

Fashioning the Future: Our Future from Our Past

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	1
Preface	2
Classical Revivals in Dress Patricia A. Cunningham	3
Historicism In Fashionable Dress Gayle Strege	12
Fashioning Future Fashions Gwendolyn S. O'Neal	25
Works Cited	29

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Lena Bailey, Charles Kleibacker and Lucy Sibley who gave birth to the dream.

This exhibition would not be possible without

the dreams and hard work of many people who

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> Gayle Strege Curator

Acknowledgments

Preface

As we sit on the threshold of a new millennium, it seems only natural to reflect on the past as we contemplate the future. It is partially for this reason that we created a costume exhibition which does exactly that. "Fashioning the Future" exhibits costumes from the eighteenth through the twentieth century that demonstrate how we revive past styles. silhouettes, and design elements in fashionable dress. The exhibition also celebrates the completion of the Geraldine Schottenstein Wing of Campbell Hall, which houses the Historic Costume and Textiles Collection and the College of Human Ecology. The addition includes new costume and textile storage space, office space, and exhibition galleries. This new space gives the Department of Consumer and Textile Sciences the opportunity to explore various new directions for the Collection, as well as furthering our impetus for defining its future as a teaching tool, scholarly resource, and vehicle for community outreach.

Contemplation of the future of any endeavor requires that we put it in proper historical perspective. We can use history to gain an understanding of our present situation and to guide us in deciding our future direction. The exhibition we have created serves as a symbol of our interest in building on our past to create the future. Both it and the catalog show how historicism in fashionable dress reveals ways in which we create our future; by incorporating new ideas and technologies, while building on strong foundations.

In studying the history of clothing, it is obvious that past fashionable elements of clothing resurface as "new" from time to time. As you study the exhibition, you will see that the revival styles displayed are not strict line by line replications; rather, they are essentially variations of historic clothing with a new twist. Such revivals often are created with an eye to the past, while simultaneously incorporating contemporary influences. The result is a totally new creation. Thus, the creative reinterpretations of historical styles are more an evolution of a design than a direct copy. The new garments

reflect changes in society and influences of new technology that affect our lives; and will continue to do so into the next millennium.

The historically conceived styles represented in this exhibition are but a sampling of the genre, and by no means represent a complete repertoire of historical styles in dress throughout time. The exhibition focuses on three themes in which we look at certain time periods and follow them through revivals up to the current day. Under the classical theme we explore the vertical columnar silhouette as well as the draping associated with Greek and Roman styles. In the segment of the exhibition devoted to the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, we reveal how neo-medieval, neo-gothic, and Italian Rennaissance revival design elements have again resurfaced in dress. Finally under the heading of Elizabethan Artificiality we examine the contrived and unnatural silhouettes created by oversized and bustled skirts.

The garments and illustrations in this exhibition were chosen to represent fashionable dress styles, not fancy dress worn to costume balls. Although historicized fashions have been popular for costume balls since the fifteenth century, we wanted to emphasize that historical themes in clothing also appear in fashionable dress. The purpose of the fashion plates exhibited here is to impart information on contemporary eighteenth and nineteenth century styles of dress worn for various occasions.

Limited space and access to artifacts also dictated the scope of this exhibition. We regret the omission of historically revived men's dress. The omission does not suggest that men's clothing styles have been devoid of historicism. On the contrary, fashion revival is very apparent in today's menswear, especially the traditional three-piece suit.

Figure 1. Doric peplos/chiton on statue from the Acropolis, Athens, 420 B. C.



Figure 2. Ionic chiton, red-figure kylix Athenian, ca. 490-480 BC. Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 3. Himation on left figure, red-figure kylix, 5th century B. C. Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Classical Revivals in Dress

Patricia A. Cunningham

Dr. Cunningham has taught classes in Historic Costume, and Dress and Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University and The Ohio State University. From 1986 to 1995 she served on the board of Directors of The Costume Society of America and has edited Dress, the Society's journal, since 1992. Her publications include Dress and Popular Culture and Dress in American Culture. Publications related to her current research on women's clothing reform are "To Be Healthy, Artistic and Correct: Alternatives to the Fashionable Ideal," in the Cincinnati Art Museum exhibition catalog, With Grace and Favour and a forthcoming book-length study "Women's Clothing Reform in Cultural Context: Literature, Art and Health."

I conceive that the past is as real and substantial a part of our being, that it is as much a *bona fide* undeniable consideration in the estimate of human life, as the future can possibly be The past . . . has received the stamp of truth,

And left an image of itself behind.

(William Hazlitt, Table Talk, 1821-2)

Dress is not only a mirror of history, but is itself historical, for in any given period of time fashion might evoke styles from the past. Since the Renaissance one of the dominant historical sources for designs in clothing has been the dress worn in ancient Greece and Rome. Indeed, even within the classical world, the Romans borrowed from the Greeks. Paying homage to the historical past is not unique to the arena of clothing, for such borrowing has occurred in nearly all of the arts and architecture. In many respects it is not surprising that we rely on the past, for ideas must come from somewhere. As Ethel Traphagen observed "Fashion like history. goes in cycles. Nothing is new; yet everything appears new to the generation that greets it." 1

In Fashion Revivals from the Elizabethan Age to the Present Day (1981), Barbara Baines concurs with Traphagen in offering a revivalist history of fashion. Baines discusses not only classical sources, but records the influences of medieval and Renaissance dress, as well as the pastoral and exotic. Our love of historical styles is apparent in their persistent re-occurrence. The

1980s, in particular, saw a re-emergence of Elizabethan, classical and all sorts of historical styles as a blossoming of the "postmodern" style that had begun to emerge in art and literature in the late seventies. Certainly current fashion is not immune to history; we see, for example, styles of the 1960s and 1970s prevailing as inspiration for many designs of the 1990s.²

But why have the classical styles of dress—variations of the Greek peplos, chiton and himation, the Roman toga, palla, stola and tunic—and antique hairstyles continued to be revived? (See Figures 1-3) The answer lies, perhaps, in the reverence given to classical art, architecture, literature, philosophy and rhetoric in the early development of universities and colleges throughout Europe. Indeed, well into the eighteenth century university students were expected to read Greek and Latin. Intellectuals, and for that matter most middle and upper class men and women, would have some understanding of the classical arts and would have read the classics. (Plutarch may have had a greater



Figure 4. Eloborate French court dress of the eighteenth century. French fashion plote, 1778, from Galerie des Modes.

following than Rousseau.) Such knowledge served to distinguish people in society. No doubt individuals with an appreciation of Greek and Roman sculpture would derive a certain amount of pleasure from making associations with the classical past whether for masquerades, the theater or romanticized fashion.

During later periods, especially the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women and men wore representations of ancient Greek and Roman dress as a symbolic means to express either aesthetic or political ideas associated with the classical world. These ideas include the concept of ideal beauty as expressed in simplicity and Nature, as well as the political concept of equality and democracy. It was not by accident that in the early years of the American republic these two ideas—ideal beauty and republicanism—became conflated in the figure of the Goddess of Liberty whose image in art served as a symbol for the United States.³

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Revivals

In sixteenth-century England there were various courtly enactments created for the benefit of Elizabeth I. The costumes often included imaginative classical dress. It was not unusual for gods and goddesses—Diana, Pallas, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter and Juno—to appear in court masques which were put on for entertainment especially during royal visits. By the seventeenth century people of fashion took greater pleasure in revivals of dress. Historical paintings and portraits are quite telling. Men might appear in full armor or a pseudo toga, while portraits of women show them in loose fitting dress more suggestive of the antique than a direct copy of a chiton or peplos.⁴

As interest in antique sculpture increased in the seventeenth century it became evident that there were alternatives to restrictive traditional English dress. Statues became models for the young to learn about good taste in dress. Masques became more popular. The most productive designer of court masques, Inigo Jones, was particularly fond of classical dress. He

had traveled in Italy with the great collector of antique sculpture, the Earl of Arundel. Jones also would have had access to the numerous source books published during this period, such as Vicellio's costume book.⁵

Eighteenth-Century France and England: the Age of Neoclassicism

It was during the eighteenth century in France and England that classical dress became the inspiration for women's high fashion. Even then the tubular loose-fitting high waisted gown was not readily accepted. Classically inspired dress had always assumed the role of timelessness, especially for portraits, for it was considered somewhat exotic. Yet if worn in public such loose clothing would be equated with wantonness. Classically inspired dress was more like clothing worn exclusively in the intimacy of the boudoir. Such clothing was never meant to be worn in public. It took the efforts of the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, several artists and a revolution to set the stage for a gradual acceptance of the classical style as a fashionable garment to wear in public.6

After stiff bodices returned to fashion during the early eighteenth century, it meant that chasteness was again associated with stiff, armor-like, garments (Figure 4). For the looser styles to be accepted as fashion, the idea of loose morals had to be disassociated from loose clothing. Rousseau argued that the domestic role of classical women was virtuous and worthy of emulation in the eighteenth century. He believed that women's domestic role raised their morals and thus restricted access to the follies of pleasure seekers. For Rousseau classical dress reflected desired attributes of the domestic role. Many eighteenth-century moralists believed that all women's fashions were not only unhealthy. but immoral because adherence to their dictates often caused economic hardship. And indeed, as Rousseau's writings reveal, efforts were made toward reforming women's dress during the eighteenth century.7

The artist William Hogarth certainly believed that French fashion was pure folly. He also



Figure 5. Portrait of Madame Récomier by Jacques-Louis
David, ca. 1801, Musée du Louvre.
Courtesy Alinari/Art Resource, NY.

argued for the beauty of simplicity found in classical sculpture. Simplicity was one of Hogarth's art principles which he believed could lead to true beauty. To simplicity he added fitness, variety, uniformity, intricacy and quantity, all of which are similar to the classical principles of art.⁸

Hogarth was not alone in his advocacy of the classics and the idea that beauty lies in simplicity. Many artists and art theorists recommended antique dress for portraits. In his Theory of Painting (1715) Jonathan Richardson observed that "we favour. . . whatever is theirs, so that it shall appear to us to be graceful and noble." The "antique," he observed "had the truest taste in cloathing [sic]." Richardson also noted that arbitrary loose dresses "are not so affected with the change of the fashion as the common dress." Joshua Reynolds likewise observed that "fashion must be excluded from the art of painting." Antique dress, he believed. lends an air of negligence and timelessness to a painting, and draperies create "simplicity of nature" which is the ideal for history painting.9

It is clear that appreciation of Greek and Roman art never died away after the Renaissance, but indeed reached its height during the eighteenth century, which is now known as the age of Neoclassicism. Venus (Aphrodite) was the most popular classical subject for artists. Many great Renaissance artists included a Venus in their repertoire of paintings. Her beauty was greatly admired and soon became the ideal beauty. Eighteenth century artists continued the theme. The most famous painting in this "genre" is perhaps David's portrait of Mme. Recamier (Figure 5).

The discoveries at the ancient Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum no doubt peaked interest in the classical world. The German archeologist, Johann Joachim Winklemann, also greatly stimulated interest in Greek arts with the publication of *The History of Ancient Art* in 1764. Winklemann argued that modern artists could arrive at principles of true beauty by studying Greek sculpture which he said displayed "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur." His

writings were popular and influential. The artist Jacques Louis David was indirectly influenced by Winklemann through Joseph Vien, a Winklemann disciple. In England, The Royal Academy of Art was established in theory for the preservation of neoclassical ideals. Sir Joshua Reynolds, first president of the Academy, lectured on neoclassical theories of art and practiced his theory by depicting women in semiclassical dress. Still later in 1809 Thomas Hope published *Costume of the Ancients* providing art students access to more exact antique forms of dress. ¹⁰

In France simple dress, and in some cases bizarre clothing, was worn by everyone during the height of the revolution. It was important to avoid wearing any styles which were in fashion during the *Ancien Régime*. A man wearing a silk or velvet embroidered coat with knee breeches might easily find himself trundling toward the guillotine; at the height of the revolution men wisely chose a style known as *sans-culottes*, which consisted of garments closely linked to the dress of an English country gentleman.¹¹

While the clothing worn by the sans-culottes was the revolutionary men's garment and had a high political profile, it was a more sober style that prevailed in the last decade of the eighteenth century. The style is typified by a black cloth double-breasted coat, white waistcoat and grey breeches. The fashion was adopted all over western Europe and the United States. Associations with the idea of republicanism had settled on the sober black suit in the early years of conflict, and this style prevailed with the replacement of long trousers for knee breeches at the close of the eighteenth century. Classical inspirations for men were seen in the hair style á la Titus or Brutus. Classical garments for men appeared in the designs for "a national costume based on reason." This concept had taken hold with many writers and artists. The Société Populaire et Républicaine des Arts discussed this concept in depth in 1794 and commissioned the artist David to create the designs. Few people during the Jacobin regime actually wore the national costume although

Figure 6. Early nineteenth century classically-inspired gowns (left). Off-white wovenstripe silk dress, ca. 1820 (right). White cotton dress with tassels on sleeves, 1800-10. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



artists in David's workrooms adopted elements of classical dress for themselves. During the Directory the classically inspired costume of the legislative body was a long white tunic with a full mantle open at the side. Napoleon realized the importance of costume for dignity and discipline, so requested Carle Vernet to create new designs for government officials. Vernet's designs moved away from classical decoration toward a costume more related to contemporary fashion.¹²

Acceptance of the classical style of dress for women occurred in France after women had adopted the looser chemise which was introduced by the English in the 1770s. In keeping with the times simple white chemises and antique classical styles for portraits continued throughout the revolutionary era. After the fall of the Jacobins, during the Directory, elegant fashionable women—

Mesdames Tallien, Recamier, and Napoleon and others—adopted very skimpy classical dress. This was a period of a certain amount of wantonness in dress and the exaggerations of the merveilleuses and incroyables, young people obsessed with extremes of fashion. Although there were few fashion publications in France between 1793 and 1797, designs for women's national dress included chemises and classically inspired dresses. The high-waisted, classical inspired tubular dress fit the need for simplicity. Heideloff's Gallery of Fashion which appeared from 1794 to 1802 reveals clothing which suggests a compromise between the extremes of Recamier and the simple white chemise. Classically inspired dress continued to be worn into the second decade of the nineteenth century (Figure 6), after which women slowly returned to heavily boned bodices and cinched waists which prevailed until the end of the

century. The many portraits and historical paintings by European and American artists, as well as extant garments, offer ample evidence of the rise and decline of the classical style. Portraits by David and Ingres are especially revealing. David was a true revolutionary figure and more than any other French artist was responsible for the infusion of the classical style in France. ¹³

While it would seem that Rousseau and other reformers had miraculously brought about true reform in women's dress, it was not exactly true. Although critiques on the extremes of fashion worn during the Directory suggest that women wore few undergarments, it is quite possible that real acceptance of the classical style came about because, in fact, women usually were well supported under these seemingly diaphanous and revealing gowns. Indeed, the undergarments could be quite restrictive, in some instances greatly impeding movement of the arms.

The Nineteenth-century: A Renewed Appeal to Venus

During the nineteenth century when women's fashion prescribed health defying corsets and

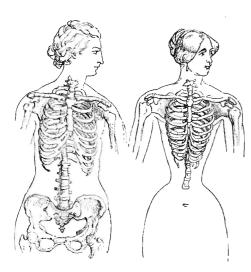


Figure 7. An artist's skeletal drawing of the thorax of the Venus de Medicis compored with the thorax of a fashionable woman in the 1890s, from *Arena 6*, 1892.

heavy full skirts, dress reformers struggled to provide more reasonable alternatives. Advocates of women's clothing reform were persistent men and women with seemingly diverse interests and political agendas. They included hygienic reformers, hydropathic physicians, educators, feminists, allopathic physicians, artists, authors, editors, architects, club women, dancers, physical culturists, actresses, opera singers and members of communal and religious sub-groups. These reformers did not always agree on how to alter women's dress. Reform dress included different styles of trousers, more rational underwear and artistic gowns based on classical dress. All reformers wanted to improve women's health, and nearly all of them drew on classical sculpture—the Venus de Milo and Venus de Medici—as perfect examples of the ideal form. They believed that these sculptures represented the natural female body. The reformers also found a solution to the problem of unhealthful dress by arguing for the application of classical principles of art to the design of clothing.

The physical education reformers,
Catherine Beecher and Dio Lewis, both
believed that "beauty in women is, in
considerable part, a matter of health" and
that it was only through exercise that women
could achieve real health, hence true beauty.
Advocates of gymnastics for women asserted
that the body shape of Greek statuary was the
natural ideal. At Vassar College, for instance, a
statue of the Venus de Milo was placed in the
gymnasium to serve as a model while students
performed their exercises. 14

Two advocates for creating more rational underwear for women during the late 1800s were John Kellogg, noted physician and health reformer, and Annie Jenness Miller, the editor of *Dress, the Jenness Miller Magazine*, a journal devoted to improving women's health and dress. Kellogg, like many other reformers, used the proportions of the Venus statues as a standard of comparison with distortions caused by the fashionable corset (Figure 7). At one point Kellogg stated that women who had not permanently



Figure 8. A fashion plate from the French Empire period based on classical dress shown next to a modification designed by the Liberty Company for Catalog #25, 1893.

injured their bodies through corset wearing could learn to stand like the Venus Genetrix. 15

Long discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of classical dress appear in literature concerning artistic dress in England, most notably in the works of Mary Haweis. Oscar Wilde, Walter Crane and members of the Healthy and Artistic Dress Union. The Liberty Company, which still holds forth on London's Regent Street, began offering classically inspired artistic reform gowns in 1884. These artistic dresses were arranged to follow the conventions of modern life, but shared design elements with classical Greek clothing as reinterpreted during the Empire and Renaissance period (Figure 8). By 1905 Liberty's had well-established shops in Paris and other cities, as well as numerous depots for their fabrics. Arthur Lasenby Liberty, founder of the shop, was himself a strong advocate of the classical ideal. He promoted his cause in essays which appeared in Aglaia, the publication of the Healthy and Artistic Dress



Figure 9.
Annie Jenness Miller advertised this pattern for the "Josephine" gown frequently. A photograph of her wearing the gown appeared in her journal, Dress, the Jenness Miller Monthly.
The style is similar to those advertised by the Liberty Co.
From Jenness Miller Monthly 7, 1894.

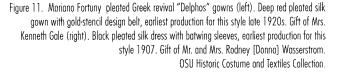




Figure 10. Reform dress in the "classical" style as it appeared in Wiener Mode 1907.



Union and the Liberty catalogs. ¹⁶ In America, authors of books concerning women's beauty and dress—Annie Jenness Miller, Helen Ecob, Frances Steele, Elizabeth Steele Adams and Francis Parker—carried on arguments for reform which were most in favor of the classical ideal. Miller often included artistic dresses based on classical styles in her magazine *Dress* (Figure 9). ¹⁷

Austrian and German artists connected with the modern design movements of Jugenstil, Successionstil and Art Nouveau also advocated the classical ideal and Venus standard for improving women's health. The German reformer, Paul Schultze-Naumberg, created a women's evening dress that is clearly in the classical vein, and he, too, compared the modern woman's distorted torso with that of the Venus de Milo. In their writings, architects and designers on the Continent—Josef Hoffman, Koloman Moser, Peter Behrens and Alfred Mohrbutter— also espoused classical principles of art when they discussed ways to improve women's dress. 18

The Twentieth Century

The dress reform movement in Europe was so well established that there were dress reform departments in large stores like Wertheims in Berlin. The first major exhibition in Germany of women's artistic reform gowns designed by artists and architects was held in the city of Krefeld in 1905. This event spawned similar exhibitions of artist-designed reform dress in Leipzig, Dresden, Weisbaden and Berlin. These exhibitions were reviewed in art journals and fashion magazines like Wiener Mode, which also frequently presented dress reform styles ("new style, Empire style or Empire-reform style") as fashionable dress for various occasions (Figure 10).19 The two most celebrated avant-garde designers of the early twentieth century, Mariano Fortuny and Paul Poiret, whose styles of dress we have come to associate with freedom in dress for women, were acquainted with the gowns created by the German and Viennese artists and architects. They also would



Figure 12. High-waisted gowns inspired by nineteenth century neo-classicism. *Les Robes de Paul Poiret*, illustrated by Paul Iribe, 1908.

have been well aware of the artistic reform styles promoted by Liberty's. Fortuny's *delphos* dresses (Figure 11) and Poiret's *Directoire* models offered to the public in 1907 (Figure 12), clearly are similar to earlier artistic reform styles inspired by the Greek ideal.²⁰

In the second decade of the century fashionable dress emphasized the tubular high-waisted silhouette that echoed the classical lines promoted by the dress reformers, Fortuny and Poiret (Figure 13). Since then there have been several classical revivals in women's dress, and the style has become an easily recognizable classic. The memories of political upheaval and dress reform seem to be long forgotten, while the aesthetic appeal remains. The classical style often appears in lingerie and evening gowns and

Figure 13. Early twentieth century classically-inspired gowns (left). Jacques Doucet pink silk satin beaded gown with peplos effect, ca. 1912-1913 (right). Pale green silk satin dress with pleated shoulders and drapery, ca. 1908-1915. Gift of Mrs. John E. Brown. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 14. Madeline Vionnet "Empire" style evening dress, 1937. Photograph from *Femina*, Courtesy Special Collections, Fashion Institute of Technology.

returns to fashion in brief nostalgic historical moments. The long lean lines of the thirties especially suggested the silhouette of antique dress as the gowns designed by Madeleine Vionnet might suggest (Figure 14). Using wool or silk jersey Madame Grés, whose real name was Germaine Barton, created timeless pleated and draped evening gowns which are often cited as perfect examples of neo-classicism in fashion.

Designers in more recent years who are associated with Greek revival dress are Mary McFadden for her evening wear made of pleated polyester "Marii fabric" (Figure 15), John Galanos (Figure 16), Issey Miyake for his recent "Pleats Please" line (Figure 17), and Charles and Patricia Lester who successfully replicated the technique used by Fortuny. Both Miyake and John Galliano have made obvious references to radical dress worn during the French revolutionary period. Miyake designed an Incroyable man's garment for the 1980s woman (Figure 18). The image of the Galliano gown shows the model dressed as a revolutionary "victim" (Figure 19). (Was he suggesting, perhaps, that women who wear these gowns are fashion victims?) During the 1980s when historical influence on designers was very apparent, adaptations of himations, chitons and Greek motifs cropped up in many collections. The Historical Mode, Fashion and Art in the 1980s includes photographs of classically inspired gowns by Louis Feraud, "Lyre Gown" (1989), Giorgio di Sant'Angelo, "Draped Evening Gowns" (1989), Angel Estrada, "Draped Evening Gown" (1989) and Douglas Ferguson, "Mesh Evening Dresses" (1985).21 Since revivalism has been a strong element in the history of dress, it seems quite likely that fashions of the future will in some way always evoke images of Greece and Rome along with other elements of historicism.







Figure 16. James Galanos white chiffon gown reminiscent of Greek peplos/chiton blousing and shoulder fastening, Spring 1990. Gift of James Galanos. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.

Figure 15. Mary McFodden aqua pleated gown with "Y" back showing classical influences and reminiscent of early twentieth century Fortuny gowns, mid 1980s.

Gift of Mrs. Samuel (Ann) Swint, Jr.

OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.

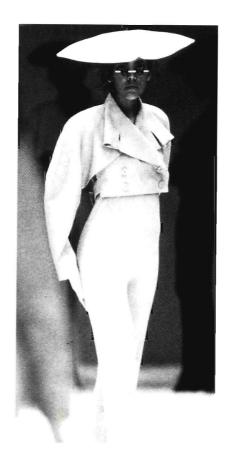


Figure 18. Issey Miyake jacket and tights in the style of a late-eighteenth-century Parisian *Incroyable*, Spring-Summer Collection, 1989. Courtesy of the designer, Mitsuma Fujitsuka, photographer.



Figure 17. Issey Miyake Pleats Please two-piece gown showing the designer's use of heat-set pleats in polyester; reminiscent of Fortuny gowns of the early twentieth century.

Lent by Jean L. Druesedow, Kent, OH.

Figure 19.
John Galliano evening gown
in the Directoire style, Spring-Summer Collection, 1986.
Courtesy of i-D Magazine,
Sean Cunningham,
photographer.



Historicism In Fashionable Dress

Gayle Strege

Previous to her recent appointment as Curator of the Historic Costume and Textiles Collection, Gayle was employed as Assistant to the Curator at the Chicago Historical Society Costume Collection. She worked there for 4 years after completing her Master's Degree in Museum Studies at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York.

Each generation rewrites its own history.

So the saying goes, and so too does it serve as a definition of historicism in its most broad and popular sense. History is rewritten because new perspectives, viewpoints and revelations offer opportunities for new interpretations of a person or event. Revisionist historiography is inevitable, and is regarded "as desirable and inevitable as technological innovation in industry, and novelty in style of art." Historicism occurs not only in history, but is also reflected in society's cultural milieux of literature and art.

Fashionable dress worn in Western Europe from the fourteenth century onward appears to have been ever-changing. Upon closer scrutiny, however, it is apparent that during the progression of history, garment styles often evoked the past. Indeed, stylistic elements from previous historical eras frequently were revived and incorporated into the contemporary fashionable aesthetic. Revivals of historical dress often center around nostalgia or anniversaries of historic events or persons, but they may also be the result of the political and economic

environments of their time. These revived styles are not exact replications of historical clothing. Rather, they are entirely new creations which incorporate all the modern technology of their day, while also reflecting design elements or silhouettes of past periods.

Historicism in fashionable dress during the last two decades of this century is a reflection of the diverse and eclectic styles of the "post modern" world in which we live. Like all stylistic movements, it is a reaction to what has gone before, namely modernism. Modernism as an art historical term had its beginnings in the late nineteenth century. It was a reaction against the traditional religious, mythical, historical and literary subject matters of fine art. Modernism was an "unremitting pursuit of the 'new'"2 which led visual art and architecture to pursue a purity of their forms and functions, becoming streamlined and abstract. Modern art was not subject to "meaning," and reflected modernist thought and philosophy in its search for pure and objective truth—subject and relative to nothing. When the rapid progress of modernism had

Fashioning the Future: Our Future from Our Past

reached its apex, the reactionary next course was to pursue the avenues which modernism had been ignoring. Thus began the age of Post Modernism.

The result in this "post modern" era has been the revived importance of meaning and content in art, as well as a return to traditional subject matter ⁴ and relativism. The post modern in art refers to a period of wide diversity of styles, with no as yet discernible centralizing theme. ⁵ Historicism, using history to tell a story or to relate to some past era, is one aspect of the eclectic taste of these post modernist times. The variety of historical periods visited by fashionable dress during the last two decades of this century reflect the span of Western European historical dress rather than one specific era.

Classicism

The images of simple draped archaic and classical Greek forms dressed in the peplos. chiton, and himation which are found in redfigure painted pottery and sculpture are the foundation for our exploration into Greek classical style and revival. The Doric peplos of 550 BC was a tubular garment with a generous overfold at the top which reached from the shoulders to just above the waist. It was held in place by pinning at the shoulders, and often was girded at the waist. By the fifth century BC, the peplos evolved into a fuller version called the Doric chiton which had extra length pulled up at the waist creating a blouson effect (Figure 1). The Ionic chiton was another tubular garment, worn by both men and women. Made of linen, it was much more sheer than the woolen Doric chiton. In one version of the lonic chiton, the top opening of the tube was pinned at regular intervals along its entire width, allowing a space for the wearer's head and resulting in small openings down the arms (Figure 2). The himation was a large rectangular-shaped outer garment usually draped over the shoulder. It was also worn by both men and women, and was the inspiration for the Roman toga (Figure 3).

The mid-eighteenth century rediscovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii again gave rise to classical influences in art and philosophy. Georgian architectural styles blended with classical ornament to rebel against the curvilinear excess of contemporary rococo style and create a cleaner, more linear form. The philosophies associated with classical styles, such as Greek and Roman rationalism. democracy, and republicanism, were also experiencing a revival, especially among those interested in Reason, the key ideal of the Enlightenment, and its views on freedom of the individual, constitutional government, and justice through law. After the tumultuous years of revolution in America and France near the end of the eighteenth century, simpler styles of clothing based on Greek and Roman ideals of beauty and democracy emerged. The columnar silhouette in women's dress was created by a high waist with a minimal bodice and short sleeves (Figures 5 and 6).

Early twentieth century fashions also experienced a classical revival, influenced by artistic reform dress and its philosophy of beauty based on the Greek classical ideal (Figure 10). Various components of dress carried names such as "Empire, Regency, Directoire," and "Josephine," reviving the early nineteenth century neo-classicism. The evolutionary reincarnation of the classical style is explained in *Dress and Decoration*, the 1905 catalog of Liberty and Co., London:

...there is nothing that is absolutely new, it is all a matter of evolution. . .the artists of Greece, of the Italian Renaissance and of eighteenth century France can all claim a share in the moulding of art as it is today. . . . Classic, Renaissance, and Empire styles, developed during long intervening years: absorbed into each other, reincarnated, but never lost, because they were good and true in principle. And so today their appeal is as strong as ever.⁷

Fortuny and Doucet are two of the better known designers of the early twentieth century who created classically-inspired fashions and continued the evolution of classical style (Figures 11 and 13).

The classically historicized fashions of late twentieth century fashionable dress are represented in the designs of Halston, Mary McFadden, James Galanos, Bob Mackie, Patricia and Charles Lester, Issey Miyake and countless others (Figures 15-17). The silhouettes and design styles of the Greek peplos, chiton and himation are evident in these examples of post modern eclectic historicism.

Medieval/High Gothic/Renaissance Design Elements (14th-16th Centuries)

The fourteenth through sixteenth centuries witnessed the use of several types of elaborate materials and design features. Influences from the Near East as well as the Americas contributed to the sumptuous fabrics and decorative elements which are representative of these centuries. Fur and velvet, two extremely sumptuous materials, figured prominently in European fashionable dress at this time. Extensive use of fur for outergarment linings or edge trim was common, particularly in the northern regions of Europe. The most luxurious furs were ermine, sable, lamb, and miniver, the white fur of the squirrel's belly.8 Velvet, a relatively new fabric in fourteenth century Europe. became central to the successful economies of several northern Italian cities during these centuries. It evolved into a complex fabric with varying cut pile heights and elaborate patterning.

One of the more interesting decorative elements to come out of the fifteenth century was a technique known as dagging. Most often located around the hems of hoods, sleeves and garments, dagging was produced by cutting into the edges of a garment one to two inches, producing a scalloped, foliate or crenelated (mimicking the tops of castle

turrets) effect (Figures 20 and 21). Another decorative style which had its beginnings in the late fifteenth century was reportedly initiated by conquering Swiss forces who overran the Burgundian army and cut up the tents, banners, and sumptuous costumes of the vanguished. The scraps of cloth were then shoved into the tears and holes of the Swiss garments. From this spectacle, so the story goes, evolved a fashion element known as slashing in which seams of garments remained open, exposing colorful linings or undergarments (Figure 22). One variation of slashing was produced by actual cuts made in the garments, with contrasting fabric pulled through the cuts to create decorative puffs.

Significantly interesting sleeve variations also contributed to the creation of distinctive dress from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century. Sleeve styles ranged from long and tight varieties which extended to the knuckles to large and full examples with either wide or tight hems. Hanging sleeves were a type of long full sleeve which would hang cape-like from the shoulder. Two variations existed: one with the sleeve fullness swinging freely and one with the sleeve fullness drawn into a tight wrist opening. A second opening along the inner arm of the sleeve offered two wearing options: one as a regular sleeve, the other as a sleeve hanging from the shoulder (Figure 23). The puffed sleeves associated with the Italian Renaissance were actually the result of lacing pairs of sleeves (created separate from the bodice) onto a garment. The resulting "puffs" which were formed were actually the chemise undergarment appearing between the lacings at the armscyes and elbows (Figure 24).

Various aspects of medieval and gothic styles resurfaced at masked balls in later centuries, but the use of neo-medieval, neo-gothic and Italian



Figure 20. Examples of various styles of gothic dress including fur linings, sleeve variations, and scalloped dagging. *Hunting with Falcons at the Court of Philip the Good*, 15th century, Versailles Museum. Courtesy Giraudon/Art Resource, NY.



Figure 21. Fur-lined outer garments and dagging trim. Jan Arnolfini and His Wife by Jan van Eyck, 1435, National Gallery, London. Courtesy Alinari/Art Resource, NY.



Figure 22. Some of the more extreme examples of slashing. Detail of *Triumphal Procession of Maximilian I*, 1514-1516, by Albrecht Dürer. Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 24. Tied-on sleeves producing puffs of undergorment at elbow.
Judith with the head of Holofernes, 1500-53, by Lucas Cranach the Elder.
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 23. Figure in upper left shows two variations of the wearing of hanging sleeves. Rose
Tapestries detail courtiers with roses. Franco-Flemish, c. 1435-1440.
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund.



Figure 27. Puffed sleeves inspired by Italian Renaissance styles in an offwhite 1830s dress. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 25. Use of dagging in a sleeve detail of an 1830s dress. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 26. Use of slashing with decorative puffs of fabric protruding.
Fashion plate of 1827. Courtesy Fashion through fashion plates:
1771-1970 by Doris Langley Moore.



Figure 28. Gothic hanging sleeves reinterpreted in a fashion plate for the Englishwoman's *Domestic Magazine*, 1865.



Renaissance revival design elements appeared frequently in fashionable dress throughout the nineteenth century (Figures 25-28). The rise of historicism in the nineteenth century brought a revival of architectural design elements from past historical periods and revival clothing styles. Published volumes of historical dress were used by both couturiers and painters of historical subject matter. La Mode Artistique published plates of historical French dress and informed their clientele (couturiers and ladies of fashion) that they could create new styles by "mingling the fancies of one century with those of the previous one."9

Medieval and Renaissance styles were again revived for the artistic dress movement of the late nineteenth century, and continued as an influence into the first decades of the twentieth century (Figure 29). The close-fitting velvet dresses of the 1930s, with their long and narrow sleeves, recall Gothic dress styles (Figures 30), as do the "slashed" Worth fur

Figure 29. Block crepe cape with roll collar and petal-shaped appliques reminiscent of gothic dagging, co. 1910s. OSU Historic Costume & Textiles Collection.



Figure 30. Long and lean silhouettes of 1930s velvet evening gowns invoking gothic styles (left). Black silk velvet dress with smocked sleeves and beaded collar. Gift of Ms. Imogene H. Loose (right). Plum velvet dress and matching jacket with doublet-inspired shoulders.

Gift of Ms. Iris de la Motte. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.





Figure 31. House of Worth white fur coat with "slashed" sleeves exposing magenta lining, ca. 1929. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 33. Slashed blue jeans as worn by Ohio State University student in air band competition 1989. Courtesy Ohio State University Archives.



Figure 32. House of Paquin black velvet jacket with white ermine trim showing vestiges of gothic hanging sleeves, ca. 1930s. Gift of Mrs. Philip Peters estate. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 34. Neo-gothic velvet dress designed by Donna Karan, as pictured in *Harper's Bazaar*, September, 1993.



Figure 35. Artificially broad-shouldered silhouette fashionoble during the reign of Henry VIII. Portrait of Henry VIII by Hons Holbein the Younger, Galleria Nationale d'Arte Antica, Rome. Courtesy Alinari/Art Resource, NY.



Figure 36. Broad shouldered silhouette fashionoble during the 1830s. The dress on the right also shows influences of dagging in the sleeve trim, and at the front neckline, imitates the exposed chemise of gothic dress. Fashion plate, The Lady's Magazine, 1830.



Figure 37. Broad-shouldered silhouette of the 1890s, recalling the 1830s and Henry VIII era. The figure on the right also displays gothic crenelation design elements in her bodice. Summer costumes fashion plate from *The Young Ladies' Journal*, July 1896.

coat and the fur-trimmed velvet Paquin jacket with vestigial hanging sleeves (Figures 31 and 32). The historicized fashions of the last two decades of the twentieth century also include reflections of gothic dress. Slashed blue jeans, sometimes with another fabric underneath, were popular street fashions in the late 1980s and are reminiscent of the slashing first practiced almost 500 years before (Figure 33). A revival of gothic-style clothing constructed of stretch velvets and velours in designer collections for the Fall 1993 fashion season continued the historicism into the post modern decades (Figure 34).

Elizabethan Artificiality

Fashionable clothing styles worn in Western Europe between 1520 and 1620 consisted of

stiff and contrived forms alien to the natural shape of the human body. This was the era of the Reformation and Elizabethan England. Portraits of Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth provide historians with images of these artificial silhouettes.

The sociological and political climates during the 100 year period played an important role in the shaping of art and dress. ¹⁰ The rivalries of the great nation states of England, France, and Spain coupled with the tremendous religious rift created by the Reformation resulted in many acts of violence throughout the nations of Europe. The ensuing dislocations, confusion, fear and distrust were reflected in an artistic style which was both repressed and contrived. ¹¹ In addition, a great influx of gold and other precious metals from the

new world helped to change the market economy from a barter method to a monetary system, ¹² which brought economic wealth to Europe and a consumerism that was evident in the highly ornamented and excessively decorated dress of the nobility.

The bodies of both men and women were distorted from the natural human form by fashionable apparel. The extremely padded and broad-shouldered silhouettes of Henry VIII were later revived in the sleeves of 1830s dresses, which were themselves revived in women's sleeves of the 1890s (Figures 35-37). The conical shapes of women's skirts, bodices, and sleeves were formed by farthingales (a form of hooped petticoat), rigid torso corseting with an elongated point at the waist, and wide-hemmed bell-shaped sleeves revealing

undersleeves (Figure 38). During the second half of the century, padded sleeves and hips for both men and women, as well as high starched neck ruffs, were common. Women also adopted cartwheel-shaped farthingales which resulted in a more circular shape at the hips and high-standing sheer collars known as whisks.

Men's doublets (jackets) were also padded in the chest, a style which was to be revived in men's clothing in the mid nineteenth century. Excessive ornamentation was ubiquitous, giving garments worn at court a look of being decorated with "everything but the kitchen sink" (Figure 39).

The mid to late eighteenth century (1750-1780) saw another period where extreme body distortions in women's dress were taken to extremes. The hooped panniers of court dress prescribed during the reigns of Louis XV (1715-1774) and Louis XVI and his gueen Marie Antoinette (1774-1789) mirrored the extravagant ornamentation of Elizabethan dress, and also reflected a consumerism forced on the French nobility by the rules of court (Figure 4). The elaborate styles, which extended women's skirts out to the sides, mirrored the public's fascination with and enthusiasm for Elizabethan and Mary Stuart styles. 13 Occasionally, the trailing hems of late eighteenth-century gowns were pulled up by a system of interior loops and drawstrings forming a bustle with three divisions, "a la polonaise" (Figures 40 and 41).

Distended and contrived body shapes did not resurface again until the mid nineteenth century, a time of rigid conservatism and oppressive monarchies in Europe, 14 where fashionable dress originated. The lighthearted Romanticism of previous decades had become codified and rigid, while an excessive materialism was practiced by a wealthy *nouveau riche* who "equated this overstuffed and over-ornamented eclecticism with power, position, and good taste." As in the Elizabethan and Rococo ages, the mid nineteenth century was an affluent time when the rise of industrialization helped make fortunes seemingly overnight. While men's dress reflected somber business responsibilities,



Figure 38. Conical shapes formed by corseting the torso, bell-shaped sleeves, and wide skirts. Portrait of *Princess Elizabeth*, ca. 1547. Courtesy of The Royal Collection Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



Figure 40. Mid-eighteenth century gown artificially held out at the sides with *panniers* or pocket hoops. The back is drawn up with a series of rings and tapes, creating a bustle effect, ca. 1760.

OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 39. Opulent decoration in the form of abundant jewels, bows, and lace. Queen Elizabeth I in the "Armada Portrait," 1588. Courtesy Collection of G. Tyrwhitt Drake, Bereleigh, Petersfield.



Figure 41. Red damask gown with quilted petticoat, ca. 1780. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.

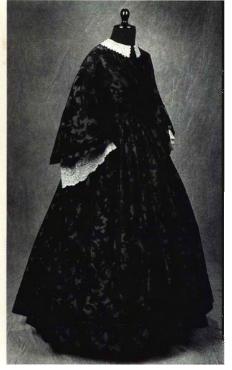


Figure 42. Black and blue floral and paisley silk brocade dress with bell-shaped pagoda sleeves recalling English Elizabethan styles, 1854. Gift of Ethel Traphagen Estate, OSU Historic Costume and



Textiles Collection.

women's dress became a visual and rather

ostentatious display of her husband's wealth.

nineteenth century and the bell-shaped pagoda

eighteenth century¹⁶ (Figures 42 and 43). Not

silhouettes directly coincided with a renewed

interest in the English Tudor period and in

sleeves mirrored styles worn in Elizabethan

England and the hoop petticoat of the

surprisingly, these wide skirt and sleeve

The distended skirts and crinolines of the mid-



Figure 44. Fashionable bustle silhouettes of 1884. "Les Modes Parisiennes," fashion plate in April edition of Peterson's Magazine., 1884.

particular with Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart. 17 Literature and visual arts of the eighteenth century and its court life also served as a model for the new Second Empire in France. 18 The French Empress Eugenie had a particular fascination with Marie Antoinette, 19 often dressing as the late queen at costume balls. Many of the decorative details of the wide skirts from the Second Empire were based on Rococo layering and festooning.20 The shift of the

Figure 43. The artificially-contrived bell-shaped skirt silhouettes of the 1860s were accomplished with hooped undergarments. Aqua satin gown, ca. 1863. Gift of Ethel Traphagen Estate, OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.

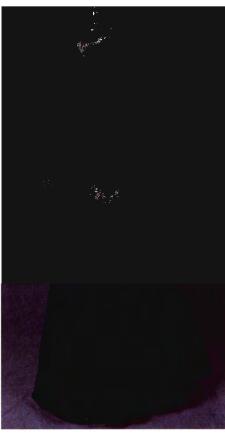


Figure 45. Royal blue cut velvet silk walking suit, ca. 1884. Gift of Ethel Traphagen Estate, OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.

overall fullness of skirts to primarily the back of garments evolved into the fashionable bustles of the 1870s and 1880s. It is not a coincidence that the drapery of the skirts often mirrored the polonaise dresses from a century earlier (Figures 44 and 45).

Extended skirt styles occurred in the twentieth century as well. A penchant for whimsical and fantastic styles in the mid-teens resulted in some eighteenth century revivals, but this trend was short-lived (Figure 46). It was the post-WWII era which saw a significant return to feminine styles, ²¹ seen in the boning of bodices, full-skirted crinolines, and bustle-effect gowns of the late 1940s through mid 1950s (Figures 47-49). The sociological and political climates were influenced by a post-war economic boom, conservative materialism, ²² and a psychological uneasiness brought about by the cold war. The economically sound "go-go eighties" saw yet another period of political conservatism and a return to full skirts, bustle effects, corselets, padded bras, and pannier revivals (Figures 50-52 and cover).

Although there are various periods throughout Western history when clothing silhouettes seemingly coincide with political and economic environments or aesthetic movements, these factors are not always evident during every instance when a certain style or set of decorative elements experiences a revival. The wide variety of historicized styles of dress which have existed concurrently during these last decades of the twentieth century does not call to mind any single event or environment which may have triggered a particular revival. Rather this historicism reflects the diversity, eclecticism, and theatricality of this post modern age. It seems appropriate as we near the end of this millennium, and venture forth into the next, that we experience this "review" of history and fashionable dress. As the year 2000 approaches, we can see where we have been, assess where we are now, and by building on past traditions, fashion the future.

Figure 47. Mid-twentieth century full-skirted silhouettes were epitomized by gowns such as this black and white satin, lace, and tulle evening gown, attributed to Charles James, ca. 1950. Gift of Mrs. Sally Van der Meersch.

OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.





Figure 46. Early twentieth century Rococo period revival dress, 1916. Designed as a wedding dress by Lucile, Ltd. Gift of Ms. Nancy Pace. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 48. Off-white silk faille strapless, bustle-effect gown, 1961. Gift of Mrs. John W. Kessler. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 49. Pannier-effect strapless evening gown by Estevez, ca. 1957. Gift of Mrs. Sally Van der Meersch. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 51. Late twentieth century bustle-effect gown. Issey Miyake monofilament dress, Spring/ Summer 1991.



Figure 50. Late twentieth century full-skirted dress with opulent decoration. Emmanuel Ungaro ballgown, 1989. Gift of Mrs. Marvin (Terre) Hamlisch. OSU Historic Costume and Textiles Collection.



Figure 52. Late twentieth century Rococo revival dress. Complice quilted evening dress, Fall-Winter Collection 1988-89. Courtesy of Josef Astor.

Classical







peplos





pleating

Gothic











slashing







hanging sleeve





puff sleeve

Elizabethan







broad shoulders







wide skirts







ostentation









panniers









bustles

Fashioning Future Fashions

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develop, through research, the area of AfricanAmerican aesthetics in dress.

Fashion is a term of such common usage that almost everyone feels qualified to present an expose' on the current mode. While "common" in its expanse and it's reverberations, as exemplified by its subtle encapsulating embrace, few have understood the essence of fashion and even fewer have been able to explain it. I lay no claim to being able to accomplish a feat which has so ably eluded scholars of great repute. Yet, in this essay I will attempt to point to some future possibilities for fashion by examining some past and present influences. However, it is necessary first to examine what scholars think fashion is in order to arrive at what it might become.

Fashion has been defined in various ways by numerous scholars. Approximately seven decades ago Paul Nystrom said:

Fashion is nothing more nor less than the prevailing style at any given time . . . every important style has at one time or another been *the* fashion. It may even have had fashion revivals,

... There are countless styles, but there can of necessity be but a *limited number* of fashions.\(^1\) (Author's italics)

This definition, like other more complex ones. portrays fashion as a style that dominates the capitalist consumer's interest at a specific point in time. It is usually perceived as a process oriented phenomenon which begins with some creative genius whose new style is adopted by a fashion leader from whom it receives increasing visibility. The style, then, is very soon adopted within and across social groups, reaches social saturation, finally becomes obsolete and is then replaced by another creation. Fashion's dominant characteristic of change was believed to be driven by a paradox of identification and differentiation in which elite consumers endorse the new mode by adopting it to display their ability to distinguish themselves from the masses (i.e.common folk).2 The style is discarded when the masses copy it for the purpose of identifying with the elite.3 Thus, existing modes are continuously made obsolete

by new ones which then dictate mass contemporary taste. As such, fashion is power.

Twentieth century theorists have approached the study of fashion from various perspectives: social, psychological, economic, cultural, communication, geographic, historical, aesthetic, and marketing. Most writers on fashion assume the existence of a prevailing mode or style which is centered around high fashion (haute couture), which at some point represents the norm. While these theorists have attempted to explain the origins, diffusion, meanings, and consequences of fashion, they do not agree about its nature.

However, cultural critics of the last two decades do agree that the term 'fashion' has been used as an exclusive description of Western elite fashion, and is associated with the rise of mercantile capitalism in Europe at the end of the middle ages.4 This elitist view of fashion derives from modernist assumptions that the nature of history is a record of the past rather than an interpretation of the significance of past events and that the nature of progress is linear and constantly moving to a more advanced state. The latter assumes, of course, that the role of rational thinking, science, and technology is the "march of progress." In the modernist culture fashion gives tangible form to the latest technological innovations, as well as social and cultural ideas, thus substantiating the notion of progress.⁵ It was these assumptions that led historian Anatole France to state:

If I might choose out of the piles of books that will be published a hundred years after my death, do you know what I should take?... I should simply take, my friend, a fashion paper to see how women dressed a century after my decease. Their ribbons and bibbons would tell me more about future humanity than all the philosophers, novelists, preachers, or men of science.⁶

Various cultural critics refute the notion that creative brilliance of individual designers such as those perpetuated by the elite design system (i.e. Paris, New York, Milan, etc.) can capture the imagination of a given moment.⁷ They

contend that there is no grand 'fashion narrative' or one unique fashion system. Some ridicule the Western high-fashion system as a tool of oppression in which fashion exerts a repressive power over the poor. McDowell even states that fashion is a weapon used against the poor to teach the lesson that the elite is not only different but better. "They wore on their backs the proof that they were superior intellectually, morally and socially." 8

It is clear to most observers that fashion today is not what it was when Nystrum and Veblen wrote their economic analyses, 9 or when Simmel and Sapir developed their sociological perspectives. 10 Contemporary fashion is no longer cast into a dominant mode of one look. Today a veritable smorgasbord of lengths and looks are available, representing a kaleidoscope of cultures, subcultures and moments in time, all co-existing. While ostensibly meaningless, the concern of fashion is with image and appearance. In the past, fashion's most prominent role was one of differentiation, that is, it visually communicated specific cultural categories. Today, however, a crisis of categories exists in which formerly unbroken lines between categories (e.g., male/female) have become permeable, and now permit border crossing from one category to another. The binarism that once distinguished between "this" and "that" has been put into question¹¹ creating what Fred Davis called "ambivalence." 12 Such fashion 'ambivalence' bodes well with Fredric Jameson's view of postmodernism. He argues for the death of art, thus, the lack of distinction between elite, mass, and street fashion. In addition, in the last three decades fashion has been characterized by what Jameson calls 'pastiche' and 'eclecticism,' essential characteristics of postmodernism.¹³

Currently some scholars use the term "postmodernism" to describe the prevailing 'zeitgeist' or spirit of the time. 14 These words denote a decentered culture characterized by ambivalence, plurality, fragmentation, and continuous rapid change while making respectable and aestheticising cruelty and excess. 15 Wilson's postmodern explanation of

fashion suggests that dress is used to manipulate, to falsify identity, and to lend a theatrical quality to the "hallucinatory experience of the contemporary world." Morgado illustrates how features of contemporary dress can be seen in the current postmodern climate: decentering may be represented by ethnic and subcultural styles and deconstruction represented by the challenges to traditional ways of wearing certain garments. The 'confused chronology' apparent in fashion today presents the notion that history no longer moves toward progress. 17

Whether this contemporary age is designated by the term postmodern or not, few would disagree that we are living in a period of potential crisis—in the environment, in politics, capitalism, socialism, globalism, and in fashion. Ash and Wilson state that "clothing and its vicissitudes reflect rather accurately the wider crisis of world dimensions." In spite of the tenets of the time, fashion historians, theorists, and cultural critics agree that fashion reflects the spirit of the age. According to Benstock and Ferriss "Whether torn in shreds or folded against itself, fashion is the cultural fabric." In the world of the cultural fabric."

Craik concludes that the term fashion needs revision since there is not one fashion system but many operating today.

Fashion should not be equated with modern European high fashion. Nor are fashion systems confined to a particular economic or cultural set of arrangements. Rather European high (elite designers) fashion is one specific variant of fashion . . . other fashion systems co-exist, compete and interact with it.²⁰

Craik suggests that the European model of fashion which has dominated and dictated the fashion literature must be revised to incorporate non European and non capitalist systems. Incorporating other systems would allow fashion:

to be conceived as a cultural technology that is purpose-built for specific locations. This revised idea of fashion systems entails systematic and changing styles of dress, adornment and conduct; 'grammars' of fashion (bodies of rules and forms) that underpin codes of dress behavior; consensual denotations of power, status and social location; and recognized codes of self-formation thorough the clothes and bodily adornment.²¹

Fashion then is a technology of 'civility.' It is sanctioned codes of conduct in the practices of self-formation and self-presentation. As such, fashion is no longer dependent upon the system of production, distribution, and consumption unique to the Western world (i.e., capitalism). It remains, however, a social phenomenon in that limits are set on behavior through prescribed acceptable—and proscribed unacceptable—modes of clothing the body, which are subject to constant revisions.²²

Craik argues for various fashion systems competing and inter-meshing across Western and non-Western cultures. Central to her definition is the personal 'habitus' which includes:

the unconscious dispositions, the classification schemes, taken-for-granted preferences which are evident in the individual's sense of the appropriateness and validity of his taste for cultural goods and practices It . . . is inscribed onto the body, being revealed in body size, volume, shape, posture, way of walking, sitting, ways of eating.²³

From Craik's perspective fashion is not something separate from the body that is used to disguise a 'natural' body or 'real' identity, but the body is constructed through how it is used and projected, and clothes aid in the construction of a personal habitus. Thus," fashion has no absolute or essential meaning, rather the

clothes-body complex operate in ways appropriate to a particular habitus or milieu."24

This notion suggests that fashion does not require the creative genius of an individual which then must be endorsed by the cultural gate keepers but rather is a process by which individuals continually form and present themselves. While the body techniques and codes of conduct are imposed by external forces over which individuals have little control, the codes of conduct are "acquired abilities of collective and individual practical reason."25 This does remove the restrictions of the capitalist consumerist culture, but attaches fashion to a general technique of acculturation. This phenomenon becomes problematic in a postmodern global society since acculturation suggests conforming to dominant or different sets of cultural ideals, thus implying that selfpresentation always conforms to prescribed codes and is understood, at least within the context used. Further, inherent in the notion of 'habitus' is the requirement of classification schemes which would greatly limit or prohibit "border crossing," thus preventing the level of ambivalence currently noted in fashion. Craik attempts to explain deviations from prescriptions of appropriateness, which leads to ambivalence, by describing them as 'exotic' body techniques or the borrowing of codes from 'other' looks to produce marks of distinctiveness. Still, that which is fashion must be determined by cultural gate keepers who define appropriateness. These definitions serve to maintain the hierarchy which pits 'fashion' against the 'other,' and continuing the marginalization of those who do not conform to the norms of the gate keeper's culture.

While the debate surrounding the definition of fashion continues, agreement exists that fashion in general reflects an historical moment. The modernist notion of fashion seems inappropriate for the twenty-first century, the notions of a grand prevailing mode are already outdated, and Craik's definition has its limitations. The question remains, then, how might fashion be viewed in the future?

If fashion reflects the prevailing 'zeitgeist,' what might be said of future fashions? One might begin by considering the global environment of the future. Since modernist homogenization is fragmenting socially. politically and culturally, a single interpretation of trend cannot be hoped for. Trend analyses suggest, however, that technology will drive the future just as industrialization drove the period that began with the Enlightenment and later became known as modernism. A telecommunications infrastructure composed of telephones. televisions, computers, and consumer electronics has resulted in a world wide network and the ability to view and or participate in the unfolding of world events as they occur.26

The Information Age, which opened around 1950 with the appearance of the first computer, is already approaching its end. We are now moving into a "dream" society in which people will move from science toward nonscientific and nonmaterialistic values. Technologies allowing global communication will be taken for granted and emphasis will be placed on the content of the communication.²⁷ McGuinness calls this the knowledge age and notes that the future will require a move from accumulating and processing information to acquiring and applying the knowledge contained therein.²⁸ Unlike the modern erg in which the hallmark of success was the accumulation of material possessions, this period will be noted for the commercialization of emotions. "It will no longer be enough to produce a useful product. A story or legend must be built into it; a story that embodies values beyond utility."29 Products will be designed to meet spiritual and emotional goals. Business in the future will operate in the realm of imagination, emotions, and dreams. New jobs will appear in the creation and distribution of feelings. e.g., "sensory designers will use colors, scents, and textures to create environments that stimulate emotions. The market for thrills and excitement. including violence, solitude, and quiet, personal identity, and understanding life, will continue to grow."30

While computers and telecommunications will continue to drive the future, the global society/ culture has to be understood as a "complex, overlapping disjunctive order . . . between economy, culture and politics.31 According to Appadurai, five dimensions of global cultural flow must be considered: ethnoscapes produced by flows of people such as tourists, immigrants, exiles, and guest workers which affect politics of and between nations: technoscapes which move technology across various boundaries based on complex relationships between the flow of capital, political possibilities, and labor; finanscapes produced by the rapid flow of monies through currency markets, national stock exchanges and commodity speculations; mediascapes which distribute images and information through various media throughout the world; and, ideoscapes which are political images and ideologies of states and counterideologies comprised of elements of Western Enlightenment world-view, e.g. freedom, welfare, rights, etc. 32 While these dimensions of cultural flow will allow individuals and organizations to operate almost as if national borders and boundaries do not exist, and create a world market for the same products and entertainment, it is misleading to conceive of a weakening of the sovereignty of nation-states and the simultaneous evolution to cultural homogeneity.33 Instead, Western culture is expected to gain little ground in developing countries. The end result is more likely to be a revival of cultures with each tribe rediscovering its roots. This could result either in the preservation of diversity or in an increase in intolerance, Jensen believes, however, that the concern will not be whether one culture is "better" or "worse" than another; importance will be placed on preserving the difference.34

Information and entertainment technology currently provide numerous sources of information and forms of stimulation. Interactive technology and virtual reality will change the face of education, entertainment, business and industry. The proliferation of information sources and entertainment will shape ultra-realistic

simulations of people, places, and events and overwhelm the individual's ability to focus on issues. As a result, some people will be seduced by superficialities which could lead to the inability to make rational decisions, while others may choose to live in fictitious worlds, attempting and almost succeeding at blotting out the real world.³⁵

Human activities will be globalized. While interacting with others on a global scale, next door neighbors will be less likely to be known and individuals will be driven more and more into obscurity. The globalized media will make gods of a few international personalities but the masses will become more and more frustrated out of need for recognition.³⁶

Because people will be bombarded with so much data, most of the messages sent will be ignored. A result of the combination of the proliferation of messages with the need for recognition will be that attention will become the world's most precious resource. In order to get the attention of certain consumers, 'content providers' will compete in making the audience feel important. Consumers will thus become more self centered, narcissistic, and infatuated with themselves.³⁷ At the same time fashion will be the mechanism through which individuals attract attention—through the creation of a personal milieu.

Future fashion will not be limited to objects conceived by a creative genius which are manipulated "artistically" to create a look or mode for the masses. Instead fashion will be a constructed personal milieu in which the individual manipulates the dress-body complex to create a mini "narrative." This personal milieu is constructed and reconstructed for identity, for hedonic and egocentric purposes. Objects of apparel will not in and of themselves be considered the fashion; instead, the narratives produced through constructing and reconstructing the dress-body complex will constitute the fashion. Change will continue to be the dominant characteristic, however, the purpose of change will not be to maintain social distance but to produce distinctive

images in order to attract attention and to receive aesthetic stimulation.³⁸

Fashion's ephemeral and malleable character will be manifested increasingly in permanent body alterations and extensions as human beings seek to find balance between the physical and spiritual selves. Fashion will facilitate this urge as the revival of forms of adornment previously considered as primitive become common place as individuals search for the ultimate aesthetic experience. Technology will play a major role in this shaping and reshaping of the personal milieu thorough the development of technologies to reengineer undesirable body features and to adorn other body parts. Materials and techniques used to reconstruct identity will be shaped, molded, inserted and attached in ways that blur the boundaries between the physical and the material, thus prohibiting clear distinctions between the body and objects.

As a result of the disjunctive nature of the dimensions of cultural flow discussed earlier (i.e., ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes) the tools and techniques used in the construction of the dressbody milieu will be drawn indiscriminately from various points in time and places all over the world, as well as technologies, ideologies, and images of established and anti-established world views. The cultural and intellectual fragmentation already apparent, will be reflected in the exacerbation of the hodgepodge of images blurring geographical, cultural, historical, and physical boundaries in which global, retro, ethnic, and street symbols are reflected. Therefore, fashions in the future will be fashioned by the individual who will be the creator, the created, the appreciator, and the appreciated, and who takes subjective pleasure in his or her own creative experience.39

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- 8 Ibid., 41-42. See also William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, edited by Joseph Burke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955).
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- ²¹ Martin and Koda, Historical Mode, 1, 4, 20-27.

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- ¹⁶ Simon, Fashion in Art, 91.
- Baines, Fashion Revivals, 13. The "Mary Staurt" hat was a popular accessory to fashionable dress throughout the 19th century.
- ¹⁸ Simon, Fashion in Art, 95.

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- Margarie Garber, Vested Interest: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety (New York: Routledge, 1992), 16.
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- Pastiche is defined as the blank parody; quotation or imitation as in parody, but lacking the ironic twist. See Fredric Jameson," Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." New Left Review 146 (1984): 53-92.
- 14 Elizabeth Wilson, "Fashion and the Postmodern Body," in Chic Thrills, 3-16.
- Many cultural critics writing about postmodernism will include a variety of similar characteristics. See for example, Fredric Jameson, 1984; Janet Wolff, "Postmodern Theory and Feminist Art Practice," in Postmodernism and Society, edited by Boyne and Rattansi, (London, 1990), 192-193; Jack Solomon, The Signs of our Time, 211-230; and Elizabeth Wilson, "Fashion and the Postmodern Body."
- ¹⁶ Wilson, "Fashion and the Postmodern Body," 8.
- Margado, "Coming to Terms with Postmodern," 44.
- ¹⁸ Ash and Wilson, Chic Thrills, ix.
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- ²⁹ Jensen, Dream Society, 10
- 30 lbid.
- ³¹ Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Theory, Culture* & Society 7 (1990): 295-310.
- 32 Ibid., 296.
- 33 Mike Featherstone, "Global Culture: An Introduction," *Theory, Culture & Society* 7 (1990) 1-14.
- ³⁴ Jensen, *Dream Society*, 13.
- 35 Edward Cornish, "The Cyber Future," The Futurist 36 (January-February 1996): 39.
- 36 lbid., 29
- 37 lbid., 39.
- Since capitalism's existence seems not to be threatened, this does not suggest that those with wealth will no longer seek out "positional" or prestigious goods. But the global shift in the distribution of wealth will contribute to the continuous blurring of cultural categories, thus, a less well defined symbolic structure of values to be produced and consumed.
- 39 Some ideas reflected in this essay are the result of the numerous debates among students in my recent Theory of Fashion classes. Where my ideas end and their's begin (and vice versa) can not be determined. Their creative and analytical minds contributed immensely to this work.