CONTEMPORARY MASCULINITY

AND THE MALE SELF IMAGE

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Contents

Thanks Anne!

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PREFACE

Contemporary menswear design is turning to ever
more complex interpretations of male self imagery for its
inspiration. This is due primarily to the changing social
attitudes towards masculinity and what it means to be a man.
My interest as a menswear designer is not only to recognise
the use of self imagery, but to understand its emergence
and motivation.

INTRODUCTION

This work has primarily been motivated by the ongoing debate
and examination of masculinity by the femininst movement and
more recently the non-sexist men's movement with its
concentration on sexual discrimination against men in
socially coded attitudes . It is largely from this viewpoint
that the work examines both (a) the social attitudes, and
(b) the imagery men use to project masculinity within this
time of social change.

SECTION 1

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

1.1

SOCIAL LEGACY

When reading any social history, the dominant role men have played is quite obvious. What is not so evident is, except for some very few cases, the attitudes of society which produced this male orientated legacy. By the late 19th century, as Psychology developed its basic principles, the roles of male and female were examined. Writers such as Havelock Ellis suggested that, in previous times,the concept of male sexuality was unproblematical. By its very nature it was direct and forceful, as it was based on the original position of primitive seizure and ownership of the female by the physically stronger male.[1]

It is quite possible to see the forming of our contemporary social attitudes towards masculinity in the 19th century. Much time was given by the Victorian social moralists to the debate on masculine supremacy over the female. They felt a real need to prove the social structure they were building was the correct one. Because of this much of the debate was undertaken with an air of great anxiety, many being predisposed to a particular point of view on the whole subject. It is fascinating for us, even today, to see how one very strong section of society was able to dominate for many years the sexual politics of society.

It was mainly the Bourgeoisie of the last century who set the agenda. They saw the male as the true provider, and the female as the uncorrupted opposite. However, the lower classes were seen to have quite a different sexuality. The male, though still seen as the main provider, was perceived to be on a level nearer to the animal world, with low desires that had to be kept in check, without any aspirations for a higher level of existence. This useful idea, in terms of economic exploitation was almost totally held by the Bourgeoisie. The working class woman was seen to be much more self sufficient than the woman in the employer class. She however was not perceived as being as "womanly". This led to one of the greatest hypocricies of the 19th century, thriving prostitution. As many of 20th century social structures were being formed, such as schooling and hospital care,the differences between the male and the female were embedded in every aspect of social life.

1.2

FEMINISM

The concept of analysing masculinity would be very alien to
the early feminists of the 1970's. As for many of the early
theorists masculinity was the net cause of discrimination in
society. However, in contemporary writings masulinity has
been recognised as a valid field from which to work towards
a more equal society. Both movements are largely, in the
broadest sense, focussed on sociological issues. They have
become joined on many issues into a non-sexist focus. This
growth is one which is finding widespread acceptance and
this acceptance is giving added strength to each of the
movements.

By 1971/1972 many feminist writers working from the view
point of the psychologist recognised the inadequacies of
looking at the inner self, or psyche, while attempting to
analyse the traits of male or female. Writers, such as Anne
Oakley discuss the importance of differentiating between
one's inherent "sex" as a biological term and "gender" as a
social, cultural term.$_2$ Others, such as Judith Bardwick,
Martina Horner and Naomi Weisstein also support this
argument,claiming that the answers to understanding the
inequalities in society lie in the outer self , in the
social context of role learning.$_3$ Generalising to some

extent,it can be seen how women have been taught to be
dependent and to fail outside the home , men to stand on
their own two feet and not need emotional support.

In these early days of feminism there was not much of a role
for men to take. The movement, of necessity, was
concentrated on women. The impetus needed this concentration
because of the revolutionary theories being expounded, and
because development would only come from the involvement of
the gender or "sex class" which had suffered most from the
processes of inequality. However, as the discussion
broadened and began to analyse society in general, many men
found themselves no longer at odds with the movement. Over
the past decade the "non - sexist" debate has opened up the
whole issue of equality on a broader scale for men. More and
more of the feminist ideas have been accepted by a broader
society. It can now be argued that more and more men find
themselves at odds with the values of the society in which
they have grown. These values were so entrenched into male
lifestyle in our society, that it is not surprising that
there have been big changes for the male in the past few
years, as the male image has been fragmented, and it has
become acceptable that there is no longer only one image
with which to identify.

As early femininst ideas were slowly integrated into the
social framework, during the 1970's decade, so now the new

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theories arising from the analysis of masculinity are now no longer on the outskirts of our socially acceptable psyche. Contemporary masculinity, or the male self image, finds itself in an era of change, very similar to the process in which the female self image was affected in the early part of the feminist era. That is, it is not a global sense of awareness, but rather a state wherein individuals find themselves no longer compatible with many of the doctrines held by society around them. This seems to be happening on both a general and a more personal basis. As happened with the advent of the feminist movement, and the subsequent changes in women's self image, men today find themselves receiving alternatives to the general set of the social views. It is interesting to see that many a man's self image has found itself trying to discover and create its own aspirations rather than that which society, in general, guides him to aspire to.

As more and more male and female feminists have concentrated on analysing man's role in an non - sexist society, a whole new movement has developed around the sociological traits that men, in particular,have found themselves following. Initially the non-sexist male debate centred around workshops at conferences addressing feminist concerns. By the late 1980's, both in America and Britain articles started to appear in periodicals such as Robert Bly's article in <u>The American Family Therapy Journal</u> (1988) wherein he discussed the need for men to contact within themselves the "wild man" or the warrior.[4] Articles such as this sparked off an interest in Britain. A British magazine <u>Achille's Heel</u> by The Changing Men's Publishing Collective (1989) featured articles on the experience of both men and women interested in seeing social attitudes change. Another element in the contemporary mens movement was the increasing awareness of Gay rights and Gay activists like Harvey Milk in America. By the early 1980's many American Gay men questioned the traditional perception of the homosexual. This re-evaluation of masculinity led to questions on how men should behave. One such questioner is John Stoltenberg. In his many books and essays, he has tried to analyse how men's behaviour has been programmed by society as much as

was the behaviour of women before the feminist movement. In his most recent book <u>Refusing to be a Man</u> (1989) Stoltenberg discusses how men have a "sex", echoing Anne Oakley's argument of "sex" versus "gender". He describes the social gender roles as "sex class" or "sex classing", saying "The idea of the male sex is like that of the Aryan race. As the Nazis constructed the idea of the Aryan race by considering traits to be proof of race, so too the traits of maleness are used to define the "sex" (class)".[5]

What makes the men's movement independent of the femininst non-sexist movement is how masculine power in society is analysed. The concept of man as the provider, a concept which is almost universal, and which will be discussed later, is the basis of the men's movements main contentions. The men's movement would argue that if the non-male was not manipulated , so as to appear inferior in our society, there would not be the desire for the male to affiliate himself so strongly with his "sex class" or gender, as is generally the case. This rejection of what is seen as non masculine, and the desire to aspire to be the provider are the bases upon which most male contemporary images are based. As the feminist movement worked for new roles for women in society so now , the men's movement works to provide new role models for men to aspire to in the future.

CHAPTER 2

THE SOCIAL SYSTEM AND MALE CODING

2.1

MALE CODING

Male coding, or men's socially learned sexuality, may at
first seem a simple concept. Boys grow into men observing
and imitating traits and opinions from their
predecessors.The idea of skills being handed down from
father to son through generations is a traditional view of
the way in which society proceeds and survives. However,
today , as we have learned from the feminist movement, the
idea of handing on to the the next generation traits,
manners and morals can breed codes , or doctrines, that are
so integral to perceptions on life that they are practically
invisible. The feminist movement has done much for women in
the discovery of the the reality of the way they live within
a code of widely accepted conduct.

 However, many men are only now realising the extent to
which they have been manipulated by social codes. Within our
society masculine traits are very definable. They include
confidence, strength, being un-afraid and in control, being
self-sufficient, successful,and dominant. Men, responding
to the Hite Report (1987), felt that a man by showing

masculinity would be accepted to participate in men's activities and be accepted by other men as being one of them.[1] Masculinity was the trait in a man that men most admired.[2] Many thought that masculinity was the opposite to femininity, that the real way to be masculine was to ensure against showing any feminine traits.[3] Men were asked in the report how they would feel if someone said thay acted like a woman. The most common answers were, " I know what he is really saying. If a man described me as womanly, what he really means is I should be submissive to him".[4] The belief that the non male is of lesser worth, as mentioned earlier, is something that is dominant in male coding today, as is the notion that a man must be in control. A real man can take hold of any situation and manipulate it to his will. It is not difficult to see how the men's movement sees this male coding as a real form of sexual oppression in our society. Male codes are best illustrated in our concepts of man as the provider.

2.2

THE PROVIDER

The concept of man as the provider gives insight into many
traits of male self image. To examine our society's image of
men is to examine the traditional male self image. The most
fundamental trait of masculinity today can be seen as that
of the provider. The male has been portrayed as the bread
winner for the family. He is the person who can go out into
the hostile world and can win for his dependents what is
needed. More recently, as women fight for equality, rather
than diminishing the concept of the provider they have found
themselves working within this framework. The term
"Superwoman" of the late 1980's was coined to describe the
women who found themselves sucked into the masculine traits
of being provider and yet being expected by society to raise
the family. The bread winnner can be seen to have the traits
of the hunter. He must be strong, self-sufficient, single-
minded to survive. This could seem abstract until modern
images of the business man are analysed. In the media,
advertising and films etc. the executive is portrayed as a
forceful character, dominant is his field, very much a
person in control of the master plan. He is shown as
successful, with wealth implicated by his surrounding and
his clothes.(Fig.1.) The element of the warrior or the

hunter is constantly present in any style or image of the bread winner, be he trucker, policeman, forester or lawyer.

We have all learned to recognise the same aggressive traits in them. Many television characters and programmes illustrate this. Our social concept of the male hero can be seen as the super bread winner, or super warrior. <u>Conan the Barbarian</u> or <u>Master of the Universe</u> are good examples to look at. How valid is this imagery that men are asked to aspire to? From what source is the warrior element derived? Contemporary feminism has turned the spotlight very much on the examination of masculinity and violence. The past five years has seen many demonstrations of women's anger against male violence. Many see male violence as the undiluted subjugation of women. The direct violence of men against women, e.g. rape, has been widely written about. Though it is strongly connected to the area of discussion in this work, this paper will look at culturally and socially encouraged violence in our society. Male aggression and the rejection of non masculinity are very strong motivators in our society.

They are held up as a most legitimate aspiration for almost every boy child in the society. The deliberate use of this philosophy can be clearly seen at work in male bastions, such as the army. The biggest motivating factor in the training of army officers, and indeed in training lesser

ranks, is that they must work to achieve a fuller concept of masculinity, obliterating all signs of what might be perceived to be feminine aspects. They learn how to act "tough", to fight and to have confidence in violence. They learn to use this knowledge of violence as a form of assertiveness.

As the social sciences were explored the belief that men have been genetically programmed with thousands of years of hunting and killing instincts developed. However, an anthropologist like Richard Leakey counter argues this point. His basic belief is that it is aspects of our societal growth, such as sharing and community development that make us human and not the hunting and gathering traits which are present in most animals that have not evolved as has the human species.[5] Professor John Keegan, a lecturer in War Studies at Sandhurst, England, also supports this thesis. He says "Killing people is not an activity which seems to carry widespread approval..... It is worthy to note that the one sort of front line soldier who has some choice over whether he will kill or not, the officer, has consistently and steadily withdrawn himself from the act of killing itself".[6]

This is reassuring, but it does not explain the violence present in the aggressiveness of masculinity today. One explanation might be in the case put forward by Professor Konrad Lorenz (1967). He argues that all animals, on

examination, seem to be seekers of status. This could explain the inherent aggressiveness in animals. He puts forward the notion that perhaps a measure of this aggressive drive was inbred into man, and that in today's world he has no outlet for it other than in the social context of provider.[7]

Others, like Brian Easlea,(1983) try to explain masculinity's social traits in other ways: "Man's lak of the magical powers of giving birth and suckling infants is what creates mens's terrifying vulnerabilities and insecurities..... men give birth to science and weapons."[8]

2.3

<u>*SOCIAL CONTEXT OF CODING*</u>

As with the current women's movement, the men's movement
finds itself caught in certain extremes. Our culture has a
tendency to highlight such extremes in the initial stages of
their development. For example, the early feminists were
perceived as aggressive, men-hating lesbians. The very early
men's movement was often defined as an aggressive gay
movement against masculinity. The early topics of the
masculine movement discussed in magazine articles go hand in
hand with lightweight discussions of someone such as Boy
George and other "Gender bending" stars. More recently, the
arguments of the men's movement have found themselves, as
did the ideas of the feminist movement before them ,
seemingly in the forefront of social aspirations. As the
beliefs and values of the movement, became more familiar,
advertising agencies and editorials , always on the lookout
for new developoments in order to "piggy back" on them to
boost sales and create images of use to them for a new
generation, discovered the "new man" (Fig.2.) of the
contemporary magazine world.

In this new movement the media picked up, as it had
previously done with the feminists, on the worst excesses of
the fringe activities of the anti sexist men's movement. In

an editorial called "Beyond the New Man" appearing in
Achille's Heel (Autumn 1990) it was described how the new
man was " a monstrous cross between ever aspiring anti -
sexist wimps and the ultra sensitive liberated man".
........"The Frankenstein monster the men's movement had
helped to create was now threatening to completely destroy
the movement's credibility".

In her essay "The Great Pretender .. Variations on the New
Man Theme", Rowena Chapman summarises the foundations of the
concept of the new man as " ....a potent symbol for men and
women searching for new images and visions of masculinity in
the wake of feminism and the men's movement. The new man is
a liberal, and an outlaw from hardline masculinity, from the
shirt busting antics of the Incredible Hulk, to the jaw
busting antics of John Wayne. He is an about face from the
whole fraternity of "The Right Stuff".[9]

It is interesting to see how these fundamental aspirations,
quite close to those of the men's movement have been taken
by society and manipulated so as to become another status
concept for the provider to aspire to. The future of the
men's movement is basically safe. The present strength of
the women's movement illustrates the potential for survival
of any of the many concepts which have found such a broad
degree of acceptance. It will go on to develop and interact,
even more than it has up to the present, with the womens
movement.

It is important,however, to ask how the aspirations of the men's movement can be subverted and put alongside the notion of the superman provider as a social status for men in our society to achieve.

One answer could be in such arguments as are put forward by Adam May in his NCAD (1989) thesis "Man and Reception, Aesthetics and Masculinity". He argues how the "Superman" role and the New Man" role fulfill the ideology of the economic base of our society. Without men striving to achieve these "ideals" our capitalist world would have no motor on which to run. Initially, it would seem that the "new man" and all he aspires to is contrary to the more traditional "superman" provider image. However, when it is seen how it is used in today's society,it is not difficult to see why so many of the men's movement describe it as a Frankenstein monster. We are shown how the new man dresses, carries his child, what his sports are etc. This is all portrayed against a background of wealth. We have come to recognise the new man as someone who can afford to risk critical repercussions from the traditionalists because he has already established social sucess, money and power.(Figs.3,4.) In less wealthy cultures the traditional role of the male would not come under such attack. An example would be African tribes, wherein a sense of

independence would not necessarily be something to be
striven for.

fIG. 1. YOUNG, RICH AND POWERFUL

EMPORIO ARMANI
— London, Glasgow

fIG. 2   ARMANI, USING THE 'NEW MAN' TRAITS TO SELL

FIG 3   Oliver Stone's film 'Wall Street'. The YUPPY
         'New Man' imagery used to portray "The Master
         of the Universe". Tom Wollf.

FIG 4 "I've got mine" Selling style to the
independant new man.

SECTION 2

CHAPTER 3

THE MALE SELF IMAGE

3.1

MALE SELF IMAGERY

It is quite easy to examine the extent to which our society depends on coding its members from a sociological framework, but to really examine the effect coding has on men one must turn one's attention to the effect on the individual man. It would seem a wide area to attempt to examine. There would seem to be as many perceptions of what it means to be "manly" as there are men. However, by examining how men project their personal sense of masculinity, a strong framework of accepted doctrines becomes evident.

THE "REAL" MAN

The concept of the "real" or the "macho" man would seem the
most obvious result of social pressure on men to be the
provider or warrior. He is the embodiment of what is
expected in the super hero. Though at its most fundamental
the image would seem to be fictional,the concept of the
"real" or "macho" man has been used by many men to express
their maleness.(Figs.5,6.) From the earliest times in
Western society, men have felt they best proved their
masculinity in the pursuit of physical endeavours. In a
physical way they are able to express their physical
differences from the nonmale. Greek and Roman civilization
had boys being initiated into manhood by their prowess at
fighting other men. This led to official recognition of
their now being one of the band of men. Hunting was also
seen as proof of masculine traits.

 In the 20th century the identification of the "real " or
"macho" man is still firmly based on the same concept.
Increasingly society has begun to reject the concept of man
as the fighter, notable during the Hippy movement of the
late 1960's and the rejection of American participation in
the Vietnam War,. However, visual and literary imagery
extensively explores the "superior" masculine traits
required to head off into battle or to confront hazards such

as wild beasts. One of the most highlighted macho men of this century is perhaps Ernest Hemingway.(Fig.7.) In his novels he created male characters of great physical virility, fighting against and containing the beast in nature. This hunter image was very important to the early colonial settlers of Africa. The white man using his superior mind in conjunction with his physical powers could harness and capture the great natural forces of the continent.

Hollywood in the 1930's and 1940's produced some powerful role models in the "real man" or "macho" style. Clark Gable,(Fig.8.) Humphrey Bogart and John Huston (Fig.9.) were seen hunting through vast areas of the wild jungle world, protecting their women and all wearing versions of the colonial type uniform that personified the great white hunter image, a warm country hybréd of the gentleman's hunting jacket. The hunter image intermingled with the soldier/warrior masculine image. This too stemmed from the concept of aspiring to manliness through physical traits. The image of the soldier or warrior, though its base is in violence and aggression, does not present itself either mentally or visually for the sole purpose of killing. Rather it displays its confidence in violence as proof of manliness. Uniforms have played an integral part in mens's imagery, though they have never been "lean and clean"

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utility clothing when used to convey status. They have been expressive mediums of male ego projection.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, as the sophistication of uniforms increased, their basic suitability of them as clothing in which to fight a war decreased. The British army marching in tightly cut, unyielding pantaloons, with bright red attractive jackets showed man as a very sophisticated warrior.(Fig. 10.) In fact, marching was drastically hindered by this type of trousers and the red jackets acted as a blatant beacon to any enemy. Add to this,a restricted pillbox or busby hat with its restrictive strap on the chin and it becomes clearer that the actual function of the uniform was not for combat. Napoleon seemed to recognise its primary function. He allowed each successful general in his army to design his own uniform, thus allowing the general's directly to express his masculinity. As wars are fought and more of the population is drawn into armies, elements of the uniforms are adapted by the civilian population. This had always been the case with upper class gentlemen in Europe. Most of these would have spent some time in a military academy or in the army and they adapted the imagery for their personal use outside military pursuits.

This was never more evident than after the Second World War. American military styles swamped Europe. The duffle coat, originally a naval garment for arctic conditions, and the

short leather jackets worn by the fighter plane pilots became widely used. The young European man, especially the British man , adapted not only to the style of clothing but also embraced the super masculine male traits.(Figs. 11, 12.) The tough streetwise image, originally very jarring in places like Yorkshire and Suffolk, as is often the case with the advent of a new culture, are now almost as natural an expression of masculine self imagery as any military equivalent. The "macho" super heroe weres portrayed by Hollywood and their imagery exported to Europe, thus enhancing and speeding up this integration. Other formats or concepts of masculine imagery have also become universal. Characters such as the cowboy and the mafia boss would also belong in the media's super macho or heightened masculine self image.

FIG 5   "Dressed to Kill"
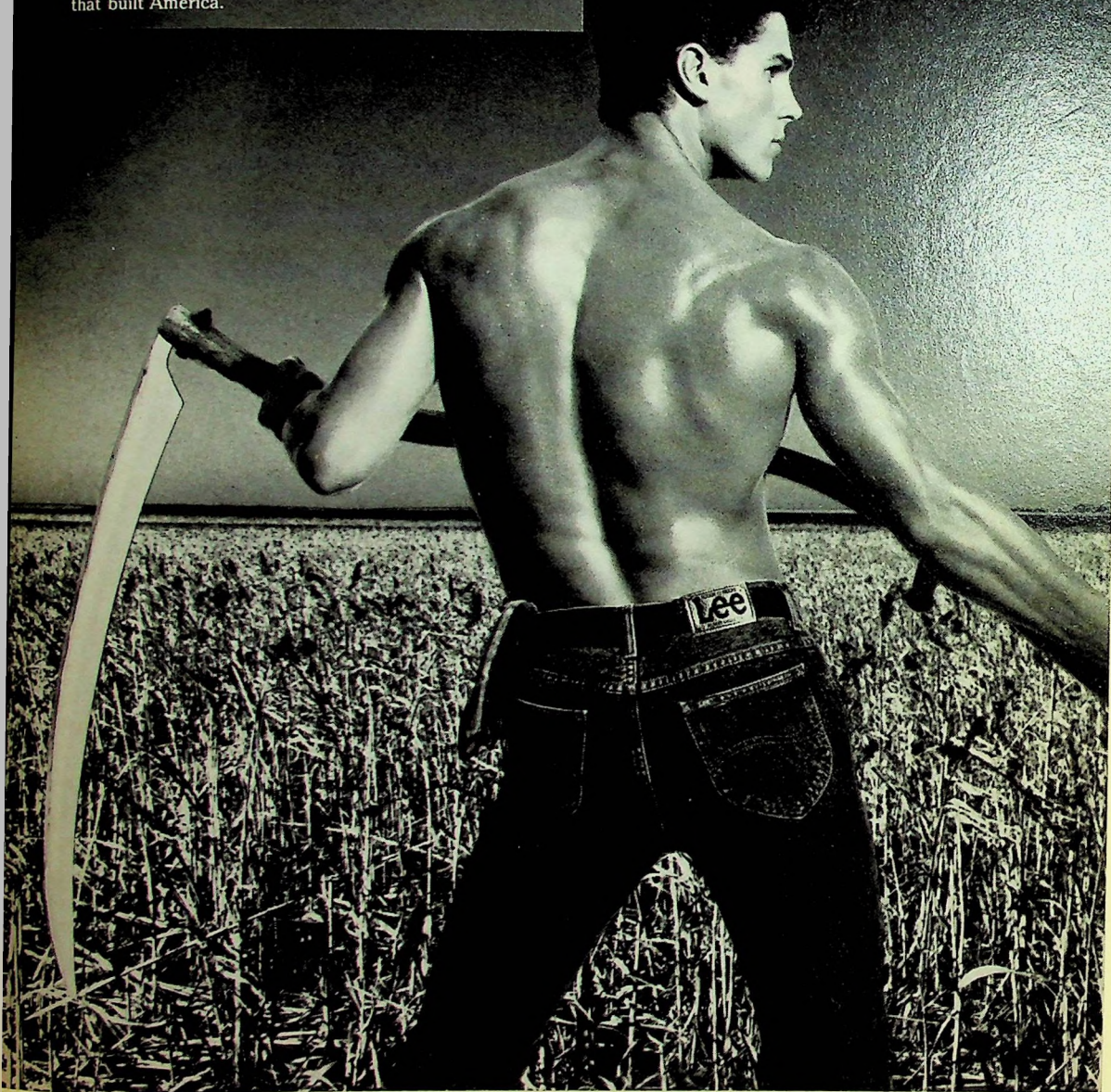
FIG 6   THE SUPER PROVIDER

FIG 7   ERNEST HEMINGWAY

FIG 8   'MOGAMBO' MGM. 1953.
          AVA GARDNER, CLARK GABLE, GRACE KELLY.

FIG 9   DIRECTOR JOHN HUSTON.

FIG 10   ILLUSTRATION OF RIFLE CORPS FOOTMAN 1802.

LEVI'S REGULATION CHINOS.

IN 1944, YOU COULDN'T BUY THEM. YOU HAD TO EARN THEM.

FIG 11   Selling the warrior image. Levi's make it
clear the traits bought with Cheno's.

FIG 12   Selling beauty products the Macho way.
UNIQUE MAGAZINE. 1988.

CHAPTER 4

ARTIFICIAL SUPER MASCULINE IMAGERY

4.1

It is interesting to realise that in the early 1980's, as
the feminist and non-sexist movements developed their
concepts and reactions towards masculinity, highlighting its
traits and its use of coding, these very codes and traits
were being used in a new form of super masculine imagery. As
the spotlighting of masculinity increased, so too did the
visual images being used to express masculinity. Men's
magazines became ever more popular. In them stylists such as
Ray Petry and Stephen Linard presented new masculine images
heightened in machismo by the awareness of the exposure of
masculinity as perhaps nothing more than socially
constructed role play.(Figs.13,14.) In his 1988 essay
entitled 'Boy's Own', Jonathan Rudderford observed that in
the mid eighties " Young men are being stimulated by media
(and magazines) to look at themselves and other men as
objects of consumer desire. They are getting pleasures
previously branded taboo or feminine ".[1] This exposure or
adjustment of masculinity produced an imagery which dived
into the realm of the macho. Rather than trying to highlight
the similarities between male and female as the feminist and
anti-sexist male movements were attempting, masculine self
imagery began to examine the polar opposites.

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Designers, such as Jean-Paul Gaultier and Claude Montana in Paris watched, copied and expanded the young man on the street's sense of being non-female. Jean Paul Gaultier,(Fig. 15.) and British designers reached extreme expressions of playing with masculinity by the end of the last decade. Stretch fabrics were used to reveal the body structure. Traditional military imagery, mixed with all the other heightened macho stances, produced a concept of masculinity to be exploited sexually - as femininity had been and many would argue still is.

Men were shown in magazine articles and films and other media as being sexually desirable. American films, such as Top Gun,(1989) Angel Heart(1989) and Nine and a half weeks,(1988) among others showed a new role model for men - a man not admired for his masculinity but for his masculine "sex". After-shave advertisements started to use concepts more traditionally used to sell women's perfume. The notion of personal sexuality, that the physical being could be desired, that using a product could help in attracting a woman rather than impressing her with masculine ability was established. The famous Nick Camen advertisement for Levi jeans, where he undressed in the launderette, impressing with subtle sexuality, can be examined against the former concepts of impressing as a provider or warrior. Ironically perhaps, one of the first products of the masculine movement was the image of the male "Bimbo".

4.2

MASCULINE TRIBAL SELF IMAGE

As a boy child grows in our society and learns to be of his
sex, he learns not only to be a man , but to be of men. The
boy is told when in tears, "Men don't cry". He is told not
to let his peers see him do this, they don't and he should
be more like them. In our schooling system we learn how to
socially interact. Boys, traditionally, learn how to
interact with each other. For a society to produce a set
style of man it must encourage uniformity. Sports,
entertainment and learning all superimpose the desire for
uniformity. To be one of the men, one of the fraternity,
becomes of extreme importance. This encourages men to fall
into line with socially accepted traits. The tribal element
of male coding is probably at the kernel of our social
system. The sense of belonging to one "gang" rather than
another is very strong in masculine coding. The Capitalist
system echoes this, to some extent, in its reliance on
social classing.
Some of our most predominant sub-cultural male self-imagery
works on this basis. The masculine self image of the 'mod'
and later the 'teddy boy'(Figs. 16, 17.) used a current
cultural movement and was validated by being a member of a
group of males all similar and recognisable as being
together. Such sub cultures arose from protests against some
of mass society's codes. Men/boys rejected the class

snobbery of their world, especially that of Britain, and they developed their own male class. This had no function other than to reject the doctrines of the society around them. The cult or tribe turned its image as a form of development. Music played an important role in the lives of these young men. It was, and is, for many sub-cultures, or tribes, a banner to front their culture. As result of this construction of a male "class" or "cult", self image was not necessarily to impress the girls but rather to impress each other. This narcissistic element has re-emerged more recently in retrospective "mod" male cults. Again, using music as the banner, they see themselves apart from the rest of society.

More recently we have seen equally strong sub-cultures or tribes. The cult of the early New York black street rappers, demonstrating against society's injustices against black people, and focussing on the concept of each individual black person, expanded and became international.(Fig. 18.) The early base of a male cult continued as the tribe/cult grew; so too did its blatant narcissism. These were people, predominantly black, producing a male image to prove their masculinity. More recently the images and lyrics of their music have offended many in its narrow-minded sexism. The main effort of the music and imagery seems to be to promote the rappers' sense of manliness, and belonging to a group of men. Its off shoots however, with variations of music and

style, have supplied many young men with their male self
image.

Adolescent dissatisfaction has manifested itself in many
other tribes. Music is not always the banner. Often the
traits of one person are the main stock of the self image.
One example would be the James Dean cult, still very strong
today. Since his death, after the release of <u>Giant</u>(1956) and
<u>Rebel without a Cause</u>,(1955) the characters he played, and
his own persona, have been admired by many, both male and
female, as suitably not of the system. The James Dean
persona traits of being confused by the social structure,
and rebelling against it , have also inspired similar
aspirations in many young men, and perhaps at this date in
not so young men."Deanism" is still present today, both in
advertising and styling. His character is still copied,
even in recent films. This tribe may not have as strong a
group image as others do, but it is a well defined group to
advertising directors.

One of the strongest rejections of the self image of the
status quo was the punk image of the early 1980's.(Figs.
19,20.) Elizabeth Wilson, in her book <u>Adorned in Dreams</u>
(1985) makes an interesting analogy between punks and
modernism in art (Duchamp's ready-mades). Just as Duchamp
made us look at industrially made, everyday items used in
our world in a new light, questioning our social

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perceptions of art ,and indeed of utility, so too the punks

visually threw a deviant, shocking, self image at passers

by, forcing them to question their own self projection.[2] The

cult grew around music as violent and harsh as their

imagery. The violent imagery was very often aggressive, in

the masculine "thug" style. The Punk cult was as important

for many women as it was for men. The overall ethos may not

have been to aspire to masculinity, although the imagery was

often dynamically masculine. The Punk cult is an interesting

one in a study of masculine self-imagery. The sub-cult

rejected the idea of mass conceptions - a man must look

clean and neat if he wants to get a loan from the bank

manager. Yet both males and females used basic elements of

male coding to project dissatisfaction. As the cult reached

international proportions, it lost its British working class

anarchic foundations which gave it such vitality.

MALE STATUS

The areas of self image discussed so far have been derived
from a desire to appear not of the social status quo or
social classing system. There are however just as many, if
not more examples of men's self imagery built on or about
the social class structure. This self image is formed to
portray certain traits or idiosyncrasies of a class within
the social structure.(Fig. 21.)

THE GENTLEMAN AND HIS LEGACY

The 19th and 20th century concept of the gentleman is
predominantly English. As a more industrially orientated
society developed throughout the 18th and 19th centuries,
social roles became more polarised. As specific jobs and
functions developed during the industrial revolution the
Bourgeoisie, as it built the new social structures, also
established doctrines of male imagery. This image was of
the sober and unemotional male, an efficient worker and God-
fearing man. He was an example to lesser beings in his good
taste and refinement.

With this polarization of human roles within society, the
concept of specific genders became more evident. Elizabeth
Wilson,in her book Adorned in Dreams (1985), points to this

time of enormous industrial development as the era when
image and clothing split into two distinct sex camps. Up to
this time male and female clothes were similar. In the
Mannerist styles of the 16th century both males and females
used ornamentation to express aspirations and self imagery.
Fine fabrics with cut and slashed bodices, gloves, frills,
earrings, breeches with stockings, lace ties, feathered
hats, are all in sharp contrast to the businessman's imagery
of the late 19th century.[3] The photograph by Edward J.
Steichen of financier and banker J. Pierpont Morgan,(1903)
the famous American business man of the late 19th century,
shows the extent to which the ideals of the new merchant
class were reflected in dress. His three piece suit,
inpeccably cut, constructed with precise Bespoke techniques,
his starched pure white shirt collar and cuffs, are seen in
a contemporary view as being conservative and Victorian
upper middle class. For very many men this style conveyed
self image quite adequately, even into the 1940's and during
the Second World War.

Many middle and upper middle class English men, by 1945 no
longer dressing every day in this way, would wear very
similar garments on more formal occasions, such as wedding
and dinner parties. Men's formal wear today is a direct
descendant of the gentlemen's morning riding suit of the
18th century (a suit of clothes reserved for riding,
generally in the morning), hence the name "morning suit".

These clothes displayed a mans status in society. The
quality of tailoring and cut and the use of high standard
fabrics are still used by business men as a way of
portraying high status in a class system. It would not be
incorrect to say that it was the Bourgeoisie's concepts of
money and wealth which dictated this use of status imagery.
As Elizabeth Wilson has pointed out, the aristocracy
originally were not part of this strict imagery. By the
Victorian period the aristocracy had incorporated this high
quality tailored image into their country gentleman
wardrobe.

Such high quality standards which needed a great deal of
time for maintenance, have their basis in quite a different
use of status as self imagery, that of the Dandy in the
English Regency period (1811 - 1820). The Dandy style of
self imagery was a reaction to the 18th century country
estate life style.(Figs. 23,24.) On the surface the Dandy
style self image used a more advanced sense of tailoring
than was the norm of the day. Combined with this were
variations of gentlemen's suiting fabrics and actual style
lines. The Dandy image was quite different from the image of
the traditional well-to-do young man. It used a sense of
chic to portray status and projected a sense of self through
an attitude. Dandies have been described as the inventors of
"cool". At the forefront of this image was George Beau
Brummell (1778 - 1840). Described by Lord Byron as the

leader of fashion in the Regency period,[4] Brummell and others like him, created a colourful look which was very erotic in a masculine un- painted way. Tapering waistcoats and tailored trousers flattered the male physique, with the thin waist in contrast to the wide shoulders, and the strong legs enhanced with delicate shoes, in contrast to the more traditional masculine image of the day. One of the main reasons why it became so strong, despite its unconventional stance, was its highly elitist pose. The ultimate Dandy had no occupation other than himself. He rejected the warrior image. Thomas Carlyle, writing in <u>Sartor Resartus</u> (1833 - 1834) described the Dandy as "a man whose trade, office and existence consisted of wearing clothes. Every faculty of his soul, spirit, purse and pension is heroically concentrated on the wearing of clothes wisely and well, so that as others dress to live, he lives to dress".[5]

This elitist status masculine image is still used today.(Fig. 25.) However, as time went on, the Dandy image was vulgarised. By the late 19th century and early 20th century the imagery of Oscar Wilde and others changed the perception of Dandyism. Oscar Wilde is a good example of a male image based upon the status of good quality clothing. He, and others, introduced a more foppish element before the First World War which developed further after it. The Dandy style became ever more effiminate and painted, and by the 1920's was strongly associated with homosexuality. Its

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status was still based in affluence. It is out of this mix of affluence and a delicate sense of aesthetics that the contemporary Dandy image is built. New people, such as Quentin Crisp, Tom Woolfe, Karl Lagerfeld, use this narcissistic, delicate use of quality clothing to portray status in their self images. Many men, especially Europeans, are using quality clothes to portray the image of an inherent status. The use of Burberry, tweeds, cashmeres and classic English tailoring are very evident in the contemporary man's wardrobe.(Fig. 26.)

The clothing styles and specific garments used by men assuming to aspire to the specific group or staus which use garments in their display has been a very important factor in male imagery. The contemporary business suit is a direct descendent of an Edwardian style of a high buttoned fitted jacket and narrow tapered trousers, a short fitted overcoat with a velvet collar, and perhaps a bowler hat and an umbrella.(Fig. 27.) This image was in fact very similar to the civilian dress worn by the generals and officers of the foot regiments before the Second World War, who were most likely to be from the upper classes. The style became a definable status symbol for many men. In London today the style is still evident in the City business district. Pearl Binder, in her book <u>Dressing up, Dressing down</u> (1986), puts its healthy survival down to the fact that " it was thought to be the antithesis of both uniforms and utility dress".[6]

Throughout the 1950's , both in Europe and America, most
working men used a suit to portray their desired image, the
only exceptions likely to be boys, students, the emerging
teenager and some specific labouring class workers.
The photograph by Dan Weiner (Fig. 28.) of commuters in 1958
would be quite typical of the uniformity prevalent on any
street of the time. By 1952 - 1953 most men got their
clothes through chain stores or wholesale manufacturers. As
is the case with mass-produced garments, the clothes were
conservative but quite well made.

By the early Sixties, social changes in the structure, with
the emergence of defined groups such as teenagers, a market
for clothes and imagery that could still be used as a symbol
of status and yet express the individual was ripe. In the
United States this was satisfied by the ever increasing
popularity of sports clothes and work wear such as Biker
jackets. In England, London found shops such as Blades
opened by Rupert Lycett Green (1962) providing a whole new
range of status symbols. Lycett Green started in 1962 to
combine Bespoke tailoring with some innovative design
content. It was so successful that soon more individualistic
designs and images were available to men. Designers such as
Pierre Cardin with his "Nero" jacket and his "Cosmos" (Fig.
29.) space age outfit of 1967 (illustrated), allowed men

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once again to use fashion as an integral part of developing
a self image.

This designer status concept grew quielty in the 1970's. It
began to include more casual sport and work orientated
clothes into the designer category, so that by the 1980's
almost all elements of male dress were availble for use as
status symbols. The 1980's saw male imagery brought to new
heights. Designers such as Giorgio Armani, Versace and more
recently Paul Smith of London now present a complete self
image for men, both for those men who wish to express status
through clothes and to the larger market of men who wish to
aspire to such a status through their own imagery.

This would seem to echo the earlier motivation of the Dandy
movements. The casual movement of the last six or seven
years is highlighted in Deborah Lloyd's 1988 essay
<u>Assemblage and Subculture: The Casuals and Their Clothing.</u>
In this she highlights an ever increasing group of young
men, generally football supporters from London and the North
of England who have used status and designer goods to
improve their standing within their own community. These
"unofficial" football clubs of Liverpool, Arsenall, Spurs
etc., initially used designer labled sportswear as a
uniform, but as this was used by other football supporters
they changed the uniform to uphold the status effect. By
1988 -1989 the members of this football group were using

designer suits to project an air of respectability and affluence. London shops such as Browns and Woodhouse were supplying these men with " a fantasy self". As troubles on the terraces of British football venues became the order of the day, the whole operation of these "unofficial" football clubs was exposed by the police. They were, in fact, the trouble makers at the games and went relatively undetected for a long time because they reflected a high status image, and travelled to the matches away from the main crowd of supporters. It is fascinating to see the way such a sub-culture could develop around the desire for status. The concept of the casuals has been quite well documented in magazines such as The Face. Many retailers who became strong in the 1980's, such as Next and Habitat, feel thy benefited from the "Good taste" revolution. They discovered that the majority of their customers were lower on the economic scale than they had targeted. " Many people want to be on the ladder upwards at a time when the econonic structure of society is directing them downwards."[6]

The status derived from affluence and a good position in society are not the only images used by men to project their aspirations. The Dandies manipulated their concept of what it meant to be masculine by devaluing the inherent male values of the day, such as diligence and hard work. In contemporary society a male image is being constructed in a way which is similar to the construction of Dandyism.

It is based on the concept of the intellect, or the individual's intellectual existence, being a status symbol. The best way to illustrate this is to discuss the work of designers like Rei Kawakaubo,(Fig. 30.) Issey Miyake (Fig. 31.) and Yohji Yamamoto.(Fig. 32.) These Japanese designers use mental awareness, be it meditative or aesthetic as a status symbol, still clearly holding to the desire for affluence as did the Dandy. Early Comme Des Garcons designs were marketed and sold as precise image statements, originally monochrome. They invited men to reflect mental awareness, with stylish, premeditated individuality, cementing this individuality in a price range far out of the reach of most people. Advertising for the company used art photographs with no connection to the garments other than to underline the aesthetic or intellectual discourse of the whole imagery. Timothy Greenfield Saunder's photograph of Francesco Clemente (1989) appeared as advertising, the artist wearing a Comme des Garcons shirt. Works by Andre Kertese (1943) and Jim Britt(1988) were highlighted within the carefully designed minimalist interiors of the shops. A superior intellect and a heightened aesthetic became images to aspire to. Though this image making is a commercial venture, it is as relevant today as was Dandyism in the Regency era. The Kawakaubo/Yamamoto image is an individual, or a small group perception, of how men should present their masculinity.

By portraying the individual's aspiration as higher than
that of the traditional warrior or provider image, both the
Dandy and the Japanese design stylist do not project male
sexuality as physical or aggressive, rather the intellect is
presented as the real value of the individual.
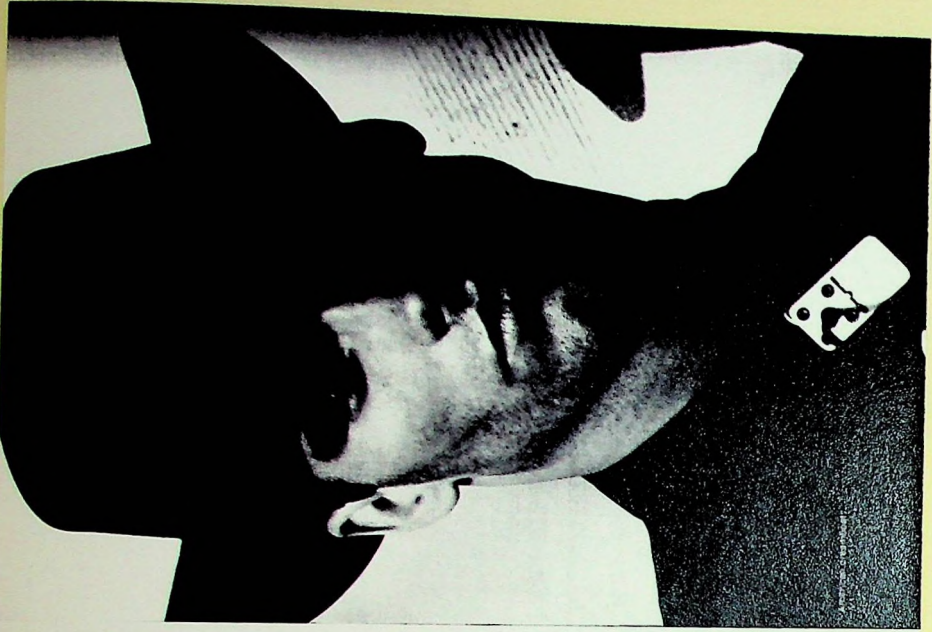
1.
urban cowboy: shot on location
in new york. fashion by *ray petri*
photography *norman watson*

NYC

FIG 13   Ray Patri's American Dreamboat. Patri
         reinvented Butch imagery for the style
         magazines of the 1980's.

FIG 14   Linard's angel; over emphasising the 'real
man' image with the absurd.
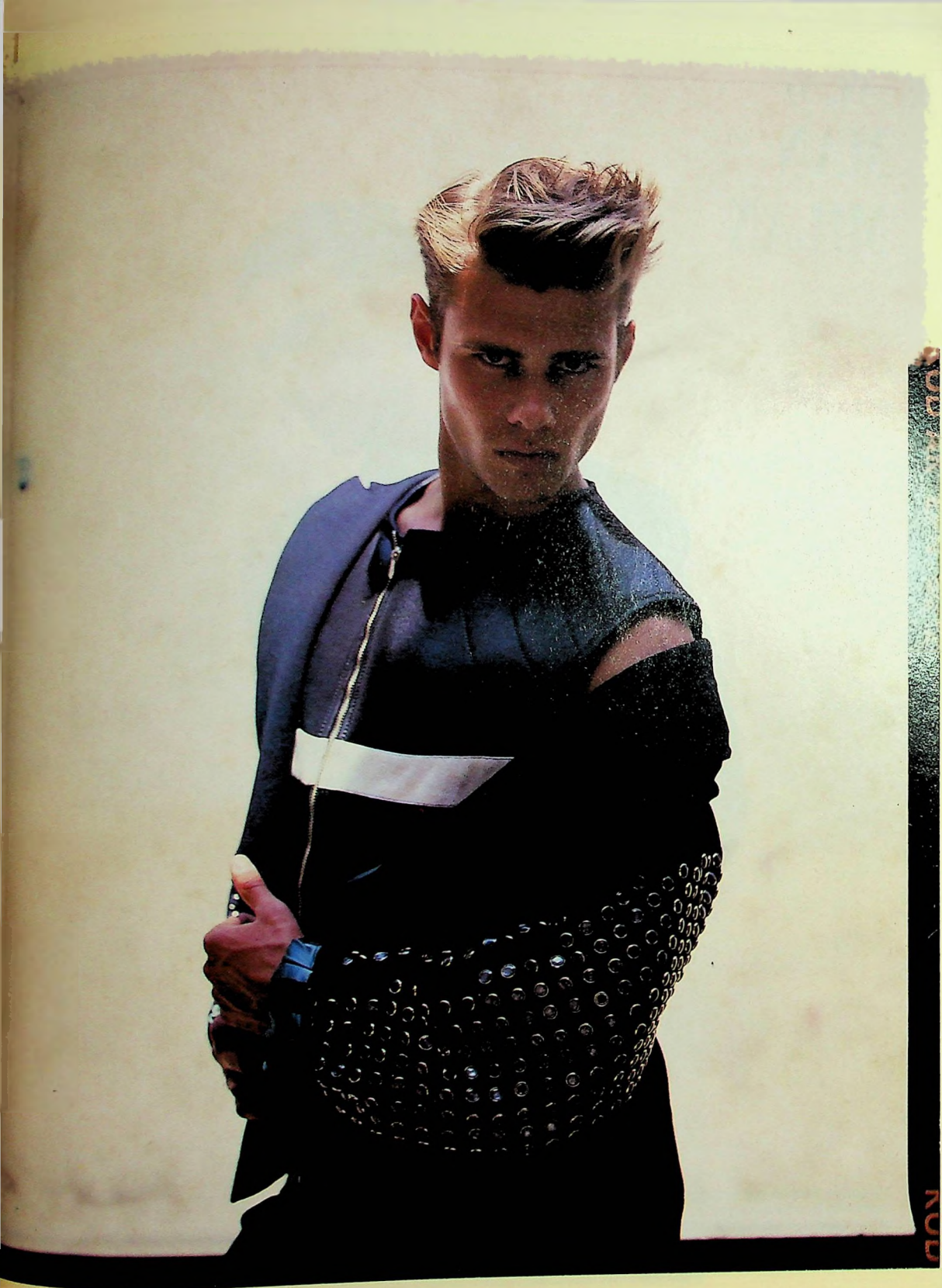
FIG 15   Rivets and PVC design. John-Paul Gaultier.
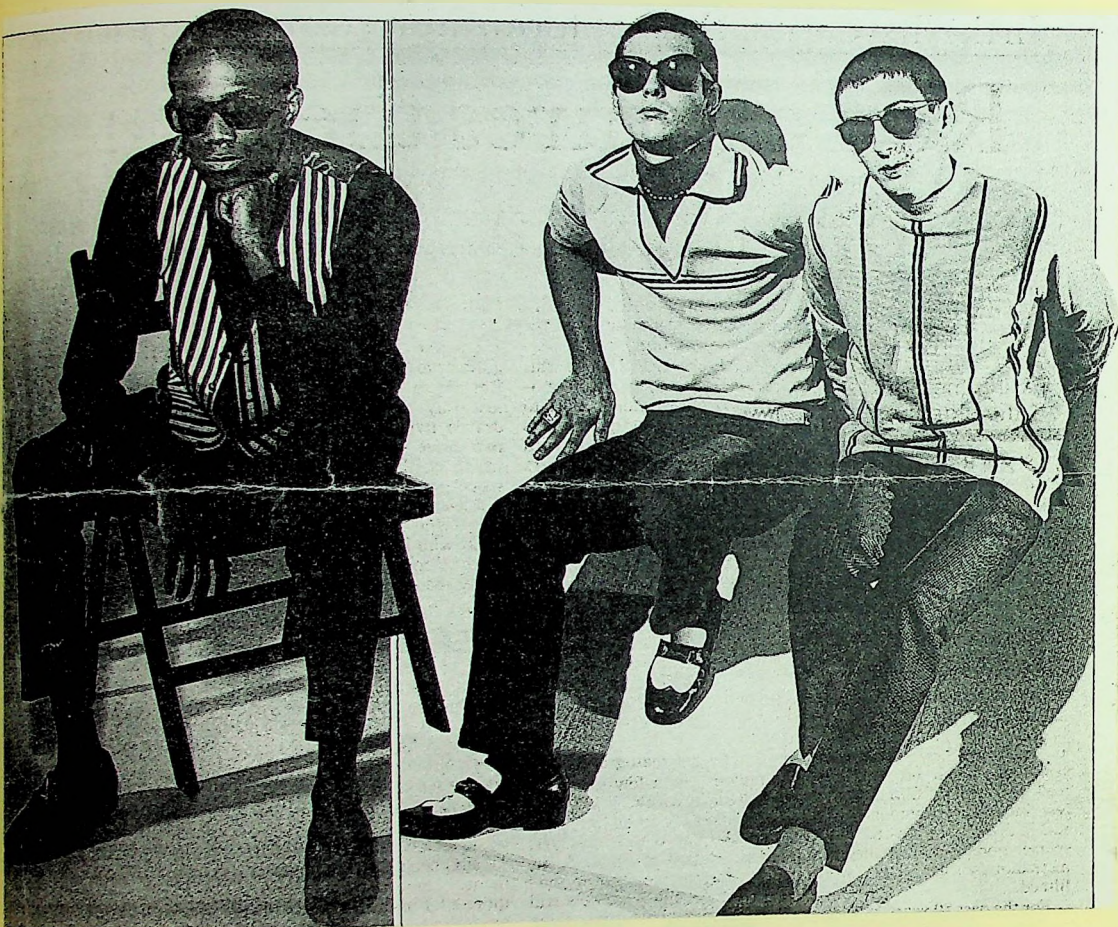   Spring 1988.

FIG 16   MOD!

FIG 17   A more contemporary version of the tribal
          mod look.

FIG 18   L L COOL J

FIG 19 and 20   PUNKS!

FIG 21   Bruce Weber photographs clothes to the
back drop of money. Using the sporting
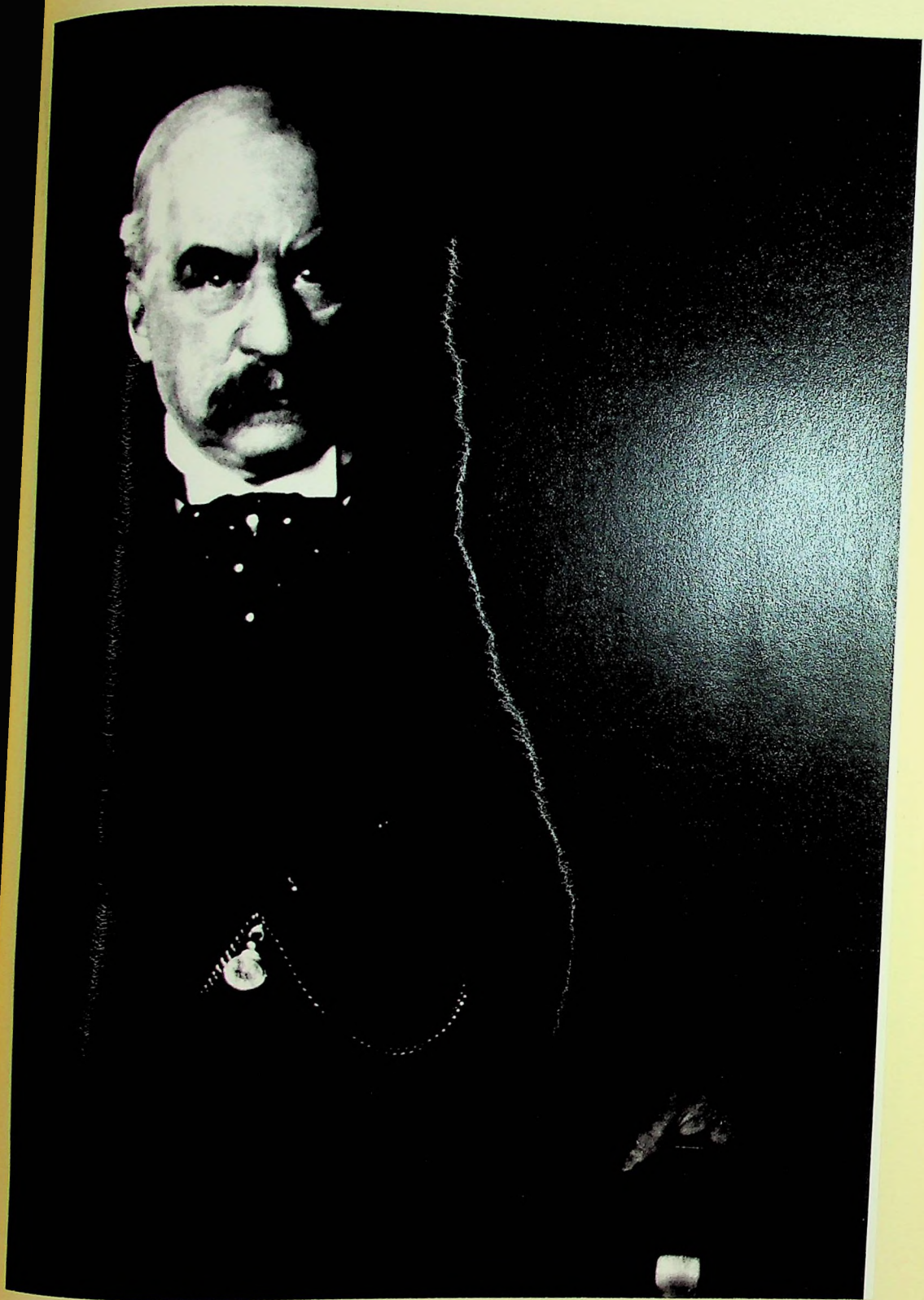activities of the rich - Polo/Rugby - to

FIG 22   J.Pierpont Morgan. A Tycon of the late
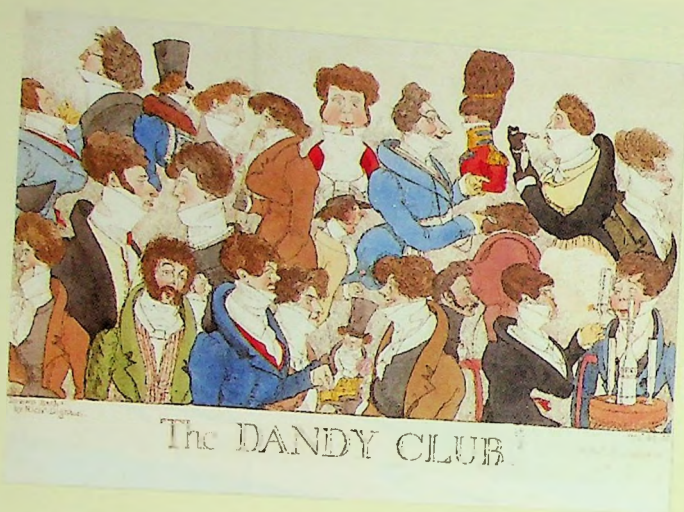   19th Century.

FIG 23   THE DANDY CLUB.

FIG 24   The French post revolution version of the
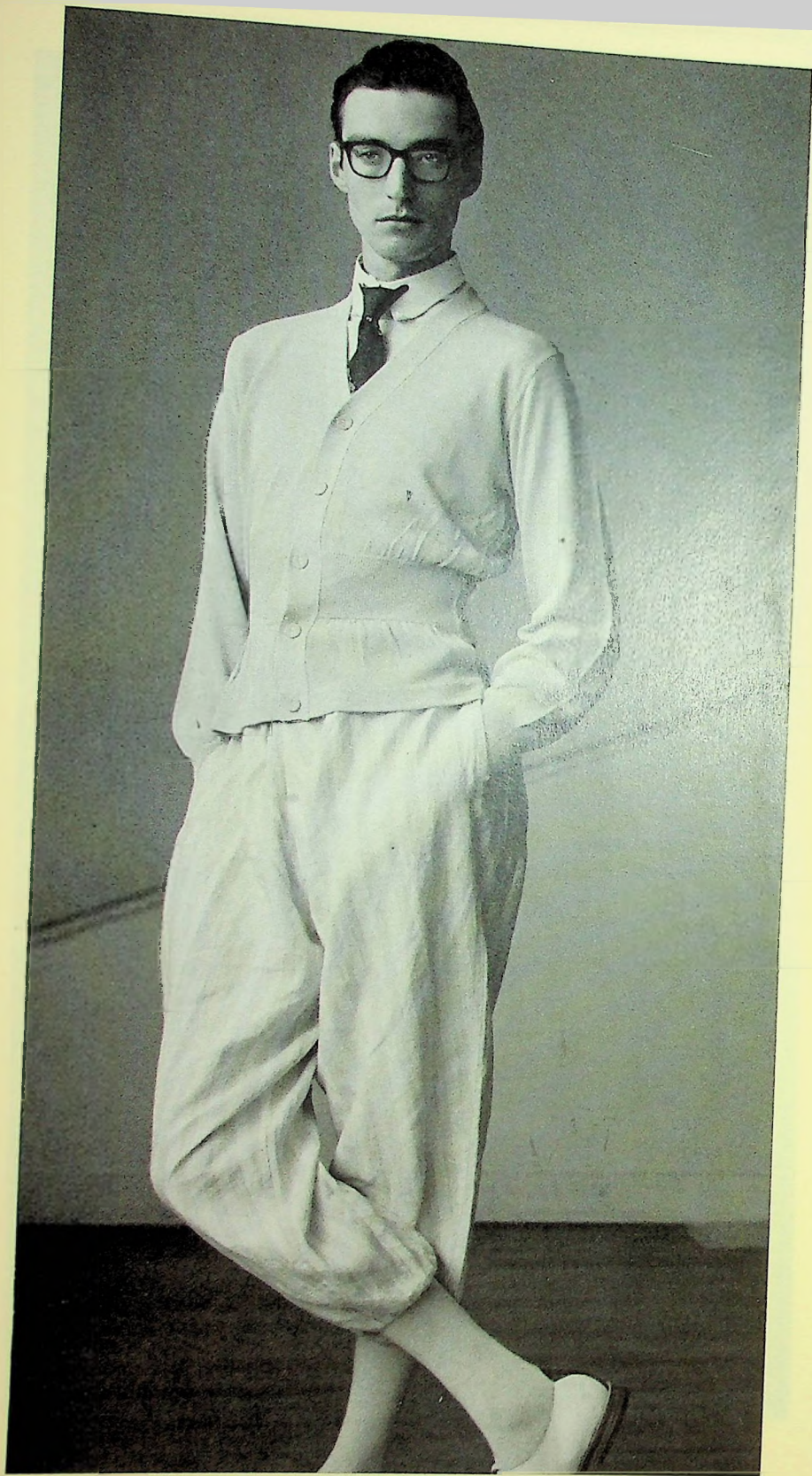   Dandy. "Les Incroyable".

FIG 25   A contemporary Dandy from 'Arena Magazine'
         March 1987. Cardigan by Comme Des Garcons,
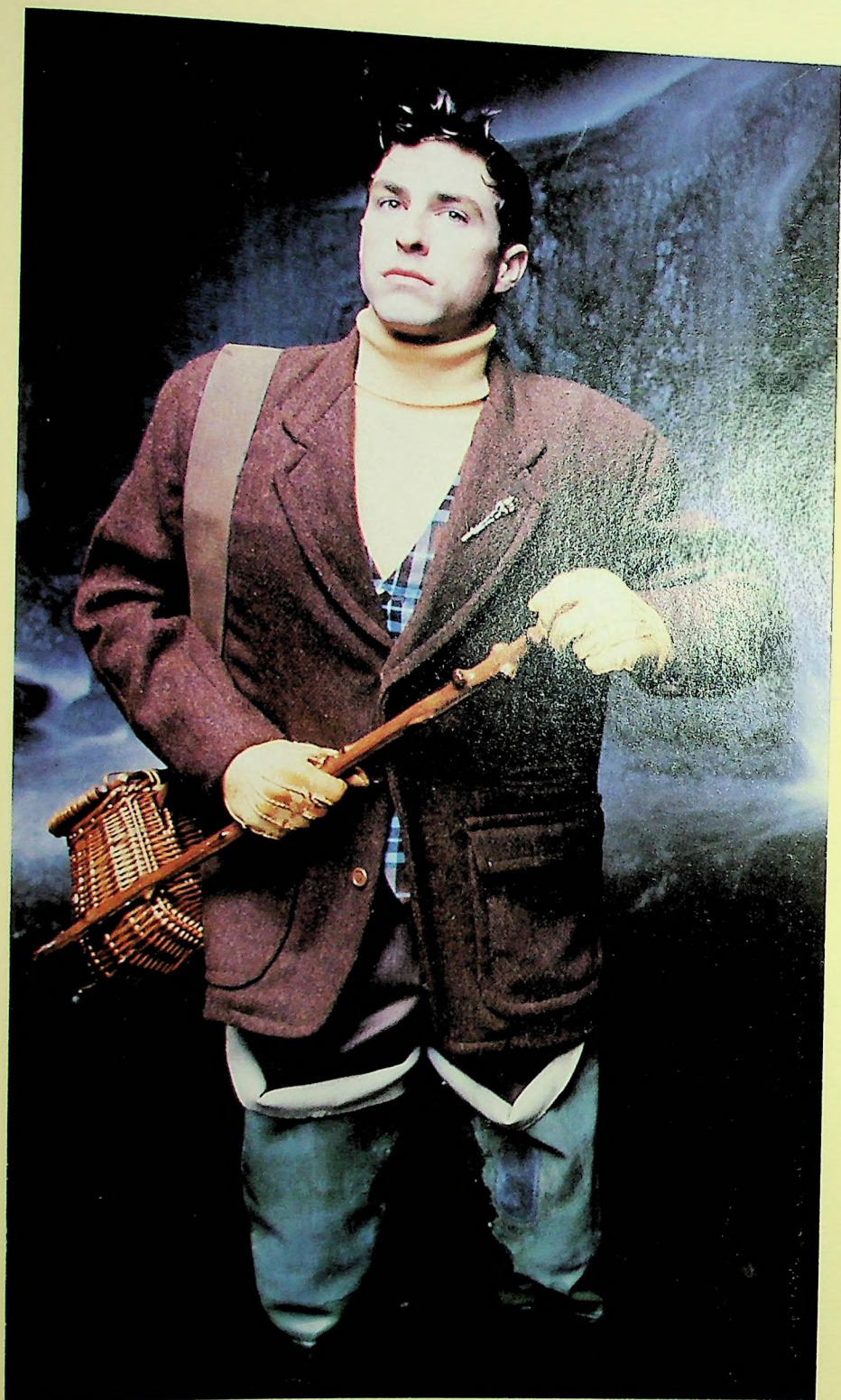   Plus Fours by Yohji Yamamoto.

FIG 26   From a contemporary English countryman's
          wardrobe.

FIG 27.   The Steed (The Avdengers. Thames T.V.)
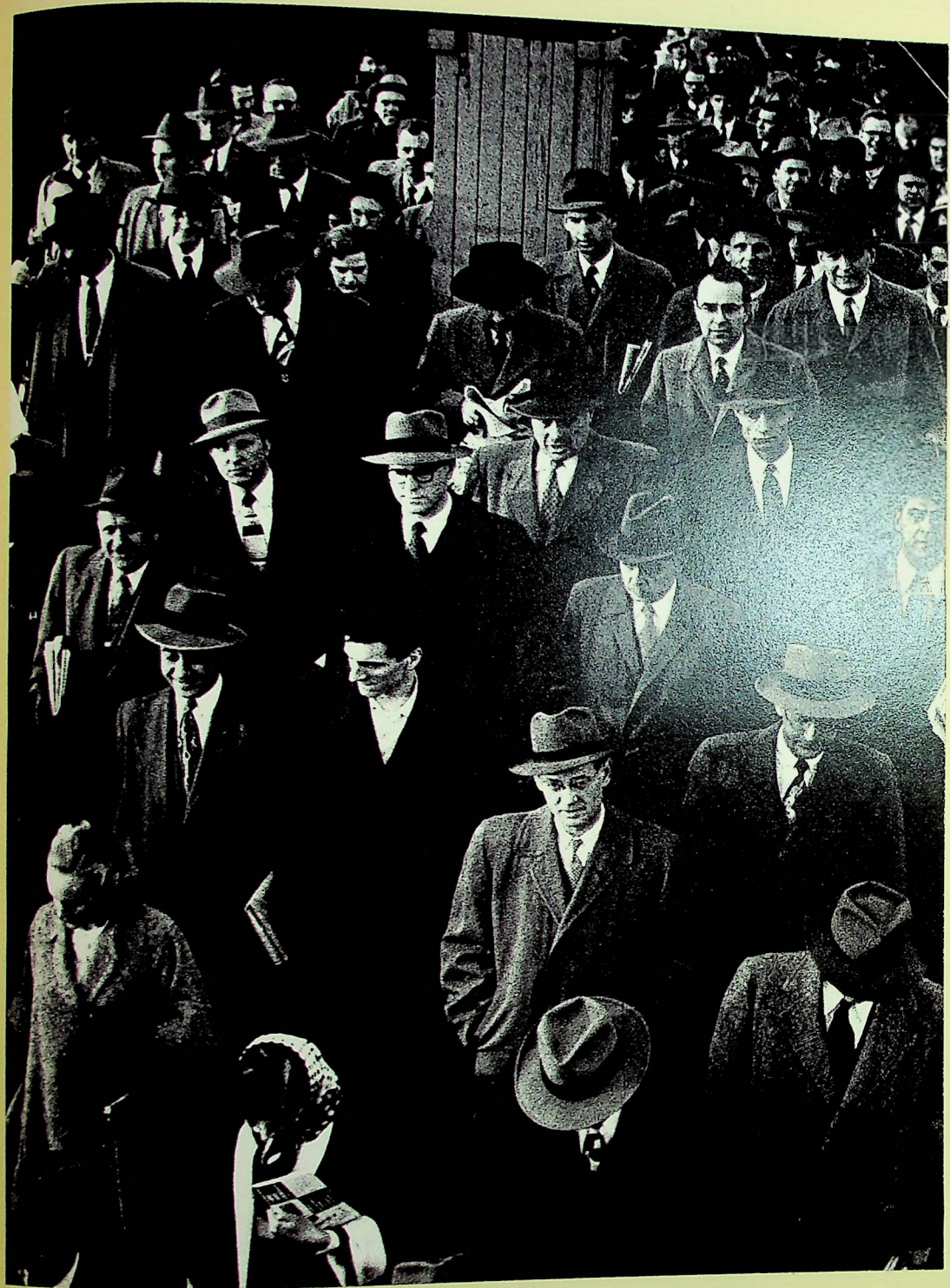   Edwardian look. 1967.
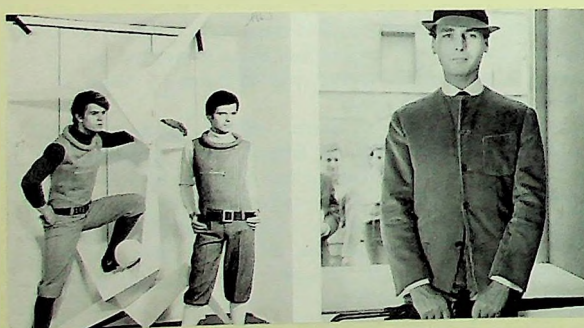
FIG 28 The uniformity of the business man. 1958.

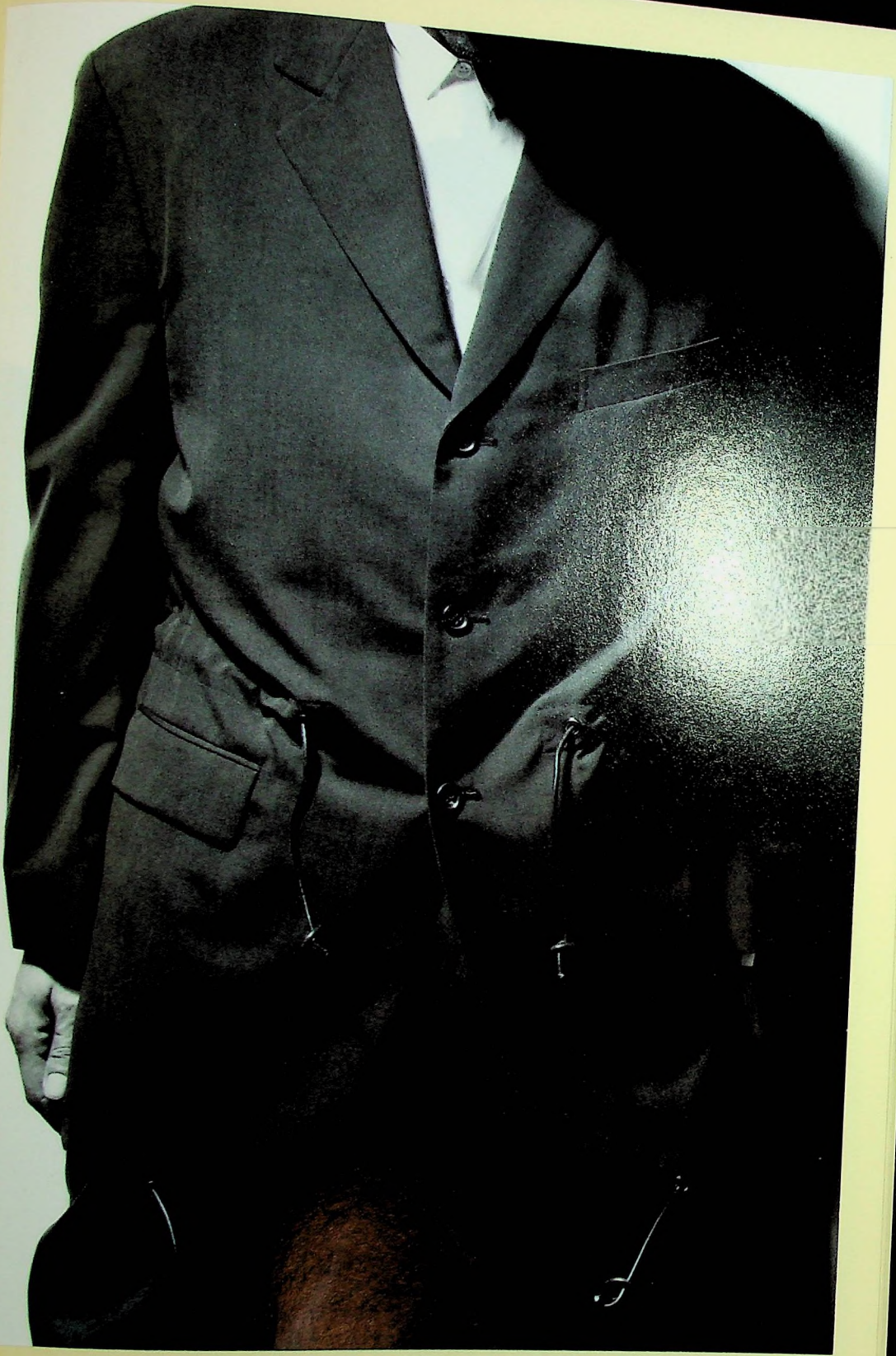FIG 29   The 1960's work of Cardin.

FIG 30.   Design by Kawakaubo.

FIG 31   Design by Miyake.

ND GAMBLERS
d blue shirt by Yohji
posite page: Black
neck by Paul Smith; drill
amamoto; black leather
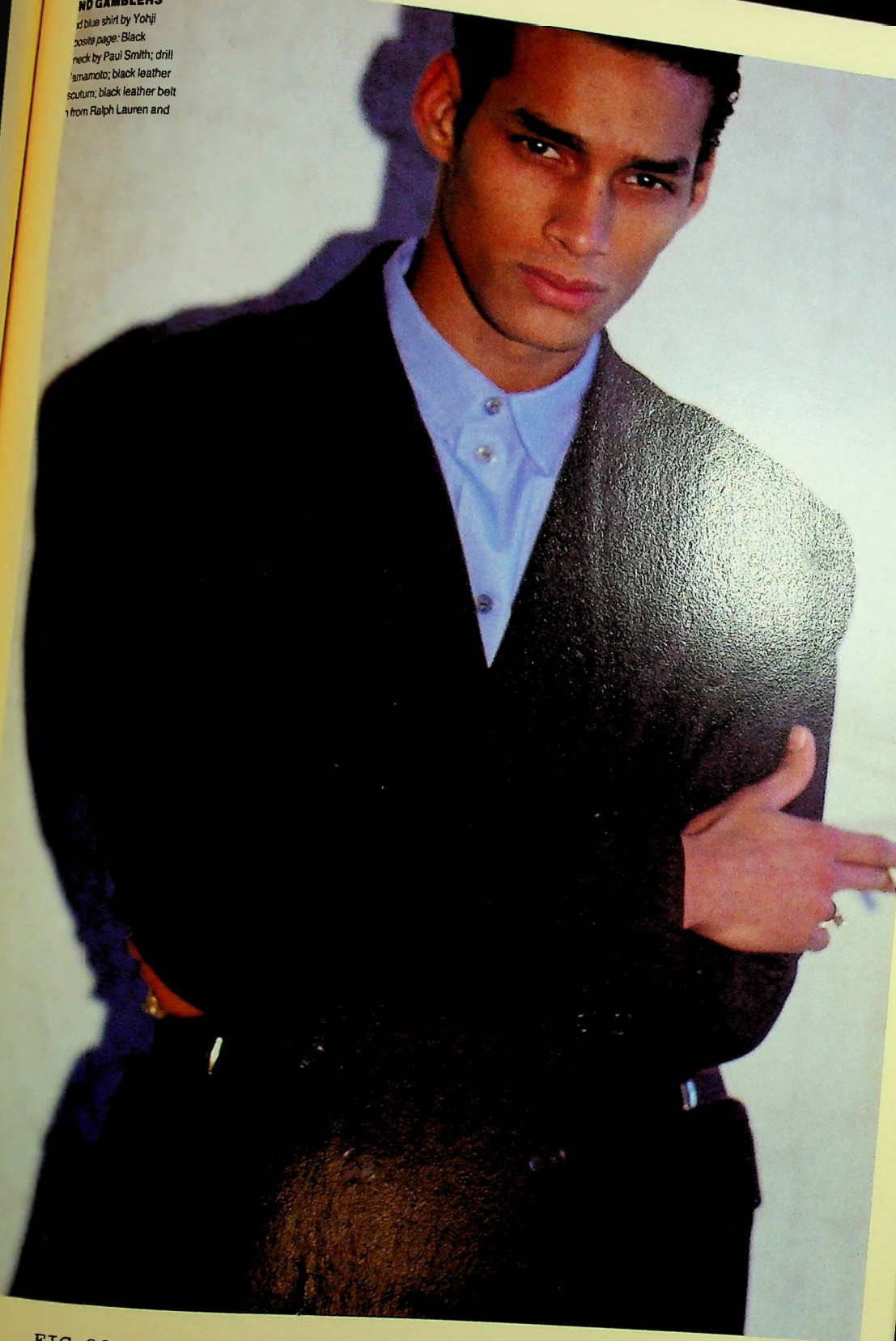cutum; black leather belt
from Ralph Lauren and

FIG 32   Design by Yamamoto.

SUMMARY

After its initial stages of rejecting masculinity , the
feminist movement began to analyse the traits of masculine
behaviour found least acceptable. With this approach a whole
new world and a body of society (men) found themselves more
involved in the anti-sexist movement or debate. This new,
more inclusive situation, has allowed the forming of an
anti-sexist men's movement with its goals of working
towards a society free of gender oppression.

The analysis of male social models by the many groups
seeking changes in society has highlighted many codes
through which men in society express a sense of 'self.'
Many of these codes are now under attack. The growth of a
Humanistic, non gender based, anti-sexist movement is making
inroads into the old concepts around the super macho,
tribal, and status based images.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1

1 Jeffery Weeks. <u>Sex, Politics and Society.</u> Thames.
   London 1989.
2 Ann Oakley. <u>Sex, Gender and Society</u> p.158. Temple
   Smith. London 1972.
3 Bardwick, Horner, Weisstein. Quoted in
   <u>Is the Future Female?</u> p.119. Virago. London 1989.
4 Robin Skyner. 'A reply to the male man'.
   <u>Guardian Newspaper.</u> Sat.Jan.12. 1991.
5 John Stoltenberg. <u>Refusing to be a Man.</u> p.37. Fontana.
   London 1989.

CHAPTER 2

1 Shere Hite. <u>The Hite Report.</u>'What is masculinity?'
2
3
4 Shere Hite. <u>The Hite Report</u>. 'What does it mean to be a
   man?.
5 Quoted in <u>Is the Future Female?</u> p.179. op cit.

6 Quoted in <u>Is the Future Female?</u> p.180. op cit.
7 Quoted in <u>Is the Future Female?</u> p. 181 - 182. op cit.
8 Brian Easlea, quoted in <u>Is the Future Female?</u> p.177. op
   cit.
9 Rowena Chapman. 'The Great Pretender'.
   <u>Male Order Unwrapping Masculinity.</u> Lawrence and
   Wishart. London 1988.

CHAPTER 3

   No footnotes.

CHAPTER 4

1 Jonathan Rudderford. 'Boys Own'.
   <u>Male Order Unwrapping Masculinity.</u> op cit.
2 Elizabeth Wilson. <u>Adorned in Dreams</u>. Chap. 6. Virago.
   London 1985.
3 Elizabeth Wilson. Ibid.
4 Collins English Dictionary. Collins. Glasgow. 1979.
5 Richard Martin, Harold Koda. 'The Dandy' p. 189.
   <u>Jocks and Nerds.</u> Rizzoli. New York. 1990.

6 Deborah Lloyd. 'The Casuals and their Clothing'. p.100.
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