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FASHION AND THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF POSTMODERNITY

Gail Faurschou

The Politics of Style[1]

Until recently, the decoration of the body has been a subject confined mostly to the disciplines of sociology[2] and anthropology although literary references to what we might call a 'fashion consciousness' are numerous. I am thinking here specifically of Proust, although Baudelaire and Balsac, among others, were fascinated by the ambiguity surrounding desire, sexuality and style.

If anything can be said about fashion at a general level it is that its history testifies to the fact that the adornment of the body has rarely been a question of strict material or functional necessity. Indeed, as in precapitalist societies, it has constituted a privileged point of departure for inscribing the socius in and through the body and its vestments, the process of recording a memory of alliance, a system of symbolic in-vestment and exchange. Moreover, as with those cultural practices that have persisted throughout all social formations, albeit occupying radically different positions, adorning the body as a form of consuming the social surplus means that here is etched out not only an aesthetic and symbolic but a *political* terrain, an economy that marks and inscribes the most intimate surfaces of our skins. In these designs where the lines of power and desire are drawn, one can trace the fundamental contradictions intrinsic to the history of all societies. Thus bodily decoration becomes a form of cultural production that can simultaneously both limit

and enrich symbolic communication, constitute a site of freedom or restriction, submission or rebellion, eroticism or domination, identity or difference. Its intimate relation to the body means it weaves upon it both pleasure and pain, sacrifice and selfindulgence.

As cultural theorists sensitive not only to the subtleties of power in the apparently most insignificant of cultural texts, but also aware of the possibility of complicity with it through moralizing and universalizing judgements, we cannot but approach the subject of fashion with ambivalence. This is not only the ambivalence we face when interpreting past cultural practices of which we are not a part, but the ambivalence that strikes us particularly in evaluating practices in which we participate and, in many cases enjoy. Like many of the exploratory contributions feminist theory has made to contemporary cultural studies, including the recent debates on sexuality, pornography, and images of women in general, an analysis of fashion must be aware of the intricately entwined relations not only of power and domination, but also of desire and play, however complex and abstract these relations have become in the ever expanding boundaries of the mass society of late capitalism.

There is much work to be done here. Even the initially most simple questions soon prove elusive. What makes up a style, a look? How do shapes and folds of clothing appear aesthetically pleasing or ridiculously old fashioned? How does the play of difference in fashion create a meaningful code and in what sense can we speak of symbolic or expressive communication between subjects — if at all?

While there are many theoretical avenues that one could pursue in relation to fashion, for example, semiotics, psychoanalysis, and deconstruction, I am primarily concerned in what follows with how, on a more general level, we can view fashion and its promotional industries as a point of departure for exploring some of the contradictory tendencies of our present period.

If fashion today appears as the most ephemeral and trivial of leisure pursuits, infinitely distanced from its ritual, mystical, religious, cememonial, or simply symbolic capacity for communication, surely this makes it all the more an interesting and important area to explore. The fashion-object appears as the most chaotic, fragmented, and elusive of commodities, yet it circulates a pervasive and enveloping logic. I would argue that, for this reason, it constitutes an exemplary site for examining the cultural dislocations and contradictions of the transition from modernity to the late capitalist, new wave, postmodern era. In particular, I will attempt to show that the widely noted tendency toward the abstraction, disembodiment, and even disappearance of the subject is implicit in the very principles of an expanding fashion culture — that if the subject is on the way out, it is going out in style.

II

Modernity: Fashion as a Commodity

Before discussing fashion as a late-capitalist, postmodern phenomenon, a few words need to be said about its development from that initially crucial stage of its origin in modernity. It is, of course, only with the rise of industrial capitalism and the market economy that fashion becomes a commodity produced for the realization of economic exchange value in the division of labour and the separation of production and consumption. In this regard, it is interesting to note that clothing was the first industrialized sector of capitalism and that Marx began his analysis of value equivalence in *Capital* with the example: 10 yards of linen equals one coat[3]. Indeed, the whole rationalization process of capital originated with what would seem to have become the most irrational of commodities. But in the 19th and early 20th century, dress was still a commodity produced according to the existing structure or 'ideology of needs'. As William Leiss, et al. point out in their recent study of advertising[4], this production-oriented phase of capitalism marketed its products primarily on the basis of improving, but not changing, one's existing mode of life. The early capitalists emphasized the craftsmanship, traditional values and tastes that were important to the social economy of prestige and class distinction. One can observe this attitude to fashion apparel in the way clothes were marketed in early magazine advertisements and catalogues. Here we find long descriptions of the quality of the material, its impeccable construction, durability, etc. Every effort was made to place these new products in the familiar context of established cultural significations.

It is also interesting to note, in this regard, that it was not until the rise of the market and the bourgeois class that fashion became a notably gendered phenomena. As Elizabeth Wilson points out in her study of modern dress[5], fashion became a way of distinguishing the bourgeois class and its values from the artistocracy and its excessive lifestyle and extravagance. The bourgeois woman was now to become a sign of the conservative family unit: feminine but modest, attractive but frugal.

Similarly, Wilson notes, early feminists' critiques of dress focused on the value of clothing to the body, movement, health, and activity. The Rational Dress Society was only one of the dress reform movements of the 1900's that debated the corset, the introduction of trousers for women, and the return to what they saw as a freer more 'natural' look that was influenced by the art of the Pre-Raphaelites. Even many socialist movements took up the issue. But it would be wrong to assume these debates on the use value of clothing excluded the issue of beauty and femininity which was still a foremost concern. In the modern period,

beauty as a cultural ideal retained much of its classical importance and allure. That is to say, beauty in early modernity was still thought of as an aesthetic category that bore on some ideal of the ultimate expressiveness of the human soul, specifically one that linked it to its embodied form. Clothing was supposed to assist and accentuate this embodied beauty. Ambiguity and vulnerability, unrefined hints of subjectivity, remained vital aspects of its aesthetic appeal. This is a point to be kept in mind when we turn to our discussion of postmodernity.

In the early 20th century, modernist objects still retained some capacity for symbolic investment, whether that of use value, prestige, or the expression of identity. According to Frederic Jameson, this was possible because commodities still bore traces of the human labour objectified within them. They were not yet the disembodied, free-floating, abstract commodities of the mass consumer market. Jameson argues that surrealism was emblematic of the status of objects in the high modernist period.

> the human origins of the products... their relationship to the work from which they issued — had not yet been fully concealed... what prepares these products to receive the investment of psychic energy characteristic of their use by Surrealism is precisely the halfsketched, uneffaced mark of human labour, of the human gesture, not yet completely separated from subjectivity, which remain therefore potentially as mysterious and as expressive as the human body itself.
>
> ... We need only juxtapose (the object of surrealism), as a symbol with the photographic objects of pop art, (Andy Wharhol's) Campbell soup can, pictures of Marilyn Monroe, ... the gasoline stations along American superhighways, the glossy photographs in the magazines, or the cellophane paradise of an American drugstore, in order to realize that the objects of Surrealism are gone without a trace.
>
> Henceforth, in what we may call postindustrial capitalism, the products which we are furnished with are utterly without depth; their plastic content is totally incapable of serving as a conductor of psychic energy... All the libidinal investment in such objects is precluded from the outset, and we may well ask ourselves, if it is true that our object universe is henceforth unable to yield any 'symbol apt at stirring human sensibility,' whether we are not here in the presence of a cultural transformation of signal proportions, a historical break of an unexpectedly absolute kind?[6]

The meaning of this break is also clear for Jean Baudrillard: "The era of function and the signified has revolved, the era of the signifier and the

code is beginning."[7] The object of postmodernity has finally become the true object of consumption, Baudrillard argues, when "...released from its psychic determinations as *symbol*; from its functional determinations as *instrument*; from its commercial determinations as *product*; (it) is thus *liberated as a sign* to be recaptured by (the logic of differentiation) the formal logic of fashion."[8]

III

The Postmodern Fashionscape

In contrast to the productivist ethic of industrial modernism, late capitalism is the society of consumption, the society of the mass market and multinational capital, the age of media, information, and electronic reproduction.[9] It is no longer an economy seeking to fulfill the needs of a modernizing society but a society driven to create a perpetual *desire for* need, a need for novelty, for endless difference and instant satisfaction.

In postmodernity, fashion has become the commodity 'par excellence'. It is fed by all of capitalism's incessant, frantic, reproductive passion and power. Fashion *is* the logic of planned obsolescence — not just the necessity for market survival, but the cycle of desire itself, the endless process through which the body is decoded and recoded, in order to define and inhabit the newest territorialized spaces of capital's expansion.[10] A line of escape at one moment, fashion is recaptured in the network of images the next; frozen in the mirror of the media scape, we gaze forever at our suspended moment of flight. As Guy Debord says of the "society of the spectacle": "the image has become the final form of commodity reification."[11] This is Baudrillard's world of the hyperreal, and the infinite simulacrum, the abstract, compulsive innovation of signs: arbitrary but perpetual, empty but brilliant. It is Jameson's aesthetic of the euphoric hysterical sublime, the frantic schizophrenic explosion of multiple glossy surfaces without depth, the gleaming hallucinatory splendor of style without substance. Fashion has become our contemporary mode of being in the world — and our contemporary 'mode' of death. Style-speed-seduction-death. We need only think of Hollywood's glamourized version of itself in Warner Brothers "To Live and Die in L.A.," or its television spin off, "Miami Vice," or even the increasing popularity of the novels of J.G. Ballard, to realise its imagistic appeal.

Postmodernity then is no longer an age in which bodies produce commodities, but where commodities produce bodies: bodies for aerobics, bodies for sports cars, bodies for vacations, bodies for Pepsi, for Coke, and of course, bodies for fashion, — total bodies, a total look. The colonization and appropriation of the body as its own production/

consumption machine in late capitalism is a fundamental theme of contemporary socialization.

> ...monopoly capitalism...not content to exploit the body as labor power, manages to fragment it, to divide the very expressiveness of the body in labor, in exchange, and in play, recuperating all this as individual needs, hence as productive consummative forces under its control...[12]
>
> ... the body, beauty, and sexuality are imposed as new universals ... emancipated by abundance and cybernetic revolution. The deprivation, manipulation, and controlled recycling of the subjective and collective values by the unlimited rival speculation over sign values renders necessary the santification of a glorious agency called the body that will become for each individual an ideological sanctuary, the sanctuary of its own alienation.[13]

For Baudrillard, fashion is the epitome of the cynical survival of capitalism. It is the celebration of a perverse, fetishized passion for the abstract code, at the expense of any collective investment in symbolic exchange. The logic of the commodity multiplies indefinitely in the fascination for objects eviscerated of their substance and history, reduced to the pure state of marking a difference. As Baudrillard writes, "A thousand contradictory definitions of beauty and style are possible [but] one thing is certain: they are never a calculus of signs."[14] Indeed, Baudrillard argues, the very category of beauty is liquidated when the semiological order succeeds the symbolic order.

The disappearance of the beautiful as a sustaining category of pre-capitalist culture marks an important phase in the eclipse of subjectivity. According to Baudrillard, the forms of beauty were a symbolic play on the ambiguity of the subject. Beauty could be: "an effect of the soul (the spiritualist vision), the natural grace of movement, or countenence with the transparency of truth (the idealist vision), or the inspired genius of the body which can be communicated as effectively by expressive ugliness (the romantic vision)?[15]

In this juxtaposition of an erstwhile subjective beauty with the postmodern sublime, Baudrillard is not concerned to recall an 'essence', but to draw out the historical supercession of ambivalence and to distinguish this from the substitutive logic of the fashion cycle. In symbolic exchange, the social relations between individuals or groups, as mediated through the gift, the ritual, and writing on the body, are all virtual relations of desire and as such, relations of risk, of unresolved ambivalence, danger, and vulnerability. In this sense, the sign-object of fashion and the symbolic object exist in mutually exclusive cultural forms:

> The sign object is neither given nor exchanged: it is appropriated, withheld, and manipulated by individual subjects as a sign, that is as coded difference. Here lies the object of consumption. And it is always of and from a reified, abolished social relationship that is "signified" in a code.[16]

Opposed to the forever unresolved order of the symbolic stands fashion, an abstract, arbitrary exchange of signs, a system that manifests in its appearance of play and difference the "total constraint of the code." Replacing the traditional, socially ambiguous forms of beauty, fashion becomes a data base of aesthetic categories. Baudrillard refers to it as a "semio-aesthetic order," one which consists of "an interplay of referrals, of equivalence, of controlled dissonances."[17] This reinscription of the polyvalence of beauty within a homogenous, system of endlessly but equally differentiated signs has, Baudrillard, argues, as its ultimate goal, closure and perfection, a logical mirage suturing all social contradictions and divisions on the level of the abstract. This is the glamour of fashion, the glamourized body of disembodied perfection. This is *Vogue's* 'total look'; *Cosmopolitan's* 'perfect match'; *Mademoiselle's* 'elegant coordination'. This is the look of envy John Berger speaks of in *Ways of Seeing*. The look of solitary assurance, of impersonal power, a look absent and unfocused precisely because it looks out over the look of envy which sustains it.[18]

These are the images we find as we flip through page after page in fashion magazines. Despotic and total, each confronts us, but only to be overturned in an instant, replaced indefinitely in the continuous oscillation of absolute authority and immediate irrelevance.

Emblematic of this momentary, monthly, seasonal marking of time on the eternally reincarnated youthful body, oblivious to historical recording or wrinkling is *Vogue's* editorial, titled, interestingly enough, "The Last Word", summing up the new look for each issue. Here are a few 'last words' that would seem to exemplify the aesthetic ordering, of a semiological culture:

> What works? Lets start with a conclusion. When you're dressing in a small shaped suit or precise dress (and those clothes are some of the stars of this season... and this issue), you're wearing highly finished sorts of clothes. You've a total look; there's not much need to interfere...
>
> In terms of accessories, the modern key to this 'finished' way of dressing may be a certain elimination of things...[19]'
>
> Designers have solved the problem of dressing fast, with wonderfully thought out looks. You'll like these looks best if you enter in, more than somewhat to the equation... In almost any

clothes that sense of pureness is one sign of modernity...[20]

For Baudrillard, contemporary fashion is "the generalization of sign exchange value to facial and bodily effects. It is the final disqualification of the body, its subjection to a discipline... The signs are there to make the body into a perfect object."[21] Like Jameson's description of the images of postmodernity, this perfection of the body into an object of glamour "is a feat accomplished through a long and specific labor of sophistication... in which none of its real work (the work of the unconscious or psychic and social labor can show through. The fascination of this fetishized beauty is the result of this extended process of abstraction, and derives from what it negates and censors through its own character as a system."[22]

Like Berger's "look of envy", this fetishized beauty exercises what Baudrillard calls a "cold seduction." It has nothing to do with pleasure or play or "the illegible ambivalence of desire"[23] In these frozen figures, flawless skins, blank stares, there is no pain, no fear, nothing moves, and nothing could move these invulnerable figures bereft of affect and expression.

But Baudrillard goes even further. He calls this fetishized beauty 'anti-nature incarnate' and argues that the fascination we hold for this model of reification is the very essence of what desire has become in the postmodern era: the desire for closure and logical perfection, the desire of desire to be ultimately and resolutely sufficient unto itself.[24]

> this kind of beauty is fascinating precisely because it is trapped in models, because it is closed, systematic, ritualized in the ephemeral, without symbolic value. It is the sign in this beauty, the mark (makeup, symmetry, or calculated asymmetry, etc.) Which fascinates; it is the artifact that is the object of desire.[25]

Here the aesthetic effect plays on our initial misrecognition of the model for the mannequin and the mannequin for the model. We have to look twice. Yet this 'works,' as the language of *Vogue* would have it — and why shouldn't it? For isn't the reversibility of life and still life, nature and 'nature morte', a kind of epitome of the commodity system itself, a triumph of the principle of substitutibility?

In these inanimate figures, the idea of glamour goes beyond the perfection of the body, its making-up, dressing up, and even cutting up in plastic surgery — toward death itself.

In the latest issue of *Vogue*, Calvin Klein has eliminated the last distinction between the body and its adornment.[26] The body has imploded into the pure play of surfaces, its outline delineates the imaginary otherness of the simulacrum, the substance that never was. Beyond the subject as object, made-up model, idol, mannequin, artifact. Beyond the pure positivity of desire perfected in the object, we now have the equivalent of the photographic negative. In place of the subject, a shadow, a ghostly absent presence clothed in angelic white silk. A shadow illuminated in its outline like the radiated figures of Hiroshima: it haunts us. But, it also seduces us. The empty abstract black hole of desire... beckons. Sleepwear. Deathwear. Shrouded in fashion — the ideal logic of late capitalism.

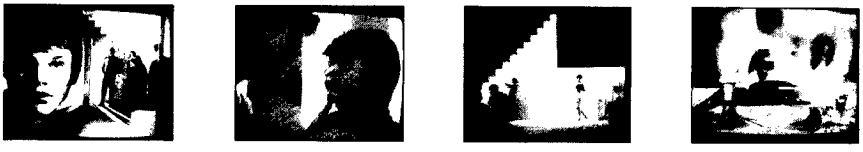
IV

Obsession*

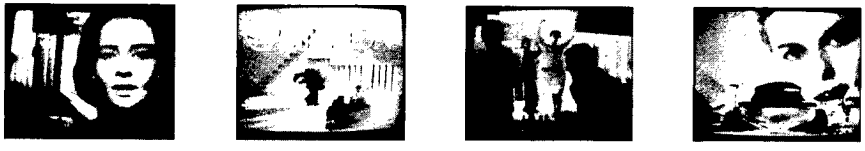
A Scents of Style: Some Thoughts on Calvin Klein's Obsession (four 15 second commercials on Video)

"There are many loves but only Obsession"

"In the kingdom of passion the ruler is Obsession"



"Love is child's play once you've learned Obsession"



"Between love and madness lies Obsession"*

* This section was written in collaboration with Charles Levin

Between love and madness lies Obsession. Desire and power spiral interiorized in this zero space of shadows and staircases leading nowhere, mocking all lines of escape. Obsession. All are positioned around it. Everything falls before it. All are reduced "to ashes, all ashes," "abandoned to the wreckage of themselves."

Why Obsession? Why name a perfume after the structure of neurotic inhibition? It appears that in a world so affectless, so sterile, only aggression sustains enough intensity to attract. What is initially most memorable for the viewer of this series of commercials is that in each the sign of the perfume is inserted into an obsessional collection of fetishes, the tokens of destroyed love, of loss, aphanisis, depression. In the first, it is the stolen chess piece, the king; in the second, scattered flower petals, yellow like the Narcissus; in the third, the pathetic child's diary of frustrated Oedipal passion; and in the fourth, the grieving mother's black scarf. In this fourfold cycle, like a Frygian mythos, laughter and love are followed by castration and perversion. The denouement is always an affective metonymy, in which the fragment of a broken bond is liberated as an ironic sign. Each segment transfixes a symbolic relation at its moment of destruction and adds it to the cumulative economy of Obsession. The perfume thus becomes a kind of liquid intensity, a condensation of failed or faded libido.

The phallic, pre-Raphealite woman is the simulacrum of incarnation, an angel, a fever — "all heat and hunger" — "taunting, exquisite creature" — like a wayward Ariel. She begs to be saved, but always escapes. In this sense, Obsession is alchemical, a distillation of the product at the conclusion of each episode, seated in the collection of fetish objects, marks the dynamic mutation of leaden desire into the signifier of charged memory. Each gesture, each touch, each utterance revolves around an absence. "To breathe her innocence was life itself" — a trace.

As in Klein's sleepwear ads, the simulation of 'obsession' produces an absence in order to forestall the death implicit in completion, or semiotic perfection. The 'system' cannot function without its Imaginary other, but this otherness only exists in a relational form, as the abstraction of a sign-object which refers back to a lost body. In the 'Oedipal' sequence featuring the little boy, his diary, and his idealization of the female model, there is a reference to Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*: "the whispers at my bedside, her arms, her mouth..." This maternal projection is "the only woman I'll ever love" — but she steals his fantasies away. "Did I invent her?" the little boy asks.

The sign of obsession is the cynical sign of a purely relational, abstract power, a power which thrives on its own self-hatred. It could be argued that the Obsession commercials interpellate a representation of the social world of late capitalism by recoding desire in Oedipal form, as a despotic

signifier which territorializes fantasy as family theatre.[27] But this 'signifier', together with the family organized around it, are no longer credibly interpreted as Oedipal or patriarchal or even phallic. The paternal simulacrum (the narrator in the first episode) is a defeated Prospero, not only stripped of his secular power, but forlorn, unmagical, without spiritual authority. His gold has already turned into lead, his Miranda is a mannequin; and the purloined chesspiece is not a symbol of the procreative possibilities of kingship, but merely a mnemonic ingredient in the nostalgic simulation of coenesthetic seduction, a psychic ruin of bodily attraction.

The Lacanian father no longer has any of his symbolic authority, not even as an ideological constraint on "desire", not even as the progenitor of words. Everywhere and nowhere, language becomes cynical and hollow, evoking a pervasive structure of deauthorization and panic.[28] There is, to be sure, an Oedipal theatre, but it is empty, and the lines of memory echo in its phantom acoustic space like rehearsals for a play the actors know will not be performed.

The grieving mother of the fourth and final sequence surveys a scene in which neither conflict nor repression have any meaning. Sublimation tunrs out to have been a cruel, patriarchal joke. Like the helpless child, this dark, Trojan woman represents an emotional testimony; but she has witnessed neither struggle, nor death — only the schizoid terror of undifferentiation, the futile will to total consumptive passivity. Obsessional destruction is not final, merely recurrent: it is a repetition compulsion which infects each figure who participates in the concept of the family, and forces him or her to play out destiny in a pattern whose meaning all must pretend not to know, in order to create the illusion of meaning. The signs of absence multiply like the snakes on the Medusa's head, but not because something like the missing phallus is feared and repressed. It is not the phallus which is missing, but the *absence* of the phallus — or in other words, the issue is not absence, but the absence of absence. Not the anxiety of sexual difference, but the depressing apperception of endless sameness. The obsessional meaning-effect overdetermines itself, swallows its own tail in a circle of disembodied power. Every time we grasp a signification, it is substituted by another, which only adds to the collection of objects, but takes us nowhere in time or space. The death instinct, an overpowering odour, beckons.

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APPENDIX

[Contract]

CALVIN KLEIN'S
OBSESSION

From the contract between Calvin Klein and model Jose Borain, the "Calvin Klein Girl." Borain appears in advertisements for the designer's fragrance Obsession.

AGREEMENT made as of the 25th day of September 1984 between CALVIN KLEIN INDUSTRIES, INC., a New York corporation (hereinafter called "CK"), and BORAIN ENTERPRISES, LTD., a New York corporation (hereinafter called "Consultant").

In consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein, the parties hereby agree as follows:

I.A. CK hereby retains Consultant and Consultant hereby agrees to be retained by CK and to provide to and for CK the "Services" of its employee, Jose Borain ("Borain"), as a model in all respects which services shall be deemed to include, without limitation, all broadcast advertising, promotion and exploitation (e.g., network, local, cable and closed circuit television, AM & FM radio and cinema), print advertising, promotion and exploitation (e.g., printed hang-tags, labels, containers, packaging, display materials, sales brochures, covers, pictorial, editorial, corporate reports and all other types of promotional print material contained in the media including magazines, newspapers, periodicals and other publications of all kinds), including but not by way of limitation, fashion shows, run-way modeling, retail store trunk shows, individual modeling and other areas of product promotion and exploitation which are or may be considered to be embraced within the concept... of fashion modeling.

4. Consultant shall, and where applicable shall cause Borain to:

A. Keep CK informed of Borain's schedule in the event she travels outside the metropolitain New York area for periods of more than two (2) days consecutively;

B. Maintain Borain's weight, hair style and color and all other features of Borain's physiognomy and physical appearance as they are now or in such other form as CK may, from time to time, reasonably request. Consultant and Borain represent that Borain's current weight level is between 120 and 125 lbs. and CK agrees that Borain's weight up to 130 lbs. will be an acceptable weight pursuant to the provisions hereunder. Illustratively, Borain shall wear hair styles, utilize such make-up and wear such apparel and accessories as CK requests from time to time; use such hair stylists as CK engages or approves; maintain such reasonable physical regimen (including exercise, diet and nutritional programs) as will best enable Borain to perform her Services hereunder; and when requested by CK, consult and comply with the reasonable advice and reasonable recommendations of such physician, exercize coach, hair and makelup stylists and others, etc.;

C. Maintain a personal lifestyle which will, in CK's sole subjective judgment reasonably exercised, be appropriate and most suitable to project an image and persona that reflect the high standards and dignity of the trademark "Calvin Klein" and that do not diminish, impair or in any manner detract from the prestige and reputation of such trademark.

7. A. CK shall pay or cause Consultant to be paid the aggregate sum of one million dollars ($1,000,000) for all of Borain's Services during the three (3) year term hereunder, i.e., the sum of $333,333 per year for each employment year during the term of this Agreement...

13. CK may... terminate this Agreement forthwith by written notice to Consultant upon the occurrence, or upon CK's becoming aware of the occurrence, of any one or more of the following events:

A. In the event of Borain's disfigurement or disability, which shall be deemed to mean any illness, accident or other physical or mental impairment which renders her, in the sole subjective judgment of CK reasonably exercised (except with respect to disfigurement or other change in physical appearance which may be exercised solely based on Mr. Klein's

sole aesthetic subjective standards), incapable of performing or unqualified to perform her Services whenever required under this Agreement...

B....If by reason of [Borain's] deliberate or inadvertent action or conduct she shall come into disrepute or her public reputation shall become degraded or discredited so that the Services she is to provide pursuant hereunder shall, in CK's sole subjective judgment reasonably exercised, have become less valuable to CK in projecting the desired image consistent with the dignity and high standards of the CK tradition...

G. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein contained, this Agreement shall terminate automatically and forthwith upon the death of Borain, the bankruptcy or insolvency of Consultant, or the dissolution, liquidation, merger or consolidation of Consultant.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented in a session sponsred by the C.J.P.S.T., The Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association and The Winnipeg Art Gallery at the Learned Societies, Winnipeg, 1986.

2. While most sociological literature on fashion has tended to be primarily descriptive or historical rather than theoretical, the exceptions are phenomenologically oriented studies for the obvious reason that they take the embodied subject as their point of departure. In the introduction to John O'Neill's recent study of contemporary society, (*Five Bodies*, Cornell University Press, 1985) he writes, "We are continuously caught up and engaged in the embodied look of things, especially the look of others and of ourselves. Although philosophers and moralists have decried our attachment to appearances and superficialities, as sociologists we cannot ignore the elaborate social construction of embodied appearances in which we are necessarily engaged as persons... Because *society is never a disembodied spectacle*, we engage in social interaction from the very start on the basis of sensory and aesthetic impression." p. 22.

3. See vol. 1 ch. 1 of Karl Marx's *Capital*. It is also interesting to note in this regard that Adam Smith's archtypic example of the rationality of the division of labour in *The Wealth of Nations* was the manufacture of pins used primarily to secure clothing and cloth in sewing.

4. William Leiss, et al, *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of Well-Being*, Methuen, Canada, 1986, See esp. chs. 4 and 5.

5. Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* Virago Press 1985, Ch. 6.

6. Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, Princeton Univ. Press. 1971, p. 106.

7. Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, Translated by Charles Levin, Telos Press, 1981, p. 98.

8. Ibid, p. 67.

9. Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism and the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", *New Left Review*, #146, Fall 1984.

10. Gilles Deluze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Translated by R. Hurley, et al, The Viking Press, New York, 1977.

11. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, Black and Red, Detroit 1983, p. 11.
12. Baudrillard, p. 97.
13. Ibid., p. 97.
14. Ibid., p. 188.
15. Ibid., p. 94.
16. Ibid., p. 65.
17. Ibid., p. 188.
18. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, B.B.C. and Penguin Books, 1979 p. 133.
19. *Vogue*, 'The Last Word', Sept. 1982, p. 568.
20. *Vogue*, 'The Last Word', Feb. 1983, p. 336.
21. Baudrillard, p. 94.
22. Ibid., p. 94.
23. Ibid., p. 188.
24. Ibid., p. 94.
25. Ibid., p. 94.
26. *Vogue*, May, 1986.
27. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*.
28. Cf. Jean Baudrillard. *L'échange symbolique et la mort,* Paris: Gallimard, 1976, e.g. pp. 174-6.

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The following corporations kindly gave permission for the reproduction of their advertisments: Figure One; Saint Laurent Inc., New York, Figures Two and Three; Calvin Klein Inc. New York.

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