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THE INFLUENCE OF THE
18th CENTURY ON 20th CENTURY
HEADRESS



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INTRODUCTION

For many of us the word wig conjures up images of a synthetic head of hair worn by older men and women who's once healthy head of hair has deminished with age. Even hairpieces remind us of badly fitting toupees worn by balding men who many think would look better without them. Unfortunetly these stereotypes do not even begin to scratch the surface of the varied uses of wigs and hairpieces. The importance of which has been grossly underestimated by most, but finally now in the nineties this view has been challanged.

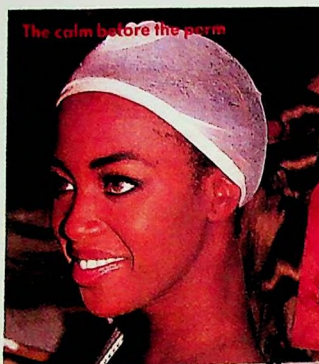
Throughout history headdresses have played an important role in the structure of society, possessing the ability to identify certain groups or tribes. Our hairstyle can say just as much about us as the clothes we wear for it has the power to denote class, race and creed. It was during the eighteenth century that headdress became not only a universal fashion but a status symbol of the upper classes.

One of the aspects of the conspicuous consumption of a wealthy society class is the extreme wig styles of the 1770's, exhibitionism at it's highest state of development. (1)

This was a time when wigs were an art form, yet they stood for extravagance and greed. The French Revolution marked the collapse of this wealthy social class and all it stood for including the eccentric headdress. It was not until the twentieth century that wigs became once more an essential fashion accessory.

TALKING FASHION

Editor: Garbe Doppelt



The calm before the storm



Big and beautiful



Looking devilishly good



Setting a platinum record for beauty



Bobbing with Marc Jacobs



Bangs for the memories

Fig 1.

During the course of this thesis I propose to trace the role of wigs and hairpieces in the twentieth century, while demonstrating the parallels which can be drawn between twentieth century and eighteenth century wigs, not only in style but in construction. While also showing the versatility of wigs and hairpieces as a nineties art form.

INTRODUCTION - REFERENCE

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CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER ONE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BACKGROUND. THE ROLE OF WIGS IN SOCIETY.

CHAPTER ONE

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries eccentric headdress became synonymous with the upper classes. Wig wearing became a universal fashion and was "considered absolutely essential"(1) by ladies and gentlemen of leisure. This fashion first began in France in the court of Louis XIV in 1660. Previously men's hair was worn long and curly. This style was called Cavalier in England and Muskateer in France. The king of France at that time had a healthy head of hair but some of his courtiers were not so fortunate. They soon began wearing wigs so as to emulate their kings hair.

This fashion spread throughout France; extra hair had to be provided for those who did not have enough of their own hair to arrange in the fashionable styles of the time. Although in the early part of the seventeenth century wigs were originally worn to conceal baldness, by 1660 they were "an essential item in the dress of every upper-class man"(2). Men were even having their own hair shaved close to their heads so as to accomodate the fitting of these wigs.

Originally the Full-bottomed wigs were made up of a mass of curls which formed a square outline around the face and flowed down the back over the shoulders. They came in natural colours and were made of human hair, horsehair, goats hair or vegetable fibres, human hair being the most

expensive. By 1700 the style changed slightly as a centre parting formed and two horns rose up on either side of it. However the full-bottomed wigs were extremely heavy and impractical for everyday wear aswell as being very expensive. (see fig: 2). Only people of leisure could wear them. For this reason, many variations of wig styles which did not use as much hair, were developed.

From around 1710 the front hair was brushed back into a toupee while the back hair was combed into a tail or queue which was tied in various ways. The most popular style with fashionable young gentlemen was the Bag wig. (see fig:3). In this style the queue was enclosed in a black silken bag drawn in with strings which were concealed by a stiff black bow. By 1750, roll curls started to appear at the side of the wig and lay horizontally above each other. (see fig:4). All wigs were dressed with Pomatum, a scented ointment which held the hair in place and concealed any joins with the natural hair. Early in the eighteenth century wigs began to be dusted with powder which was also scented and made of crushed rose leaves and starch. The application of the powder helped to keep the hair dry.

As regards women's hairstyles, these began in the seventeenth century to echo those of the men although they didn't start wearing full wigs untill 1760. At first they added false chignons and ringlets which were finished off with bows. By

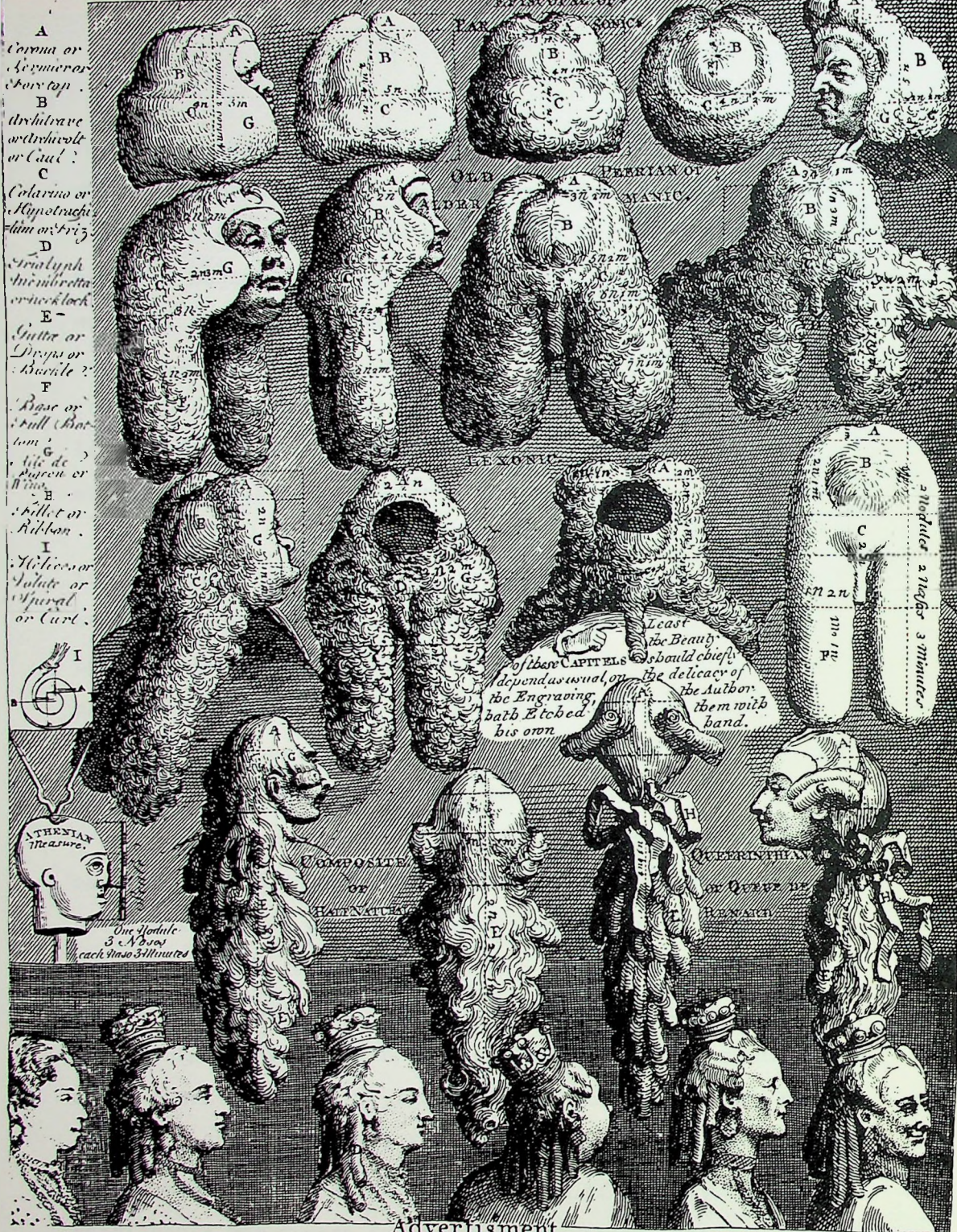


Fig 2.



Fig 3.

The five orders of PERRIWIGS as they were worn at the late CORONATION, measured Architectonically.



Advertisement.

In about Seventeen Years will be completed, in Six Volumes, folio, price, Fifteen Guineas, the exact Measurements of the PERRIWIGS of the ancients; taken from the Statues, Busts & Baso-reliefs of Athens, Palmira, Balbec, and Rome, by MODELS TO PERRIWIG-METER from Lagado. NB: none will be sold but to Subscribers. Published as the Act directs Oct. 15. 1765 by W. Hogarth.

Fig 4.

1685 their coiffures began to rise in the shape of a commode. This was a pleated frill arranged on wires to stand up at the front with ribbon or a cap tied behind it. (see fig: 5). From the beginning of the eighteenth century false curls were added at the back of the head, emulating the tails of the men's wigs while their own natural hair was worked in with the false hair which was then powered. It was not until the latter half of the eighteenth century that women's wig styles were taken to extremes.

At this time fashion ran riot as women's coiffures grew out of all proportion. Their heads were dressed so high that numerous satirical caricatures were printed in which wig makers were seen on step ladders or stools dressing their amazing creations. (see fig: 6). The heights of doors and carriage roofs had to be raised as the wigs often exceeded three feet in height. (see fig: 7). These wigs were a master piece of construction. Hair was pulled over a cushion stuffed with wool which was later replaced by an iron frame. Over this the hair was draped, held in place with pomatum and dusted with powder. The headdress was then crowned with the most fantastic structures e.g ships in full sail, windmills, stage coaches even bird cages which sometimes had live birds in them. The wig maker's imagination was allowed to run riot for he was regarded as the great artist of his day. Fashionable women were in constant competition with each other as to who had the highest wig with the most ornate

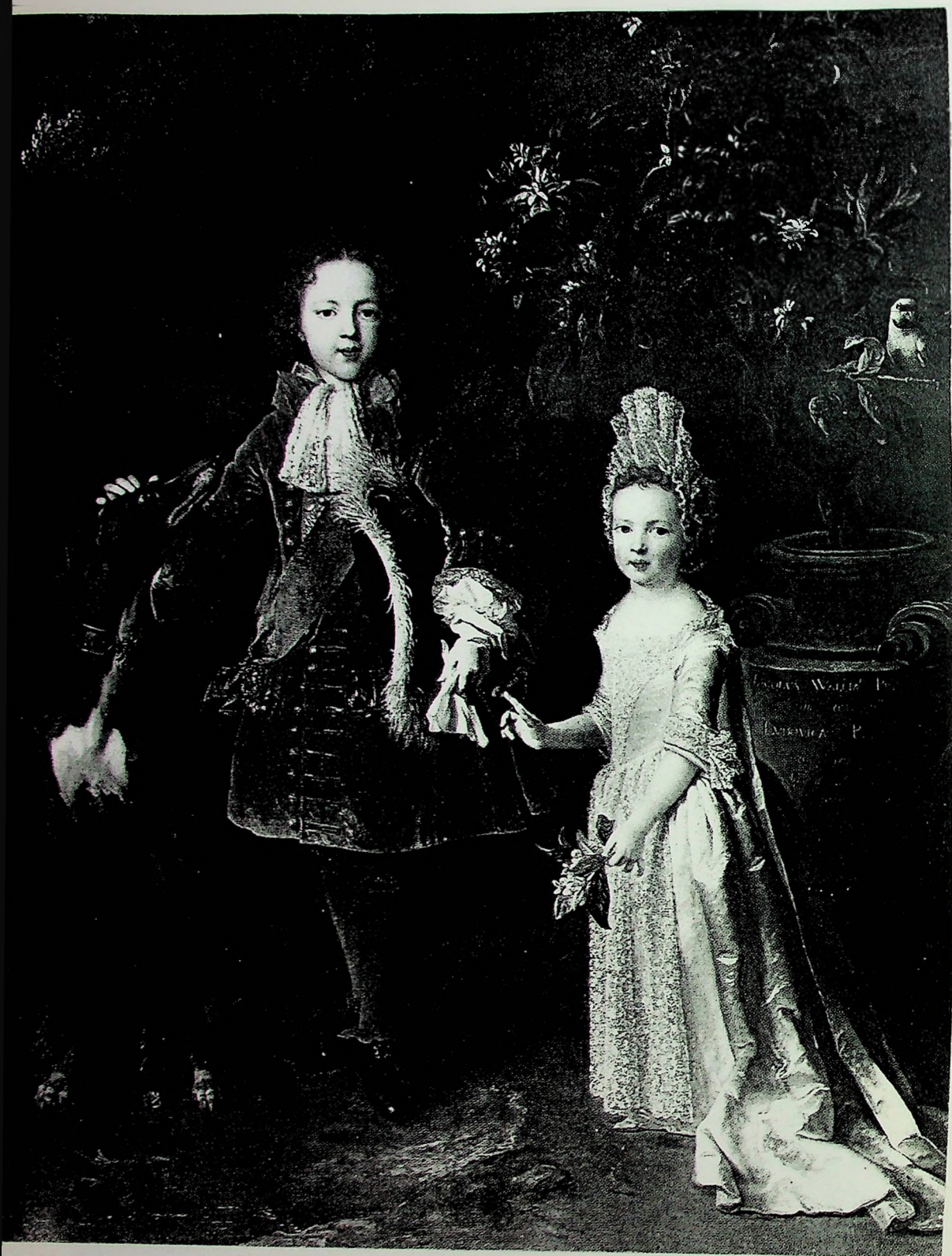
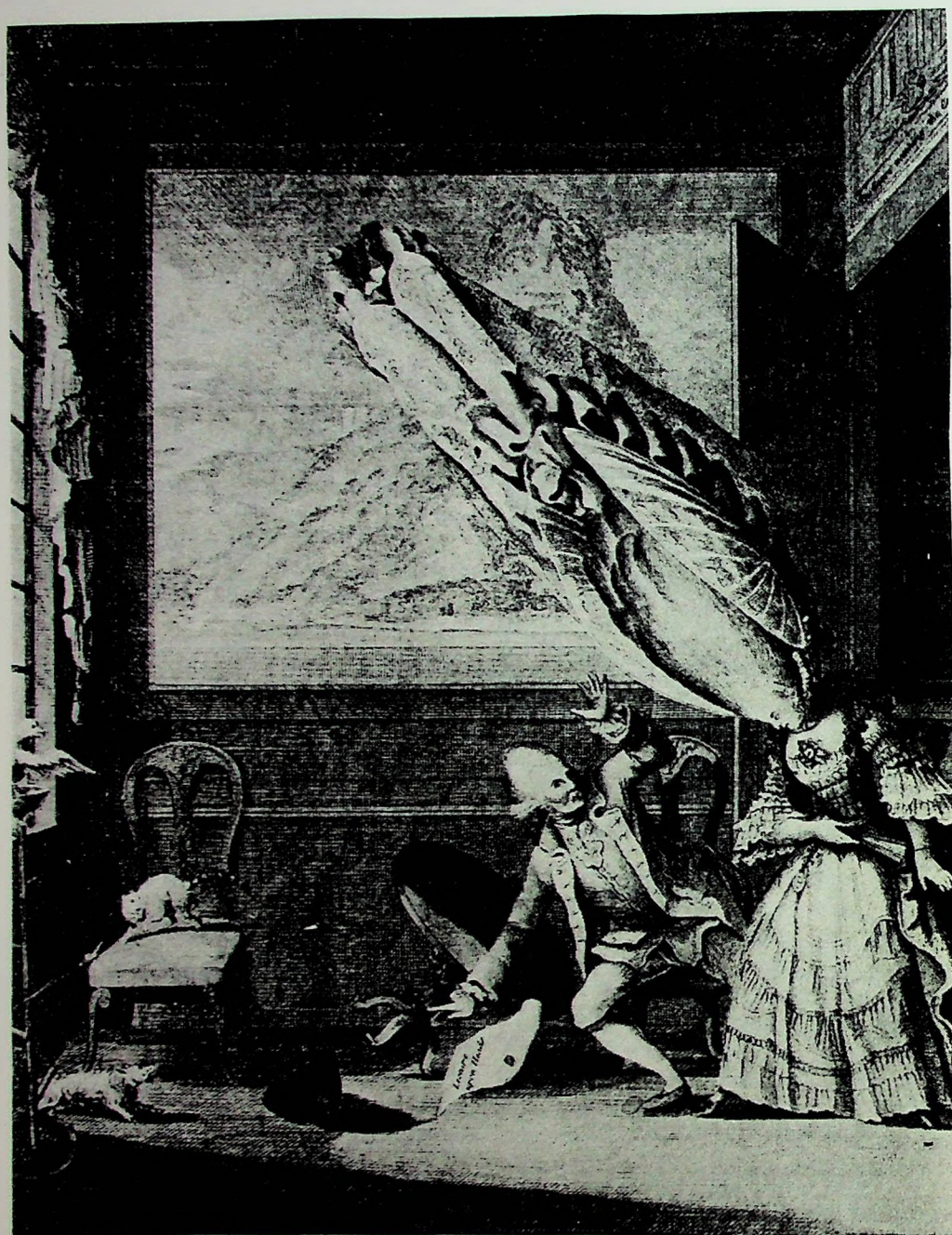


Fig 5.



THE PREPOSTEROUS HEAD DRESS,
or the FEATHERD LADY

Fig 6.



La Française à Londres.

'The FRENCH LADY in LONDON,

or the HEAD DRESS for the YEAR 1771.

From the ORIGINAL DRAWING by J. H. GRIMM.

Printed for J. Knapton, Printseller in Honours Street Covent Garden. Published on the Art Street 17 April 1771.

Fig 7.

structure perched on top of it. Women's hairstyles were completely over the top and impractical yet they were works of art. (see fig: 8).

The French wig makers were regarded as the masters of their profession for in the eighteenth century everything that was French was fashionable. Women of inferior rank had to be satisfied with inferior talent for they could not afford the French coiffure. The fashionable wig styles were further watered down for the lower classes, who could only afford plain styles made out of horsehair or vegetable fibres. Some only wore their wigs on special occasions so as to preserve them. However, while being a fashion they became yet another status symbol of the upper classes. The more elaborate the wig style, the higher your place in society. It was obvious from an elaborate coiffure that you were a lady of leisure as these enormous works of art were not practical.

Men's wig fashions also became eccentric with the founding of the Macaroni Club in England in 1773. The club was "formed by wealthy young men of fashion who had travelled in Italy and adopted excessive and eccentric fashions"(3). Macaronis rebelled against everything they thought staid at the time. They became leaders of fashion, adopted a feminine poise and were painted, powdered and perfumed. They carried walking sticks and wore huge bunches of flowers in their button holes. Everything was taken to extremes and their clothes



Fig 8.

were just as eccentric as their wig styles. Macaronis made the Club Wig fashionable. In this style, the large clubbed queue was doubled back and tied in the middle giving the impression of a large knot of hair at the back. This was also known as the Cadogan style of wig. (see fig: 9).

Macaronis revelled in attention and they enjoyed nothing more than shocking the general public. They were also often seen in satirical caricatures of the time, pictured as dainty creatures with fine silk stockings, tight breeches and waistcoat awash with bows and flowers, topped off by a huge powdered club wig. (see fig: 10). However by 1774 the fashion to be "a la Macaroni" had died out and the styles of men's wigs reverted to a brown bob. Women's hair also shrank in size; it was now worn broad and frizzed with a hat perched on top. The rigidity of the previous decade had more or less disappeared.

With the coming of the French Revolution in 1789 there was a complete social and political upheaval within France. The lower classes revolted against the upper classes and all its symbols. This was echoed by the fashions of the day, there was a complete return to nature and simplicity. Wigs were abandoned for natural hair styles which were modelled on classical Greek statues. Women adopted a neo-classical look, wearing white empire line dresses which fell naturally below the chest. They no longer wore paniers or corsets, and began



NOW. S'YOUR A COMPLEAT MACARONI
LE PETIT MAITRE PARTANT POUR LA PROMENADE

Fig 9.

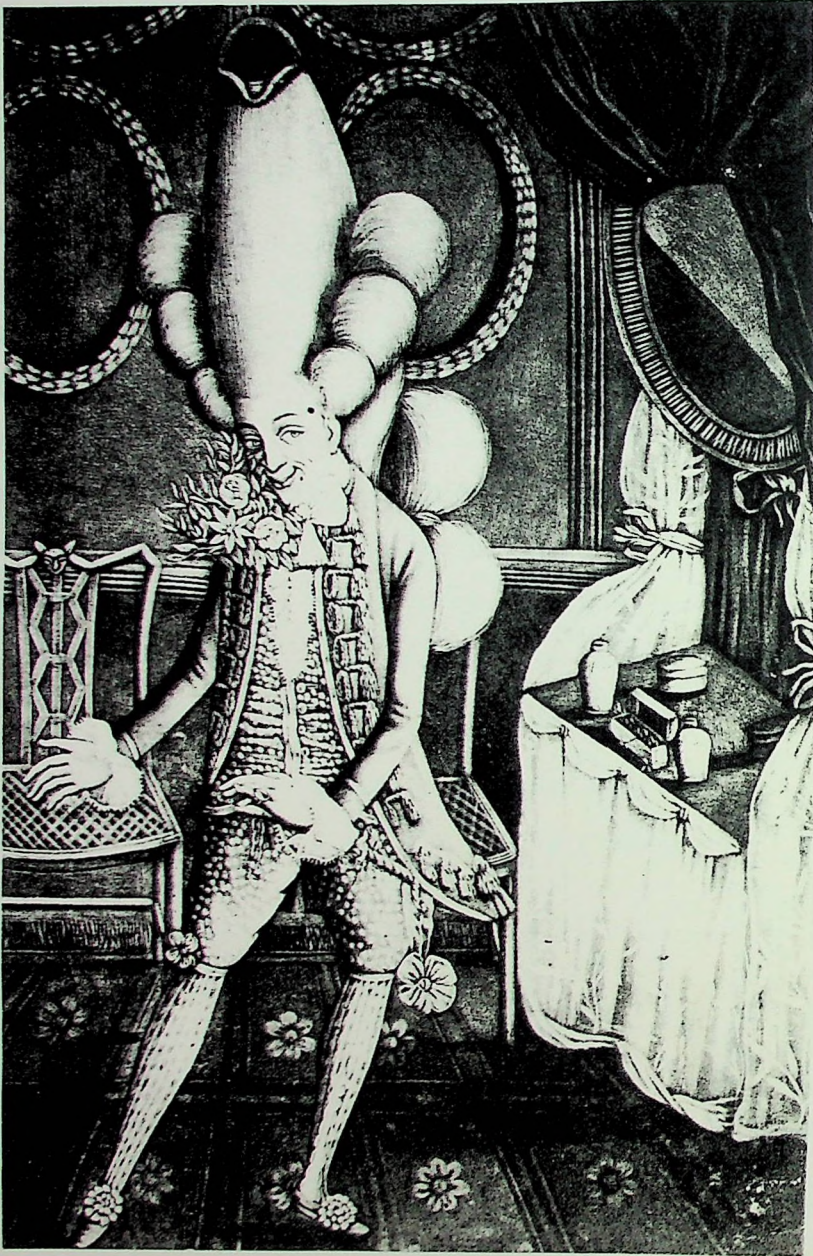


Fig 10.

to rely on their natural beauty.

(see fig: 11).

The Revolution was a reverse reaction to upper class society within France at the time. The upper classes were governed by what was the right thing to say, the right way to dress, they had to have the right etiquete. Every whim was indulged and fashionable dress was the most important thing they should be concerned about. Dressing up was the order of the day, with countless masquerade balls to attend. They became the leaders of fashion with not just their extravagant costume but with their eccentric wig styles. However these enormous structures were works of art and status symbols. Hence, with the coming of the Revolution, wigs were abandoned along with the other symbols of the upper classes.

"Reason and a certain amount of common sense once more had a place in the councils of fashion"(4)



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- (4) - ARNOLD, Janet. Perukes and Periwigs.

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER TWO

RE-EMERGENCE OF WIGS IN THE SIXTIES. LINK BETWEEN SIXTIES AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER TWO

After the eccentric wig styles of the eighteenth century, wig wearing took an extended break from the fashion world until it's re-emergence in the twentieth century, during the sixties. The "Swinging Sixties", as the decade has been fondly called, was a time for youth. Mary Quant became a household name with the introduction of her Mini Skirt and Carnaby Street in London was the centre of the fashion world. On the whole fashion was fresh and experimental; it had to be in order to satisfy its youthful customers. Music also played an important role in shaping the fashions of the time with pop groups such as the Beatles and the Supremes influencing the way people dressed and even the way they wore their hair.

One of the most eccentric hairstyles which became synonymous with the sixties was that of the Beehive. This hair style originated in America in the late fifties. It was thought eccentric at the time because of the sheer height of women's hair. To achieve this style, people spent hours backcombing and teasing their hair into shape. Just as in the eighteenth century wigs, a wire or plastic frame was used to structure it. Finally when the right style was achieved, it was sprayed with excessive amounts of hairspray. (see fig: 12) Another eccentric style of the time was that of the Bouffant which originated in the late fifties. This was essentially a long version of a page boy style which was backcombed at the



Fig 12.

sides and crown then held in place with hairspray.

(see fig: 13). The Bouffant was taken to extremes as young girls' heads were often seen shaped like great toadstools or peanuts not unlike eighteenth century wig shapes. More time was devoted to the right hairstyle than any other part of the appearance.

John Walter's aptly named film Hairspray which was made in 1988 takes a humorous look at American teenagers in the sixties. This film centers on the cult hair obsession at the time, a period when girls were called "hairhoppers", constantly changing their hairstyle to keep up with fashion - when the most valuable item was indeed a can of hairspray; for without it the towering creations would collapse. So much time and effort were put into these hairstyles that they were often left undisturbed for weeks apart from a daily coat of hairspray. They were in fact just as unhealthy as eighteenth century women's wigs. It was unthinkable to dismantle either until it was absolutely necessary or until something live was found lurking within. However some people did not have the time or the ability to style their own hair so they took the easy way out by wearing wigs. It was much easier to take off a wig at night than try to sleep in a beehive without disturbing it. Previously eighteenth century women had to sleep on wooden blocks at night so as not to disturb their creations. Sixties women were not prepared to suffer that much for fashion.



Fig 13.

It was not until 1964, however, that wig wearing really took off as a fashion, with the aid of the Supremes. Diana Ross, Mary Wilson and Florence Bullard made up the all-black female pop group which took the Sixties by storm. (see fig: 14) They were the queens of Motown but when they went on the road so too did their wigs. Travelling from concert to concert did not allow much time for teasing and backcombing hair into place so the three girls sensibly opted for wigs. It was much easier for them to put on a pre-styled wig before a performance rather than spend hours with a can of hairspray, a comb and a wire frame. The Supremes' wigs were all hand made out of human hair although most other Sixties wigs were made of nylon. Their wigs came in many different styles, ranging from Vidal Sassoon bob cuts to high Bouffants with flick-ups at the bottom. The most fashionable styles of the time were made into wigs and wherever the Supremes went so did their wig boxes.

However Diana Ross and her girls also adopted another fashion of the sixties and that was "add-ons". Not only did they wear false hair but they went out on stage with false eyelashes and fingernails as well as padded bras, padded hips and padded bottoms. These were typical accessories of many Sixties women. The sixties artificial aids to fashion were reminiscent of the way women's shape was distorted by paniers and corsets in the eighteenth century. There are many



Fig 14.

similarities between women in both periods, the fundamental one being that they both suffered for fashion. As I've mentioned in the previous chapter, there was a complete return to nature after the French Revolution with the neo-classical look, so too was there a similar reaction to the falseness of the sixties stereotype. "Beatniks", or early hippies, ironed their hair straight and wore it long in reaction to the hairhoppers. They were interested in expansion of the mind rather than expansion of the head. As one eighteenth century philosopher (who seems ahead of his time) remarked:

The finest beauty in the kingdom will gain more real admiration by the enlargement of her mind than the expansion of her head.(1)

CHAPTER TWO - REFERENCES

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CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER THREE

SEVENTIES - AFRO WIG

EIGHTIES - DEVELOPMENT OF HAIR EXTENSIONS

CHAPTER THREE

During the 1970's and 1980's, wigs became obsolete once again as a universal fashion accessory. However in the late Sixties and early Seventies, wigs did seem to become more than just an accessory when the Afro was invented. The Afro became a symbol of black pride during the late Sixties when a wave of militant black politics spread throughout America. Young black students were discontent with the integrationists who tried to fit in with the white majority with their short haircuts and suits. They were fed up with trying to make themselves white by straightening and bleaching their hair. It was now time to be proud to be black so they let their hair grow wild and kinky. A huge campaign for black awareness was mounted, while at the same time a group of militant youths called the "Black Panthers" was established to fight the cause. Most of these ended up in jail and had to have their Afro hair styles shaven off. However not ever young black in America at the time shared the convictions of the Black Panthers, so the Afro wig was developed in 1968. People who couldn't make a choice one way or the other were able to don their Afro wig at weekends. (see fig: 15). The Afro wig was simply a statement of black identity not a fashion eccentricity.

21 In the eighties people strove to be as individual as possible. A mixture of unusual and original hairstyles sprang up everywhere. Hairdressers became more experimental



Fig 15.

and competitive because their fashion conscious customers demanded this. Wigs for the time being were shelved; instead a new technology was developed to provide people with extra hair. This was of course hair extensions, which were invented by Simon Forbes founder of the Antenna hair salon in London. Forbes developed Monofibre in 1981, a form of artificial hair which is braided into the natural hair roots and sealed by heat.

Forbes looked at what was happening in the world of fashion for inspiration. At that time there seemed to be an anti-fashion feeling. People were dressing as they pleased and no longer felt compelled to wash or comb their hair every day. The look was untidy and casual yet sexy. Forbes saw a need to develop a hairstyle which complemented this look. With the aid of Monofibre he created bobtails or white dreadlocks. (see fig: 16). Another variation was ragtails, in which pieces of real and false hair were combed or matted into the clients own hair. (see figs: 17).

During the Eighties, hair extensions seemed to allow people to achieve the white Rasta look, a reversal of what the Black Panther youth were fighting against in the Seventies. However this untidy look was adopted simply for style reasons, not because white people wanted to make themselves seem black. Many hardline Rastas were offended by their white imitators, particularly by pop personalities like Boy





Fig 17

George and the band Haysee Fantazee. Dreadlocks formed part of the Rastafarian religion where as now they were a fashion for white people.

Hair extensions, however, are still being used today not just by the stylists of Antenna but in salons throughout the World. People still want the untidy anti-fashion look which became a fashion. Extensions are also good for people with short hair as they add length and body without damaging the natural hair. If you don't want to wear a wig you can opt for the permanence of extensions for they last up to a year. Hairdressers are constantly experimenting with false hair, incorporating it with their clients' own hair to create new and exciting styles. Thanks to Simon Forbes, they have the technique to do so.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FOUR

SIXTIES REVIVAL IN THE NINETIES. WIGS IMPORTANT IN STYLING.

CHAPTER FOUR

Finally, with the arrival of the nineties wigs seem to be making a come back, yet again as one of the most essential fashion accessories. Within the pages of nearly every fashion magazine models can be seen wearing wigs and hairpieces. They have become a major factor of fashion styling, since headdresses have become as important as the clothes themselves. The big sixties revival at the moment is partly responsible for this. Last October, when designers showed their collections, models paraded down the catwalk in sixties-influenced clothes topped off by beehive or bouffant influenced wigs. "Fake is Fab" seems to be the order of the day. Just as in the sixties, today's models are fitted not only with false hair, but false eyelashes, black eyeliner and beauty spots, creating a dramatic and sexy image reminiscent of the time that was.

When Thierry Mugler showed his 1990 Autumn/Winter collection, we saw space age nineties women clad in militaristic P.V.C. and leather creations topped off by 1960's influenced wigs and hairpieces. (see fig: 18). Mugler's clothes were reminiscent of the tough but sexy image of Honor Blackman and Diana Rigg in the sixties T.V. series - The Avengers. In this series both stars were clad in streamlined leather outfits ready to battle against evil at a moments notice. The make-up was also very much in the sixties mode i.e strong

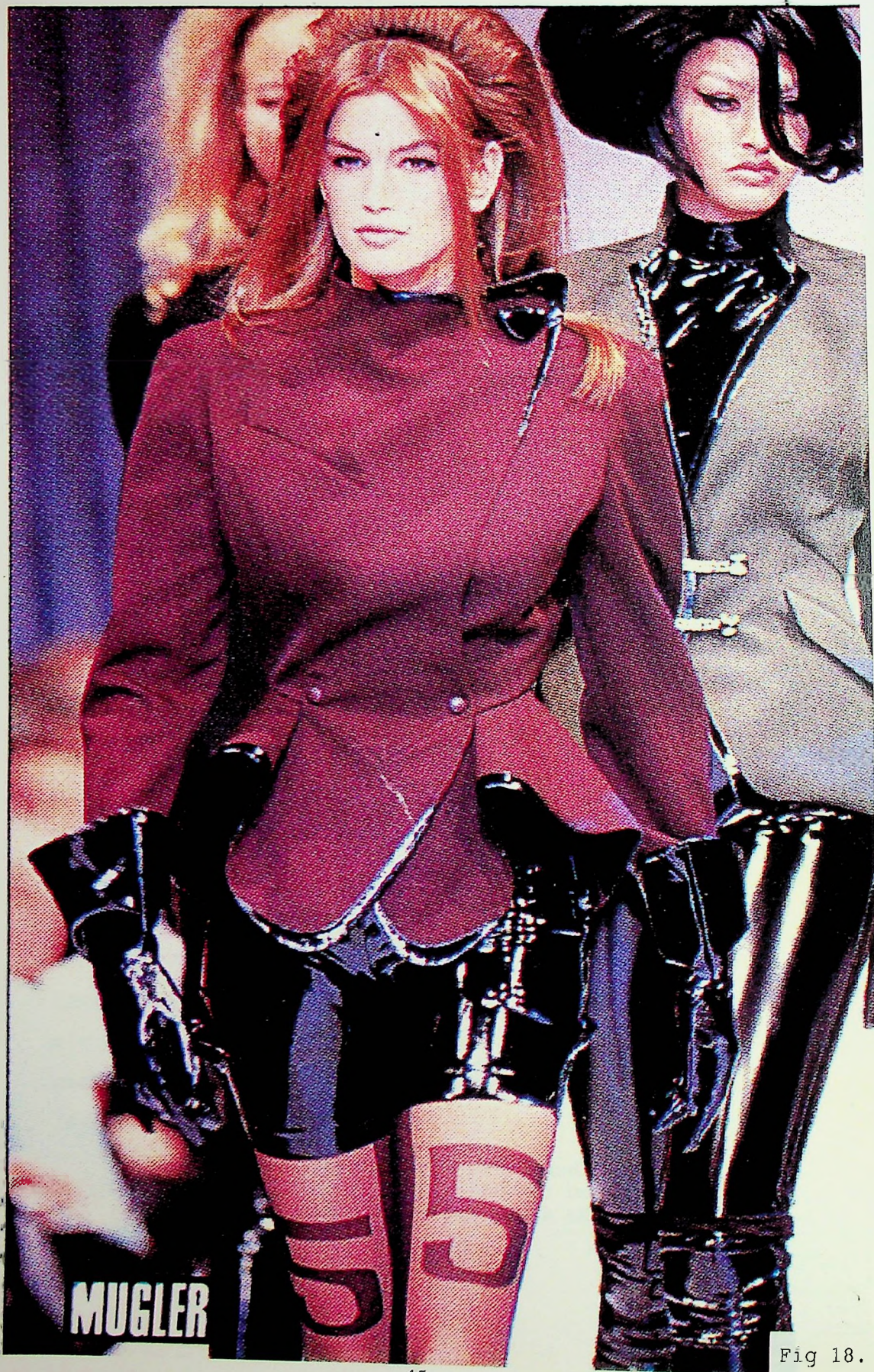


Fig 18.

use of black eyeliner and false eyelashes. The hairstyles ranged from teased bouffants to heavy angular bobs, making use of full wigs and hairpieces to achieve the whole look.

However it is not just designers who have initiated this revival; the music industry has also had a part to play. Pop stars such as Betty Boo, alias Alison Clarkson, an ex-Vidal Sassoon Model, is a typical stylistic product of the sixties influence. Betty Boo and her back-up singers nicknamed the Booettes are seen in her videos complete with beehive wigs, false eyelashes etc. - wiggy images reminiscent of the Supremes but not as talented musically. Another pop personality who has adopted the Retro scene is Kylie Minogue, Australian soap opera star turned singer. Her single "Steps back in time" released in 1990, is inspired by the "hip" seventies soul scene, while in the video she gets funky in platforms and hot pants. The Manchester band Happy Mondays also released a single called "Kinky Afro" which coincided with the appearance of exaggerated Afro wigs on the Catwalk at the London collections. (see fig: 19). Afro wigs have also appeared as a styling feature in magazines such as The Face . For example in one feature entitled "Kinky Afro" clothes by Helmut Lang and Jean Paul Gaultier are photographed on a model sporting a wild Afro wig. (see fig: 20).

Beehives, 70's sweep effects and kinky Afros are de Rigueur. Whatever be loud be proud and don your wig with abandon.(1)



**Hair apparent:
afros were
high profile at
the London
Collections**

Fig 19.



Fig 20.

This is the view of Karen Hendry writer for Hair magazine, one which is shared by designers and pop stars, however the sixties revival has had much deeper implications than just another passing trend. Stylists have realised that wigs and hairpieces are an invaluable asset to the fashion wardrobe.

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CHAPTER FIVE

FANTASY STYLES CREATED BY TONI & GUY.
LINK WITH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.
LIBERTY'S DISPLAY WIGS.

CHAPTER FIVE

The 1960's and 1970's may seem to have given the inspiration for most of the wigs around at the moment but the 1990's have provided the technology. Today's wigs are made from modacylic fibre which looks and moves like real hair but is not as expensive. Adam Bryant, stylist at the Academy, Toni & Guy's training centre in London, says that they use modacylic fibres because:

they are durable and cheaper than others. The wig can be dressed with sprays and gels which can be brushed out easily when creating a new style.(1)

Toni & Guy have just launched a range of wigs and hairpieces in conjunction with Hairraisers (an already established wig supplier in London). The range includes six basic wig styles which the customer can choose from, two cropped styles, two long styles and two bob styles. (see fig: 21). All of these are available in different natural hair shades. You can either style the wig yourself or alternatively bring it into the salon and have it cut or styled into a particular look you want. This type of customer, says Adam, "purchases a wig because they do not want to permanently change the style of their own hair but would like to adopt a different style on occasions".(2)

Toni & Guy also have a creative team which design and make wigs for their breathtaking shows. These are held three times a year and act as publicity for the company, showing

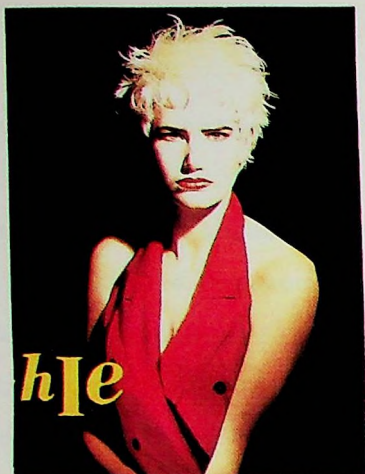


Fig 21.

off the amazing talent of their stylists. The shows are a multi media event, in which music, clothes and hair combine to make a strong impact. They use clothes from top designers such as Vivienne Westwood and Jean Paul Gaultier. The stylists choose a look which complements the hairstyle which the creative team are going to make. For example, in their November 1990 show in Dallas, they used an exaggerated Sarah Stockbridge style in conjunction with Vivienne Westwood corset and bloomers. Masses of distinct ringlets were piled on top of the head with smaller ones hanging down the side.

As a company they are very conscious of what is happening around them; they have to be, since they are in the business of image creation, continually having to come up with new and exciting styles. They have long since realised the value of false hair. Most models are restricted in their hairstyles but with the aid of wigs and hairpieces the creative team's imagination is allowed to run riot. For example, pieces of false hair can be attached to the head with spirit gum (a theatrical skin glue) which can then be cut into the desired shape adding an extra dimension to a style. They also work pieces over a base of blocking mesh (used by milliners for hat shapes) to create rolls and shapes that make a strong photographic statement.

Anthony Mascolo, artistic director of Toni & Guy and British hairdresser of the year in 1990, is responsible for styling

and photographing most of the company's publicity pictures. He obviously recognises that, good styling is important, for each element within the lens is as important as the other yet all complement the hairstyles. For example, the Caprice Roll is just one of the fantasy hairstyles which he has photographed. (see fig: 22). To create this style, hair was worked over a base of false hair which was fixed to the models head. The bodice was originally a chest plate made by one of the stylists, which was covered with copper for the shoot and the dress is by Georgina Godley. Both bodice and dress work together in style and colour to show off the exaggerated hair style.

The Hairdressers Journal ran a two part feature in November 1990 on how Adam Bryant, stylist at the Academy, actually created the Caprice Roll. The first feature showed how the base was made.

Making the base.

For this Adam started off with a square of blocking mesh which he wet with water to make it pliable. This was then placed on a mannequin's head, pressed down firmly and moulded into shape like a cap. (see fig: 23).

Then he cut out two more squares of the same size, placed them together and wetted along one edge. This was then put on top of the first mesh at the front and pressed down. (The



Fig 22.



Fig 23.



Fig 24.



Fig 25.



Fig 26.



Fig 27.



Fig 28.



Fig 29.



Fig 30.



Fig 31.

blocking mesh contains a glue which is activated by water). This was then dried with a hairdryer. (see fig: 24).

The bottom edge of the squares was then wetted and brought over the head to the back, pressed down and dried. The result is a curve shape which forms the beginnings of the base. (see fig: 25).

The shape was then packed tightly with cotton wool and the sides were moulded in. (see fig: 26).

More strips of mesh were then added to conceal the cotton wool, gradually building up layers and moulding them into shape to strengthen the base, each side of the base being identical. (see fig: 27).

Any overlapping pieces were pressed flat with the end of a dryer. Excess mesh was cut off at front and back so the base would sit firmly on a model's head. (see fig: 28).

Adam then took a long ponytail of false hair and cut off a length. Glue was applied to the end which was to be attached to the base. When the glue dried, a clean edge was cut for working. (This was repeated on three or four lengths) (see fig: 29).

Glue was then applied to the base. The first piece was

placed clean edge down on the centre front. Then taken over the back and pressed down. It was then sprayed with hairspray to keep it in place and the loose ends were cut off at the back. (see fig: 30).

Finally Adam attached two other pieces, one on either side of the first strip. They were each clipped down at the top and then taken down behind the ears and moulded neatly to the base shape before the excess was cut off. (see fig: 31).

This shape was left to dry overnight resulting in a perfect base ready to be fitted on a model's head. (see fig: 32).

The base shape is not very difficult to make although it is time consuming but once you have created the base it can be adapted to suit whatever style Adam has in mind. The real skill is creating the fantasy of the Caprice Roll with the aid of the base. The second feature showed just how this was done.

Creating the Caprice Roll

For this a model who had natural long hair the same colour as the base was used. First, Adam backcombed the roots of the hair which was then taken forward and sprayed heavily. The base was then placed symmetrically on the crown. Holes were placed around the front of the base and grips inserted to attach it to the head. (see fig: 33).



Fig 32.

The model's natural hair was then backcombed in sections, smoothed down over the top of the base and fixed at the back using hairspray and dryer. At the front the hair was criss-crossed in sections, taken back and fixed in place with grips. The hair is smoothed down and sprayed with hairspray. (see fig: 34).

The finished look is amazing. (see fig: 35).

However the Caprice Roll is just one of the breathtaking creations which Toni & Guy are capable of producing with the aid of hairpieces. The construction of the base is similar in so far as cotton wool is used to pad out a shape and also natural hair is worked in with false hair. The Caprice Roll takes a lot of time and effort to create and once it is dismantled, the style is lost. For this reason women in the eighteenth century left their huge eccentric wigs untended for weeks. The twentieth century fantasy of the Caprice Roll however is only created for the Toni & Guy fashion show; it has not become a universal fashion accessory yet. There is no longer a leisure class similar to that in the eighteenth century which could feasibly wear this creation as part of every day dress.



Fig 33.



Fig 34.



Fig 35.

Liberty's display wigs

The eighteenth century has also been the inspiration, recently, for the display team of Liberty's in London. Their January/February windows were dressed characteristically in the period. Tony Crathern, who is a member of the team, found that Liberty's bridal dresses seemed to lend themselves towards eighteenth century styles. The windows were hence dressed romantically with mannequins placed leisurely in a stately garden setting. They were fitted with bodices and full skirts, either of plain or floral prints, with fans, shawls and pearl beads. Finally, the painted faces were topped off by the most magnificent white powdered, Madame Pompadour -style wigs. (see fig: 36). Usually display wigs are made of nylon but in this case Tony Crathern wanted the wigs to have "a soft powdered look similar to the wigs of the eighteenth century".(3)

Liberty's wigs were constructed in much the same way as Toni & Guy construct their fantasy headpieces. Buckram (which is also used by milliners for hat shapes) was used for a hard base and soft hair, which had already been pre - curled or styled, was then glued to it. The hair was then sprayed with a matt white paint which was then dusted with talcum powder when dry. Kevin Powling from Bodyline in London (the company who made the wigs) says that "the wigs were made to fit exactly the particular mannequins head".(4) Bodyline mainly do display wigs, which are made out of nylon, but they also



Fig 36.

make wigs for the stage, which like Liberty's, are made from soft hair.

The design of Liberty's wigs is a twentieth century interpretation of the eighteenth century style. There are two distinct roll curls lying at the side of the head, the front rises high into the air and is topped off by corkscrew curls which cascade down the back of the head. (see fig: 37). It seems to be a cross between men's and women's wig styles which were fashionable in the middle of the eighteenth century. For example, the definition of Pompadour is:

a style of dressing the hair without a parting, the hair being combed back from the forehead and worn high at the front.(5)

This style was named after the style worn by the Marquise de Pompadour around 1745. While, roll curls began to appear at the side of men's wigs from around 1750.

Liberty's windows were most effective, bridal dresses were displayed in a romantically flamboyant style, reminiscent of the decadent leisure class of eighteenth century society.



Fig 37.

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CHAPTER SIX

CHAPTER SIX

INFLUENCE OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ON FILM MAKERS AND FASHION DESIGNERS.

CHAPTER SIX

Although the 1990's have given rise to a 1960's fashion revival, the eighteenth century has proved to be a continuously rich source of ideas, not only for wig makers but for film makers and fashion designers alike within the past ten years. For it was a time of frivolity and eccentricity, not just in dress but in society's behaviour. The upper classes were governed by what was the fashionable thing to do or say; they did not concern themselves with the mundane matters of ordinary life. It was also a period in which great importance was placed on fashionable dress. Both men and women wore the most beautiful costumes made from fine silk and satins. An enormous amount of time was devoted to dressing since appearance was everything. The ladies and gentlemen of polite society entertained themselves by going to the opera or attending fantasy masquerade balls. Life was romantically carefree for the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century - or was it?

The film Dangerous Liaisons which was made in France in 1988 is based on the play "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" by Christopher Hampton, adapted from the eighteenth century novel by Choderlos de Laclos. This film centers on the behaviour of the French Bourgeoisie in the latter half of the century. It displays the callous streak of the upper classes when they indulge in a battle of the sexes. The two principal characters are the Marquise de Merteuil, played by

Glen Close, and the Viscomte de Valmont, who is played by John Malkovich. Both characters are prominent figures within the fashionable society of Paris. They match each other in wit and intelligence yet they are both ruled by desire. The film revolves around a bargain struck up between the Marquise and Valmont, one which is based on revenge.

The Marquise tries to persuade Valmonte to help her seek revenge against her current lover by seducing his innocent bride to be, Cecile de Volanges. Valmont refuses, since he has his reputation to think of and it would be too easy a task. Instead he tells the Marquise of the task he has set himself - that of seducing Madame de Tourvel, a married woman famed within the bourgeoisie for her virtue. He then suggests that the Marquise engage in an infidelity with him as a means of revenge. This she agrees to do, providing he produce written evidence of his success with Madame de Tourvel. The bargain is struck. Valmont sets off to win the love of Madame Tourvel. Meanwhile the Marquise tries to find someone else to tempt Cecile. This she does in the shape of Danceny, a handsome young music teacher.

Valmont pursues Madame de Tourvel, constantly tring to break down her defences, during which time he carries letters from Danceny to Cecile and eventually seduces Cecile since the young Danceny could only speak of love in his letters. Valmont does however succeed in winning Madame de Tourvel's

love, only to find that he has fallen hopelessly in love with her a feeling he refused to recognise, although the Marquise did.

"Have you forgotten what it's like to make a woman happy and to be made happy yourself"(1).

The Marquise was also in love with Valmont, she admits when they were lovers it was "the only time I've been controlled by my desires"(2).

Consumed by jealousy, she advises Valmont to break with Madame de Tourvel before he becomes a laughing stock. This he did, constantly repeating the words "it's beyond my control"(3). The cruelty of his rejection drives Madame de Tourvel into ill health. However having freed himself, Valmont returns to the Marquise to claim his reward with written proof of Madame de Tourvel's love. The Marquise refused to honour the bargain and war was declared between both counterparts.

Danceny is told by the Marquise of Valmont's seduction of his love and thus challenges him to a duel. Valmont is wounded in the duel and with his dying words he warns Danceny about the Marquise, "be careful of the Marquise de Merteuil; in this affair we are both her creatures"(4).

He gives Danceny letters to substantiate this and tells him, "when you have read them you may decide to circulate them". Valmont also asks Danceny to let Madame de Tourvel know his true feelings towards her. He is content to die, for he says "I am glad not to have to live without her, her love was the

only real, happiness I have ever known"(5).

This Danceny does just before she dies. The film ends with the death of the two lovers and society's realisation of the Marquise plotting in the whole affair.

Dangerous Liaisons illustrates the manipulative power which desire has over people, overriding all those senses except revenge in this case. The film also illustrates beautifully the way of life of the leisure class in the eighteenth century. For example within the opening scene of the film we witness the procedure which ladies and gentlemen of leisure had to go through every day when dressing. We first see the Marquise admiring herself in the mirror, then her group of maids enter the room and start to dress her. One powders her chest while the others fit her corset and pinner.

(see fig: 38).

She chooses her scent for the day, is fitted with her earrings and then pinned into her orange silk dress. There is an air of indulgence about the whole routine as the Marquise is perfumed and powdered by her maids.

Similary Valmont is awakened by six attendants who first give him a fresh handkerchief. Then they fill his bath and give him a manicure. He then decides what shoes he is going to wear that day. Next we see Valmont at the window pointing with a cone to one of his many wigs on his dressing table. (see fig: 39). Once the wig is selected it is placed on his

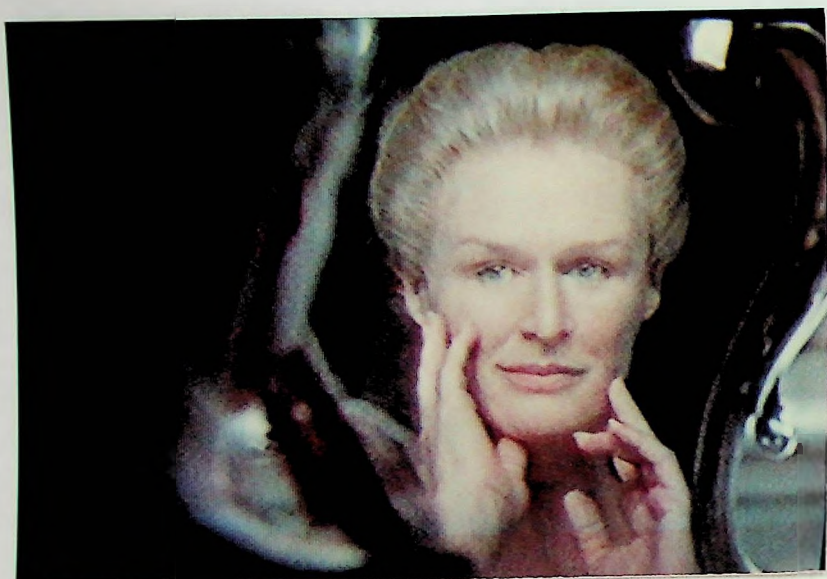


Fig 38.

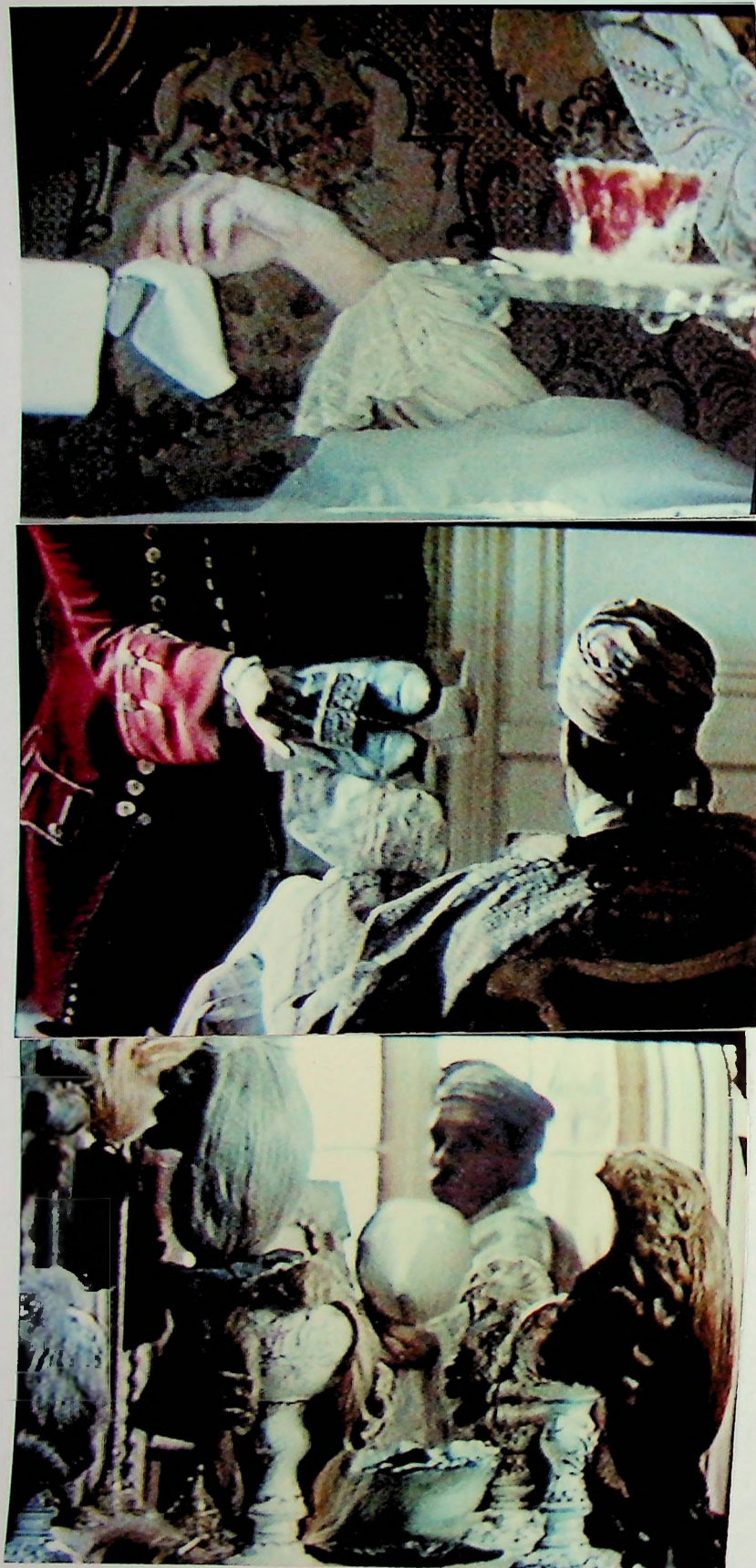


Fig 39.

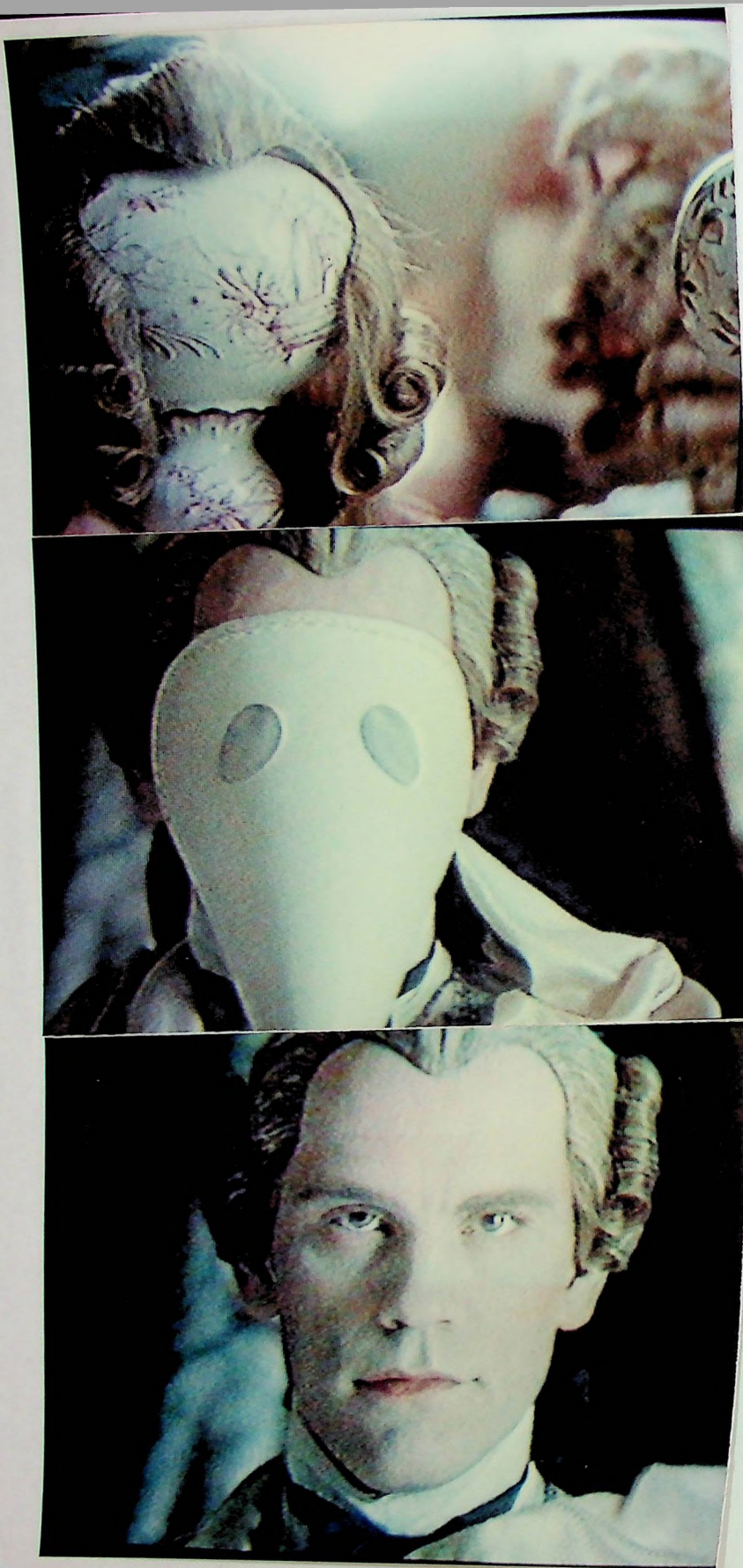


Fig 39.

head, the cone is put over his face and an attendant dusts the wig with powder. He stands upright in his blue velvet jacket and embroidered waistcoat. Finally with the addition of his sword he is ready to start the day.

From this scene we can deduce that both characters are obviously members of the leisured class, who are governed by etiquette and fashionable dress. It is not until the film progresses that we discover the true nature of both characters, realising the undercurrents of revenge and desire, as it were that lye beneath the serene image of the bourgeoisie.

The last scene of the film is also note worthy as in this we see the Marquise stripped of her mask which she invented for herself. Upon the circulation of Valmont's letters she enters her opera box amidst boos and jeers from her own class within society. Finally she is seen for what she really is, a dangerous woman consumed by revenge. As she wipes off her powder and paint in front of the mirror it is as though she is wiping off the symbols of her own class, who have shunned her. (see fig: 40).

The film deservedly won an award for James Acheson's lavish costume designs which were typically flamboyant and made from the finest fabrics. The man responsible for the wigs was Peter Owen, who claims the wigs were "pure invention"(6).



Fig 40.

They were also true to the period in which the film was set. Women at that stage were not wearing wigs, instead the help of a hairpiece or chignon was enlisted. This is exactly what Owen did; he added hairpieces at the back of the female characters' heads and then dusted the whole head with powder. (see fig: 41). Ribbons, flowers and beads were also added to finish off the hairstyle. The mens' wigs were of typical bag wig style, with one, two or maybe three roll curls lying at the side horizontally above each other. John Malkovich's own hair was in some scenes worked in with a hairpiece, where as the rest of the time he wore full wigs with roll curls which were simply powdered. (see fig: 42).

Peter Owen also created the wigs in the 1982 film The Draughtman's Contract written by Peter Greenaway. The film is set in England in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The men's wigs are typical variations of full bottomed wigs, while the women's heads emulate the mens by rising in the shape of a commode. This film examines the behaviour of polite society within England.

More importantly, Dangerous Liaisons provides a taste of the way of life within France prior to the French Revolution. But since the film is based on a play which is adapted from an eighteenth century novel, it can not fully demonstrate in a hundred and twenty minutes the true nature of the French aristocracy, who with their excesses drove the lower classes



Fig 41.



Fig 42.

to revolt. "The century is drawing to its close"(7). So too was the reign of the aristocracy.

Jean Paul Gaultier

The eighteenth century has also attracted the attention of fashion designers such as Jean Paul Gaultier. Gaultier has been one of the most influential and innovative designers within the past ten years. It is not surprising that he too has also been caught up in the romanticism of one of the most flamboyant centuries of fashion history. Even his early designs were of a corset style, reminiscent of eighteenth century women's costume. However his corset dresses are worn as outerwear instead of underwear, for he recognises the beauty of a structured female shape. Without the distortion of paniers.

Today as headdresses grow rapidly in importance as a fashion accessory, Gaultier looks at the eighteenth century for inspiration. He has begun to design elaborate headpieces which he teams up with simple suits or dresses, pieces which are not unlike the eccentric hairstyles of the upper classes at that time. In the twentieth century there isn't such a large leisure class, thus a functional yet stylish outfit is seen on the catwalk topped by an amazing headpiece which creates the look. For example when Gaultier showed his Autumn/winter collection last October the audience were

dazzled by illuminated plastic Madame Pompadour wigs which topped off a simple yet classic double-breasted jacket and trousers. The suit would look nothing however, without the headpiece. (see fig: 43).

Gaultier's publicity campaigns throughout the fashion magazines have always been new and exciting. His recent ads in French Vogue illustrate beautifully his love of the eighteenth century. (FIG: 44). Shows a headpiece made from ribbon and braid which has been curled at the sides to add texture. False hair pieces which are braided are seen flowing down from under the headpiece. The model's face is powdered and painted subtly, not forgetting the all-important beauty mark, truly creating a romantic image of the past. (FIG: 45). Shows a headpiece in which satin ribbon is braided and fitted close to the head topped by a huge bow. It is teamed with a simple bra-top dress. In the corner there is an elaborate old glass chandelier creating a feeling of the enormous ballrooms of the French chateaus which were filled in the eighteenth century with the most beautiful people. In both images it is the headpiece that stands out and gives a romantic evocation of the eighteenth century.

Gaultier also displays a sense of humour and irreverence with his raw silk fuchsia walking suits which he teams up with long Marie Antoinette wigs of the same colour. (see fig:46). "Life must be lived in the pink at all times", says Gaultier,

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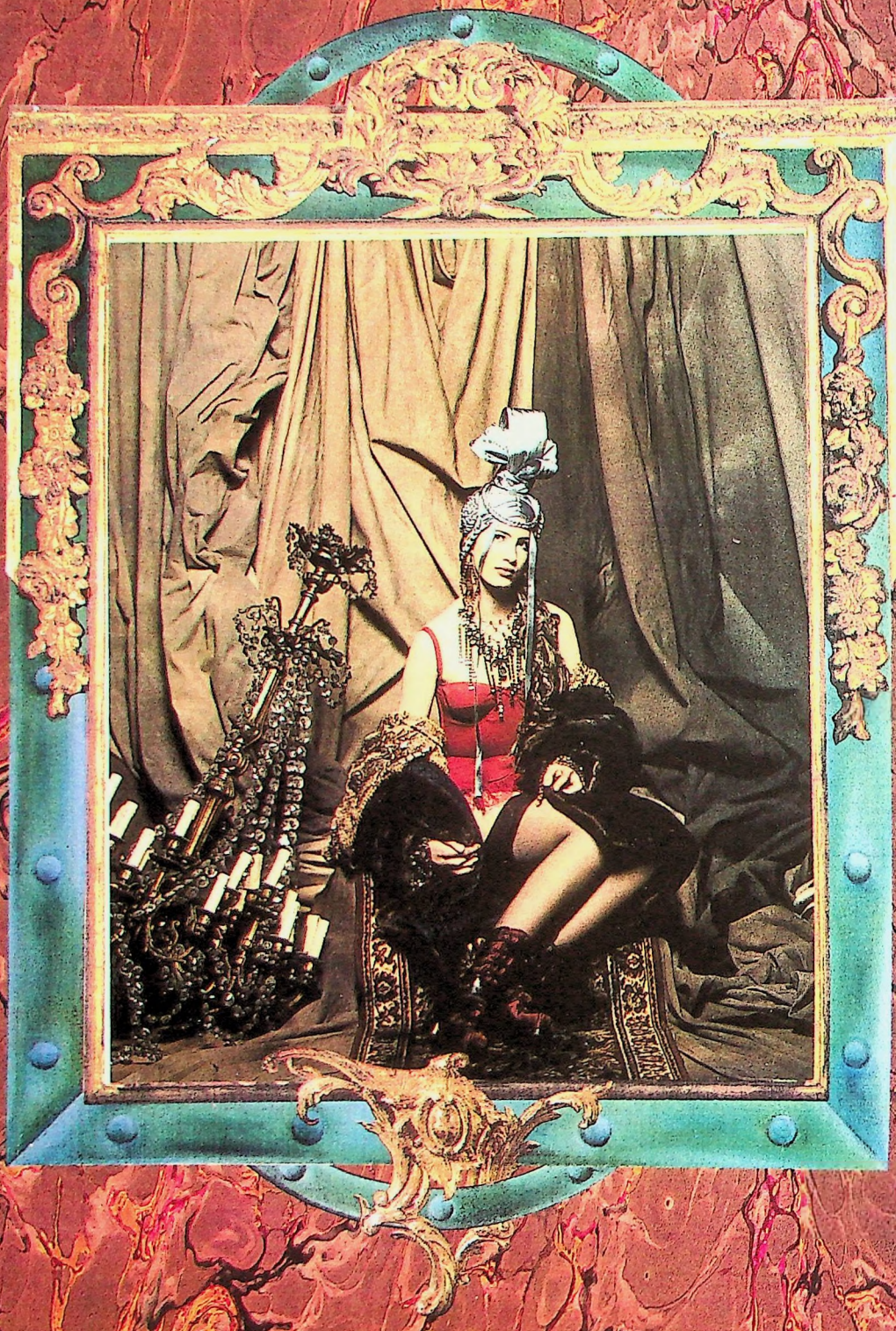
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GAULTIER

Fig 45.



fashion 1991



Jean Paul Gaultier

Fig 46.

"even dreams should be thought of as a wonderful life filled with colour"(9). In other words fashion should not take itself so seriously or be so straight. The carefree frivolity of the upper classes in the eighteenth century seems romantically desirable to Gaultier.

(9) *Journal des Dames*, *Paris*, 1870.

(10) *Journal des Dames*, *Paris*, 1870.

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CONCLUSION

Having traced the varied role of wigs and hairpieces in the twentieth century, it seems apparent that they have had an important role in our "Social History"(1). During this century they have symbolised not only youth culture but political identity. Clearly illustrating the power of headdress. However there is one thing wigs have not managed to do and that is, distinguish class. Unlike eighteenth century headdress which defined the opulant leisure class and singled out the lower classes. However, despite the class division brought about by their eccentric fashions of this period, the eighteenth century has been a continual source of inspiration for many. The romantic idea of a carefree existance similar to that of the fashionable upper classes in the eighteenth century is a desireable form of escapism from the pressures of our modern society. Designers such as Jean Paul Gaultier and Vivienne Westwood recognise the importance of our past, both of whom seem to share in a passion for the frivolity of the eighteenth century. A time when both men and women of the upper classes took great pride in their appearance, dressing in the most luxurious and extravagant costumes. Gaultier and Westwood have come up with their own twentēith century interpretations of the classic styles of the eighteenth century. Creating designs for our modern society which is no longer dominated by a rich leisure class.

Both designers add a touch of humour to their collections. For example in the British Vogue February 1991 issue, the stylist has chosen to photograph a Vivienne Westwood "peek-a-bow floral print corset"(1) with stretch leggings and Jean Paul Gaultier lace up thigh-high satin boots. Westwood's bodice shows a clear sense of fun, as irregular satin bows are sewn down the front of a very structured boned bodice. Even Gaultier's thigh high boots are an unexpected version of this style for they are made of rich satin, one of the most popular fabrics used in eighteenth century women's gowns. Most importantiy, the models hair is dressed high and curly reminiscent of an eighteenth century wig style. This is a very strong photographic image, clearly demonstrating the eighteenth and twentieth century crossover in the world of fashion, as now, in the nineties, the headdress and costume of the eighteenth century are forming the basis for new and exciting interpretations of classic design.



Fig 47.

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