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Special Issue (English)

In French Fashion

From One Court to Another, the Proprieties of a Passing Beauty

Céline Mallet et Mathieu Buard

Traduction de Vicki McNulty

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Marianne Marić “Femmes Fontaines”, Mulhouse, 2012

by **Céline Mallet & Mathieu Buard**
translated from French by Vicki McNulty

In French Fashion

From One Court to Another, the Proprieties of a Passing Beauty

A – Alaïa Azzedine
Great, indisputable master of soft, sculpted material and classic herald of ideal feminine curves turned mythical, dressing the stars with a timeless eloquence, Azzedine Alaïa is the stubborn and particularly solitary demiurge who prefers the cherished price of freedom and confidentiality to the systems and rhythms of industrial fashions. Part of the sparse horde of couturiers from Parisian *Haute couture*, he has always defended the demanding culture of a garment that is more concerned about perspicacity and adjustment than the ostentatious luxury of an image of modernity that is too quickly attached. De facto, Alaïa's dresses extol their creator to such an extent that they pronounce something like the truth of an essential quality. *Dress follows master*.

Amalric, Mathieu
While the Apollonian beauty of Delon easily measures up to the male ideals of international glamour, France has invented and established another form of masculine seduction like a charming and formidable local exception. Jean Paul Belmondo, Jean Pierre Léaud, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Mathieu Amalric, Guillaume Depardieu, Vincent Macaigne, Serge Gainsbourg or Michel Houellebecq… all express, to varying degrees, with the wiles of a fox, a general indiscipline, a nonchalant air that can border on negligence, a physical, random or even approximative form, but a willing, bewitching voice as it emanates from a spirit that is skilful with words like the joyous and devious amateur of all vices. The young lady friend of this not so smooth French devil provides impeccable physique, and often in compensation.

Ass
In the film by Yves Robert entitled "The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe" from 1972, the actress Mireille Darc makes a memorable appearance, dressed in a black sheath dress signed by Guy Laroche, which has become iconic. This robe plays an astounding contrast: although the front conceals while exalting as closely as possible the smooth, willowy and juvenile body of Mireille Darc, the back of the dress reveals the actress's back in its totality and even more, the dress reveals a discreet cleavage of the buttocks, and not of the breasts as gallant tradition would have it. While it is not certain that the dress designed by Guy Laroche is a forthright feminist manifesto, the spectacular way that it has of shifting the look towards Mireille Darc's ass as a promise of pleasure, manifests a newly androgynous eroticism, at a historic time of the freedom of morals and bodies in the West.

Author
While fashion as an ensemble and system advocates the cult of the author and of singularity, from couturier to designer to stylist since Worth, Poiret and consort, the turnover of designers, organised by major luxury groups and 'fast fashion' ultimately question fashion without an author, without originality and or without a future.
What happens to the spirit of an old fashion house when its occupying artistic directors redecorate with a sweep of digital paint, working in a crazy and peremptory cavalcade with the fleeting marketing speed of products that they aspire to make people crave?
In the same way, if Hennes & Mauritz (otherwise known as H&M) or Inditex (Zara, Maximo Dutti…) frivolously and joyfully draw from the fashion corpus of their neighbours, the clothes that they produce seem to be without originality or author. Brand-named, granted, but without an author as the stylists in attendance are considered as a throng of

anonymous persons – without any particular style as the clothes are the sum of elements abruptly, incompletely copied, and with an industrial perspective whose logic is programmed obsolescence. This rationale condemns the garment by the hurried wear of the fabric, the fragile nature of the style, and the impossibility of a future vintage comeback.

B – Bidault Waddington, Camille
"I am already a caricature of the Parisian woman. I spend my life at the Flore, in restaurants, I drink, I smoke, I go around with bare legs in all seasons and I don't give a toss what others think of me." Portrait of a Parisian woman: Camille Bidault Waddington by Paquita Paquin for *Pure Trend,* 3 June 2013.

Bimbo
In theory a pejorative or even sexist term, bimbo designates what is failed in the young and pretty woman; it is her caricatured and perverted downgrading. The bimbo is also a danger, due to her escapades and her exaggerated courtship displays, the vehement expression of non-restrained seduction. This explosive charge does not exclude her from fashion prospects, quite the contrary she is a phenomenon in herself, from the R&B bitch to the luxury bird, as established by Balmain and certain other Italian empires. The Versace bimbo is a brilliant example, with the theatrical and multicoloured eclecticism of the ultra and exultant editor, Anna Dello Russo.

Black
The colour is worn by the existentialists of Saint-Germain-des-Près, displayed by Rykiel as a tribute to the former, structured by Balenciaga, exalted by Yves Saint Laurent and his feminine dinner jackets. But the presence of this colour, traditionally associated with mourning, in the wardrobe of elegant Parisian women is all down to Chanel and her little black dress. Since Coco, black has defined French seduction, which one could dare to define as paradoxical as it assimilates everything around it for the benefit of a sudden and haughty retreat. It's all about being seen by pretending not to be trying too hard; vermilion red lipstick, gold-coloured shoes with straps, a cigarette in the gob for a brash look. And off you go!

Bourdin, Guy
Photographer and fashion illustrator, Guy Bourdin has earned the hall of fame of ingenious photographers, on an equal footing with Helmut Newton, Horst, Blumenfeld and others. Except that he embodies great French classicism, almost identical to the painter Poussin, which is perfectly accomplished in his relationship with colour, with composition and with the visual oddities that narrative construction, *ut pictura poesis*, proposes to the eye. Bourdin's editorial is opera in image, a colorimetric contraction, an expressive sexualisation, a fetichisation that is much more than accustomed to for stilettos, clear images of edgy women, cut-out by a scalpel revealed in Vogue Paris, ad hoc, since the 1950s. Bourdin is himself French photographic fashion style.

Broke
Being flat broke, to put it simply, is when we speak of someone who doesn't have a penny and when their threads, their gear or their clobber bear witness to an advanced state of destitution. From Balzac to Chateaubriand to Houellebecq, the downgraded aristocrats, the petty bourgeois, the working class will always be described by the state of wear, obsolescence or the old-fashioned nature of their clothing. From another perspective, Diogenes of Sinope, the man who lived in a wine barrel, according to the anecdotes of his contemporaries, lived naked and penniless and professed his philosophical ideas to those ready to listen. A dignified way of being broke?

C – Chanel, Gabrielle
"Chanel was a sorceress. She still is – a black-eyed, ageless sorceress with a disarming monkey grin from an oversized mouth, and a barrage of words that come out like the fast rattle of a machine gun (...) She was small and built like a boy, her check-fronted vest sweater was hung with pearls, which I assume were real, and she had a very special stance – hips forward, stomach in, shoulders relaxed, one foot forward, one hand plunged deep in her skirt pocket and the other gesticulating angrily". In *My Fashion* by Bettina Ballard, 1960, Secker & Warburg.
"She was a very good stylist who stole a lot from others. This is not pejorative, it is even quite modern: she substantiated elements of style that she did not necessarily invent, but to which she gave her identity". Karl Lagerfeld: "The scent of holiness is not important for me." By Richard Gianorio, 20 May 2013 for *Madame Figaro*

Cleavage
Cleavage was a woman's prerogative, a prevailing argument and dedicated seduction device up until the mid 20th century, when loose-fitting sportswear vest tops and v-neck tee-shirts from the noughties from ready-to-wear American Apparel would unfasten the male bourgeois cleavage, revealing a naked, low-cut and hirsute pectoral – who says that men don't borrow from the woman's wardrobe? – modernity goes through the low-cut neckline.

Colette (the boutique and the writer)
While Colette, the boutique, closed down after more than 15 years of being completely geared towards the taste of the moment, the mercantile

perspicacity of the zeitgeist, it closed its doors henceforth, exhausted by the exercise of constant window dressing, of capsule collections, of exclusivities, of previews and chic water bars... This part of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré would not remain vacant for long as Saint Laurent Paris would keenly move in there. What would Colette the writer have said? "Only those who are sedentary by taste like me can talk about the moving out. And they must also have acquired a strong attachment to the place in which they live, the habit of leaving it. When an abode has given up all its sap, simple caution advises one to leave it there. It's a zest, it's a shell, we ourselves risk becoming the pulp, the kernel and consuming ourselves until death itself." *Colette journaliste*, éditions du Seuil.

Commerce

Daniel Roche proposes defining fashion as the evolution of "the modern age" of the culture of appearance in the Western world, and of the system of representation of the social distinction that fashion reveals. He proposes understanding the phenomenon of fashion as that which "mobilises appearances," "animates commerce" and "embodies change" and this since the 17th century. So when Louis XIV in Versailles and with the stimulus of Colbert, made the decision to develop the textile industry and the production of fabrics, of ennoblement, of elements of appearance at the same time as he organised the system of the court, he presented fashion as a vector of the hegemony of French power and its representation and defined the manners of the time by the fashion worn in Versailles. The Hall of Mirrors in this regard was the privileged place of the presentation of these dress codes and of French taste. The system of the King's court being the best showcase of this industry and the way in which the clothing of the court and the style established should be worn and consumed by the rest of Europe...

Couture

Clothing is the result of an assembly of fabrics pieced together by means of sewing with the thread binding the parts together with regularity. Dressmaking is the mechanical activity of the dressmaker to assemble the clothing to its completion. The couturier, the great, he of *Haute couture*, sketches and designs the virtuoso assembly. He thinks the dress, the coat, with unlimited ennoblement and fabric aspiring to a result that best depicts his idea and his taste. *Haute couture* presents a certain ostentation, a sublime representation.

The main criterion of *Haute couture* is in particular to mask the seams, to make them invisible. Contrary to ready-to-wear clothing, which does not. Seamless fashion plays with the technical liaison of fabrics to ensure the continuity of the surface, the uninterrupted regularity of the shape.

D – Decadence

"The decadence of this former house undoubtedly had regularly followed its course; the effemination of men was growing; as though to complete the endeavour of the ages, for two centuries the Des Esseintes family married their children together, wearing out their remaining vigour in consanguineous unions. (...) Through a peculiar phenomenon of atavism, the last descendant resembled the ancient forefather, the cute one, whose pointy beard was an extraordinary pale blond and he wore an ambiguous expression, both weary and shrewd."

Joris Karl Huysmans, *À Rebours* (*Against the Grain* or *Against Nature* in English), collection Folio classique, éditions Gallimard, 1983.

Deneuve (Catherine)

A rebel from birth, always joyfully subversive through her art, Catherine Deneuve is the exquisite figure for all those, male and female alike, who wish to start their lives by never, ever having to bend their neck. An absolute lesson in freedom, in fancy, in sovereign choices, in loyalty to the anarchism of childhood. This unruly child, from *Repulsion* to *Mississippi Mermaid*, from *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* to *Night Wind*, from Rappeneau to Ferreri, this inventor of shapes – who I like to imagine that she learned cinema by revising her Steve McQueen down to a tee, at the age of 10 trying to remember the path from Garbo to Monroe – this cinema spectator who CHOSE agility as opposed to awkwardness, emotion as opposed to pathos, Romanesque as opposed to Romanticism, sharp form as opposed to kitsch.

Catherine Deneuve by Arnaud Desplechin, portrait written for the magazine *Les Inrockuptibles* (extracts) 08/12/2004.

Delon

Irresistible in *Rocco and His Brothers*, irresistible in *Purple Noon*, Delon invented the 'homme fatal', dark and ambiguous like the character from *A Dark Stranger* written by Julien Gracq, masculine with melancholic nectar, extremely desirable. Dreamed or rather dreamed up by several urges and fantasies that everyone contrived in his respect, Visconti being the first. Delon, through his mute beauty, crystallises the most complex schemes of possession. Delon, fatal beauty, without the divide or the constructed polarity of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Mortal wound.

Dior (Christian)

"As the great skirts swirled, the pleats flew, the taffetas rustled, the embroideries sparkled and shone, the colors mingled and fused, even the hardest-bitten American would join in the French clapping and call 'bravo' and 'magnifique' and 'ravissant'. So large was the Collection (about two hundred dresses),

so rich the variety of color and line, that the most experienced critic could hardly take it all in at one showing, least of all at the Opening, where the excitement bordered on hysteria…"
In the Mink by Scott-James (Anne), 1952, London Michael Joseph Ltd, pages 138-139-140.

Durable
Slow Fashion? An oxymoron, a pious commitment and perhaps a future. For it is in the effective accomplishment of its planetary ambitions that a significant proportion of the luxury industry will have somewhat perverted its miracles and its supposed rarity. At the same time, its 'cheap' copy or its hollow hysteria orchestrated here, there and everywhere by the global 'fast fashion' brands are in turn starting to bore, to destroy desire. Certain houses now play on calm, the patience of know-how and the beautiful, timeless object. As for the ecological imperative, beyond the fantasy of 'vintage' it remains to be affirmed on an efficient scale, both here and elsewhere.

E – Egypt (campaign)
Napoleon, the Emperor or the General, reached the lands of the Pharaohs and brought back to Paris and Europe an Empire style directly out of this flattering comparison between two reigns, his and that of the ancestral kings. From furniture to clothing, the fashion consisted of clear, drawn lines, revealing simple shapes without the great baroque of the pattern or winding mouldings. The Napoleonic soldier, or even better the handsome captain, ennobled by his master for his exemplary war deeds, became the ideal standard for male fashion: romantic, dark and erect in his uniform. Orientalisms and other exoticisms would henceforth become the prerogative of the feminine, and until Paul Poiret at the start of the following century. Saint Laurent, another emperor, brought back the safari jacket from his African campaigns, by making an additional stopover between Paris and Marrakech.

Eye
"We keep our eyes available for any confrère who would like to examine them" is the posthumous note left after his firearm suicide by the psychiatrist, erotomania theoretician and pleasure-seeking monomaniac photographer Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault, who had become almost blind following a cataract and could no longer bear it. The only master that Jacques Lacan ever recognised left behind him a crackpot collection of photographs, some of which are today in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. The exclusive theme of these images is veiled Moroccan women, and the absolute object of passion is the drapes, folds and hems of the fabric. It is these incredible movements that Clérambault captures in a rapacious fashion, indicating a flow of desire that goes well beyond an anatomy that we wish to see, or hide.

F – Fake
The luxury industry propagates its products around the world while the fashion industry increases the more affordable versions; the counterfeit industry thwarts the expansion of the first and creates an underground Chinese section for the second. According to the website of the Ministry for the Economy and Finance, in France, counterfeit seizures were multiplied by 45 between 1994 and 2011, from 200,000 products to 8.9 million. Between the fake python, the fake Vuitton, the authentic imitation leather Vuitton, the altered Balmain from the latest Hennes & Mauritz capsule collection, or the real/fake collection from the 'outsider' Kanye West in the form of a poor copy of Rick Owens on the fake bouncy butt of Kim Kardashian, fashion in its hysteric spiral becomes joyfully mixed up.

False
False like the height of hypocrisy, pomp and finery; ostentatiously sinned against nature. Proust, via the character of Swann, is surprised with the strongly S-shaped outline imposed by late 19th century fashion on all the coquettes of Paris: the corset strangles their waist and projects their bosom outwards, while the rear of the body flourishes in unusual protuberances through the grace or oddity of fake chicken coops, and other bustles or faux-culs that camouflage laces and metres of fabric. Corseted, and with the behind artificially augmented, the slender harmony of the body of an Odette or an Albertine was metamorphosed in a problematic set of disjointed volumes. It was not until the mid 1990s that the priestess of Deconstructivist fashion, Rei Kawakubo, would propose in new foam a structure to be worn in broad daylight in order to reveal the intrinsic monstrosity, the Japanese designer mocking, after Proust, the stylistic Western tyranny of the design that constrains, impedes or fantasises the feminine architecture of the body.
Finally, we can note that the bustle in its enormity is no longer the done thing in the fashion world, the whim is now rather for flat and trans-gender buttocks. Fakes and phonies still abound though in support and praise, especially around fashion parades.

Fashion plate
'Fashion plate' is generally the term used, without thinking about it, to say that someone is beautiful and just right, so appropriate to the time. This expression is not without its historic precision. As fashion was diffused according to the means of technical reproducibility in the 19th century, and even before, by means of engraving, fashionable

women, their bustles, accessories and fabrics, favoured by the spirit of the time, spoke to each other in an editorialised fashion, so to speak, in the *Journal des Dames et des Modes* and other dedicated magazines...

Fashion show

Dior's mannequins walked in quite a different way from those at any other house. They never minced (as at Fath's) nor strode athletically (as at Balmain's). They were taught to walk with a sort of pride, brushing the audience carelessly with their skirts as they passed, lifting their shoulders haughtily, walking rapidly, smiling at no one and stopping for no one.

In the Mink by Scott-James (Anne), 1952, London Michael Joseph Ltd, pages 138-139-140

Fat

Fat, as an adipose mass, is taboo in modern fashion and this goes back at least to Coco Chanel. This intrepid, hip-less soldier, gladly pillaged the sportswear wardrobe of her chic, svelte and sporty lovers to impose on the world a fashion without embellishments, and launched her cohort of "small, underfed telegraph operators" as Paul Poiret mockingly said. The 'poor' genius of Gabrielle's fashion, little abandoned girl from the Cevennes, brought up in the harshness of the orphanage, is also her revenge on the opulence of the upper classes into which she was not born.

Find

"Loulou de la Falaise came as a shock to Yves' thoroughly French taste. There was a fantasy and colour and daring to her style that was truly original. He took in everything about her – the Bakst-inspired fauna print on chiffon, the way she stood against the door jamb, the wide-set blue eyes and narrow bone structure. His eye was drawn to her tiny wrists and a bracelet she was wearing which he could have sworn was one of those metal bands they put on the corner of tables to hold down the tablecloth in the wind. It was; Loulou had taken it off the table at the Bistro Petit Saint Benoît and wore it as a Paris talisman".

Alicia Drake, *The Beautiful Fall: Fashion, Genius and Glorious Excess in 1970s* Paris, Bloomsbury

Française (robe à la)

From the reign of King Louis XIV, these aristocratic ladies would slide around the wooden floors in Versailles wearing great theatre clothes or robes *à la française*, that can also be randomly called variations of the 'sack-back gown', *robe battante*, *robe volante* or Watteau gown. The staging was a serious affair. And since Colbert, it was a question of luring all the courts of Europe with the miracles created by the French royal manufactures. The programme therefore was copious: pagoda sleeves open from the elbow were embellished with engageantes or multiple lace flounces, the corset with the stomach piece immobilising the funnel-shaped bust in the form of a masterpiece embroidered with gold and silver threads, the hips moving within panniers supporting extravagant layers of dress fabric – lengths of Lyonnaise silk and their padding worked wonders. The double panniers were sometimes up to two metres fifty wide, you can bet that trying to fit through a double door or trying to avoid a rival courtesan was nothing short of a comic circus act. Worse again: with the masses of courtesans sometimes adding up to several thousand in the castle, and the rest rooms not always being accessible, scandalmongers suggested that these ladies would have sometimes urinated under the hooped architecture of their skirts, very discreetly and with amazing stoicism. "But my dear Sofia! You will have another macaroon?"

France (Paris) – Where is France going?

France is Paris: capital of fashion according to Walter Benjamin, and according to the French Federation of Fashion and of Ready-to-Wear Couturiers and Fashion Designers; land of the snobbish crowd and informed propriety.

What is this French genius that embodies a Chanel or a Saint Laurent? A reformist arrogance? A seemly irony? A whim kept clear from British eccentricity but which tolerates, in an amused and knowing fasion, the trans-aggressive service on café terraces? Unless it concerns this "blasé nonchalance" described by Georg Simmel in *The Metropolis and Mental Life*?

What happens to this same French genius when the temptation to live in a cliché and on an inheritance while holding back from any post-modern audacity is great? What can the risk be if not that, in a devilishly 'Houellebecqian' way, of making France a single commercial licence?

For all that, the spirit of time parades merrily and always in Paris, in France, to the pace of collections, seasons and complex calenders elaborated by the Clothing Union Committee. Only the pre-collections, the cruise collections and the houses of vernacular tradition allow themselves relocated movements. Milan, New York and London then just become provincial towns that are graciously approved by Paris.

French (spirit)

But what would conformity be? Conforming to what and to whom? Admit that the French spirit has taken a real knock, Voltaire must be turning in his grave. At the slightest joke, the slightest play on words, one must apologize to the various communities. A good play on words, even a horrible one, if it's with spirit it's very French and that's very good.

Karl Lagerfeld: "The scent of holiness is not important for me" by Richard Gianorio for *Madame Figaro*, 20 May 2013.

Futility
"Fashion, though, speaks of whimsy, of spontaneity, of fancy, of invention, of frivolity. But these are lies, fashion is entirely on the side of violence: the violence of conformity, of adherence to models, the violence of social consensus and the scorn it dissimulates."
Georges Perec, *Penser/Classer*, La Librairie du XXIe siècle, éditions du Seuil.

G – Garment
The garment is not the buckskin breeches, the undershirt, the undergarment, the tights, the body stocking, the badly dressed or the coat-less person... Clothing is about representing a class, it is all the outer garments, the superposition of a nice appearance that is both statutory and significant. While the apparel is the entire appearance, the clothing is the façade of 'state' or 'status': "Ample screed coat closed at the neck by a trinket; very loose surcoat or riding cape. The figures of the royal family and its entourage, on the other hand, wore short houppelandes, which were the height of fashion at the time..."
Odile Blanc, *Parades et parures - L'invention du corps de mode à la fin du Moyen âge*, éditions Gallimard, 1997.

Gay
As gay as a lark, as Proust or as any good fashion designer, gaiety is a community as much as a state of mind. So, while Proust defines the practice of the author as the fixation of a dreamed vision through the prism of language, the fashion designer finds and applies to the real a model body, the desired stature, the sublime femme fatale or the handsome, young, lanky man. The look is then subsumed by the choice of this specific body. As we know, with Proust the voyeur or with modelers/designers, the icon, the fit model or the muse are the centre. The fantasised image becomes reified. The desire felt, veritable 'cruising', crystallizes into a design(at)ed object of joy.

Gaultier, Jean-Paul
Man of stripes and ostensibly worked materials, JPG was the resurgence of fanciful couture in the 1980s. Openly gay, joyfully plethoric, Gaultier, in his way, introduced pop glamour into fashion, erotic and caricatured subversion of the body, à la Pierre et Gilles. Though distinctly less totalitarian than Alaïa and Mugler, he came to grips with ready-to-wear just as much as the aforesaid *Haute couture*, in the non-differentiation of gender, with great formal perspicacity. He is the model of the baroque couturier/creator.

H – Hermès
Certain luxury fashion houses do not claim to represent fashion directly and prefer to defend a fancy of the art of time rather than that of a system of novelty caught in the flow of the spirit of the time, in other terms of the *zeitgeist*. Hermès, and particularly the work on patterns that it invents and designs with its famous squares is a precise example. The complex design and the expert colouring, its unquestionable execution, make these scarves exclusive and timeless fashion objects. The deliberateness that brings them to the present, but outside of fashion, enshrines them in infinite reinterpretations, accompanying a life's history through their quality. Another, atemporal, system of perception is therefore possible.

Hips
From short to tall women and from wide to narrow, size was measured along the waist, the medial line. More precisely, a geography defined by the maximum and minimum acme points of the hips determined a physiological reality. Once again, Dior, then Mugler, Alaïa, Montana, Gaultier... endlessly dream and adjust the body of a mermaid: the upper line of the waist is tight, the lower line is more generous, unless it suddenly decreases... Historically, the hips were key to representation: if we carry out a shift towards the bottom, a raise upwards or if we talk about a complete re-design by using a corset, faux cul or pannier... We can see a structural link between the hollow of the lower stomach, well-shaped hips and the idea of Beauty.

I – Incredible
During the tumultuous post-revolutionary period, a provocative youth with Royalist tendencies, experimented and displayed a certain sense of aristocratic excessiveness in both the dimensions and the organisation of his outfits. Refusing to pronounce the letter 'R' which for him signified the Revolution and his own decline, the Inc'edible would wear a redingote that was too short but with gigantic lapels and tie, badly-fitting trousers and twisted tights on his legs. He also carried a huge club, which he used to hunt down Jacobins.

Invisible
Where the dandy in his impeccable black suit in the middle of other men in black of the 19th century joins the adept of the ultra-standard or 'normcore' of the early 21st century: the same haughty desire of an imperceptible future. It's a question of being outside fashion and its shrill markers, it's a question of refusing the diktat of the all visible.
Moreover, it can be seen that one of the criteria of excellence of the rare *Haute couture* garment is indeed the invisibility of its construction.

J – Jacquemus
An assistant from Marseille who never ceases to recall his difference, more specifically that of not being from Paris, Jacquemus revisits the representations of his childhood, a certain idea of the young *au pair* girl as well as Provençal folklore, the customs of a terroir in terms of style or at least as a possible formal repertoire. Thrown together in a Michel Gondry style, in an extremely, even overly produced reverie, he finally imprints a special manner of staging, a new outline. Young and pretty French girl, provincial and impertinent, Jacquemus' muse is often decked out in white poplin, in oversized cotton fabric fitted with touches of colour, Cézanne-like pictorial blocks. A self-taught man, an occurrence conducive to exciting the taste of French critics, who love free genius so much, this position is seen as a myth for this young designer, at the same time excusing in him a sense of finish and volume that he still needs to perfect.

K – Kelly
When the irrefutable plastic of a travel shoulder bag in the most beautiful leather meets the impeccable physique of a top Hitchcockian actress from the 1960s, who in addition is a Queen of a tiny kingdom, from a fairytale land, the enchanted crowd hails the tangible dream of the ultra-standard where the object and the woman become mixed up as the unanimous fixation of all desires.
Legend has it that Grace Kelly brandished the Hermès bag in front of the onlookers as she exited a plane, to hide her stomach like a pregnancy that was still non-official. It's amusing that a chance gesture of defence could provoke such incredible press coverage; today's 'it-girls' armed with the 'it-bags' of one season never bother with whatever form of modesty in front of the well-timed cameras.

K-way
The K-way raincoat, which fits in a self-stowing pocket, is a technical sportswear overcoat that opens to the front with a zip and is embellished with zip-up side pockets. A draw-string hood allows the user to adjust the volume to the size of their head. Made from nylon, a synthetic material, it is waterproof and comes in a range of colours. The K-way is a handy, easy-to-transport garment, appearing before the 'wearable' era. It was invented in 1965 by the French trousers-maker, Léon-Claude Duhamel.

L – Lacroix, Christian
Great French couturier, born in Arles in Provence, magical land where the beautiful Arlesian ladies wander at will with their lace headdresses, attired in rose-cut diamonds, their slender waists encircled in a camisole corset just above their ample silk petticoats. It is said that this appearance dates back to well before the French Revolution, that it is one of the rare ones to have lasted up to the 20th century. So, Lacroix the Arlesian is also famous for his skilful eclecticism, his love of Mediterranean and Oriental folklores, his both knowledgeable and theatrical use of the history of the costume. In his work there is a consummated art of colour, an intense pictorial sensitivity combined with the pleasure of *grand genre* and *grand bal* volume. The materials, the beautiful fabrics and their patterns are well matched in sumptuous harmonies: fawn fur coats, black velvet, fuchsia, red or golden yellow brocade or silk taffeta, unless a sea-green dotted with turquoise stars like in an 18th century libertine boudoir. Ottoman stripes. Cartloads of embroideries and lace of all types, guipure or chantilly. Back with the *robes battantes*, corsets and feathers. Sheath dresses are voluptuously draped, toreros are disguised as brides, Russian icons dance in an unprecedented version of One Thousand and One Nights... We are in the *Haute couture* mirage, which will have lasted from 1987 to 2009: it's little or already quite a lot. As for the artist, he has moved on to other adventures since then.

Lemaire, Christophe
Discreet designer and honest man who, when not working for Lacoste, Hermès or Uniqlo, has been creating with his partner Sarah Linh Tran, fuss-free clothes for men and women in his name, distributed in the heart of Paris, Rue de Poitou, with Asia and modernism, the demanding nature of what is uniform or the effective nature of sportswear for long-established muses. The pragmatic outline and the clear line promoted by the Lemaire brand denote a very French spirit when, in its natural penchant for criticism or even self-criticism, the latter develops a sacrosanct fear of the lack of taste as well as classic defiance for any form of excess, of efflorescence or sparkle: ridicule and being caught in the act of pretentiousness do indeed kill.

Line(s)
With couture as the common thread in a biased way, Christian Dior invented and multiplied his collections, like peremptory architectural lines: Corolle, Tulip, Zig-Zag, Envol, Profile, Vivante, H line, A line, Y line... The Couturier was both demiurge and master, great surgeon of the female body, which, for its part, remains most docile.

Licence
In the 1960s and 70s, numerous Parisian fashion houses were decked out with international lines for commercial purposes. It was a question of opening up a range of products, under the eponymous name, that included scarves, perfumes, underwear, bath towels, etc., for a different and very middle-range market. In doing so, these ready-to-wear licences strengthened the importance of the brand's acronym

or logo. Licence as in licentious dulling down of a legacy for the benefit of a sugarcoated and relocated adaptation. Cardin is the perfect example of a loss of identity in the dilution of a spirit for the benefit of underwear and tailored products. Standard folklore of standard internationalisation.

M – Marie-Claire
Magazine founded in the 1930, and whose finest hours were due to the incredible Claude Brouet in the 1970s, Maire-Claire will have marked its era in terms of style but also in terms of lifestyle - getting Peter Knapp, Helmut Newton, Chris Von Wangenheim, Hans Feurer (and in particular its first editorial), Sarah Moon, etc. to work on decisively emancipated editorial proposals, where femininity is not reduced to household tasks or good housekeeping. Marie Claire is the place of awareness of a first freedom granted to the representation of what is feminine. From trousers to body-hugging underwear, from Rykiel to Saint Laurent, from Chloé by Karl Lagarfeld, to Emmanuelle Khanh, from the premises of Japanese fashion with Kenzo and Issey Miyake in Japan, with Missoni in Italy and Jane Muir in Britain in a steadfastly global dimension, innovative from pop to hippies – success story of ready-to-wear far from couture and tailoring, Marie Claire has been this beacon in the darkness of French bourgeois conventions.

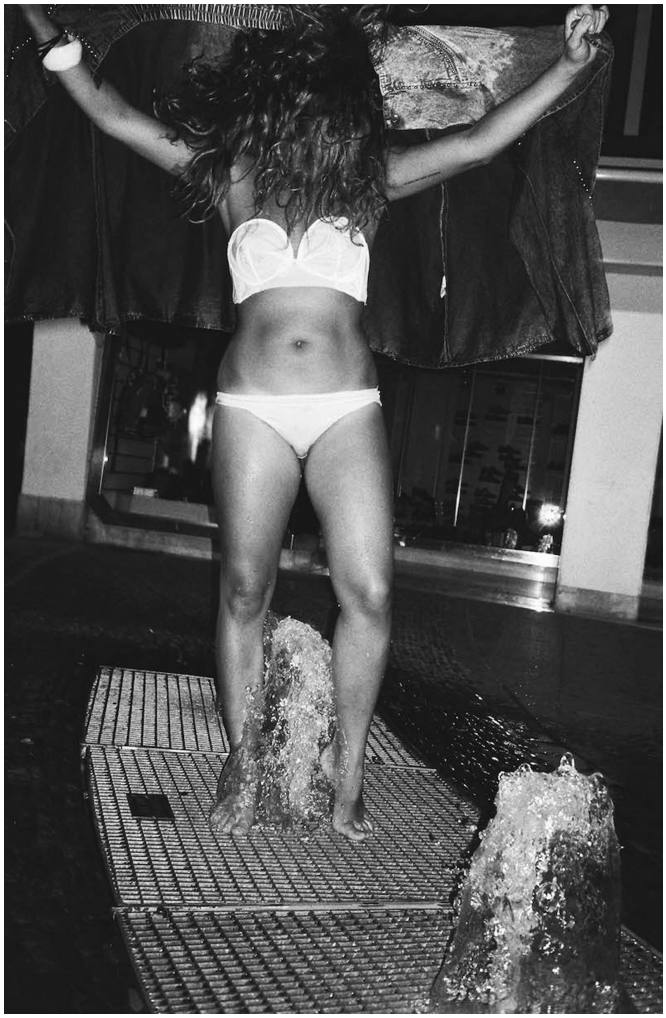
Marvellous
During the tumultuous post-Revolutionary period, a provocative young woman with Royalist tendencies, experimented and displayed a certain sense of aristocratic excessiveness in both the dimensions and the organisation of her outfits. Refusing to pronounce the letter 'R' which signified for her the Revolution and her own decline, the Ma'vellous raised scandal by wearing a light and outrageously transparent old-fashioned tunic revealing eloquent cleavage and a train that was so long that it was a nuisance more so than being seductive.

Montana, Claude – Mugler, Thierry
In the disdain and clamour of the 1980s, between top-of-the-range ready-to-wear and and *Haute couture*, the two Ms decided on the advent of powerful amazons with provocative hip-swaggered poses. From reality to fantasy, all is hyperbolic, and super outlined. The look is warlike, harnessed, belted; the waist is strangled, the legs are extra long, the bust and hip volumes are flamboyant, the shoulders aggressive and oversized. Neo-classicism re-establishes contact with 1940s Hollywoodian glamour, leather alongside draped fabrics, the suit alongside the military uniform, with a pop or mannerist artistry that elevated artifice as the summit of the aesthetic. For a few 'golden years', the Parisian lady abandoned her cerebral chic and her stolidity to taste the impure and grandiose pleasures of 'Camp' style, parading less as a woman than a creature.

Muse
Rebecca Ayoko, Jeanne Balibar, Brigitte Bardot, Jane Birkin, Carole Bouquet, Betty Catroux, Linda Evangelista, Mireille Darc, Loulou De la Falaise, Inès De la Fressange, Catherine Deneuve, Victoire Doutreleau, Wallis Franken, Grace Jones, Grace Kelly, Michèle Lamy, Twiggy Lawson, Sophie Marceau, Jeanne Moreau, Kate Moss, Delphine Seyrig, Daria Werbowy… all photographed and well-loved ladies of magazine covers, muses between elegy and *zeitgeist*. The demiurge author-creator makes her his dish and makes her shape a hallmark; the muse or the art of entering into the splendour of a divine constellation of a moment of fashion.

N – No
The difficult existence of a subject in the world of fashion is linked to the impossibility, in principle, that he has in writing or pronouncing a criticism of fashion objects and their qualities. At the same time, the subject has the formal obligation of accepting the quantities and the standards fabricated by the system itself, that of industrial production and industrial media coverage of the large, 'Luxury' groups. No is the fixed component of the structure of language, a stopping point that gives the possibility of thinking and therefore of transgressing the norm, of breaking with passive and consumer contemplation and of giving an authorised analysis of the forms produced, be they illustrated or real. No, like setting a limit, circumscribing the object and understanding the creative movements in the greatest outfits to define the prism of the creator. Nobody forces the subject, once the criticism has been pronounced, of following him.

Nondescript?
The nondescript, even though it can be qualified as non-specific and non-generic, is not Neutral as Roland Barthes introduces it in his lectures at the Collège de France: "I define Neutral as that which thwarts the paradigm, or rather I would call Neutral everything that thwarts the paradigm." Can a garment be nondescript? Evidently, yes, when it is available and admitted in the field of ready-to-wear. Can a garment be Neutral? Yes, if ones considers the quality or the talent of the designer in overturning it, in changing the paradigm of a body, in foiling, through its language, the garment and even fashion itself. The work of Rick Owens, in this sense, could be qualified as Neutral; the real work of cuts and fabrics releases a singularity, a discreet radicality, a powerful non-colour, a Kairos or in other terms, an appropriateness about the era that will have left its mark on the era.



Marianne Marić “Femmes Fontaines”, Mulhouse, 2012

O – Orifice
Fashion is about sometimes cruel cuts and cut-outs, and every piece of clothing reveals even when it covers. It is in the edges, the seaming or the unseaming of the latter that the eroticised look penetrates, given that, as Lacan noted "the very delimitation of the 'erogenous zone' that the drive isolates from the metabolism of the function is the result of a cut expressed in the anatomical mark of a margin or border – lips, 'the enclosure of the teeth,' the rim of the anus, the tip of the penis, the vagina, the slit formed by the eyelids, even the horn-shaped aperture of the ear".

Originality
"He makes the wrong choices at the wrong time for the wrong reasons. That is why he is always ahead and absolutely brilliant."
Loic Prigent@loicPrigent 26 April

Oriane (great tyrannical muse) de Guermantes
In the eye of Proust it was Madame de Greffulhe, for Nicolas Ghesquière, the sworn actress Charlotte Gainsbourg, for Yves Saint Laurent, Catherine Deneuve and for the brand Céline, the writer Joan Didion... the great tyrannical muse is she who immobilises the other and imposes, in unattainable beauty, distance without question. What is pronounced is not the "I don't know what" but rather the "you don't exist" of the Snow Queen. Another possible type of queen is the editor-in-chief of the fashion magazine, whose film *The Devil Wears Prada* describes stiff-necked hysteria. Here we think of Anna Wintour, Marie Amélie Sauvé, Carine Roitfeld, or even Diana Vreeland.

P – *Parisienne* (Parisian woman)
The street about me roared with a deafening sound.
Tall, slender, in heavy mourning, majestic grief,
A woman passed, with a glittering hand
Raising, swinging the hem and flounces of her skirt;
Agile and graceful, with her statuesque leg.

Charles Baudelaire, *To a Passer-By - Tableaux parisiens*, extract published in the review *L'Artiste* in 1855, two years later it was included in the second edition of *The Flowers of Evil*.

Palais Royal
A place of pandering and demise of the French Revolution, place of power and regencies, Comme des Garçons, Serge Lutens, the first 'vintage corner' of contemporary fashion by Didier Ludot, a multitude of houses moved there in the 1980s, under the gold and wooden floors of the Council of State and the sumptuary laws of the Ministry of Culture. The later arrival of Rick Owens can be noted, with Martin Margiela not far away, Stella McCartney, Pierre Hardy, Marc Jacobs, Acne and the famous Joyce gallery. Sex, fashion and portfolios (Ministerial); France in short!

Paul Poiret
Parisian grand couturier, who, in the modern movement of the early 20th century, with Worth as a British equivalent, also with his clothes designer friends such as Madeleine Vionnet and Jeanne Lanvin, invented *Haute couture* as a Fashion system, supported by the principle of a collection designed according to the rule of themed seasonality. The great Guermantes Greffulhe was no longer the creator but the client, the haut couturier looked after the rest. Fashion thus became externalised, in a studio, and appeared as a set of models during salon presentations, fashion previews and retail merchandising.
As for Paul Poiret, in this system of ultra-referenced oriental, ornamental, odalisk collections by Gustave Doré, muses from the *Salon de la Rose + Croix*, just like the contemporary studios, played with voyages of inspiration to determine the language and the singular range of the latest collection. Thus, between the nebulous appearances of symbolists and the winding patterns of beautiful, mythological witches, Poiret's figures assigned skilful glorification to fabrics free from any type of corset. Enshrouded with fragrances in the master's name, the total look was straight out of the waves, like a Venus of beauty.

Plastic bag (Houellebecq)
It is a mediocre Monoprix plastic bag that paradoxically signs the outline of Michel Houellebecq in a famous portrait by Renaud Monfourny, dating back to 1998, which made the cover of *Particules Élémentaires*. This 'it bag' in the form of a fiasco, the writer sucking on his umpteenth cigarette, delicately brings it towards himself, against the soft and hazy lapel of his coat – thus defining the dandyism of little, a nonchalance that is as deceptive as it is disruptive.
Helped by the ecological injunction, it should be noted that the progressive disappearance of the plastic bag from the channels of mass consumption tends to make the latter a rare species: an object that perhaps we will yearn for as the ironic fetish of the frank consumer joys of an era. Michel Houllebecq's defeats are often premonitory.

Q – Quarrel
For fashion, as for the theory of painting (between the primacy of the colour or the drawing) or for architecture, a quarrel opposes the defenders of the old and those of the modern on the subject of emergence, of what is new, of what is coming. Rhythms and objects are, granted, not the same, but the debate remains identical: should we consider the changes, the contemporary rationales, as harmful or even dangerous or should we allow

ourselves to be carried towards what redefines the stakes and the media of a discipline in its time? Also, should we validate the Wintourian 'see-now, buy-now'? Should we accredit the prescriptive value of Instagram…? Or in other terms, how to be 'in' or 'out' with regard to the *zeitgeist*.

R – Religion
We will limit ourselves to citing an extract of an interview with Jean-Charles de Castelbajac for the magazine *Grazia*, from 22 July 2016. The interview was by Eric Dahan and the fashion creator evokes the year 1997, in which he dressed representatives of the Catholic religion in the colours of the rainbow, in particular during the World Youth Days: "Yes, I dressed everyone, the pope, 500 bishops, 5,000 priests and one million young people! The pope told me: "You have used colour as a cement of faith", and Cardinal Lustiger added: "And hope." As Jean-Paul II has since been canonised, these rainbow-coloured clothes are part of the treasures of Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris. The rainbow is the flag of peace, the link between God and man. It is for this reason that the planet is taking on colour, it's the only response to obscurantism."

Rykiel, (Sonia)
A great hysteric, who takes full responsibility for it, Parisian, an inhabitant of Saint-Germain-des-Près, redhead, writer at times, free stylist and researcher who will have freed the female wardrobe of its hems and linings, turned the stitching inside out, and explored knitwear to free the appearance of her sisters and to teach them nonchalance, among other finds. And all that from a little sweater, tight-fitting and libertine, easy to put on, easy to take off – for the swift joy of the moment, for a lover.

Rupture(s)
Always in fashion, as they are cyclical by essence, ruptures follow on from each other in the system of fashion like a succession of epidermal reactions, and in particular in modern Western fashion, which, around the 20th century, was torn between speed like the permanent revolution of customs and the cynical acceleration of flows and ways of consuming.

S – Safari jacket
"The most important thing in the mythology of the Yves Saint Laurent safari jacket, is that it finds its true origin in Franco Rubartelli's photo featuring Veruschka in *Vogue Paris* of June-July 1968. This was the starting point of the cult of the safari jacket. This photo, so famous, so emblematic, this image prefigures the future success of the garment. What is amusing in this story is that is was a garment made for a fashion editorial and that it did not feature in the spring-summer 1968 collection. It was only one year later, in spring 1969, that the safari jacket found its commercial version in the Saint Laurent Rive Gauche ready-to-wear collection. The garment that was industrialised in 1969 was in fact a huge commercial success that was much more than editorial. The laced up safari jacket would be produced in two versions, one in cotton gabardine (close to the editorial version) and the other in a lighter poplin that was a mix of cotton and polyester. The 1968 version was made by the Yves Saint Laurent Couture workshop, while the 1969 version was totally industrialised by Mendes." Olivier Châtenet, NYC, Summer 2017.

Snobbery
Without nobility, without means, there can nevertheless subsist an elitism of the gesture, a dandyism of withdrawal or even of removal. What is essential thus appears in a meditated economy: scorn for common taste or the mediocrity of crowds, indifference in relation to the obvious seduction of all forms of opulence, the singular creation of a culture as well as the transcendent radicalism that is likely to overturn the established social order or the world as it is, as part of its highest ambition. In this way, Boris Vian would savour camembert cheese from a small spoon. In this way, it was said that when Marcel Duchamp would travel or take a plane, only brought the absolute necessary with him, namely a set of objects that could be contained in a single pocket of his suit. An invisible sign of speed, elegance and ultra lightness.

Sold
It is now rare for the creator to hold the keys to his own house. Since the 1990s, the arrival of shareholders in huge conglomerates and the voracious strategies of marketers and salespeople out to conquer the world, this same creator has now become a sort of mercenary, who sells his charms like he sharpens his weapons for the highest bidder and according to opportunity, whether it concerns resuscitating the former house of another like a Sleeping Beauty, or monopolising the ever more volatile desires of a clientele by currying favour for a few seasons. As the market is fickle, the turnover is worrying, and Prince Charming is flighty.

Spirit of the time (Zeitgeist)
One can suppose that the spirit of the time is a form of anticipation, in the literary sense, of the act of creation in fashion. Nothing predisposes what occurs, no Pythia predicts the future of fashion. Only a series of heterotopia*, uttered by designers, stylists and artistic directors who gather and tangle in their proposals the sum of desires and contemporary plastic dimensions that they observe, make fashion. Or, as said by Giorgio Agamben "he who truly belongs to his time, the real contemporary, is he

who does not perfectly coincide with it or concur with its ambitions, and does not, in that respect, define himself as non-contemporary; but precisely for this reason, precisely due to this interval and this anachronism, he is more capable than the others of perceiving and grasping his time."** It is therefore heterotopia or dyschronia, which builds an assembled vision, a spirit of the time that proposes ideal models of appearances, of identities, that could define a horizon of fashion.
* Michel Foucault, *Les hétérotopies*, 1966, édition de la Pléiade, p. 2015.
** Giorgio Agamben, *What is the contemporary?* from *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*, Stanford University Press, 2009.

Style
"Style stems from the particular and ever steady direction of will, which differentiates it from the general volitive direction of its time. The task of the scientist is to distinguish what is specific to the era, to the compact majority, from what is specific to the person." Citation from *Aby Warburg. La lotta per lo stile*. Maurizio Ghelardi. Nino Aragno Editore, *2012*.

T – **Tail**
Tail, the sexual object, as in buttocks, behind, rear end, tush. The tail becomes a tool as an appendage or the prerogative of official outfits in the form of tops and tails. Also, we may be at the tail-end of the queue for the numerous shows of fashion week or during the sales at Abercrombie and Fitch. Lastly, the pony tail is a capillary 'normcore' form, both joyful and specific that we often find in the fashion editorials of Marie Chaix.

Taste (Bourdieu vs Sontag)
There is taste, the main one, that distinguishes, spurs on and subdues, that which informs of what's lovely and good in the elite so as to better distance or if not, stigmatise, the vulgar. This great taste is without social reverie or Utopian nuance. And there is 'Camp' taste, which is never concerned by value judgement, is unmaliciously attached to pleasure, to laughter, to a singular freedom. It tolerates stiff criticism and allows it to slide off its cape of joyful and subversive immunity.
"Camp taste is a kind of love, love for human nature. It relishes, rather than judges, the little triumphs and awkward intensities of 'character'..."
Susan Sontag, *Notes on Camp*, point 56 -1964

Thin (See: fat)

U – **Uniform – 1**
"When the British took control of the world, they freed themselves from these fairground costumes that other people forced them to wear, to impose their initial clothing on the entire world. The people of Bacon and William the Great, of the Swan of Avon, had preserved its fabric intact. Then an outfit was designed that had a unique form, a uni-form, under which individuality could better hide its treasures. A mask was designed."
Adolf Loos in *Why A Man Should Be Well Dressed*.

Uniform - 2
A little bit of easy psychology: behind every self-respecting couturier-designer there is at least the humble affection of a 'fairy seamstress' grandmother or else the indifference of a mother who is as much idolised as she is sumptuously dressed (with Proustian love), or the trauma linked to the uniform of a Swiss boarding school and its programmatic consequences: love/hate of the group to which you are obliged to belong, just as ambivalent fascination for the perfection of the mould or the art of the mask, narcissistic attention given both to the imperceptible detail and the 'small differences', and of course an unquenchable thirst for differentiation.

V – **Versailles**
Great showcase of fashion in the 17th century, Versailles, its court, its King and its Hall of Mirrors already proposed the system of fashion, from its design to its dissemination. The creators were great nobles, while the courtesans and mistresses were the emerging figures who rewrote the rules. The King, the industry, the major groups and the '*Chambre Syndicale*' (union committee), the all powerful decider of the calendar... the commentators would sit and decide what was good and what was not, as described for us by Baldassare Castiglione in *The Book of the Courtier*. The catwalk is indeed a fitting name...

Vetements (When Demna Gvasalia meets Roland Barthes)
Naming a fashion brand 'Vetements' (clothing, in French), is about tackling the issue of branding from a provocative and transgressive tautology viewpoint. Should we take it as a simple marketing ploy or can we consider this principle of naming as a vision of fashion besotted with the spirit of the time, with a Kairos (right or opportune moment)? Also, considering the presence of a vernacular logo on a sweater in a post-internet style, dreaming up a Slavic S&M look when Putin features as an autocratic master, mixing and unmatching the wardrobe from random leisurewear to officewear, all of this reminds us of the work of Demna Gvasalia, according to a vision that is connected to the ultra-present and yet which remains anachronistic through its radicalism. So, what's it like being a vestimentary item with Vetements? It's about being real but not really totally wearable, it's pushing the limits in that direction... It is a cut that outwits

the standards and dramatically overturns lines, drops the shoulders or firmly shortens them... deforms the tailoring, introduces sportswear everywhere, flatters the facially disfigured and both male and female brutes. It shamelessly sexualises and de-sexualises. It uniformises with no fear or boundaries. It hacks into Couture!

Vionnet, Madeleine

All the 'grandes dames' of modern French couture have also worked, each in their own way, on freeing the woman's body. Gabrielle Chanel had the art of a stylist, a virtuoso in borrowing, master of signs; taking from the masculine she built a clean, efficient, mobile look, one that was sharp vis-a-vis the old puffiness of bourgeois eclecticism. Vionnet, her contemporary, before Alaïa, who venerates her, was a master in architecture, spending her whole life as inventor, experimenting the art of the cut and volume on her fetish wooden doll. Her most beautiful creations are linked to free form, when some sections cut on the bias of the fabric only take on their full significance on the body wearing them, beautiful and skilful drapes that are just held on with a few hooks. The apparent lucidity of Vionnet magic is in reality very demanding. It is better for the client to have a firm and toned body, to assume the outline with the ancient reminiscences that are proposed. And the dressers of this person had better have a good memory as a few grams of unsewn fabric could become a real puzzle just a few fateful hours before the ball. It is said that these ladies could run to Vionnet's at all hours of the day, to avoid a fiasco and find the operating instructions in extremis... That was before the Deconstructivist Japanese wave, that took place later in Paris in the 1980s.

Virile

From the member to the status, virile is the political form of he who has become man, victorious. In its former sense, the diversity of virile genres opens the possibility of shifting status between these typologies in a society where economics and power rule the mechanics of domination. Julius Caesar is one, both icon and paragon. So, towns and cities have for a long time been led by the virile genre, captains of industry or military leaders. The effeminate is possibly the cursed part of what is virile.

Vogue Paris

Since the 1920s, in an access of folly and luxury, Parisian fashion has found its best receptacle and echo at *Vogue Paris*, embodying style *à la Française*. This magazine disseminates a unique taste and spirit, a frank glamour, a radical narrative ability that describes the freedom of the *Parisienne*, woman of the city, who has been exported all over the world and who holds the power or at least the influence to say yes or no, to attract a chorus of the biggest names in photography to serve an imperious beauty. Vogue Paris is therefore the magazine capital of fashion where Michel de Brunhoff, Edmonde Charles-Roux and Carine Roitfeld will have been the greatest editors, editorial writers and printers in the world of vestimentary assembly, daring bodies, mythical fashion figures.

Nowadays, *Vogue Paris* is in much better shape, whereas under the reign of Emmanuelle Alt it had difficulty in conquering the editorial object. Should we re-subscribe?

W – Watteau (pleats and gown)

A painter of the idealised society life of the early 18th century and of libertine pleasures, through the paintings representing rural celebrations and other *fêtes galantes* and bucolic scenes, Watteau describes precisely a unique style of clothing of the time. It consisted of a very stylish aristocratic fashion, overflowing fabrics (taffetas and velvet), sleek and opalescent, with floating forms and a *je ne sais quoi* of neglect, volumised by panniers and corsages marking a net difference between the top and the bottom of the female outline. Watteau is also the name of a pleat that further increases the volume in the back of the gown, maximising the spread and therefore the quantity of fabric worn, another difference, this time social, of ostentatious wealth.

X – Xennials

Each generation in the marketing era seems to have its own specific appellation, AOC – protected designation of origin of the political and cultural framework in which the generation grows up. In this regard, the term 'Xennial' corresponds to the bracket of humans born between 1977 and 1985 and makes up this particular block that saw the daily emergence of the issue of information, access and flows, from the emailbox and Facebook, from games consoles to mobile telephones... We might as well say the prehistory of the ultra contemporary. Quick to catch on to this modernity, but still able to tell the difference between an iron and a hammer, a cow and a sheep, the Xennial is a connecting point between the old and the new worlds.

After these came the Millenials, those who were born shortly before or during the 'Millenium bug', a generation that takes for granted the Internet, plurality and maximum instantaneity, the fall of the twin towers and 'seapunk'. It was not however born with the tactile smartphone and its 'apps'. Post-Millenial babies already know how to scroll on a tactile screen in utero. As for the Millenials, the old fuddy-duddies...

So, marketing, a strategist in the multiplication of hot cakes, uses the understanding of these

respective generational origins to lure in their clients, making the time regained emetic. Marketing is dead…

Y – Young and pretty

Like the promise of something to come or something evident, the association of the terms 'young and pretty' has spanned centuries and finds its full vitality in the emergence of the genre of the young modern woman at the dawn of the 20th century, she who is impertinent in the novels or novellas by Henry James (*The Bostonians*), by Francis Scott Fitzgerald (*The Beautiful and the Damned*); she who is standing firm in Oscar Wilde's work *Aristotle at Afternoon Tea*. Among these authors, who constantly pitch American and European women against each other, the young transatlantic lady has an unconstrained waist and a flowing appearance, with speed and lightness as luggage. She disconcerts both the old faded dandies and the captains of industry already nominally saddled with the blazon of 'WASP'. And she disconcerts them even more, if this can be judged from the endless vitality of this figure in women's press over the past one hundred years, much to the delight and the terror of all women venturing beyond the age of thirty. In his work *The Possibility of an Island*, Michel Houellebecq totally fixed the latter and cruel paradox, when he gets a fictitious female editor-in-chief of a fictitious magazine entitled *Lolita*, to say: "What we are trying to create is an artificial, frivolous humanity, that will never again be accessible to seriousness or humour, who will live in an ever more desperate quest for fun and sex until it dies."

Yves Saint Laurent

Great master of ready-to-wear but also of a certain idea of couture, a symptom, neurosis and obsession of fashion that has infused, diffused and crackled at every moment since he started with Dior and until the definitive and long-lasting creation of his Parisian house, its very DNA overpowered with sensuality, taste, modernity and colour. Monsieur, accompanied by his companion Bergé, was a fighting force that understood the era, that overturned the existing models, opened the outline of a wardrobe like a scalpel making an incision, creating a complex and simple, precise and sharp wardrobe. Loulou, Clara, Betty, all these women have embraced the spirit of the master. With freedom as a banner, safari jacket in the wind, ascot tie loose, evening attire without trousers, Parisian provocation in a smirk, Yves Saint Laurent preempted the sexual revolution and conveyed the dawning liberality.

Z – Zizi shoes (Gainsbourg, Jeanmaire and consort)

Every fashion leaves its imprints and its triumphs – The famous Zizi shoes by Repetto, soft Richelieu shoes with light soles created at the end of the first half of the 20th century, were adopted by Serge Gainsbourg, first under the airs of jazz and then the eternally 'Gainsbarre' sound. With a shoe as a characteristic feature, made from natural leather, deformed possibly from having been worn too much, these shoes have become the standard of neglected yet genuine elegance, nonchalent, *sprezzatura* as Baldassare put it, *je-ne-sais-quoi* in Jankeleviteh's words, the art of being stylish. Zizi shoes as in Zizi Jeanmaire, music hall and cinema screen icon, were revived in the early 2000s along with numerous types of material which were invented around this ideal. From there, the baby doll or neorock youth once again adopted it, recognising a formula synonymous with agility, flexibility, cool and chic, the Zizi shoe for a time replaced the Converse, the Stan Smith, the UGG, the Nike Flyknit… Jane Birkin has her bag (Hermès), Serge his shoes, Alain Delon his pefume (Dior Eau Sauvage), hence the question of muses and their prescriptive force, and their contemporary branding.

Marianne Marić “Femmes Fontaines”, Mulhouse, 2012