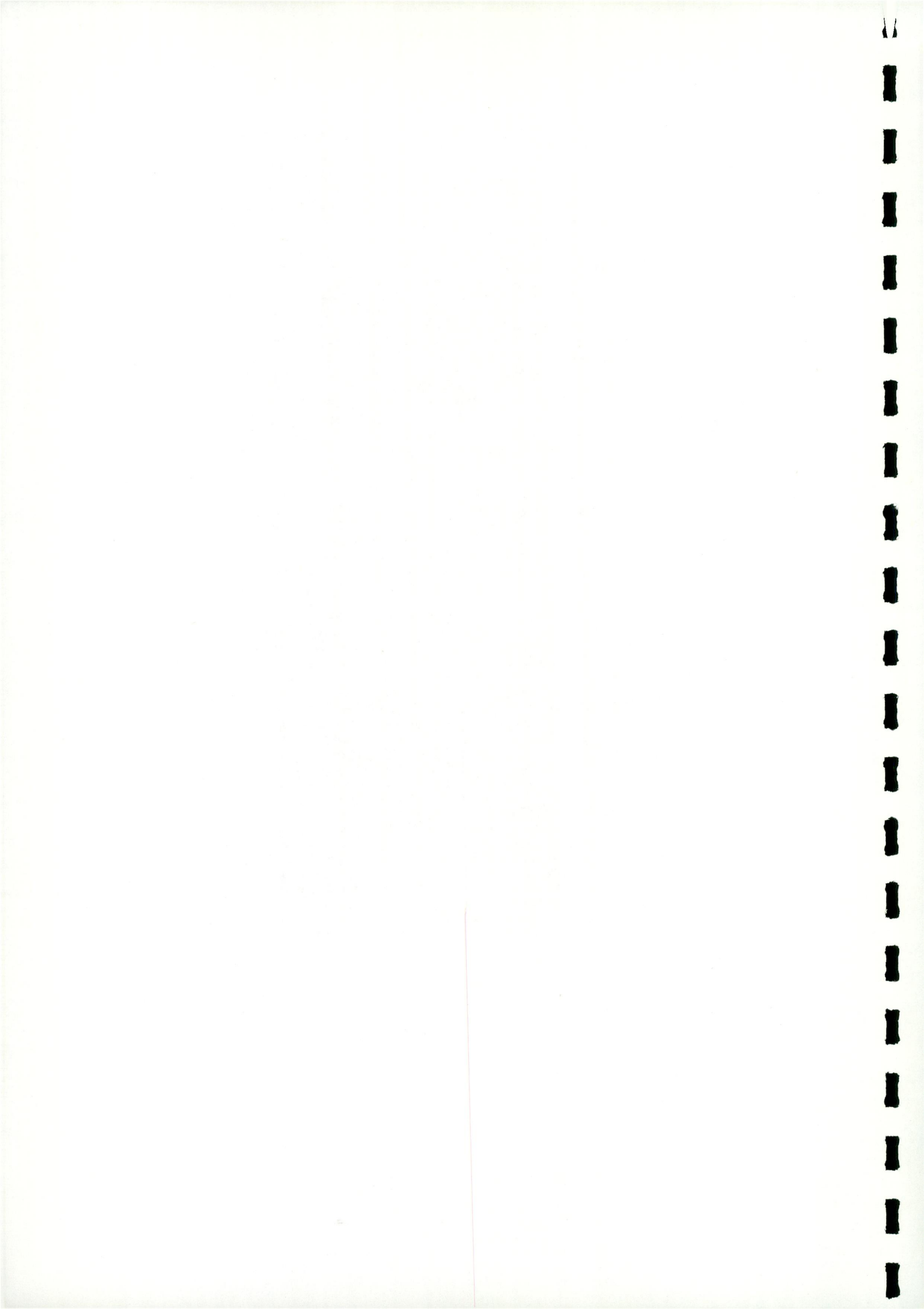
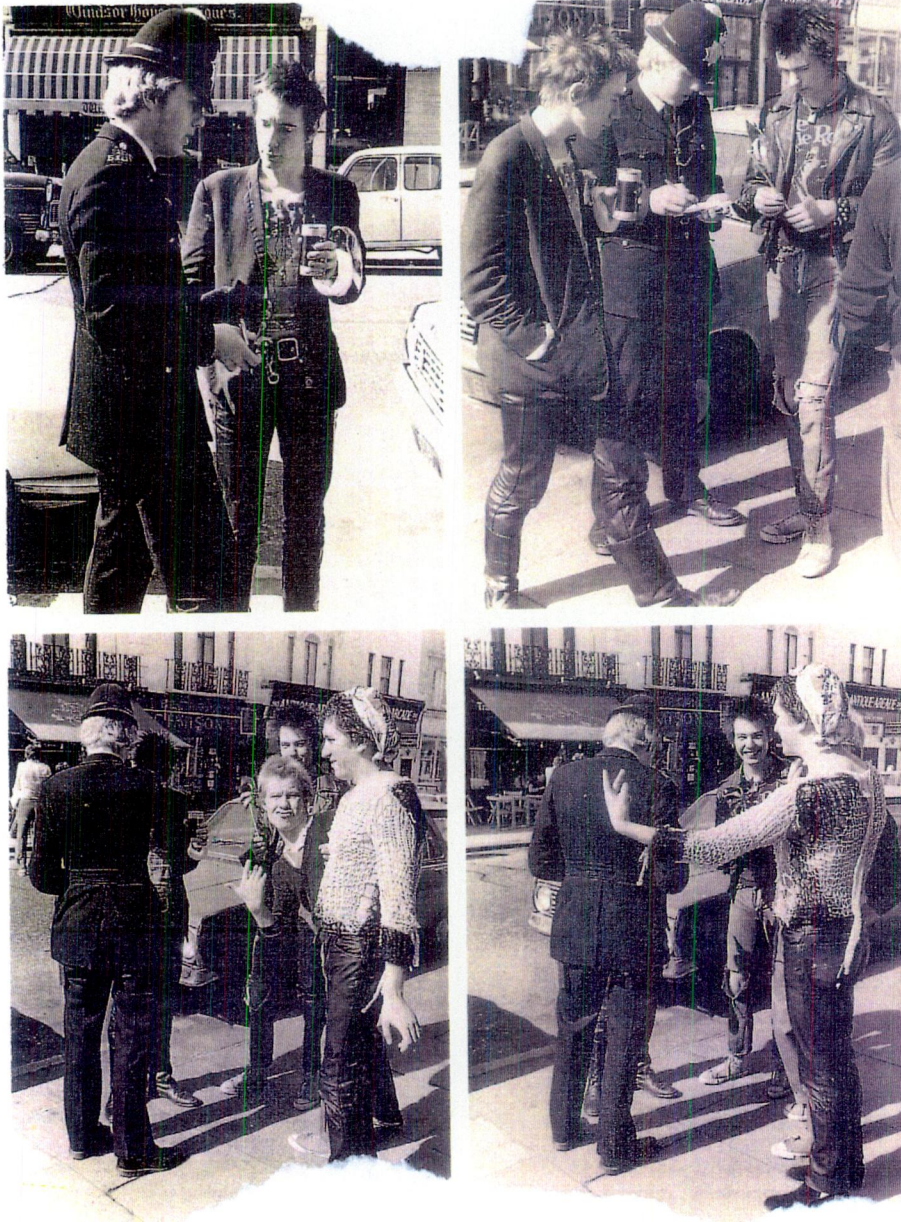




PLATE 17



Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols wearing one of Vivienne and Malcolm's Marlin Monroe pornographic T-shirts which led to prosecution of its wearer

Vivienne's intention is to change as much as she can through her clothes, and to open people's minds to their own potential.

"My whole existence and reason for doing anything is to change as much as I possibly can."

(FLETT, Kathryn, The Guardian, 3 June 1993)

Vivienne Westwood made a statement about ecology, the environment and the nurturing 1990's with her pyjamas for the family, patterned with endangered species of animals. (MENKES, Suzy, International Herald Tribune, October 1993).

To wear her creations means to wear recycled but still pure philosophy upon your sleeve. She understands history, classical music and art. She loves books more than anything in the universe. And this is the key to the enigma that is Vivienne Westwood. She brought so many half-forgotten fashion quirks back to the pure consciousness, redefined so many ways of cutting, that her appeal is always academic.

She is a fashion historians dream and a fashion victims enemy.

CHAPTER 5

Q What was your reaction towards winning the designer of the Year awarded twice. For so many years you were “passed-over” when so many felt you should have won it?

A *“I was annoyed at the time. Yes, definitely. But I never expected to be given it. I never thought it would happen. I’m in a position now where I’m starting to be able to production-wise exploit what I do. My clothes are expensive. They have to be because it’s high fashion and it costs an awful lot to put on these shows and that has to be included in your costings. Sometimes you’re selling something and there aren’t a lot of sales for that particular fabric and you have to get your money back.”*

The cost of a Paris catwalk show

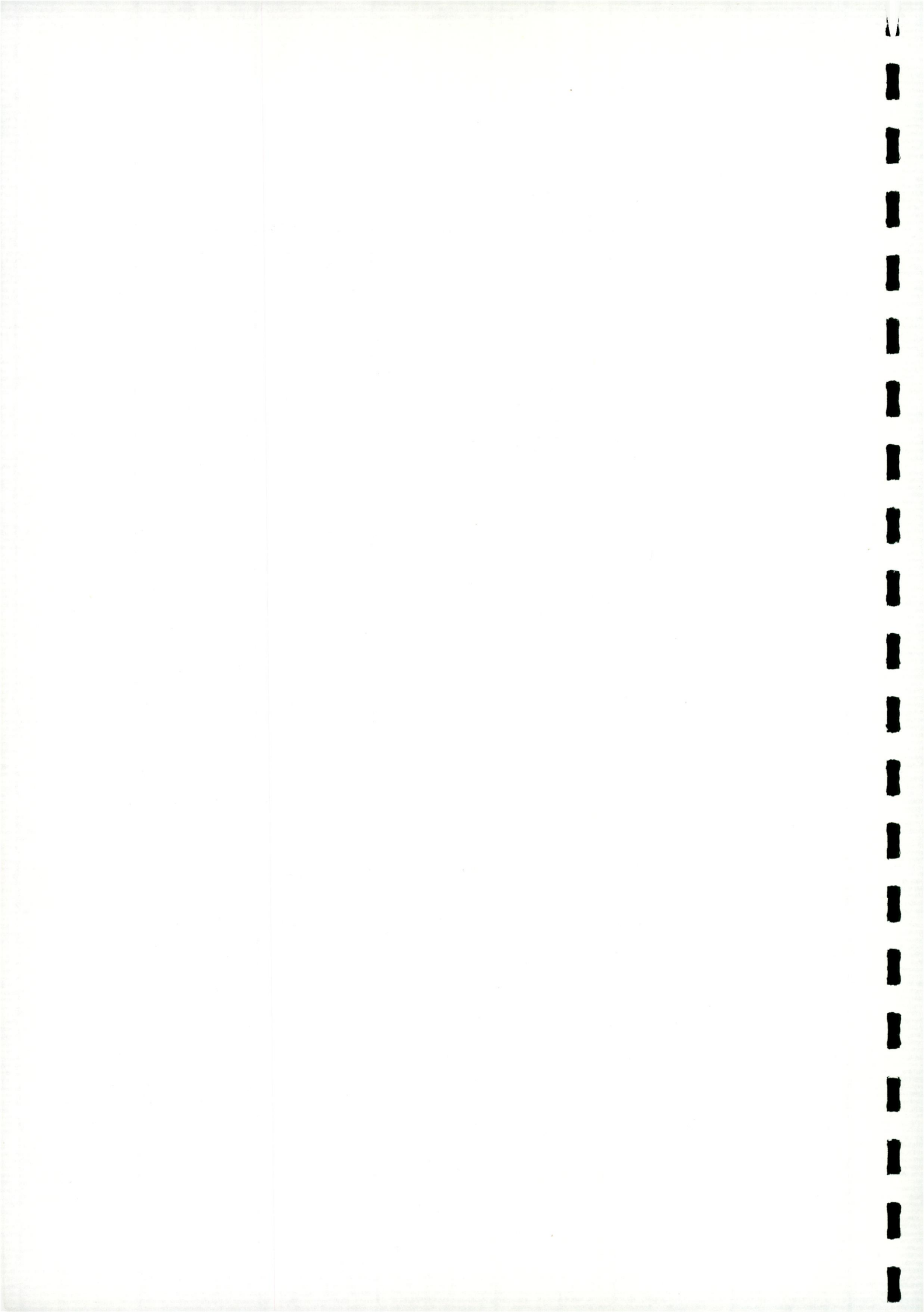
Lighting	£500
Music	£2,000
Hairdressers	£4,500
Make-up	£4,000
Ushers	£1,250
Dressers	£1,500
Professional pressing	£750
Video/photography	£16,000
Invitations	£2,500
Press dossiers	£5,000
Security	£2,000
Set construction	£10,000
Models	£30,000
Venue hire	<u>£20,000</u>
Total	<u>£100,000</u>

(Figures courtesy of Vivienne Westwoods press office)

According to Womens Wear Daily, in 1992 the American fashion trade newspaper the average cost of a show staged in the couver carée of the Louvre is \$170,000.

This figure includes \$50,000 in models fees, \$38,000 to rent the venue, £21,000 for decor and \$8,000 for hairdressers. This does not include the cost of the clothes themselves.

Again and again the British media, every eager for a cheap laugh have mocked Vivienne Westwood. It was a shock to them that she won a fairly coveted,



financially insignificant, award. She herself was mystified as to why she hadn't won the award before she did.

"I'm the only English designer who has never won the designer of the year award. I honestly do not know why they don't hold me in the esteem in which they should hold me."

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, Vanity Fair, 1989)

Many of the other British designers shares her sentiments, so much so that a number of them (including Jasper Conran and Anthony Price) should they win were going to turn the title down with an impassioned plea for it to go to Westwood. She nearly did not go to the award herself.

"I thought they were going to give it to someone I'd never heard of."

(ROLFE, Gail, Daily Mail, 16 October 1990)

Westwood has always inspired loyalty among her peers. She is the designer's designer and many of them will go out of their way to help her. In 1990 the French designer Azzedine Alaia gave her the free use of his showroom in Paris so that she could have a show there.

"Azzedine realises how certain people have benefited from my ideas and he doesn't like them to get the awards, not me."

(MODLINGER, Jackie, Daily Express 1990)

Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss, Christy Furlington and Helena Christensen, working for a fraction of their normal fees, tottered along in Westwood's signature platforms at the Spring 1994 collection in Paris. At the same time, they had to struggle with bustles and lairs of taffeta and net. (Plate 18, 19 & 20)

Kate Moss drew a short straw and came out in only a strip of striped blazer fabric, barely covering her bottom (Plate 21).

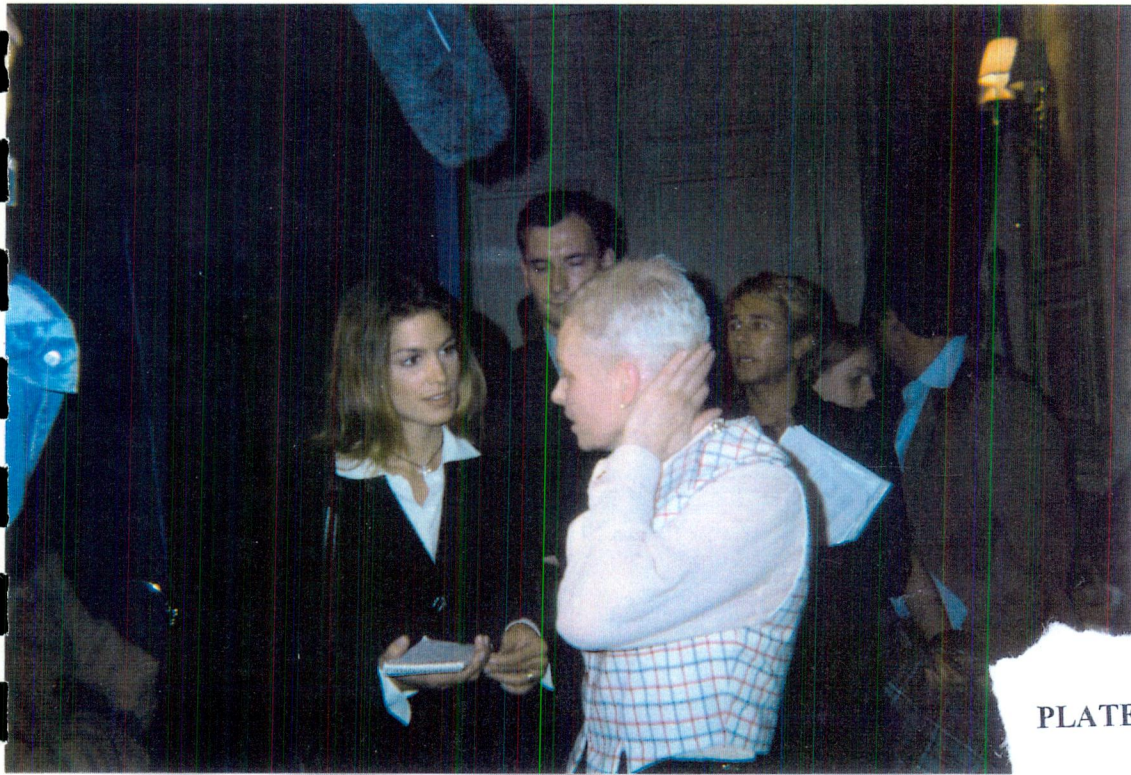
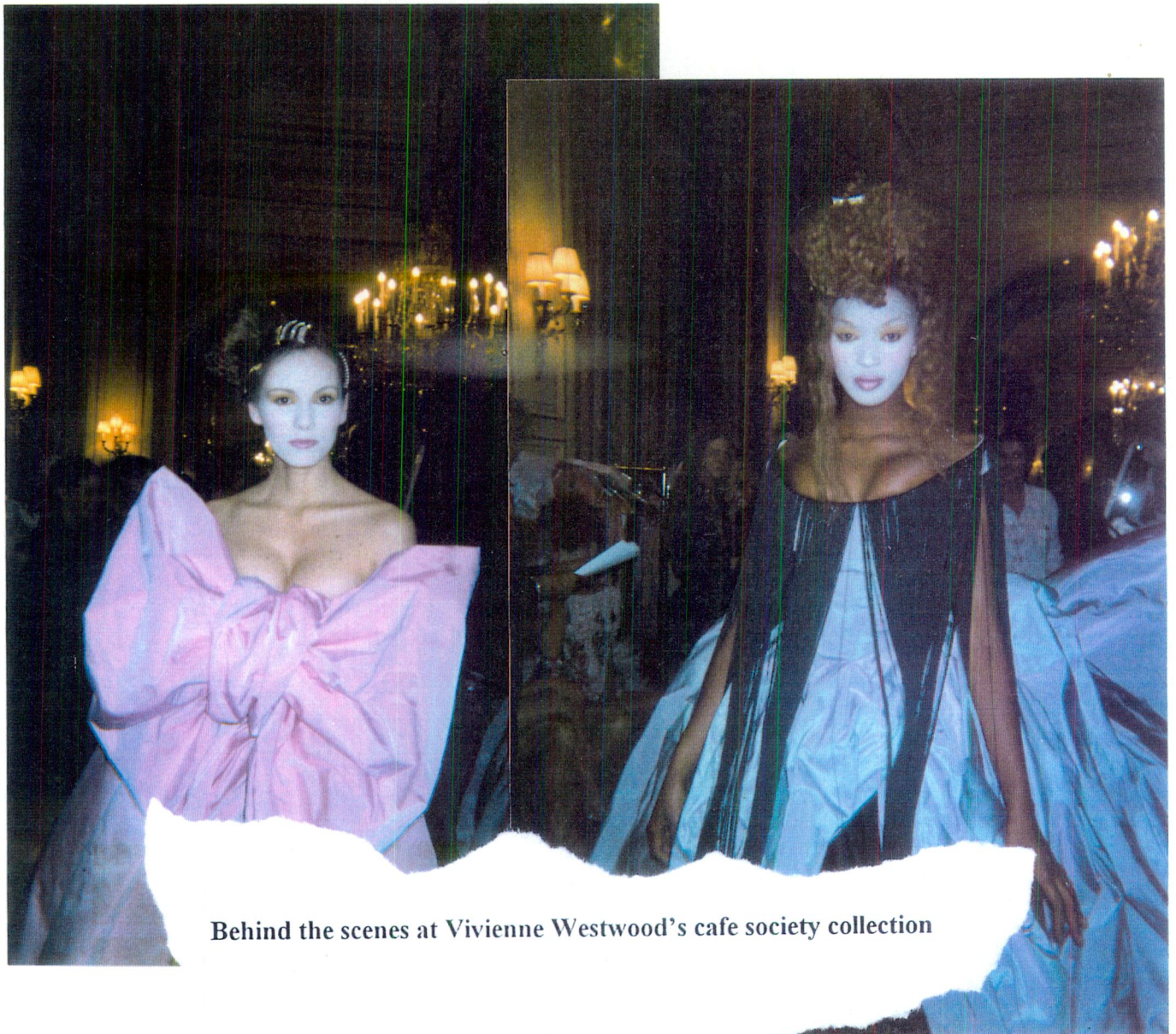
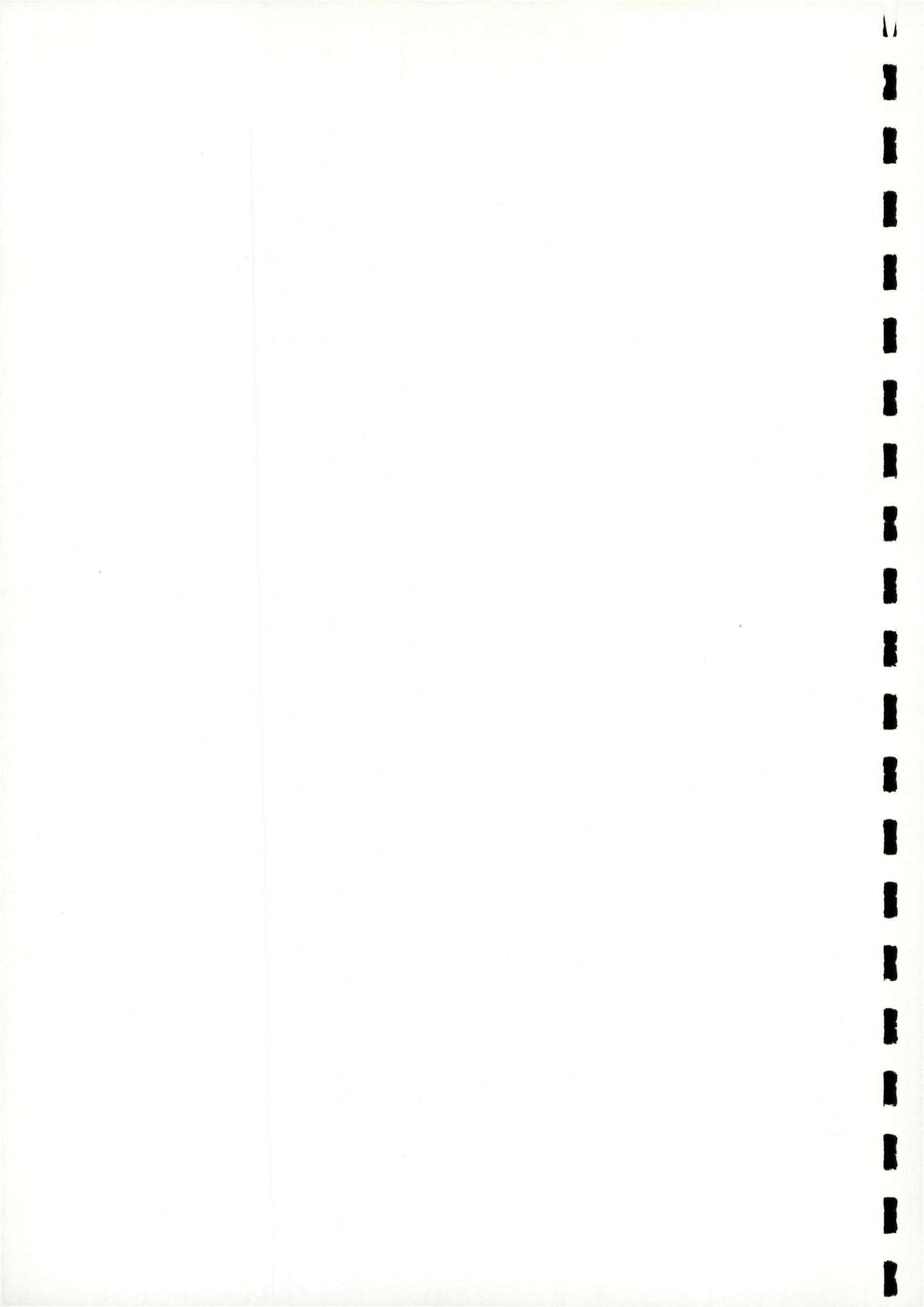
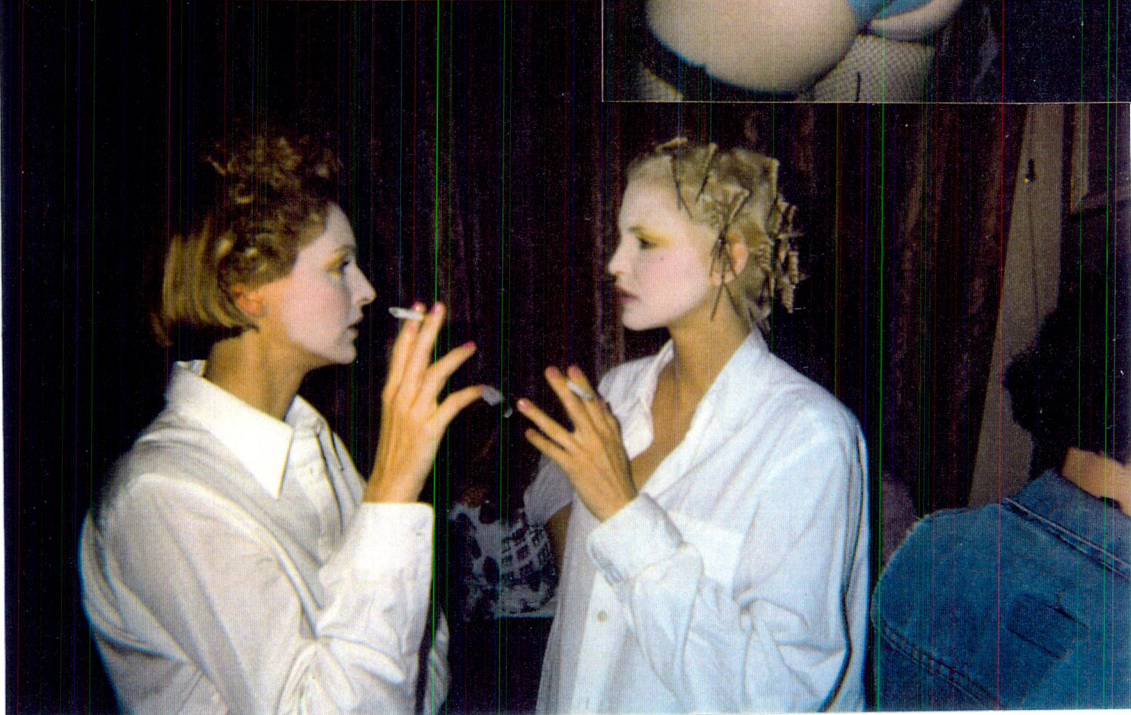


PLATE 18, 19 AND 20

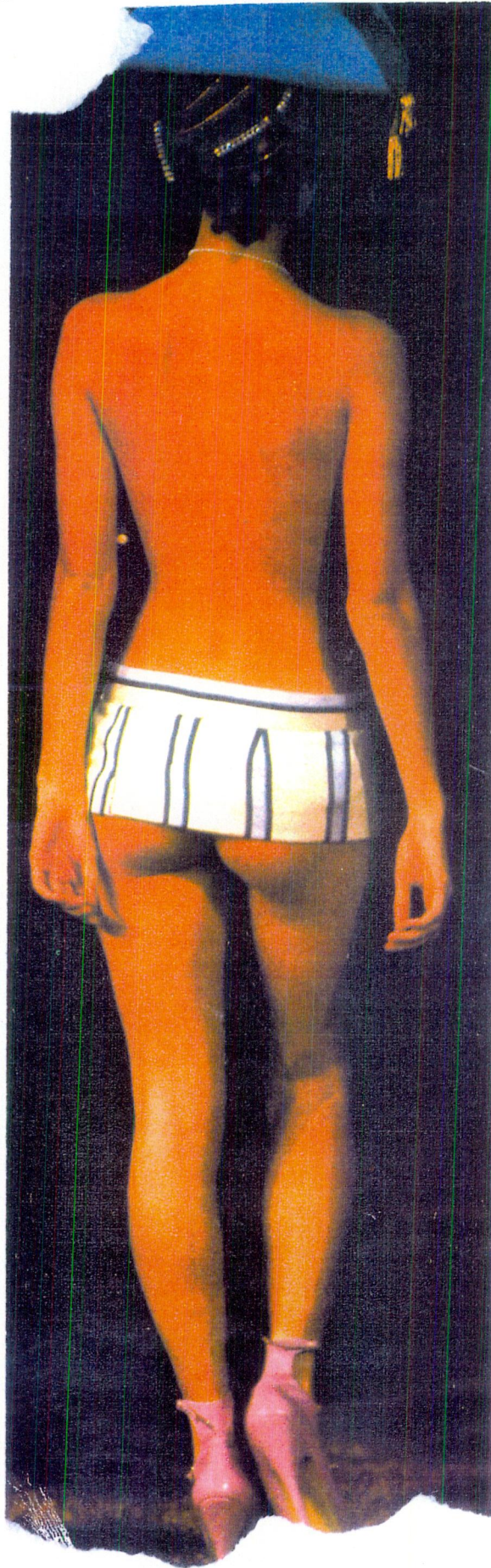


Behind the scenes at Vivienne Westwood's cafe society collection









The crotch mini worn by Kate Moss

But why should these supposedly money-grabbing girls put themselves at such a risk for a pittance? Their supermodel seal of approval is a reflection of the high esteem in which Westwood is held by almost everyone in the international fashion industry. If they are not ripping her off they are fawning at her feet. It is often said that if Westwood were paid for every idea she has spawned she would be worth millions.

"I haven't resented other people benefiting because I didn't have the means to cash in on my ideas - so what I have cashed in on, or at least been credited with and benefited from, is the credit and the prestige."

(MODLINGER, Jackie, Daily Express, 18 March 1993)

Jean Paul Gaultier, Claude Montana and Norma Kamali all freely admitted to borrowing ideas from Westwood and making fortunes from such inspiration.

In 1982 Gaultier saw Westwood's 1950's style bazooka bras worn outside blouses and while the British press laughed at Vivienne, he copied the designs, won press acclaim in Paris and was asked by Madonna to costume her world tour (Plate 22). When she won the designer of the year award in 1990 (Plate 23) Miss Westwood was chosen from a short list of six, including John Galiano, Helen Storey, Betty Jackson, Rifat Ozbek and Arabella Pollen.

The fact that she was voted designer of the year seems to have paid off, but it wasn't the case in the 1980's. There is no doubt that Westwood and McLaren were out to make their pot of gold through complying with existing fashion channels rather than working against them, for example world's end fashion.

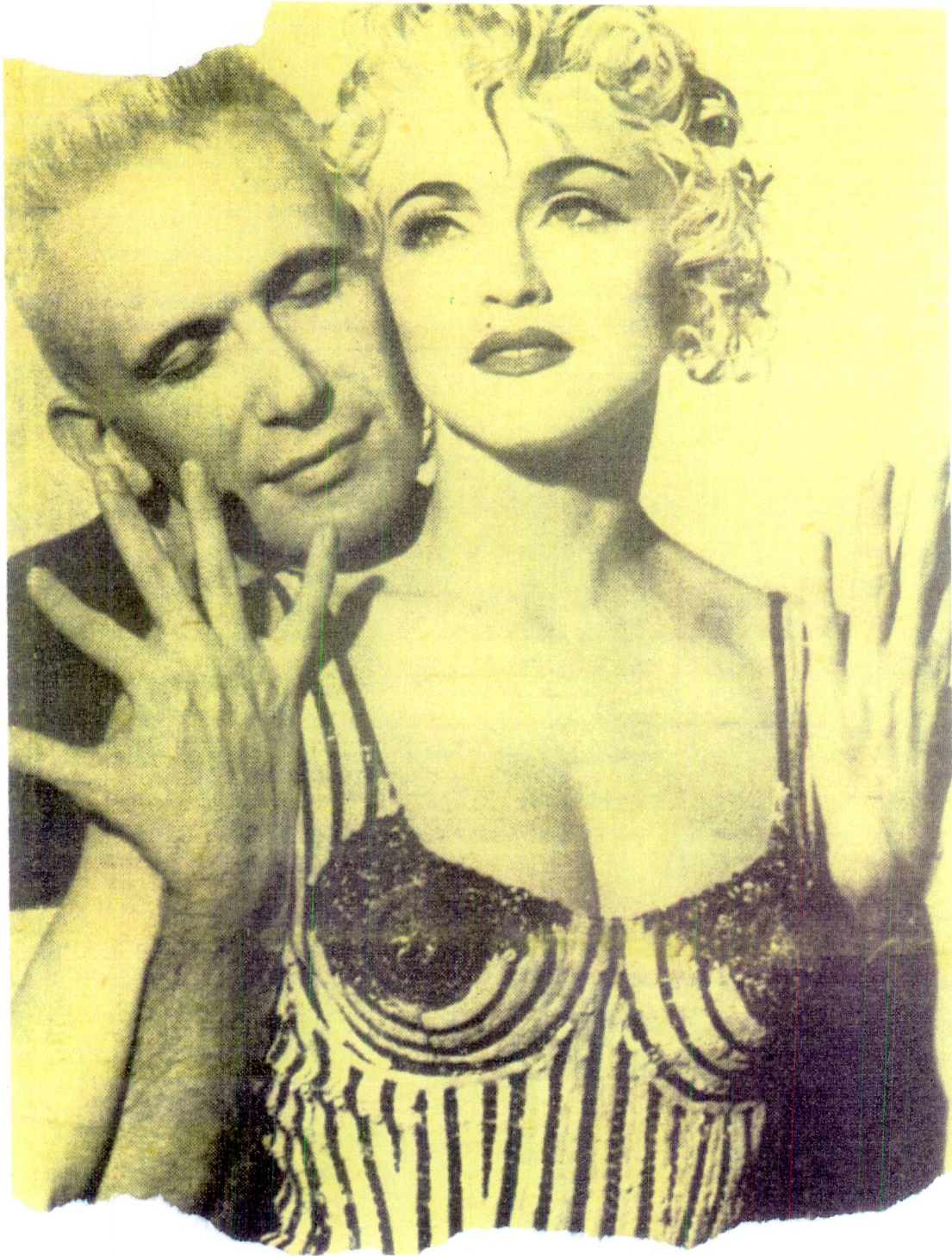
"Will now be made available in Macy's and Bloomingdales in new York, not to mention a specially designed gold and tan make-up by Elizabeth Arden ..."

(Ms London, 27 October 1986)

A fashion revolution began taking place in shopping malls as more and more of Britain's most exclusive and expensive designers linked up with high streets chains



PLATE 22



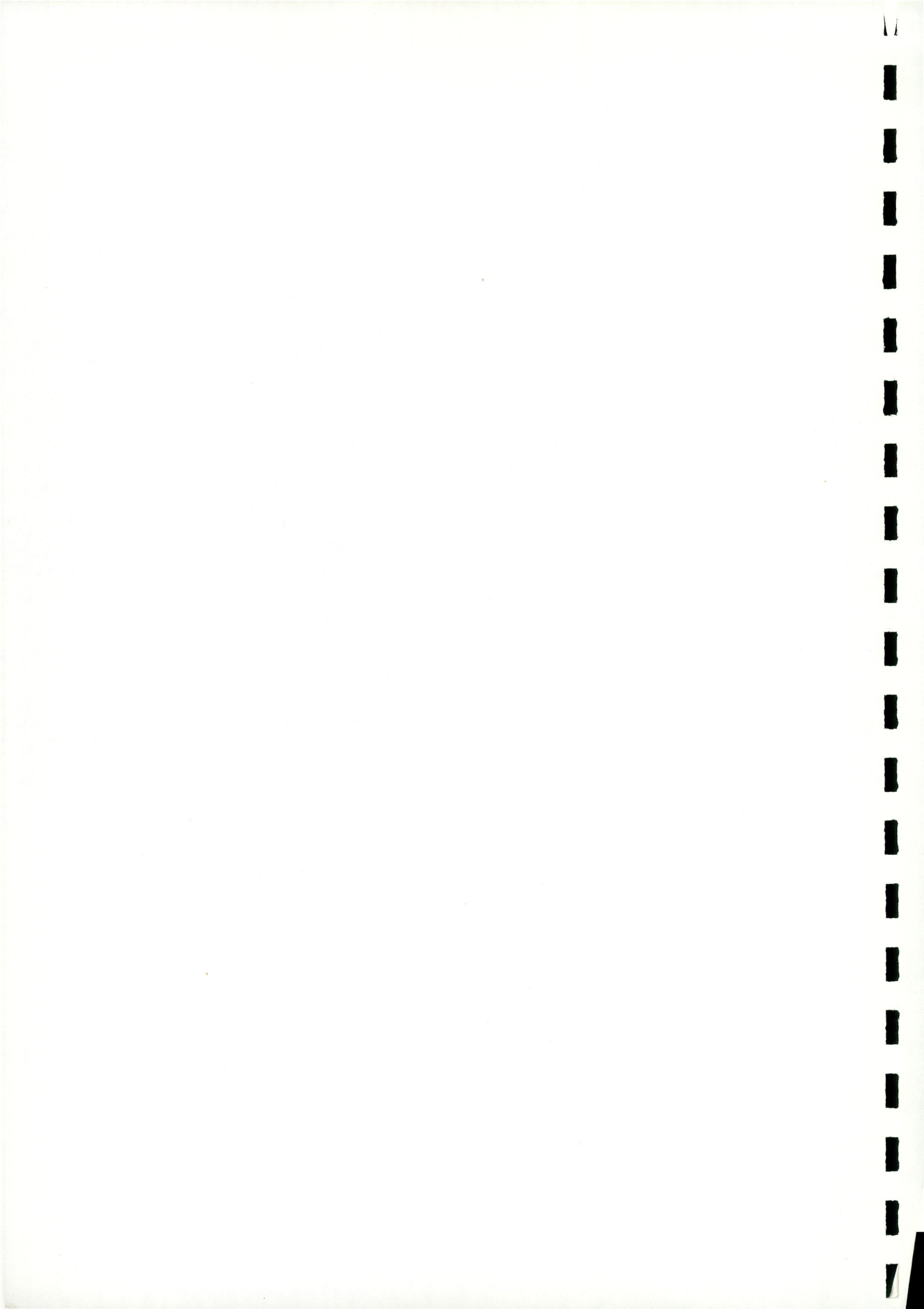
Jean-Paul Gaultier and Madonna wearing a costume from her 1990 *Blond Ambition* tour



PLATE 23



News paper cutting of Vivienne Westwood after winning British designer of
the year award 1990



and mail order companies according to Hugh Sebag - Montefiore, The Mail on Sunday, August, 1989. [^]

For years British high fashion designers cultivated the image of being aloof from the mass market. But the 1980's recession put an end to that philosophy for many of them. Sales had fallen and several of London's most important fashion houses had been forced to close.

Vivienne and Malcolm were looking for financial backing.

"We've always been self financed. Suddenly our resources were not sufficient to fulfil the kind of orders I was getting. (Here in Italy) ... they back talent with money."

(MULVAGH, Jane, The Irish Times, 14 November 1989)

Westwood was being courted by the Italians. Italian company Gruppo GST picked up the tab rumoured to be around £1 million, for a lavish show in July 1990 to preview her first menswear only collection. She showed her collection in Florence at the Pitti Uomo show. Italian manufacturers praised her innovative designs, but she left empty-handed.

Liz Tuberis, editor of Vogue said:

"It is disgraceful that no one has had the courage to back her. She has been at the forefront of British fashion for 20 years and her name must be worth a fortune."

However, as Westwood ideas and designs began constantly reappearing in the collections of French, Japanese, Italian, American and other English designers - often translated into major mainstream critical and financial success and sometimes only a season or so after being ridiculed as weird or unwearable - even the staunchest of her detractors were forced to take her work more seriously. She has had her false commercial downs, rip-offs and deals that did not materialise. But this time it all looks a lot more solid. Littlewoods catalogue features a Westwood collection (Plate 24). The huge difference in price between her designer collection

PLATE 24

VIVIENNE
WESTWOOD
FROM



C A T W A L K

TO



C A T A L O G U E



Designer collection Vivienne Westwoods Littlewoods home shopping
catalogue

and the Littlewoods range is explained: *“By volume involved in selling to a mass market the materials used, it also cuts out expensive catwalk costs”*. (Vivienne Westwood, Barber Richard Clothes, January, 1994). The French catalogue Toris Suisse has also commissioned Westwood. ¹

There's a deal with the bag maker Braccialini, the show manufacturer Charles Jourdan, Swatch watches (with Westwood limited edition orb watches changing hands for thousands of pounds); a licensing deal with the Japanese conglomerate Itochu, perfume plans with Trucocco, Liberty, the London store, now offers exclusive Westwood wedding dresses and a Westwood book to be published by Thames and Hudson featuring the work of leading fashion photographers.

“She's been called unwearable, but she can make neat little black suits, undemonstrative leisure wear, formal slacks, neatly-logoed T-shirts and pretty frocks. Inexpensive bodies have been stocked at Knickerbox (with a) budget range exclusively for the French catalogue 3 Swiss. French girls can now buy a Westwood waistcoat for £28 and a bustle skirt for £58. Then there's Westwood designs sold exclusively through branches of Sock Shop nationwide (Plate 25). This is high street Westwood.”

(GERRARD, Noel, 1995)

Chris Moore who has been covering ready-to-wear couture shows in Paris since 1967 says:

“It's all about marketing a product.”

Westwood seems at this time as never before to have pulled off the difficult balancing act between being freely creative and highly commercial.



PLATE 25



STRETCH A POINT: Grey jacquard body and leggings, £26.99 each.

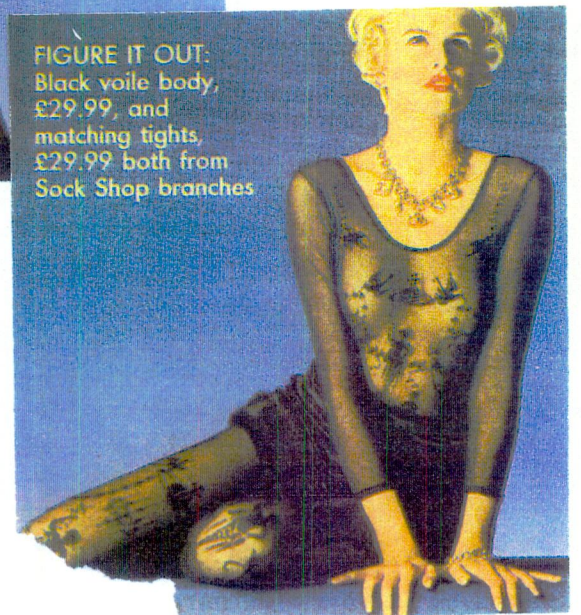


FIGURE IT OUT: Black voile body, £29.99, and matching tights, £29.99 both from Sock Shop branches

Vivienne Westwoods sock shop designs



CHAPTER 6

Q Do you think your clothes are perhaps too avant-garde for the typical British person?

A *“Most women are not quick to change, so, what I’m doing has to be for the avant-garde initially. But I do maintain that my clothes are commercial because eventually most people do get into them. I want to get to the point where any woman regardless of shape or size can come into my shop and put on a jacket that will fit perfectly. At the moment my clothes tend to be for the ideal sort-of proportion. That is only because I’ve just started working on it.”*

With the 1980’s Westwood began breaking through to a wider market. To jaded tastes everything about her was silly, knowing and completely irresistible: Collection names like Seditonaries, Buffalo Girls and Clint Eastwood. Models looked less like mannequins than upmarket prostitutes, the lead singer of all-girl heavy-metal bands.

Then there were the clothes: While net tutus paired with baby blue leather corsets, Harris Tweed jackets shown with matching cloth crowns and chiffon togas, garments that were sometimes cut with neck or arm holes displaced to achieve an unorthodox fit (Plate 26).

“Expecting Vivienne to design commercial clothes is like asking a comedian to play Shakespeare. It’s a difficult barrier to cross.”

(BARBER, Richard, Clothes, January, 1994)

Her detractors in the fashion industry would argue that she is her own worst enemy: that, given the television and press opportunities she has had, she should have carefully tailored her public persona and the clothes she has shown to suit popular taste, editing out all the incomprehensible extremes.

“Conservatism leads to stagnation.”

(WESTWOOD, SEBAG-MONTEFIORE, Hugh, The Mail on Sunday)



PLATE 26



Suit with matching crown and a design featuring a displaced armhole

Many agree with her and see her work in terms of the deconstruction of the meanings of dress. Her first experiments were in one of the most loaded area of dress: bondage were. She filled the World's End Shop, then called it Let it Rock, with studded leather and slick rubber, straps and buckles and spiked dog collars.

“These clothes announce that you’re an arrogant autonomous being who can handle life, and they give you power over rich people because you look more chic than they ever can, going to all expensive shops.”

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, quoted BRAMPTON, Sally, The Guardian, 18 March 1993)

Miss Westwoods royal fetish is most notably seen in her queenly twin sets, peals and tweedy skirts and her signature logo - a regal orb and her most current collection is inspired by the Bottom - her latest obsession where she designs her clothes around a small cage or pad placed on the models buttocks (Plate 27) she claims that she was interested in the control of sexuality inherent in the clothes and accoutrements. The consensus then was that sadomasochism degrades women: Westwood wondered whether it might, conversely, empower them.

“Fashion is always about sex and about power.”

(BRAMPTON, Sally, the Guardian, 18 March 1993)

Westwood has never been afraid to shock and admits that some of there creations are “ridiculous” but it is her self-confidence that carries off her outrageous outfits.

Vivienne Westwood had not decided how she would be dressed when she was going to Buckingham Palace to receive her OBE, but she promised to wear her knickers.

She had raised eyebrows when she appeared at a previous fashion show at Kensington Palace in a tight see-through dress and nothing else. She said:

“I do not know what I will be wearing, but I an assure you I will wear my underwear.”



PLATE 27



Her latest collection inspired by the bottom

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, quoted WEBB, Gervase, Evening Standard, 3 June 1992)

But the controversial fashion designer caused a stir at Buckingham Palace when the grey tailored ensemble she wore to collect her OBE from the Queen has short of one vital accessory ... her knickers (Plate 28). When asked if she wore underwear she replied:

"I didn't actually. I wore tights and I have got a bra on, but no knickers. I never have time to buy any I like."

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, quoted ROSATO, Stella, Daily Express, 4 June 1992)

Shock showed its head in 1991 when as punk rock was being revived through a misty-eyed nostalgia, Vivienne Westwood, who invented it (and who was named "Designer of the Year" for the second consecutive year). Westwood shocked her audience not with bondage trousers and PVC, but with refined tailoring and beautifully mannered pieces.

Westwood looked not to the 1970's but the 1870's, to the artists and writers of the Grand Salon. Artist's smocks with billowing full sleeves in crisp cotton or rich velvet were combined with elegant narrow trousers. Slender skirts of navy ultra-light worsted wool were worn with classic double-breasted blazers. Victorian nights at the opera were evoked with black lace and net evening-wear and stretch lace body-stockings (Plate 29).

And who does she sell to now, compared with the punk era!

"They're still the same sort of people. A lot of them are the same people, even right back from 1971."

(REED, Paula, The Sunday Times, 3 April 1994)

She is more interested in older people, whom she hopes are more intelligent than youth.



PLATE 28



Vivienne Westwood caused a stir at Buckingham Palace when she went to collect her OBE from the Queen wearing a grey tailored suit with no underwear



PLATE 29



One of Vivienne's designs for her award winning 1991 collection

"My mother wears my clothes and I do - I'm 48. But I'm known as avant-garde you see, and people think my clothes are primarily for younger people. They were in the past as a matter of fact, but that has changed now."

(WESTWOOD, FEINSTEIN, Sharon, Daily Express, 11 October, 1990)

"Westwood fans include Madonna, David Bowie, Jackie Onassis, Billy Connolly and Jack Nicholson."

(MODLINGER, Jackie, Daily Express, 16 October 1990)

No real woman, they say, would be seen dead in a Vivienne Westwood outfit. The media have repeatedly laughed, jeered and sneered at her "outrageous" creations, but a growing coterie of style cognoscenti (real women, to boot) is proving them wrong.

"I would do anything for Vivienne" says lady McAlpine, "She's so under-appreciated."

Jibby Beane has been a fan for years, so much so that when she is not busy running her own gallery she acts as adviser behind the counter at Westwood's conduit street shop in London (Plate 30).

The Westminster councillor Olga Polizzi wears Westwood. Sian Phillips said:

"I would not have dreamt of wearing Westwood had it not been for a particular dress that looked so gorgeous on Glynis Barber."

(REED, Paula, The Sunday Times, 3 April 1994)

Lady Henrietta Rous journalist (Plate 31) loves Westwood clothes and says that Westwood:

"Doesn't charge half of what the French and Italians do."

Kara Harris Heavey (Plate 32) is a student and fashion model who says she lives in leggings and T-shirts, but



PLATE 30



Jibby Beane

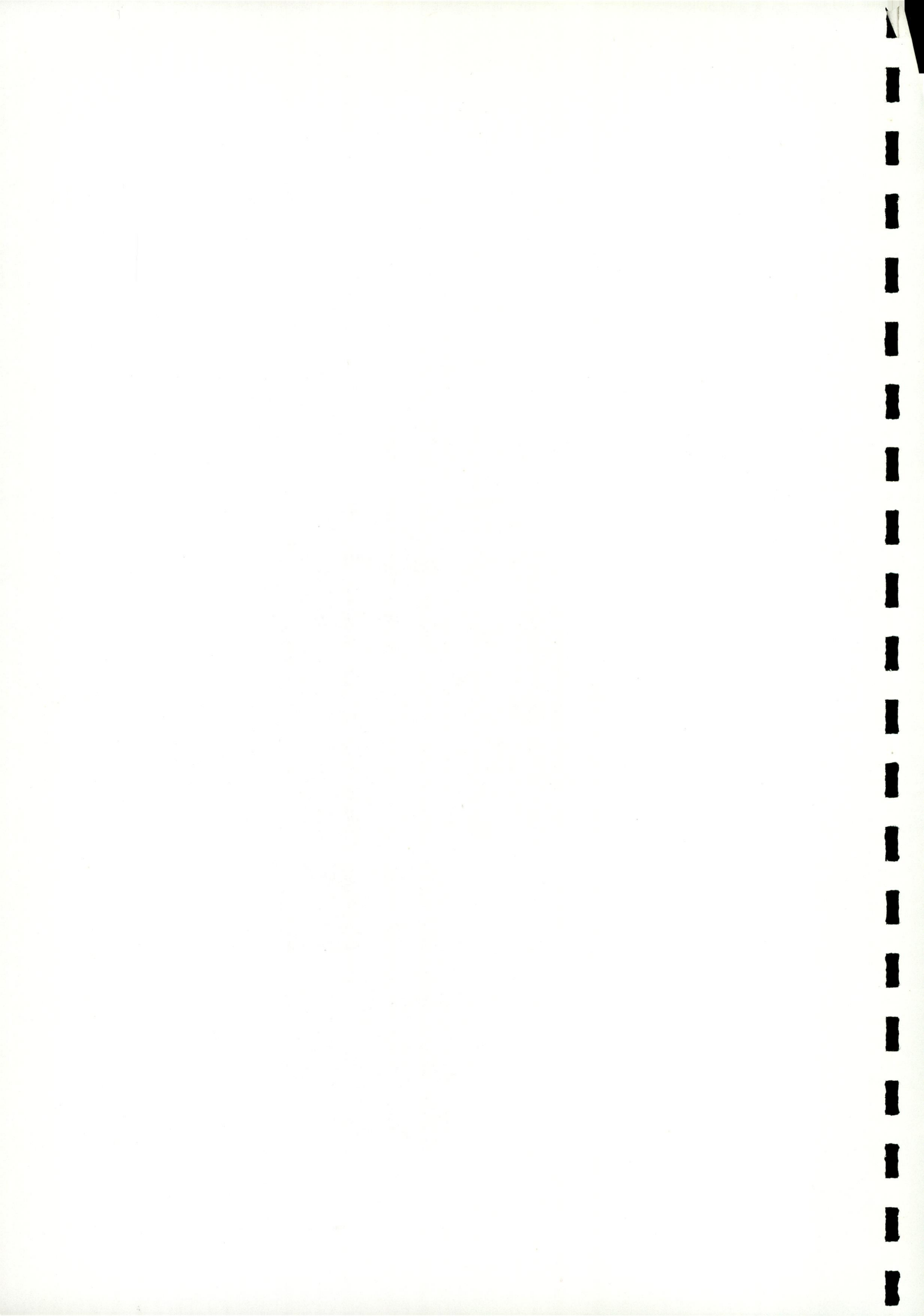




PLATE 31

Lady Henrietta Rous

Journalist, dog-lover
and Wessex regionalist



Lady Henrietta Rous



PLATE 32

Kara Harris Heavey

Philosophy student and part-time model



Kara Harris Heavey

"There are times when a feather-trimmed taffeta suit is irresistible."

(REED, Paula, The Sunday Times, 3 April 1994)

Eva Gundersen, a florist says of Westwood:

"She is extreme, but there's real genius in her work."

(REED, Paula, The Sunday Times, 3 April 1994)

"As Long as I feel what I'm doing is right, I don't care if I'm laughed at ... and it would worry me a bit if everyone suddenly loved what I did."

(WESTWOOD, BARBER, Richard, Mirror Women, 3 November 1993)

Nevertheless, Britain's favourite national joke is in danger of becoming a living museum piece herself unless more real people realise they can wear Westwood.

CHAPTER 7

Q So what about the salon you'd like to start?

A *"I want to do something optimistic. Intellectuals are isolated, you've got to bring them together. I need money for the salon, to invite people, to give them a nice dinner. Prince Charles should support art and culture because culture is the badge of civilisation."*

"I despair of this so-called civilisation that we live in, this cult of mediocrity. Here I must quote Huxley ... "We don't let people do what they like, we make them like what they do"... we don't need an Adolf Hitler to burn the books. Nobody reads them anyway."

(WESTWOOD quoted, GERRARD, Nicci, Life, 22 January 1995)

There are few people who would be more welcome at Vivienne Westwoods salon (Plate 33) than John Stuart Mill. He's her kind of thinker. So are Bertrand Russell and Aldous Huxley. In the years since she split up with McLaren Vivienne has embraced not just a new philosophy but philosophy itself.

Its been the thing, over the last decade, for a fashion designer to have a creative muse. Vivienne by contrast, has an intellectual one.

"Gary directs my reading. He's been reading in the British Museum for 30 years."

(TURNER, Lowri, Evening Standard, 20 May 1991)

Gary is a bit of a mystery. He used to be a painter - and that's how he met Vivienne, because he wanted to paint her portrait. But one day, Gary threw away all his paints and immersed himself in books instead. Since then he's been reading and coaching Vivienne.

Gary Ness has little respect for the time he lives in. He would have preferred an earlier era, before the decades of the twentieth century rolled on.

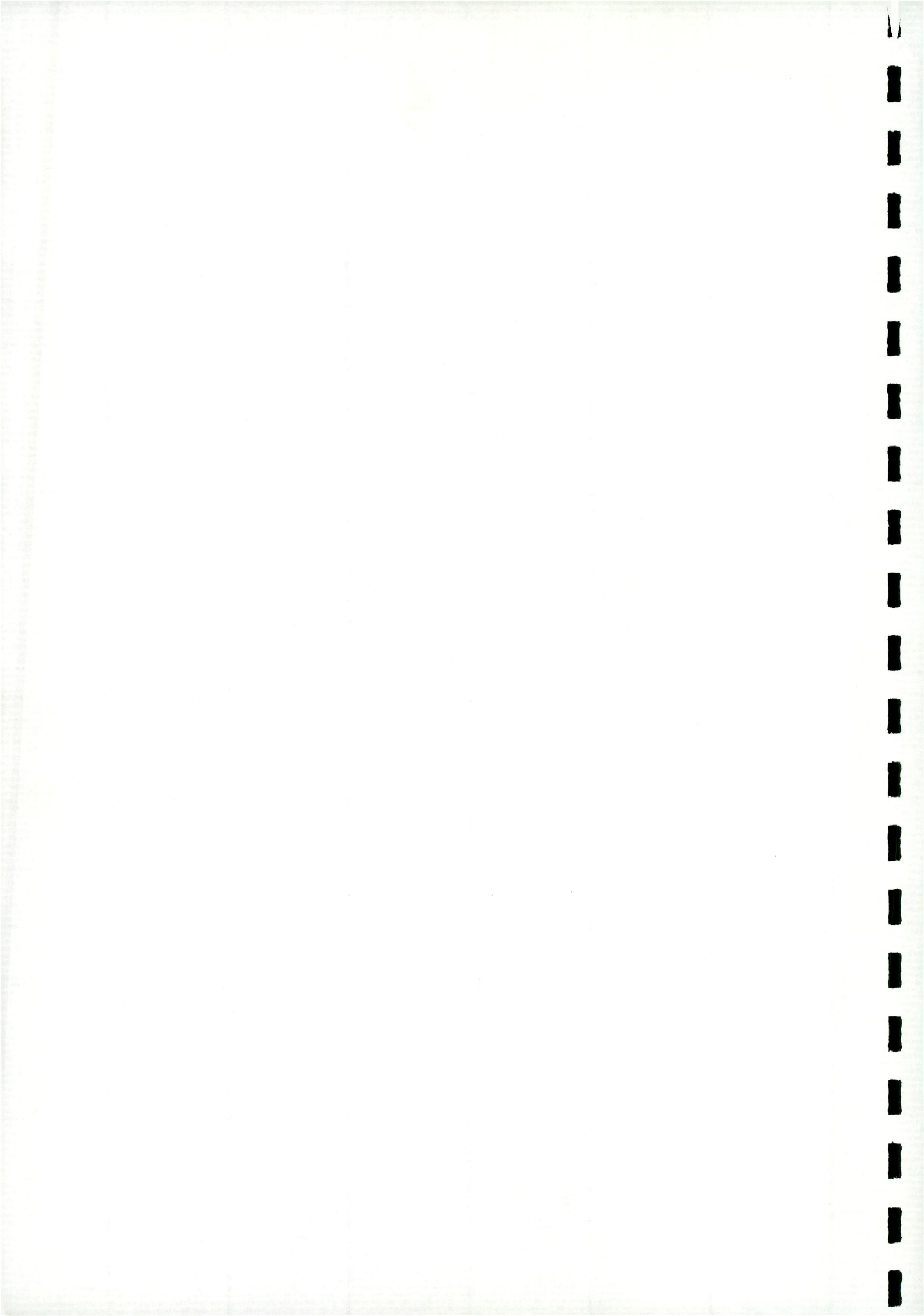
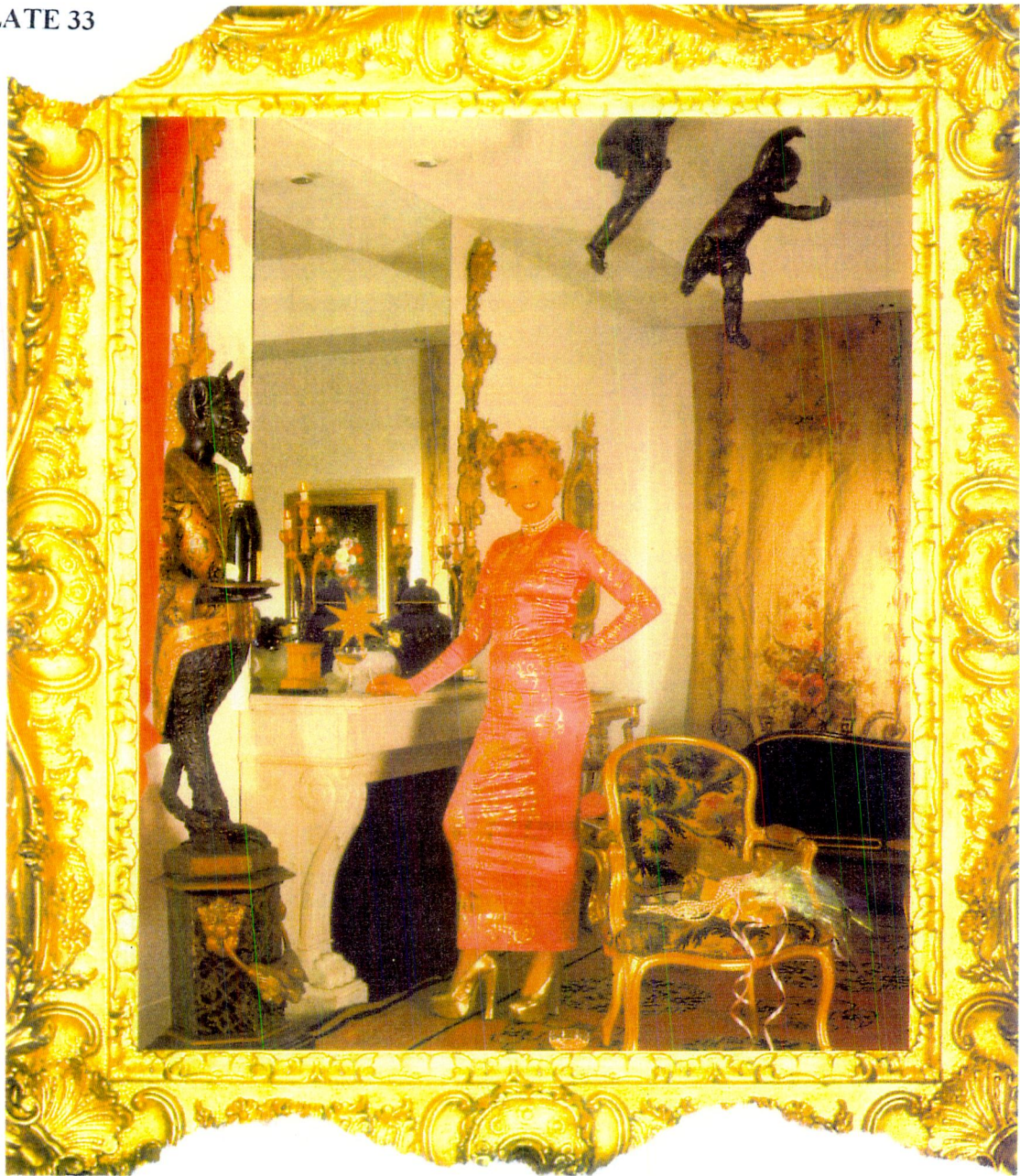




PLATE 33



Vivienne Westwood in her proto salon at the D & D building

Having been converted to the idea of intellectuality, Westwood is dedicating herself to reintroducing the exchange of ideas into English society by setting up a salon where the thinkers and creators, the beautiful and the hopeful, the patrons and the promising can co-mingle to promote a high level of cultural debate.

“I myself am hoping to put my own money into this ... I do find fashion very rewarding, but it’s a means to an end. If I haven’t done it within the next two years I’m going to stop designing and raise money by talking to people.”

(WESTWOOD, DOBEY, Liz, The Independent on Sunday, 5 January 1992)

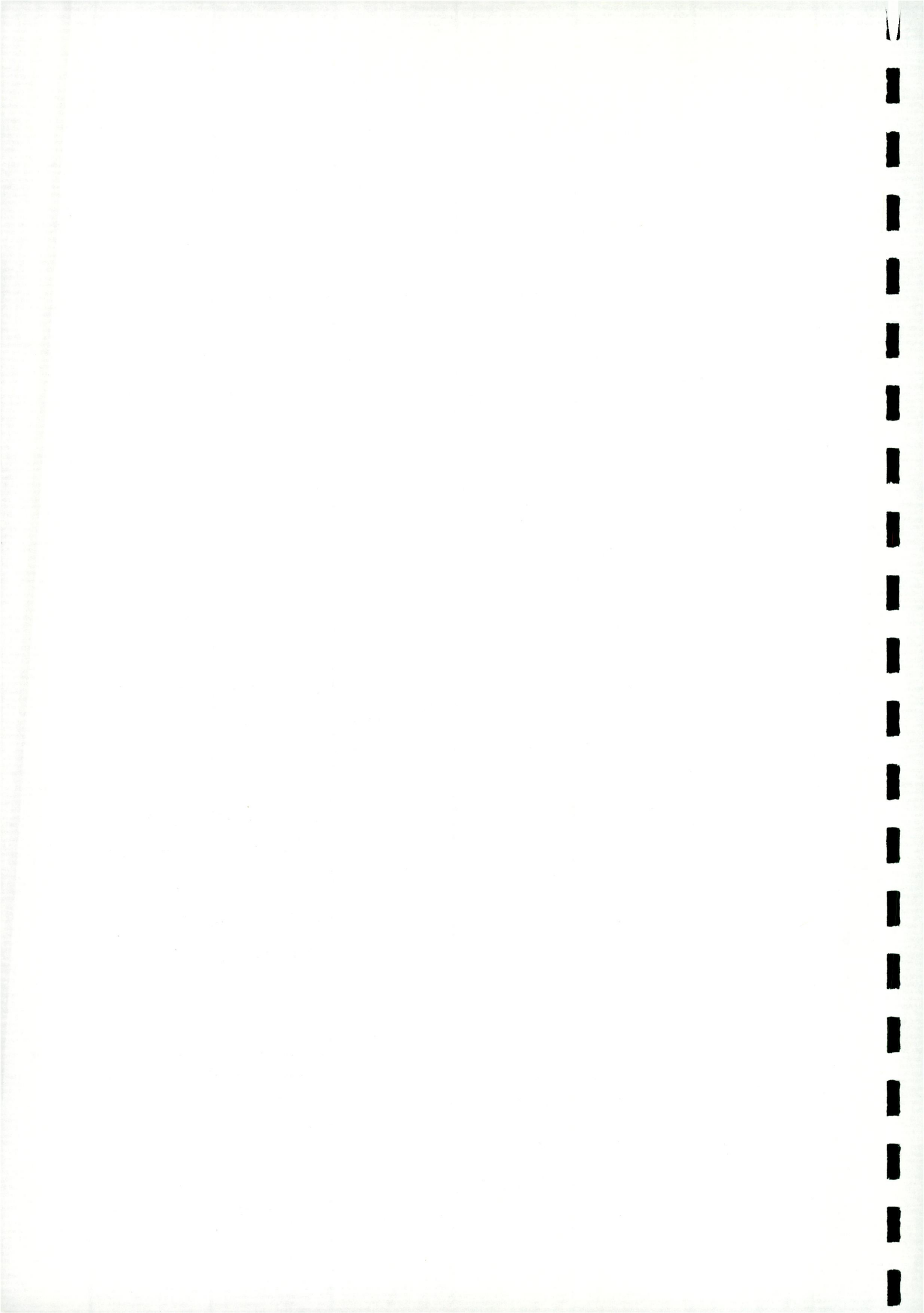
If Westwoods salon is to exist at all, it won’t be in the warren of rooms from which she works day-to-day. Perhaps a kind patron will come along. Indeed, Vivienne is quite keen on a donation from the Duke of Westminster himself, he being her landlord, and having so much property and all.

“I need about £2 million ... there must be millionaires somewhere who wants to do something useful with their money why not give it to someone intelligent for a change?”

(WESTWOOD quoted, JOBEY, Liz, The Independent on Sunday, 5 January 1992)

Salons have rarely flourished among the proletariat, and the middle class are scorned by Westwood for their middle brow-ness. This is an elitist thing, a long way from punk. But Vivienne might just carry it off. From Madame de Staël through Julie Burchhill’s little mid-eighties gatherings in the Groucho Club, to Lady Antonio Frazer’s June 20th group, it’s been women who have hostessed their artistic acquaintances into regular groups.

Westwood may be eccentric, her clothes may be considered unwearable, she may seriously take up ideas the rest of us have dismissed as mad, or at best unnecessary to our everyday existence. But this everyday existence is what she abhors. You might not want to stumble along in those foot-high heels. But once you’re up there, it’s amazing what you can see.



CHAPTER 8

Ever since she preached anarchy and put a safety pin through the Queen's nose, Westwood has struggled for credibility as a serious designer. Just when it looks as if she is returning to hygienic society by designing immaculately well-tailored tweeds and twin-sets, she sends page three girls down the catwalk in 10-inch heels and saucy peek-a-boo skirts. Or a model shows her backside to the world's assembled press photographers. Or Westwood appears on TV, aged 49 wearing nothing below the waist but a pair of flesh-coloured tights with a small fig leaf where fig leaves really ought to be large.

Westwood can't understand why people find her so outrageous.

Vivienne has always been walking on the wild side of fashion innovation. Every way-out trend can be traced back to the shop she ran together with her lover and partner Malcolm McLaren in the Kings Road, Chelsea.

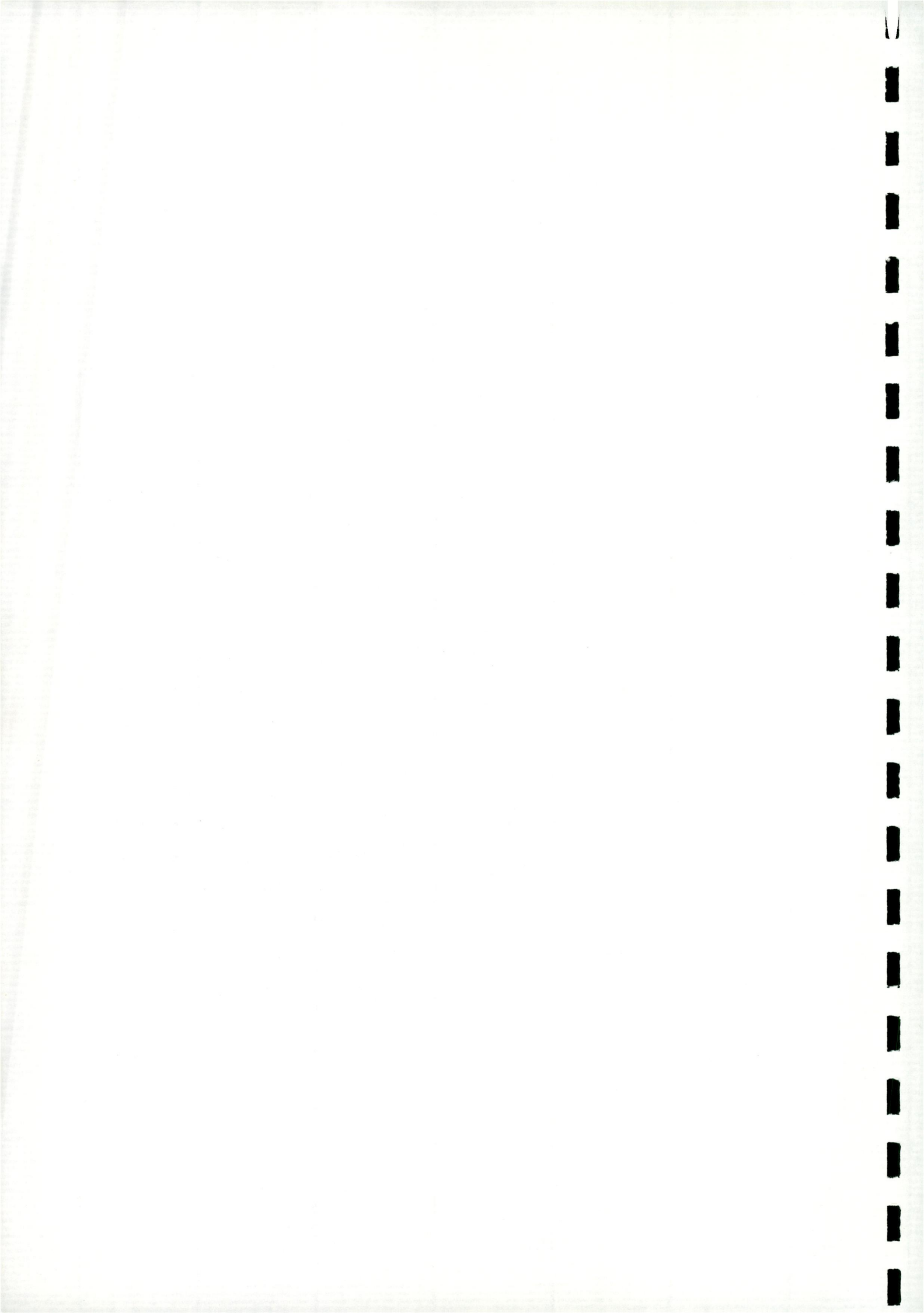
Past collection included vast platform heels, and her collaboration with the Sex Pistols creator Malcolm McLaren produced not only punks, but the Buffalo Girl look with models swathed in mid-coloured layers.

She has toyed with all sorts of sartorial stereotypes, displacing them into her successive collections. Naughty schoolgirl and city gents, lord and lady muck, bedeviled and bescarfed. Pirates and savages gave way to Hobos. In the later eighties she presented a contorted vision of the sort of clothes worn by the Queen. Marc Bohan, designer for Normal Hartnell said in the Evening Standard, June 1992:

"The thing about Vivienne Westwood is that she's a little crazy and over the top - but I suppose that is her character and that is what makes her famous. Vivienne has always done her own thing."

(ROLFE, Gait, Daily Mail, 16 October 1990)

"Vivienne Westwood pushed the frontiers. She has an extraordinary insight that enables her to do fresh and inventive things."



(Valerie Mendes, keeper of twentieth century costume, V & A)

She is one of her own keenest customers, wearing outfits that few others would dare to wear publicly. But she rejoices in her reputation for eccentricity.

"It's such a badge of honour in this conformist age"

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, quoted WARK, Penny Today, 15 October 1993)

She is the woman who spearheaded the revulsion against hard edged power-dressing. She is the woman who long abhorred the skeletal figure presented as female perfection (It doesn't stop her using models like Kate Moss). She is the one who put old women, pregnant women and voluptuous women regarded as fat on to her catwalk, opening her eyes to sensuousness and gentleness in place of commercial sex appeal.

But Westwood is generous with her sexual energy and shares it around. She prints it on T-shirts (Plate 34) large phalluses, small phalluses, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs engaged in group sex.

Westwood would like us not just to look at her clothes, but to appreciate the "intellectual curiosity" behind their design: the Pompeii graffiti that inspired the phallus, the book on Green mythology that put the fig leaf on the tights, the Watteau painting that gave a crinoline effect to the mini-skirt. But you can't help thinking that all this effort is wasted on clothes bought by the kind of people whose idea of being well read is buying Hello! once a month. With eccentric schoolteacherly concern for the education of the fashion dunces in her orbit, Westwood gives people books. Usually nothing more recent than 200 years old. For her model (muse Sarah Stockbridge (Plate 35) seven volumes of the memoirs of Casanova.

"I got halfway through the first one then gave up."

(STOCKBRIDGE, Sarah, quoted Choice Blitz)

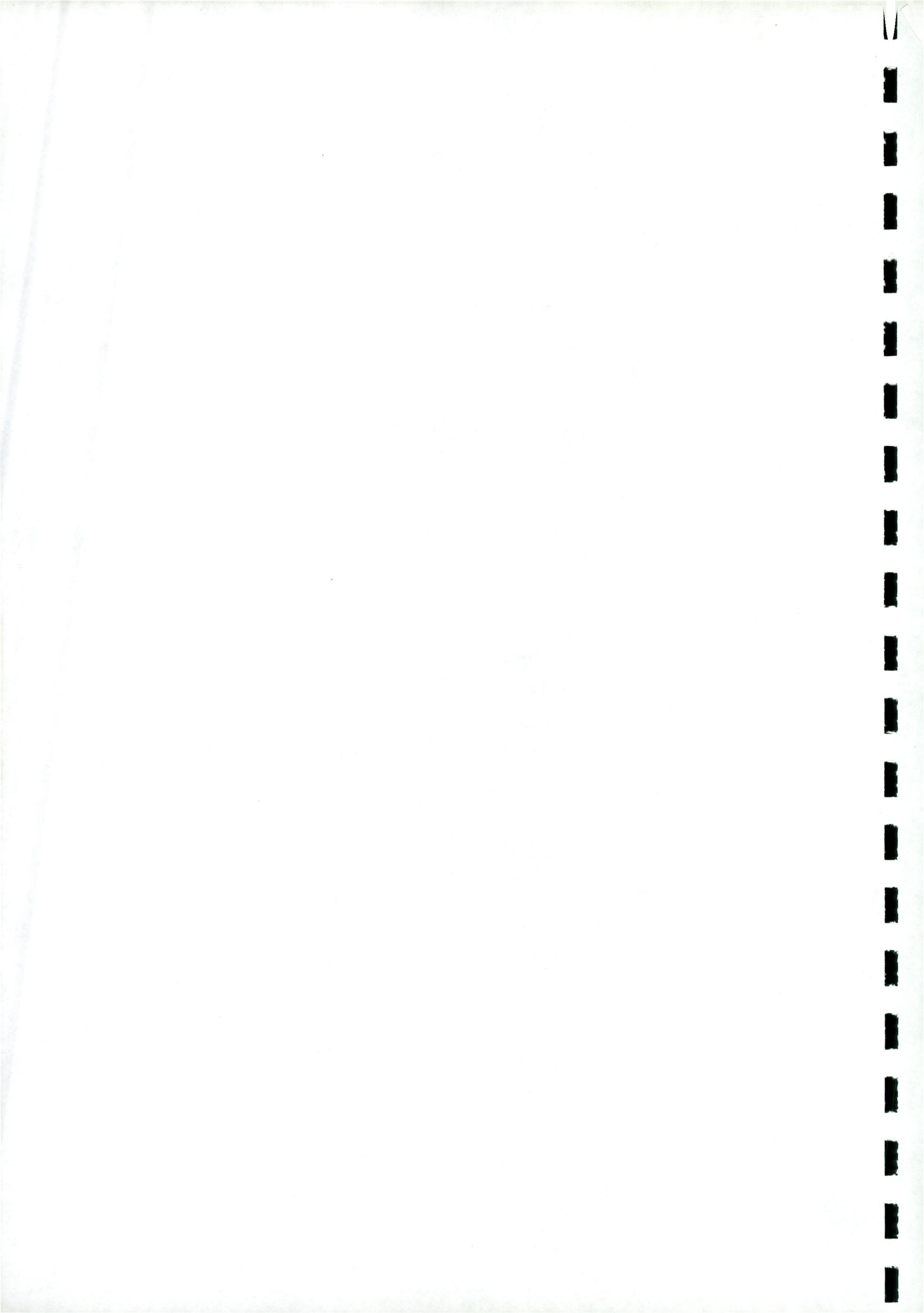
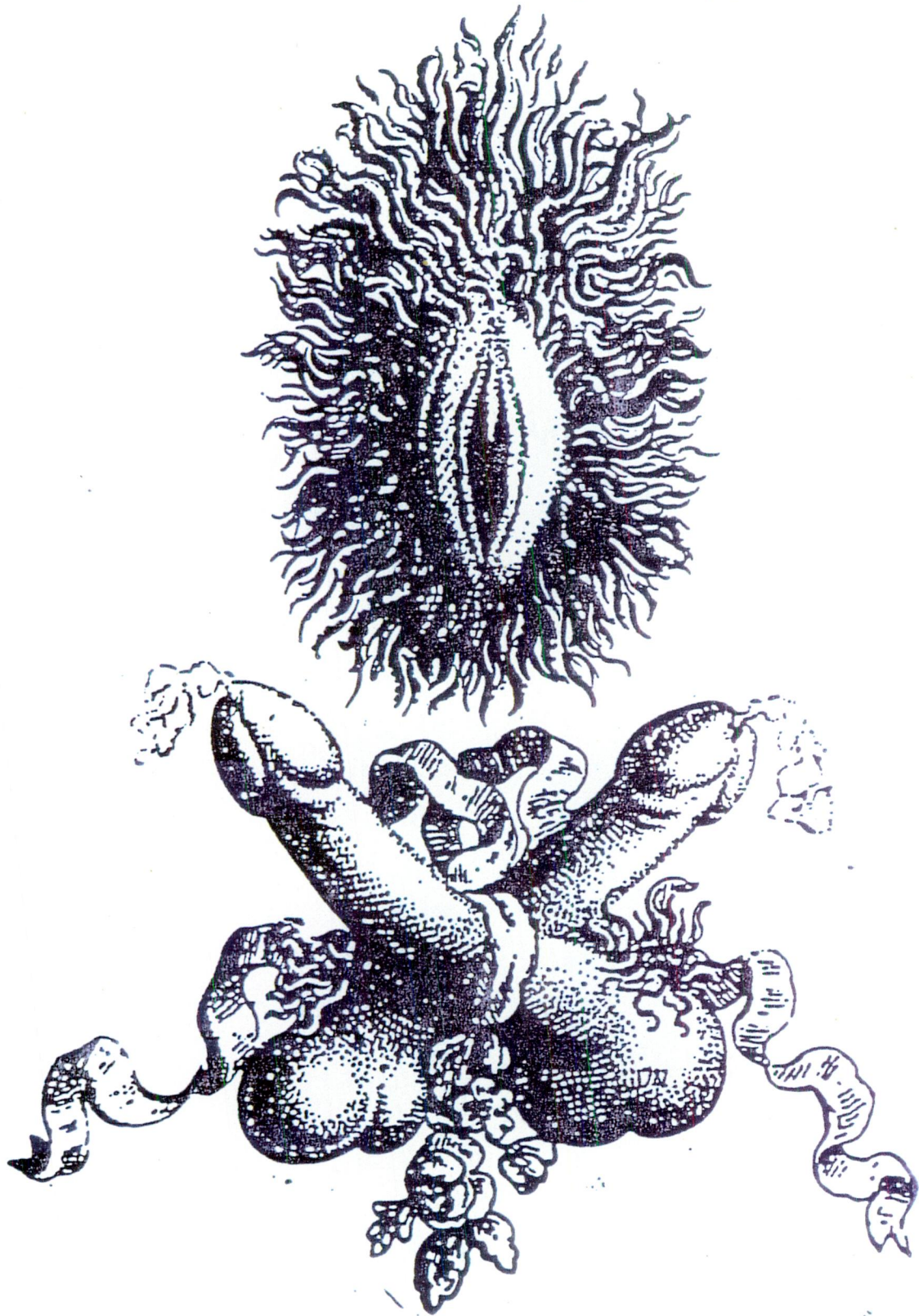




PLATE 34



A print from one of Vivienne Westwoods T-shirts



PLATE 35



Sarah Stockbridge one of Westwoods muses

Another acquaintance, upon leaving her job as editor of a fashion magazine, received a book of 17th century French philosophy. Ex-employees speak of being instructed to study alchemy and Jungian psychology, the better to understand the roots of her work (Facts compiled from FLETT, Kathryn, The Guardian, 15 October 1990)).

She discovered books after she became an adult and she looks all the words up conscientiously in a dictionary.

Westwoods greatest fear is to lack intelligence - this is not to say that she minds appearing stupid.

Now that all the anarchic nonsense is over, Westwood wants her ideas to be taken seriously.

“Shall I tell you about my ideas for a club or the abolition of philistinism?”

(WESTWOOD, BRAMPTON, Sally, The Times Review, 12 October 1991)

Westwoods esoteric vocabulary has changed considerably since the days when she clad the punk movement. Now her buzz words are “tradition” and Seville Row.

“After a while I got tired of punk, because to have credibility you had to be poor and look it.”

(WESTWOOD, DAVIDSON, John, the Scotsman, 11 August 1993)

Westwood is resolutely un-glamorous. She has the sort of lived-in face that belongs on a dralon sofa in a TV documentary about bad housing. If she announced that she was just ripping down to the Rovers for 20 woodbines and a bottle of stout you wouldn't be at all surprised.

Yet despite her apparent ordinariness, Westwood is famous for originating ideas which may seem ludicrous and unwearable at the time, but which invariably appear two seasons later, often in a more wearable form on other designers catwalks.

Once she was styled to Queen of Punk. Now it is not quite clear what mantle Vivienne Westwood is now seeking - or, indeed if she wishes to wear any mantle at all.

Vivienne Westwood, like her hairdo, appears to have softened with age. She professed a fondness for monarchy and strikes regal poses for the camera (Plate 36). She now also lectures in Vienna to the "brain dead" students she once mocked.

"I now know the only real subversion lies in ideas."

(REED, Paula, Style and Travel, 27 October 1993)

Westwood is still working to realise her latest ambition, to create a literary salon with herself the hostess of her own self-styled elitist class.

"I always prefer to do things in a different way."

(WESTWOOD, DOBEY, Liz, The Independent on Sunday, 5 January 1992)

Westwood is a woman of many words. She answers every question in long and sometimes laborious detail, although she is astonishingly had at small talk, rotten as a gossip and will not discuss her private life. Or rather, she will. It is just that her private life is spent in books not night clubs, and so she has more to say about philosophy than pop. Her sole pastime is reading - she has no television.

"There's no exchange of ideas in television. It's a passive occupation."

(WESTWOOD, TURNER, Steve, 1984)

She reads no newspapers or magazines other than "Private Eye", is indifferent to contemporary literature and allergic to contemporary thought.



PLATE 36



Vivienne Westwood

Even with reporters, she prefers talking about anything but work. Her conversations, not unlike her collections, usually covers surprisingly varied ground, with bold statements in rapid-fire order, frequently peppered with quotations from John Stuart Mill, André Gide and Aldous Huxley.

She frequently mentions the state of the world, especially the United States, all forms of mass culture and the quality of the English system of publicly funded education.

“I’ve never seen a more brain-damaged youth than in the past decade and especially in the last five years ... what these people should be doing is typing to use their brains in some way.”

(WESTWOOD, MOLINGER, Jackie, Hello, 1992)

She used to encourage young people to be active, to rebel, to do things, no matter what. But now she says:

“I have learned that the only true subversion lies in ideas.”

(REED, Paula, Style & Travel, 27 October 1993)

Westwood was appointed (in early 1990’s) head of the panel of judges of the Lloyds Bank fashion challenge, a national competition aimed at encouraging young people of school age to develop their creative design skills. How does she reconcile this with her beliefs?

“I’m trying to encourage the organisers to participate in the realising of their ideas. Instead of them just submitting a drawing and then seeing the garment made up. I would like them to be in some ways involved in the technical process. Ideas in isolation are meaningless.”

(WESTWOOD, Vivienne, BARBER, Lynn, The Independent on Sunday, 18 February 1990)

After all she says:

“... I don’t care about 95% of the people in the world. I’m just interested in protecting genius, if it’s possible.”

“When I talk about those 95%, what I mean is that those people shouldn’t be encouraged to believe they can be orchids. They have to know that they are weeds and be content with that, and be very good weeds and not strangle the orchids.”

(WESTWOOD, quoted HUME, Marion, The Independent 15 October 1993)

Miss Westwood clearly sees herself as one of those orchids. Vivienne Westwood like Margaret Thatcher and Barbara Cartland overlap significantly. All three are revolted by the present and imagine that previous realities were far better. In turbulent times it is perhaps natural to retreat into an idealised past, but one should remember that it is the past that has brought us to this present turbulence.

Westwood has grown more, not less eccentric in her views, even though she is now regarded - at least by the fashion industry as something of an establishment figure.

So what now for Vivienne Westwood - she says she is no longer interested in attaching the establishing. She has reached her pinnacle in the fashion world - now she wants to protect genius

In my opinion the only new creation she can reinvent is herself by retiring from the fashion world. How else will she finally be hailed as she genius, she always thought she was. Many other artists have become famous only after they’ve died but in the words of Vivienne:

“I have very intention of being successful because when I die I’ll feel very stupid if I never did what I really wanted.”

(WESTWOOD, JOBEY, Liz, The Independent, 5 January, 1992)

And what Westwood really wants is the success of her literary salon. She herself has said.

“... if I haven’t done it within the next two years I’m going to give up designing and raise money by talking to people.”



Vivienne Westwood

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALAI, Susan, "Westwood sings the praises of the crinoline" Womens Wear Daily, 27 January 1986.

ASH, Juliet and WILSON, Elizabeth, Chic Thrills, Published by Pandora Press, 1992.

BANBER, Lynn, "How Vivienne Westwood took the fun out of frocks", The Independent on Sunday, 18 February, 1990.

BARBER, Richard, "I'd make Di as trendy as this" Mirror Women, 3 November, 1993.

MODLINGER, Jackie, Wacky Westwood .. versus cool Dior, Daily Express, 18 March, 1993.

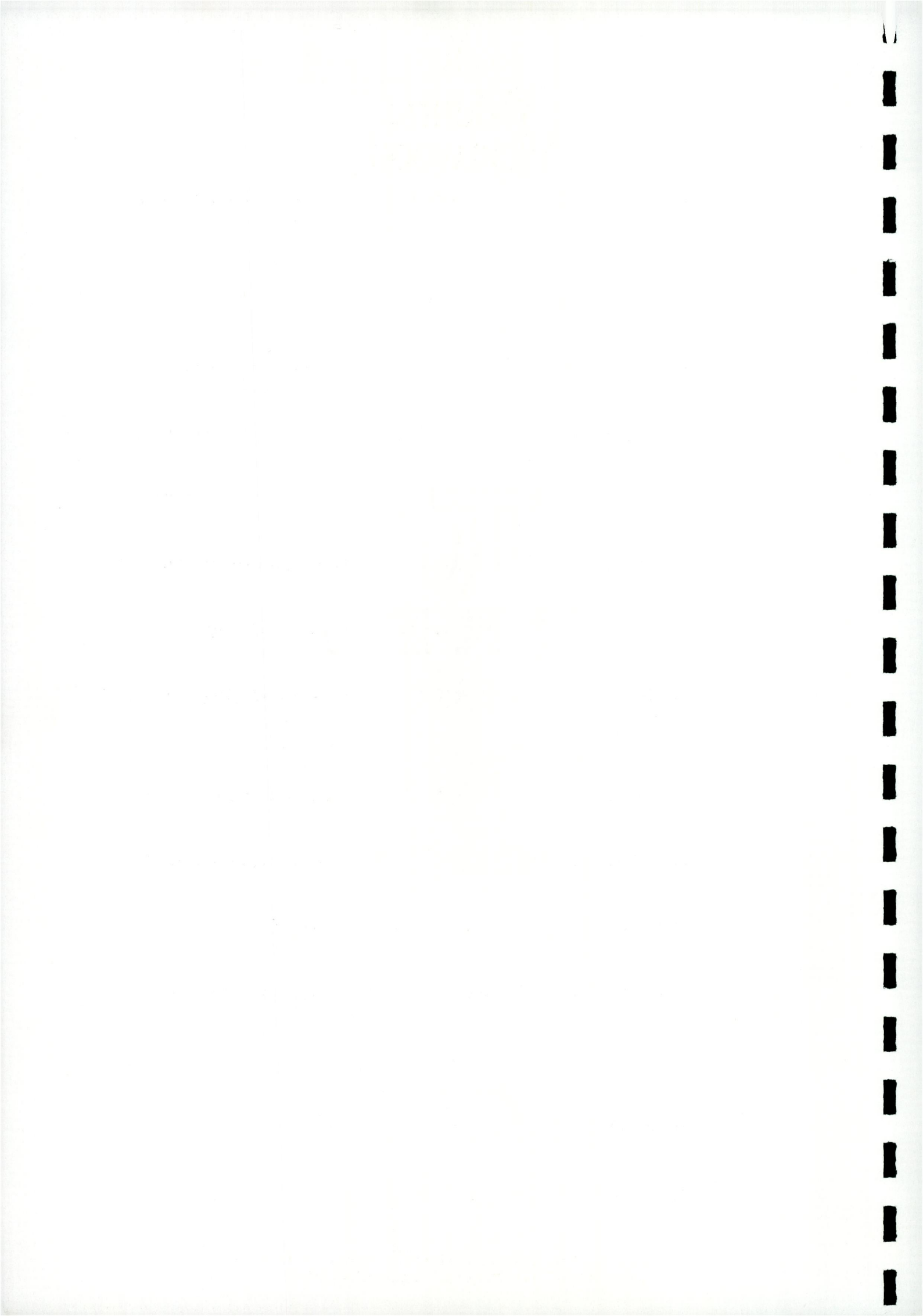
BARKER, Richard, "Vivienne Westwood from Catwalk to Catalogue", Clothes, January, 1994.

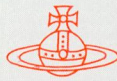
BLITZ, "Choice", May 1986.

BLITZ, Choice, March 1981.

BRACKETT, Marcia, "Vivienne's Shock Shop" Mirror Woman, 30 September, 1992.

BRAGG, Melvyn, Edition/Presenter, The South Bank Show, Script "Vivienne Westwood".





Vivienne Westwood

BRAMPTON, Sally, "God Save the Queen (The Fashion Regime)", The Times, Review, 12 October 1991.

BRAMPTON, Sally, "A Briton in Paris", The Guardian, 18 March 1993.

DAVIDSON, John, "Wonderful Westwood" The Scotsman, 11 August 1993.

DAVIDSON, John, "Wonderful Westwood" The Scotsman, 11 August, 1993.

DOKTON, Terry, "Clothes that ask Questions", The Soho News, April 1983.

FALLOWELL, Duncan, "Facing Westwood", Mikabella, November, 1991.

FEINSTEIN, Sharon, "She gives stars a dressing down" The Express.

FEINSTEIN, Sharon, "Wicked Witch of the Westwood" Daily Express, 11 October, 1990.

FLETT, Kathryn, "Withering Heights" The Guardian, 3 June, 1993.

FLETT, Kathryn, "Design Queen of Anarchy", The Guardian, 15 October, 1990.

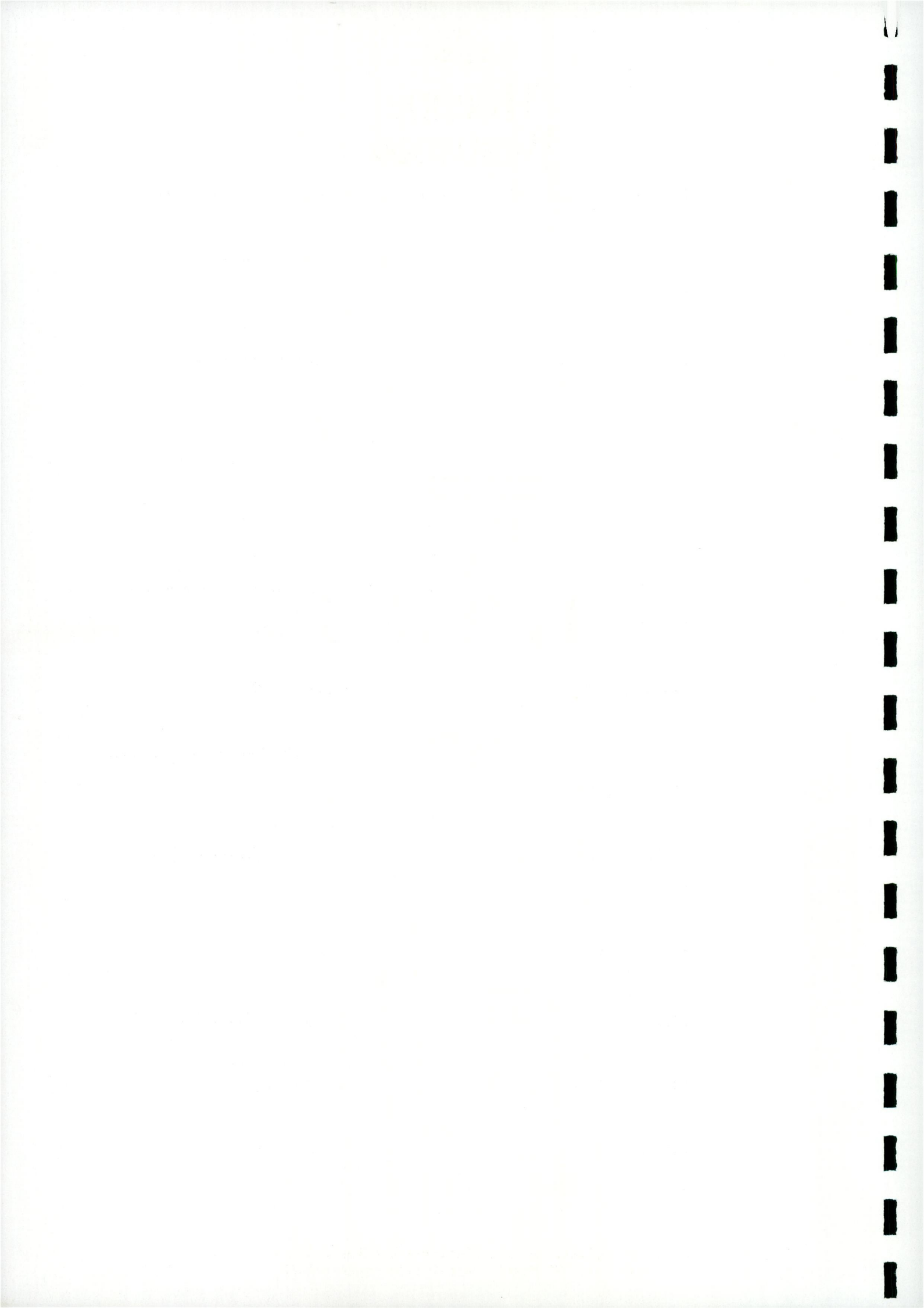
FRANKLIN, Lanyn, "Rule, Britannia" 1-D, November, 1992.

GERRARD, Nicci, "Vivienne Westwood Knows Women", Life, 22 January, 1995.

HAGGARD, Claire, The Independent, May 1990.

HEGERTY, Anne, "From Punk to Pukka".

ARNOLD, Sue, Frocks and Culture Shock.





Vivienne Westwood

HOWARD, Samantha, "Viv Shocks it to you" Sun Woman, 21 April, 1993.

HOWELL, Georgina, Sultans of Style: Thirty years of fashion and passion, 1960-90, London Ebiny, 1990.

HUME, Marion, "Out of the outrage comes gold", The Independent, 15 October, 1993.

JOBEY, Liz, "Salon Fever" The Independent on Sunday, 5 January, 1992.

KEMP, Mary, The People, 20 October, 1991.

LESSER, Guy, "Vivienne Westwood: Batty Fashions of the Verge of Boom" Herald Tribune, Style International, 12 August, 1990.

LOTT, Tim, The Sunday Correspondent, 19 November, 1989.

McDOWELLS Directory of Twentieth Century Fashion, Copyright Colin McDowell, 1984.

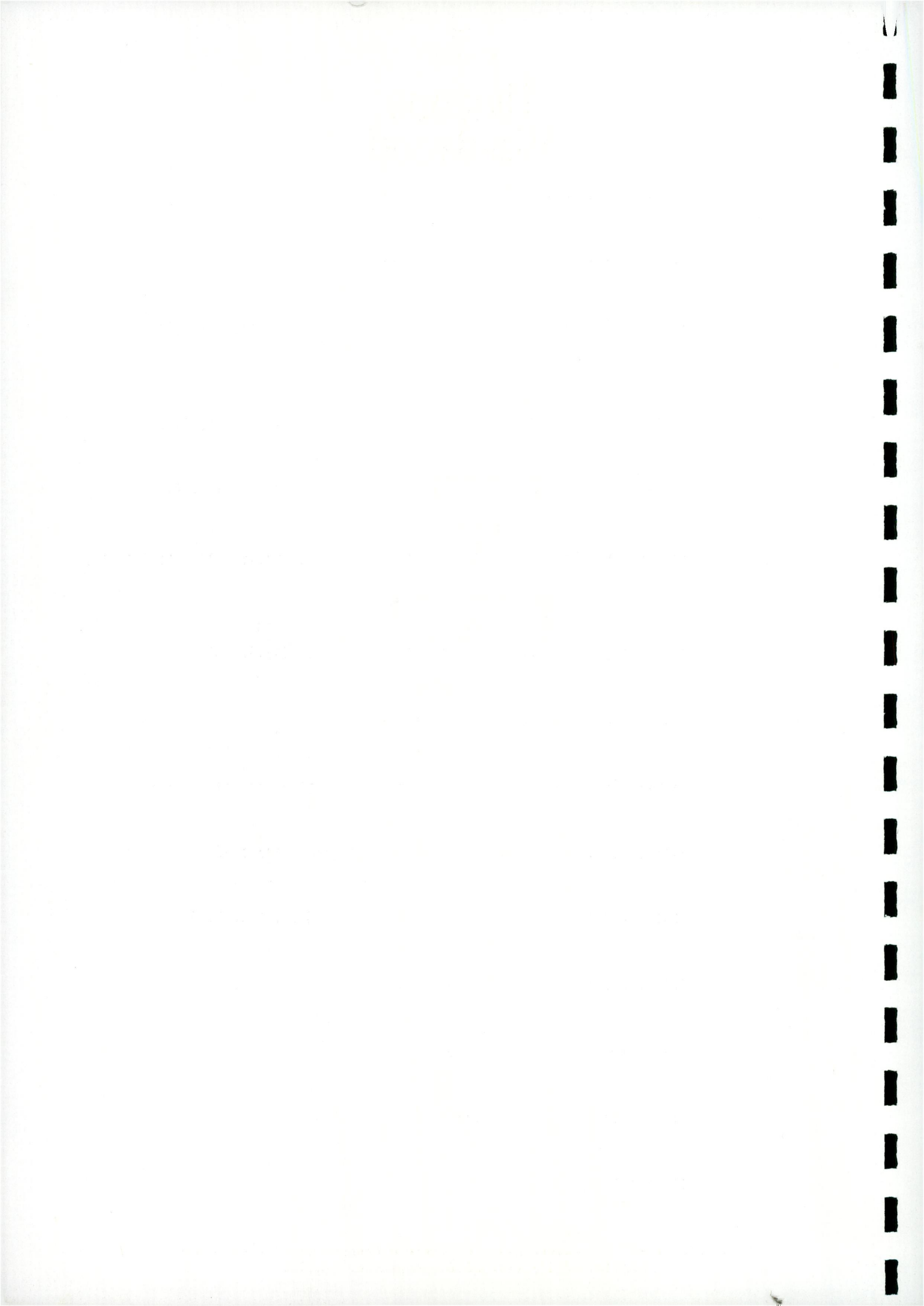
MELLOR, Karen, "Today on the Height of Nonsense Splatforms!" Today, 19 March, 1993.

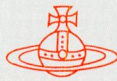
MELLOR, Karen, Today, 19 March, 1993.

MENKES, Suzy, "Walking Still Wildly into the 1980's", The Times, 7 April 1981.

MENKES, Suzy, International Herald Tribune, October, 1993.

MODLINGER, Jackie, "Queen of Punk" Daily Express, 1990.





Vivienne Westwood

MODLINGER, Jackie, "Daily Express", 16 October 1990.

MODLINGER, Jackie, Vivienne Westwood, Hello, 1992.

MULVAGH, Jane, "Outrageous Westwood" The Irish Times, 14 November, 1989.

MURTO, Michael, "Vivienne Westwood" The Soho News, 2 March, 1982.

O'DWYER, Thom, "The Word According to Westwood" ?, October 1992.

REED, Paula, "Who wears Westwood", The Sunday Times, The Magazine, 3 April 1994.

REED, Paula, "The Best of British" Style and Travel, 27 October, 1993.

ROBERTS, Yvonne, "Queen Viv", Harpers.

ROLFE, Gail, "Britain's' Designers of the Year" Daily Mail, 16 October, 1990.

ROSATO, Stella, "Too Much to Bare" Daily Express, 4 June, 1992.

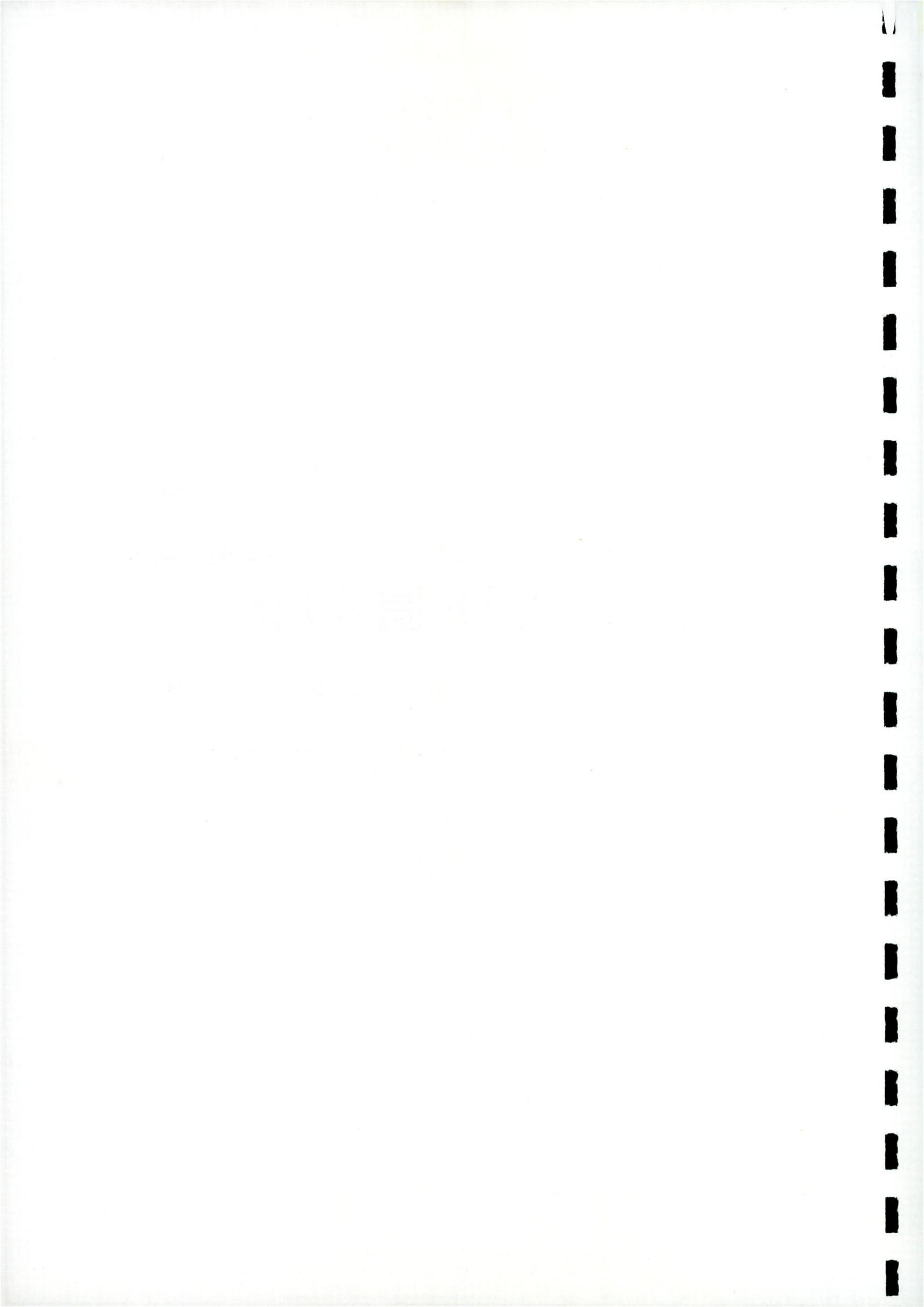
SEBAG-MONTEFIORE, Hugh, "Dressed to make a killing" The Mail on Sunday.

SHELLY, Jim, "A Matter of Choice", Blitz, 1991.

SPINDLER, Amy, "Westwood Ho!"

The Sunday Independent, November 1989.

TUBERIS, Liz, Vogue.





Vivienne Westwood

TURNER, Lowri, "Vivienne Westwood the Legend", Evening Standard, 20 May 1991.

TURNER, Steve, "Good Talking to Vivienne Westwood" ?, 1984.

VREELAND, Diana, Falio.

WARK, Penny, "Vivienne the Shocker" Today, 15 October 1993.

WEBB, Gervase, "Dare you wear it at 51" Evening Standard, 3 June 1992.

WESTWOOD, Vivienne, "Pursuing an image without any taste", Vanity Fair, 1989.

WESTWOOD, Vivienne, The Times, April, 1981.

WESTWOOD, Vivienne, "New Generation" Drapers Record, 31 October.

WILSON, Eliz & ASH, Juliet, "Chic Thrills", London, Pandora, 1992.

The Queen of Kings Road, Ms London, 27 October, 1986.

