

EROTICISM IN CLOTHES.

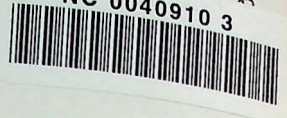
DEGREE THESIS

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INTRODUCTION :

What is erotic ; "Erotic" of sexual love, arousing sexual interest. Ref. (1).

This is not about kinky clothes or clothes used purely for sex or what you should wear when you want to have sex with somebody. It is about the clothes we wear everyday and the messages we give out through our clothes.

When I say erotic clothing I am talking about clothes that assist a person in arousing sexual interest in another person. They are not blantant or obvious, for then, they are not erotic as eroticism in clothes (in my opinion) is a subtle art of dressing.

However everyone has their own opinion of what eroticism is. For me it is something that is beautiful and aesthetically pleasing. There is at times a fine line between what is considered erotic and what is considered sexual. Fig. (1). This photograph of a women in a swimsuit, to me is very erotic, she has perfect form and shape, but then I see it from a womens point of view perhaps if I was male, I'd see it differently. There are however few of us with perfect form or shape and we endeavour to change our shapes to whatever our fashions dictates at the time, whether it be through discomfort, mutilation, distortion, decoration, risk to life and health.



Fig 1.

Through out history fashion has dictated its ideals of beauty in both men and women. Ref. (2). In 500 BC, the Egyptians, a lean and elegant race were astounded by the fatness of the African Queens. However this fatness was considered a form of wealth and rank. A good figure in the 15th. century included thrust forward stomach and backward stance. The exact opposite in Victorian times, the thrust our chest, pushed back pelvis and protruding bottom. In mid 17th. century beauty was voluptuous and loosely dressed. The Napoleonic era brought forth a liberal interpretation of 'classical' dress. Then a looseness was admired again in the 1920's.

Each period of fashion has, as its basis a deliberate intention to stimulate sexually either others or the wearer. However our clothes now not only need to stimulate but they must also identify, communicate, and act as a mediator between groups. The need for our clothing to identify with a group of sect only ratifies the need we have to belong to a certain section of society.

Our 'clothes' or 'apparel' give the first messages of who we are and what we are. In order to identify with this we must create a veil of images, or reasons, so we can see ourselves as we wish to be seen. Fashion magazines are a network of signs dictation how we should be seen and what way we can achieve it. However one's interpretation of these messages can only be relevant to the way one constructs one's own fashion interpretation, a secondary schoodgirl's interpretation of a garment would be considerably different from a thirty year old's, as would the message they would both portray clothes can only create the images for us, e.g. a tweed pleated skirt, plain blouse, a v-necked lambswool cardigan, flesh coloured tights a pair of court shoes, and a neat bobbed hair cut describes an image of efficiency, an average secretary, neat trim and precise. But had I said, denim jeans a sweat shirt, sneakers, long loose hair, this would conjures up a completely different image, a casual look; you would not consider the two people doing the same job.

Our clothes do the talking for us, helping us to cover up our own inadequacy and insecurity, or expressing the confidants we have ourselves.

## CHAPTER 1.

### THE FIG LEAF.

"When Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, the eyes of both were opened and they knew they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons, unto Adam also to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them".Ref(1).

In many ways the fig leaf conjures up the explanation for clothes, sexual modesty. Fig (1). Our innate feeling of guilt and shame resulting from the exposure of particular parts of the body can be related back to the legend of Adam and Eve. The Christian religion has done more than time in developing our shame and guilt against our own bodies.

The early Christian writers such as Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria thought the sight of womens bodies or faces posed a temptation to sin and they should be concealed as much as possible, thus only increasing the desire to see what has been hidden or banished away from the eye of men. Women have been considered evil temptress, inducing mens desires, but perhaps it is more true to say that by concealing the naked body, it can only provoke sexual interest,

"When primitive peoples are unaccustomed to wearing clothing putting it on for the first time does not decrease their immorality as the ladies of missionary societies think it will" Ref (2).

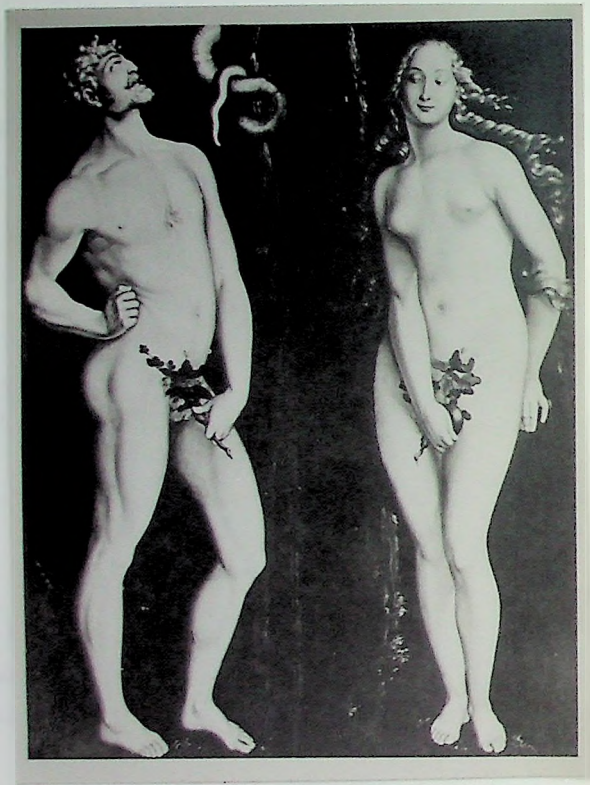


Fig. 1.



It is just the opposite effect. It draws attention to the body, especially to the parts of it which are covered for the first time.

Arthur Grimble, Research Commissioner of The Gilbert and Ellice Islands, in the South Pacific Ocean, expressed his views regarding this matter. "Clothes may have originated in the garden of Eden, but they have spoiled a Pacific Paradise. Clothes, covering bodies which once went naked, have contributed to the natives moral decadence by stimulating a nasty curiosity which never before existed" Ref. (3).

But if the wearing of clothes increases sexual activities in both sexes, this would logically be expected amongst people who were normally habitually naked. e.g., The men of Pongo refuse to let their womean wear clothing of any kind, in case their women become more desirable by the men in other villages.

So why has clothes achieved these sexual attributes? Clothes have added an important stimulus to the mating instinct, continuously arousing interest by;

1. The curiosity which is aroused by the continuous wearing of clothes which habitually cover the body, preventing the naked body from becoming commonplace.
2. The erotic impulse which comes into play by the removing of these clothes.

These are two major reasons in understanding the effect of clothing on human eroticism. Whereas in traditional cultures, though they are just as much interested in sex, they lack the immediate sexual arousal due to the uncovering of the body yet they do often accentuate their bodies with tattooing and beading, particularly by highlighting their genital areas.

Though Freud (Ref. 4) wrote relatively little about clothing, his theories on human sexuality and our unconscious revolutionized our understanding of the way the mind works, and fashion historians and psychologists have attempted to apply his ideas to the way we dress. J.C. Flugel (Ref. 5) and Rene Ronig (Ref. 6) elaborated on some of Freud's ideas e.g., the idea that clothing permits a socially acceptable form of passive exhibitionism or Flugel's extension on the theory on 'erotogenic zones' to 'shifting erogenous zones'.

However in relationship to clothes, Freud did believe that they were sexually symbolic as have many fashion psychologists. Freud believed that fur symbolized the pubic hair, lingerie, the moment of undressing and silk the softness of the skin, while the coat, the hat and of course, the necktie can symbolize the phallus. Flugel however continued to develop Freud's theories and suggested, what he thought were phallic symbols, the hat, the tie, the coat, the collar, the button, trousers, the heel the toe of the shoe and sometimes the entire shoe, although these can also symbolize the vagina into which the phallic foot can slip.

Garments that represented the female genitals, included the veil, the corset, the garter, the bracelet and jewelery in general. But Flugel on the other hand thought that clothing on the whole was all sexual.

These symbols are open to argument and everyone has their own answer to each piece of clothing and what it relates to. Alison Lurie in her book "The Language of Clothes", suggests that the reason catholic priests do not wear ties, is to show symbolically that they are sexually castrated, presbyterian ministers wear a white tie, to show their sexual purity. However I find this theory a little removed from reality, equally as controversial are her ideas that black leather has sado-masochistic associations and fur allegedly turns its wearer into an animal, symbolically of course. The "old hand bag", reveals its owner to be an "old bag" (bag also being symbolic of the vagina) while the shabby, small or worst of all ill functioning umbrella is a source of shame that often seems excessive, unless some erotic meaning is presumed. A woman who wears ecru lingerie is elegant, a woman who wears pink is romantic, a person who wears rubber or edible underpants is one of those with "minority sexual interests". Ref.(7)

Yes well not every woman in fur has a masochistic lover. These theories are over simplified and grossly generalised, reducing every one who wears black leather to be sado masochistic, what does that make approx over 70% (Ref. 8) of most customers in leather shops? Does that make the woman with pink leather suit a romantic sadomasochist.

I feel that Alison Lurie's generalisations are too simplified, she takes the extreme cases and makes that the rule, not taking into account what makes it romantic, the cut of the garment, the mood of the person, or the fashion of the time. I feel that sex appeal theorists strain the sexual motives involved in fashion, but that they focus on only a very limited range of ways in which fashion emphasizes the erotic.

## CHAPTER 2.

### CONCEALMENT AND REVEALMENT.

"There is to my mind no doubt that the concept of beautiful has its origins in sexual excitation and that its original meaning was - sexual stimulating".  
(Ref. 9).

Beauty is sexual, but beauty is not the same as sexual stimulation. Although it seems clear that the cultural concept of beauty contains a very significant sexual element, beauty is not reducible to sexual attraction. If it was just the sexual characteristics, the ideal physical beauty would not change so much over time and in different places. Beauty can be artificial constructed and that varies from culture to culture.

The idea of 'beauty' is important in understanding the role that eroticism plays in dress. A woman dresses to attract sexual admiration, but only occasionally with the aim of actually seducing the viewer.

The single most influential explanation of fashion is the "sex appeal" theory or the theory of the shifting erogenous zones. Its proponents argue that fashion - and the driving force behind fashion change - is the desire to attract the opposite sex - no matter how liberated we are we still need the comfort and satisfaction of being able to attract - if nothing else, but for our own personal satisfaction and the knowledge in knowing we can still sexually stimulate somebody, somewhere. It is like the civilized erotic attraction between friends who may or may not ever make love. Woman's fashion is said to attract by means of selective exposure, concealment and emphasis on the various erotic zones of the female body. These can be secondary sexual characteristics, (such as the breasts, hips, and bottom) or parts of the body that acquire sexual connotations, (such as the legs, feet, back waist, shoulders and so on).

The changes in women's fashions, however need not focus directly on sexual attributes (or erogenous zones), at all to produce feelings of curiosity and fascination for the male viewer. The erotic element can even remain unconscious. Novelty of any sort, variations on colour silhouette, decoration etc., plays a role in the appeal of the changing form of fashion.

Fashion often tends gradually to exaggerate one feature, almost to the point of parody and then then to reverse directions. We can see this in our own fashions of today. Shoulders are a big emphasis on fashion, for the past two seasons, either just the shoulder cut away, drawing attention to the shoulder line and neck and arm, which have been covered up for a long time. Or the large exaggerated shoulder padded out to its fullest. Fig (3). This however has been helped strongly by the American Soap operas Dallas and Dynasty. The larger shoulders emphasis a small waist and slightly larger hips. The hour glass figure is about to take on a new look, it has a very masculine appeal to it. Fig (4). The collars of this new shape are buttoned up the neck or else this look has taken on a mans suit with a woman's curves.

This whole silhouette has an expression of femininity with power and the strength being carried onto the shoulders, (to almost challenge members of the opposite sex at their own jobs), and falling down onto the waist and hips to let men know they are still dealing with women. This new look on the hips is just starting however, but already bustles and drapes are appearing making the bottom become a important point once again. Perhaps it is to show although women are not taking positions of power and authority, there is a strong desire for women to become mothers!

Alison Lurie, wrote "that to be successful in business, woman must wear a plain suit with a skirt in greys and navy, never wear trousers and a plain blouse with a neat collar, never with a low plunge line, one may have a bow tied discretely at the neck!" Ref. (10).



Fig. 3.



Fig 4.



However, when Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1979, she chose her dress image with as much care as her cabinet. The image she selected was tailored, calm, authoritatively and all the softening pussy-cat bows in the world could not prevent her being labelled an iron lady. She was in effect wearing the dress of powerful men since the industrial revolution. However, the lady obviously does have another side to her since on occasions she has slipped into something quite superbly flattering and very erotic by the designer Yuki, whose skill is to leave everything to the imagination in draped dresses, which one moment hide and the next offer a peep of the inner woman. Of all the British Designers, he is the most sensuous to the wearer. Because of the use of suitably plain working clothes, we can usually enter an office or workroom, where men and women work side by side without arousing more than casual curiosity. There is of course the flirtatious minic who wears dresses or blouses to business which reveal as much or even more than they conceal. The men who work in the same office with her usually recognize the fact and are on guard, since as she "dresses to kill" in business hours, her mind may not primarily be on her work.

Quite differently is the effect of wearing seductive clothing designed for leisure hours, one of whose main purposes is to gain the attention of the opposite sex. Here the control changes as the occasion changes, and clothing which conforms to the usual standards of concealment can cross all the permissible boundaries when it comes to revealment.

Clothing which reveals and conceals at the same time has been referred to as "ambivalent". A perfect example of this ambivalence is found in the decollete evening dress. Fig. (5). which can date back to the middle ages.



FIG 5.

So long as only the upper parts of the breasts are exposed, and the balance hidden, no undue sexual excitement is produced and no shock is administered to modern morality. But let the nipples fall out and panic ensues! Ambivalence no longer exists. In the Hey Day of Hollywood motion pictures, the amount of cleavage measured between the breasts which a woman could expose on the screen without breaking rules of decency, was approximately 2 inches!

It is superfluous to consider the many ways in which clothes help to stimulate men to respond to the sexual attraction of women. Yet there is very little in mens business clothes which enhances his physical charms. The absence of any seductive or ornamental frippery in men's clothes usually conveys an impression of plain masculinity and solid security to the female - not that men's clothes do not often indicate masculine charm - to themselves and women. Fig. (6). There are many articles of masculine attire to which women may respond; the white shirt open at the neck, the byronic cloak, the hat worn at a jaunty angle, the smoking jacket and pipe, the silken pyjamas and dressing gown - all these can play a subtle role in the game of clothes and sex.

Woman on the other hand, having sensibly appropriated all beauty and ornamentation in clothes to herself, uses her clothes to create an alluring picture of the outer manifestation of inner delights. At her best her clothes supply a discrete invitation to discretion. At their worst, they represent a vulgar display of her wares like an overcrowded shop window. The low - cut gown must not be cut too low, the tight fitting skirt should not be too tight, the bust may protrude but not obtrude. Womans dress should tempt, but not insist on masculine admiration. The colour, the materials, the texture, the softness, the lines, the fit, the purpose behind all of this is to obtain the man she wants for her own.

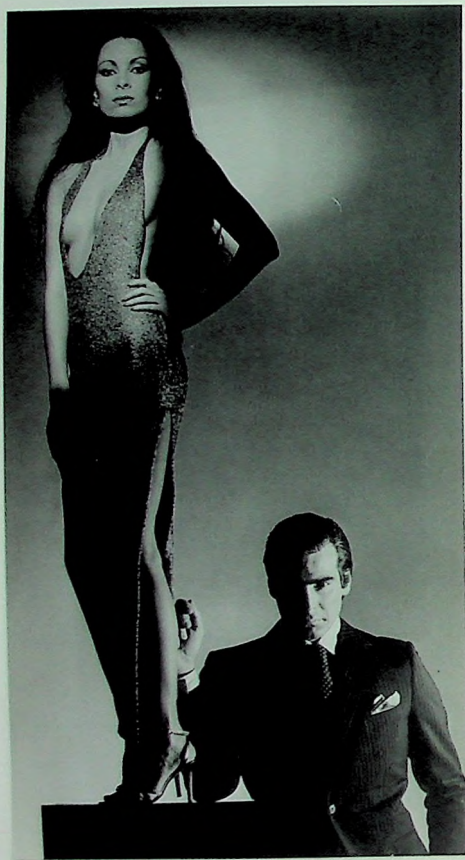
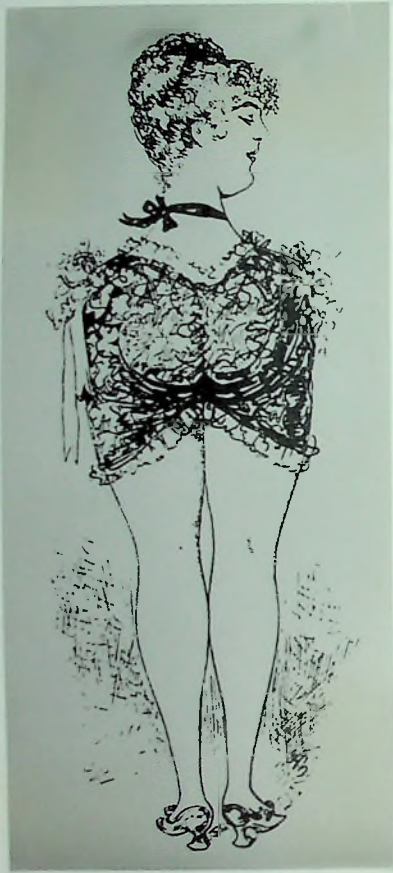


Fig. 6.

A fashion advertisement which reffled the feathers of the women's liberation faction. They should not have worried because the message is so unsubtle that short of hitting the prospective customer over the head with a sledge-hammer the point could hardly be banged home more firmly. The piquant aspect is that advertisers, Dormeuil are the infinitely respectable pro- of high classed mens suitings, and if you can afford high-priced suitings then surely you have learned to up-grade your taste, at any rate in public, from girls dressed like hostesses in a Shanghai massage Parlour.



Man's ideal beauty. Caricature, from Karikaturen - Album (1887).  
Vienna reproduced in Friedrich Wendel, Weib und Mode.

For a woman's as well as a man's primary purpose is to procreate. But this is not necessarily stating that it is everyone's sole desire, but she will still find in her clothes a source of security in whatever walk of life she has chosen.

Another very basic and sound reason for covering our bodies is because they are so often unattractive physically. With clothes, many such individuals appear to be more interesting sexually and consequently superior beings. If you doubt the truth in this, regard the people you meet everywhere and imagine them all completely naked. Fig. (7). For every beautiful body you will probably encounter at least a dozen ugly ones. This is not a reflection of our lives today. Fig. (8). The pictures of naked people from the jungles of Africa, Asia and Australia, will show they too have pot bellies and pendulous breasts. Though we often do observe beautiful bodies of males and females all over the world, they are in the minority. The gradual deterioration of the body as we grow older is another good reason for hiding ourselves in our clothes. Thus clothes have often greatly improved on nature's handiwork by adding to sexual attraction, but the disadvantage is that wearing clothes, hides the effects of lack of exercise and over indulgence in alcohol and food.

There are however many reasons why we wear clothes. One of the strongest arguments is that the growth of pubic hair which marks the beginning of puberty also notifies the world that man appears to be related to the furbearing animals, which is a fact that does not please us. So we hasten to cover our bodies although curiously enough pubic hair does not exist in the animal world. However 'natural modesty' plays a large role in inhibiting the full exposure of the human body. Also our own innate sense of inferiority inhibits perhaps more than any other reason for wearing clothes.

Why we wear clothes !



Fig. 7.



Fig 8.



### CHAPTER 3.

#### THE EROGENOUS ZONES.

The obvious result of the quickened pace of fashion has been the virtual disappearance of body mutilation, which not only takes a very long time to achieve and may cause intense pain or even malfunction to the body, but which takes even longer to undo, if indeed the process is reversible with recourse to major surgery. Since the introduction of structured clothes permitted the appearance of change without the necessity of having to opt for a permanent 'beauty' which might in time come to be regarded as a hideous deformity or an unacceptable social practice, only two areas of the anatomy have been subjected with regularity to the mis application of dress to the extent of physical damage. These two areas are the waist and feet. It will hardly come as a surprise therefore to learn that it is these two long suffering areas which have proved the most consistent and the sharpest erotic props in the wardrobe. e.g. corsetting and footbinding.

One fact remains clear ; if only one point of interest is revealed at a time, it effectively douses the thrill engendered by its predecessor. The choice has been varied,- the bust or the leg at times have become boring and at other times, brought excitement.



Only one name for this lady; Thunderhighs. Weighing in at a guess at around two hundred pounds, this rounded pin-up of the late nineteenth century has not missed out on one trick; frills, tonged shoes, ultra-deep stocking-tops, jewellery on a naked breast which she is wisely supporting by the classic dodge of putting her hands behind her head. Pin-ups are for drooling over, so it is as well to capture a wide audience.

### The Waist :

If you watch, the first place that most men will touch a woman is on the waist. Such lines as.. "his arms enfolded her waist".. or being bolder "...he grasps her to himself around the waist".., are common place in romantic novels, the waist being the first place to indicate a little more than the formal courtesy.

The waist is the one erogenous zone, which has never gone completely out of fashion even if it has been bypassed by the outer layer of clothing. The reason for the endless fascination with the waist is that it symbolizes youth and virginity. If you consider the thickened waist which, ie. left unconstricted, bears proof of childbirth, all other proportions of the body may regain their original shape, but there is always some loss of the maidenly trimness through the centre of the body (frequently a slight curve to the stomach, which no amount of dieting or massage can entirely remove). This is also why fertility symbols are frequently shown with tiny waists, Fig. (9), proving them still in good shape for providing offspring; they are often made to appear smaller still by swelling thighs and breasts.

The practice of tight lacing and corsetting perhaps has had the single most erotic effect on the waist. The construction of any part of the body can stimulate sexual desires in both the wearer and observer. The waist is the half way point between the bust and the hips, thus throwing high sexual connotations on the waist.



Fig. 9.

Western society has placed great emphasis on the waist. Only three periods of fashion can be seen as having neglected it. The late fifteenth century when a strange convention raised the junction of bodice and skirt to close below the breasts; the Regency period when fashion decreed a return to what was deemed classical dress, then also after the 1st. World War; as ideologies had taken such a battering, society seemed hell bent on demolishing as many sexual differences as possible.

#### The Foot :

After the waist it is the foot which has been subjected to greatest degree of sexual attention - the greatest degree of pain deformation and ill-health, all resulting from what it has been obliged to wear. In some cultures the size of the foot is equated with the size of the vagina, the principle being small is beautiful. e.g. Chinese and Indian. It also has connotations of an alternative penis. Ref. (12). Both Chinese and Indian art depict this, or that famous hero having sexual intercourse with five women at once two of them via his feet.

The most extreme examples of foot worship were to be found in China. Where at one time a foot which was not deformed was a dishonour because it suggested that the woman was not utterly the subject of her husband's domination and prepared to illustrate her devotion to his pleasure by her own discomfort Fig. (10).

The tiny foot squeezed until very recently into too tight and cruelly shaped shoes, continues to be an object of excitement all over the world.



Fig 10.

Certainly modern feet in general are quite often deformed by fashionable shoes, a price paid as willingly it seems, as any deliberate deformation such as that practised in China. The stiletto heeled shoe must remain one of the most erotic shoes women have ever worn. They thrust the calves and pelvis into the most provocative positions. To walk properly in these shoes you must lean your body forward and the bottom in turn sticks out balancing all your weight, at the top of your toes, placing incredible stress on your calves, thus defining strong muscle lines. These shoes I can only imagine were designed by a man, who was afraid his woman would try to run away from him.

#### The Breasts :

Possibly no area of the female body has aroused such intenseley ambivalent feelings as the breast.

It is the maternal aspects of the breasts which supply the most material for the study of the part they have played in the shifting cycle of sexual stimulation. At their most fundamental, the breasts suggest security, maternity, warmth, comfort and food. They indicate generous bounty without the threat of having to perform anything more than suckling.

The men most attracted to large breasts are often either insecure and seeking a mother figure, or rumbustuous and attracted by such overt femininty and its suggestion of fertility. In sophisticated societies the bosom is much less in demand, but as soon as society feels itself insecure or under pressure the larger bust is returned to favour.

The breasts act as one of a womens strongest sexual stimulants. When fondled or suckled while making love, they promise and help to aid a complete and satisfying performance for both men and women.

The media has also used womens breasts as a sort of play-thing Page Three, Fig. (11). of the "Sun" newspaper has become shorthand for a sexy nude picture. There is no doubt that page three sells extra copies (whether it should be viewed as the exploitation of women for business purposes is questionable, since there is always a queue of young women with the right dimensions eager to appear).

The wet T-shirt competitions or posing in wet T-shirts for the media showing the hard and erect nipples through the T-shirt also provides sexual stimulation for the on-lookers. However it does not have to be a wet T-shirt, an ordinary T-shirt or an angora jumper with nothing on underneath. The shape of the breasts and nipples are gently outlined. They give the image of young and firm, gentle to touch and also very erotic.

The cross your heart method of lifting and separating the breasts goes back a long way, Fig. (12), emphasising the shape of the breasts. The cross over itself is very feminine, it almost looks as though it means not no be touched as it engulfs the neck.

Interestingly enough in terms of dress, the implication in all the sweater-girl pin-ups and cantilevered co-eds of the late forties, came at a time, when, for once American fashions had been cut off from Europe. Left to themselves, American designers focussed in on the bosom, (while Europe was not interested in breasts). The American ideal women has always been a busty women with fine child bearing hips and the pin-ups of the Mae West etc, all being well endowed, helped the G.I.'s remember their homeland, fertile warm and comforting.





Fig. 12.



Fig. 12

## The Legs :

For a very long time, legs were reserved for men as displays of erogenous excitement, although we know what is not revealed is just as exciting if cunningly presented. Men got a start on women in display of their legs for practical reasons. They had to ride, fight, walk, in short they had to move, all activities which were severely if not dangerously impeded by long flowing skirts.

Women on the other hand should show their dependence, vulnerability and immobility by being hampered as much as men demanded; men's freedom of action compared with the inaction enforced by long skirts gave endless opportunities for gallantry.

Since concealment is so exciting the long skirts also provided an endless game of trying to peek. The outer clothes might reach to the ground, but if they could in some way be ruffled or caught up, or the classic example, of the girl allowing her lover to push her on a swing, what delights may be glimpsed.

The inside upper leg has the most delicate and sensitive skin., this fact might help to explain the excitement of stocking tops with their band so specifically outlining, protecting and compressing this most erotic area.

Alison Lurie has said in her book, 'The language of clothes', that when a man runs his hand up the leg of a woman, he becomes more excited as he nears the top, because he can feel the difference in the texture at the top, knowing he is about to reach 'heaven'.

### The Hair and The Head :

Everybody gets very excited about the Role of hair as an erogenous zone, probably because it is so involved with virility and because of its creepy ability to grow like the toe-nails after death.

A hair has been used as an erotic stimulant when either the fashion silhouette has become dull or the body has become common place e.g., a bas-relief of Cleopatra, which points up the importance and erotic mysticism of hair and head - dressing when clothes are both very revealing and very explicit. The naked bodies were two a penny in ancient Egypt, but the elaborate coiffure was quite another turn-on denoting as it did rank and privilege. This is a pre-couture image of dress of power. Fig. (13)., also being used to denote status and origin.

Long hair has of course its own excitement, especially when it is pinned up elaborately or whimsically. The elaborate styles, the unknottling of this glorious veil and the vulnerable wisps, skewered in with random hairpins, leave the lover of long hair trembling for the moment when the whole lot falls down, probably to the force of gravity but, to his ecstatic gaze, in submission to his own fascination.

In Western Europe hair has spent most of its time in hiding, possibly because this made it more exciting when it was revealed. But more probably, hair, was usually dirty, smelly and lacking in luster due to the deficiencies of diet and hygiene.



Fig. 13.

A few romping curls scattered the foreheads of the easy-going ladies of the 17th. century Fig. (15) and before, but while working women covered their heads for protection against the sun in the fields or against grime of the cities, the smart exchanged the wimple for the wig. The nineteenth century entered with its neo-classical dress ideas and so with the elaborately piled, very seductive long hair associated with the records of the classical world from which the ladies drew their inspiration.

The 1920s re-imposed the wimple in the shape of the cloche hat as all girls sought to be good chaps, but the depressed thirties revived hair as a goddess symbol and the more unlikely its blonditude, the more exciting and revered it was. The coming of peroxidized proved what many mediterranean ladies had believed for centuries, 'gentlemen prefer blondes'. Dark hair has many mysterious associations, but quite frequently they are with evil or alarm, especially on the screen where blondes were less likely to be murderers or cheat on their husbands, they were more likely to be angelic, gentle and often the victim., e.g. Doris Day, Betty Garble, Veronica Lake. However these blonde bombshells were also sex goddess of America's Hollywood.

Hair became an area for attention during World War II, partly because the women of the world were once again closetting their locks in snoods and turbands as they went about their masculine lives. The war helped in a technical sense, too: many products which have served to improve, beautify, thicken, curl, straighten or colour hair to an ultimate beauty are spin offs from scientific research with more deadly initial purpose.



FIG. 15.

The neck, shoulders, arms and hands.

Understandably, the upper part of the body plays a proportionately more important part in erogenous dressing, when the lower part is covered up, though it has already been noted that the very obvious display of flesh in one area can lead quickly to satiety and induce a yearning to see what is not on show. Thus at the high point of hypocrisy in dress, the mid-Victorian age, very respectable women went about in, and indeed were commanded to appear in court in, décolletages which we would consider extremely risqué, Fig. (16). Dramatic 'Madame Moitessier', by J.-A.-D. Ingres 1844/5-56. While the mention of legs was unpardonable and the sight of an ankle deeply moving.

The décolletage did engender excitement in both wearer and viewer though. A young woman of that time described the friction of going to the theatre for the first night of an opera by Offenbach, and how hard it was to work out which was the more stimulation - the music, or the sensation of being half naked in close proximity to a male. For the male, there was the intense excitement of being able to breathe onto or better, down onto - plump white shoulders with apparent propriety, coupled with the teasing notion that if he could make his fair companion laugh the whole creation might fall off. Ref. (13).

The Victorian appreciation of shoulders was a far cry from that of the peasant culture of centuries, which had favoured an off - the - shoulder blouse above workday clothes as a lure to suitors interested in a lusty, strong body promising plenty of hard work in the fields and numerous progeny. It was also a far cry from the revival of the wide-necked long dress, fastened with an innocent drawstring, which suddenly appeared on the streets with the 1960s upsurge in do-it-yourself and in societies pledged to protect our planet.





Fig. 16



Dramatic Black at its most intense. Sargent's Madame X (Mme Virginie Gautreau). If such clothes are elegant and of rich materials they suggest worldly power and sophistication, often with an undertone of evil or danger. Above her superb low-cut gown however Madame X is seductively naked, creating a high tension between attraction and fear. Perhaps it was for this reason that when Sargent's Portrait was shown at the Paris Salon, in 1884 it caused such a scandal that it had to be removed.

As with the blue jeans, the revival of a quasi-peasant or working style owed a lot more to pure fashion than had its originals. Fig. (17).

Just where to place the strapless dress as an indicator of erogenous zones is hard. Anything so blatant is many cases so unflattering, (bulges or bones popping out of a corsage which needed to be skin-tight to stay put) immediately provoked the desire to see what was under the bits that covered the rest of the body. Since it was those portions which were currently on display in day clothes, though, it could be said that the appearance of the strapless dress in the 1950s merely provided women with an alternative of revelation, and men with a wider option of personnel preference to admire. The strapless dress had a brief revival in 1981, most notably when worn by HRH the Princess of Wales on her first appearance in public with her fiance. Fig. (18). The Princess caused a furore by having to hold up the front of her dress to climb out of her car and then tripping on the long hem as she attempted to negotiate a vast flight of stairs from the top of which the cameras of the world were observing her.

In sophisticated societies the glimpse of the well turned arm veiled in translucent fabrics and terminating in a tiny wrist, has always been exciting. Fig. (19). That the handsome strong arm and delicate wrist and hand might mete out punishment as well as a caress is well documented in studies of erotic stimulation. Ref. (14) On the whole the hand is used as an erogenous zone more when it is covered, for once again there is the implication of intimacy in its disclosure; the drawing - off of gloves is a very calculated gesture.

*A. Palmer*



Fig. 17.

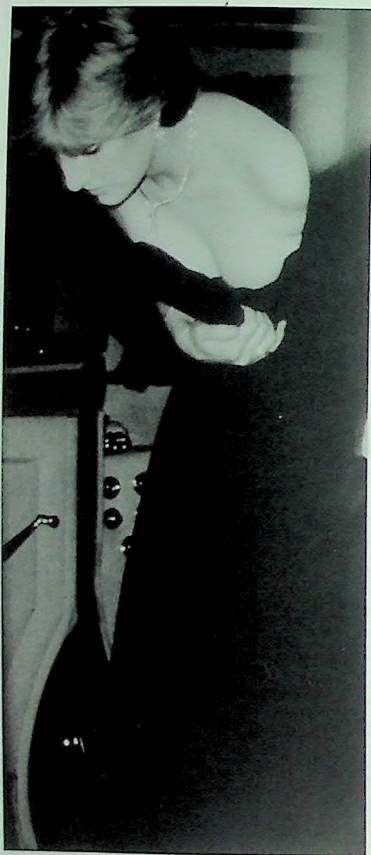


Fig. 18.



Fig. 19.

The first item removed by the striptease artist is her glove, the first intimation of familiarity is the touch of the bare hand. To strip off, to peel off, your gloves has a significant message; let's get down to business, let's know one another better. This is why gloves are an integral part of all the most formal dress. - the authority which such dress represents has no wish to get to know anyone better except on its own terms. In modern times the great glove revival was brought about by Jackie Kennedy, who in her all-American, prim, governessy little outfits had hopeful souls yearning to find out if she really was as goody - goody as she looked. The implication being that she was not, just playing a delicious game.

To the Japanese the neck and spine have a particular erotic appeal, where women tend to be small breasted. Fig. (20). They enhance this charm by the traditional hairstyle, in which the hair is scraped up off the neck into an elaborately decorated chignon, thereby adding apparent inches to that delicate area covered with the nerve - ends which make the back a source of pleasure for massage.

The rediscovery of the neck and wrist in modern fashion was largely due to Cristobal Balenciaga, probably the greatest tailor and architect of dress ever. Fig. (21). Balenciaga horrified the fashion pundits by cutting his severest tailleurs not flat or to the figure, but curved most subtly away from the back of the neck and the collar bone so that the head stood up like a flower on a stalk from a neat shell of gaberdine. After the initial reaction that he simply did not know how to make anything fit, the brilliance and innovation of his style was recognised, and when he then sliced off his sleeves to bracelet length, thus revealing the wrist bone, the audience raved at a new eregenous zone.



Fig 20.





Fig 21.

### The Back and Bottom.

In the middle of the 1960's coloured models made a real impact on the fashion media, one fact immediately became apparent; they were not the same shape as white models, but neither were they the same shape as one another. Such however was their beauty, their originality of movement, their mysterious eroticism, that their inclusion in top shows has been irresistible.

The main distinction between the new wave of model girls and their predecessors could be phrased succinctly by saying that what the latter carried in front the former carried at the rear. It is not surprising to find that the arrival of these exquisite if uniquely formed creatures quickly brought about the discovery of new erogenous zones for fashion to explore. They were the back and the bottom.

The erogenous place is subtle and elusive. It is therefore not surprising to find that it plays a major part in oriental eroticism. In very high sophisticated cultures the art of stimulation reaches the most delicate heights of intellect. Again dress is the message-carrier, the aspect of appearance which signals to the sexual partner, thus in Japan, while every Kimono is cut away from the collar bone, the precise degree of what it reveals, is very precise indeed. For a married woman or for a high-class daughter of the house, the cunningly stitched padded rim will set off her head and neck like a flower in a vase, ready for the man to pluck, but at the same time the knowledge of the spine, the core and supporter of life, is a privilege merely suggested by the custum. for the geshia, the professional courtesan, the Kimono stands right away from the neck, which is as heavily lacquered as the face and which is as erotic in its symbolism of the flower which may be taken.

But the Kimono of the Geisha is cut so that as she kneels, her lord and possible master may glimpse right down to her tail-bone - and bliss beyond?

In western cultures the back, as used as an erogenous zone by fashion did not emerge really until the 1960's. From then on softly draped jersey dresses, exemplifying the influence of Japanese designers became a major factor in ready to wear collections. The new back was bared and accentuated by the cutting and stitching of fabrics or the use of lace.

The bottom has had three spectacular revivals since nature suggested it as fashionably interesting. The Edwardian period when they adopted the droit-devant, a hideously uncomfortable, low-breasted stomach-repressed, bum-stuck-out silhouette. Fig. (22). Commonly called the S-bend, this precarious line was supported by padding and drapery and appealed to the satiated appetites of the overfed society.

The next revival came fifty years later and should be attributed for convenience's sake to one feminine idol - Marilyn Monroe. With her wiggle was back, the impossible short step on too-high heels was back but the stunning thing about Monroe was that she had all the contributions of both the Ayrrian and coloured beauties. Fig. (23).



185. Bionic advertisements. The horsehair bustles of the 1870s and the "scientific" bustles of the 1880s. The "Healthy Bustle" is recommended as being "less heating to the spine than any other." The "Lantern" bustle folded up to allow the wearer to sit down and spring into place again when she got up.

186. *The Reception* by James Tissot, 1886. No nineteenth-century painter is more useful to the costume historian than Tissot. He observed the *women* of the period with the greatest attention and painted them with meticulous accuracy.



Fig. 22.



Fig 23.

Then there came a period in which the bottom was relegated by fashion to anonymity (as indeed was much of the figure) with the flower power era. Blue jeans were re-born, but now as a fashion garment, first they were baggy, durable and worthy, as had been their ergonomically sound ancestors in the genre. The difference was that now jeans did not need to be nearly so ergonomic as only a small percentage was being used for labouring. Jeans became one of the best sellers in the history of any garment and the more fashionable they became the tighter they got, so tight indeed that some medical opinion feared for the safety of the vital organs so enclosed.

The bottom was back, though it was not to receive the brand of high fashion approval until the spring of 1981, when the paris collections revived the bustle.

### The Stomach, Thighs and Pudenda.

Modern fashionable society is dedicated to the abolition of the stomach, and now fitness by bodily exercise and self-mortification of dieting has taken over from panti-girdles and all-in-one corselets, the pursuit of flatness is even more regeous. The rounded tummy, so admired and worshipped in married women by mankind through all but a few starchy periods, is again out of favour.

Interestingly, the stomach has been repressed in western fashion only during the reign of, or predominant influence of, women. Thus the Elizabethans constructed rigid cages stretching pointedly down to the pudenda, Fig. (24), suppressing the true outline of the natural female figure from armpit to floor. Things went very tight again when Queen Anne was on the throne. A rigid, long narrow body was once again admired, and once again it was the intricate fastenings of lacings and bows which provided the stimulus for the male to discover what enchantments lay beneath.

The Thighs have never been emphasised by fashion; indeed a lot of effort has gone into the work of designers to prove that they do not exist except in the imagination of the male. There they certainly do exist: all the most ancient fertility symbols from every culture show figurines of females with quite astonishingly developed thighs and buttocks. Fig. (25).



Fig. 24.





Fig. 25.

The fortunate advent of denim jeans for everyone from granny to toddler provided the perfect excuse for fashion to start working on what had always been work wear. Designers discovered that male and female may want to wear the same clothes i.e., T-shirt and jeans, but that they are not nor do they want to be the same shape. A great many women welcomed the jeans boom because they were mostly made in the first instance for men and so provided a much roomier waist-size in proportion to hip-size, which suited older women or women determined upon comfort.

Women in trousers have always presented an interesting challenge to certain men. When the great trouser suit revolution happened in the 1950's, it was clear that a new era for stomach, thighs and pudenda was about to start for both sexes. For as women wore even tighter trousers, lengthening their legs with high heels, competing in fact for the masculine phallic image so too did men. Trousers started to outline every curve of the physique and where they creased, the crease-lines served only to point to the formerly forbidden pubic area. As they shrank and shrank - no longer a sign of poverty and overwashed clothes but the ultimate in sexual indication for modern times, so the lower half of the torso was revealed, Revealed, not guessed at. The symbol of this fashion, because he is portraying an 'ordinary' character as opposed to being a pop star trying to deliberately by dress to excite his fans; could be seen to be John Travolta playing a dance-crazed youth in the 1977 movie 'Saturday Night Fever'.

Chapter 3.      Lingerie.

The whole erotic impulse of underwear is that of secrecy, of intimacy, of knowing something the others do not. It is privileged information for your eyes only, and above all it is equally as erotic to the wearer as to the lucky partner. It is therefore not surprising that lingerie, in the way one thinks of it - ie., the eyes lighting up or glazing over - is a comparatively novel thing. Only as women have moved further into the territory once dominated by men, and in doing so adopted considerable areas of their clothing, has under-clothing been a cause of excitement. There are still older people alive who remember aunts born in the mid-nineteenth century who were mortified by not being allowed to wear knickers, which were considered indecent, the implication being that you were so far removed from delicacy as to be likely to reveal more than you ought in playing, romping or going on the licentious swing. The aunts probably thought it would have been much more fun to wear knickers and not to worry about falling over.

Underwear being invented for utility purposes, was not long before it was used to stimulate a sexual interest. Nothing appears to be more exciting to the average male than to witness a woman in her underclothes. For generations the layer upon layer of billowing lace petticoates and drawers, trimmed with flounces of lace, and the chemise with its openwork top which partly concealed and partly revealed the breasts all played an important role in the game of sex.



How this elaborate underwear fitted beneath the sheer, short, shift dresses of the 1920' is hard to work out, though psychologically it is right in line with the theory that the more boring the outer layer the more sexy the underneath has to be.

Underwear has been used to re-construct the female body to what ever shape or size fashion requires her body to form. The corset for example generally made of whalebone or iron crushed the rib cage, compressed the waist, distorted the breast and in general was perhaps one of the most dangerous garments a woman ever wore. It damaged her body internally as well as externally, in order to be "attractive" and thus snare her mate.

However the corset has stood its course in time and is now perhaps one of the most erotic forms of ladies underwear. When you think about a French prostitute or the can-can girls of gay-paris, you quickly associate them with corset - stockings in black lace and red bows. The corset has also been a favourite for transvestites, this perhaps symbolises their own sexual frustrations and their will to be submissive. Taking over from the liberated female.

The corset has also been closely linked with bondage fends, forcing their bodies to extreme. The Punk reveal was very important in our day to the reveal of the corset. Fig. (26).. However it now has become an outer garment, but it does not have the same restriction as its predecessor. Fig. (27).



Fig 26.



Fig 27.

Thus we come to the stockings, hose, socks and tights. First the legs were encased in wrappings of wool, for it was only after the invention of knitting that men were able to provide elastic tubular hose which adjusted to the shape of the legs and did not hang in baggy folds. Then with that interest in enhancing sex, stockings were designed and redesigned to show the beauty line of the feminine limbs themselves, by using sheer silk which embraced the legs like a second skin, and shone with a sheen which invited the interest of the opposite sex. For generations the colours black and white were used for stockings, and no respectable woman would wear any other colours. With the advent of short skirts in the nineteen - twenties, however, black stockings began to have a somewhat startling effect. They transformed what had been a mere suggestion into a positive invitation to set forth on a voyage of discovery. In vain the girls rolled the tops of their stockings and wore sheaths to encase their bodies. Their efforts to appear modest were unavailing until fashion discarded the black stocking for hose of light tans or various shades of skin colour or even transparencies, so that the paths leading to the borders of their abbreviated skirts lost their conspicuous quality. Appearing in public with what seemed to be naked legs naturally caused protest from the bewildered moralists of that day, but they were so busily engaged in storming against the abbreviated that they ended by swallowing the transparent stocking whole. The result is when the skirts came down again, the skin like stockings remained. Fig (28)





Fig 28.

And so a handful of women of montmartre preserved the tradition of wearing black stockings nestling in layers of ruffled petticoats, as shown in Toulouse - Lautrec posters. Thus, there has been handed on to the present and future generations, in the performance of that boisterous dance, the Can-Can, the almost forgotten pleasure experience to our grand-fathers, - the contrast of respectable black stockings against the billowing white back ground of seductive petticoats.

The camisole and the camiknickers, Fig. (29) are perhaps more erotic because of the fabric that is used in them, that is silk and cotton with soft lace. (of course there is the cheaper end of market that use polyester with nylon lace). They are cool and sensuous to touch. They offer excitement in the fact that they are the last piece of clothing to be unravelled.

1974 brought the return of camiknickers into light again. Previously the camiknickers had proven inconvenient but new camiknickers that filtered through were, with devastating practicality and a surely unintentional erotic effect, the manufacturers fitted three tiny buttons at the crotch.



Fig. 29.

The most un-romantic sight one can perceive must be the sight of elasticated trunks with tight control' in a fearful white, which soon turns grey and shows signs of distress after much washing.

It is interesting to note that ladies underwear becomes more exciting when the fashions become dull and boring., e.g. 1920's and mid 1960'.

Also during the 1970's, when everything was left to hang loose and the feminist movement was gaining recognition, the bra industry dropped drastically. Women rejecting the bra, was symbolically rejecting, womanhood and motherhood. A strong comparison can be drawn from our predecessors who rejected the corset also in a form of protest.

However, women are now wearing bras, the female shape is back, the bra industry is flourishing again. Fig. (30). But this does not mean women have become submissive once more. We've proved our point and are proud of our shape.



Fig 30.

Fetishism :

Sigmund Freud's theories of human sexuality and the unconscious have revolutionized our understanding of the way the mind works, and it is not surprising that fashion historians and psychologists should attempt to apply his ideas to the study of dress. Unfortunately, many of them have tended to use psychoanalytic concepts in an imprecise and reductionist manner.

Psychoanalysis deals with extreme attitudes and behavior in part on the view that these offer important clues to 'normal' behavior. It would be a serious mistake to assume that psychoanalysis is only useful for the study of deviance; yet it is also an error to blur the distinction between pathology and "normal sexuality". Fashion historians who have been influenced by psychoanalysis often imply that fetishism is very closely connected to the "normal" erotic appeal of fashion, and that the changing form of fashion reflected cultural (rather than purely personal) obsession with certain parts of the anatomy and certain articles of clothing. Fashion exploits the erotic appeal of those physical characteristics - such as a small waist - that attract "normal" individuals as well as fetishist.

As James Laver put it :

"Fashion is the comparative of which fetishism is the superlative". Ref. (15).

There are problems with this interpretation, however, since its adherents oversimplify and overapply the psychoanalytic concept of fetishism. Fetishism is a perversion of variation of the sexual instinct, involving a desire only a part of the body or even an article of clothing that functions as a substitute for the loved person. Writers such as Laver who described late Victorian and Edwardian fashions in terms of "frou frou and fetishism" imply that the average woman was a proto - fetishism - but this is a serious distortion of the concept of "fetishism".

The popularly accepted idea of cultural quasi-fetishism involves the conflation of the distinctions between perversions (such as foot and shoe fetishism) and widespread interest in, say feet and shoes. Thus many fashion historians argue that the long skirts of the nineteenth century contributed to the development of a cultural obsession with female feet, since concealment theoretically invested these appendages with greater erotic appeal. These historians then jump to the conclusion that this indicated that the incidence of foot and shoe fetishism was significantly higher in the nineteenth century than in earlier or later periods - an hypothesis that the available evidence does not necessarily support.

David Kunzle author of Fashion and Fetishism, has suggested that fetishism was almost entirely distinct from fashion. Yet limited connections between ordinary erotic symbolism and fetishism do merit investigation. In other respects also, Kunzle's approach appears to be inadequate for an understanding of either fetishism as such or of the erotic aspects of ordinary fashion. Kunzle deliberately eschews any attempt to analyze the possible unconscious significance of fetishism, presumably because such an analysis might make tight-lacing appear to be a sexual perversion, rather than an unorthodox but legitimate and sexually liberated form of behavior.

The psychological analysis of fetishism was first made in the later nineteenth century, as part of a more general expansion of theoretical writing on sexuality. The older categories of morality and disease were expanded and supplemented in the new "sexology" by medical and psychological categories such as "degeneracy". Ref. (16)

Thus in "Psychopathia Sexualis", Ref. (17), written by Richard Von Krafft-Ebing, the celebrated German physician, neurologist, the professor of psychiatry, maintained that "adornment, ornament and dress" played a role of "erotic fetishism" was however, significantly different from "pathological erotic fetishism" which he defined as "The Association of Lust with the idea of certain portions of female person, or with certain articles of female attire". In pathological cases, the fetish itself (rather than the person associated with it) became the exclusive object of sexual desire, while "instead of coitus, strange manipulations of the fetish" became the sexual aim.



According to Krafft-Ebing, among the objects chosen as fetishes were parts of the female body (feet, hair, skin) or physical characteristics (lameness), articles of female attire (dress - fetishism in general or the fetishism of particular garments, such as shoes, petticoats, corsets) and special materials (fur, velvet, silk, white starched linen, leather). The fetishes of women remained somewhat conjectural however, to beards, "the emblem of virility", and "It is a well-known fact that the female heart has predominant weakness for military uniforms" Significantly, though, Krafft - Ebing, admitted that he had "thus far not succeeded in obtaining facts with regard to pathological fetishism in woman. Ref. (17) These appeared to be only male fetishists. Krafft-Ebing was concerned with fetishism, both as a psychological abnormality and as a matter of criminal behaviour - theft or assault.

Another early sexologist, Doctor Wilhelm Stekel, on the other hand, largely ignored the issue of "normal fetishes" to focus on "the psychopathology of fashion - its connection to homosexuality, "psycho-sexual infantilism", onanism, religion, and "compulsion neurosis", together with its "invariable criminal component". He remained confused about the cause(s) and psychological significance of this "sexual aberration". For example in various cases he associated silk, satin, and fur fetishism with frigidity or impotence; petticoat, chemise, and dress fetishism with "incestuous strivings"; corset fetishism with "the sadistic fantasies of an ascetic"; foot fetishism with masochism; button fetishism with "the repression of a fellatio phantasy"; and uniform fetishism with infantilism; "criminal instincts", and homosexuality. Ref. (18).

Although Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, Stekel (among others) made certain possibly valid observations, they failed to develop a comprehensive theory of fetishism. Over a period of time Freud did develop such a theory which appears to be the most coherent explanation of the phenomenon. Freud first discussed fetishism and "unsuitable substitutes for the sexual object", Ref. (19) in which he observed that there existed cases in which;

"the normal sexual object is replaced by ..... some part of the body (such as the foot or hair) which is in general very inappropriate for sexual purposes, or some inanimate object which bears an assignable relation to the person whom it replaces and preferable to that person's sexuality. (e.g., a piece of cotton or under-linen). Ref. (20).

Freud noted that in transitional cases, the individual might only require that the sexual object "fulfil a fetishistic condition - such as the possession of some particular hair-colouring or clothing ..... if the sexual aim is to be obtained". He concluded that;

"A certain degree of fetishism is thus habitually present in normal love..... The situation only becomes pathological when the longing for the fetish passes beyond the point of being merely a necessary aim, and the fetish becomes.... the sole sexual object. Ref. (21).

Freud was still uncertain about the cause of fetishism and the choice of particular objects as fetishes. He suggested tentatively that fetishists might have an intrinsically weaker than average drive toward genital union, and that their choice of fetish might have been a consequence of a childhood sexual impression. In his article of "Fetishism" Freud offered an explanation of the genesis of fetishism and the significance of fetish, together with possible causes for the choice of particular fetishes.

Freud argued that "The fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and.... does not want to give up... for if a woman has been castrated, then his own possession of a penis was in danger". The fetish represented the unconscious, "compromise" between the "unwelcome perception" and that the mother has no penis and the wish and earlier belief that she does. The ego defends itself by disavowing or repressing an unpleasant perception. "Yes in his mind the woman has a penis... but this penis is no longer the same... Something else has taken its place". The fetish thus serves to assuage his fear of castration, at the same time transferring the importance of the penis to another part of the female body or to some article of clothing. It remained unclear why "the fear of castration caused by the sight of the female genitals made some men become fetishists and others homosexuals while the majority "surmount" this fear.

The object chosed as "substitutes for the absent female phallus" were not necessarily those that appeared elsewhere as symbols of the penis; but they were perhaps related to "the last moment in which the woman could still be regarded as phallic". Thus, for example "pieces of under-clothing which are so often chosen as a fetish crystallize the moment of undressing". Fur or velvet was associated with the pubic hair that should have revealed a penis. The appeal of shoes is related to the association of the foot and penis. "The foot represents a woman's penis, the absence of which is deeply felt". The fetishist was often ambivalent about his fetish. For example, the type of hair fetishist who cuts of woman's hair feels "the need to carry out the castration which he disavows... His action contains in itself the two mutually incompatible assertions: 'The woman has still got a penis' and my father has castrated the woman!" Obviously this type of equation is unconscious. Ref. (22).

If fetishism functions as a defense against castration fears, then this would support Kinsey's conclusion that "fetishism is an almost exclusively male phenomenon". Ref. (23).

Since Women very rarely have fears of castration, it is doubtful whether one can even speak of female fetishists. This is an important issue if you want to understand the appeal for women of certain articles of clothing that men often choose as fetishes such as lingerie, high heeled shoes and corsets. Furthermore, only a very small minority of men are real fetishists. Consequently, it is unlikely that pathological fetishism plays a very significant role in fashion.

Rather, it appears that the fashion historian should distinguish between this relatively uncommon perversion, on the one hand, and a more widespread erotic symbolism, on the other. Fetishism clearly emphasizes the appeal of phallic symbolism in dress, and thus draws attention to some of the attractions felt by many "normal" individuals for certain parts of the body and articles of clothing, but it hardly typical. Furthermore, erotic symbolism may well extend beyond fetishism, in many ways that would appeal to both men and women.

William A. Ross; suggested that foot and shoe eroticism derived in part from the intrinsic sensitivity of the feet, (especially the soles and toes) to tactile stimulation, as well as from the phallic symbolism of the foot and the ambivalent symbolism of the shoe. The erotic appeal of the foot led simultaneously to the desire to ornament it and to cover it. Furthermore, many of the characteristics commonly associated with feminine sexual attractiveness are accentuated by high heel shoes, which affect the wearer's gait and posture. By putting the lower part of the body in a state of tension, the movement of the hips and buttocks is emphasized and the back arched thrusting the bust forward. High heels also change the apparent contour of the legs, ankles and feet. Thus much of the sexual appeal of the foot and shoe is potentially experienced by nonfetishists as well.

This is not to deny Freud's analysis of fetishism, but only to point out that there are additional reasons for erotic appeal of objects often chosen as fetishes. It might be more productive to explore these, rather than to rely so heavily on "fetishism" as an explanation for satorial eroticism.

Conclusion :

Any dress or bodily decoration above and beyond, that is necessary for survival has as its inspiration the desire to gratify the wearer or to inflame the interest of somebody else. Viewed as a form of incitement, dress has shown itself to be the best weapon, what else can gratify the longing for heroes, or the fantasy of being someone else for a few hours? Dress can seduce by touch, by smell, by colour or by size (big or little), it invokes sentimental or frightful memories, it provokes aggression and also soothes the nervous.

Clothing is used as a sexual lure as well as an indicator of bravery and skill. It indicates one's status in society and obtains for the wearer the rewards of recognition, approval, or identification.

Dress is a product of a complex set of motives; all of which are independent and arise out of varied physical, psychological and social conditions. Striving for beauty may be motivated by a desire to be sexually attractive or by a need for status. Sexual attractions therefore becomes one of the main reasons (along with adornment) that we wear clothes.

What every we wear and what ever way we wear it, gives out a message about our sexual interest. Our dress can indicate what our through emotions really are. By dressing provocatively or obviously reduces the effect of eroticism in our dress, and by stating the obvious you loose the element of surprise.

The art of dressing erotically therefore needs clever manipulation and innovation.

"The greatest provocation of our lust are from our apparel"

Ref. (24).



## FOOTNOTES

### Introduction.

- Ref. (1) The Oxford Dictionary.
- Ref. (2) The importance of wearing clothes  
Lawerence Langer - Page 41.

### Chapter 1. The Fig Leaf.

- Ref. (1) 3:7, Genesis.
- Ref. (2) The importance of wearing clothes  
Lawerence Langer - Page 41.
- Ref. (3) The importance ow wearing clothes  
Lawerence Langer - Page 42.
- Ref.(4,5,6) Fashion and Erotisim  
Valerie Steel - Page 24, 25.
- Ref. (7) Lanugage of clothes.  
Alision Lurie - Page 230 - 261
- Ref. (8) Sheepskin Shop and Skin Deep.  
Westbury Mall

### Chapter 2. Concealment and Revealment.

- Ref. (9) Three essays on the theory of sexuality  
Vol 7 Page 156. Sigmund Freud.
- Ref (10) The language of clothes. Alision Lurie Pg.123.

### Chapter 3. The Erogenous Zones.

- Ref. (12) Skin to Skin Page 34-35
- Ref. (13) Skin to Skin Page 52
- Ref. (14) Skin to Skin Page 53-54

Chapter 5. Fetishism.

- Ref. (15) James Laver, Modesty in Dress/Page 119.
- Ref (16) Fashion and Eroticisim. Page 31
- Ref (17) Psychopathia Sexualis Pages - 17-24, 218  
224, 222, 234 - 238, 247 - 269.
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sexuality. Sigmund Freud Page, 153-154.
- Ref (22) Freud "Fetishism" se Vol 21 Page 152-154
- Ref. (23) Vogue April 1982. Page 84.
- Ref (24) Skin To Skin - Page 15.

Photographs :

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Chapter 1. The Fig Leaf.

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Fig. 3 Harpers and Queen, March, 1986.

Fig. 4 Biba, Fevrier 1986. ?

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Fig. 7 Garden Party by Beryle Cook.

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Fig. 16 Madame Moitessier, by J.A.D. Ingres. 1844/5-56.

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- Fig. 24 Queen Elizabeth at Blackfriars, by Marcus Gheeraerts  
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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S .

Susan Hunters. (Ireland).  
Ladies Underwear Shop,  
Westbury Mall,  
Dublin 2.

Nicola Jackson (Physiologist).

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South Anne Street,  
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National Library (Ireland).

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