# For a Contemporary Vision of the History and the Phenomenology of Fashion

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*This paper traces the salient phenomena that have marked the history of fashion and define it as it is nowadays. Foremost, an attempt is made to value the term "fashion" under different lights. From the 18th century onward, there was a succession of historical, political, social, and cultural changes that accelerated the phenomenon consolidation of fashion as a cultural phenomenon of great importance and dynamism, both in terms of its incursions into the languages of art and in terms of the international economy.*

*A few focuses follow: on Lombard clothing, on how some items played different roles besides clothing, on the costume in the Goldoni's theater, on the twentieth-century Decadentism of Oscar Wilde, and others. Other aspects that characterize the industry today follow: the intersection of fashion with all the other arts, the role of magazines in the process of women's emancipation, the meaning of "fashion showcase", luxury brands and the phenomenon of their counterfeiting, the role of the "prosumer", and sustainable fashion laws, looking toward a future zero-carbon society.*

*Keywords: environmental policies, fashion, art, visual arts, fashion showcase, fashion history, fashion phenomenology, luxury brands, sustainable production*

## PART I: HISTORY AND PHENOMENOLOGY OF FASHION

Fashion is a very complex phenomenon that accompanies man throughout his history, grasping trends and giving them form, color, and texture. *"It is fashion that produces society, not the result of it":* this is how the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel and the French Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard J. (2010; Baudrillard J. 2011) speak of it. Fashion has the teleological function of interacting with the social culture that permeates it.

The dynamic phenomenon of fashion interacts with the arts, architecture, customs, and the personal, social, and cultural identities of individuals.

Walter Benjamin believed that fashion belonged to *"the obscurity of the lived moment, to the dreamlike consciousness of the collective"* (Baldini C. 2008). Fashion is an artistic and cultural expression in which the material object takes shape through the use of textiles forged into a variety of forms to clothe, cover, and beautify people in a given social context.

However, fashion has a major influence on today's world economy, but its industry produces a huge amount of manufacturing waste that is not easily and not always recyclable. This is why the fashion industry is considered particularly polluting, especially with regard to leather and some mixed and/or man-made fibers.

The fashion studies that arose around the 1980s involve different areas: corporate identity (brand identity), the market for textiles and new technologies, the weave of textiles, distribution channels,

advertising, communication channels (Internet, specialized publishing, marketing, psychology of the masses and mass media), fashion shows, theatrical and film performances, and events.

But fashion is primarily and fundamentally a social and cultural expression. This is why we speak of the *"phenomenology of fashion"*: fashion historically invests every space of every day and economic life in contemporary societies. The study of its historical evolution and the study of the history of customs tell the story of the cultural changes that happened since the origins of civilizations, as Fernand Braudel (Braudel F. 1982) well pointed out: by studying fashion, one can make a distinction between the stable and conservative societies of the East and the dynamic societies of the West. In this regard, I happened to read a fashion textbook that came out of the pen of an Indian teacher. He says that Chinese, Muslim, and Indian societies see changes in Western fashion as something "unethical", as if change could somehow undermine the stability of much more static cultures (Ahuja, N. K. 2021).

Fashion can be observed from a variety of points of view: the evolution of taste and dress codes, market orientations, the evolution of technologies and textiles, and the modes of dress related to different social, cultural, and political contexts. Its study involves disparate scientific disciplines: sociology, psychology, history of art and costume, literature, economics and legal sciences, communication, entertainment, environmental sciences, and sustainable fashion (Simmel G. 2015; Muzzarelli F. 2013; Wilson E. 2008).

The analysis of the phenomenology of fashion leads us to attempt to trace an interpretation of the transformations that fashion has induced and induces in relation both to contemporary society and in its relationship with other disciplines, by which it is itself influenced.

The focus should be placed on fashion's links with art, society, and the economy, where it stands as an absolute propeller in the individual's search for his or her own style or group identity: fashion can be the instrument for a free manifestation of the individual's thoughts and to feel accepted and adequate in his or her community. Indeed, while clothing lets the consumer cultivate and exhibit his or her own aesthetic taste (and also a narcissistic need), on the other hand, clothing allows the person to identify with his group.

Fashions emerge, follow one another, and die hard, and each new trend expresses both a particular and contingent personal need to show up and a social need for "recognition," "integration", and "inclusion". Quoting a famous dialogue by Leopardi encapsulated in his *Operette morali,* fashion is the sister of death: both are daughters of transience and immortal at the same time, a transience that refers to customs and habits, to ideas or opinions, to *"fashions"* (Leopardi G. 2008).

In the economic world, manufacturers replace previous collections with new ones so that previous tastes and fashions artificially decay. Likewise, consumers contribute to dismissing clothes, fabrics, and accessories that are not yet worn out (Barthes R. 1970; Barthes R. 2006).

As we shall see, from era to era, fashion contributes to expressing ideologies, beliefs, religious faiths, ethics, and rates of sexual and cultural freedom: the way of dressing is still instrumental in women's emancipation. Currently, similar phenomena occur for other categories of individuals who fail to feel represented by established classical gender stigmas: the current market is dotted with collections defined as *"no gender",* consisting of clothes that can be worn by everyone, regardless of gender.

The so-called feminism and the anti-bourgeois rebellions of the 1960s and 1970s were forerunners in this regard, also revolutionizing customs and politics through clothing. This phenomenon happened with the introduction of clothing and accessories that were originally men's into the women's sector, or by the introduction of garments intended for political and social provocation, like the miniskirt.

The creation of unisex garments (a concept that developed between the 1960s and 1970s) suggests the sharing of certain values common to the male and female genders.

Through fashion, a unified cultural ideal different from previous cultural models began to be built. The contemporary society that was born in the early 1960s broke with the past and with some old traditions that were obsolete. Fashion has taken on an increasingly important role in forming new identities and new social purposes.

The current "no gender" phenomenon, characterized by the absence of gender connotations, is gradually becoming a stable worldwide trend, falling more under the definition of 'global social movement' than under the definition of 'fashion trend'. Also called *"a-gender," "gender free," "gender-neutral," "gender-fluid," "no gender"* is the affirmation of total gender absence, because it can be a stigma or a

stereotype of differentiation and thus discrimination. In this sense, the experiment of the company Selfridges (which under the name of *"The Concept space"* packaged a unique experience in fashion shopping) seems to be very interesting: designed by the British fashion designer Faye Toogood, *The Concept space* stands as an environment where it is possible to transcend the notions of "he" and "she", and a person can choose the garment only by color and line. The designer proposes a new way of enjoying fashion and understanding beauty and style.

But before delving into a true history of fashion, let us proceed to analyze the primary functions of clothing and some philosophical perspectives on it.

**Fashion as Protection, Adornment, Modesty**

Psychology has identified three primary purposes of clothing: ornament, modesty, and protection (Flügel G. C. 1930). These needs are evident when we look at the existing indigenous communities that still inhabit some parts of the Earth. Firstly, clothing serves to protect certain delicate areas of the body (like the genitals) from the external environment and climatic excursions. Secondly, clothing serves as an adornment in social recognition, especially in community rituals.

Depending on the dominant culture in a society, certain parts of the body are considered to be sexual interesting, and they should be duly covered out of modesty; each society has its own concept of modesty: the object of sexual interest may be hair, feet and other areas of the body that in our society are not considered properly sensual and capable of attracting particular glances.

While in the past clothes mainly responded to the purpose of physiological well-being and comfort, in modern societies certain concepts like consensus-seeking, exhibitionism, vanity, and personal satisfaction began to assume importance. The related implications can be the object of the study of psychology of the masses, especially in economic-productive and marketing functions.

In primitive societies clothing had a semiotic connotation: let us think about the way of dancing, dressing and painting in some indigenous rituals. Those embellishments and ritual gestures might have a religious significance or might be the symbol of belonging to a particular social role or class (e.g. the community shaman).

Just a brief reflection on the dress/body relationship that seems to be dialectical, although dress and body remain two different entities: dress serves to "uncover" some parts of the body and "cover" others (e.g. physical defects), so that the result can be very harmonious as a whole. Sometimes, the structure of the dress may prevail over the forms of the body and may constrain it within certain unnatural limits: it is, for example, the case of particularly structured clothes that do not leave absolute or partial freedom of movement to the body. In such cases, the body becomes instrumental to the dress. Sometimes, on the other hand, the dress is just enough to emphasize the curvy lines of the body and serves only as an accent. But every time, the body/dress combination becomes a unique result that the eye of the beholder captures as a whole, whether harmonious or disharmonious.

The result can contain a variety of immediate signals: a person's aesthetic taste, his social background, his desire to impress, to be noticed and to draw attention to his physicality, and even on his sexual availability. Inevitably, clothing also falls into the category of the individual *cura corporis,* and the related signal is seen from the rest of the world in the same way.

Like gesture, posture, mimicry and facial expression, clothing reveals and conceals, makes one appear and at the same time disappear (Meo O. 1995). But unlike the naked body, dress lives only when it is worn.

In classical theories of beauty, canons such as dress symmetry and body proportion mark the elegance of the garment. Between the living body and the dress, there is an exchange where the former enhances the latter, and vice versa. Dress is made of fabrics, shapes, accessories, colors, symmetries and asymmetries that are developed and enhanced by the dynamism of the human body in motion. The function of the dress is to complete the perceptual play of the body in space, enhancing the aesthetic pleasure and the fashion object increases the power of fascination of the body and the related erotic and seductive component, like Plato already noticed at his time: exhibition and modesty are the two sides of the same coin and covering the body does not always mean making it less seductive. These two aspects are balanced every time, depending on the wearer's choice of dress.

The dialectic of appearance is resolved in the balance of concealment/revelation in a public image visible to others, to which the "private" face entrusts a difficult and irreplaceable task of representation.

The work of Roland Barthes contains numerous valuable observations on the relationship of clothes with the symmetric axes of the human body: let us think of the effect of bulging and thickening obtained with the aid of prostheses, or raising or lowering the waist-line. Entire epochs have based their way of dressing and adorning with make up and hairstyle on the artifice of fashion (Gombrich E. 1979).

The erotic and seductive component of clothing is enriched by the perception of the type of fabric by the watcher, a kind of virtual tactility that allows one to feel the softness or roughness, the workmanship of a garment (handmade or industrial) without actually touching it, only through visual perception. This aspect also enhances the satisfaction of the wearer.

**Fashion as a Semiotic/Philosophical Problem**

Clothing constitutes an object admired and coveted and possesses an ephemeral power of fascination. This characteristic of the garment is the object of study of philosophical anthropology in its various combinations (ethical, aesthetic, theoretical), so much so that Oscar Meo states that *"fashions change, [...] but fashion does not change, that is, the fundamental mode: the taste for appearing, for performing to others, the aspiration to capture their attention by making itself a pole of attraction."*

Meo examines in detail the fundamental elements that characterize the phenomenon of fashion from a philosophical perspective, keeping in mind the contributions of sociology and psychology.

Transience is the first hallmark of fashion, and its inconstancy partly determine its ontological status.

By what time is fashion conditioned? The time of fashion is the present, destined to self-destruct from time to time: the history of fashion is a chain of *hic et nunc,* in which each denies its past self. In fashion, as Plato already argued, there is no memory and no expectation: it is all consumed in the course of a short season. The pleasure derived from it is momentary, destined to be outdated and antiquated within a short period of time. And it is all this internal movement, this continuous contradiction, that produces intense pleasure. To be fashionable is thus to live in the present and enjoy all its fullness. Recent semiotic and sociological research extensively insists on the changing character of fashion (Volli U. 1990; König R. 1971).

The philosophers of the past in their almost contemptuous aristocracy have regarded fashion as a symbol of deplorable vanity, a concept well summarized by Hegel, when he says that *"as a mere outer covering, dress can be left to the 'accidentality' of fashion"* and therefore not worthy of philosophical speculation (Hegel G. W. F. 1924). Diogenes Laertius the Cynic was considered by Plato to be contemptuous and nonconformist full of vanity, understood as a desire to stand out and arouse awe (Simmel G. 2015).

According to Plato, fashion would be the object of rhetoric for the part in which it addresses persuaders who easily impose their will on weak-minded and psychologically labile subjects. Thus, fashion, or rather, fashions in general, are deplorable insofar as they appeal to the worst part of man's personality.

Again Heidegger, several centuries after Plato, in his *"avaluative"* phenomenological analysis of curiosity, criticizes the attitude of inconstancy and structural fragility of being: *"Curiosity, now free to expand, will take care to see not to understand what it sees, that is, to arrive at a being-for it, but only to see. It seeks the new, only to take momentum again from it toward another new. The care of this seeing is not directed toward understanding or consciously being in the truth, but toward the possibilities arising from surrendering oneself to the world. [...] Curiosity is everywhere and nowhere".* Here Heidegger captures one of the fundamental characteristics that distinguish fashion: it is detached from reality, with a fleeting, *"u-topical"* character that also contains all the premises of the narcissism that characterizes our contemporary society (Heidegger M. 1976).

It is clear that past philosophical currents are unable to fully explain the fascination and awe that fashions continue to arouse to this day among all social classes and all contemporary cultures.

Since fashion is an ever-changing object of persuasion, capable of tickling the interest and craving of an ever-increasing multitude of users and even of being a propulsive cultural tool, it is necessary to refer to

further avenues of reading, to other scientific disciplines: fashion can be the object of study of rhetoric and semiotics, which can help us further investigate the anthropological and philosophical meaning of its signs.

As we know, the message needs a sender and a receiver who is able to decode the message, attributing semantic and pragmatic value to it. The receiver will himself become a vehicle of the message for other broader groups of users, reinforcing the persuasiveness of the original message.

It becomes clear that the main semiotic-sociological interest of the producer, assisted by his marketing experts, will be to build a message with a strong sign and equally powerful social meaning. This can be achieved through a market survey of the target catchment area that analyzes psychological, sociological and cultural variables (environment, class, gender, etc.) and the individual consumer's ability to convey the message: if a user buys an item by assuming it as a particular sign of distinction and status by making a psychological investment in it, he himself becomes a promoter of the message.

Each individual adherence to a given fashion contributes to the creation of a system of conventions and signals functional to economic-productive needs. However, the user's freedom to be himself a vehicle of the message or not, depending on his personal lifestyle and logic, remains firm.

The other side of the coin is the propensity for imitation: some studies confirm that the lower classes would tend to reproduce the habits of the upper classes. Kant already emphasized this aspect of fashion when he stated that competition occurs between different classes, but also within the same social class, so imitation and differentiation are balanced: *"It is a natural tendency of man to compare himself in his demeanor with someone more authoritative [...] and to imitate his manners. One law of this imitation, in order not to appear inferior to others even in that for which one does not care at all about the useful, is called fashion"* (Kant I. 1912).

Imitation also has a recognition function within a group: for example, new generations adopt the same fashions to recognize themselves socially, not only in clothing, but also in listening to a certain genre of music, using certain social, or lifestyle (Flügel J. C. 1930).

In general, fashion serves to self-represent oneself and give certain messages about oneself to the surrounding social context in an immediate way, but it also serves to differentiate oneself from others, from the rest of the context. Distinction is not a sign in itself, but a relationship that nonetheless possesses semantic value between one's self and others with an autonomous persuasive force and not necessarily deferring to common codes and stylistic features.

Fashion also carries within itself a playful element, being a harbinger of individual and social transgression of the norm; the acceptance of its transience allows individuals to extrude their personalities in (almost) total freedom, just as happens in pure play. If, for example, we compare fashion dress to mourning dress or the cassock, we notice that fashion turns out to be frivolous, cheerful, colorful and less subject to the conventions that certain roles or situations impose.

In such occasions or contexts where conventions are more rigid, dull colors (black, white gray) prevail, colors that are referred to as achromatic or non-colors. This characteristic of frivolity is called by Meo the *"external freedom"* of the playful activity of fashion (Meo O. 1991). Thanks to it, goals such as elegance and glamour, the ostentation of economic status may prevail, or, conversely, other social, psychological and aesthetic ideals may prevail.

Fashion goes hand in hand with accessories and makeup, and all together they constitute not only a rite of preparation of celebration and self-celebration, but also a desire to affect a certain context, a certain event in a factual and personal way.

The playful aspect is particularly evident in fashion magazines, fashion shows, where never are there any hints of pain.

From the point of view of phenomenological analysis, the antitheses concerning fashion are not existential, but rather frivolous and lighthearted (elegant-inelegant, attractive-repugnant, beautiful-ugly, classy-not-classy, etc.).

Regarding the ritual of the party, Roland Barthes calls the complex of customary norms the *"law of euphoria"* of fashion: to dress up for the party means to give order and form to the chaos of life by being inspired by the decorum and style of one's time. It can be said that all codified rituals in a society demand

precipitous attire for that particular event or occasion and, therefore, imitation prevails. The more the ritual is codified, the more the clothing is codified.

In Barthes' opinion, fashion is an art form *sui generis*: indeed, it cannot be attributed that universality which, since Aristotle, is recognized to great art. The "classic" of the major arts rises to the dignity of a universal archetype, of an eternal model to be inspired by. In clothing, the term "classic" stands for that which lies within the limits beyond which one steps out of the norm and which adapts itself pliantly to its times without making significant innovations or breaks with the past (now also called *old money* or *quiet luxury*).

The need to stand out is what can give rise to a new fashion in the strict sense, while the tendency to imitate generates a form of cultural stability.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF FASHION

### The Beginnings

Clothing arose primarily out of the need to cover oneself and adapt to the environment, enabling man to shelter himself, at least in part, from adverse weather and the elements. Secondly, in its evolution, man sought to improve his image and enhance his personality.

The ancient origins of clothing come to us from the records of past civilizations, revealing their codes, languages, and customs of the time.

Fashion, broadly understood, has taken on multiple expressions and has had different weight in the anthropological representations of various ancient societies, so much so that it serves as a tool for investigating the historical becoming and customs of various peoples.

The term *dress* denotes both the individual garment and the set of garments worn. The origins of the dress date back to the invention of the tunic, the basic garment of all ancient traditions. In the Mediterranean area during the ancient times skins and furs were worn on the head, shoulders and waist, often leaving the chest uncovered. Gradually, the skins were thinned to be used beyond climatic needs and tended to cover more and more body surfaces. Rudimentary coarse fabrics, gradually becoming more refined, were probably employed, obtained through the craftsmanship weaving of natural fibers. Early tunics began to cover the entire body, even with multiple layers.

The typical Assyrian-Babylonian clothing of the seventh century B. C. consisted of a first brightly colored inner tunic (the *kandis*) and an outer tunic (the *kaunas*) arranged diagonally to form a series of flounces and bangs. Persians also wore long overlapping tunics, highly decorated and asymmetrical at the shoulders.

From archaeological sources, as early as about 1500 B.C. Egyptian women were probably the first in history to have a gendered female robe, the *kalasiris*, a single piece of cloth without seams or cuts that wrapped around the body and was supported at the shoulders by suspenders: those made of fine pleated linen fabric were reserved for women of high social status, as the fabric and workmanship were particularly valuable. This type of dressing testified both to coming from a high social class and to the universally acknowledged delicacy of the female body.

Homer teaches us that in Greece the national dress, the *peplos,* was a kind of shawl held on the shoulders by two pins that left one hip uncovered and descended in undulating folds over the body.

The Athenian Doric *peplos,* on the other hand, was a wide, often pleated rectangle with two side seams, held on the shoulders by a series of pins or fibulae and enriched by a rich belt placed at waist level (ca. 500 B.C.).

The long Roman women's tunic had gold edging and was cinched at the waist. Tunics could be multiple and worn one on top of the other, for both men and women. Women wore a *pallium* over the shoulders, which is a square shawl that also wrapped around the head. Such clothing left the body free, which was enhanced by drapery.

The Roman ruling class and senators wore the refined *toga* over the tunic, a long woolen cloak made in the shape of a semicircle that fell over the left arm: it was often adorned with a *clavus*, a long gold or purple stripe that indicated rank or social role.

Legionary soldiers engaged in expeditions were adorned with footwear, helmets, leggings, shin guards, corsets, short tunics, and a variety of cloaks made of wool, fabrics, leather, and metal. Over time, Roman legionaries also began to wear tight-fitting pants.

The Byzantine robe borrowed the Roman double tunic, but the one above became the undisputed star, made of rich fabrics worked with gold and silver threads of silk and enriched with gems and precious stones. The body was flattened by the heavy fabrics, and the figure was rigid and geometric.

**The High Middle Ages**

The Early Middle Ages saw the spread of multicolored Byzantine silks, which were always used in the double tunic formula, often sewn in two bands of colors vertically.

Claudio Azzara reports on a splendid research carried out on the clothing of the Lombards, the barbarian tribe that conquered parts of northern Italy beginning in the 6th century A. D. Clothing, as always, constituted an element of the group identity, but their clothing gradually transformed in contact with other peoples, especially the Roman (Kurze W. 1980; Gasparri S. 1983; Capo L. 1992; Azzara C. 2015; Azzara C. 2019).

Evidence comes to us mainly from Paul Deacon's *Historia Longobardorum* (a late 8th-century work) and from archaeological remains.

The Deacon testifies that Queen Theodolinda had a palace built in Monza (no longer extant) intended to house her and her consort Agilulf, within which a number of frescoes were created that recounted the history of the Lombard lineage: probably in the form of myth, the paintings recounted the adoption of the Lombard people by the god of war Wotan and their continuous migrations that predominantly took place in the European area. Moreover, these origins are evidenced by an ancient Latin manuscript known as *Origo gentis langobardorum* (Azzara C., Gasparri S. 2005).

In the paintings described by the Deacon, the Lombards were depicted with the typical shaved hair at the nape of the neck and divided by a central parting into two sagging bands on the cheeks, until it merged with the long beard. The name *longibarbi* (*"long beards,"* hence *"Lombards"*) had been given to them by the very god Wotan at the time of their adoption. The hairstyle, a sign of the pagan cult just described, was abandoned with the conversion of the Lombard tribe to Christianity during the seventh century AD.

The Deacon also describes the Lombard clothing portrayed in the Monzese frescoes, where warriors wore broad linen tunics adorned with bands of different colors, similar to the robes of the Anglo-Saxons. The men wore open socks held in place by leather strings and breeches in which they rode horses, borrowed from Roman culture. Cloth leggings were worn over the breeches.

Due to the gradual process of acculturation (mainly Christian-Roman), the Lombards soon (7th century AD) abandoned the custom of endowing the deceased with a trousseau that could serve them after death, a symbol of their earlier paganism.

The trousseau consisted of clothing, ornaments, furnishings and utensils. In the men's tombs can be found, in addition to metal fibulae used to fasten clothing, buckles and decorative belt and shoe plates, rings and weapons: a two-cut spatha, a round wooden spear and shield with an iron umbo, a scramasax (short saber), arrows, helmet, flail armor, spurs and horse trappings. Even parade weapons and other richly ornamented trappings, symbols of their social status, can be found in the graves of high-ranking men.

In men's burials, objects of non-war use can be found, such as horns or combs made of bone, horn or ivory, with geometric decorations mainly in the shape of circles.

In women's graves we find utensils and accessories such as rings, necklaces, earrings, scissors, combs, needles, ridges, objects of decorative and perhaps magical value, especially glass spheres and shells that had to be worn hanging from the belt like small bags, crockery and pottery or metal vessels, buckles, clasps and the characteristic "stirrup" or "S" fibulae that served to hold garments in place on the body.

The Lombards knew how to finely engrave metals, especially by embossing, or by *cloisonné* and punching techniques. Lombard goldsmiths were particularly skilled in die casting and filigree, damascening, and *niello.*

Women's dress, consisting of cloth and leather, was a tunic often adorned with embossed silver or gold threads.

Men's dress consisted of a riding gown and breeches and a cloak made of linen or wool. In addition to the gender distinction already present in clothing, the Lombards distinguished between married women (who had to keep their hair up and covered by a veil, decorated with skeins of very fine silver or gold threads) and unmarried women so-called *"in capillo",* who kept their hair long and loose.

After the migration to Italy, the grave goods became increasingly valuable, testifying to a general enrichment of the tribe and an accentuation of the social divide between rich and poor, depending on the wealth of the raids they had made on conquered territories.

But with the process of cultural Romanization and Christianization that began as early as the 7th century, grave goods gradually disappeared, and Lombard tombs became indistinguishable from Roman ones. As the total fusion between the two peoples took place, the term "Lombard" began to indicate only the origin of the ruling class, ethnically and culturally already hybridized.

From the Romans, the Lombards also learned the custom of frequenting the baths, and the circus, a recreational and entertainment space *par excellence*. Moreover, they soon assimilated rituals in the celebration of power, as in the case of the coronation inside the circus in Milan of the young heir to the throne Adaloald, son of Theodolinda and Agilulf.

**The Late Middle Ages**

After the Year One Thousand, medieval dress appeared as a reworking of Byzantine dress. Women wore a double tunic: the first simpler one made of cloth, softly cut and with long, narrow sleeves; the second, the one above (the *sopratunica*) was colorful, made of heavier and more valuable cloth, sometimes shorter than the first. The latter had long sleeves flared at the wrist, with scallops, tassels, and fur trim.

In thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe clothing did not change much from the former (Mafai G. 2011): morose garments consisted of a tunic, also with long, narrow sleeves, and a *surcot* in its *cyclas* or *ganache* or *gardcorps* versions, a sleeveless over-tunic, for both men and women. Both used socks, stockings, and leather shoes.

Often, a cloak and different types of headgear were also added to such clothing. Women kept their hair inside a net or bonnet.

In that period, a wide development of wool processing took place. Women's tunics had narrow waist and sleeves, while were wide in the bottom. The skirt (*gonnella* or *gamurra*) with a high waist, detached from the top, began to be used. The over-tunic became *cioppa*, which is a long surcoat, narrow and shaped in the bust thanks to side strings, and wide in the bottom, with a waist marked by a high belt, rich in embroidery and precious beading, especially for the wealthier classes.

In the fifteenth century, too, there was a very simple and morose fashion of scantily decorated dresses, except for silver buttons and beading.

Sleeves were very narrow, but cut along the forearm to keep the elbow uncovered. Women adopted a train at the bottom of their skirts, the length of which determined their social rank.

In trans-alpine Gothic women's gowns, the cioppa featured different types of sleeves: wide, flared funnel-shaped, and even winged; they gave a glimpse of the sleeves and high, tight-fitting cuffs of the garment underneath.

Women of the lower classes throughout Europe wore a wide, often sleeveless dress called *garnello*, made of coarse cotton, hemp, or wool, almost always white or light in color.

**The Renaissance**

The end of the 15th century brought about the final separation of skirt and bust, and female figures became rounder at the hips and belly. Fashion changed according to changes in social morals and religious ethics.

Corsets and skirts that cinched the waist by resting on rigid structures were adopted. In particular, the farthingale (or *guardinfante*) was adopted, a rigid petticoat forged in different shapes according to fashion: cone-shaped in Spain, wheeled in France, and drum-shaped in England. The farthingale was first adopted by Princess Juana de Portugal, Queen of Castile (1438-1475) to conceal her second pregnancy. Her wide skirt that spread from top to bottom was made stiff by *verdugos*, hoops made of whalebone or reed slats.

At that time, corsets, farthingales, and ruffs constricted the body into wholly unnatural and uncomfortable shapes. The ruff, shirt, cuffs and handkerchiefs were adopted between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and became symbols of a definite aristocratic status.

The invention of printing that took place in the sixteenth century also enabled the wide dissemination of beauty and body care books containing prescriptions and recipes for perfumed waters, poultices and cosmetics according to the cosmetic pharmacopoeia of the time.

Likewise, with the vast increase in clothing production techniques, a specialized lexicon relating to the manufacture of clothing, accessories and decorative elements came to be established.

The development of textile arts such as embroidery and lace, which had been implemented both technically and in geographical spread between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, allowed for an increase in the number of women employed in the manufacturing sector: these increasingly used pattern booklets containing the patterns of the most desired embroideries (*cartiglia* or needle lace), a precious and ancient decorative ornament that was much loved throughout Europe. A creative and imaginative technical language was increasingly being created, full of technicalities that influenced all fashion to come.

The sixteenth century was a crucial moment in the history of fashion also due to important socioeconomic phenomena and there was a remarkable change in individual taste and behavior that fostered the expansion of a new sensibility, as it is evident from all the treatises in the field.

Throughout history, some accessories have risen to the role of religious or cultural symbols, such as the bonnet, the identity and religious tool of the Waldensian community used from the 12th century to the present day. The Waldensian Church was born in Lyon in the 12th century with the teachings of Valdo of Lyons (Lyon, 1140-1206) as a response to the corruption of the Church of Rome. Present in Italy since the 13th century, the Waldensian community was subjected to harsh persecution for centuries (Tortora A. 2020).

At other times, some items of women's fashion have taken on purposes in addition to the strictly functional ones, as happened, for example, with the fan introduced in sixteenth-century Europe: in the eighteenth century the fan became (skillfully manipulated by female hands with certain movements) a real tool of communication and seduction (Barra F. 2020).

The word *fashion*, an unknown word between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had full attestation only in the following century; it appears to have been used for the first time in the work *Della carrozza da nolo, overo Del vestire, et usanze alla moda* (1648) by the Milanese abbot Agostino Lampugnani (Montanile M. 2020).

If fashion was a reflection of social living and reproduced the hierarchy of appearances, from the seventeenth century onward following the Protestant and Catholic Reformation, clothing was at the center of debates about wealth and poverty, excessive and superfluous, necessary and sufficient, luxury and moderation. Clothing, in both Catholic and Protestant morality, had become the touchstone for measuring the relationship between customs and ethics.

Women's dress constructed in separate, rigid sections remained so throughout the seventeenth century, a time when a bulge in the back was noticed. This effect could be achieved by a *criarde,* a typical rubberized cloth petticoat on which the heavy and rich seventeenth-century over-skirt was pinned. Such an oval structure increasingly flattened at the front and back to widen at the hips, meeting the majestic fashion that could be seen at the court of the Sun King.

**The Eighteenth Century**

In the eighteenth century, the dress became the emblem of products capable of improving society and the quality of life for economists. The philosophical impulse of the French Enlightenment combined with the Industrial Revolution and typical English pragmatism led to a definitive shift in men's dress. The baroque wig was relegated to the attic: the new man took pride in his work and discovered a taste for comfort and outdoor physical activity.

In women's clothing, the turning point came with the import of exotic cottons printed with oriental and fanciful patterns from the Indies. They were particularly lightweight and conquered all European courts. During the Regency period, cottons were employed by the yardstick in the new French fashion of the flying gown, the *robe volant* or *andrienne*, launched by a famous play by Terence in which the protagonist (Andria)

wore a plain bell-shaped gown fastened at the shoulders and bulged at the back by a new hooped structure, the *panier*.

By the middle of the century, the most popular model in France was the so-called *robe à la francaise,* also worn on the panier: it consisted of an overcoat, a petticoat, and a breastplate. Open at the front, it bore two sets of pleats at the back. The variant *à la polonaise* saw the richness of the upper robe gathered at the back by two drawstrings that formed a voluminous and decorative drapery.

In the late eighteenth century, the grandeur of surcoats dictated the necessary adoption of a folding panier, suitable precisely for gowns such as the *robe à panier* and *the robe à la française.* The panier, which saw increasingly light and jointed models to facilitate passage through doors, took on an elliptical shape, developing the volume of the skirt only on the hips and flattening the front and back.

The *robe à plis Watteau* made its appearance, considered a robe-mantle in that it was a combination of two types of dress: narrow and tight-fitting in front, low-cut and buttoned, while at the back it was broad and full, falling from the shoulders in a series of fixed pleats.

The bulkiness of the dresses eventually led to a preference for less demanding gowns: *à la polanaise, à la circassienne, à l'anglaise,* supported by the *tournure,* a new model of basket whose structure consisted of a series of barely curved slats at the front and a series of very curved slats at the back, where it was fitted with a large padding: its function was to give volume to the rich back draperies of the dresses.

Another fashionable dress of the Enlightenment was the *chemise à la reine,* worn by Queen Marie Antoinette in the portrait by the painter Elisabet Vigèe Lebrun: it was a shirt-dress made of very light white muslin, straight, with long sleeves and a sash at the waist. The width was held at the neckline by a drawstring, the sleeves had a series of gathers, and it had a large flounce at the bottom of the skirt.

The economic and political power of the European countries that saw them as protagonists throughout modern history conditioned fashion, which increasingly became a tool for social differentiation and the fulfillment of multiple deep needs.

Fashion intersects with literature and the other arts to paint the round human characters of all eras. Drawing from the rich theatrical *corpus* of Carlo Goldoni, we can note the taste and orientations of eighteenth-century fashion and the customs and mores of the time (Citro C. 2020). Fashion, along with objects and costumes, are of central importance in the narrative architecture on a par with other functional elements in the warp of the narrative. The insistence on clothes and objects becomes invaluable for the construction of the character and status.

Goldoni lived almost a century, and besides being a very skilled and incomparable scriptwriter, he was also a great observer of the human soul. His characters are brought to life by the accurate description of their attire and their foibles and manners, showing the social status and personal ambitions of each character.

By the 18th century, Venice had lost the luster that characterized it in the 14th and 15th centuries, when together with the other maritime powers it dominated international maritime trade. It remained a luxurious and cosmopolitan city, still capable of laying down the laws of fashion and elegance.

Among the female accessories that distinguished the high society woman in Venetian salons was the fan, made of silk, parchment or paper, hand-painted and adorned with pearls and gems. Carlo Goldoni dedicated an entire play to it, titled *The Fan*, where it rises to the role of communicative tool of unspoken feelings. It makes imperishable the eighteenth-century Rococo fashion in the period of the decadence of the bourgeois class (Goldoni C. 1980). Among the items for men, goggles and snuffboxes of rare fashion and precious manufacture reigned supreme.

Beginning in the 16th century, given the severe famines that oppressed Europe, many political authorities felt compelled to take some measures to curb the overflowing luxury at certain courts and social classes, also restricting the activities of merchants.

Even the Venetian republic at that time had enacted intransigent penalties against excessive luxury, both for sellers of precious fabrics and importers of fashionable costumes from France.

Even the Venetian republic had enacted intransigent penalties against excessive luxury, both for sellers of precious fabrics and importers of fashionable costumes from France. The government's prescriptions, however, were punctually disregarded, especially during the theater season and during the summer for the

summer holidays: wealthy upper-class Venetians spent entire fortunes on their theater dresses or on summer vacationing in the countryside, where the days were spent among balls, banquets and hunting parties.

Goldoni brought to the scene the profound crisis that the Venetian bourgeoisie was going through as it turned toward its own decadence: the sons of the bourgeoisie, blinded by the pomp of the nobles, tried to imitate them by spending lavish and very expensive vacations in villas outside the city, dressing as fashionably as possible, but without having the real wealth to pay their creditors.

Goldoni sketched a myriad of characters in a fine and ironic way, even describing their vices, customs and virtues. Thanks to his plays, we can observe of how the inconclusive and wasteful eagerness of the young bourgeois contrasted with the vision of the old bourgeois, now unable to understand the society that was evolving.

In *Le smanie per la villeggiatura* the main themes revolve around the new fashion of vacationing and the inadequacy (always concealed) of the financial capabilities of the young scions, burned by the urge to wear expensive clothes in the latest French fashion, without which it became impossible to leave (Goldoni C. 1962).

In *The Coffee Shop* the whole story unravels around the square's coffee shop, a place of meeting and gossip, from which the whole square, the stores and houses surrounding it are glimpsed. The protagonist is that Venetian petty and middle class so dear to Goldoni, made up of socially accepted daily gestures and rituals. Ridolfo, the owner of the store, is a solid, poised man who manages to keep the balance between the different patrons during the most disparate events. But there is among his customers a Neapolitan gentleman, Don Marzio, who is easy to slander and gossip, and who spreads discord as much as he can with bad jokes against everything and everyone. The character of this man is cleverly underscored by Goldoni with a small eyeglass that he possesses: through it, the gentleman spies on and analyzes anyone, going so far as to see even what does not exist. (Goldoni C. 1984).

**The Nineteenth Century**

At the turn of the century, neoclassical simplicity led to the recovery of some of the classical stylistic elements of Graeco-Roman antiquity: the courtly beauty of Greek statues evoked again the use of the tunic. While men wore dark colors and short spencer jackets over white culottes, women wore very light dresses in marble colors.

In the wake of Queen Marie Antoinette's *chemise-à-la-reine,* fashion adopted tunics that resembled those of vestals, long linen or cotton sleeveless shirts draped over the body and belted with ribbons below the breasts.

Another style in vogue was a very low-cut tunic with several drawstrings and balloon sleeves, with the shoulders covered by cashmere shawls. This so-called *Empire style* was the one that distinguished Napoleon's victories: the emperor commissioned the artist Isabey to design the gowns for his coronation, during which Josephine wore a high-cut gown at the breast decorated with gold embroidery, short balloon sleeves, long gloves, and a cloak with a wide train in purple-red velvet.

Later in the nineteenth century, a typically bourgeois fashion emerged that fully expressed the ethical values of the Restoration. This perhaps had its roots in the French Calvinist fashion that had spread among Belgium, France, and Holland between the 16th and 17th centuries: as a common thread, a kind of conversion to austerity and the renunciation of frills (Muzzarelli M. G. 2011; Racinet A. 2012*;* Cole D. J., Deihl N. 2016).

Although the costumes of middle-class women appeared more casual than in the past as they were increasingly determined to acquire a social role similar to that of men, the *crinoline* made its appearance, a petticoat made of stiff and durable fabric, enlarged by iron hoops with a circumference of up to seven meters, the width of which was so considerable that it became an object of ridicule in the satirical newspapers of the time. The crinoline was worn indiscriminately with day and evening dresses. It was initially made of a fabric composed of horsehair and linen fiber (hence, its etymology). Created to stiffen the collars of military personnel, it soon passed to the world of women's fashion in the forge of petticoats designed to support the heaviness and volume of early Victorian dresses.

In 1867 Charles F. Worth created the *demi-crinoline* through a reduction in the number of circles. Tournure and crinoline did not disappear for good until the turn of the century.

However, the richly draped nineteenth-century dress remained a luxury reserved for upper middle-class women. Commoners wore simple camisoles, aprons over gathered skirts made of coarse fabric, and corsets to support the breasts.

Around 1885 the suit made its appearance, borrowed from the men's wardrobe, worn on the *cul-de-Paris,* a padded pad that enhanced and emphasized the back of the skirt and was worn under both housedresses and elegant evening gowns.

In 1889, the Eiffel Tower rose on the Paris skyline with its thin, flared line, the brainchild of Gustave Eiffel in celebration of the centenary of the French Revolution during the Universal Exhibition on the Champs de Mars.

At that time, gowns began to take a variety of shapes, inspired by the emerging fashion of stylizing sartorial lines and curves: this stylistic trend was later transposed into decoration and throughout the Art Nouveau that followed and that was all the rage in the early twentieth century.

Dresses could be: tube-shaped as during the Napoleonic and Restoration eras, bell-shaped and domed. The Art Nouveau movement, the Viennese Secession, and Jugendstil in art and architecture, in pursuit of natural decorative forms, increasingly encouraged the stylization of forms in women's dresses, especially in graceful floral shapes: tube, corolla, calla, lily, campanula are terms used to describe the line of a dress. To fit such patterns, depending on the fashion, the body was forced into unnatural silhouettes: whirligig, S-shape, V-shape.

But before turning to the analysis of fashion in the twentieth century, let us see how the very concept of fashion began to take on entirely new roles and purposes.

If fashion had been a tool for communicating religious beliefs, morals, rank and class, used already in its capacity of standardization/distinction and to emphasize one's personality, at the end of the nineteenth century it also became a workhorse and bearer of ideals, new models of lifestyles and thought, as happened in particular with the Dandy movement.

Born in the mid-nineteenth century, Decadentism was a cultural phenomenon and a fashion at the same time that was not reduced to a simple style in dressing, but imposed itself as a life project and *"total fashion"* in search of a more authentic humanity. The greatest promoter of this ideal of life, along with Charles Baudelaire and Lord Byron, was Oscar Wilde (Amendola A. 2020).

It can be said that Wilde was the inventor of what we now call *"lifestyle",* a concept that definitely goes beyond the concept of fashion. *"I put my genius into my life. I put only my talent into my works",* Oscar Wilde said during a conversation with André Gide.

Oscar Fingall O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was a man passionate about life and the pleasures it could bring: a brilliant intellect, astonishing wisdom and a boundless generous nature enabled him to savor life to the full, despite the risks of an existence lived on the edge.

Born in Dublin in 1854, Wilde was a much-criticized writer: journalists of the time, in addition to emphasizing his ambiguous nature, competed to reveal every aspect of his colorful, Bohemian, and somewhat scandalous living for the time.

He began his career very young, publishing a few poems in various magazines. There were few who accepted his unconventional personality and his affected and pungent eloquence. But what was most criticized about Wilde was his aesthetic pose, often overtly hedonistic, with which he posed to the world: the writer offered himself to the world in the round, sparing nothing of himself, distinguishing himself from the other decadents of his time by the fact that he first and foremost exhibited his personality in drawing rooms all over the world. He made his life a work of art, and he is remembered for his eloquence and highly original aphorisms.

For Wilde, the ideals of breaking with the past (and also with his present) were the only stimulus that drove him to share his thoughts forcefully, even exposing his own dark side, including his vices. Always eager for new experiences and a great lover of travel and writing, Wilde became popular in social salons everywhere from London to Paris and later in the United States. His writings ranged from history to politics, theater to painting, art to life.

Artifice, reality and literature were fused together, although Wilde soon realized that *"life and art are tragically two irreconcilable systems: to embrace one, one must destroy the other"* (Amendola A. 2020).

His clothing, lifestyle, and extravagant conversation placed him overwhelmingly in the center of public attention; but above all he was the focus of the criticism and satire of the time, which did not fail to point out his socialist leanings and corrupt mores. Near the end of his life, he ended up in prison on charges of sexual perversion and homosexuality.

Wilde's great challenge was to be himself in a rigid and respectable Victorian age. Had he lived in the present day, he would have been a far more likely character and far less "monstrous" and "glamorous" than he was. Yeats said of him that he was the greatest conversationalist he had ever met.

Wilde exalted style and form, both in writing and conversation, using highly explosive and provocative paradoxes and epigrams. According to Wilde, morality, along with order and beauty, was to help man shape his existence into a harmonious and satisfying whole.

The dandy employed for his clothing all the items available at that time (headscarves, gloves, handkerchiefs, hats, short and long men's jackets, pants), but what distinguished him was the very elegant and whimsical combinations he made of them, and above all the pose with which he wore his clothes. *"The dandy must aspire to be sublime without interruption; he must live and sleep before a mirror",* wrote Baudelaire (Baudelaire C. 2017). Baudelaire was the best descriptor of the poetics, ideals and lifestyle of the cultural movement of the time. The dress completes the dandy, and the dandy, by his poses, enhances the dress.

An anecdote about Lord Brummel is highly significant regarding this concept: he would invite friends to attend his dressing to show them the simplicity of what he wore. But then his particular manner of appearance, his glamour, his pose, and his manner of conversation would congeal the whole into a magical, highly aesthetical effect.

In fact, the first half-century of the nineteenth century was marked by the explosion of English men's fashion made up of tailcoats, frock coats, and tight suits, cylinders suited to highly refined financiers who, thanks to the Industrial Revolution, had accumulated huge movable and real estate fortunes.

The poetics and philosophy of the dandy is expressed through dress, poses, language, and extreme elegance: the cloying and subversive fascination that emerges from this set of details is transformed into a provocation to society, a challenge to the stereotype of the time and moral judgments. The poetics of the dandy is individualistic, hedonistic, decadent; he is drawn to dreaming and evil, to certain forms of perversion, to the visionary nature that the dandy seeks to achieve through taking narcotics (Scaraffia G. 1981). He repudiates everyday life with ironic and irreverent masquerades in clothing and elocution, he is easily bored (Baudelaire's *spleen* summarizes and fully expresses this underlying mood of the dandy), chasing beauty and youth (Baudelaire C. 1869).

That is why Wilde superimposes the value of art on the value of life itself, deliberately confuses them. The dandy has an aristocratic figure, he moves as a *flaneur,* opposing the gray monotony of the daily routine with an unbridled hedonism in pursuit of the ephemeral, the useless, the empty and the excessive. The dandy stands as an unconventional nonconformist in a bourgeois society dominated by reason and the rhetoric of the good. The dandy believes in utopia as a possible and alternative answer to reason. Indeed, utopia coincides with reason itself and is also often manifested through an elegant spirit of play in a provocative way made of humor and *bon mot.*

The dandy's worst enemy is time, which destroys all worldly vanities. In the case just made, it is clear that a fashion phenomenon in a given historical period has significantly changed and influenced our society, so much so that nowadays clothing is often an expression of a well-rounded lifestyle, it is a manifestation of a political position, of thought, as well as of belonging to a certain social class.

Although Decadentism has long been reduced to pure frivolous and hedonistic mannerism disconnected from real life, over time it has established itself as an extremely important cultural phenomenon, as it contains *in nuce* all the elements of the contemporary lifestyle concept.

**1900-1959**

The twentieth century was extremely rich in novelties that are almost difficult to categorize and describe.

In the early years of the century, novelties arrived in Europe from the United States: Levi Strauss, a German who immigrated to America, had in 1873 invented a new pair of pants for California gold miners according to the latter's demands: the pants had to be comfortable and made of an extremely durable fabric. In Genoa, as early as the 16th century a blue cotton cloth called *Blu di Genova* was used in the manufacture of ships' sails and for tarpaulins as it was very strong, durable and easily washed. Thus, the name *blue jeans* derived from the fabric *Blue de Genes,* meaning blue of Genoa.

The first imports to America of such fabric were for making camp tents, but over the years, thanks to Levi Strauss, denim was used for work clothes, taking the name jeans or blue jeans.

In Europe, in the years between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, French Post-Impressionism was soon overtaken by Art Nouveau, a term that referred to everything that was new stylistically and idealistically, especially in the applied and decorative arts.

This new, dreamy style with an orientalist flavor was a way for many artists to break with the old nineteenth-century patterns that were too realistic for an age of renewal as it was at the turn of the century.

Art Nouveau, which declined its name in many different ways throughout Europe, spread to bourgeois drawing rooms with new designs for furniture, cutlery, chandeliers, and wallpapers, but the style was also introduced into dress and hairstyle fashion. In the applied arts, Art Nouveau attempted to reconcile art and industry and aimed to mass-produce unique pieces.

The century opened with the Paris International Exposition in 1900, where the fashion industry was also present, in which Parisian *haute couture* clearly predominated.

The underlying ideal of the early part of the century was that progress was unstoppable. In 1852 Parisian Aristide Boucicat had purchased the Bon Marchè, a textile and clothing emporium that soon began selling ready-made ladies' clothing, linens, hats, and footwear, thus setting itself on the path to becoming the prototype of the modern department store and channel for the mass market.

In 1902 the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Turin, driven by the first European artistic *avant-garde*, fashion saw the first creative outbursts of Italian designers. This experimental spirit was reconfirmed at the 1906 Milan International Exposition, where Rosa Genoni, inspired by the Renaissance and Botticelli's *Spring*, presented the *Spring dress*, thanks to which she won the Grand Prize in the Decorative Arts section.

But such an attempt was still not enough to consecrate Italian fashion as independent of French taste. While French *couturier* Paul Poiret proposed an elegance made up of soft lines and shapes that indulged the body, Mariano Fortuny in Venice experimented with fabrics and workmanship for dresses with a highly innovative structure, but always inspired by classicism: his designs include the *delphos*, a tight-fitting pleated tunic, and the kimono-sleeved cape cloak, inspired by the Orient and made with precious fabrics and hand prints.

During the same period, the print media landscape began to increase more and more, especially with regard to magazines. Women began to take on the traits of "modern", in step with the times and ready to stand alongside men on a social level as well (although they were still a long way from being truly emancipated).

The silent films and literature of the time also supported this ideal of the modern woman, especially with the emergence of a number of fascinating actresses, often *femmes fatales*, who shared certain rituals of seduction and eroticism, and who became very popular idols and cultural symbols of the collective imagination: their characters were developed thanks to clothes, jewelry and luxury items; they were women pervaded by the spasmodic pursuit of pleasure with a neurotic and impelling desire for emancipation.

Fashion magazines were showing signs of change, bringing new lifestyles and fashions, especially for women: suffice it to say that Vogue, a magazine founded in 1892 in New York, began to devote many articles to fashion, luxury, and high society sophistication. In later years, it then focused mainly on women's high fashion. Newspaper editorial offices were increasingly colonized by female writers and journalists who, behind pseudonyms, devoted much of their time to answering letters from their readers, full of their ever-changing needs (Leone W. 2020).

These phenomena together testify the close relationship that developed in those years between film stardom, literature, culture and fashion (Rimolo E. 2020).

This intertwining went on growing more and more in the following years, contributing, until World War I, to the emergence of new models of femininity and elegance.

If the first decade of the century had shown an intense intermingling of fashion, stylistic design and Art Nouveau, the following decade showed an even more intense connection of fashion with the artistic *avant-garde* of the time.

1911 was the year of consecration of Turin as a city of fashion: its Universal Exposition (organized to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Unification of Italy), ran for six months, from April to October.

Giacomo Balla's Futurism advocated gaining independence from the French *haute couture* market: with his multicolored vests, his *Manifesto of Futurist Men's Fashion* (1914), and the more explicit *Manifesto of Antineutral Dress* (1914), Balla listed the characteristics that dress should possess: *"dynamic, aggressive, shocking, volitional, violent, flying, increasing agility, joyful, illuminating, phosphorescent, simple and comfortable, short-lived, hygienic, variable"* (Balla G. 1914).

In 1915 World War I broke out, which halted activities and production throughout Europe for an abundant three years.

The 1920s were especially dominated by planning in the field of design at the Weimar School of Applied Arts, the Bauhaus. Design means planning, and its origins can be traced back to even the earliest human inventions. Around the 16th century inventors began to present their machines at courts, but it was in the 18th century that design became increasingly important, thanks to the advent of the Industrial Revolution (Dardi D., Pasca V. 2019).

Walter Gropius, its founder, had directed teaching in such a way that the design and construction of prototypes took place in the laboratory so that their feasibility, functionality, and cost-effectiveness could be tested.

Gropius succeeded in involving a variety of European *avant-garde* artists, giving rise to Rationalism and Industrial Design.

The design objects proposed by the Bauhaus were intended for a very wide and popular audience. The school's footprint was public and democratic, with abundant female participation and marked by genuine coexistence between students and teachers, as well as professional sharing.

During the three-year course, the student learned from two teachers, a master craftsman and a drawing master; therefore, learning was based especially on practical experience and the confrontation of ideas. This choice proved to be crucial, since at that time it was not possible to find artists with sufficient technical knowledge, nor craftsmen with great imagination for stylistic problems (De Fusco R. 2009).

The school soon had important economic and industrial recognition: prototypes often became the subject of patent contracts, thus guaranteeing an income for the students.

The influence of Bauhaus could soon be seen in all industries, from metal to wood, ceramics, furniture and fashion accessories.

Breuer's chair made of nickel-plated steel tubing became a symbol of that influence. Textiles, too, began to employ weaves more suitable for furniture and clothing, and looms were mechanized.

The Bauhaus had created a style based on rationality, functionality of products and exactness of the design.

The decade was marked by restorative aspirations, innovative impulse, and pro-American tendencies, and ended with the ruinous rupture marked by the 1929 crisis.

In Italy, Fascism was attempting the first steps toward a wholly Italian fashion and style, but imitation of French fashion was still more profitable than innovation (Gnoli S. 2012). Therefore, the Fascist government merely encouraged Italian manufacturing and folk traditions: women's dresses were embellished with typical Venetian embroidery lace and glass beads, acquiring an unmistakable touch of Italian originality.

The lines of dresses were extensively renewed, as smooth shapes that slid over the body were favored: the tube line was the favorite of women of the time. Compared to the previous century, the waist was no

longer emphasized by cuts, seams or restrictions, and the length of dresses was shortened, allowing a glimpse of the legs. Coco Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli were the leading designers of the era.

Although the first decades of the century were marked by major world economic development, the Great Depression of the 1930s that originated in the United States had an immediate impact on European countries.

World War II was also being prepared. Beyond the hegemonic and ideological causes that saw Hitler as the major player, the issues that led to World War II were essentially concerned with economic arrangements relating to the supply of raw materials (energy, coal, steel, oil), the traffic of goods, the domination of markets, the exploitation of resources, the exclusivity of commercial distribution channels, and the control of high finance in the absence of a world market under free competition.

Throughout the 1930s, France remained the world leader in fashion. In Italy, Mussolini, great promoter of an autarchic policy, understood the importance of the fashion industry, proposing a shapely, buxom woman against the model of the slender French woman. In 1932 the Ente Nazionale della Moda (National Fashion Board) was founded with the aim of certifying the Italian nature of production and greater diffusion of Italian products.

Raw materials were in short supply due to trade sanctions (1936), but the regime pushed Italians to devise new solutions toward the use of substitute materials, especially in accessories and footwear, in which Guccio Gucci and Salvatore Ferragamo soon distinguished themselves (Merlo E. 2003). The most widely used poor materials in the postwar period were raffia, cork, hemp, broom, Lanital and viscose.

Italian fashion was dominated mainly by the fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, a maverick and so extravagant that she managed to hold her own against the French Coco Chanel: her designs inspired by the *femmes fatales* of the cinema were extremely innovative, with bias cuts and draping that drew the mermaid silhouette.

The already established Coco Chanel proposed her own idea of lifestyle and fashion: she was the first to use cotton jersey for her sporty creations, a material that remained readily available even after World War I.

Chanel's woman broke with the past: vaguely androgynous, she did not emphasize the waistline, but wore garments that slid gently over the body.

Her most famous creations were the two-piece jacket-skirt and the idea of feminizing masculine garments such as pants.

Among her great successes was Chanel Perfume No. 5, of which, however, she held only 10 percent of the royalties for life, having entered into an unfavorable contract with Pierre Wertheimer, owner of the Bourjeois Perfumeries. The perfume is composed of 80 ingredients and has sold over 80 million packages over the years. Coco Chanel wanted a perfume that was intoxicating and highly provocative, with fragrances of a wide bouquet composed of orange, lily of the valley, rose, iris, bergamot, vanilla, Neroli, jasmine, amber, and much more.

After the Great War, fashion had come to a very strong standstill as fabrics and trimmings became scarce or overpriced; the making of clothes was almost entirely based on revisiting a few old dresses repurposed at home or by the seamstress on the basis of the models suggested by the magazines coming from Paris and America.

In the climate of postwar recovery, the monopoly of fashion returned to Paris with the launch of the *New Look* by Christian Dior. He had figured out exactly how to please international high society and, with targeted marketing tricks, from 1947 he managed to channel the world's interest into his production. Dior not only designed dresses, but also all kinds of other accessories: handbags, stockings, hats. His models impersonated the woman of the future in 360 degrees, from head to toe, from hairstyles to movements.

He rented sumptuous palaces for his fashion shows, and among his most important clients were Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret. Over the years, his successors to the style included such names as Yves Saint Laurent, Gianfranco Ferrè, and John Galliano.

Thus, *haute couture* was dominated by Christian Dior's dream: the New Look was characterized mainly by the expression of utmost grace and elegance, as well as luxury to the highest degree; his creations praised

optimism and superfluity: the corolla skirt model required more than three meters of fabric in double height, a nylon flounced petticoat and a waist-tightening *guêpière.*

The models proposed by Dior combined a variety of geometries adaptable to the female figure defined by the shape they replicated: A-line, H-line, Y-line, book, corolla, balloon, and profiled. His most famous proposal was the BAR suit with its famous corolla line, launched in 1947.

Dior studied draping directly on the model and proposed a well-rounded woman: he designed and created all sorts of hats, stockings, corsets and accessories for his ideal customer.

The designer succeeded in creating an atmosphere of spasmodic anticipation for his fashion shows, partly because the dresses were kept hidden until the last moment.

In Italy manufacturing was at its highest level in those years, which allowed its industry to understand that not only emancipation from France was possible, but also that it was possible to compete with dignity and satisfy the emerging American market thanks to the quality of the materials, accurate workmanship and abundant low-cost labor. Rome finally managed to emerge as an international protagonist thanks to the creations of Roman tailors such as the Fontana Sisters: cinema was also a great tool for promoting Italian fashion. Incidentally, Ferragamo's shoes were already being sold in Tod's stores in New York.

If previously fashion was presented at private ateliers, the 1950s opened with the first real fashion show organized by Giovanni Battista Giorgini at his residence at Villa Torrigiani in Florence. The fashion show was attended by Milanese, Florentine, Roman and Neapolitan designers, including the Roman Simonetta, Fabiani, the Fontana Sisters and Emilio Schuberth, the Milanese tailors Vanna and Noberasco, Germana Marucelli, Giorgio Avolio, Franco Bertoli and the Neapolitan Emilio Pucci; the latter offered his creations that had already entered the American market through his *Emilio* brand.

Giorgini had been privileged to know the tastes of the American market through his exports of Tuscan handicrafts such as straw, majolica and embroidered household linens. He sensed that the production of Italian *haute couture* could find acceptance in the American market and compete with the prices of Parisian creations. Giorgini cleverly organized the show immediately after the conclusion of the Paris fashion shows, so that American buyers would end their stay in Europe in Florence (VV. AA. 2010). American Time magazine publicized the event, extolling the quality and affordability of Italian production against the French *haute couture.*

This was the first real moment of the rise of Italian fashion, which went on to develop throughout the next decade, distinguishing itself for the conquest of the American markets.

Rome assumed a central role, both for the birth of Cinecittà, which was a privileged tool for the conveyance of Italian fashion, and for the founding of the Italian Fashion Union Chamber in 1958.

The previous year Yves Saint Laurent had replaced Dior at the helm of the famous fashion house, and the following year Valentino opened his own fashion house on Via Condotti in Rome (Tyrnauer M., Menkes S. 2011).

Innovations and technological advances were making great strides in the field of photography with color printing, in the cinema with the invention of the giant screen, in music with the introduction of long-playing, and television then entered every home.

The idea that fashion was a possible art form took shape in those years when fashion became a planetary, immediate and very powerful medium, like music and information.

One of the first to argue that fashion was closely related to art was Remy G. Saisselin with his 1959 essay *From Baudelaire to Christian Dior: the Poetics of Fashion*, in which he stated that *"a dress can be at a given moment a poem of form, color and movement, which in an instant can transform the wearer into a poetic apparition"* (Saisselin R. G. 1959).

Rather than contiguity, the idea of hybridization of languages can be advanced between art and fashion: let us think of pioneering examples such as those of Dali, Picasso and Pop Art itself.

Beyond the undeniable features of each branch, especially in terms of the languages of its own self-representation, we will see how over time the relations between fashion and art have intensified, hybridizing and transforming themselves definitively, but without ever erasing the very thin boundary that separates them.

We can safely say that at the end of the 1950s the era of a much deeper analysis of the value of fashion as a cultural and artistic expression began: starting from the examination of the already seen relations with the historical *avant-garde* of the early 20th century, from Art Nouveau to Futurism to Surrealism, their relations are then analyzed from 1959 onward from the semiotic, philological, philosophical and, why not, even economic perspectives (Barthes R. 1959).

If art progressively includes languages, forms and materials foreign to its origins and also adopts all aspects of the culture of sale, on the other hand, fashion comes closer and closer to a dematerialized and symbolic idea of dress in the strict sense, in an increasingly dynamic and conceptual interaction with the consumer/user: in other words, art increasingly takes on the characteristics of an object of market interest, while fashion acquires an increasingly cultural significance over time.

Let us not forget that Charles Frederick Worth also made citation, reinterpretation and crossover the measure of his strength; just as the great Venetian colorists portrayed in their rich sixteenth-century pictorial depictions the precious fabrics of the clothes of the nobles and clergymen of their time. Fundamentally, fashion did not originate as a major art, but as a minor art, having arisen to satisfy an existential need of man, namely that of *"dressing", "covering oneself",* unlike painting, sculpture, and cinema, which arose to satisfy aesthetic-cultural needs of human beings, and not out of necessity.

On the other hand, it is inevitable that some designers would later enter the ranks of artists precisely because of their cultural contribution, predominating over material factors.

**The 1960s**

In 1960 Yves Saint Laurent was fired from Dior and, after a long illness and a legal battle against the fashion house, opened his own fashion house flanked by his lifelong partner, Pierre Bergè.

Saint Laurent was a great innovator and many were his homages to the great masters of the 20th century such as Picasso, Warhol, and Van Gogh, when the art/fashion combination was not yet so obvious.

His designs were forerunners of the fashion to come, as he borrowed from menswear many garments that he adapted with wisdom and great elegance to the female body and interpreted (adapting them in an original way) Eastern and African ethnic patterns, making them usable to a Western audience. Yves Saint Laurent opened his first luxury ready-to-wear store on the *Rive Gauche* in Paris in 1967.

In 1963 Mary Quant in London made Twiggy wear the first miniskirt, completely revolutionizing all previous fashion and paving the way for new, more uninhibited sexual mores for the female gender. The miniskirt was a symbol of feminism, liberation, and provocation. It was ultra-short, but not vulgar; it was paired with sheer blouses or tight ribbed sweaters with high necks in bright colors. Women were showing increasingly androgynous shapes and were wearing pants and long-line dresses that were close-fitting to the body.

Women's fashion of the time was a collection of short, flared, colorful dresses: geometric, optical, polka dots and stripes triumphed; the Givenchy's dress was the famous trapeze shaped one, paired with colorful stockings and knee-high boots.

Glasses and jewelry became larger and more colorful, often made of plastic; handbags also became larger, headbands and scarves came back into fashion. Women's makeup began to focus on the eyes to make them intense through abundant use of mascara, false eyelashes drawn on the eyelids and eyeliner. Hair adorned the face with bangs and bobs, or was backcombed and gathered into buns.

For the first time, fashion was inspired both by fashions launched by film and TV and by street fashions, by rebellious and protesting youth realities. Young people were inventing and experimenting no longer succubi of fashion houses, but on the contrary, it was the designers who were inspired by them.

The concept of fashion acquired a new identity, no longer understood only as *haute couture,* but with democratic connotations, as it imposed itself from below: young people created their own styles, inspired by the street subcultures that sprung up almost everywhere and teenagers were inspired by their favorite bands they used to see on TV.

The concept of *looks* was born: clothes, accessories, attitude, or even just a small detail (a certain scarf, a pin) communicated which subculture one was inspired by.

England became the nerve center of the new trends replacing Paris. The sources of inspiration were the Beatles and the Rolling Stones; London became the center for spreading the news.

The concept of *Mix & Match* was born, meaning the coexistence of different styles inspired by music bands, groups of protesters, and the *bon ton* style of Audrey Hepburn in Breakfast at Tiffany's and Roman Holiday, movie icons par excellence.

Freedom was the key-word of the 1960s. The Western world was undergoing major historical transformations. Student protests were born: young people demonstrated in the streets against the war in Vietnam, against imperialism and capitalism, against all denied freedoms.

Ecological thinking was born, as the problem of pollution became much more prominent than before. In 1962 American biologist Rachel Carson (Carson R. 1962), starting from her biological and naturalistic observations, initiated the protest movement against the use of persistent chlorinated pesticides and also paved the way for ecological protest. It concerned criticism of the capitalist model as a whole, whose only law was and is to consume enormous amounts of resources in order to create increasing amounts of incomes. This model is mainly substantiated by the imperialistic subjugation of peoples and their territories (through wars or by creating induced needs) and then robbing their natural resources and exploiting local labor at derisory costs.

The aspiration for freedom and peace was also evident in the way the protesters dressed: their style consisted of colorful scarves, frayed jeans, oversize sweaters, duffle coats and parkas reminiscent of military style, and Clark-type shoes or tennis shoes.

In addition to the style of the protesters, other currents became firmly established in the following decade: among them, hippie and folk fashion.

The hippie culture was born in the United States in the wake of Pop Art, which was gaining popularity. This current quickly spread throughout the rest of the world thanks to film and television. It was a true way of life: the freedom was also to look as one wished by provoking and exaggerating in one's look: beards and hair were allowed to grow long and wild, colors were bright, floral patterns exaggerated, and decorations in naturalistic-floral themes were all the rage. Very loose, wide tunics that left the body free were worn in natural cotton or denim.

Almost completely banning makeup for women, the hippie style was presented as rather simple, but embellished with maxi accessories, colorful bandanas, flower necklaces, and tall, gaudy ethnic-inspired belts.

The same ethnic inspiration underlies the other great protagonist of Sixties fashion: the folk style. Its best representative is Bob Dylan: American by birth, the folk style draws on its peasant origins and the folk songs of American villages. This style still in use today consists mainly of plaid shirts, leather jackets, casually worn vests, and ankle boots.

In Europe, the 1960s were marked by the increasing spread of industrial production and the development of sizing. This transition from tailoring to industrialization was by no means easy, nor was it painless: the idea of the dress already made in preformed sizes still brought back the idea of recycling that had come in handy in wartime. The suit was a real suit only if it was created and sewn at the tailor's shop to the customer's body measurements.

Needing to promote the garment industry, marketing began to refine itself more and more and assumed greater relevance in order to influence consumer choices.

In Italy the 1960s reconfirmed the success of the internationally known signatures: Emilio Pucci, Valentino, the Fendi Sisters, Mariuccia Mandelli (Krizia), and Florentines Ottavio and Rosita Missoni with their knitwear collections.

The National Chamber of Fashion, which had been dormant since its creation, was reactivated. Its goals were to manage the increasingly strong signs of crisis that were overshadowing the success of Italian fashion, especially the rivalry between the fashion houses of Florence and Rome, and to moderate rising operating costs, which were evidently spread over too few creations.

The 1960s saw the emergence of two strands in Italian fashion: *haute couture* on the one hand and luxury *prêt-à-porter* on the other. The main innovation was finally the establishment of the mass-made clothing industry: however, for such products there remained a major problem related to the product

distribution network, which proved to be inadequate to support a large industrial production. For this reason, many enterprises restructured their set-up to build a real unified system that was increasingly technological and cutting-edge in production, distribution and marketing.

**The 1970s**

*Milan at the Center of the International Scene*

The pace of Italian fashion began to accelerate considerably and the combination of style/industry led the sector to the most solid production centers, all concentrated in the Milan area, projecting this city into the international geography of fashion.

Persistent economic uncertainty led fledgling companies to reduce the number of employees to streamline costs, invest in new technologies, downsize facilities and decentralize production.

The move away from the Florentine catwalks supported by Krizia and Missoni meant that Milan was definitively established as a major international fashion capital, especially thanks to the strong entrepreneurial and managerial skills of some designers such as Albini, Versace and Armani (Morini E. 2006).

Walter Albini had sensed the need to respond adequately to changing tastes through greater customization of production, which could be accomplished through new collaborative relationships between designers and industrialists in the design and production stages. Albini presented in Milan the first collection born from such a partnership: the creative process was preceded by intense study and modification of machines and fabrics.

Stylists like Elio Fiorucci also had the ability to pick up on certain trends in advance, creating a fashion area in Milan's San Babila in just a few years thanks to trendy emporiums. At the Fiorucci emporium it was possible to find everything from poorly finished clothes to sky-high rafts, sweatshirts, jeans, and colorful accessories. Fiorucci's marketing remains to this day one of the most enviable examples of Italian fashion history.

*More Hippie, Folk and Mix & Match*

By 1964 there had been a birth boom thanks to a surge in economic prosperity. As a result, the 1970s were characterized by a youthful society more than in other historical periods. The fashion of the 1970s was characterized by excess and contrasts, reconfirming the trends born in the previous decade (particularly hippie and folk), to which others were added. Film and television icons and rock stars with their lives of excess and luxuries became the idols of the masses. The veneration of certain showbiz personalities is a phenomenon that increasingly amplified over time, and it is an absolute trend today.

In the 1970s, the Mix & Match trend continued: the trends of the time did not promote a one-size-fits-all style, but rather sought freedom in all its expressions, while embracing interest in and curiosity about other cultures, such as those of indigenous peoples and nomadic communities. Experimentation was the watchword of the decade.

The flower power/hippie counterculture experienced its heyday. This current opposed all forms of violence, advocating the triumph of love over everything. Clothing also expressed this ideal of peace and brotherhood: hippie fashion increasingly became a tool of protest and liberation from the standards imposed by society.

The excesses and experimentation were manifested in looks, drug use, behavior, and the sexual revolution. The first black supermodels and extremely unconventional and sexually ambiguous outfits appeared. Sexual ambiguity was soon a feature of many of the icons of the time. Television personalities and music bands were becoming spokesmen for hot topics and cultural issues such as racism, drug use, emigration, sexual violence and war.

The hippie movement sought to replicate the religious spirit, meditative practice, humble and essential lifestyle of the Hindu religion, especially after the Beatles returned from India.

The robes were worn indiscriminately by men and women, in the wake of unisex fashion, apt to eliminate gender diversification deemed discriminatory.

In addition to the loose, comfortable dresses and all the super-colored gadgets of the previous decade, shoes with vertiginous wedges were imposed on both men and women.

Jeans, the quintessential symbol of comfort and wearability, began its unstoppable rise in the 1970s, especially in the flared model. Hair was allowed to grow unkempt, often separated by a parting in the middle and held to the forehead by thin, colorful ties.

The hippie movement drew heavily from the cultures of nomadic peoples, from whom the flouncy skirts decorated with rattles and floral embroidery were borrowed.

From American Indian culture the movement drew a particular style made of feathers and leather: leather dresses, fringed suede pants and jackets and leather belts decorated with precious stones.

The cultural movement through outfits rich in ethnic references manifested solidarity with people crushed by the capitalist system.

In the more sober style of the civilian non-protesters, the miniskirt typical of the 1960s was replaced by wide long skirts including pleated ones, very short and tight-fitting shorts and medium and long pants skirts.

The 1970s were also the years of the explosion of knitwear and crochet with which sweaters, vests, cardigans, beanies, scarves, bags, leg warmers, and swimsuits were made.

*Disco Music*

During this decade, many new styles were born thanks to the interest in all pop stuff. With the emergence of dance floors and discotheques where disco music was played, a fashion that did not go unnoticed soon took hold: luminescent dresses under strobe lights, sequin tops, skirts, and jumpsuits for women; for men, tight shirts and flared pants, leather jackets, and short hair held back by glitter.

The study of polyurethane (or spandex, or Lycra) that began in 1937 in Bayer's research laboratories made it possible to develop a high-molecular-weight polymer to obtain fibers with great elastic properties.

*Unisex Patterns*

While Yves Saint Laurent in Paris modeled several traditionally masculine garments on women (the tuxedo, trench coat, knickerbockers and pantsuit), unisex fashion spread like wildfire in the rest of Europe. The androgynous style finally allowed women to adopt previously purely masculine garments such as jeans, pullovers, sports shoes, dungarees, and jumpsuits.

*Accessories*

To complete women's outfits, accessories contributed with comfortable, wide and functional handbags, shoulder bags and backpacks made of fabrics, rope and straw with ethnic patterns.

The alternative to platform shoes remained boots, both day and evening.

Very large sunglasses took on square shapes. Costume jewelry (necklaces, earrings, collars, rings) was decorated with feathers, leather, stones and colorful beads.

*The Glam Rock*

From the reverence for singers and bands came the glam rock fashion, whose greatest exponent was David Bowie. Such fashion also rejected gender diversity and immoderately favored sequins, Lycra and bright colors even in makeup and hair color.

*Punk*

Toward the end of the 1970s, a new counter-cultural movement peeped out in England that intended to break the rules of respectable bourgeois society and stood as a protest against racial prejudice and unemployment-induced malaise: punk.

The punk hairstyle is the typical one with a crest, sometimes colored; clothing is made up of black leather jackets paired with jeans tight inside typical military amphibious boots. The punk style also makes extensive use of strong symbols and images designed to outrage modesty.

**The Thirties/Forties' Revival**

The economic boom was gradually winding down to give way to a live, but slow and gradual decline. Toward the end of the decade the trend was to return to a more sober and androgynous, less flamboyant style: the hourglass figure of earlier years was revisited and repurposed with broad shoulder padding to outline a funnel-shaped bust.

Also in men's fashion there was a return toward a reinterpretation of 1930s/1940s fashions: high-waisted pants with darts and cut pockets and wide legs, but not bell-bottoms.

Navy-style jackets such as the duffle coat and double-breasted coats became popular; leather or suede jackets, with or without ethnic inserts, remained in vogue, always a trend in folk fashion. Single-color or plaid shirts gradually abandoned long, wide collars to the introduction of two buttons that stopped the short points.

The styles born in this controversial and very intense decade are often linked to different political leanings: if punk was fundamentally anarchist, in Italy the reinterpretation of the sober style, paired with a few luxury accessories rather indicated a right-wing inclination; just as the green Eskimo worn over jeans and Clark shoes were associated with politically committed young left-wing intellectuals.

**Haute Couture, Ready-to-Wear and Mass Market/Street Fashion**

Until the 1950s, fashion clothing was predominantly custom designed and produced. *Haute couture* created each garment for a specific customer with expensive high-quality fabrics, hand-sewn with extreme attention to detail and finish. Later, two other fashion markets developed: ready-to-wear and mass market.

Ready-to-wear clothes emerged in the 1960s and are a cross between *haute couture* and the mass market. They are not made for individual customers, but great attention is still paid to the choice and cut of fabric. The dresses are produced in small batches to ensure exclusivity, so they are quite expensive. Ready-to-wear collections are usually presented by fashion houses for each season during the so-called Fashion Week, which takes place twice a year.

The mass market that developed in the 1960s catered to a wide range of customers, producing ready-made clothes in large quantities and standard sizes, sold mainly in department stores. Materials are inexpensive, even when used creatively. Mass market designers use simpler production techniques that are easily machine-made to sell fashion at lower prices.

**The 1980s**

The 1980s were also so dense with novelties in a variety of respects that it seems almost impossible to give them any order.

To simplify, the study of the Eighties could ideally be divided into four major strands: the pure aesthetics of fashion where we see the birth and development of underground fashions and hip hop; the development of fashion in the industrial and economic world; the exchanges of languages and interactions between art and fashion; the birth of fashion studies.

*How Fashion Changes*

From the 1970s punk, glam rock style, folk and Mix & Match were imported, while hippie style was gradually declining. There remained, however, unisex clothing, which, indeed, was greatly enriched, especially in sports.

Many sports centers and gyms had sprung up where aerobics and bodybuilding were practiced: the cult of the body and fitness was developing more and more.

The current of disco music remained, but it was enriched and modified by the underground wave, also joined by hip hop, a fashion born in the streets (Frisa M. L., Tonchi S. 2004).

These were the years of Madonna and Michael Jackson, of commercial music products exported all over the world thanks to the birth of small private music TVs such as Video music in Italy and MTV in the world. The emerging homosexual community was trying to enfranchise itself in some circles, especially on the nightclub scene in major American metropolises, while the galloping AIDS problem was gradually coming to light.

The Thirties/Forty's revival of the Seventies led to a spin-off called yuppie, adopted especially by the young upstart traders of the Wall Street Stock Exchange, who flaunted a stylish office fashion, but trendy.

In the latter years of the twentieth century fashions became increasingly eclectic and transient, resulting in a multiplication of styles and consumption patterns.

Fashion, traditionally linked to seasonal creation, became increasingly diversified in part by virtue of the multiplication of its niche markets, outlets, shopping malls, online sales and extended sales.

In a world where the cult of image and "democratic" fashion exploded through the lifestyles proposed by the magazines, women acquired more and more tools to emancipate themselves.

*Fashion and Art*

Among the major events of this decade, the important intermingling and deep hybridization between art and fashion, especially in underground contexts, should be highlighted. In this context, *underground* means everything that was born at home, in garages and on the streets, and is not regulated by traditional market logic.

The debate about the nature (artistic or otherwise) of fashion arose and became increasingly heated in the early 1980s.

Bruno Latour suggested a new vision between the two languages of fashion and art: he believed that these worlds, although parallel, hybridized each other on a plane of mutual relations (Latour B. 2005).

The art/fashion relationship took on a very important significance, and the contiguity between the two languages allowed both to experience their most experimental and innovative output.

The relations between art and fashion were multiple: firstly, fashion shows borrowed the concept of performance and installation from the theater.

A small premise should be made about the birth of experimental and informal theater and the concept of *art installation*. Until the previous decade, the staging of theatrical performances followed a script or at least a plot, and the action would unfold in the course of the narrative within a predetermined logical system. The relationship between actors and public was hierarchical starting from the stage and addressed to the spectator, where the latter was only a passive receiver.

In the 1970s a huge number of experimental and informal exhibitions had emerged (in spite of the classical structure of visual storytelling employed until then), where the action was based totally on extemporaneous improvisation and where the spectator became an integral part of the performance.

One example among all is the one coming from the Living Theatre of Judith Malina and Julian Beck (Malina J. 2018). We can also recall the most important names of the so-called New Theater: Jerzy Grotowski, Tadeusz Kantor, Eugenio Barba and Giuseppe Bartolucci.

A similar thing happened in art, when among the second-generation artistic *avant-garde* (in the wake of the first-generation *avant-garde*, especially Dadaism and Surrealism) the concept of *art installation* was born (Baudot F. 2002): it was a three-dimensional visual artwork consisting of various elements arranged in a predetermined space to signify the extemporaneousness of the event. Installation, of Dadaist origin, is an artistic practice that developed in the second half of the twentieth century, based essentially on the assemblage and setting of objects, materials, and images that have no need for an organic fusion with a dramatic text. This term was used in the 1970s to define works created in indoor spaces such as galleries or museums. It was widely used by artists of different tendencies (minimalism, process art, conceptual art, neo-baroque, multimedia, pop). The installation can be a synthesis of different languages: raw materials, mechanical elements, video, sound or musical components, computerized images, etc. A fundamental artistic precedent can be traced back to Marcel Duchamp's so-called ready-made. It could include different media, objects and forms of expression.

In those years, Marshall McLuhan had introduced the concept of the global village, completely distorting the point of contact between the viewer and the observed object: McLuhan shifted the focus precisely to the interaction of the viewer with the work. The viewer is no longer merely passive, but stands as a subject interacting with the work itself. Herbert Marshall McLuhan was a Canadian sociologist, philosopher, literary critic and professor, and his fame is linked to his innovative interpretation of the effects produced by communication on both society and the behavior of individuals. McLuhan is the theorist of

the *technological determinism:* he believes that the collective imagination of a society is determined by the type of technology it has (McLuhan M 1964; Bauman Z. 1999; Benjamin W. 1966; Bauman Z. 2002).

Mc Luhan explains that, thanks to electricity whereby, the whole world becomes connected and indeed becomes a global village, interactions between individuals increase by leaps and bounds, enabling a much more intense cultural exchange than in the past. As a result, the work of art is enjoyed in a completely new way and the viewer becomes an active and integral part of the work of art itself.

The old classical conception of art had been challenged by the new theoretical and political reasons that opposed the old class-based status quo.

Essays like Umberto Eco's *Open Work* (1962) and Roland Barthes' *The Death of the Author* (1968) teach us that the deliberately incomplete or necessarily indeterminate aspects of a work stimulate the active interpretation of the viewer, who rises to the rank of co-creator.

This gave rise to the concept of interaction between work of art and viewer, which was to develop concretely in the 2000s with the global-popular spread of the Internet.

Within the critical debate that developed in the 1980s in the United States regarding whether or not fashion can be defined as a major type of art, we can place some important moments in which fashion was actually a work of art.

In February 1982, *Artforum* magazine dedicated its first cover to a model wearing a dress by Issey Miyake, thus sanctioning the institutionalization of such a fashion/art dialogue and the process of art's acquisition of the languages of fashion: Miyake's dress-sculpture assumed the dignity of a work of art and the designer was likened to a real artist (Mancini M. G. 2020).

Artforum magazine's policy *"does not limit its territory to one visual world";* rather, it works at the real definition of art in the knowledge that *"boundaries are fluctuating"* (Celant G., Sischy I. 1982).

Such openness to the world of fashion on the part of the art world had already been widely adopted by other journals of art criticism and theory, including the journal *October* founded in 1976 by Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson as a result of their departure from *Artforum* magazine for theoretical-political reasons.

Contemporary art historians' interest in fashion transcends the merely aesthetic dimension. Both come to terms with market choices, communication strategies and trends.

According to Debord it is *spectacularization* that links them both, becoming a major component of contemporary society. (Debord G. 1967).

Debord also identifies capital with the showbiz: in fact, he argues that the true essence of the commodity is *spectacularization.* The commodity is not bought to be consumed, but for its symbolic charge.

Another important episode that lifted fashion as a major art occurred in 1983, when there was the first Yves Saint-Laurent retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

The relationship between art and fashion can be observed from different points of view: the close relationship between fashion designer and artist through mutual quotations and collaborations; art steals the tools of fashion techniques and makes them its own and vice versa, while fashion appropriates the images, icons and effigies of art (Capucci R. 1990).

Incursions into the world of fashion by artists continued with Street art, Graffitism, and Pop Art. Keith Haring painted fabrics, T-shirts, and watches for Vivienne Westwood, and his collaboration with Elio Fiorucci in Milan was instrumental in the opening of his emporium in San Babila (Fabbri F., Muzzarelli F. 2011).

Andy Warhol also designed for magazines such as Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, and Glamour; among other things, he had begun his career designing shoes that flowed into a series of works entitled *Diamond Dust Shoes*.

Again: in 1981 Gianni Versace created the *Warhol Evening Dress*; Depero made designs for some Vogue and Vanity Fair covers; in theatrical performances, the making of costumes was often entrusted to artists rather than designers.

*The Economic World of Fashion and Haute Couture*

The innovations introduced in these years and the extension of licensing contracts for the use of trademarks sanctioned a new era of success for the great Italian fashion brands, which became increasingly international. New trends no longer came only from France and Europe, but also from the United States, Japan and, indeed, Italy.

The imperative of the 1980s was *"to show".* Fashion photography triumphed as a communication tool in marketing strategies; the philosophy of life was expressed by the phrase *total look*: it stands for a style designed from head to toe in which everything is consistent, from the smallest accessory to the outerwear.

The success of images in business growth strategies found in the brand the specific symbol that satisfied the hedonistic need for consumption, regardless of the intrinsic qualities of the product.

The international success of the Italian system (governed by an integrated production chain between textile and clothing industries) was strengthened by the contribution of creativity and entrepreneurial and managerial ideas of established designers and new talents.

The latter certainly include the tailor Domenico Dolce and the graphic designer Stefano Gabbana, who presented their first collection in Milan in 1986, and Franco Moschino, who, after training designing the ready-to-wear production of some of the most important Italian fashion houses, debuted with the *Moschino Couture, Moschino Jeans,* and *Cheap&Chic* brands.

Among the greatest successes of Italian fashion in the 1980s appears first and foremost Giorgio Armani: the centerpiece of both his men's and women's collections was his deconstructed jacket. It became the *must-have* of both men's and women's wardrobes at a time when women were increasingly entering the working world.

American *Time* magazine in 1982 devoted its entire cover story to Armani and his deconstructed jacket. Armani fashion was now so widespread and well-known that his collections were marketed in the most luxurious American department stores. Richard Gere dressed Armani in the film *American Gigolo* (1980), helping to expand the brand's fame. Collaboration with industry and the use of royalties generated from licensing agreements for the use of the brand became the pillars on which the company, by then firmly anchored in the overseas market, was founded (Molho R. 2006).

*The Emergence of Fashion Studies*

Another important development in the 1980s was the emergence of a new strand of studies that we now call fashion studies, a set of multidisciplinary studies: they include sociology, anthropology, ethnography, marketing, psychology, semiotics, fashion and art criticism.

*Material culture* has also recently made inroads into the study of fashion: it deals with the material objects of fashion, attributing meanings to them that transcend their actual use attributed to them by the people who use, collect, produce, sell and consume them: a bikini is not simply a piece of cloth worn for sunbathing, but a fundamental object of contemporary social practices (Riello G., Gerritsen A. 2016).

Fashion studies interpret and study the object of fashion in a new way, as new questions have arisen regarding the nature of fashion itself.

**The 1990s**

The 1990s were mainly characterized by the globalization trend and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which had enabled the first emigrations from Eastern countries to Western Europe.

European and American governments, aided by international banks, began to acquire more and more slices of the free competition market in order to channel them into a few increasingly solid and unassailable distribution channels: the supply of raw materials, all the way to television communication were increasingly managed by large international multinational corporations that tended to swallow up all other economic systems.

The production system on which Italian success had been built entered a crisis, and the strategies of small artisan fashion houses turned to the creative direction of foreign designers and investors to survive.

The peculiarity of fashion in the 1990s was the absence of unambiguous aesthetic trends and the fact that youth fashion was becoming increasingly similar across the globe: music televisions such as MTV spread simultaneously somewhat around the world, guiding the choices of youth toward common trends.

The creations of the great French *couturiers* and Italian designers were varied and imaginative, but always rapidly obsolescent.

The forms of fashion were the most unprecedented and contradictory: sportswear/elegant, poor luxury, chic/sporty style, and so on.

Gucci flourished again thanks to the collaboration with the American designer Tom Ford, who took over its creative direction and contributed to the company's renewal.

In the mid-1990s, success also came for Miuccia Prada, who in 1999 bought a share in the Jil Sander brand and thus established herself internationally.

Gianni Versace and Dolce&Gabbana dressed the pop star Madonna on the 1993 tour. In the same year, Gianfranco Ferrè was entrusted with the direction of the Maison Dior (Bankowsky J., Gingeras A., Wood C. 2009).

These are just some of the episodes that contributed to the fame of Italian fashion at a time when the production system was beginning to show signs of crisis. Meanwhile, small Italian companies increasingly began to move production out of Italy to lower their costs.

These changes marked a different economic arrangement than in the past, conditioning the global center of gravity of apparel production. Often, production was placed in Eastern countries, China and India for cheap labor.

**The Years 2000-2010**

The attack on the Twin Towers and the international recession caused by the collapse of Lehman Brothers characterized the first decade of the 2000s.

Instability, insecurity, emerging poverty, and deterioration of the political framework were the main ingredients that marked that decade.

The Italian fashion system was also affected by these changes, and only the most solid companies withstood the hard blows inflicted by the widespread impoverishment of the Western world. The economic swings have severely affected the apparel and luxury goods sectors. As widening inequality in income distribution lowered the vibrancy of demand for luxury goods, the fashion industry suffered from rising production costs, falling demand due to widespread impoverishment and slowing market growth.

The decentralization of production to non-European countries, however, increased demand from the East Asian region.

A few healthy Italian companies remained, among them certainly the Giorgio Armani empire. In 2000, an extensive monographic exhibition was dedicated to him at the Guggenheim in New York curated by Germano Celant, a key figure in the international history of exchanges between art and fashion (Celant G., Koda H., et al. 2003). The touring exhibition presented in five cities was defined by Thomas Krens, then director of the Guggenheim constellation, as a milestone in the history of exhibitions since *"it was the first time that the entire career of a single designer was presented in a way comparable to a retrospective of any other fashion designs"* (Krens T. 2003). In the substantial volume published on the occasion of the Berlin stop hosted at the Neue National Galerie, Germano Celant emphasized the classicism and minimalism of Armani's work (Altea G. 2001).

Collaborations between designers and artists took place, especially during some fashion shows. The artist Jutta Koether participated in Marc Jacobs' 2004 fashion show and read her own text before the show began. In the text, she analyzed the society of the showbiz, highlighting the brevity of time and the continuous quest for showmanship at all costs. The work was entitled *"20 minutes before Marc Jacob's catwalk"* and was intended to make people think about serious and committed issues and real problems.

Art and fashion were destined to meet with increasing frequency, and indeed, fashion was definitively consecrated as a true artistic activity, the language of which appeared absolutely worthy of the contemporary expressive aesthetic domain.

**The Years 2010-2023**

In addition to the increasingly invasive globalization, the relocation of goods production to China and India has enabled a drastic and irreversible surge in the galloping economic growth trend of these two non-European countries. As a corollary, the United States lost its world economic primacy, and pollution began to become a huge international problem.

At present, in the field of fashion, the environmental matter turns out to be one of the undoubtedly most interesting and sensitive topics from the point of view of human connection with one's territory in relation to the performance of the productive activities established on it.

Great attention is being paid to environmental issues by the media and institutions around the world. With increasing urgency, the problems of air and water pollution, global warming, climate and geological changes, waste production, and the protection of the various wildlife and protected biological diversity at risk of extinction (also due to the drastic morphological change of entire areas of the planet due to fires, deforestation, and other human interventions) are at the center of the public agenda.

Among the environmental issues plaguing the planet, climate change is certainly one of the most complex to address and also the most recent in chronological terms. Phenomena such as the alteration of the cycles of the seasons, the scarcity of water resources, the multiplication of devastating fires that are often arson, the ever-increasing reduction of glaciers, and the great human migrations due to wars or for environmental reasons give an idea of the need to articulate the related studies and policies into a unified *corpus.*

Looking at government interventions on the environment, new solutions are sought that can curb global pollution and improve the quality of life of human beings, as well as protect nature itself.

Despite the blossoming of informal local initiatives, civil society struggles to give a systematic meaning and a legal foundation to necessary transformations of lifestyles in order to gain a better balance on the planet; industries are struggling to accept more correct paradigms to reduce and rationalize the consumption of raw materials, moving towards real circular economy models within the framework of truly sustainable development.

The redevelopment of some traditional sectors (agriculture, industry, fuel supply) is required because of a massive transformation of the European landscape due to the reduction of forested areas, which has occurred without taking into account other aspects of eco-compatibility.

Proper waste disposal plays an essential role in the contemporary economy. Eco-fashion involves a careful study of the types of raw materials used and a careful analysis of the entire supply chain.

Unlike other animals that are included in closed cycles of resource transformation, humans consume a large amount of resources and are able to make irreversible chemical and physical transformations in the environment. They create substances that do not occur in nature, often mixing materials that, following transformation, become indissoluble.

We speak of nonrenewable resources when their use can occur only once through an irreversible process.

The fashion industry also turns out to be one of the most polluting industries in the world and is in need of major restructuring in the very design of fashion itself.

It exploits, in huge quantities, many raw materials, including those available in limited quantities, such as oil.

Energy production in the world is still strongly tied to the use of nonrenewable resources such as oil, gas, and coal. The processing of such fuels never has 100 percent efficiency but rather has a margin of dissipation that we perceive in the form of pollution: waste heat, CO2, reduction in the quality level of a natural element.

A renewable resource is a source of matter that reproduces itself in nature in a short time, but such sources are often very limited: wind, sun, tides, geothermal energy, biomass (wood and other plants), fermentation gases, and plant-derived hydrocarbons.

European environmental policy began to take hold as early as the 1970s, prioritizing what were hot topics at the time: improving air and water quality by reducing pollutant emissions, protecting endangered plant and animal species, and introducing civil and criminal liability for industries for environmental

damage. The regulatory approach has become increasingly systematic, international, and cross-cutting, taking into account the increasingly global dimension of environmental damage.

General principles now established in European environmental policy include:

- the precautionary principle (a tool for managing presumed risks to human health or the environment);
- the principle of damage prevention and restoration;
- the *polluter pays* principle, aimed at preventing or repairing environmental damage caused to protected species and natural habitats, water, and soil.

The European legal framework consists of a series of multi-year environmental action programs that guide future international legislative and policy choices.

These action programs include a number of horizontal and vertical strategies that promote cooperation between different institutions at different levels, including international, regional, and supra-regional agreements on the different issues being addressed (biodiversity, climate change, air pollution, and so on). Ordinary instruments, such as directives, regulations, decisions, and opinions, are used to implement multi-year programs.

One of the key areas of European industry policy concerns the energy sector. The Union's challenges in this sector include import dependence, scarce endogenous resources, high and volatile energy prices, rising energy demand, security risks in producing and transit countries, growing threats posed by climate change, slow progress in energy efficiency, and the need for more transparent communications and further interconnection of energy markets. The Union's energy policy attempts to achieve an integrated market for security of energy supply and sustainability.

The related legislation is currently evolving. In light of the Lisbon Treaty and the Paris Agreement, the main goal of EU energy policy was and is to move to a zero-carbon economy. Currently, long-term national strategies are projecting an environmental policy vision at least until 2050.

The Union is working on the post-2020 regulatory regime to provide investors with much-needed clarity on future policies, where renewable energy will remain a key sector in the coming decades, as statistical science has shown that, in the absence of further action, renewable energy growth is likely to slow down after 2020.

A voluntary and very interesting phenomenon is making its way into the mindset of public and private actors: corporate social responsibility (or CSR). Social Contract Responsibility is a form of self-regulation that originated around 1950 in the private/corporate sphere whose practices are not imposed by laws: they are the set of procedures adopted by some companies in relation to the conditions of the worker within the company and the company's relationship with third parties (e.g., in the relationship between the damaging party and the injured party in case of environmental damage). For now, it is only a voluntary practice, a kind of self-limitation and self-responsibility of productive companies. CSR arises on the basis of an in-depth analysis of routine corporate governance practices that include calculations on risk assessment and risk management.

One of the tasks of CSR is to identify ways to communicate sustainability to other stakeholders involved in a dynamic rather than static way, which is also useful for prevention and information exchange.

Other goals of CSR are to create partnerships in an interactive way and to improve the quality of the work environment for employees while respecting human rights.

In addition, the study of CSR contributes to the evaluation of insurance and other appropriate financial coverage in cases of environmental damage.

The rate of ethical sensitivity that manufacturing companies show in the concrete implementation of CSR practices, especially in the field of fashion, is now becoming central.

A company's management of social and environmental issues is therefore a significant component of corporate governance, carrying out concrete and transparent actions for the company's shareholders and other stakeholders, including employees, suppliers, customers, partners, public institutions, and NGOs. Voluntary CSR practices go beyond compliance with legal requirements and can lead to optimal results and benefits that benefit the company in its operating environment.

Sometimes the principle of sustainable development comes up against other fundamental principles, such as the right to work, the right to profit, and the absolute right to the environment itself.

Since ecological instances are so important, the exponential development of current technological and information knowledge should not be underestimated because it could well contribute to a positive metamorphosis of environmental policies. For example, in the near future, blockchain technology could be used in many industries, especially for countering criminal acts perpetrated by large business entities or sector mafias.

EU policy on this front has been moving since May 2019 toward a virtual platform (EIOnet) that collects all voluntary declarations of large European companies that decide to adopt CSR policies. This embryonic self-declaration set-up could prove to be very important in the exchange of information and its validation among the various stakeholders.

As with all market-related information, CSR practices go a long way toward affecting the relationship with individual consumers and investors. If they are informed about the company's activities, the company can definitely improve its credibility, bypassing the level playing field imposed by the legislature.

CSR contributes to the improvement of social and environmental risk management, directly impacting the total quality of the company. Transparency regarding the results of a socially responsible approach is absolutely central to the CSR debate, as it allows social partners to assess how the company actually meets their expectations.

In the waste prevention and management policy enshrined in the Sixth Community Program, the Union intended to decouple waste generation from economic growth. It should be kept in mind that there is very little recyclable waste in the fashion sector.

Although landfill was the worst option from an environmental point of view (2005/666/COM), market signals often favored it, disregarding the environmental impact.

Taxing landfills encourages recycling and waste recovery, but price differences between national taxes often cause waste movements motivated by purely fiscal considerations and generate distortions of competition.

The European Commission encourages member states to exchange information on this issue and tends to set common criteria, such as environmentally effective minimum rates, to develop landfill taxes based on proven best practices.

Different packaging materials or different products within the same category (such as batteries) have different impacts on the environment, and market instruments should be accordingly differentiated.

Member states may adopt national provisions to discourage the production of packaging waste, promote its recovery, and encourage the collection and recycling of battery waste (Dir. 2006/66/EC). Measures must always respect the principle of non-discrimination and other EC Treaty internal market obligations ( Dir. 2004/12/EC).

Many European states use taxes, deposit/refund systems, or marketable permits for general or specific packaging waste (e.g., beverage packaging or plastic bags) (EEA 2006). Denmark has introduced a packaging tax that takes into account the different environmental impacts of different materials; Latvia also differentiates according to the material used (2006/216/COM).

Currently, industrial production implies a very high interest in the entire life cycle of the product up to the time of its disposal, especially with regard to its durability and how it is revalued at the end of the cycle.

Among the many waste materials, wood is absolutely natural and retains its characteristics even after being processed. It is the only material that humans can reproduce ecologically through replanting.

Among waste, rubber waste has attracted increasing interest in recent years. There are various systems for reusing the various materials and regenerating them. Mechanical recycling of plastic waste allows these items to become "second matter" due to the possible ways in which thermoplastic polymers can be enhanced.

Besides the environmental issue, the exchange between art and fashion has gradually been enriched by important episodes that have reconfirmed fashion as a cultural language of great importance. This liaison is increasingly manifest to the extent that the exchanges are reciprocal: artists have contributed to keeping alive a process that is unlikely to be scaled down because of the logic of entertainment and showbiz that dominates both the fashion and art worlds. It is a sudden and intense succession of exchanges and events

that lay in favor of a dematerialization of work and dress in favor of immaterial and symbolic forms. The current landscape increasingly sees fashion shows conceived according to a specific theme, whereby clothes are merely a backdrop for deeper messages ranging from identity issues to racial and political ones.

For example, the proposals of fashion designers Alessandro Michele and Demna Gvestalia prove to be very interesting; with blatant references to contemporary art forms, they refuse to produce elegance they don't know what to do with. After working for a full 12 years for Gucci, Alessandro Michele became its creative director in 2015. Demna Gvestalia, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, climbed abruptly out of anonymity with the success of the collective signature brand *Vetements* and then by becoming the creative director of Balenciaga.

Demna Gvestalia dresses his audience in t-shirts, department store bags, sweatshirts, and parkas that look like they came from a flea market. Close in taste and style to a young generation of painters who have trained in international academies in the last decade, Demna Gvestalia recently said: *"What is different about my point of view is pragmatism, the fashion world isn't the real world, and my aesthetics are a kind of hyperrealism. I am not interested in trying to live in some kind of dream. I'd be bored to death" (*Carter-Morley J. 2018).

A different sign is Alessandro Michele's proposal: the fashion show presenting the fall winter 2018-2019 collection was heralded by an invitation that consisted of a timer bearing the warning *"Parental Advisory Explicit Content".* The fashion show environment had been transformed into an operating room complete with cribs and lamps, and the audience was seated on plastic chairs typical of hospital waiting rooms. The collection featured incongruous juxtapositions of jewelry and balaclavas, precious fabrics, and eccentric headgear, and the models were accompanied by realistic models of dragons, chameleons, and severed heads. The similarity with artistic practice in the juxtaposition of incongruous elements suggests a scenario that is both realistic and absurd.

According to Alexander Fury, one of the most influential journalists in the trade press who interviewed the two designers in an unusual double interview, the very reason of their success lies in the fact that their proposal "dresses" the public since they conceive their clothes as individual creations: *"They're clothing people, not 'fashioning' them. The collections themselves include countless styles, worn every which way"* (Fury A. 2016).

Their proposal conveys a contemporary taste similar to that proposed in the arts, where standardized popular culture and sophisticated *avant-garde* culture meet.

These years are increasingly characterized by the almost total abolition of classical canons of beauty and sexual genders, while fashion accompanies and privileges the attribution of ever greater dignity to women in the world and their total emancipation from repressive cultural imprinting, including the fight against femicide, prevalent in recent times.

Culture is increasingly becoming a melting pot of information from all parts of the world and each individual can and does have the power and tools to emancipate himself or herself even from inhumane and now obsolete working conditions compared to current technological availability.

It is a slow process of worldwide cultural democratization that will still see blood spilled to establish itself, but which is reconfirmed day by day as the winning one.

All over the world from Europe to Asia the symbols of clothing, makeup and hairstyle are assembled in a scenic artifice in the sign of an aesthetic declined in a myriad of ways that exploits all means to communicate the disruptive need for freedom of women and the masses from the capitalist and repressive logics of globalization desired by the few and some retrograde societies still existing, even if our society is defined as fundamentally narcissistic. Actually, the messages that pass through fashion and individual expression are much deeper.

## PART II: INSIGHTS

### Insight I. The Role of Magazines in Contemporary Female Iconography

This analysis takes its cue from an essay by Emanuela Pece, who compares a number of women's fashion magazines from the second half of the 20th century and extrapolates an iconography that is in part still relevant today (Pece E. 2020).

The mass media are now instrumental in providing social and cultural representations. Women's magazines are considered one of the first mass media used by the fashion industry to convey the sale of clothing and accessories, including perfume, makeup, handbags, body products, etc.

Comparing some women's magazines that have driven fashion since the 1940s, one can see that the images and words are highly suggestive and primarily propose an iconic model of women in an upper-class lifestyle context.

Fashion magazines convey in a set of rules that express various meanings, from social background to sexual inclination in relation to a given historical and cultural context.

They are rich in symbolism and, although their primary purpose is to implement sales of certain garments, an important use of them is to produce cultural languages and patterns capable of influencing the choices and behavior of individuals (Mascio A. 2003).

Vogue magazine, which appeared in Italy in 1966, has a long tradition in lifestyle and to date is based in more than 20 countries; it is considered one of the most prestigious fashion magazines. Until 1966 in Italy the magazine was called *Novità* and was aimed at an elite group, dealing with fashion, style and interior design.

Vanity Fair, which originated in the United States around 1800, initially pitched itself as a humor magazine, later becoming a "society magazine" ironically depicting caricatures of the personalities of the time and reporting gossip related to the lives of prominent businessmen and entertainers.

Marie Claire was born as a high fashion magazine in the 1930s in France as a showcase for the high society of the time.

Alongside the fashion magazines, the Women's Encyclopedia of the 1960s encompassed all the tips and advice to become the "perfect hostess" and chronicled those years amid persistence in gender roles and changes in costume taking place (Pelizzari M. R. 2020).

The magazine cover is the showcase of the magazine itself; it has its own structure, usually a main image surrounded by the headlines of the trending topics that will later be developed within the magazine.

The magazine is a frame space, a visual environment in which to enclose the articulated construction of meanings, a "window on the world" (Tuchman G. 1978): the contents are related to each other by a frame of meaning that provides a dialogue between what the newspaper proposes and the user's reworking of said meanings.

The set of cultural, symbolic, and social information consists of verbal and visual content organized together in the "frame" that allows setting up a common thread, a container endowed with certain preset and known meanings related to a variety of topics of social interest and that can be conveyed through the image of women and fashion.

Pece has identified six main types of media frames:

1. **the woman-jewel,** symbolizing luxury and elegance. Her look refers to a wealthy and affluent lifestyle, and special attention to details (earrings, hats, glasses, handbags, shoes) used as elements that enrich a woman's personality and making her a symbol of elegance is highlighted. From the 1980s and 1990s onward, the representation of "luxury" seems to appear less in the covers.
2. **women's voice,** which features women who have an opinion on topics and issues of general interest related to everyday life: relationships, careers, the role of women and mothers in contemporary society. Women who stand out for excellence in a particular field (artistic, political, cultural, etc.) are nevertheless part of a reality that does not want to be perceived as distant nor unattainable. The media image of women is the tool that fashion magazines have to

publicly address topics of general interest that can reinforce or weaken classic female stereotypes while also trying to create new cultural trends.

3. **Natural beauty,** which enhances the beauty, sensuality and authenticity of being a woman. Photographic shots depicting women's faces and bodies aim to propose to the public the image of a woman *"au naturel"*.
4. **Women of art**, or photographs that recall paintings and works of art, where female faces and bodies are the very expression of art. Female images are reinvented and are subject to the interpretation of the artist/photographer.
5. **Icon women**, i.e., well-known faces from music, entertainment, film, theater, and politics who testify to success in a particular social sphere. Famous women become role models and reference points, as spokespersons for life experiences common to women's daily living.
6. **Female power,** whose images accentuate the masculine component of women, emphasized by male clothing and accessories: suits with jackets and pants in typically masculine poses. These are representations in which the woman plays a role, the male role, through clothing and posing.

Over the years we have witnessed an evolution in the iconic language of magazines and an extension of the thematic content covered.

It is evident that contemporary iconography no longer belongs to that elitist society depicted in the early issues of Vogue and Marie Claire. This evolution highlights a willingness to represent multiple images of the female universe with which any woman can recognize and identify.

If the iconic dimension prevails over the textual one in Vogue, it is also true that the use of descriptive titles and slogans accompanying the images, has evolved: slogans are increasingly catchy, seemingly disconnected from the rest of the news contained in the magazine.

The textual aspect takes on the function of a catalyst for the reader's attention. Among the most popular slogans we have: *"Feeling good"; "Love," "Real beauties," "Beautiful like this," "Chapter One," "Wonder,"* and *"The power of personality"*. Some of them allude to and anticipate the fashion shows in Milan, Tokyo and Paris.

Other slogans refer to certain fashion rules, such as: *winter fashion, style codes, style, classic fashion, women's fashion, seasonal look, dress for every evening, collections, the return of Italian glamour, rules to follow, patterns, geometric fashion, pastel colors, style power, autumn in color, trends, runway shows, ready-to-wear shows, remix fashion, glamour.*

In recent years we are witnessing new ways of reinterpreting female physicality that tend toward a representation of the body that disengages from the unattainable models of the past and, indeed, condemns body-shaming and broadens the acceptable canons of female beauty.

**Insight II. The Role of the Shop Window in the Contemporary Representation of Fashion**

This in-depth study takes its cue from an essay by Pier Pietro Brunelli, who identifies one of the main elements of the fashion shopping system: the fashion storefront, found throughout the urban streets and nerve centers of large metropolises.

The shop window displays clothing and accessories, goods and services in a highly beautified representation. It is a phenomenon of spectacularization of goods that characterizes urban space in several respects. Firstly, the location of the storefront matters, which may be in a high traffic street or, vice versa, in a restricted traffic zone, where the walk is enlivened by the various offerings glittering inside. The stores may be located in an area of historical and architectural interest, where the location itself serves as a frame for the store windows installed there.

The first goal of shop windows is to entice the customer to purchase. But the storefront can also be the subject of psycho-cultural and semiotic study, particularly with regard to its aesthetic-communicative aspects, since the relationship of the storefront with the consumer is rather complex creating an open dialogue with the consumer for the main purpose we have already mentioned.

In recent years, shop windows have very similar characteristics in every city thanks to the signs and images of large multinational brands, as can be seen in international cities of fashion and design (New York,

London, Paris, Milan, Tokyo, Shanghai). The storefronts in these cities attract different attention because of their location in cities of specific interest.

In psycho-cultural terms, the shop window represents a kind of threshold of desire for the consumer, who is defined by Deleuze as a *"desiring machine"*. The concept of the *"threshold of desire"* is developed by Guattari and Deleuze (Deleuze G., Guattari F. 1972). The storefront is a great alchemic glass in which to project eudaemonic and magnificent fantasies. *The Great Glass* (1915-23) is a work by Marcel Duchamp, the initiator of an artistic production of unraveling and desecrating the desiring alchemy produced by consumer society.

The advent of large-scale industrial production has led the fashion industry to increasingly sensationalize its products, and the characters of goods have begun to take on symbolic and evocative features to determine their aura, or rather, *allure.*

Such increasing spectacularization of goods has meant that, in addition to the function of conveying the customer to purchase, the storefront also rises to the task of entertaining the "spectator," and seems to be an anxiolytic and an anti-depressant.

The playful component of the storefront is nowadays much studied, since it must induce the customer to develop desiring fantasies and imaginations that go beyond simple rational, evaluative and economic reasoning.

This is why the seductive component is the most important: it enhances the aesthetic-communicative value of brands and goods. The *siren effect* of the showcase involves passions and emotions, subject of study in the psychology and semiotics of passions (Pezzini, I. 1991). The seductive power can be increased by the urban area in which the store is located and by the quantity and quality of storefronts found in that same area; some urban areas are distinguished as special *genius loci* of fashion; these are areas where the fashion shopping system is more concentrated, assuming a special commercial significance characterized by the affluence of a certain type of public.

In the contexts of walking and shopping where transportation traffic is reduced, the shop windows are enjoyed as a show that accompanies and colors the stroll. If the setting is also of historical-architectural interest, the consumer can further participate intimately in the prestige of the place and stroll amiably with *flaneur*-like stride. The *flaneur* is a figure who, in mid-19th century Paris, personified the wanderer of department stores who observed the spectacle of goods with curiosity and aesthetic detachment. This figure, described by the poetics of Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, expresses a sense of critical and creative participation in the changing times in the commercial scenario of the big cities (Benjamin W. 1966).

The promenade is graced by the lights of shop windows, more or less intense. There are areas where the fashion of youth sub-cultures prevails, presenting a liberating, trendy, unconventional aesthetic-communicative language with fairly affordable shopping proposals for a young audience. Such areas can also become hotbeds of new fashion trends.

The shop window also reflects the image of the consumer, who may see the reflection of himself in a fleeting narcissistic motion; attracted by his own image, he may think that the merchandise on display may enhance his own image: *"the shop window is thus a mixture of the subject that looks and the object that is looked at. The spectator/consumer is an actor, and the shop windows themselves seem to be looking at the audience. The shop window is the yardstick through which the consumer has the sense of being able to reevaluate his own image"*. In Bauman's words, the storefront invites us to measure our sense of adequacy; it is a mirror onto which desires and contradiction between being, having and appearing are projected.

Semiotics leads us to investigate what the typical signs of the storefront are: it then becomes a system of signification with its own logical-syntactic rules.

Signs become meanings through a reasoned display of clothing, lettering, price and quality indicator signs, photographic images, displays, decorations, mannequins, etc. This ensemble generates a narrative plot, designed by the window dresser according to the image the store wants to give of itself.

Jakobson identifies the six known factors of communication: the sender, the channel, the message, the code, the context and the receiver (Jakobson R. 1966).

The message assumes six special functions: emotional, phatic, poetic, referential, metalinguistic, and conative.

The emotional function of the showcase is embodied in the gradient of mood tone, e.g., the rate of cheerfulness and/or seriousness it expresses.

The phatic function concerns the actual visibility of goods and other display elements, it is an accent.

The poetic function concerns the aesthetics of the displayed goods. Also called the aesthetic function, this function can be investigated according to semiotics that leans into the field of arts and design, since it is given by the mixing of fashion with other fields of creativity and other forms of expression. However, this function always has a strongly perlocutionary function, that is, aimed at selling products and establishing trends and brands.

The metalinguistic function emphasizes the location of the display case.

The referential function deals with the contexts to which the narrative plot refers (style, social context, etc.).

The conative function refers to the verbal and visual messages that urge the customer to enter, inquire, and observe carefully (e.g., during sales).

The psycho-cultural aspects of the shop window are well expressed in Roland Barthes' famous study: he states that the entire fashion system is a purely *word-centric* language, whose phrases are composed of the connection of shapes, colors, symbols, and words that the consumer reworks in a personal way. Such dialogue also occurs with magazines and fashion shows, but window displays have the privilege of offering an immediately accessible live display, predisposing the audience to receive and rework the messages of the showcase. These messages, in addition to providing information about the quality and price of the goods on display, are aesthetic messages aimed at evoking inspirations, defined by Eco as *"fairy-tale narratives of possible worlds",* which, in psycho-cultural terms, become possible dreams, evocative of stimulating, magniloquent worlds in matters of the body, the person, sexuality, and prestige.

The discourses of fashion, design and entertainment are subject to a dynamic of rapid obsolescence that demands constant innovation; they are discourses that invite the audience to a passionate and poetic interpretation that is open and immediate.

Thus, the showcase has creative functions, an assembly box that is renewed every season, so it is an open work that evokes an atmosphere of mystery and expresses suggestions rather than literal information.

The literal clarity of a showcase makes it a "closed work," and unconscious elaborations are restricted, loosing part of its great ability to fascinate. The open work, as Eco explained, emphasizes the overall poetics of contemporary art, which is characterized by its enigmatic dimension, its ambivalence and thus a remarkable openness of interpretation (Eco U. 1962).

However, one should not run the risk of provoking disorienting, confusing and uninformative interpretations. Window dressing art is an effective mix of information and creative freedom.

We can say that the act of displaying goods has a persuasive force (which invites the consumer to choose and enter the store).

In addition, the storefront has its own strategy, since it is meant to persuade the consumer of the goodness and competitiveness of the goods displayed.

Bonfantini also identifies another function, that is, tending to build a dialogue with the consumer, where the observer speaks to the shop window, questioning it and also allowing himself to be questioned. The storefront solicits questions and produces answers.

The more goods displayed in the window show, the lower the quality and prestige of what is displayed: luxury windows tend to reduce the quantity of goods displayed, while cheaper shops tend to display an abundance of items.

The window show has its own three-dimension status and offers a live show in a public space. It has its own scenic text, almost theatrical.

In fact, window dressing can be considered a younger sister of the theatrical set design and anti-naturalistic performance installation typical of the twentieth century, made up of essential sets based on the play of shadows and light; it aims to decontextualize the objects to place them on a level of unreality, dematerializing them.

Estrangement and decontextualization amplify the viewer's state of fantastic participation, and thus also manipulate his critical attention as well.

The scenic elements of the shop window are clothes, displays, decorations, verbal messages (referring to descriptions and information about prices and discounts and sign-brands), lighting and optical effects, animated and sound effects (obtained mainly with the help of multimedia equipment). Sometimes the spectacular character of the storefront is highlighted by music from inside the store.

In some cases, the storefront may also be a window that offers the audience a view of the interior of the store itself; thus, its scenic narrative is a kind of invitation to follow a story-line unfolding within. This effect is accentuated when the storefront enters the store with a pre-entrance.

The scenic quality of a storefront is also determined by the architectural features of the storefront itself, its shape and width, the materials with which its structure is made, and its state of preservation and cleanliness.

Certain elements provide some indication of the kind of the store and its particular identity characteristics: for example, prices and offers or the highlighting of prestigious brands.

Thus, a storefront can provide information according to categorical classes:

- **luxury**: high quality and exclusive value of garments and brands;
- **expensive**: goods and brands that are not exclusive, but are particularly attractive in terms of trend and novelty;
- **cheap:** goods do not appear exclusive or of high quality;
- **affordable:** goods and brands of decent quality with competitive and affordable prices;
- **bazaar store:** storefront displaying a wide assortment of different goods without an overall concept or thematic content;
- **concept store:** plurality of goods with underlying concept (e.g. clothing, gadgets, CDs, books, Internet café);
- **boutique:** subjective store characterized by well-defined offerings, according to a strongly typifying merchandise line and assortment (e.g., men's, or women's clothing, dressy, casual, etc.);
- **objective store:** goods in the same category that aims to indicate the store's specialty in a categorical and stylistic area (e.g., shirting, knitwear, denim, sportswear, street style, ethnic, techno, etc.).

The storefront narrative between fairy tale and myth is a kind of macro-text that is composed of various texts that link to other texts, particularly those of fashion, design and the arts.

Scenic narratives can refer to a wide range of themes: sexuality, transgression, *bon ton* and sobriety, sports life, holidays, festivities, everyday situations, passions, technological, naturalistic, surrealistic, dreamlike contexts, etc.

In order to interpret the aesthetic-communicative aspects of the showcase and group them within meaningful cluster stories, Brunelli proposes to refer to certain mythical narratives having particular psycho-cultural meanings.

Myths are understood as archetypal narratives of human states of mind, attitudes and behaviors.

Brunelli particularly refers to four myths narrated by Plato in the *Phaedrus*: Apollo, Dionysus, The Muses and Eros. These mythical deities have the special ability to invade human beings in order to lead them to a state of inspired exaltation. In psycho-cultural terms, mythical invasion is considered by Jungian-area psychology as an archetypal phenomenon that develops in the collective unconscious and goes on to condition individual consciousnesses.

1) Apollo inspires attitudes that involve the pursuit of a state of concentration, thus discipline, purity, silence, magic, visionary, etc. Apollonian showcases evoke an understated elegance, sometimes magical and mysterious. Lighting and settings are designed to express aesthetic-communicative aspects of order, rigor, sometimes even a sense of mystical transport.
2) Dionysus, on the other hand, inspires a state of enthusiastic, collective, spontaneous, liberating euphoria that induces a loss of control and inhibitions in the name of celebration and confusion. Dionysian showcases are rich in visual stimuli and colors characterizing a playful, often unconventional, chaotic, ironic, and liberating atmosphere.

3) The Muses inspire poetic and inventive doing that invests the studio, working life and society. The showcases inspired by the Muses are characterized by artistic quotations that recall pictorial and musical currents.
4) Aphrodite and Eros inspire love and eroticism, seduction and sexual pleasure. Erotic drive is the passionate motive that also spills over into the earlier mythical sources of inspired exaltation, but aphrodisiac showcases precipitously present explicit narrative elements that evoke eroticism and passion that constitute their main theme.

**Insight III. How Luxury Goods Conquer the Markets**

If we want to point out which are the peculiar features of a luxury item (beyond the ones already seen) and how a brand becomes a luxury brand, we must modify our lexicon by introducing concepts like ***'dream', 'seduction', 'desire', 'exclusivity', 'classicism'*** and, of course, ***'nothing is impossible'.*** Keith Helfet (former Jaguar Cars styling manager) says that for a designer *"there is no greater satisfaction than creating an object of desire"* and we can see how the future of design is mainly *'seduction'.* When a brand is particularly solid and is able to invest in research and good minds, then it can produce luxury goods. A luxury good is a good whose demand increases proportionally to the increase in income, unlike it generally happens in other markets. They have a high flexibility in demand: as the number of high-income individuals increases, consumption of luxury goods increases.

The definitions of luxury good proposed by sociologists and consulting companies on the basis of market research and sector studies focus on the elements of the marketing mix developed specifically for this category of goods.

Luxury goods are capable of conferring a status of prestige, they are characterized by excellent quality, higher prices, a highly exclusive character and a strong emotional component when purchasing and owning the asset.

Luxury goods have:

- **excellent quality,** deriving from the exclusivity of the raw materials used (e.g. diamonds) and the care of the manufacturing processes; quality means a great guarantee about reliability and durability, conveys consumer confidence and a sense of 'eternity' given by the absence of defects;
- **aesthetic relevance.** The consumption of a luxury product constitutes a hedonistic and sensual experience involving taste, sight, touch, hearing and smell. They are placed on a par with artistic works;
- **high price.** It is legitimized, compared to other items of the same kind, but less quality. The idea of longevity generates a feeling of comfort;
- **uniqueness/rarity.** This is a crucial characteristic for the luxury industry and concerns both the demand and the supply side. The luxury good 'has to be earned': the greater its inaccessibility, the greater the desire it arouses. The rarity is linked to the uniqueness of the raw materials used and to the specific skills employed in the production process. The scarcity is also reflected in the distribution area: in contrast to mass stores that contain a wide choice of products of the most varied quality levels, the luxury shop has to offer a narrow range of highly selected goods and a certain attention to the design of the entire store;
- **superfluous character.** The product does not meet basic needs, its value does not derive from the functional component, but from the satisfaction of other nature. The superfluity can be linked to the concept of abundance, as the number of products purchased far exceeds the quantity necessary to satisfy functional needs;
- **patina of tradition.** The link with the past is fundamental. A luxury good must have a history, far removed from passing fashions, just as its production and sale must respect tradition.

In the second half of the 19th century a German statistician, Ernst Engel, studied the consumption expenditure of households in relation to their incomes, observed that: the poorer a family is, the greater the share of income allocated to the purchase of basic needs.

The growth in household income does not lead to a corresponding growth in food expenditure: Engel observed that, under these circumstances, consumers do not proportionally increase their spending on necessities, but their consumption choices migrate towards superior or luxury goods. Expenditure on basic needs, for example bread or milk, does not increase in the same proportion as income: above a certain threshold, if a family's income doubles or triples, they are unlikely to double or triple their consumption. Beyond a certain income level, then, the demand for such goods stabilizes, because consumers no longer have an interest to increase their consumption. Since the availability of greater economic resources leads consumers to direct their choices towards superior or luxury goods, the increase in demand for these goods **is more than proportional to the increase in income (Engel's law).**

The growth of the luxury market is historically correlated with GDP growth, and in the past 15 years has maintained a growing trend.

Bloomberg has created the *European luxury goods index:* it includes almost all companies operating in the luxury sector, such as LVMH (listed on the French market), Prada group (listed on the Hong Kong market), Tod's spa (listed on the stock exchange), Richmond and many others operating in the same segment.

On the other hand, Lidewij Edelkoort, a very famous trend forecaster, in his anti-fashion manifesto tells of the process that has irrevocably transformed fashion understood as *haute couture* and luxury goods: *haute couture* is dead, fashion is now an obsolete system, and the couturier, who produces unique clothes-pieces that are the object of collector's fetishism, has definitely lost its central position.

**Insight IV. The Phenomenon of Counterfeiting Luxury Brands**

Italy is known worldwide for fashion, a sector that creates a high economic value in terms of GDP, employment and know-how and represents a very relevant production sector especially in our "Made in Italy" economy, our calling card on the international market.

On the one hand, the Italian economy must adapt to the needs of the global market, and on the other hand, it must preserve those qualities and imagery that make each piece extraordinary and desirable. The brand "Made in Italy" indicates the excellence, quality, beauty, creativity, talent and innovation that Italian fashion, with all its manufacturing companies in the territory, means in the world. Italy holds a tradition of high quality manufacturing and ranks among the world's largest exporters of clothing, generating enormous economic value that deserves proper protection.

This market, however, offers great opportunities for counterfeiters to achieve illicit economic advantages.

Because of this worldwide success of Italian fashion, the phenomenon of counterfeiting of our luxury brands is widespread and has very high numbers.

The Italian regulatory system in this regard is unparalleled in the world and stems from the need to prevent the devaluation of brands through street, beach and stall sales.

Over the years, the phenomenon has intensified: counterfeit products have multiplied and counterfeiting systems have reached unprecedented levels of refinement. For this reason, the General Directorate for the Protection of Industrial Property-UIBM of the Ministry of Economic Development has decreed that the fashion sector is in particular need of regulatory protection and control interventions, and therefore commissioned Censis to conduct a sector analysis on the size and trend of counterfeiting for the period 2021-2023. The study involved desk analysis of available data and materials, interviews with privileged witnesses, and survey of a sample of 1,000 national residents, representative of the adult population, by gender, age, and geographic district of residence.

The main findings confirm the rise of the phenomenon, but highlight other previously lesser-known characteristics:

- the purchase of fake clothing and accessories is a mass experience involving mainly young people;
- the most falsified items are sportswear, casual and underwear, and handbags (handbags, clutches, backpacks, etc.);
- hundreds of pieces of counterfeit textiles were seized, and there was a strong presence of production and packaging activities of imitation products;

- in 2021, more than 62 percent of seizures involved goods from China, which is currently the largest producer of fake textiles.

Among the areas of production of counterfeit goods, Prato and Naples were reconfirmed as the cities of greatest production and assembly of fake goods, while Milan continues to hold the record for sorting and logistics of the fake, remaining the site of passage of goods.

The Censis analysis shows how counterfeiting is a complex, changing and adaptive phenomenon, always ready to seize every market opportunity through the diversification of products (from luxury, easy wear, sports, leather goods, etc.) and sales channels (integrating traditional ones with online).

The extent of its ramifications inside and outside the country cover all stages of the production chain: from the procurement of materials, to their processing, storage and marketing of finished products.

The Covid-19 pandemic has driven an amplification of counterfeiting through digital channels and has changed some Italians' purchasing behaviors: according to the latest Censis Report on Communication, 43 percent of Italians in 2021 purchased online, registering 6 percentage points more than in 2019 (Censis 2021).The increase in online sales has been matched by a shift of counterfeiters and malicious people away from traditional physical locations (markets, streets, beaches, etc.) to e-commerce; likewise, there has been a greater diversification of social media for the advertising and sale of fakes.

Very young people belonging to Generation Z (usually with greater digital skills) are the main buyers of e-fake: a recent survey by EUIPO testifies that 27% of young Italians between 15 and 24 years old over the past 12 months have intentionally purchased at least one counterfeit product.

In 2020, the fashion sector (including clothing, knitwear and leather goods) had about 34,000 enterprises, accounting for more than 9 percent of total manufacturing enterprises, employing more than 263,000 people, or 7 percent of the total.

For these enterprises, as for most other manufacturing enterprises, 2020 was also marked by a deep crisis due to the pandemic, with the production base shrinking by 4.8 percent compared to 2019. Despite this, data published in May 2022 by the Italian Union of Fashion Industry, returns a vital picture of the industry, with an average annual recovery of +22 percent, despite the expected market contractions due to the Ukrainian war.

Italian fashion items (clothing and accessories) are produced due to strong foreign demand. In 2021, the value of exports was about 35 million euros. The main destination market is Switzerland, which absorbs about 15 percent of exported products, followed by France and Germany.

Among other non-EU countries, the main buyers were the United States (7 percent of exported goods), followed by China (6.6 percent), the United Kingdom (4.7 percent), North Korea (4.6 percent) and Hong Kong (4.2 percent). Finally, Russia was the recipient of 2.8 percent of exports.

The pandemic unleashed in 2020 contributed to the closure of several fashion-related businesses, and seizures made by law enforcement agencies also contracted.

In 2021 there was an upswing in supply and demand in the counterfeit market: the Italian Financial Police and the Customs Agency made 4,623 seizures of clothing (taking more than 3 million items from the counterfeit market) and 3,325 seizures of clothing accessories, with the confiscation of more than 1,100,000 items.

Compared to 2020, seizures increased by 81 percent. Even more appreciable was the increase in seized clothing products (+117%) and accessories (+208%).

Thanks to the seizure operations, it is possible to get a fairly accurate idea of which items are the most imitated and in demand on the counterfeit market: in the case of clothing, mainly sports and casual clothing recurs, in this case t-shirts/polo shirts, undergarments, brand names and pieces of fabric. These types of clothing testify to the presence in the territory of a wide activity of assembling trademarks on neutral products.

Handbags, clutches, backpacks, etc. represent the most reproduced counterfeit item. Of the 3,325 seizures made during 2021, 72.3 percent involved leather goods, and of these 53.3 percent were handbags, totaling more than 100,000 items seized.

Among accessories, seizures also involved various items suitable for packaging (pins, buckles, buttons). The presence of fake goods was detected particularly in the areas of Rome, Naples, and Milan.

Considering the production aspect, the most affected area is Prato near Florence, which has long been a place of production and assembly of the products. This is followed by Naples (where the entire counterfeit chain is present, from production to marketing) and Milan, which for some years now has basically played the role of logistics platform.

More than 60 percent of the goods seized in 2021 came from China and Hong Kong: these are pieces found in warehouses on Italian territory and cataloged as if they were of Italian origin and provenance. Some of this merchandise comes from Greece: this testifies to the presence of a production and sorting market in Turkey and new production areas in Bangladesh and India.

Milan and its hinterland serve as a logistical hub for the transit of goods destined for other territories, as well as an area for the marketing of fake products: in Milan's Chinatown, two warehouses run by an entrepreneur of Chinese origin of garments bearing well-known luxury fashion brands destined for subsequent distribution in the north of the country were recently discovered. On the other hand, inspections carried out by the Local Police in some clothing stores led to the seizure of about 4,000 garments reproducing brands in vogue, especially among young people.

Another seizure carried out in the Niguarda neighborhood reveals the presence of manufacturing activities in the area: a print shop had been set up in the basement of an apartment building, where sportswear items with the counterfeit logo of Milan and other Serie A clubs were made.

In the summer of 2022, about 23,000 perfect copies of clothing and accessories of the most well-known fashion houses imported from Turkey and Greece with an estimated value of 4 million euros were seized. The illicit trade had been set up by a group of businessmen from Calabria, who used several companies and warehouses to store the goods in the Certosa area of Milan.

Copies were subsequently marketed at prices that were not excessively low so as not to cast doubt on the originality of the garments through a dedicated e-commerce portal, and advertised with campaigns on major social networks. The organization, in order to create around itself a gray area behind which to hide its malfeasance, had also purchased some official resale licenses of some brands.

In Milan, more than 5,000 textile products with the counterfeit Burberry brand name and 10,000 square meters of non-original Burberry branded fabric were seized.

Many fake fabrics were also found in the Prato area. Naples confirmed its reputation as a center of excellence for the reproduction of all kinds of fake goods: in the Forcella district, large seizures were made of about 10,000 garments, including handbags, jackets, pants, hats, scarves, and backpacks kept inside a clandestine domestic factory run by a Pakistani citizen.

Such activities in the production and sale of fake garments has now branched out throughout the country. With regard to leather goods, some major seizures have been made in Florence, in the Siena area, in Pisa, in Verona and in Padua. In addition, Venice is both a gateway and a marketing area for counterfeit leather goods and clothing: in 2021, 3,700 bags bearing the mendacious Made in Italy stamp were seized and sold in eight stores in downtown.

The city of Genoa, by nature a port city, is both an area of transit for containers usually coming from China and destined for other Italian regions, and an area of production and assembly in small workshops set up inside homes in the historic center.

E-commerce has become a widely used tool for selling fake products, making the phenomenon increasingly difficult to track and counter.

The *"Fake shopping"* operation carried out by the Financial Police of Jesi dismantled a sales network with ramifications present not only in the Marche region, but also in Palermo and Barletta Andria-Trani. During that operation, 1,400 customers were fined. The criminal network employed particularly the drop-shipping model, which allows intermediaries who contact potential customers to sell products online without owning them: orders are forwarded to suppliers based in China, who take care of directly shipping. The counterfeiters were using the social networking site Instagram, where links were posted advertising products that were quite similar to those of the big names, but neutral, as they were unbranded and had no price indication. Potential customers would contact the sellers via Instagram and WhatsApp messaging, where the true nature of the counterfeit products, sold at prices lower than the originals, would be revealed.

After choosing the product, the customer would proceed to prepay, mostly by credit cards, and receive the goods by express courier from the Far East.

The entities that are part of the network as intermediaries are both Italian and foreign, but in most cases of online sales, the last link in the chain is an Italian entity.

Among Italian consumers surveyed during a Customs Agency survey published in May 2022, at least 95 percent believe that counterfeiting of clothing items is a widespread phenomenon and that attempts to sell such goods are by no means episodic situations. 8 million Italians have purchased fake clothing or accessories at least once, often consciously, including through online purchases.

Sales techniques have changed substantially in recent years: currently, street and beach sellers limit the amount of items on display, often having a catalog or sampler on cell phones, iPads, or online to show the customer, thus limiting the risk of a possible seizure. Delivery, usually delayed, will then be arranged with the buyer.

Often, however, counterfeit products can also be found in stores or on market stalls, especially in city areas where the Chinese community, so-called Chinatown, is settled.

However, customer anonymity seems to be much more guaranteed with e-commerce. Data from the latest Censis Report show that almost half of Italians buy online, being able to say that the practice of e-shopping has now integrated with traditional ways of shopping.

The growth of online consumers is matched by an increase in the number of companies that have adopted a so-called marketplace approach through e-commerce channels.

Online selling exploits cross-links and cross-referrals between different channels to broaden the target audience and also often evade provider controls to hinder investigations.

Among the main web channels used are marketplaces such as Amazon and Alibaba. These large players have advanced automatic illicit goods supply detection systems that perform very well.

Usually, the sale of fake goods takes place through clone sites, which, in terms of domain, content and graphics, appear to be the legitimate sites of famous registered trademarks. Thus, infringement occurs through fraudulent registration of an identical (cyber-squatting) or similar (typo-squatting) domain.

In the specific case of fashion, it is the same law enforcement agencies that report the presence of numerous fake sites on the web. The counterfeiter places fake products for sale, letting visitors understand that they come directly from the manufacturers.

The computer apparatuses on which these online storefronts rest are mostly located in foreign countries or dispersed in a dense network of addresses and virtual hubs, the reconstruction of which from an investigative point of view is very complex. The only remedy is to shut down the site, which unfortunately is easily circumvented by connecting to other equally illegal Internet addresses. Moreover, when proceeding with a blackout, the user sees only a blank page without any information about what happened. To remedy this shortcoming, at the Milan Public Prosecutor's Office the preparation of an institutional web page to which all connections of Italian users attempting to access illegal websites subject to blackout are being authorized.

The number of customers who have no interest in purchasing original products is lately increasing. The critical target audience of the Z Generation is growing, as these users are more familiar with the Web and online shopping. The low cost of products remains the major driver for the intentional purchase of counterfeit goods.

Young people are increasingly "targeted" in their clothing choices and their consumption is influenced by social media. Among the products most in demand by young Italians are accessories such as handbags by Prada, Yves Saint Laurent, Celine, and Gucci that represent brands highly evocative of status. In terms of clothing, however, it is street-wear and sports-wear that represent the prevailing demand.

Among the dangers of buying fakes, labeling affixed later may not reflect the merchandise identity of a product in accordance with EU Regulation No. 1007/2011, which regulates the labeling rules for the textile and clothing sector. The labeling and traceability of products acquire particular importance in order to protect consumer safety and his ability to make informed choices. Traceability communicates to the consumer a set of product characteristics and the observation of environmental and labor rules in manufacturing companies.

Environmental sustainability surfaces among the factors influencing the shopping practices of the Generation Z. While price and quality still remain the first two discriminating factors at the time of purchase, almost one in ten Italians indicate environmental sustainability as a quality to be weighed in their purchase choice.

The translation of counterfeiting to the web has led the various stakeholders involved to focus their activities on preventing and controlling the digital marketplace.

Brand owners holding industrial property rights have long been cooperating with e-commerce players: marketplaces and social networks. These initiatives aim at developing shared seller vetting tools, detecting and removing counterfeit goods from platforms through the use of machine learning systems with predictive abilities.

Meanwhile, European bodies have launched a system of rules that will regulate digital services at the European level. The new Digital Services Regulation approved by the European Parliament on July 5, 2022, better known as the *Digital Services Act* (DSA) and in force since 2023, marks an important milestone in the field of digital regulation: it was created to protect users and ensure profits for businesses, to take greater responsibility of intermediaries and platforms. Platforms are therefore required to engage in active surveillance behaviors. Brands, for their part, have provided an increasing amount of merchandise information, because when imitations of goods are not crude but very sophisticated, high technical skills are required to ascertain their falsity.

Amazon has greatly implemented controls on its platform to secure cooperation with prestigious brands. The manufacturer can then use systems such as Brand Registry, whereby a right holder can register the description of all product features, whether they sell with Amazon.

Some gray areas in the regulatory environment that could frustrate prosecution occur, especially when it comes to identify the territory of the competent court.

Large luxury brands have their own brand protection strategy, but small and medium-sized companies are forced to enlist the help of specialized consulting firms, possibly relying on blockchain technology that allows for easier product traceability. Through this technology, it is possible to trace all production processes, thanks to the creation of a unique and immutable code that accompanies the entire life of the product. Any component lacking the above-mentioned identification code of either a company's internal production process or the production chain is therefore considered non-original.

Blockchain is a practice already used by large industrial groups (Maserati employs it to monitor the parts supply chain) and LVMH, owner of high-fashion brands such as Christian Dior, Bulgari, DK NY, Fendi, Céline, Guerlain, Marc Jacobs, Givenchy, Kenzo, Loro Piana, Emilio Pucci, and Louis Vuitton.

LVMH (along with Prada and Richmond) in July 2021 launched the *Aura Blockchain Consortium*, open to all luxury brands globally. Customers can access via the QR code on the product's certificate of authenticity its history and lifecycle, from creation to distribution.

**Insight V. How the Consumer Can Condition the Product: The Prosumer Concept**

A *prosumer* is a consumer who collaborates in the birth of the product he or she buys. The term derived from the compound of consumer/producer (Toffler A. 1980). In 1972 Marshall McLuhan and Barrington Nevitt anticipated that the consumer of electrical technology would become a producer himself (McLuhan M., Nevitt B. 1972).

The mixing of roles between producer and consumer originated with self-help cooperatives, movements that arose during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Currently, *prosumption* has become a fundamental feature of our times.

The term originated in reference to hobbyists who in recent years have begun to purchase increasingly technologically advanced, semi-professional, and high quality products: the purchase of such products carries higher expectations, and the prosumer's role is to bring greater customization and technical improvement to the product, based on his or her suggestions and personal needs. It should be noted that users' access to professional-grade equipment is possible due to a combination of several factors, such as: improved income and increased leisure time for certain social classes; the continued decline in product prices; the growth of dedicated web magazines and online forums.

To increase their profits, companies use interaction with their customers to continuously improve their items, resulting in a globalized mass production process of highly customized products: the prosumer participates in the production process by creating business value for free.

In the field of renewable energy, prosumers are the households or organizations that produce excess fuel or energy, which is then piped into a common grid available to other users.

These changes in the role of the consumer have also led to modify the company's approach to the user, especially in one aspect: as far as marketing is concerned, corporate websites (public or private) tend to be less and less static and much more dynamic, allowing for much more vivid one-to-one interaction than in the past, which, as a corollary, creates loyalty, often leading the customer to become a promoter of the company himself.

There are other aspects that need to be highlighted: the prosumer is reducing the role of the corporate producer to some extent, partly because the consumer is developing some capabilities for self-made products, such as with 3D printing and thanks to new multimedia technologies. Creation becomes open, independent, and nonprofit; culture is directed toward a consumer-to-consumer logic. Moreover, the prosumer is much more aware than the consumer of the past: he knows that he can affect prices and other market conditions, since he knows that the existence of the whole economy is to serve the consumer. That is why companies are much more attentive to consumer demands and therefore devote large portions of their budgets to research and development. Companies take into account the fundamental role of the prosumer, which also often affects demands for transparency regarding environmental compliance throughout the production chain.

Likewise, future trends in sustainable development seem to be heading toward greater awareness, which seems to be directly proportional to technological growth and the demands of certain social classes that are attentive to environmental issues. In spite of this, there are still many dark areas of government administrations, which often fail (or do not want) to curb the widespread ecological offenses, partly due to a stable capitalist mentality accustomed to little respect for human rights and the principle of healthiness, often bordering on illegal behavior.

In this regard, Corporate Social Responsibility and blockchain are yielding excellent results so that there can be an incorruptible registry online and open to all, where all the actions that companies put in place to protect the environment and human health can be permanently registered. This could prevent the proliferation of damaging and criminally deplorable attitudes, especially with regard to mafias in the environmental branch, which would automatically remain excluded from the global market.

Of course, these are only the first timid attempts by European public bodies toward maximum transparency and the globalization of environmental information. It is hoped in the future that this can expand and become a reality, allowing peoples around the world to enjoy their living natural beauty, just as Bolivian thought understands *Naturaleza*, to which the Government recently recognized 11 legal rights.

**Insight VI. Deceptive Advertising and Greenwashing: An Italian Case**

In the area of deceptive advertising, the concept of greenwashing is becoming increasingly popular. Green-washing is the use of corporate communication aimed at falsely or exaggeratedly presenting the image of a company, ostensibly committed to the environment with higher-value environmental performance than is actually the case, with the obvious goal of attracting the approval of customers and other public and private stakeholders.

There is an Italian legal case of green-washing that can serve as a paradigm in the production of green fabrics, and it concerns the use of a type of fabric for car seat covers.

The Miko company was accused of using untrue claims such as *"the first sustainable and 100% recyclable microfiber",* when this does not correspond to reality, especially since polyester is not 100% recyclable. The Alcantara company, for its part, considered these statements to be detrimental to its business, as they favored its competitor based on untrue product definitions. Alcantara took action in the Court, mainly because such use of green-washing can divert investments to unsustainable activities as opposed to others that are truly sustainable.

Some studies recently conducted by the European Union would confirm that consumer choices, at least in most cases, are made on the basis of a company's green choices, and that at least 42 percent of environmental advertising messages are false or misleading, influencing consumer and investor choices, thus damaging the competitiveness of the most virtuous companies.

The court of Gorizia confirms the above principle, according to which: *"the sensitivity towards environmental problems is very high today and the ecological virtues extolled by a company or a product can influence the consumer's purchasing choices".* The court stated that the environmental slogans used by Miko *"are certainly very generic and create in the consumer a green image of the company, without, however, actually giving an account of what company policies allow for greater respect for the environment and effectively reduce the impact that the production and marketing of an oil-derived fabric can determine in a positive sense on the environment and its respect".*

The same court points out that *"some of the concepts reported find denial in the very composition and derivation of the material itself".* The judges therefore reiterate that green environmental statements must be *"clear, truthful, accurate and not misleading, based on scientific data and presented in an understandable manner".*

Consequently, the Court of Gorizia ordered Miko to refrain from direct and indirect dissemination of the challenged advertisements and also imposed an obligation on the company to publish this order on its home page for 60 consecutive days, in addition to having to send copies of it to some customers.

In Italy, there is no specific regulation on green-washing, but there is one regarding general misleading advertising, namely the *Code of Self-Discipline of Commercial Communication* with which the branch is monitored by the Italian Antitrust Authority. At the same time, the Communications Guarantee Authority oversees the fair competition of operators and protects consumers in their fundamental freedoms. A number of rules have been issued in the past by the Competition Authority.

Some articles of the Code of Self-Regulation, particularly Articles 2 and 12 stipulate that advertising shall avoid any statement or representation that is likely to mislead consumers, including by omissions, ambiguities or exaggerations that are clearly not hyperbolic, and in case of violation, the Control Committee may invite the advertiser to change the commercial communication. In more serious cases, proceedings may be referred to the ordinary court.

While in general the new goal for the industry is to move away from the use of fossil-based materials, petroleum derivatives cannot be represented as green.

In general, greenwashing also causes strictly financial harm, materializing the main concern of nearly half of investors, as green bonds currently hover around $1 trillion and more.

Consumers, for their part, can ascertain the veracity of corporate sustainability through environmental certifications and by observing the type of communication employed by the company (clear, understandable, rather than vague and overly technical).

The war against greenwashing is recording an increasing number of international cases, especially based on the 7 key points compiled by Terra Choice Environmental Marketing Inc., to which one can always refer:

1. ***Sin of the hidden trade-off,*** is the most widely used practice and involves communication aimed at highlighting only certain product features, omitting communication of those environmentally negative aspects;
2. ***Sin of no proof***, which is the lack of clear and sufficient references regarding the characteristics that should be supported by certifications (possibly external), allowing easy accessibility to environmental protection information;
3. ***Sin of vagueness,*** involves the use of slogans containing vague statements that may lead to misunderstanding by the consumer;
4. ***Sin of worshiping false labels***, occurs when the company, through images and/or words, gives the impression that the product is certified by a third party, when in fact it is not; this also occurs with through the affixing of false labels;
5. ***Sin of irrelevance,*** when the company evidences environmental protection characteristics that are irrelevant to an informed consumer choice;

6. ***Sin of lesser of two evils,*** when the company boasts real environmental merit of the product, but tends to distract the consumer from the product's worse environmental effects;
7. ***Sin of fibbing***, when the company simply lies about the characteristics of the product, e.g., boasts of a nonexistent environmental certification.

Europe has a document on the taxonomy of sustainable activities that lists investments considered sustainable, to which the European Commission gives a green label. This Commission initiative is part of the European New Green Deal project, with the goal of reducing emissions and accelerating the energy transition to a low-carbon economy.

Greenwashing was already a widespread phenomenon in the 1970s. Recently, many states are cracking down on the practice: for example, France recently introduced a fine of up to 80 percent of the total cost of the misleading advertising campaign against companies that violate the precepts of fair green advertising.

Greenwashing should not, of course, be confused with green marketing. The latter is adopted by companies that want to make themselves socially responsible for the entire life cycle of their products: from monitoring the cycle, controlling of the entire production and distribution chain, packaging and corporate communication itself. In this case, the claims of companies that adopt green marketing are verifiable, as opposed to those companies that, especially since the 1990s, have used this form of misappropriation of non-real sustainable qualities often to conceal and make people forget a bad reputation.

Green marketing is in the broader realm of corporate management, dealing with product advertising communication, labeling and packaging.

Greenwashing has also become the subject of several purely psychological studies, some of which have pointed out that its use can even lead to a loss of consent on the part of the user, who considers it a deceptive behavior.

From the concept of greenwashing have then descended a number of neologisms that tend to accentuate certain social aspects: for example, *pink-washing* exploits issues of women's empowerment*, gender-washing* aims at the demolition of gender differences, and *rainbow-washing* tends to abolish the hetero/homosexual stereotype.

Consumers' perceptions are often linked to their awareness of where the product comes from. This is why sustainability labels have become so important: they can be conferred on a product either by an external organization or internally by the company itself: a variety of studies suggest that those from external entities are perceived as more reliable. The consumer choice also depends on the lack of substantive commitment to the environment by companies that profess to be green.

Corporate marketing exploits some of the principles of mass media manipulation, often omitting some information or, conversely, exploiting the overcrowding of it, according to different tactics.

As far as public and private institutions are concerned, information flow is often managed by so-called *spin doctors,* individuals with specific expertise and authorized to deal directly with the press.

Some entities, particularly public ones, are subject to the obligations of third-party or impartiality, but their communicative activities are not subject to the journalists' code of ethics.

Similarly, the lack of mediation that contemporary social media allow, fuels the lack of control over the information that reaches citizens directly, often resembling propaganda rather than a description of the truth.

Within advertising messages, certain principles of social psychology are then exploited, such as cognitive bias, or patterns of cognitive distortion that prevent correct decoding of the message, leading to errors in evaluation and inhibiting objectivity in judgment.

The individual, when faced with a choice, applies the so-called mental maps, established patterns of judgment that enable an immediate and decisive response, but which, however, do not always lead to the best result. Since these paradigms are already preconceived, they are often not applied following logical reasoning, but automatically.

Mind maps depend especially on factors such as: prior experience, cultural context, public opinion, beliefs and fears. In essence, biases are the result of the incorrect application of the parameters of logic and validity and can therefore affect choices and behavior.

The most common cognitive biases are:

- *the anchoring bias*, which is employed when using a main reference point corroborated by some adjustments that then lead to a result (sometimes distorted by the preponderance of a central element);
- *the confirmation bias,* which leans toward information that supports a preconceived idea to the exclusion of other information.
- But there are many others that may provide erroneous beliefs on the basis of a positive past experience *(memory bias)* or that exalt the individual's ego or focus on details that are not important in the actual choice. Indeed, it appears that the (uncertain) origin of the etymology of bias comes from the ancient Provencal word *biais,* meaning '*slanted'*.

In marketing and scams, the cognitive traps are often applied in order to capture attention to unreal or unimportant information to induce the user or victim to make the wrong choice.

In scientific reasoning, bias is considered a systematic error. For example, many scientific studies are biased by the fact that the subjects analyzed are only a small segment of the world's population, the so-called Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) and therefore not truly representative.

In the case of the ruling against Miko, the company could be said to have committed the sin of no proof and the sin of fibbing, lying about product characteristics and otherwise providing no realistic support on the disputed claims, deliberately contributing to the formation of an erroneous judgment on the part of the consumer.

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