

UC Santa Cruz

UC Santa Cruz Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

A Looming Possibility: Towards a Theory of the Textile

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4nk910jk>

Author

Archer, Nicole

Publication Date

2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SANTA CRUZ

A LOOMING POSSIBILITY: TOWARDS A THEORY OF THE TEXTILE

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS
with an emphasis in VISUAL STUDIES

by

Nicole Archer

June 2013

The Dissertation of Nicole Archer
is approved:

Professor David Marriott, Chair

Professor Teresa de Lauretis

Professor Jennifer González

Professor Irit Rogoff

Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Copyright © by

Nicole Archer

2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	v
Abstract	xiv
Acknowledgements	xvi
PREFACE	1
TOTAL FASHION	
Chapter One: Changing Clothes: Rudi Gernreich's Past Possible Futures	9
On the Eve of What's to Come	
Off the Grid	
Unraveled Artistry	
A Twin Paradox	
Stretching the Limits	
The Suit Heard Round the World	
UN(I)FORMED	
Chapter Two: The New Regiments: Getting Down to the Details	110
Mass Appeal	
(Un)Authorized Fabrics	
Chapter Three: Dirty Clothes: Perverting the Fantasies of Power	147
Suspended Animation	
NO HARD FEELINGS	
Chapter Four: Insecurity Blankets: The Production of Terror	185
Dressed to the Crimes	
Closet Tactics	

Appendices	224
Bibliography	229
Filmography	248

LIST OF FIGURES

TOTAL FASHION

- | | | |
|------|---|----|
| 1.1 | Newton, Helmut. <i>Rudi Gernreich with the 'pubikini,' his last creation, a few days before his death, Los Angeles.</i> 1985. | 8 |
| 1.2 | Manet, Edouard. <i>Olympia.</i> 1863. | 11 |
| 1.3 | Courbet, Gustave. <i>L'Origine du Monde (The Origin of the World).</i> 1866. | 11 |
| 1.4 | 'Gunter.' <i>Space 1999</i> Cast Photo. 1978. | 15 |
| 1.5 | <i>Star Trek</i> Cast Photo. c. 1966. (Photographer: Unknown.) | 16 |
| 1.6 | <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> Cast Photo. c. 1978. (Photographer: Unknown, possibly Mel Traxel.) | 19 |
| 1.7 | Cover <i>LIFE</i> magazine, August 13, 1971. (Photographers: [R] Nina Leen, [L] Lee Boltin.) | 21 |
| 1.8 | Gernreich, Rudi. Early, Unpublished sketch of the <i>pubikini</i> (Rudi Gernreich Papers - UCLA). 1985. | 22 |
| 1.9 | Gernreich, Rudi. Early, Unpublished sketch of the <i>pubikini</i> (Rudi Gernreich Papers - UCLA). 1985. | 22 |
| 1.10 | Gernreich, Rudi. Published <i>pubikini</i> drawing. 1985. | 22 |
| 1.11 | Hansen, James. <i>Monokini</i> , as it appeared in <i>Look</i> magazine. June 1964. | 28 |
| 1.12 | Gruber, John. <i>The Mattachine Society</i> [L to R]: Harry Hay, Dale Jennings, Rudi Gernreich, Stan Witt, Bob Hull, Chuck Rowland and Paul Benard. c. December 1951. | 32 |
| 1.13 | Zinner, Christa. <i>Rudi Gernreich and Oreste Pucciani.</i> c. 1954. | 36 |
| 1.14 | Dürer, Albrecht. <i>Der Zeichner des weiblichen Modells (Draftsman Drawing a Recumbent Woman).</i> 1525. | 39 |
| 1.15 | Advertisement for <i>Jantzen 'dreamliner'</i> swimsuit. c. mid-1950s. | 41 |
| 1.16 | Advertisement for <i>Catalina</i> swimsuits. c. mid-1950s. | 41 |
| 1.17 | Advertised <i>Catalina</i> swimsuit. c. mid-1950s. | 41 |
| 1.18 | Mitchell, Tommy. Jimmy Mitchell in Gernreich's first unconstructed swimsuit. 1952. | 43 |

1.19	Mitchell, Tommy. Jimmy Mitchell in Gernreich Swimsuit with vest and pinstripe detail. mid-1950's.	43
1.20	Mitchell, Tommy. Jimmy Mitchell in Gernreich Swimsuit with double-breasted front. mid-1950's.	43
1.21	Rico, William. Gernreich as a young dancer. c. early 1940s.	44
1.22	Mitchell, Tommy. A sampling of designs from Gernreich's 1962 Resort Wear Line. 1962.	45
1.23	<i>Look</i> magazine feature showing the 'total look' (page 76). October 5, 1965. (Photographer: Frank Horvat.)	47
1.24	Claxton, William. Gernreich's Typeface Dress with Matching Tights and Silk Signature Scarf. 1968.	47
1.25	Green, Sam. Edie Sedgwick at Andy Warhol Exhibit Opening, Philadelphia Institute for Contemporary Art. October 1965.	49
1.26	McDonough, Frank W. Andy Warhol and Gerard Malanga, dressed to the nines at the ICA Opening, <i>Village Voice</i> . October 14, 1965.	49
1.27	Dior, Christian. Dior's New Look: 'Bar' Suit and Jacket (Spring/Summer 1947) and Skirt, executed in 1969 from a 1949 Dior design. (Photograph from Metropolitan Museum of New York's Costume Institute.)	57
1.28	Dior, Christian. Dior's 'Bar Suit' from the New Look Collection. 1947. (Photograph from Archives Christian Dior.)	57
1.29	Zinner, Christa. Unidentified Model wearing an ensemble from Gernreich's first collection. c. 1948.	58
1.30	Hopper, Denis. Model Léon Bing and Rudi Gernreich in his Studio. c. mid-1960's.	58
1.31	Nancy Reagan, accompanied by President Ronald Reagan, in her John Galanos inaugural ball gown. 1981. (Photograph Credit: Mai/ Time LIFE Pictures/ Getty.)	60
1.32	Wasser, Julian. Rudi Gernreich with Léon Bing and John Galanos with an unnamed model. c. 1965.	61
1.33	Artist Unknown. ' <i>Revolution d'Octobre</i> ,' as if printed on fabric and windblown. (Taken from Lyotard 1981, 27.)	66

1.34	Claxton, William. Gernreich Typeface Dress with Matching Tights and Silk Signature Scarf. 1968.	68
1.35	'Rudi Liberates the Leg' Advertisement for Typeface Tights produced by The McCallum Boutique. August 1968.	68
1.36	Basic Illustration of the warp and woof (or weft) of a textile. c. 2000. (Image provided by TheFreeDictionary.com.)	72
1.37	Seiler-Baldinger, Annemarie. Knitting Schematics. 1994. (Image taken from taken from Seiler-Baldinger's <i>Textiles: A Classification of Techniques</i> .)	72
1.38	Seiler-Baldinger, Annemarie. Crocheting Schematics. 1994. (Image taken from taken from Seiler-Baldinger's <i>Textiles: A Classification of Techniques</i> .)	72
1.39	Mitchell, Tommy. A Gernreich white, plastic Evening Dress. 1954.	74
1.40	Claxton, William. Peggy Moffitt and unidentified model in Gernreich's Vinyl Jumpers. 1963.	76
1.41	Gustave, Courbet. <i>Young Ladies on the Bank of the Seine</i> . Before 1857.	76
1.42	Author's photo of Gernreich's Vinyl Snakeskin Jumper, c. mid-1960's. 2012. (Taken in FIDM archives.)	78
1.43	Author's photo of Gernreich's Vinyl Snakeskin Jumper, c. mid-1960's. 2012. (Taken in FIDM archives.)	78
1.44	Claxton, William. Belted, Yellow Gernreich Vinyl Swimsuit with Mother of Pearl Buttons. 1963.	79
1.45	Author's photo of Gernreich's Yellow, Vinyl Jumper with mother of pearl buttons. c. mid-1960's. 2012. (Taken in FIDM archives.)	79
1.46	Zinner, Christa. Cropped catwalk image of black, vinyl coat with embroidery, aka one of Gernreich's 'Austrian calvary officer looks' from his Fall 1967 collection, shown at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. January 20, 1968.	80
1.47	Author's Photo of Gernreich's Black, Vinyl Cape with detail of Embroidery. 2012. (Taken in FIDM archives.)	80
1.48	Zinner, Christa. Models in Cut-Out Dress and Swimsuit. 1961.	82

1.49	Claxton, William. Gernreich's Wool-Knit Dress with Transparent Vinyl Inserts. 1968.	82
1.50	Cover <i>Time</i> magazine. December 1, 1967. (Illustration by Boris Chaliapin.)	82
1.51	Scheider, Andre. Fashion Designer Jen Wilder's <i>Cult of California</i> Clothes, as photographed for Plus Model Magazine. October 2012.	84
1.52	Scheider, Andre. Fashion Designer Jen Wilder's <i>Cult of California</i> Clothes, as photographed for Plus Model Magazine. October 2012.	84
1.53	Claxton, William. Gernreich's black wool-knit and plastic bikini for his Resort line. 1968.	86
1.54	Riefenstahl, Leni. <i>Olympia</i> - film still, as it appears on cover of a film program. 1938.	86
1.55	'Hippie' dresses. [L] Porter, Thea for the <i>Thea Porter in London</i> label. [R] Hulanicki, Barbara for the <i>BIBA</i> label. c. early 1970's. (Photograph from The Kyoto Costume Institute, photo by Takashi Hatakeyama.)	88
1.56	Wasser, Julian. Gernreich's <i>Looks for the year 2000</i> . 1970.	90
1.57	Faure, Patricia [L] and Hideki Fujii [R]. Gernreich's <i>Looks for the year 2000</i> , produced for Expo '70 (Note: The look on left is intended for the young, the look on right is intended for the more aged). 1970.	90
1.58	Faure, Patricia. Gernreich's <i>Looks for the year 2000</i> , produced for Expo '70. 1970.	91
1.59	Faure, Patricia. Gernreich's <i>Looks for the year 2000</i> , produced for Expo '70. 1970.	91
1.60	Poncé College of Beauty's 'Help Stamp Out Rudi Gernreich' Advertisement. February 1970.	93
1.61	Claxton, William. <i>The 'Monokini.'</i> 1964.	100
1.62	Grossman, Henry. The <i>monokini</i> photographed for <i>LIFE</i> magazine. July 10, 1964.	101
1.63	Schutzer, Paul. The <i>monokini</i> photographed for <i>LIFE</i> magazine. July 10, 1964.	102

- 1.64** Claxton, William. Various Gernreich swimsuits, as the images appeared in *LIFE* magazine. July 10, 1964. 102
- 1.65** Thompson, Michael. Stacy Ferguson aka Fergie, photographed in homage to Moffitt and Gernreich, wearing a swimsuit by Yigal Azrouël. July 2009. 104

UN(I)FORMS

- 2.1** Currier & Ives. *Battle of Gettysburg July 3rd, 1863*. c. 19th Century. 109
- 2.2** Still from *The Tiller Girls* appearing on *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, hosted by Bob Monkhouse. 1967. 114
- 2.3** Berkeley, Busby (Choreographer). Film still of title song choreography, from *Dames*. 1934. (Director: Ray Enright.) 114
- 2.4** Charles, Larry (Director). Publicity still of Sasha Baron Cohen's title character in *The Dictator*, parodically displaying how the uniform can support the most 'absolute' articulations of power, not through the information symbolized in each of the badges, but in their neat profusion. 2012. 119
- 2.5** Judge, Mike (Director). Film still, in which the character Joanna (Jennifer Aniston) is scolded by her appropriately addressed superior for not wearing an appropriate amount of 'flair' (or cooky pins, etc.) on her waitressing uniform, from *Office Space*. 1999. 119
- 2.6** Beecroft, Vanessa. vb-39.005vb, performed at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, USA. 1999. 120
- 2.7** *New York Times* Cover Page. February 7, 2007. 127
- 2.8** Furst, David. "An Iraqi man comforted his mother, who collapsed yesterday after he was questioned by American soldiers under a new security plan for Baghdad" (Page A1). *The New York Times*. February 7, 2007. (Image copyrighted by Agence France-Presse/ Getty Images.) 127
- 2.9** Infographic, produced by *The New York Times*, which details the differences between the US Army's new and old combat uniform. February 7, 2007. (Photographs from PEO Soldier.) 129

2.10	One of several Battle Dress Uniform Camouflage Patterns, for the Temperate and Hot Weather BDU. c. 2000.	131
2.11	Universal Camouflage Pattern of the United States Army ACU (Army Combat Uniform). c. 2009.	131
2.12	A 100% polyester gaberdine. 2012. (Image from the Wujiang Wanshiyi Silk Co., Ltd.'s catalog, product number HL942103.)	138
2.13	Ad for Burberry's Gabardine advertisement, as it appears in <i>Indian Small Game Shooting</i> written by C.A.G. Rivaz. 1912.	141
3.1	<i>Der Nachtportier (The Night Porter)</i> , German Promotional Poster. 1974. (Director: Liliana Cavani.)	146
3.2	<i>The Night Porter</i> , US Promotional Poster. 1974.	146
3.3	<i>The Night Porter</i> , Criterion Collection DVD cover. 2000.	148
3.4	Audrey Napoleon <i>Ornamental Egos</i> album cover. 2011. (Photographer unknown.)	152
3.5	<i>Interview</i> magazine cover featuring the actress Kiera Knightly. December 2007/January 2008. (Photographer: Sam Taylor-Wood.)	152
3.6	Schorr, Collier. <i>Night Porter (Matthias)</i> . 2001.	153
3.7	<i>Numéro</i> China magazine cover, featuring hat from Marc Jacob's "Night Porter" collection, modeled by Doutzen Kroes. December 2011. (Photographer: Tiziano Magni.)	153
3.8	Mariah Carey as 'a Sexy Firefighter.' October 2008. (Photographer: Unknown.)	154
3.9	Beyoncé in a still from her video <i>Love on Top</i> . October 2011.	154
3.10	"Sexy Arresting Police Officer" adult costume, produced by <i>Leg Avenue</i> (one of a score of 'sexy cops and firefighters costumes' category). c. 2008.	154
3.11	<i>Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS</i> , US promotional poster. 1975. (Director: Don Edmonds.)	156
3.12	Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still, title image from <i>The Night Porter</i> , with actor Dirk Bogarde appearing on the left. 1974.	158

3.13	Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still, Dirk Bogarde in <i>The Night Porter's</i> opening interior Shot. 1974.	158
3.14	Riefenstahl, Leni (Director). Film still, Opening of the National Socialist Party Congress, from <i>Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)</i> . 1934.	161
3.15	Riefenstahl, Leni (Director). Film still, 'The Rally Closing,' from <i>Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)</i> . 1934.	161
3.16	Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still, a younger and naked Lucia, in line with other prisoners being processed upon arriving at the camp, alongside Max, who appears in uniform with camera in hand, from <i>The Night Porter</i> . 1974.	162
3.17	Riefenstahl, Leni (Director). Film still of the Labor Corps, from <i>Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)</i> . 1934.	165
3.18	Brooks, Mel (Director). Film still of Nazi chorus girls, from <i>The Producers</i> . 1968.	165
3.19	Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still of Max cleaning Lucia's wound and kissing her arm, while in the Camp, from <i>The Night Porter</i> . 1974.	166
3.20	Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still of Max and Lucia, years later, after reuniting and rekindling their affair, on the floor of the <i>Hotel zur Oper</i> , from <i>The Night Porter</i> . 1974.	170
3.21	Paramount Pictures publicity photo of Marlene Dietrich from <i>Morocco</i> , dressed in her famous tuxedo drag. 1930. (Director: Josef von Sternberg.)	172
3.22	Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still of Lucia, dressed in Piero Tossi's infamous costume and performing with the cabaret band of Nazi soldiers, from <i>The Night Porter</i> . 1974.	173
3.23	Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still of Lucia, dressed in Piero Tossi's infamous costume and performing for a group of Nazi soldiers and other inmates, serving as the soldiers' 'dates,' from <i>The Night Porter</i> . 1974.	173

NO HARD FEELINGS

- | | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 4.1 | Herbert, Gerald. Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey at the American Enterprise Institute, shaking the had of AEI President Christopher Demuth, after delivering his address. July 21, 2008. (Image copyrighted by Associated Press.) | 184 |
| 4.2 | <i>Ludovisi Throne</i> , detail. c. 460 BCE. | 193 |
| 4.3 | Buonarroti, Michelangelo. <i>Pietà</i> . 1498-1500. | 193 |
| 4.4 | Reubens, Pieter Paul. <i>The Descent from the Cross</i> . c. 1617 - 1618. | 194 |
| 4.5 | Magritte, Rene. <i>The Lovers (Les Amants)</i> . 1928. | 194 |
| 4.6 | J.H. Bufford's Lithography. <i>Cotton and Worsted Fancy Loom</i> , an advertisement for Brompton Loom Works in Worcester, MA. c. 1869-1872. | 196 |
| 4.7 | Prisoners arrive at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba's U.S. Military Base. Photo by Petty Officer 1st class Shane T. McCoy, U.S. Navy, for the U.S. Department of Defense. January 2002. | 201 |
| 4.8 | A hooded and wired prisoner (identified by the involved MP's as Abdou Hussain Saad Faleh, nicknamed Gilligan), held at the Abu Ghraib in Iraq by U.S. Army personnel and additional U.S. government agencies. The photograph was taken by Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick II. November 4, 2003. | 202 |
| 4.9 | A prisoner is hooded and handcuffed to walkway railings, after appearing to collapse. November 3, 2003. | 203 |
| 4.10 | A prisoner is stripped naked, hooded, and handcuffed to jail doors. c. late 2003. | 203 |
| 4.11 | Serrano, Andres. Special for the <i>New York Times Magazine</i> feature "Interrogating Ourselves." June 12, 2005. | 204 |

4.12 -	Photos taken with cameras owned by Cpl. Charles A. Graner Jr.	206
4.13	and Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick II. A detainee regularly referred to as “H---- ----,” but sometimes referred to as “W---- ----” (or “The Taxi Driver”), stripped naked and handcuffed in various stress positions, to a bedframe, with women’s underwear over his head. According to a Salon.com report, both prisoners described eerily similar abuse. “H---- ----” told the military Criminal Investigation Department officials that “They [Graner et.al.] gave me woman’s underwear that was rose color with flowers in it, and they put the bag over my face. One of them whispered in my ear, ‘Today I am going to fuck you,’ and he said this in Arabic” (Sherer and Benjamin). October 18 and 19, 2003.	
4.14	Botero, Fernando. <i>Abu Ghraib 60</i> . 2005.	212
4.15	Botero, Fernando. <i>Abu Ghraib 43 (triptych)</i> . 2005.	212
4.16	Haake, Hans. <i>Star Gazing</i> . 2004.	213
4.17	Brinkmann, Thorsten. <i>Jr. Whitestripe</i> . 2007.	214
4.18	Brinkmann, Thorsten. <i>Lady Glittersky</i> . 2009.	214
4.19	Brinkmann, Thorsten. <i>Milkymaid</i> . 2009.	214
4.20	Smith, Allison. <i>Untitled (02)</i> , from <i>NeedleWork</i> . 2009.	215
4.21	Smith, Allison. <i>Untitled (09)</i> , from <i>NeedleWork</i> . 2009.	215
4.22	Smith, Allison. <i>Untitled (04)</i> , from <i>NeedleWork</i> . 2009.	216
4.23	Smith, Allison. <i>Untitled (05)</i> , from <i>NeedleWork</i> . 2009.	216
4.24	Mann, Elana. Document from the performances of <i>Embroid/ Embroil</i> . September 11, 2007.	218
4.25 -	Mann, Elana. Images of the artist’s embroidered hand, following	219
4.27	her performance of <i>Embroid/Embroil</i> . September 11, 2007.	

ABSTRACT

Nicole Archer

A Looming Possibility: Towards a Theory of the Textile

A Looming Possibility: Towards a Theory of the Textile is, at its heart, a critical examination of the politics and aesthetics of desire. It positions ‘the textile’ as a material formed at the intersections of desire and modern politics, and it focuses attention on those instances where and when the textile’s ‘textility’ (or texture) trumps its ‘textuality’ (or readability). It does this in an effort to reconsider the *forms* of relations that desire and politics typically take in modern, Western culture, and to propose that we must be prepared to address the ‘consistencies’ of these relations—should we ever hope to meaningfully reform them.

The ways that fabric conditions and binds our bodies and desires is explored through close readings of fabrics that expose, supplement, and abstract the ways pleasure and felt experience adhere to one another through the body. The mid-century futurist fashion designs of Rudi Gernreich expose how the fashion system instrumentalizes the body’s ‘desire to move,’ while inscribing it within the time-signatures of modern capitalism; the subversive and fetishistic figurations of modern military uniforms, produced in the wake of Liliana Cavani’s 1974 film *The Night Porter*, reveal how the desire for flexibility is tempered by the physical comforts provided by discipline (and how the material conditions of the erotics of power and violence are made manifest); the War on Terror’s (un-)uniformed ‘unlawful enemy combatant’ is cast alongside the fabrics used in the capture and detention of high value targets—high-tech ‘digi-camouflages’ and crude hoods fashioned from sand

bags, laundry sacks, or disused towels.

Finally, this work critically engages a host of contemporary artworks produced by the likes of Fernando Botero, Thorsten Brinkman, Elana Mann, and Allison Smith, and asks how it is in those moments, when few put stock in their leaders' words or their land's written laws, that our confidence in cloth and its ability to articulate something 'real' about our current condition becomes crucial.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a great debt to my committee members, each of whom have deeply shaped the way that I think, teach, and generally interact with the world. Without the mentorship and friendship of Teresa de Lauretis, Jennifer González, David Marriott, and Irit Rogoff, this project would never have come to fruition. Without their varied and important contributions to their respective fields, this project might never have been imagined in the first place. I am continually inspired by each of their works.

I also want to thank the many wonderful thinkers who personally helped me parse the ideas and histories that inspired this project: my undergraduate advisor at New College of Florida, the feminist art historian, Cris Hassold; the History and the Visual Cultures faculty whom it was my good fortune to work with at Goldsmiths College, especially Sally Alexander, Gavin Butt, Howard Caygill, Simon O'Sullivan, and Rob Stone; and the equally exceptional faculty in the History of Consciousness and the History of Art and Visual Culture Departments who helped to guide me through the University of California, Santa Cruz, namely Martin Berger, Angela Davis, and Donna Haraway.

It was my good fortune to land at the San Francisco Art Institute shortly after I began the research for this project. The thought provoking work of my colleagues helped galvanize my interest in 'the textile'. I am particularly grateful for the friendship and inspiration provided by Zeina Barakeh, Claire Daigle, Allan DeSouza, Krista Lynes, and Jeannene Pryzbylski. I also want to thank the scores of undergraduate and graduate students that it has been my unwavering pleasure to work with, and especially my current and former advisees.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my fellow travelers and friends, those individuals I shared so many classrooms, coffees, and glasses of wine with as peers. The work of Adam Bush, Shannon Brownlee, Gerwin Gallob, Lucian Gomoll, Ros Gray, Eve Halpern, Ginger Hill, Jessen Kelly, Susan Kelly, Martha Kenney, Nick Mitchell, Surya Parekh, Adam Reed, Trevor Sangrey, Eric A. Stanley, and Anika Walke has inspired me to be rigorous, politically engaged, and generous. A brief shout out to Shelia Peuse, Anne Spalliero and Melanie Wylie ... if all graduate students could be so lucky.

I must also extend my deepest appreciations to my family and friends not already mentioned. Their unwavering support and understanding has allowed me to pursue and maintain my peculiar path in life: my parents (Concetta and Howard), my siblings (Arianne, Christopher, and Jonathan), and my extended/adopted families: the Andersson, Arad, Bunn-Ingram, Carl, Haj Mohammad, Hovenden-Ross, Johnson, Michalson, Paine, Petersen, Potterveld, Robbins-Lee, Shore, Tarbell, and Vella-Wilkinson clans. I want to especially thank Fiona Hovenden for helping me jump this project's final few hurdles. And to my tireless editor, constant co-conspirator, and favorite wordsmith Jesse Card Potterveld, thank you for everything.

Finally, I would like to dedicate the completion of this still rather preliminary work to the person whose brightness of spirit, endless curiosity about the world, and unwavering belief in the transformative power of avant-garde culture—even in the face of his own grave illness—stopped me from ever giving-up on this project. To my dearly beloved and admired friend Richard Ross.

Preface

A Looming Possibility: Towards a Theory of the Textile is, at its heart, a critical examination of the politics and aesthetics of desire. It positions ‘the textile’ as a material formed at the intersections of desire and modern politics, and it focuses attention on those instances where and when the textile’s ‘textility’ (or texture) trumps its ‘textuality’ (or readability). It does this in an effort to reconsider the *forms* that the desire and politics’ relations typically take in modern, Western culture and to propose that we must be prepared to address these relations’ ‘consistencies’—should we ever hope to meaningfully reform them.

The dissertation’s methods pick-up where Roland Barthes’ late work leaves off, specifically around the notion of ‘hyphology,’ or the idea that:

Text means *Tissue* [the translator’s choice for the French word ‘*tissu*,’ which can also be translated into ‘textile,’ ‘fabric,’ or ‘cloth’]; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue—this texture—the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web ... (*hyphos* is the tissue and the spider’s web).¹

¹ Barthes, *Pleasure* 64.

The project aims to formulate a means of lingering in the textile's volatile gum long enough to develop forms of critique that can account for the peculiar textiles 'we' are currently wrapped-up in—textiles made by and for globalized economies or within militarized laboratories. BioSteel™ textiles, for instance, which have literally substituted the unruly, cannibalistic spiders Barthes' knew with easily domesticated and genetically modified 'spider goats,' whose milk is made to contain the protein threads of dragline spider silk after the genes of an orb-weaver spider are synthetically spliced with a goat's DNA.²

Critical theories that remain content to think about the relationship between 'text' and 'textile' in purely etymological terms, or via metaphor (the social fabric, the Internet, the Fold, etc.), or by way of myth (Arachne's textiles, or Penelope's epic loom), will be hard pressed to account for the scales and particularities of such strange, neo-liberal and transgenic subjects. In this sense, the project works to hold various (Post)Structuralist theories of the text accountable for claiming to be 'radically materialist,' while instead remaining disembodied and intangible. It also suggests that this tendency is owed to the way textiles have traditionally been racialized and gendered—as 'woman's work,' for example—*contra* the text.

Through close readings of three radical re-figurations of the textile, the dissertation considers how fabric typically conditions and binds our desires and bodies. The central examples take-up textiles that expose, supplement, and abstract the ways pleasure and felt experience adhere to one another through the body.

² O'Brien and Walton, *Got Silk?*

Please note that I'd like to thank my friend and peer, Dr. Cressida Limon, for first alerting me to the presence of these bio-engineered, transgenic silk spinners.

The first section, 'Total Fashion,' ponders the innovations of the futurist, (anti-)fashion designer Rudi Gernreich. Through his deconstructed sportswear, Gernreich exposed how the fashion system instrumentalized the body's 'desire to move' while inscribing it within the time-signatures of modern capitalism. As a queer, Jewish refugee who witnessed avant-garde and socialist culture during his youth in inter-War Vienna, and who later trained as a modern dancer in mid-century Los Angeles, Gernreich was well poised to identify how the modern fashion system produced a fleeting *sense* of freedom, while simultaneously working to delimit the durations of our desires. Gernreich worked to liberate the body from this paradoxical situation by designing clothes that encouraged new repertoires of self-expression.

The project's second section explores contemporary fashion's other, namely the 'Un(i)form,' and particularly those uniforms that appear in the wake of World War II, after totalitarian regimes perfected this corporeal technology's capacity to enclose the body within rigid, disciplinary spaces. It asks readers to consider how the uniform might challenge law and order—by beating a path from the evolution of military uniforms and the recent controversies surrounding the development of *digi-camo* (or the redesigned and digitally remixed camouflage fatigues worn by the US military) and towards the iconic and deeply fetishized image of the actress Charlotte Rampling in Liliana Cavani's 1974 film *The Night Porter*. While the dissertation's first section explores the desire for 'freedom' and for alternative temporalities, this section considers the desire for discipline and physical restraint. It asks how revolutionary politics might re-address the tight spaces our desires are prone to work themselves into?

The final section, 'No Hard Feelings,' leads up to a consideration of how contemporary artists and filmmakers, such as Thorsten Brinkman, Elana Mann, and Allison Smith, are contending with the role textiles play within the New World Order, and particularly within the political terrains of terror. This section revolves around those materials that have come to efface the textures and taxonomies of fashion and uniformity so as to present themselves as a new form of international law making. Specifically speaking, this section concentrates on the way 'the hood' is used in the military transport of high value targets, wound around detainees' faces during waterboarding, and fashioned from sand bags to deface the enemy combatants at Abu Ghraib—all in the pursuit of a perverse desire for justice (*a desire that many feel is best met in the violent erasure of certain subjects*). This section argues that it is in those moments when few put stock in their leaders' words or their land's written laws, that our confidence in cloth and its ability to articulate something 'real' about our current condition becomes key. I claim the artists and directors surveyed in this section similarly recognize this, and are keen to use the textile in their efforts to critique and transform modern-day forms of justice and retribution.

T

o

t

a

l

F

a

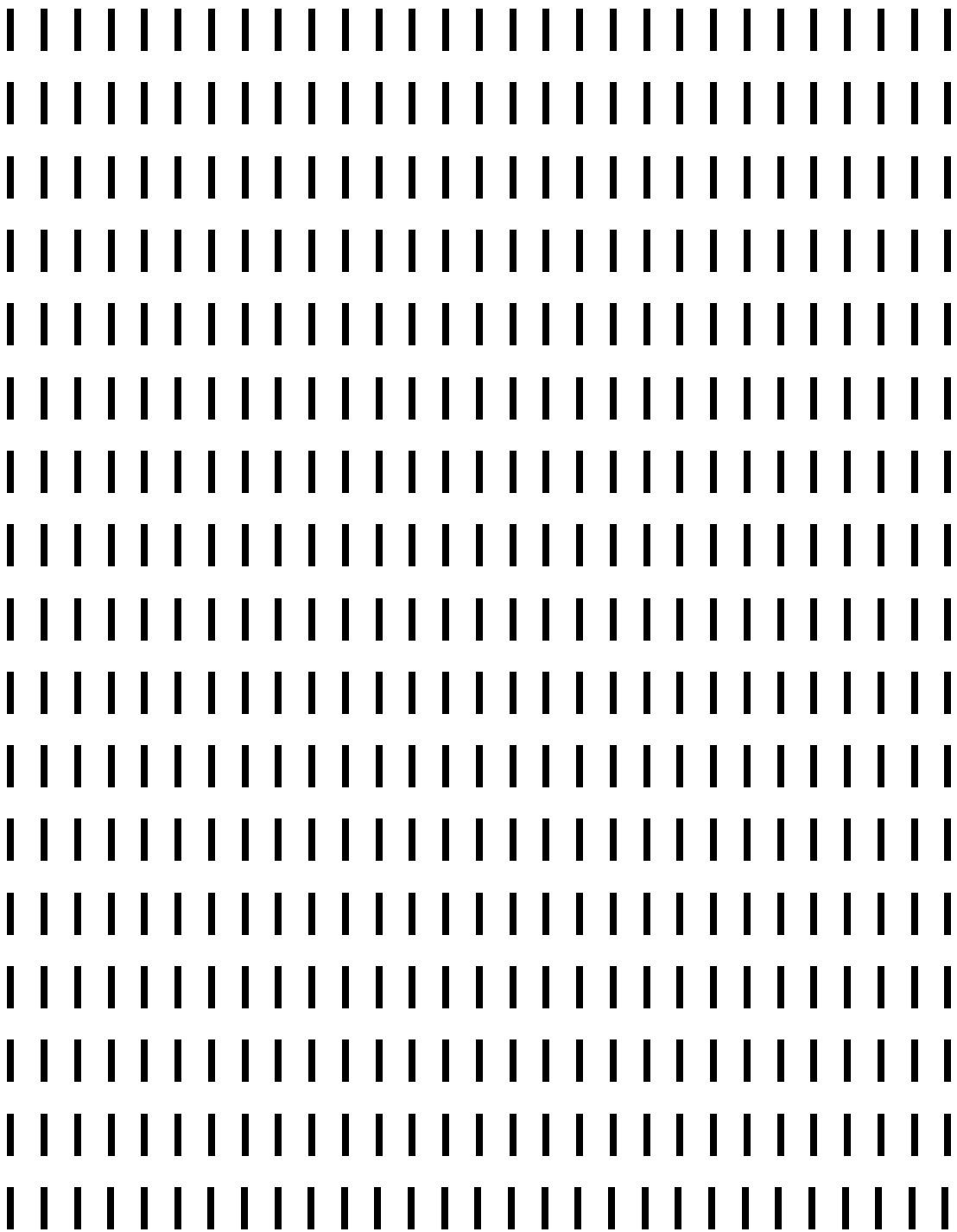
s

h

i

o

n



“Once a designer can spray-on clothes or transmigrate fabrics to the body, new things will happen.”

**–Rudi Gernreich,
‘Futurist Fashion Designer’**

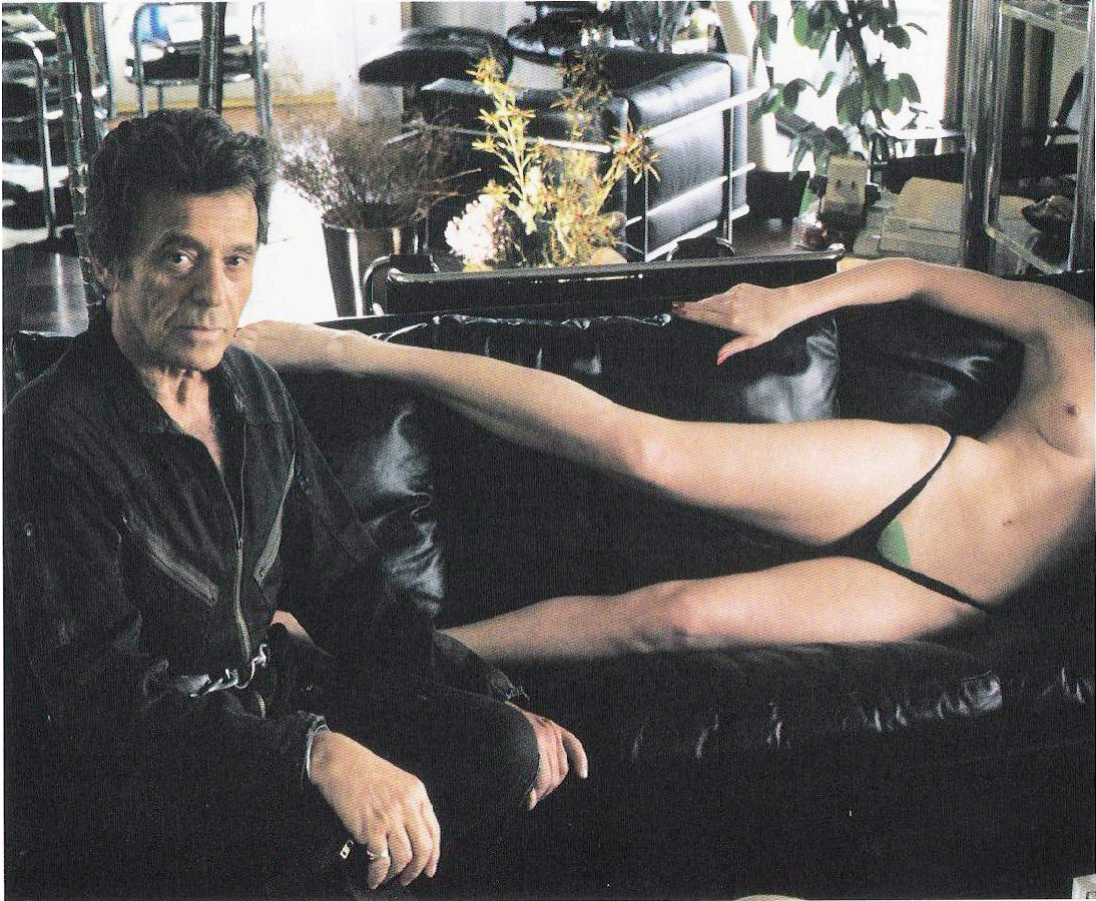


Figure 1.1: Newton, Helmut. *Rudi Gernreich with the 'pubikini,' his last creation, a few days before his death, Los Angeles. 1985.*

Changing Clothes: Rudi Gernreich's Past Possible Futures

ON THE EVE OF WHAT'S TO COME: In the final

days before his death, Rudi Gernreich enlisted the photographer Helmut Newton to come to his stylishly furnished Hollywood Hills home and shoot his last public portrait [Figure 1.1].¹ Sitting upon a black, Le Corbusier sofa that seems to devour much of his frail body, Gernreich stops to look-up from the foot of the thin, long-legged model, Sue Jackson, who boldly wears 'the futurist fashion designer's' final fashion statement. Her pale, white skin contrasts starkly with the couch's lustrous leather cushions. Here, in line with the work of many 'forward thinking' men who had come

¹ Please note that I'm not sure of the exact date of this photograph, according to its reprint in a collection of famous Newton portraits, this image was taken "a few days before [Gernreich's] death" (181); according to a book on Gernreich assembled by Peggy Moffitt and Bill Claxton, this photograph was taken "a month" prior to the designer's death. In either case, Gernreich's impending death looms large in the photograph's captioning – hence, I think it is safe to say that this is an image of the designer knowingly presenting his last design statement prior to his passing.

before him [Figures 1.2-1.3], and hauntingly proximate to his own life's end, Gernreich's *pubikini*, jet black and "dramatically cut to scoop below a carefully coifed and dyed patch of neon green pubic hair,"² announces the coming of a new, clearly embodied, and brightly colored future: a future always, already here; a future found, queerly enough, at the end (as in the beginning) in 'an origin without an original.'³

Anxiously poised on the edge of his seat, it is striking to see how much Gernreich's raised brow and slight smirk mirrors the expression of Edouard Manet's Olympia [Figure 1.2], whose infamous gaze signaled over a century prior that 'the ruse was up.' It was time for us to embrace a future in which we could all stop pretending that 'we' weren't already caught-up in the messy circuits of desire. However, unlike the phallically fingered Olympia—or her close cousin, Sigmund Freud's figure of the woman who has nothing better to do than braid her pubic hair into a futile simulation of the phallus, and who (interestingly enough) accidentally invents weaving as an outcome of this inherently fetishistic gesture⁴—Gernreich and his *pubikini* suggest, in accord with the art historian Linda Nochlin's critical reading of

² Luther, *Looking Back*, 32.

³ Here, I'm of course borrowing and foreshadowing my mention of Linda Nochlin's essay "Courbet's 'L'origine du monde': The Origin without an Original" (1986).

⁴ In his essay on "Femininity," published in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud writes: "It seems that women have made few contributions to the discoveries and inventions in the history of civilization; there is, however, one technique which they may have invented—that of plaiting and weaving. If that is so, we should be tempted to guess the unconscious motive for the achievement. Nature herself would seem to have given the model which this achievement initiates by causing the growth at maturity of the pubic hair that conceals the genitals. The step that remained to be taken lay in making the threads adhere to one another, while on the body they stick into the skin and are only matted together. If you reject this idea as fantastic and regard my belief in the influence of lack of a penis on the configuration of femininity as an *idée fixe*, I am of course defenseless" (117).

Much later, this passage was elaborated on by Roland Barthes, who in *S/Z*, comments that "We know the symbolism of the braid: Freud, considering the origin of weaving, saw it as the labor of a woman braiding her pubic hairs to form the absent penis. The text, in short, is a fetish; and to reduce it to the unity of meaning, by a deceptively univocal reading, is to *cut the braid*, to sketch the castrating gesture" (160). Please note that my above comment is, indeed, indebted to both citations.

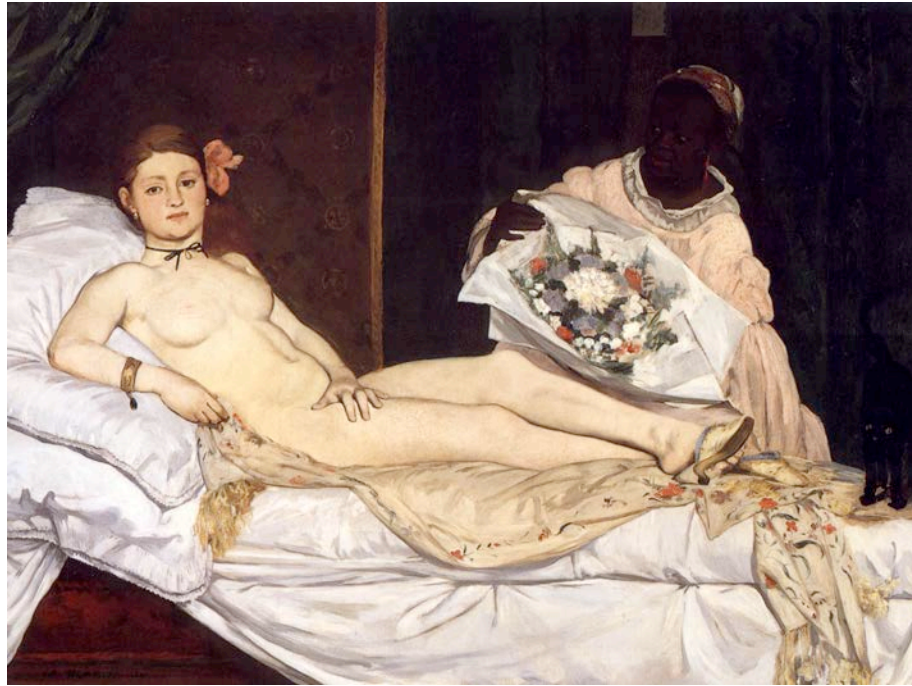


Figure 1.2: Manet, Edouard. *Olympia*. 1863.

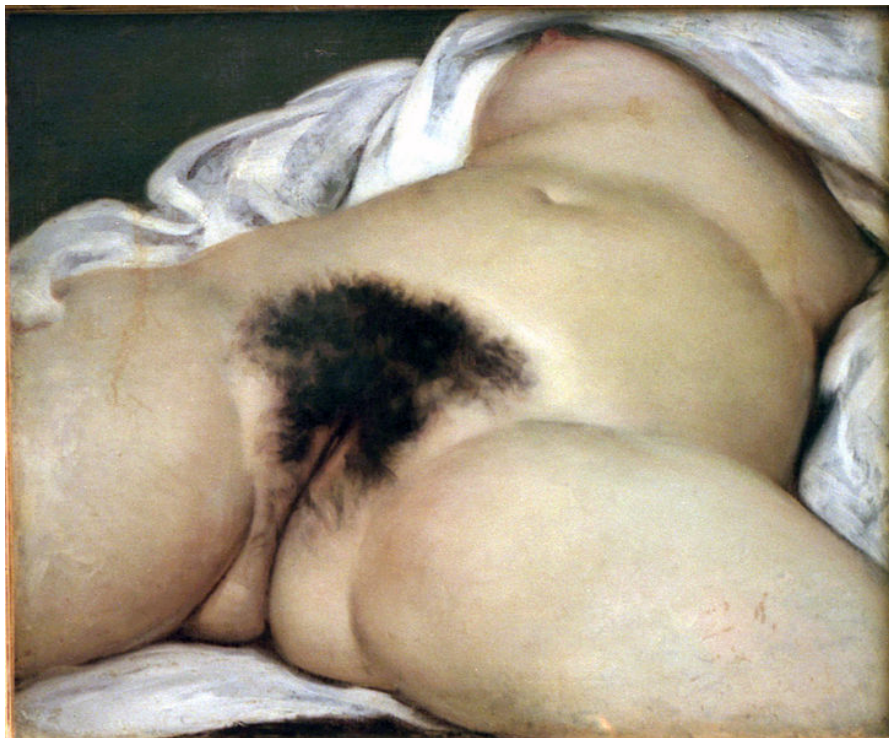


Figure 1.3: Courbet, Gustave. *L'Origine du Monde (The Origin of the World)*. 1866.

Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du Monde* [Figure 1.2],⁵ that 'our future'—*yours and mine*—lies in an origin that challenges typically bivalent and phallogocentric models of difference. Then adding, in Gernreich's own unique twist on this idea, that we will only arrive at this 'other time and space' once arrayed in garments like his 'futurist space suits,' which are uniquely fashioned from materials stretched to the point that they can no longer claim to serve any effective good.

While most fashion designers are noted for having an 'eye for the future,' few have been able to see as clearly as Gernreich, earning him the well-deserved moniker of 'futurist.' Over the course of his career, the daring designer distinguished himself from his peers not simply by working towards the future, but by working with it, by working with 'the future' as a medium and not as a destination. At its heart, 'fashion' is a distinctly modern clothing regime engineered to materially manipulate 'the past' so it may serve as a springboard into 'the time to come'. Each cycle in fashionable clothing styles documents an attempt to create the perfect tension between 'right now' and 'back then'—in the service of catapulting wearers towards a time and place where present-day problems can no longer reach them and unknown pleasures are made manifest.⁶ Conveniently, when this impossibly distant future is not met, fashion's springboard doubles as a taut landing area that keeps our bodies

⁵ In this essay, first published in *October* (1986), Nochlin famously critiques how "notions of origination and originality ... inform the discipline of art history itself ... and [how it] has been constructed as the very source of artistic creation itself," through an inspired, feminist reading of the way Courbet's form of pornography wreaks havoc on historiographic archive. Or, how desire upends the historian (and artist's) quest for 'truth,' or *the* lost origin(al), by catching their respective projects up in its infinite feedback loop.

⁶ Here, Walter Benjamin's famous comment on fashion from "Theses on the Philosophy of History," bears repeating: "Fashion," he writes, "has a flair for the topical, no matter where it stirs in the thickets of long ago. It is the tiger's leap into the past"—*not*, as popular logic might assume, 'the future' (Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 253).

bouncing up and down in a predictable loop. It is in this way that fashion serves as one of modern culture's main engines—continually converting the erratic power of our desires into a kind of motion that can be effectively capitalized upon. Fashion is best understood, not simply as 'a popular style of dress,' but rather as a kind of duplicitous time-machine using the particular, formal qualities of the textile to capture all our bodies (and their unpredictable whims) within industrial modernity's repetitive timeframes, while simultaneously claiming to offer a way out of these redundant rhythms through momentary and marvelous sensations of free fall (or 'of freedom'), by way of design.⁷

Gernreich was keen to work with fashion as a 'time-based medium,' but only insofar as it could be retooled to deliver us onto alternative temporalities. In this regard, there certainly are ideological and formal resonances between his 'chronopolitical' works and those of the Italian Futurists, on the one hand, and many of his 'Space Age' contemporaries, on the other. However, unlike many of these individuals, Gernreich maintained a rare, feminist perspective on the shapes that this work could take. Like Giacomo Balla, he rejected the way popular women and men's fashions restricted the body from moving in certain directions, focused as they were on producing subjects that functioned only to maintain the *status quo* rather than actually 'move ahead.'⁸ And like other 'supermodern' fashion designers, such as Pierre Cardin, André Courrèges, and Paco Rabanne, Gernreich's designs were

⁷ I say 'all our bodies' here in order to suggest that whether one wears, covets, detracts, sells, sews, or designs 'fashions'—all are ensnared in its logic, albeit along very different lines.

⁸ For more on the Italian Futurists, the interests they took in fashion, and the way many of their design programs seem to parallel Gernreich's, please see Giacomo Balla's 1914 "Manifesto on Men's Fashions" and Vincenzo Fani's [aka Volt's] 1920 "Manifesto on Women's Fashion," alongside E. Braun's more recent article 'Futurist Fashion: Three Manifestos' (1995).

strongly influenced by the contours and speeds of those technologies that had landed man on previously unreachable lunar terrains.⁹ Matter-of-factly, Gernreich was even tapped to design the original ‘moon city’ costumes for the mid-1970’s, British answer to *Star Trek—Space 1999*, which starred Martin Landau and Barbara Bain [Figure 1.4].

Upon first glance, it is clear that the *Space 1999* designs are in direct conversation with costume designer William Ware Theiss’ *Star Trek* uniforms [Figure 1.5]: both eschew patterns and prints (and the histories these motifs can smuggle into a garment)—preferring solid, color-blocked and relatively ‘blank-slated’ designs made from synthetic(-blended) fibers.¹⁰ But these similarities aside, the differences between Gernreich and Theiss’ designs are quite remarkable, and help to illuminate what separates Gernreich’s sense of the future from that of nearly all other futurist artists and designers he is regularly associated with. Most conspicuously, the *Space 1999* uniforms are not nearly as concerned with drawing-out diametric gender distinctions. Gernreich’s sleek and muted, unisex garments offered all Moonbase Alpha residents equal opportunity to go about their lives without fear of ‘wardrobe malfunctions;’ whereas the women aboard the Starship Enterprise were all dressed in accord with the “Theiss Titillation Theory,” or the notion that the success of a woman’s costume increases in direct proportion to the likelihood that the hem of her garment might slip and expose some censored part of her anatomy.¹¹

Here, the fine line between sexual liberation and sexual exploitation is drawn.

⁹ For more, see: Andrew Bolton’s *The Supermodern Wardrobe* (2002).

¹⁰ The best example to the contrary would be Yinka Shonibare’s batik spacesuits, see Appendix A.

¹¹ Whitfield 360. Note: This theory is taken to the extreme in designs of alien women’s costumes.



Figure 1.4: 'Gunter.' *Space 1999* Cast Photo. 1978.

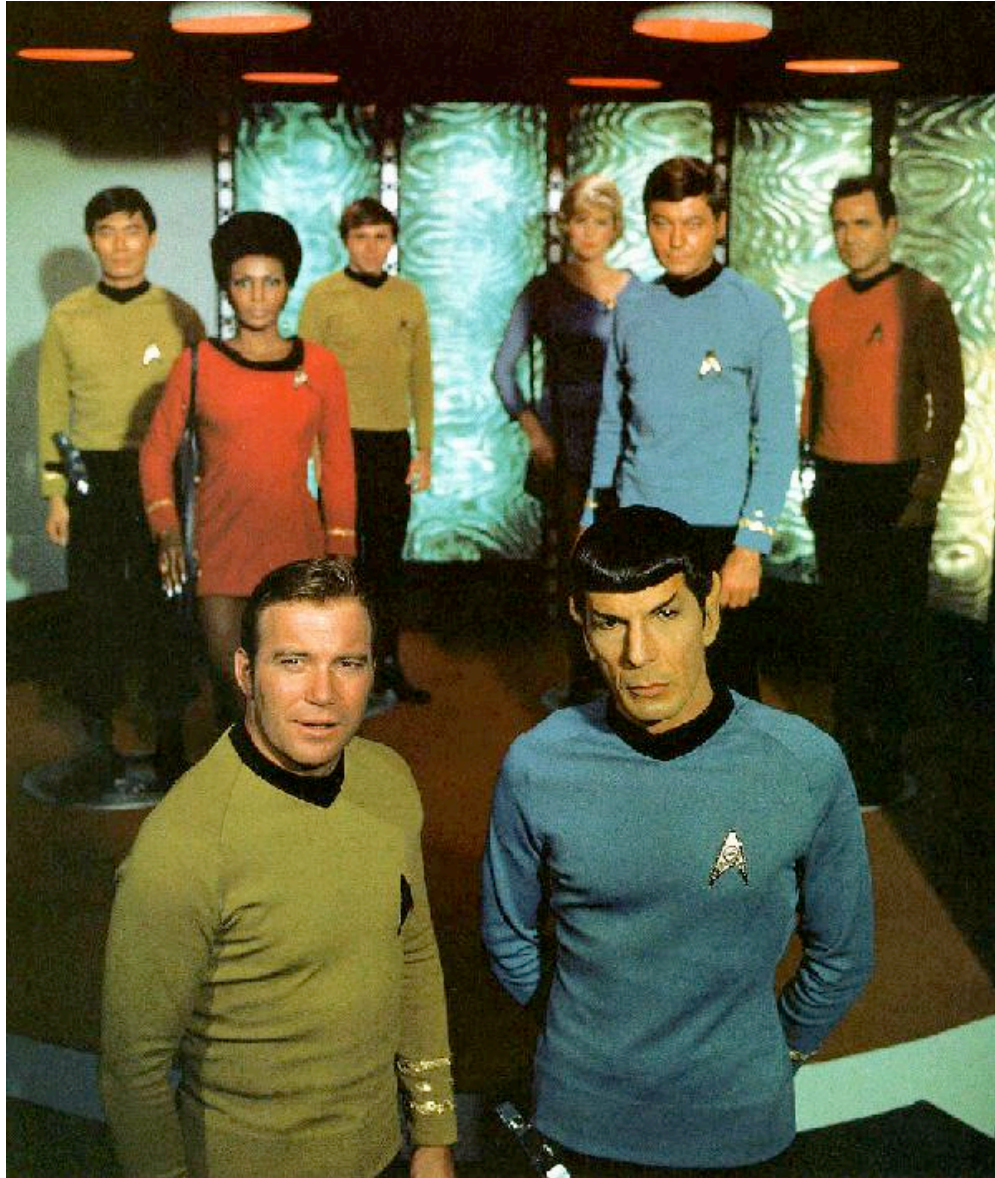


Figure 1.5: *Star Trek* Cast Photo. c. 1966. (Photographer: Unknown.)

Star Trek's futuristic costumes assert their 'other-worldliness' by emphatically exposing as much of a woman's body as possible to a relatively prudish American public during the peak of the sexual revolution. Theiss' garments were literally devised to slip back into the legacies of shame that had heretofore defined the origin of sexual difference and the litany of unequal gender relations that followed. Despite being a science-fiction clothing designer, Theiss chose not to forecast unforeseeable possibilities, '*to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before;*' instead he opted to insist on a future where woman's work would primarily be, as it is now, and 'forever' has been: *the impossible task of maintaining her modesty.*

The unvaried materials, cut, proportions, and accessories of Gernreich's *Space 1999* uniforms offered new ways to perform and read the gendered body, both individually speaking and in relationship to others. His body-conscious clothes were built upon the promise of transforming gender roles by questioning the limited range of significances attached to the woman's body and the insistent inscription of woman's time within the temporalities of contrition. Rather than suppress difference, the unisex garments lit the way towards more novel expressions of the self.¹² While the *Star Trek* actors all position their arms straight down or akimbo in distinct binary, gendered uniformity [Figure 1.5], there is a greater variety of expression in the *Space 1999* cast photo. The mustachioed individual at the top right of Figure 1.4 assumes a kind of comportment never seen in *Star Trek* press releases—and while this

¹² For more on Gernreich's explorations of unisex designs and the different differences they can give rise to, see: Gernreich (*Interview with Claire Loeb*).

distinction might partially be accounted for by cultural difference (the repertoires of American vs. British masculinities), and the near decade that separates the two shows (during which time the women's movement gained real momentum), much also lies within the different possibilities offered by the look and feel of the clothes, themselves. John Kenneth Muir explains in *Exploring Space 1999: An Episode Guide and Complete History of the Mid-1970's Science-Fiction Television Series* that, "Interestingly, the Gernreich uniforms did make an impression on the world of science-fiction. When *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* premiered in 1979, the crew of the *Enterprise* was no longer garbed in bright red, gold and blue gender-specific velour costumes as they had been in the original 60's series, but rather in unisex shades of tan, just like the denizens of Moonbase Alpha [Figure 1.6]!"¹³

Here, it's worth returning to Gernreich's *pubikini* and asking how the futuristic, night-vision green of Jackson's *mons veneris* might assume a similarly defiant hue despite the 'exposure' that it subjects the woman's body to? (Un)dressed as they are, Gernreich and Jackson belie the typically gendered image of the fashion designer and *his* model (or the artist and *his* muse)—which is usually based on the classical notion of an unhampered and naturally feminine ground of conception *contra* an imaginative and notably masculine drive to be 'creative'—i.e., the old notion that if woman is, simply, *the origin*, then it is up to man to be, more complexly, original and

¹³ This said, as Figure 1.6 reveals, the 1979 *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* uniforms were still fairly beholden to the gender binary. For instance, in the lower right of the image it's clear to see how the cut of Lt. Uhuru's (Nichelle Nichols') tunic differs from that of Ensign Chekov's (Walter Koenig's), how it works to emphasize the actress' secondary sex characteristics. The film's costume designer, Robert Fletcher, continues to follow the 'Theiss Theory' even closer in his costuming of alien species, thereby continuing the *Star Trek* tradition of insisting on normative, human gender relations—regardless of the character's species (see Deltan Lt. Ilia [Persis Khambatta], third in on the lower left) (Muir 7).



Figure 1.6: *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* Cast Photo. c. 1978. (Photographer: Unknown, possibly Mel Traxel.)

to refashion feminine materiality into more meaningful forms.

Gernreich's brazen and highly stylized Eve insists on a much more complex image of originality, aligning itself with so many 1970's feminist reclamations of 'the first woman' [Figure 1.7]. While surviving sketches of the *pubikini* uncharacteristically crop the contours of the body below the neck and above the knees [Figure 1.8-1.10],¹⁴ creating a fairly phallic image of woman, the subtle, but crucial, alterations made to the *pubikini's* central design element, namely the bright green tuft of pubic hair, serve to make it increasingly less phallic in nature. These symbolic contortions suggest the designer's swan song was absolutely meant as a meditation on sexual difference, if not as a direct critique of the way the rather masculinist fashion system works within psychoanalytic terms—by manufacturing and profiting from the shame women are made to feel for having 'lost' their penises/ their creative power, *structurally speaking*, and the corresponding need that this creates for women to veil their impotent bodies in the folds of a cloth wrought from that very shame, the shame of difference.¹⁵ After all, both the *pubikini* and the Newton image are all about shame. The power of both the garment and the photograph lies in the way each points beyond the easily inscribed and veiled shame of nudity and towards what Jacques Lacan describes in a section of his lectures on *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959-1960) as "a beyond of nudity that nudity hides."¹⁶

¹⁴ Surveys of Gernreich's design drawings, left in the UCLA and FIDM Special Collections, show that Gernreich generally drew the body from head to toe, on long pieces of bespoke stationary emblazoned with his name in all caps at the top of the page and scaled to account for human proportions. Sometimes these drawings would be faceless, or the head would run into the text along the top—cutting into the figure's eye—but seldom did they cut the woman off at the neck (see Appendix B).

¹⁵ Beyond passing references in the works of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, formative is John Carl Flügel's *The Psychology of Clothes* (1930).

¹⁶ Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 227 (emphasis mine).

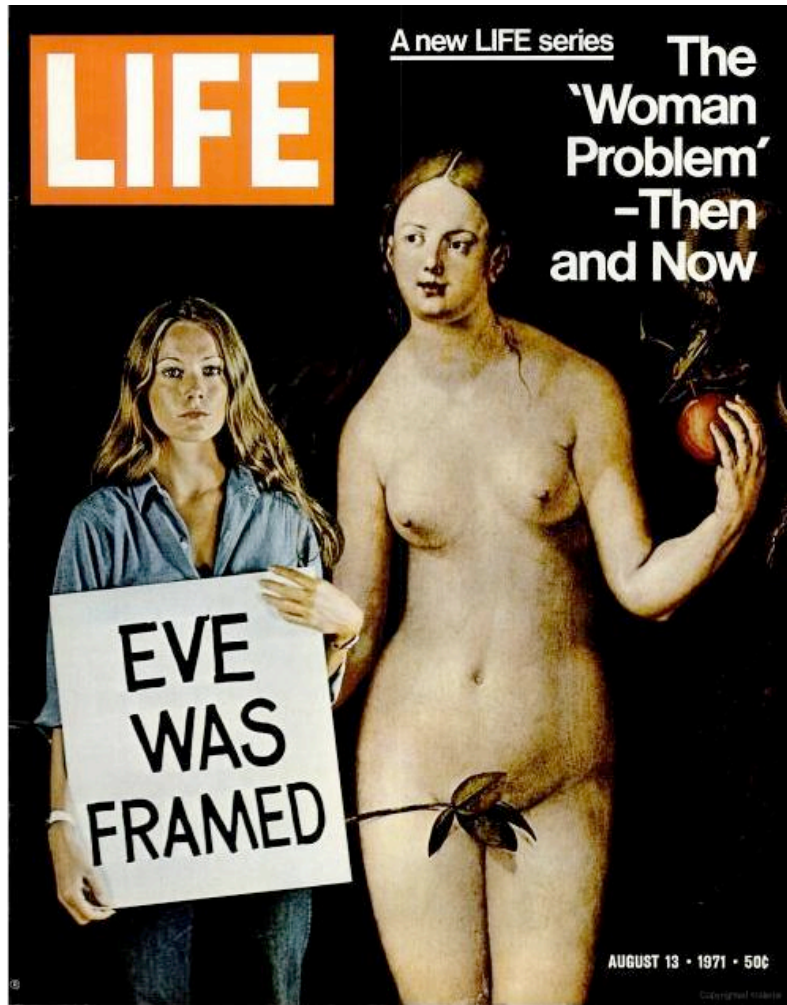


Figure 1.7: Cover *LIFE* magazine, August 13, 1971. (Photographers: [R] Nina Leen, [L] Lee Boltin.)

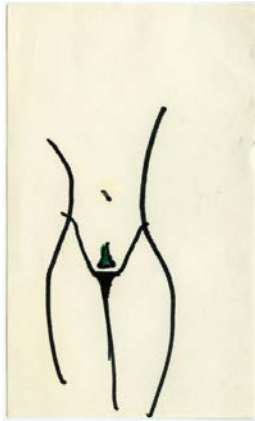


Figure 1.8: Gernreich, Rudi. Early, Unpublished sketch of the *pubikini* (Rudi Gernreich Papers - UCLA). 1985.

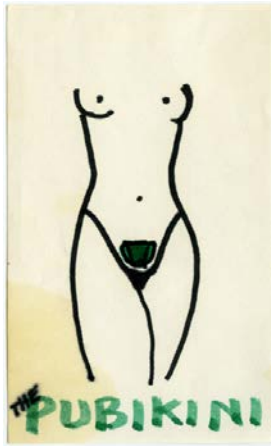


Figure 1.9: Gernreich, Rudi. Early, Unpublished sketch of the *pubikini* (Rudi Gernreich Papers - UCLA). 1985.



Figure 1.10: Gernreich, Rudi. Published *pubikini* drawing. 1985.

This move is primarily made through the way Gernreich and Newton highlight and then lampoon the paradox of the textile—that essential means of coverage and protection that is, itself, nothing more than a sequence of holes. Both the design and the image strive to promote a sense of hyper-exposure and self-consciousness that is aimed at the shame ‘we,’ who live within ‘the cultures of the textile,’ are possessed by. For we, having so readily accepted this form of cover within our daily lives, try to forget the deep-seated knowledge that the textile leaves us continually and hopelessly exposed. Rather than take advantage of this powerful emotion, Gernreich mocks it for Newton’s camera. He takes immediate enjoyment in the ‘useless material’ central to his trade, and he begs his viewer to take similar pleasure in its futility. As Newton explains in a recollection of the photograph’s staging:

I posed [Sue] on the couch and Rudi sat next to her. I remember Rudi putting some green paint or dye on her, and I remember how very excited he was about the design. Since then, I’ve always thought how that pubikini with the green on the pubic hair was so much newer an expression of nudity than just letting a boob hang out the way Yves Saint Laurent’s models did in 1989. It struck me as touching and wonderful that he was so excited at this point in his life.¹⁷

What Gernreich reveals in this gesture, and Newton is quick to recognize (if not fully appreciate), is that ‘fashion’ is simply humanity’s latest attempt to disassemble the world and put it back together in a way that serves our needs, most importantly our need to be forever wrapped-up in the text/ile—or endlessly bound by the perpendicular, criss-crossing of one another’s desires and the ‘significances’ we ascribe to such satisfying predictability. In step with Lacan, Gernreich understands

¹⁷ Luther, *Looking Back*, 33.

the textile as “a reservoir of needs; it is there whether one needs it or not; and it is around cloth that a whole dialectic of rivalry and of sharing is organized, wherein needs will be constituted.”¹⁸

With this in mind, the ‘repulsive,’ anti-utilitarian design of the *pubikini* takes-on new, political dimensions. Upon its release, it failed to capture a single headline, which was strange for such a highly editorial designer, and it was later deemed ‘appalling’ by Gernreich’s close friend and collaborator, the accessories designer Layne Nielson.¹⁹ This led many to brand the design ‘a flop,’ making it little more than an embarrassing footnote in most accounts of the designer’s otherwise impressive career.²⁰ But, herein lies the *pubikini*’s success: this ‘embarrassment’ has absolutely no use-value.

Other radical fashion designs similarly claim to liberate the body from both the day-to-day and from the throes of History through the fantasy of fashion. The screens these subversive clothes let us to project our fantasies onto are all, indeed, textile screens. They may be cut and shaped in ‘alternative manners,’ but even the ‘edgiest’ ones ultimately work by insisting on the textile’s discursive usefulness, namely: its ability to support and exploit the image of our ‘alternative’ identities. These fashion *statements* avoid the textile’s function as what Lacan would call the *objet petit a*, or that ‘prediscursive, meaningless thing’ that doesn’t simply subsist *despite* the symbolic order’s insistence on making sense of it all, but as that which

¹⁸ Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 228.

¹⁹ Nielson 56.

²⁰ So little actual attention has been paid to this design, that some authors incorrectly describe it as a bikini bottom with a small colored window onto a woman’s pubes, which conflates the design with some of Gernreich’s more famous body windows dresses.

spurs us to take-up such meaningful activities in the first place.²¹ The holes that textiles open-up must be regarded precisely as the looming sense of emptiness, or loss, that we endlessly work to cover over or fill-up through the production of meaning (or of text/iles). The *real shame* is that we cannot recognize *this*, even when faced with a textile that ‘functions differently’: the *pubikini*.

‘Textiles,’ in other words, and most of the clothing shaped from them, are not simply ‘convenient things’ that help curtail or discipline our desires (by properly veiling them—à la Adam and Eve’s handy fig leaves), they are the very object cause of our desire (for significance). The *pubikini*, unlike most garments produced within the history of modern dress (least of all fashionable dress), is a garment wrought from “a textile, where the knots speak of nothing but the holes that are there.”²² Instead of capturing and suspending our desires in fabricated flights of fancy, the *pubikini* acts as a sieve for them to pass through onto places unknown/ unknowable. Unsatisfactory? Yes. But, this is indeed the point. Rather than work to satisfy our needs, the *pubikini* is a garment that has *jouissance*-value. It loosens the ties that bind ‘us’ to the here, the now, and to one another and helps us slip through onto other spatio-temporal compartments—for better or for worse.

Now, this is certainly a generous reading: one that asks the viewer to consider Gernreich’s sketches and Newton’s cropping out of the model’s head and left breast less as the kind of Sadistic or sexist gesture usually associated with the


²¹ I would claim that it is for this reason, perhaps, that so much fashion theory is caught-up in semiotic models of critique. Most fashion is, indeed, statement-driven.

²² Lacan, *Radiophonie*, 79, as qtd. in Adams 61. The french text reads: “Ce qui du temps lui fait étoffe n’est pas emprunt d’imaginaire, mais plutôt d’un textile où noeuds ne diraient rien que des tous qui s’y trouvent.”

fashion system and more like the cut made by mythic Amazonian women, who would remove and cauterize their left breast for the sake of maintaining an autonomous, feminine existence. To further read this image as a treaty on the radical acceptance of (w)holeness, one must also challenge themselves to appreciate how, at the level of the photograph, the deep plunge of Gernreich's collar, the sharp cut across Jackson's breast and the pointed angle of the *pubikini* itself all manage to tear, or as Roland Barthes would have it *pierce*, a hole in the usual, past-tenseness of the photographic image (i.e. the photograph's claim that 'that happened'). Needling one's way through this hole and coming out the other side, it becomes possible to regard this image as a strange, future-perfect cut-up of Manet's twentieth-century Venus—in which the flat, two-dimensional axes that separate 'Gernreich' and 'his model,' 'us' and 'them,' become inoperative. Instead, the image unfolds along a looped, Möbius-strip-like continuum that reveals Gernreich's head as having been kicked up onto Jackson's shoulders through the sheer force of our twisted desires—creating a multi-gendered, cross-generational, and multi-media body that moves in very different times and spaces than those typically engendered by more polite, domesticated forms of fashion design and photography.²³

⋮

²³ This also begs the questions of how Olympia's maid and cat fit into the Newton image? And how the prostitute's parlor and designer's living room reflect upon one another? While I am not trying to argue that the Gernreich portrait is a direct transposition of the Manet canvas, I do not think these questions are unanswerable. The questions of racial and class difference and of aberrant sexuality—which are anchored by the the maid-servant and cat—are clearly at stake within the Newton image. The way Gernreich's personal clothing and home décor deviate from standard, masculine tastes marks him as sexually deviant. While the model is not to be confused with the prostitute, these subjects overlap, historically speaking: During Manet's era, fashion and artistic models were often sex workers. And the seeming necessity for the *pubikini's* model to have pale, white skin—so design 'works' and the contrasts between her body and the design's milieu are made *most* visible, begs us to recognize the extent to which race matters in the coherence of both the garment and photograph.



OFF THE GRID: This unorthodox

interpretation is certainly helped along by the fact that the *pubikini* is a clear play on the topless bathing suit (or *monokini*) that defined much of Gernreich's career. Photographed from behind, on the edge of a grey, cloud-soaked Caribbean shoreline, the *monokini* made its debut some two decades prior in the margins of a *Look* magazine feature on the fate of women's beach fashions [Figure 1.11],²⁴ and its release promptly provoked news agencies and pundits around the globe to dub the

²⁴ Kirtland 59-63.

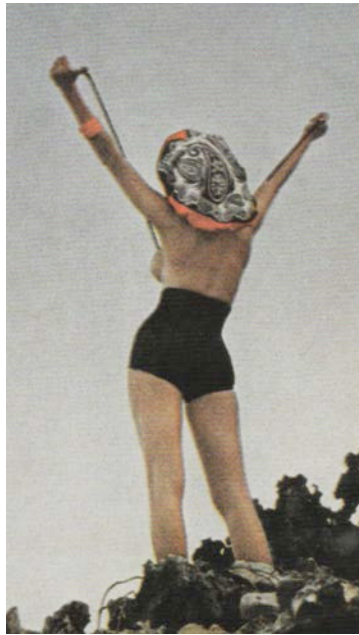


Figure 1.11: Hansen, James. *Monokini*, as it appeared in *Look* magazine. June 1964.

ambitious designer and his designs as dangerously 'antisocial' and 'immoral.' Those familiar with Gernreich's biography would quickly recognize that this was hardly the first time such a branding had stung the 'King of California Chic's' skin, and that much of his life and career was dedicated to critiquing the limits of what society could bear to 'tolerate.'

Gernreich was born an only child and raised alone in Vienna during most of the inter-war years by his mother Lisl Gernreich (née Müller), after his father Siegmund, a hosiery and knitting manufacturer, committed suicide when Rudi was only eight years old.²⁵ According to Nielson, the Müller-Gernreich's "tastes were modern, their politics leftist, and their hearts hopelessly romantic".²⁶ The family's "religion (if they could be said to have one) was socialism and not Judaism,"²⁷ having abandoned the customs and rituals of Jewish Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia and Hungary after the "Austrian Emancipation laws of 1867 abolished the restrictions on Jewish residence," and Rudi's forebearers all found their way to Hapsburg Vienna.²⁸

Within the span of a generation, Gernreich's family was literally located at the center of Viennese culture.²⁹ His mother had been friendly with the likes of Egon Schiele,³⁰ whose final studio was a stone's throw away from their home, and Rudi's extended family boasted the inclusion of prominent, Austrian Marxist intellectuals

²⁵ Moffitt and Claxton 12; Nielson 30-31.

²⁶ Nielson 27.

²⁷ Nielson 39.

²⁸ Nielson 27.

²⁹ In his incredible, biographical essay on Gernreich, Nielson details the location of Lisl and Rudi's Viennese home at 20 Gloriettegasse, an area dominated by secession villas, Josef Hoffman's *Villa Skywa-Primavesi*, Friedrich Ohmann's *Villa Schopp*, Ernst Lichtblau's *Lebkuchenhaus*, and the place where "Gustav Klimt brushed his final color before dying the same year" (Nielson 32).

³⁰ Nielson 34.

through marriage, such as Felix Kautsky and Julius Braunthal.³¹ From a young age, Gernreich was noted in equal measure for his drawing skills and for spending a good deal of time in his maternal Aunt Hedwig's dress shop—where he learned about dressmaking and fabric while regularly stopping to read excerpts from her copy of *Das Kapital*.³² Yet despite the family's secularism and their close, affective bonds, Germany's 1938 annexation of Austria forced them to leave one another and to briefly scatter around the globe in exile.³³ Some fled to friendlier parts of Europe, others to South America. A 16-year-old Gernreich left for Los Angeles with Lisl after they secured the precious visa sponsorship of David and Edith Bogen, "a young California couple who had boarded with them in Vienna six years earlier."³⁴

After immigrating under the threat of Nazi persecution, it was all the more difficult for Gernreich to later find himself systematically oppressed in his new home—only on this occasion, for his homosexuality. As the legal scholar Patricia Cain succinctly explains, "The post-World War I era in America was ... a time of censorship, especially with respect to the topic of sex. Although lesbian and gay subcultures existed during this period, hostility toward 'difference' prevented the formation of any widespread gay or lesbian movement against anti-gay discrimination."³⁵ Cut off from any meaningful form of political self-representation, the

³¹ Nielson 29-30.

³² Hay, *Secret Love*, 60; Luther, *Looking Back*, 12; Luther, *Gernreich Dies*.

³³ As Nielson explains, while Rudi's family were initially exiled across a variety of locations, many were reunited in Los Angeles, and "Once they were together again, they formed a *little* Little Vienna within the larger Little Vienna, and once again, with the Natzlers, or the Nuerras, or Frau Kielsger joining them [the Müllers, Kautsky's, and Jellinek's], sat around a large table sagging with good food, talking and eating, eating and talking"—as they once had, before the Second World War (Nielson 41).

³⁴ Nielson 39.

³⁵ Cain 1558.

figure of the 'gay-menace' took intense hold of popular, heterosexist imaginations and explicitly homophobic legislation went not only unchecked, but lauded at both federal and local levels by the mid-century.³⁶ As C. Todd White notes in his book *Pre-Gay LA: A Social History of the Movement for Homosexual Rights* (2009):

In 1950 [sic 1953],³⁷ President Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, which [amended the 'Security Requirements for Government Employment,'] equated homosexuality with sexual perversion and barred all homosexuals from working in the federal government[—claiming that such individuals posed a 'security risk']. During the next several years in Washington, D.C., more than 1,000 people were arrested per year for homosexual conduct. Other cities in which homosexuals were especially targeted in the 1950s include[d] Baltimore, Philadelphia, Wichita, Dallas, Memphis, Seattle, Boise, Ann Arbor, and Los Angeles.³⁸

In response to the pathologization of homosexuality and the constant threat of arrest that he and others were subjected to by L.A. vice squads, Gernreich worked, in 1950, to help his then-lover—the bold activist and noted Communist, Harry Hay³⁹—co-found *The Mattachine Society*, a radical, pre-Stonewall, homophile organization noted for being the first group to programmatically insist that gay liberation be framed as a civil rights issue [Figure 1.12].⁴⁰

While there was much to be done and discussed, the matter of most immediate consequence to the men at the center of this budding social movement

³⁶ Davidson, *Uncle Sam Didn't Welcome Gay Employees*.

³⁷ The National Archives and various other sources indicate that "Executive Order 10450: *Security Requirements for Government Employment*" was actually signed and put into effect on April 27, 1953.

³⁸ White 15-16 (emphasis mine).

³⁹ For more on Hay, see *Radically Gay* by Hay (Will Roscoe, Ed.); *The Trouble with Harry Hay* by Stuart Timmons; White's *Pre-Gay LA*. For a recent, theatrical exploration of Hay and Gernreich's relationship and the founding of the Mattachine Society, please see Jon Maran's 2010 play, *The Temperamentals*.

⁴⁰ Cain, *Litigating for Lesbian and Gay Rights*; Keen and Goldberg 82-85.



Figure 1.12: Gruber, John. *The Mattachine Society* [L to R]: Harry Hay, Dale Jennings, Rudi Gernreich, Stan Witt, Bob Hull, Chuck Rowland and Paul Benard. c. December 1951.

was that of entrapment.⁴¹ In March 1952, after one of the *Mattachine* founding-members, Dale Jennings, was entrapped by an undercover police officer who followed him home from Macarthur Park (then known as Westlake Park),⁴² Hay convinced Jennings to let the case go to open court, where he would publicly admit that, ‘yes, he was homosexual,’ but, ‘no, he was not guilty of the lewd or dissolute behaviors he had been charged with.’ To help make their case, Jennings would be represented by George E. Shibley, the same attorney who had helped defend the young men charged “in the racism-tinged Sleepy Lagoon case [that had rocked Los Angeles] a decade before,”⁴³ and who “had [thereby] established himself in

⁴¹ As Lilian Faderman and Stuart Timmons explain in *Gay L.A.: A History of Social Vagrants, Hollywood Rejects, and Lipstick Lesbians* (2006), it is important to note that this movement was largely male-centric, otherwise different issues and political strategies might have taken precedence:

The women’s story in L.A. was not the same as the men’s when it came to mid-century organizing because though lesbians and gay men often shared friendship and social life, their biggest battles with the outside world were different. Middle-class lesbians, like homosexuals of any class, suffered the threat of being rejected by family and friends, but they had little occasion to worry about the police. They were not entrapped by ‘Hollywood rejects’ hired by the LAPD. They did not run the risk of being busted for public cruising or T-room sex.

...Working-class lesbians in Los Angeles had considerable reason to be concerned that the police might arrest them in a bar raid or for masquerading, but as female and poor they also had to worry about everyday survival. They were in no position to see themselves as a united political force, and middle-class lesbians were certainly not inclined to take up the battle for their working-class sisters.

Formal organizing among lesbians at mid-century was also hampered by other factors. Women as a whole were still political neophytes who had been voting in America for only three decades when the homophile movement emerged. Collectively, lesbians, no less than heterosexual women, had little experience in joining organizations the aim of which was to fight political battles. ...

Neither *Mattachine* nor ONE was able to politicize more than a few lesbians. To most women, the organizations seemed irrelevant, to say the least (126-127).

⁴² It should be noted, as C. Todd White explains in *Pre-Gay LA*, that there are conflicting versions of how the arrest went down. In his biography, Hay recalls Jennings telling him, the morning after he was arrested, that he met the officer in the park and while he wasn’t interested, the officer put his hand on his crotch, followed him home, forced himself inside, and then arrested him before Jennings had the chance to call the police (Timmons 164). Elsewhere, Jennings has described a scene where he was followed from the park by a “burly stranger” who “pushed past him and entered the house,” and then called him into the bedroom where he “grabbed [Jennings] hand and tried to force it down the front of his trousers,” before arresting him (White 23-25).

⁴³ Timmons 165.

progressive circles as a lawyer willing to take unpopular cases.”⁴⁴ At the trial’s end, the jury returned deadlocked (11-1). This dismissed the case against Jennings and allowed him to leave the courtroom ‘a free man,’ while denying him a not-guilty decision. Despite the trial failing to achieve Jennings’ complete exoneration, the *Society* deemed the case’s dismissal a “Victory!” and were quick to publicize the results across their networks.⁴⁵ Soon, it was hoped that their lives and desires would no longer be dominated by the constant threat of violent censure, and that a gnawing, bleak sense of a future would stop haunting any pleasures they experienced within the present moment.

Notwithstanding the gains the *Society* was making on various legal fronts and the relative tolerance that he, himself, later observed as existing within more creative cultural arenas such as the fashion industry,⁴⁶ Gernreich—*who, as one author noted, was prone to pronouncing his last name “to rhyme with earn quick”*⁴⁷—chose to remain closeted for fear that his career as a fashion designer would come to a swift

⁴⁴ Pagán 86. For more, also see: Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles*.

⁴⁵ Timmons 167-168; *Rudi Gernreich Papers*, Box 112, Mattachine File.

⁴⁶ In a 1972 interview with Digby Dibil for the *Los Angeles Times*, Gernreich was asked why he thought there seemed “to be a preponderance of homosexuals [in the fashion industry]”? Gernreich responded that “As homosexuality is discussed, I think you will find it’s in every profession, and it happens to be more conspicuous in creative areas because there’s less threat to the homosexual. A homosexual man is not thrown out of his profession because he’s a hair-dresser or a stage designer. People sort of feel more secure that he is. It’s a convention. But if a riveter in a defense plant is a homosexual, he’ll keep that very quiet because if he’s discovered, he may lose his job. It’s as simple as that.” (Note the critical usage of the indefinite article in his response: ‘the homosexual.’)

⁴⁷ *Time* 90.22 (1967); Moffitt and Claxton 33. This is interesting on at least two fronts. First, as a Jewish emigre who fled the Holocaust, this (mis)pronunciation (in)deliberately distances the sound of his name from that of ‘*the Reich*’. Second, the way the *Time* article figures Gernreich’s name as rhyming with ‘earn quick’ positions him more as a commercially—and *not a politically or aesthetically*—motivated designer. This, despite the way that the Americanized pronunciation tries to mitigate just this. When pronounced in ‘the German way,’ as Rudi explains in a 1971 radio interview, ‘*Gernreich*’ carries the German meaning of “I would like to be rich” (Gernreich, *Interview with Claire Loeb*). Either way, it is worth noting how the dissonances that mark Gernreich’s designs are always already marked by the pronunciation of his own name.

halt if financiers learned of his sexuality, or if his customers' 'sneaking suspicions' were too flagrantly confirmed.⁴⁸ Just a few years after helping to formally start the United States' Gay Rights Movement, this decision led, in part, to Gernreich's split both from Hay and from the other *Mattachinos*⁴⁹—who all resolved to maintain the designer's secret membership. He was officially 'outed' three years following his death,⁵⁰ when his long-term life partner, the UCLA French professor and noted Jean-Paul Sartre scholar, Oreste Pucciani [Figure 1.13], publicly donated a large sum of money, in a named trust, to the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California in order "to provide for litigation and education in the area of lesbian and gay rights."⁵¹ As Rudi's friend, the former Fashion Editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, MaryLou Luther, once wrote, "that the man who tore up so many closets with his

⁴⁸ When asked why his partner of 31 years never 'came out,' even after he himself did in a University of California Los Angeles student newspaper article, Oreste Pucciani is noted in several sources as explaining that Gernreich simply thought it would be "bad for business" (Luther, *Looking Back* 14).

⁴⁹ While no one besides Gernreich could know why he ended the relationship with Hay and his membership in the group, Hay claimed in a 2001 interview that "Rudi" would have been "willing to maintain the relationship ... if [Hay] stayed in a certain sort of closet" (Hay 62). In a letter written to Oreste Pucciani, dated May 4, 1986, Hay recounted "Rudi felt that the original inspiration [of the society] had run its course, and that it was time for him to be concerned about his own life. Neither he nor Ruth Bernhardt ... ever identified with the Gay Movement *per se* again"—suggesting that Gernreich's departure might also have been political in nature (*Rudi Gernreich Papers* Box 112, *Mattachine* File).

⁵⁰ Gernreich, who simply goes by the initial "R." or "X." in *Mattachine Society* records, was not the only member who kept his legal identity private. Like the medieval society of men that the group borrowed their name from, the modern *Mattachinos* were, indeed, by their charter, a secret society—so as to protect one another from fear of being 'outed' and from the sort of retribution they would have to expect if their identities as gay men were ever publicly broadcast. After the group achieved a solid and relatively steady membership, this anonymity also allowed the members, most, but not all of whom were closeted gay men, to hold regular discussions wherein one could openly and critically discuss the issues that they felt were most central to their community, without their personal circumstances overdetermining the discussion. According to Society records and publications, these talks included topics, such as: homosexual versus heterosexual marriage; how to best "present homosexual culture to heterosexual society," and whether or not to frown upon public "camping" (i.e. what Gernreich describes in his handwritten meeting notes as "conscious homosexual behavior, usually intended to amuse another group of homosexuals") (*Rudi Gernreich Papers* Box 112, *Mattachine* File, Meeting Notes dated February 15, 1952). For more on *The Mattachine Society*, please see: Timmons (1990); White (2009).

⁵¹ Moffitt and Claxton 14.



Figure 1.13: Zinner, Christa. *Rudi Gernreich and Oreste Pucciani*. c. 1954.

revolutionary clothes never came out of the closet ... says a lot about his times.”⁵²

Indeed, ‘timing’ was everything to Gernreich. He understood the times he lived in as being key, *chronopolitically speaking*. Or, that as the sociologist George W. Wallis explains in a 1970 essay entitled “Chronopolitics: The Impact of Time Perspectives on the Dynamics of Change,” one could say that Gernreich understood that he was working in one of those ‘times of transition,’ wherein “epoch-making decisions which will lead a society to one of several alternate futures can be made,” and that “the crucial power in transition periods is the power to decide which of the alternate futures to seek.”⁵³ As a maker of culture,⁵⁴ and a fashion designer at that, Gernreich took on the job of helping to aesthetically steer people towards a less elusive future, a future you could actually catch-up to and bundle yourself within. He remained acutely aware of how vital the embodied politics of impropriety were, how much they haunted one’s experience of their own life(time), and how it felt to have your pleasures systematically legislated against and forever deferred. He designed clothes that could queer connections and re-set society’s subsequent clocks. However, unlike other artists and designers, Gernreich did not do this work by focusing on the ‘image’ of such an alternate future; instead he concentrated on this future’s material consistencies. His designs approached the disruptive and ‘antisocial’ work of rethinking how ‘the body’ is typically interpolated, along temporal lines, by formally adjusting the way sexuality, gender, class, and as I’ll show later

⁵² Luther, *Looking Back*, 14.

⁵³ Wallis 102.

⁵⁴ Here, it’s useful to follow on from Wallis’ references to sociologist F.L. Polak, ‘culture’ might best be understood in this instance as ‘the history a society’s *images* of its future (Wallis 103).

race and ethnicity, were normally woven together within modern, Western societies.

To make clothes that could work differently (and finally deliver us onto fashion's long promised futures), Gernreich believed that fashion's main medium, the medium of the textile, needed to be picked apart and that resituating and rethinking how the thread of sexual difference ran through this fabric was paramount. Gernreich regularly claimed to have been observing a "protest by the young ... [of] the old-fashioned ideas of what 'the male' and 'the female' (in quotes) had to represent in society," and that this protest was waged in hope that people might learn to communicate differently—"on a much better, much stronger human level."⁵⁵ Sensing that young people were ready to start pulling at this thread—*that rather than (ad)dress their bodies in ways that uncritically wove a mythological past together with a chauvinistic present in the service of creating a taught mesh that grounded 'man' on one side of things and 'woman' on the other*—Gernreich took-up materials and clothing styles that weren't pre- or over-determined by a dualistic form of sexual difference, and he worked furiously to knit everyone into this other time and space.

He zeroed in on the formal conceits of the textile because the form most textiles take is that of a grid. The role of the grid has been well articulated in readings of Albrecht Dürer's sixteenth century *Draftsman Drawing a Recumbent Woman* [Figure 1.14], an image that displays strange visual parallels with Gernreich's final portrait, discussed earlier. Dimitri Papadopoulos, Niamh Stephenson and Vassilis Tsianos' observations in their book *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the*

⁵⁵ Gernreich, *On Unisex Clothing*.

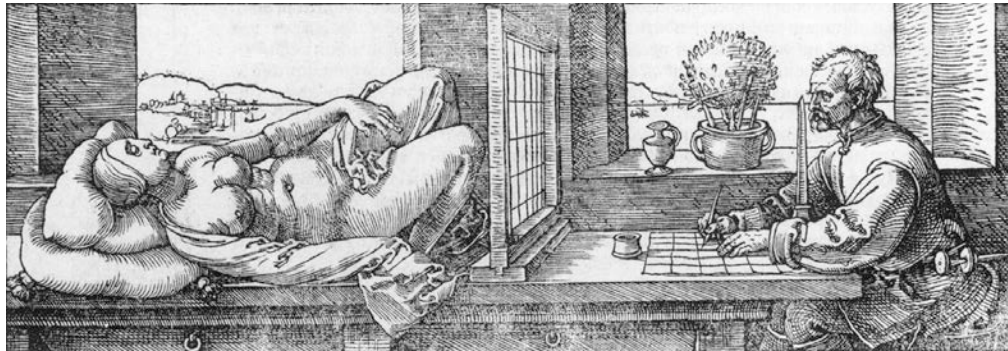


Figure 1.14: Dürer, Albrecht. *Der Zeichner des weiblichen Modells (Draftsman Drawing a Recumbent Woman)*. 1525.

Twenty-first Century (2008), claim that the grid:

...transforms imperceptible bodies and subjectivities into subjects; it classifies subjects into groups, groups into a territory. Before the grid is placed between the two subjects, these subjects do not exist at all. The grid is the metonymy for the order of modern sovereignty. It produces social classes, institutional positions, social actors, it directs them to the pervasive regime of productivity and, finally, it establishes hierarchical relations between them. The hierarchical organisation [sic] of gender relations and the organisation [sic] of space along the terms of masculinised [sic] and homophobic imaginaries is an outcome of the very existence of subjects of power.⁵⁶

Gernreich's work claimed that fashion had to be made 'off the grid,' with sprayed-on or transmigrated materials, so our desires might take hold of different and hopefully less fraught imaginaries.

At the very start of his career, after Gernreich transitioned full-time to the world of fashion design—leaving a job as part-time sketch-designer for the film costumer Edith Head behind him—he introduced the first unconstructed and unlined swimsuits for women [Figures 1.18-1.20]. Previously, mid-twentieth century women's swimsuits were designed primarily as 'shape-makers' rather than as swimming costumes; they employed restrictive corseting technologies and impractical, rigidly woven textiles (such as nylon taffeta) in order to achieve their aesthetic effects [Figures 1.15-1.17]. Gernreich stripped swimsuits of these boning systems, chose to fabricate them from lightweight, stretch knits that maintained their fit when wet, and, in what now looks like a precursor to later works focusing even more explicitly on gender play, Gernreich went so far as to stylistically riff off of contemporary men's

⁵⁶ Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos, 10. It should be noted that the authors strike a serious and unrecognized chord with Mark Wigley's observations of the same Dürer drawing in "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" (1992).



Figure 1.15: Advertisement for Jantzen 'dreamliner' swimsuit. c. mid-1950s.



Figure 1.16: Advertisement for Catalina swimsuits. c. mid-1950s.



Figure 1.17: Advertised Catalina swimsuit. c. mid-1950s.

fashions—i.e. ‘real active wear’—and incorporate motifs from male business attire into some of his more witty designs. Here, one suit winks at the banker’s vest and pinstriped pant, while another flaunts a masculine, double-breasted and buttoned front [Figures 1.19-1.20].

These distinctively different *maillots*, which first appeared on live models posed in the windows of the trendy *JAX* boutique on Bedford Drive and Wilshire Boulevard, quickly became industry standards. Retailers across the country began to clamor for more extensive lines of Gernreich’s clothing. Having previously trained as a modern dancer at the Lester Horton Dance Studio [Figure 1.21]—following a life-altering performance he once saw of “Martha Graham in 1940 at the Philharmonic Auditorium, where he worked evenings as an usher”⁵⁷—Gernreich answered this call with a parade of women and men’s fashions that attempted to expand the body’s social ranges of movement by encouraging new, more flexible corporeal aesthetics and articulations [Figure 1.22], explaining once in an interview that:

Before [dancing], I only considered the body from the neck to the knees, the part that was clothed. Dancing made me aware of what clothes do to the rest of the body—to the hands and feet and head.⁵⁸

After all, it certainly is much easier to stick your neck out and explore your curiosities when your clothes offer you more room to move about in.⁵⁹ His critique of ‘neck to the knees’ design further supports the idea that the image of his final design, the

⁵⁷ Nielson 42.

⁵⁸ Luther, *Gernreich Dies*, B14.

⁵⁹ As the modern dancer and choreographer Bella Lewitzky was reported as saying, “Even those who don’t know him [Gernreich] have been liberated by his passion for humanity. We move easier, look more natural, and have more choices because of him. He allowed us to look at ourselves—at each other...to learn and move on” (Nielson 27). For more from Lewitzky on Gernreich, see: Lewitzky, *A Life in Motion*.



Figure 1.18: Mitchell, Tommy. Jimmy Mitchell in Gernreich's first unconstructed swimsuit. 1952.



Figure 1.19: Mitchell, Tommy. Jimmy Mitchell in Gernreich Swimsuit with vest and pinstripe detail. mid-1950's.



Figure 1.20: Mitchell, Tommy. Jimmy Mitchell in Gernreich Swimsuit with double-breasted front. mid-1950's.



Figure 1.21: Rico, William. Gernreich as a young dancer. c. early 1940s.



Figure 1.22: Mitchell, Tommy. A sampling of designs from Gernreich's 1962 Resort Wear Line. 1962.

pubikini, is a critical send-up of the fashion industry.

By the middle of the 1960's, Gernreich had further formalized these observations through his creation of *The Total Look*, which boasted generously cut silhouettes that extended bold patterns across all of an ensemble's components (from the under to the outer garments, shoes to accessories) [Figures 1.23-1.24]. In these designs, a bold line would move down a pliable, knit-jersey dress and be extended along the length of a stockings leg. It was an attempt to better articulate how the legs, torso and arms of a woman 'worked together,' while simultaneously abstracting the very concept of 'the body' and its constitutive parts. This comprehensive, sartorial scheme offered Gernreich's customers a new sense of 'wholeness' *contra* more fetishistic fashions that sectioned the body into different, competing erogenous zones. It also encouraged the creation of new 'forms' of movement.

Like his hero, Graham, who had been interested in exploring 'absolute dance,' or the formal tensions over the expressive qualities of dance, Gernreich aimed at producing 'total fashion.'⁶⁰ He took to heart Graham's claim that dance was "an absolute," that it was "not knowledge about something," but "knowledge itself,"⁶¹ and he made clothes that followed suit. Gernreich's ensuing designs urged that people get to know novel and abstract improvisational physical repertoires, particularly in the face of more rigid forms of authority. He was in search of new

⁶⁰ For more on Graham's formalism, particularly during the 1940's and on, see: Franko, *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*.

⁶¹ Franko 38.

bodies that could withstand the new times.⁶²



UNRAVELED ARTISTRY: A useful

illustration of how this design program played itself out, under the best of circumstances, is provided by Sam Green, the former director of the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art, who, in recounting the story of a rather raucous 1965 exhibition opening at the ICA, noted that, at the height of the event:

The police were keeping the crowds off the stairs with their sticks. Edie [Sedgwick] was wearing a [shocking pink] Rudi Gernreich dress, a long thing like a T-shirt with sleeves that must have been twenty feet long, rolled up and bunched at the wrist. Then, in this incredible performance, she began baiting the audience: She began to let her sleeves down over the crowd like an elephant's trunk and then ... draw them up again ... teasing the crowd and working them up [Figure 1.25-1.26].⁶³

⁶² For a marvelous example of what this looked like, see William Claxton's psychedelic *Basic Black* (1967), a short 'fashion film' that stars Gernreich's most noted models (Peggy Moffitt, Léon Bing, and Ellen Harth) dressed in his mid-1960s fashions, and features the models moving, as the clothes inspires them (Moffitt and Claxton 120-123).

⁶³ Gould 7.



Figure 1.25: Green, Sam. Edie Sedgwick at Andy Warhol Exhibit Opening, Philadelphia Institute for Contemporary Art. October 1965.



Figure 1.26: McDonough, Frank W. Andy Warhol and Gerard Malanga, dressed to the nines at the ICA Opening, *Village Voice*. October 14, 1965.

While Sedgwick's gesture might seem like only a minor insurrection, the surreal transformation of a woman's arm into a pachyderm's long, wily, and authority-defying appendage is no small sartorial subversion, even to the degree that this scene was aided by the heiress and fashion model's relative stardom and her connection to the night's exhibiting artist and main attraction—Andy Warhol.⁶⁴

In 1965, both Warhol and Gernreich were reaching the heights of their fame, and various news outlets were quick to compare the work of these two men, who shared a critical interest in celebrity culture and the mass media, on the one hand, and who presented similarly alternative, public masculinities (marked by the distinct 'lilt of creativity'), on the other.⁶⁵ In the course of such reports, people would often intimate that 'more than a fashion designer,' Gernreich was, indeed, like Warhol, 'a true artist' and that his clothes should therefore be taken quite seriously.⁶⁶ The slippage that Gernreich's work forces between these closely related, but definitively distinct modes of cultural production (a slippage that Warhol, himself, couldn't seem to produce as convincingly, despite his former career as a fashion illustrator and his repeated attempts to re-enter the 'populist' world of design) speaks volumes about the extent to which Gernreich's work was able to not only test, but transform the very

⁶⁴ It should be noted that Warhol's work wasn't actually 'exhibited' that evening, as planned. Rather, it was removed from the gallery at the last minute, for fear that the works would be destroyed by the crowds that had come to see the Pop Art Superstar (Bourdon).

⁶⁵ Felderer, *Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion*.

⁶⁶ Felderer, *Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion* 200. For a through examination of Gernreich, as an artist, see: Steele, *Sunshine and Design*; Gernreich (*Interview with Claire Loeb*). For more on Gernreich's place within the L.A. Art World, see: Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, *Rebels in Paradise*.

substance of socio-cultural conventions⁶⁷—in this case, the conventional and deeply gendered notion that fashion is “[ephemeral], frivolous, relegated to the domain of the feminine and the body, as opposed to art, which [is] deemed [eternal,] masculine and placed in the sphere of the mind and psyche”.⁶⁸

To be clear, the intertwining of fashion and art has long been regarded as absolutely key to the production of the modern social fabric,⁶⁹ but in more conservative purviews, these two creative modes are intended (like the warp and weft of a textile) to remain discreet, always perpendicular. This is because, at the heart of some modern aesthetic theories and their attending definitions of art, (fashion) design is set-up as art’s constitutive other, or that mode of creative production that is beholden to the market and to the manufactured whims of the embodied, consumer passions. Whereas ‘art’ stands alone, as that which uses similar, creative techniques to produce a form of seemingly timeless or universal knowledge that sits at a critical distance from ‘everyday culture’.⁷⁰

Popular attempts to criticize this notion and to wrinkle the normative socio-

⁶⁷ Beyond the popular press’ identification of Gernreich as an artist, it’s worth noting that many individuals located squarely within the art world were, likewise, drawn to the rather ‘artistic’ nature of Gernreich’s fashions. As early as 1979, curators at SFMoMA were in talks with Gernreich to mount a retrospective of his work at the museum. While the exhibit never seems to have occurred (despite nearly 6 years of correspondence between Gernreich and museum staff detailing such a possibility), this suggests that Gernreich might have had the special honor of being one of the first, living fashion designers to have his work formally exhibited within a dedicated arts space. Today, ‘fashion exhibits’ are relatively commonplace, and multiple exhibits of Gernreich’s work have been mounted across the world MOCA (2011), Kent State (2008), ICA, Philadelphia (2001), Neue Galerie Graz (2000). For more on the rise of the fashion exhibit and museum, see: Steele, *Museum Quality*.

⁶⁸ Geczy and Karaminas 3.

⁶⁹ Obvious examples include: Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life* and Benjamin *Illuminations* and *The Arcades Project*.

⁷⁰ Such sentiments are surely rooted in the aesthetic philosophies of thinkers such as Immanuel Kant or Arthur Schopenhauer, who suggested, for instance, that “the value of art lay in its capacity to transcend the incessant demands of the body, giving us insight into the universal” (Negrin 45).

aesthetic fabric abound: Salvador Dali's early collaborations with Elsa Schiaparelli come to mind, as do the more recent collaborations of Jean-Paul Gaultier and the artists Pierre et Gilles. Add to this, a host of fashion exhibitions that have taken larger, international art museums by storm over the last decade,⁷¹ and the litany of works produced by contemporary artists, such as Vanessa Beecroft, Brian Jungen, Takashi Murakami, and Yinka Shonibare, who all regularly borrow from the rhetorics and repertoires of the fashion system in order to produce their artworks. Generally speaking, these examples all work to alter the contradictory structure of difference that separates 'fashion' from 'art' by producing a series of clever semiotic switchbacks that ask one to reconsider the substance of fashion vis-à-vis the significance of art (and vice versa). Through this, the limits of art's singularity, or 'extraordinariness,' is tested through the use of everyday aesthetics and the radical beauty of the quotidian is made visible under art's microscope.

Interestingly, it is usually the artist's egress from the realm of art and their descent into the visual rhetorics of design that tends to provide the 'most critical' means to deconstruct the manufactured oppositions between art and design. Rarely does the work of a (fashion) designer, *as such*, get recognized for causing a big enough snag in the social fabric so as to earn their work the exceptional right to be addressed as 'art,' properly speaking. More rare still, is the occasion when a designer accomplishes this feat while still resolutely maintaining their work's status

⁷¹ Steele, *Museum Quality*.

as wearable, everyday fashion.⁷² It's for this reason, perhaps, that so few designers have managed to match Gernreich's capacity to take-up the strategy of making what many have come to call 'anti-fashion,' or self-reflexive, ready-to-wear clothing that occupies the space that usually separates clothes from more critical or meaningful forms of cultural production.⁷³ More regularly, mundane material culture is repeatedly elevated and translated into art via elaborate *haute couture* showings, losing its place within lived reality in order to become critically meaningful. *Couture* or contemporary art 'sells itself out' by lending its aesthetic acumen, void of any critical significance, to popular culture in the form of 'diffusion lines' or commercial collaborations.⁷⁴ Seldom are 'art' and 'fashion' critically transformed so that they run parallel and start to resonate with one another, so rarely do they become fused together in some messy, uncomfortable way à la Gernreich.

This perfunctory form of critical engagement is, of course, precisely what Walter Benjamin warns against, as early as 1923, when he suggests in his short, sharp essay, "The Task of the Translator," that the point of translation, *or of criticism more broadly speaking*, isn't to transpose, or transmit, one language (or discourse) in the form of another, but to transform 'the original' text through the medium of the

⁷² As fashion cultures have changed, in the wake of designers such as Gernreich, this tendency has certainly been amended in interesting ways — but not nearly to the extent that one might expect. Designers such as Rei Kawakubo, Alexander McQueen, Issaye Miyake, and Viviane Westwood, for example, are all often lauded as 'artists,' but this is generally (and certainly in the case of McQueen) for their couture work, which isn't intended for 'regular wear.' These designers' ready-to-wear collections are treated as somewhat less artistic, or 'statement-driven,' and are (at best) seen as examples of tamed clothes, touched by a kind of trickled down art.

⁷³ Gernreich's work was often regarded by his contemporaries as 'anti-fashion,' and he was the chief designer identified by a 1967 *Fashionweek* article on the rising trend of such clothes.

⁷⁴ I'd argue that in recent years, Takashi Murakami's collaborations with Louis Vuitton serves as perhaps the best example of this (see Appendix C for images).

other. That is, to focus attention on the echoes that are produced in the space that opens up between an ‘original’ and ‘secondary’ text—that place where the very notion of the ‘original’ versus ‘the secondary’ becomes inconsequential. Benjamin writes, quoting Rudolf Pannwitz, that “the basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue.”⁷⁵ The point of criticism, as Benjamin, himself, explains in the essay’s conclusion, is to recognize that “all great texts contain their potential translation between the lines.”⁷⁶ The point of Gernreich’s designs was precisely this, to make clothes in-between art and fashion, now and the future, the self and the other.

To return to the 1965 scene at the ICA, and the strange, critical power that Sedgwick was able to access via the odd, protracted sleeves of her dress, it is worth noting that additional reports from the evening claim that Sedgwick had been forced onto the stairs, along with Warhol and the others in their entourage, by a crowd who were literally demanding that Warhol’s clothing be given to them, as if St. Andy’s tuxedo might possess the exceptional power of a sainted relic.⁷⁷ Trapped with nowhere to go, as the “stairway, alas, did not lead to the second floor, having been boarded up years ago,”⁷⁸ Sedgwick redirected the crowd’s attention with the aid of her stretchy, and seemingly endless sleeves—thus keeping the artist’s modesty in tact and buying the famed ‘it-girl’ and her compatriots the vital time they needed to

⁷⁵ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 81.

⁷⁶ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 82.

⁷⁷ Bourdon.

⁷⁸ Bourdon.

be rescued, not by the police who could see only one way out (through an unrelenting crowd), but by a resourceful and equally improvisational group of students “who cut a hole in the floor above through which they [all] made a Beatlesque escape.”⁷⁹

It was scenes like this that Gernreich most liked to dress. He was uninterested in simply having an upper-class clientele, with their limited range of social activities as his only inspiration. Like other designers of his generation, such as Courrèges, Rabanne, and Mary Quant, Gernreich understood this meant he needed to follow in the footsteps of Gabrielle ‘Coco’ Chanel and turn his attentions away from the *atelier* and towards the main thoroughfares of modern life—towards ‘the streets,’ which were filled with the young women employed in the downtown workforce and the young who men who circulated outside of the good ol’ boys’ networks. The new paths these young people were charting required clothes that could transition from work to play, from sun-up to sun-down. Working to help this generation, who were maturing just after the Second World War and just beyond the reach of McCarthyism, to feel less restricted than Gernreich and his peers had been forced to feel was far more important to the up-and-coming fashion designer than helping other, wealthier clients look “well-bred.”⁸⁰

⋮

⁷⁹ Bourdon.

⁸⁰ This sentiment is echoed across most of the fashion press written on Gernreich throughout the 1950’s and 1960’s; for a particularly explicit take on the extent to which the new, young woman was at the center of Gernreich’s fashions, please see: Steinem, *Gernreich’s Progress, or Eve Unbound*.



A TWIN PARADOX: To accomplish

this task, Gernreich needed to go against the economic and scopophilic grains of the fashion industry and learn how to put a garment's feel ahead of its look, thereby bringing people much closer to his clothes than to those of, say a Christian Dior—whose 'new look' absolutely dominated the fashion scene that he and other young designers entered into during the mid-Century. Dior's fashions strictly obeyed the laws and divisions of optically delineated Cartesian space, and its attending epistemo-ontologies and political economies. Unlike the simple sheath dresses and amply-cut separates that anchored Gernreich's earliest collections [Figure 1.29, 1.38], the proportions of Dior's famous, mid-century silhouette absolutely required that one always take a well-heeled 'step-back' in order to comprehend themselves in a mirror, a camera lens, or even a street window [Figures 1.27-1.28]. In the space opened and bridged by this gesture, Gernreich, like so many critical minds of his generation, gleaned the occurrence of much ideological violence.⁸¹ His subsequent experiments with more relaxed clothing shapes and affordable, easy-to-care-for, mix-and-match fabrics in hyper-modern color combinations and patterns always came

⁸¹ The echoes between this and Lacan's work on the mirror-stage in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* and *Écrits*, Sartre's work on 'the look' in *Being and Nothingness*, and Foucault's work on the panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*, for instance, are quite intentional here.



Figure 1.27: Dior, Christian. Dior's New Look: 'Bar' Suit and Jacket (Spring/Summer 1947) and Skirt, executed in 1969 from a 1949 Dior design. (Photograph from Metropolitan Museum of New York's Costume Institute.)



Figure 1.28: Dior, Christian. Dior's 'Bar Suit' from the New Look Collection. 1947. (Photograph from Archives Christian Dior.)



Figure 1.29: Zinner, Christa. Unidentified Model wearing an ensemble from Gernreich's first collection. c. 1948.



Figure 1.30: Hopper, Denis. Model Léon Bing and Rudi Gernreich in his Studio. c. mid-1960's.

together in more close-range, or haptic, or ‘seriously playful’ ways, which were bent on offering consumers new manners in which not only to dress, but to see and to understand themselves and their potentiality [Figures 1.29-1.30].⁸² As a 1967 *Time* magazine article on the designer explains, “Girls who wear Gernreich’s clothes prize them above all because they leave the body free to move”⁸³.

The portrait of a non-conformist, Gernreich remained committed to Los Angeles and to the West Coast’s famously casual style. Unlike most U.S.-based fashion designers, he choose not to locate his studio in New York City, and he was thus labeled the designer of “swimwear couture.” This designation absolutely incensed traditional *couturiers*, who would never have dreamt of including ‘sportswear’ in their catalogs,⁸⁴ and it provoked an endless stream of comparisons between Gernreich and other, more typical (and less ‘mod’) designers of the time, particularly: the other L.A.-based, but more staunchly traditional designer James Galanos—who would go on to gain renown as Nancy Reagan’s favorite designer and the man behind her 1981 white, beaded Inaugural Ball gown [Figure 1.31].

Pictured in a 1965 press photo taken by Julian Wasser [Figure 1.32], the premium that designers such as Gernreich put on the youth movement’s animated

⁸² This sentiment is perhaps best supported by statements such as those reportedly made by the noted fashion photographer George Hoyningen-Huene, who claimed: “there were only two important clothes designers in the twentieth century: Gabrielle [Coco] Chanel and Rudi Gernreich, ...[because only] Chanel and Gernreich...conceived of clothes that allowed women to see themselves from completely new perspectives and to dress according to what they saw” (Nielson 56-57).

⁸³ “*Me? In That!*” (1967).

⁸⁴ A particularly famous example of the disdain that more traditional fashion designers and couturiers relished on Gernreich occurred when the designer Norman Norell declined his own nomination for a Cody Award (the equivalent of an Oscar in the fashion world) over the 1960 awarding of a Cody to Gernreich. According to Norell, Gernreich’s designs were too great “a departure” from couture to qualify him for an award. (That said, a few years later Norell retracted his statement, admitting that Gernreich was actually quite a contributor to the fashion world.)



Figure 1.31: Nancy Reagan, accompanied by President Ronald Reagan, in her John Galanos inaugural ball gown. 1981. (Photograph Credit: Mai/ Time LIFE Pictures/ Getty.)



Figure 1.32: Wasser, Julian. Rudi Gernreich with Léon Bing and John Galanos with an unnamed model. c. 1965.

animus towards ‘the system’ is made patent—*if not a little sardonically*—in Gernreich and his model Léon Bing’s groovy dispositions *contra* the haughty expressions of Galanos and his unnamed attendant. Two years younger than Gernreich, Galanos appears as the fed-up adult. It is as though the ‘far-out,’ space-and-time bending orbits that Rudi’s designs had rocketed him into had managed to slow down his aging process and make him a perennial *enfant terrible*. Unsurprisingly, such distinctions greatly pleased Gernreich, who often claimed *couture* was long overdue for a “cruel death”⁸⁵ due to the way it revolved around unnecessarily complicated and expensive clothing that treated women’s bodies primarily as props for the display of their male consorts’ variable social worth. “Fashion,” according to Gernreich must and “will go out of fashion,”⁸⁶ if social change is to be realized.

In this, Gernreich seems to echo an economic critique of the fashion system that had long and famously been advanced by the economist and sociologist Thorsten Veblen, who wrote in his turn of the century study *The Theory of the Leisure Class*:

[The] high heel, the skirt, the impractical bonnet, the corset, and the general disregard of the wearer’s comfort which is an obvious feature of all civilized woman’s apparel, are so many items of evidence to the effect that in the modern civilized scheme of life the woman is still, in theory, the economic dependent of man—that, perhaps in a idealized sense, she still is the man’s chattel. The homely reason for all this conspicuous leisure and attire on the part of women lies in the fact that they are servants to whom, in the differentiation of economic functions, has been delegated

⁸⁵ *Rudi Gernreich Papers*, UCLA Box 35, transcript from a questionnaire sent to Montgomery Ward designers from Rita A. Perna, the then National Fashion Coordinator for the department store.

⁸⁶ Gernreich, *Fashion for the ‘70s*, 115; Felderer, *Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion*.

the office of putting in evidence their master's ability to pay.⁸⁷

When first published, Veblen's observations brought much needed attention to the sexually differentiated political and economic factors at play within the modern fashion system. However, as Elizabeth Wilson astutely explains in her quintessential book on fashion entitled *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (1985), Veblen's theories failed to "account for the *form* that fashion changes take. Why did the bustle replace the crinoline, the leg of mutton sleeve the sloping shoulder?"⁸⁸ *The Theory of the Leisure Class* also conspicuously figured the middle-class woman caught-up in the middle of the fashion system as being utterly passive and woefully unimaginative. This is because Veblen saw woman's fashionable transfiguration only in terms of what it properly signified within the bounds of a patriarchal civil society and a capitalist economy. He didn't stop to attend to how these 'transforming actions' might do violence to these orders.⁸⁹

It is in this regard that Veblen and Gernreich's critiques greatly differ. Veblen tight-rope walks between fashion and the economy's intersections without ever dipping his toe into the spaces opened-up between them. As a result, and as Wilson astutely notes, Veblen fails to appreciate the pleasures that fashionable styles offer their wearers in spite of the physical and social restrictions they impose. By ignoring this, Veblen misses how the powerful and highly volatile work of desire unfolds within the fashion system. Gernreich, who proceeded from the understanding that one

⁸⁷ Veblen 111; qtd., in part, in Wilson 52-53.

⁸⁸ Wilson 53, emphasis mine. Please also note that in her insightful critique of Veblen, Wilson borrows an interesting set of notes developed by Theodor Adorno's in his own critique of Veblen's theories, for more—please see: Adorno, Theodor, *Veblen's Attacks on Culture*.

⁸⁹ Here, I'm borrowing from the work of Jean-François Lyotard, particularly from his essay "The Dream-Work Does Not Think," 19-21.

shouldn't confuse women's oppression with passivity, knew that fashion ultimately 'worked' not simply by way of its significant expense, but rather *at the expense of signification*—that there was more to 'the impractical bonnet' than meets the eye. . . or, that 'one cannot tell what is going on in the look simply by looking at it.'⁹⁰

Beyond economic necessities and material availability, Gernreich's design program suggests that it is the force of our desires that account for so many of those particular, formal changes that fashion's consistencies regularly undergo. This is because fashion *is* fantasy. Fashion offers our desires a medium through which to formally manipulate the discourse of the body, to violently threaten the rational ordering of its meaning, and from which to produce pleasures that exceed satisfaction or sense. Fashion's forms present the perverse opportunity, in other words, to operate on the text/ile in ways that are non-linguistic, within waking life. Here, it is useful to turn to the work of the philosopher and theorist Jean-François Lyotard, who in a 1968 critique of Lacan's insistence that 'the unconscious is structured like a language,' points towards the way 'the dream-work does not think,' but 'manhandles' the text and "operate[s] on the text as if it were a material."⁹¹

For Lyotard, Freud's work on the unconscious—and particularly his work on the dream-work—insists that one always take into account the way that the textures of a text affect its meaning.⁹² Or, as Martin Jay succinctly explains in his reference to the Lyotard text in *Downcast Eyes* (1993), what Lyotard claims is Lacan's failure—and for our purposes, this should be identified as Veblen's failure too—is that the

⁹⁰ Burgin, *Perverse Space*.

⁹¹ Lyotard 21.

⁹² Jay 568. Note: Jay refers to the 'plastic embodiment signifiers effect their meaning.'

famed French analyst and philosopher does not appreciate how fantasy, or the *forms* of desire, “pits the materiality of signifiers against what they try to signify.”⁹³ One particularly useful example of how this works, especially in terms of the work at hand, is provided by Lyotard in a reading of a Frédéric Rossif *Révolution d’Octobre* film poster [Figure 1.33], which I will quote here at length:

The letters of the [film] title are deformed in such a way as to give the impression that a wind is blowing the flat surface on which they are written. This is enough to make this plane movable, to turn it into a piece of cloth, the cloth of a flag carried by someone who is walking fast towards the left (which, as well as being politically symbolic, also carries a plastic value: the eye moves from left when reading; hence the letters move ahead of the glance, complementing the movement). But this is only the beginning of condensation. If the wind were to blow harder, if the horse of the standard-bearer were to gallop flat out, if one were able to ‘freeze’ the inscription, certain letters would disappear altogether into the folds and others would undergo radical changes. B, whose base was masked by a fold, might be read as an R, D as an O, etc. Certain differential or graphically relevant features would be transgressed. It could happen that *Révolution d’Octobre* might be read *Révon d’Ore* and be heard as *Rêvons d’or* (let’s dream of gold). So much for condensation, which clearly requires the third dimension, that in which the flag forms its folds. But such a distortion would have required a preliminary choice; in our example, it is the beginning (*REV, D’O*) and an end (*ON, RE*) that must remain visible, must stand fast to windward. It is the work of displacement that effects this choice by reinforcing certain parts of the cloth, stiffening them, enabling them to preserve certain sites of the - primary - text in position. [...] If desire is the mobile element (here the wind, elsewhere water) that crumples the text, can it also be the fixative which keeps certain parts of it readable? I know of only one notion which can satisfy these conflicting demands: the notion of Form, of Phantasy.⁹⁴

To build off this and to return focus to Veblen’s work, we may also borrow from Jean

⁹³ Jay 568.

⁹⁴ Lyotard 27-28.

**REVOLUTION
D'OCTOBRE**

Figure 1

Figure 1.33: Artist Unknown. '*Revolution d'Octobre*,' as if printed on fabric and windblown.
(Taken from Lyotard 1981, 27.)

Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis' psychoanalytic notes on fantasy, and suggest that Veblen confuses fashion for "an *object* that the subject imagines and aims at, so to speak," instead of recognizing fashion as "a *sequence* in which the subject has [their] own part to play and in which permutations of roles and attributions are possible."⁹⁵ Or, to paraphrase the famed Lacanian philosopher Slavoj Žižek's formulation in *Looking Awry*, we could say Veblen ignores how it is 'through fashion, that we learn how to desire'⁹⁶ . . . even how to desire our own subjugation, as well as the possibilities of our own freedom.

This was something that Gernreich, who was acutely aware of the political potency of desire, was keen to recognize and manipulate to his advantage. Returning, for instance, to Gernreich's *Total Look*, and in particular to the 'typeface look' that he developed the same year that Lyotard wrote his essay [Figures 1.24, 1.34-1.35], it is striking to see how unabashedly the designer sets out to similarly play with 'the letter,' itself. When the look's scarf is laid flat, GERNREICH's strange proper name, which sits uncomfortably in Anglo-shaped mouths,⁹⁷ is quickly recognized for offering some sense of sonic semblance in a sea of deconstructed phonemes. At the same time, as his name becomes snagged in the folds of the scarf and subsumed by the sheer mass of other letters, the arbitrariness of his name (or what it is that 'defines' him), becomes apparent. "RUDI GERNREICH" is no more

⁹⁵ Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* 318.

⁹⁶ Žižek, *Looking Awry* 6.

⁹⁷ As a further play on how the importance of the materiality of language is figured here, it is worth noting how difficult it is for an Anglo-speaker to pronounce Germanic names and words due to the way they learn to move and shape their mouth, tongue and lips as infants. For instance, if a child repeatedly rolls their R's as an infant, a kind of space will be carved out for them to continue making this sound into adulthood. If they do not, the later production of this sound can prove to be incredibly difficult (Trudeau, *How Babies Learn to Speak*).



Figure 1.34: Claxton, William. Gernreich Typeface Dress with Matching Tights and Silk Signature Scarf. 1968.



Figure 1.35: 'Rudi Liberates the Leg' Advertisement for Typeface Tights produced by The McCallum Boutique. August 1968.

resistant to desire's disfigurement than the jumble of letters that surround it. This begs the question of why we work so hard to police our desires and the bodies they are constantly working over?

In short, it should be clear that Veblen's rather parochial economic critique forgets the fantastic, transformative magic that so potently possessed Edie Sedgwick that night at the ICA (and that Karl Marx, himself, insisted was at the heart of the commodity form).⁹⁸ This is because "In Veblen's ideal world," as Wilson explains, "there was no place for the irrational or the non-utilitarian; it was a wholly rational realm. Logically, pleasure itself must be futile since it is unrelated to scientific progress. This ideology led him to reduce *all* culture to kitsch, and to see leisure as absurd in itself."⁹⁹ Veblen situated (dress) reform in a type of neutered and disembodied utilitarianism that was ignorant to fashion's textures and to the ways that fashion's formal dimensions could motivate the body to move beyond the pleasure principle. In contrast, Gernreich regarded the politics and feelings of (dis)pleasure as absolutely central to any critical understanding or experience of the world. It is why the material realm of fashion provided such a perfect venue for his continued political practice.

Gernreich's project was to try and re-form the fashion system so the power of our desires could lead us astray, and past 'the matter of gender.' He set-out to reach this goal with an acute appreciation of the way that the pleasures of more radicalized, 'futurist' fashions might work in a manner akin to what Barthes identified

⁹⁸ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*; Marx, *Capital, Volume I*; Moten, *In the Break*.

⁹⁹ Wilson 52-53.

as “the pleasure of the text”—that peculiar, queer form of pleasure that occurs, as Barthes explains it, in the “moment when my body pursues its own ideas.”¹⁰⁰ That moment is radical, precisely in so far as “my body does not have the same ideas that I do.”¹⁰¹ Gernreich worked to create fashions that might best be figured as kinds of post-structuralist textiles. It is for this reason that one should hesitate to claim, as Hay has in various interviews, that Gernreich ‘left’ the Gay Movement and the world of radical politics in 1952. The *pubikini* designer’s focus on the development of material foils to the fashion industry’s ideological machinations was not a retreat from politics, but a different form of political activity. It is why Gernreich could not simply critique fashion’s existing forms for their physical ‘impracticality,’ nor simply offer ‘rational,’ economic solutions to the problems of runaway (runway) capitalism. Gernreich recognized that by reinforcing or relaxing fashion’s shapes and materials he could direct the ways our desires became caught-up in the system’s works, and that certain materials only worked in certain ways.¹⁰²

.....

¹⁰⁰ Barthes, *Pleasure*, 17.

¹⁰¹ Barthes, *Pleasure*, 17.

¹⁰² It’s worth noting that in addition to fashion design, Gernreich also developed fabrics for home and office interiors, lines of household accessories, perfumes, and even a line of canned soups, during a 1970’s hiatus from clothing design.



STRETCHING THE LIMITS:

Early on, Gernreich gravitated towards affordable (double)knit fabrics—which were an especially uncommon choice for fashion designers at the time, as knits were primarily relegated to the production of children’s clothes and the designs of sports and work wear. Made of variable columns of inter-looping yarns, knits are made to stretch in a variety of directions. Unlike non-elasticated woven fabrics, a knit garment offers its wearer a much greater range of motion—both in terms of time and space, giving knit garments an altogether different material profile and *durée* than clothes made from other materials.

Practically speaking, a knit’s ‘give’ allows it to follow a body through fluctuations in weight and proportion. If cared for properly, knits can last their wearers a lifetime. Psychologically speaking, a jersey cocktail dress can twist the arrow of time back to playful memories associated with more youthful and uninhibited physical activity. Knits offer an interesting contrast to woven textiles’ binary structures: they take long, curvy and contiguous routes that always double back before moving forward; they are better suited to suffer irregularities, and they don’t require a contradicting difference in order to manifest themselves [Figures 1.36-1.38]. What is more, you can easily open spaces and enlarge gaps within a knit without fraying, cutting, or removing the threads around it.

It is in all of these ways that a knit Gernreich dress encouraged one to be less

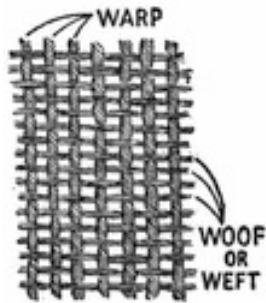


Figure 1.36: Basic Illustration of the warp and woof (or weft) of a textile. c. 2000. (Image provided by TheFreeDictionary.com.)

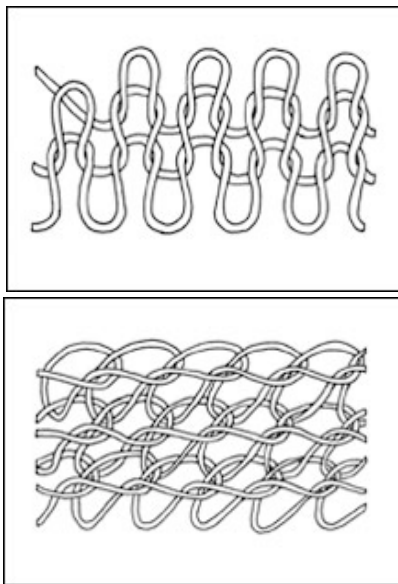


Figure 1.37 and 1.38: Seiler-Baldinger, Annemarie. [T]: Knitting Schematics. [B]: Crocheting Schematics. 1994. (Image taken from taken from Seiler-Baldinger's *Textiles: A Classification of Techniques*.)

inhibited: to dance about, to drape oneself over the arm of a couch, or run after someone leaving a party a little too early. Through his continued use of knits, Gernreich literally changed the texture of the night—helping, in his own way, to make life more ‘swinging.’ Here, the political dimensions of Sedgwick’s taunts become even more clear. The hyper-extension of the model-cum-starlet’s arm becomes emblematic of the new paths and forms of pleasure that Gernreich hoped to see all young people exploring, once freed from the rigidity of the gender binary and its attending behaviors.¹⁰³

A self-proclaimed feminist, Gernreich declared in a 1970 “fashion statement” delivered at a Montgomery Ward department store, that:

Woman is no longer the ‘better half’ of man, long a euphemism for her enslavement. She’s is a person, an individual involved in the broader issues of the world. Meanwhile ‘Man’ is temporarily bereaved. But they will find a new way. And the new way will have important consequences for clothes.¹⁰⁴

While not a typical design statement, such proclamations were expected by the likes of ‘Rudi,’ who had become a household name by the early 1970’s for repeatedly challenging young women to re-imagine their social roles and self-images by wearing his increasingly *avant-garde* designs, which also started to include the use of other non-traditional, non-woven materials such as industrial plastics and vinyls.

Early on, Gernreich’s experiments with vinyl capitalized on the way the unexpected textures, glint, and sound of the material could transform a rather simple

¹⁰³ As he was quoted saying in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* on September 29, 1966 : “We have to take this terrible world and make fun of it with fun clothes, functional clothes” (reprinted in Felderer, *Berg Companion to Fashion*, 366).

¹⁰⁴ *Rudi Gernreich Papers*, Box 25, “Fashion Statement,” typed with hand-printed amendments and notes dated January 7, 1970 and entitled “Clothes.”

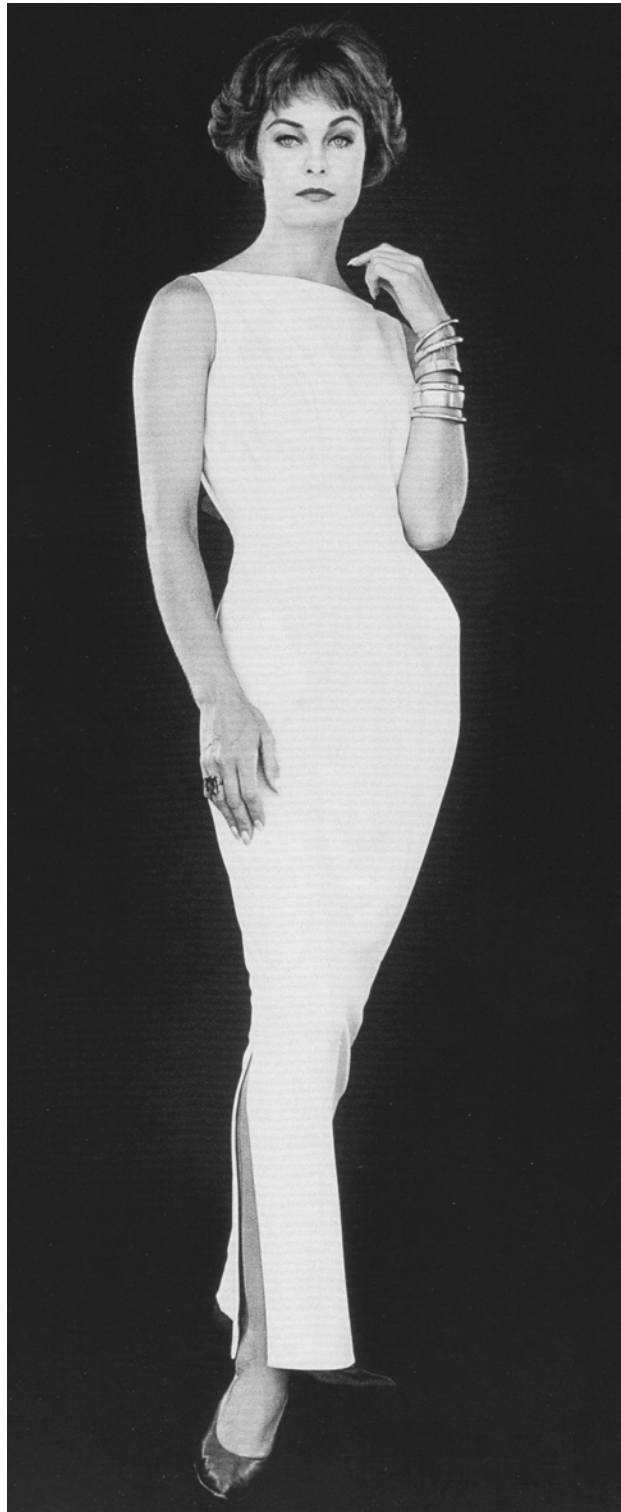


Figure 1.39: Mitchell, Tommy. A Gernreich white, plastic Evening Dress. 1954.

and expectable design into more of a conversation piece [Figure 1.39]. As he continued to work with the material, he developed new ways that vinyl could introduce less optically-driven shapes and dimensionalities into his collections. It's difficult to appreciate this when observing these designs in photographs. However, when given the opportunity to directly encounter these garments, the multi-dimensional 'mind,' or will, of the plastics, themselves, becomes overwhelmingly felt. While a photograph is able to capture how synthetic materials unnaturally glisten and contrast with the tall blades of grass that Gernreich's models lay upon while being photographed in a pair of his PVC rompers [Figure 1.40], the squeak of vinyl sticking to vinyl changes the entire scene's soundscape. In the photograph, the spoken language of clothes goes un-noted. And while normal fabrics tend to unnoticeably glide off one another, allowing models to quickly move from one pose to another without compromising the integrity of a garment's look, the slow motion manner in which vinyl surfaces separate, particularly in warmer weather, is similarly missed in these still shots. The photograph acknowledges how the models' artificial poses wryly echo romantic images of hyper-sexualized damsels, laid amidst tall grasses in the most controversial, 19th or 20th century figurations of women [Figure 1.41]. However, it falls short in showing the way that these suits clearly encourage their wearers to close their eyes and explore the kinky pleasure found specifically in the way PVC peels from your flesh in one long slurp. The vinyl might tease you into imagining a dressing room of the future, where careful overhead lighting is replaced by soundproofed walls and the salesperson exclaims, "*You sound perfect!*"



Figure 1.40: Claxton, William. Peggy Moffitt and unidentified model in Gernreich's Vinyl Jumpers. 1963.



Figure 1.41: Gustave, Courbet. *Young Ladies on the Bank of the Seine*. Before 1857.

Plastics don't have the same 'memory' as textiles. They don't hold onto the past; they won't stay obediently folded like a cotton calico. In the archive, it becomes clear that Gernreich's mid-1960's jumpsuit in simulated snakeskin questions more than modern woman's 'all natural glow.' The suit's strap moves according to its own whims, like a long serpent [Figures 1.42-1.43]: again, we are prompted to go back and reconsider the position of poor Eve. Seemingly sentient, in your hand, the jumpsuit also challenges one to reconsider what our responsibility to our clothes might be. Likewise, a conspicuous cotton lining, sewn into the groin of a yellow belted, vinyl swimsuit from the same period reminds one that these designs proliferated a multi-faceted understanding of one's own skin: after all, exposed skin feels so starkly and qualitatively different than a torso left to sweat it out under a nearly non-porous plasticine cloth [Figures 1.44-1.45]. And the high gloss of a magnificently dramatic, black vinyl, cape (1967) breathes new life into the matte, white threads used to produce its traditional, embroidered design [Figures 1.46-1.47]. This presses one to consider the time-warp that is this cape: how this timeless pattern plays itself out across a material that hadn't even been conceived of less than a century prior. It also compels one to finger the deep perforations made by the embroiderer's needle, which would slip unnoticed into a textile's ready-made gaps. Looking down on these holes, one is met by their own ghostly reflection in the cape's glassy surface, and it becomes difficult to ignore how clothing eerily doubles our bodies, how they attach themselves to us.¹⁰⁵ In a similar manner, the lined, vinyl cape's stiffness and weight makes it impossible for its wearer to forget their body's

¹⁰⁵ For more, see: Felshin, *Empty Dress*.



Figure 1.42 and 1.43: Author's photo of Gernreich's Vinyl Snakeskin Jumper, c. mid-1960's. 2012.
(Taken in FIDM archives.)



Figure 1.44: Claxton, William. Belted, Yellow Gernreich Vinyl Swimsuit with Mother of Pearl Buttons. 1963.



Figure 1.45: Author's photo of Gernreich's Yellow, Vinyl Jumper with mother of pearl buttons. c. mid-1960's. 2012. (Taken in FIDM archives.)

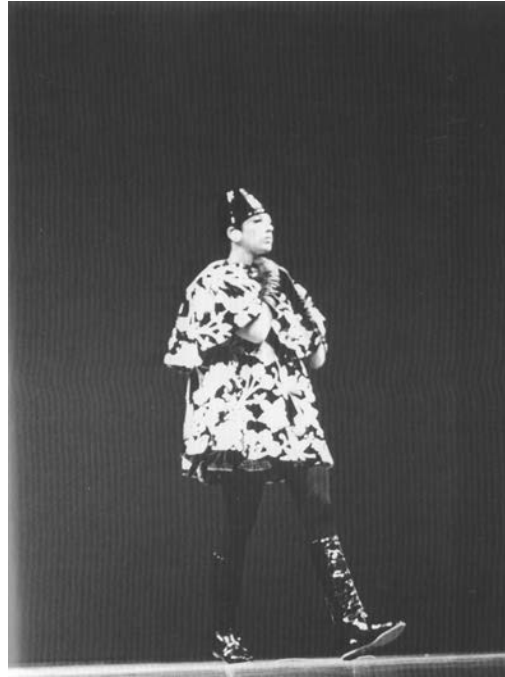


Figure 1.46: Zinner, Christa. Cropped catwalk image of black, vinyl coat with embroidery, aka one of Gernreich's 'Austrian calvary officer looks' from his Fall 1967 collection, shown at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. January 20, 1968.



Figure 1.47: Author's Photo of Gernreich's Black, Vinyl Cape with detail of Embroidery. 2012. (Taken in FIDM archives.)

rather grounded, physical limitations, while the abstracted imago revealed in its surface takes one to wholly abstracted heights. What ties all these designs together is the way they challenge dominant corporealities by offering alternative ways to address the time signatures and gendered narratives that fashion normally catches the body up-in. Rather than bounce off a tightly bounded frame our desires are able to conspicuously bend the body back, stretch it forward, or awkwardly stick sections of it together.

At the same time that Gernreich was playing with these vinyls and plastics, he was also garnering attention for the introduction of shorter dress lengths into popular fashion vernaculars, and for becoming one of a handful of designers equally credited with having ‘invented’ the miniskirt. He additionally introduced geometric cut-outs, or “body windows,” across all his clothing lines [Figures 1.48-1.50]—creating much more revealing (or, as he would have it ‘liberating’) garments that strove to rework previously concealed bits of the human form by visibly eroticizing them and offsetting the attention paid to the more typical erogenous zones. For his 1968 Resort collection, Gernreich combined all three of these design elements in a series of *Total Look* minidresses and matching boots that included vertical and horizontal vinyl body windows that cut across wide sections of the wearer’s body. This earned him the distinction of being one of the only fashion designers ever to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine [Figure 1.51], and brought him to the attention of many people who existed outside the purviews of the high fashion world. As he gained



Figure 1.48: Zinner, Christa. Models in Cut-Out Dress and Swimsuit. 1961.



Figure 1.49: Claxton, William. Gernreich's Wool-Knit Dress with Transparent Vinyl Inserts. 1968.

Figure 1.50: Cover *Time* magazine. December 1, 1967. (Illustration by Boris Chaliapin.)

popularity,¹⁰⁶ Gernreich became one of the first ‘high fashion’ designers to create clothes that were made available at mid- and lower-market retailers such as Montgomery Ward and Sears¹⁰⁷—reportedly in allegiance with those young women who had most helped to inspire his design but who could not afford to shop at the more expensive boutiques that sold his work.¹⁰⁸

This said, one could certainly be suspicious of just how liberatory these designs are. The bulk of Gernreich’s designs seem to preclude the inclusion (and liberation) both of older and more corpulent bodies, not because they were inherently unwearable by different body types (many, fat-positive designers noticeably borrow from Gernreich’s work [Figures 1.51-1.52]), but because their styling seemed to fetishize the ‘dazzling’ bodies of youth in a way that was perhaps unconsciously rather neoclassical, and hardly innovative.¹⁰⁹ For instance, when considered alongside the nationalist, physical-hygiene campaigns that preceded the rise of fascism and were most notoriously emblemized in scenes of aerobic exercise

¹⁰⁶ Gernreich frequented the pages of national Newspapers and showed-up across different media outlets throughout the 1960s. In 1967, an episode of the popular Batman television series, entitled “Catwoman’s Dressed to Kill,” starred Gernreich, his designs and some of his most popular models.

¹⁰⁷ This has had huge effects on the fashion industry. Since “Montgomery Ward became the first chain department store to send its fashion coordinators to the European couture shows. [And then]...the first to employ major designers – John Weitz and Rudi Gernreich, among them” (*CA Apparel News* [1979] 44), ‘fashion’ has become available to a broader consumer base through the development of ‘fast fashion,’ which relies on hyper-exploitative labor practices to make fashion available and ‘affordable’ for the masses. Interestingly, many of the workers engaged within (fast) fashion’s incredibly feminized laborforce are women. So, while this attempt at ‘democratizing’ fashion has had exciting and positive effects for some women, it has also had notoriously alienating and destructive effects on others. This would be much to the chagrin of Gernreich, who spoke regularly about the need for a living wage for all workers within the fashion industry, and who disapproved of early globalized labor practices that focused on labor markets where workers were made to work for free (Gernreich, *Interview with Claire Loeb*). For more on the fast fashion phenomenon, especially within the Los Angeles context, please see: Archer, et.al., *The Garment Worker Center and Forever 21*; Bonacich and Appelbaum, *Behind the Label*; McRobbie, *British Fashion Design*; Ross, *No Sweat*.

¹⁰⁸ Gernreich, *Interview with Claire Loeb*.

¹⁰⁹ Vernant, *Dim Body, Dazzling Body*.



Figures 1.51 and 1.52: Scheider, Andre. Fashion Designer Jen Wilder's *Cult of California* Clothes, as photographed for Plus Model Magazine. October 2012.

included by Leni Riefenstahl in her infamous Third Reich propaganda film *Olympia* [Figures 1.53-1.54],¹¹⁰ the affinity between fascist and the mod muscular bodies that Gernreich and other designers' clothes appear to necessitate is uncomfortably fathomable, making his work appear much less naively utopic and ideologically unfettered. It also reminds one of how fine the line between liberation and exploitation is, or how quickly forms of liberation can be turned into the material of violent discrimination.

These complications are particularly evident in a set of ambivalent conceptual designs that he was commissioned to produce for *Expo '70*, the first World's Fair held in Japan—designs that, interestingly enough, seem to try and deal with these very kinds of critique. By the start of the 1970s, Gernreich had started to lose heart in the validity of his project and he grew unsure of whether social change could effectively come from fashion design. When *LIFE* magazine commissioned him to predict 'the future of fashion' for their readers, he responded by ringing fashion's death knell, and offering 'utilitarian,' unisex uniforms that claimed that 'fashion as it was known' ought to be abandoned as a project in light of the world's circumstances.

At the dawning of this new decade, the United States government had decided to escalate its war in Vietnam despite domestic and international outcry, and a draft had been instituted for the first time since World War II. Gernreich saw pollution going unchecked, and he felt that "animals which now supply wool, fur and leather will be so rare [in the future] that they must be protected, and weaving fabrics

¹¹⁰ For more on pre-war physical hygiene campaigns, especially in France, please see: Larson, *Curing Degeneration*, and Serlin, Bu, and Cartwright, *Imagining Illness*.



Figure 1.53: Claxton, William. Gernreich's black wool-knit and plastic bikini for his Resort line. 1968.

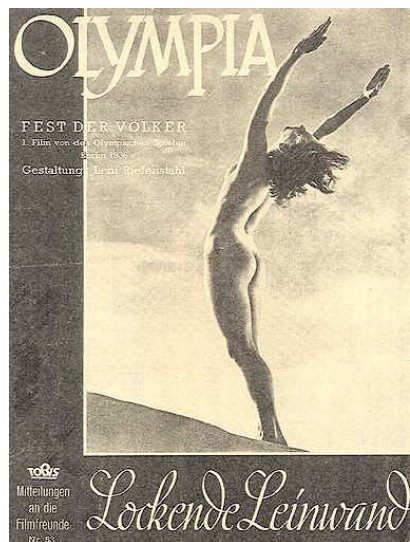


Figure 1.54: Riefenstahl, Leni. *Olympia* - film still, as it appears on cover of a film program. 1938.

such as cotton will be too much trouble, [so] most clothes will [start to] be made entirely of cheap and disposable synthetic knits.”¹¹¹ Yet, in these tumultuous times, Western fashions took a notably nostalgic and ‘hopelessly romantic’ turn, which incensed Gernreich—not only because he was watching his own aesthetic be overwritten, but because the manner in which this was being done seemed to deeply compromise the kinds of changing social relations that he had seen develop throughout the 1960’s. Womenswear designers began producing gauzy, patchworked clothing with vague, unspecified ‘folkloric’ inspirations for popular boutiques like *Biba* in London [Figure 1.55]. According to Gernreich, the “sinister nostalgia” that these designs gave form to was indicative of the fact, “that we are not facing up to the problems of contemporary life.”¹¹²

Instead of these backwards looking, “circusy” designs, Gernreich proposed that by the year 2000:

Clothing will not be identified as either male or female ... ‘women will wear pants and men will wear skirts interchangeably. And since there won’t be any squeamishness about nudity, see-through clothes will only be see-through for reasons of comfort. Weather permitting, both sexes will go about bare-chested. ...We will train the body to grow beautifully rather than cover it to produce beauty.’

[And that the] present cult of eternal youth is not honest and certainly not attractive. ...‘In an era when the body will become the convention of fashion, the old will adopt a uniform of their own. If a body can no longer be accentuated, it should be abstracted. The young won’t wear prints, but the elderly will because bold prints detract. The elderly will have a cult of their own and the embarrassment of old age

¹¹¹ Gernreich, *Fashion for the '70's*, 116.

¹¹² Gernreich, *Fashion for the '70's*, 115.



Figure 1.55: 'Hippie' dresses. [L] Porter, Thea for the *Thea Porter in London* label. [R] Hulanicki, Barbara for the *BIBA* label. c. early 1970's. (Photograph from The Kyoto Costume Institute, photo by Takashi Hatakeyama.)

will fade away.”¹¹³

The subsequent designs required that their models shave all their body hair in a bid to equalize and liberate them [Figures 1.56-1.59]. This, as Gernreich explained in an interview, was because “Hair hides a lot...and body hair is too sexual. I don't want to confuse the idea of freedom with sexual nakedness.”¹¹⁴

Regardless of Gernreich's insistence that these designs were meant to battle the 'nostalgia' so many contemporary fashions were beset by, this mandatory depilation can be read as confirmation of his own neoclassical tendencies—there is, after all, nary a hair on modern European neoclassical sculptuary and painting. And in a world where racial difference is deeply epidermized, Gernreich's strategy does little to unpick how the intersections of race and gender affect a body's social mobility. Also, as Gernreich explained the following year during a radio interview, once taken out of a Eurocentric context and unveiled in Japan, his statements on old age made little sense, as he observed a great appreciation and admiration for older bodies in this cultural context.¹¹⁵ Yet these critiques aside, the *Expo '70* designs also make it crystal clear that Gernreich understood sexual difference as something distinct from biological/ morphological difference. The varied looks that he produced all insist that sexual difference is rooted in 'hair,' or in the way we happen to style the body, not in nature, itself. This quite radical dimension of the designs also made

¹¹³ Gernreich, *Fashion for the '70's* 117-118. Here, it's also worth noting that Gernreich is noted as being the main designer behind the dancewear as fashion or outerwear craze that hit during the early 1980's. And that the clothes he designed for Danskin were the most popular designs he produced during the last five years of his life.

¹¹⁴ From *Time* January 26, 1970, as qtd. Moffitt and Claxton 28.

¹¹⁵ Gernreich, *Interview with Claire Loeb*.



Figure 1.56: Wasser, Julian. Gernreich's *Looks for the year 2000*. 1970.

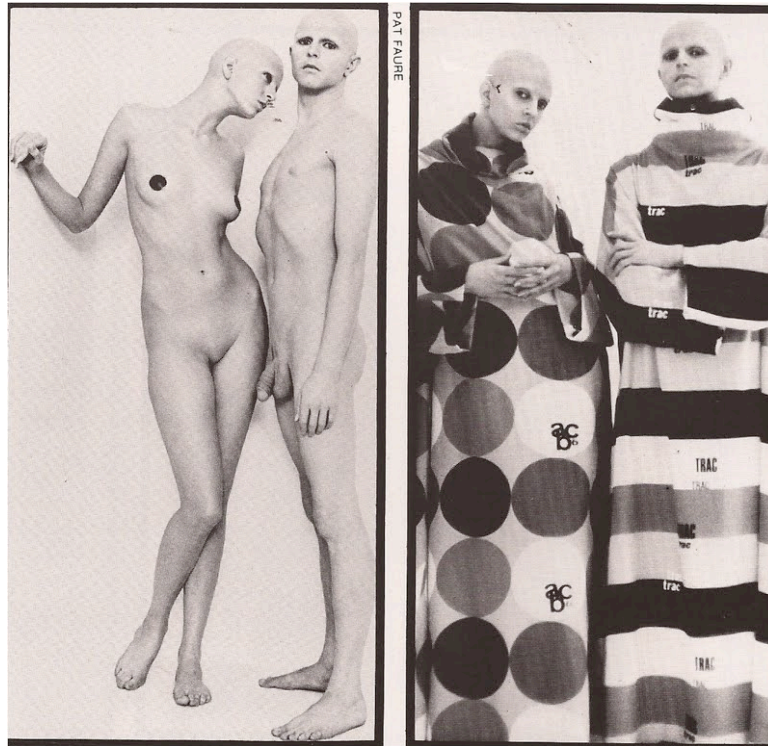


Figure 1.57: Faure, Patricia [L] and Hideki Fujii [R]. Gernreich's *Looks for the year 2000*, produced for Expo '70 (Note: The look on left is intended for the young, the look on right is intended for the more aged). 1970.



Figure 1.58: Faure, Patricia. Gernreich's *Looks for the year 2000*, produced for *Expo '70*. 1970.

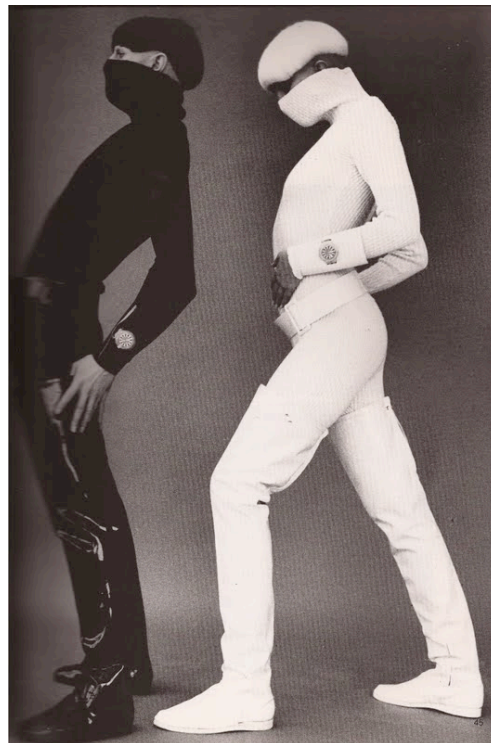


Figure 1.59: Faure, Patricia. Gernreich's *Looks for the year 2000*, produced for *Expo '70*. 1970.

more than a few people nervous.

In the end, and for mixed reasons, very few people responded to his clean-shaved looks positively. The Poncé College of Beauty in Palo Alto, California “ran a half-page ad in the Palo Alto Times headlined ‘Help stamp out Rudi Gernreich!’”¹¹⁶ which featured a model in a bald cap and suggested that his designs threatened the future of their business, which (jokes aside) was not OK [Figure 1.60]. Another typical response, which exposed the design’s worrisome neoclassical tendencies, is supplied by Gernreich’s former boss Edith Head, who quipped during an interview: “Nude for the young? Only possible, plausible or acceptable if we have a race of super bodies. [And the] look for the old will put a stop to medical science, because no one will want to live past 40 if they have to shave their heads and wear a caftan.”¹¹⁷

Now, to be sure, the women cast to wear Gernreich’s clothes in advertising campaigns and along seasonal catwalks—and in particular Gernreich’s most famous and quickly identifiable model-muses Léon Bing and Peggy Moffitt—were hardly paragons of National Socialist womanhood. Their aims were self-possession, not world dominance, and their bold features and slim, androgynous hips directly bucked the Nazi ideal. Yet despite the clear, anti-fascist impetus behind so much of his work and Gernreich’s own personal status as a forced *émigré*, the size-ism and ageism that is sometimes implied by his designs is clearly problematic. His occasional comments that laud thinner, youthful figures and deride both older and more ample

¹¹⁶ Moffitt and Claxton 29; Felderer, *Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion*, 22-23.

¹¹⁷ “Comments on Rudi’s ‘70s Look,” D6.

HELP STAMP OUT RUDI GERNREICH.

Help keep America beautiful. Be a better beautician.

O.K. Rudi, this calls for war. We've heard of a smooth head before, but this is ridiculous. Rudi, the best offense is the best defense. So what we're going to do is train better beauticians. You know the kind. They know the proper methods of hair care and follow them meticulously. They keep in touch with hair. Not only the styles that are here and now but five years from now. Professionalism, care, consideration, and just plain being nice is their bag. Yes, we train better beauticians.

We train beauticians so that by the time they graduate 90% are working professionals. And by working professionals we mean beauticians and stylists that are making \$800.00 a month and more in their first year.

We demand a lot from our students. We demand more from our graduates. We demand that they be in demand. And we teach them how. You can't beat it. We know our way is right. It works. Ask a Ponce graduate.

PONCE COLLEGE OF BEAUTY
 Call 322-5355 today for free information. Hurry! Next class this March 17 - 219 University Ave., Palo Alto, CA.

Figure 1.60: Ponce College of Beauty's 'Help Stamp Out Rudi Gernreich' Advertisement. February 1970.


bodies, alike, by suggesting that there should be different clothing regimes for such differently marked bodies,¹¹⁸ reminds one of why it is difficult for some to recuperate him as a hallmark of feminist or queer fashion design.

Nonetheless, while uncomfortable and deserving of critique, these remarks and formal inclinations also confirm that, like all other aspects of Gernreich's work during this period, his guiding design principle in making the *Expo '70* predictions was, indeed, the deeply political notion that the work of the fashion designer needed to be the work of helping to steer the desire for social change towards whatever, albeit imperfect, future a designer could envisage. Or, as he often liked to put it, that for the designer, "it is not a silhouette but an attitude that is important to change."¹¹⁹ It is why Gernreich's interviews would veer into territories concerning generational difference, size, physical ability, or sexuality, while other designers were simply left to address how the cut of their designs modified previously known profiles or 'what the hot color was going to be for 1969.' It also accounts for why people were prone to talk politics and not patterns when it came to critiquing some of his work's setbacks. It is through these conversations that the social value of Gernreich's work, much like that of all art and design practices which demand political critique, is perhaps best manifested.

⋮

¹¹⁸ While later comments are quite tempered and give the impression Gernreich was trying to carve-out space for the appreciation of older bodies with these designs, earlier statements—which essentially amounted to the idea that 'No one will want to see 'old bodies'—understandably left people with the impression that Gernreich was actually extending and not limiting the mid-century cult of youth.

¹¹⁹ Felderer, *Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion*, 15.



THE 'SUIT' HEARD ROUND THE WORLD: As previously suggested, perhaps more so than any of Gernreich's other designs (whether conceptual or put into mass production), the *monokini* provided the most resolute and successful expression of Gernreich's belief that there was no going back to 'the way things were,' and that fashion needed to produce unpredictable feelings, so as to carry all our bodies forward to unpredictable times and places. Upon its release, the 'topless bathing suit' rather expectantly provoked the direct ire of the powers that be. Pope Paul VI officially banned Catholics from wearing the provocative suit; those women

who did dare to don it, God-fearing or not, garnered threats of legal sanction from a host of international beach-towns wary of being inundated by monokini-clad women with ‘loose morals.’¹²⁰ The design also served as a brief centerpiece in Cold War cultural politics when, according to a *New York Times* article published within weeks of the *monokini’s* release:

The Soviet government newspaper *Izvestia* reported on the new bathing suit and added that American fashion was speculating on topless evening dresses. ‘The American way of life is on the side of everything that gives the possibility of trampling on morals and the interests of society for the sake of ego. So the decay of the moneybag society continues.’¹²¹

Catholic, Capitalist, and Communist unite! Shared responses to the *monokini* made it clear that most people felt there needed to be limits to the liberation of a women’s body. They also confirmed Gernreich’s suspicion that the modern fashion system was charged with formally defining the limits of the modern body, *tout court*, by securing the orders of respectability that different women’s bodies were meant to be placed under.¹²² Fashion needed to be refit to suit a different form of womanhood —one that wasn’t mired in the myth of past indiscretions, in the origin of the wor(l)d; one that allowed access to a future that could be felt and taken hold of. As it stood, the fashion system cleverly allowed just enough play to feign the sense that ‘modern

¹²⁰ One infamous and heavily photographed example of such enforcement occurred in Chicago, when the 19 year old Toni Lee Shelley was arrested for wearing the suit and modeling it for photographers and police on North Avenue Beach before being booked for indecent exposure (Alexander 62; “Gets Jury Trial”). Another, less *plein air* incidence occurred in San Francisco when Carol Doda, a go-go dancer at the San Francisco Condor Club was convinced to wear the monokini at work — prompting San Francisco police to make good on the mayor’s promise to arrest any woman who wore the suit for indecency and simultaneously birth the first ‘topless bar’ (Luther, *Looking Back* 20-21).

¹²¹ “Soviet See Signs of Decay;” Moffitt and Claxton 10 and 20.

¹²² Few texts better explore the ways difference is engendered between ‘modern women’ via the designs and rituals of consumption inaugurated by the modern fashion system than Emile Zola’s 1883 novel *Au Bonheur des Dames* (or, in its English translation, *The Ladies Paradise*).

women' were differentiated from their *un-* or *non-*modern counterparts by the measure of creative labor and moral freedom that she was given access to in order to remain *au courant*. Gernreich was dead-set on revealing this ruse, and he planned to do so by debuting the *monokini*—a design that dared to conceive of the modern woman's breast as a part of her dress rather than as 'that dangerous thing' that the garment was meant to conceal.¹²³

In this, the *monokini* challenged the very sense and logic of Western Civilization. There was no room for a 'slip-up,' à la Thiess' *Star Trek* costumes and there was no need for a 'cover-up,' as in the case of Eve. The monokini disregarded the taboo against nakedness while it picked at the tight weave of sexual difference, hetero-patriarchy, race, and class that gave modern culture its particular look and feel. Nowhere was this made more apparent than in a *LIFE* magazine article on the 'topless bathing suit craze,' entitled "Me? in That!: The Unwitting Ingenuity of a Fashion Designer Sets Off an Uneasy Buzz Over Toplessness Everywhere," which opens by stating that:

Much of the world, *at least that civilized part dedicated to concealment of the female bosom*, was in a state of uneasiness and shock. The topless bathing suit had appeared and was actually bought by hundreds of women—even being worn by a brazen few. It set off an international buzz about morality, legality and esthetics."¹²⁴

Here, the bounds of civility are established via a particular style of addressing the

¹²³ In a 1962 interview with *Women's Wear Daily*, Gernreich flatly claimed that he had "gone so far with swimwear cutouts that [he] decided the body itself—including breasts—could become an integral part of a suit's design." After reading this provocative statement and the negative comments it provoked, Susanne Kirtland, a fashion writer at *Look* magazine, requested that Gernreich design such a suit for a feature the publication was doing on 'futurist fashion;' hence the *monokini's* now fabled provenance (Luther, *Looking Back*, 19).

¹²⁴ "Me? In that!" 55, emphasis mine.

breast; between the lines awaits the figures of those 'other' bare-breasted or fully veiled women of color whose images were widely and fetishistically circulated across mid-century America via the pages of *LIFE* magazine and other popular publications such as *National Geographic*.¹²⁵

The uneasiness and shock prompted by the *monokini* certainly had, as the article's preamble suggested, little to do with whether or not it was poised to make upper- and middle-class Western, white women more vulnerable to physical or psychological distress. After all, as Veblen and others had already made clear, many of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' most lauded looks had openly subjected women to serious and immediate harm. Rather, this was a 'moral, legal and aesthetic issue;' the *monokini* was a disgrace for having betrayed the fashion system itself. Gernreich's suit exposed the hypocrisy of an industry and a sartorial culture that boldly dared to define itself in terms of 'women's emancipation' while simultaneously working to striate different women's experiences of their bodies in the name of 'modernity'.

In advance of the *monokini's* release,¹²⁶ the swimsuit's photographer, William Claxton (who also happened to be married to the *monokini's* main model, Peggy

¹²⁵ The very next issue of *LIFE* magazine ran a cover image of the petite, Marilyn Monroe-esque actress Carroll Baker juxtaposed in her modern wardrobe against members of Kenya's Masai Tribe. Throughout the article, the unbridgeable differences between Barker, as a modern woman, and 'the Masai people,' *in toto*, were figured between differences in dress and appearance. (*LIFE*, July 17, 1964)

¹²⁶ It should be noted that Gernreich did not, himself, originally put the suit into mass production. Always a conceptual and not a commercial work in his mind, only two monokinis were initially made by the designer and both were produced for the sake of the design's early photography. It was only after a meeting with the famed *Vogue* magazine Editor Diane Vreeland, that Gernreich agreed to manufacture the *monokini*, he recounts: "When she [Vreeland] asked if I were going to make it for the public I told her no, that it was just a statement. 'This is where you are making a mistake, she told me. 'If there's a picture of it, it's an actuality. You must make it.' When I returned to the hotel, I already had calls from Harmon [knitwear] telling me buyers were demanding to buy the suit. We agreed to go ahead with it" (Luther, *Looking Back*, 20).

Moffitt), approached *LIFE* on behalf of Gernreich and asked if the publication would like to premiere a full-frontal image of the design [Figure 1.61]. *LIFE* flatly refused on the basis that it was “a family magazine, and naked breasts were allowed only if the woman is an aborigine.”¹²⁷ Later, after the fervor surrounding the topless suit offered the magazine no option but to include an image of the suit and the young, bare white breasts it dared to make available for ‘unobstructed’ display,¹²⁸ the publication responded by running a full page image of the minimalist design as it hung on a hanger, framing the face of a theatrically abhorred and blonde-bobbed, ‘modern gal’ that was offset to the right by a half-page, underwater shot of an anonymous model wearing the suit [Figures 1.62-1.64]. The second, smaller *monokinied* woman (whom the article identifies as being from Paris, and not the U.S. mind you) is shown encircled by three shirtless young men wearing a variety of masculine swimming trunks that stylistically echo the *monokini* more than not, and the sliver of a more modestly suited young woman pushed towards the right of the frame. All five bathers are cut-off at the neck, so as to maintain a modicum of their modesty and to avoid the exchange of sexualized gazes implied by their bodies’ poses. In the pages that follow, a *monokinied* image of Moffitt appears towards the end of an evolving timeline of Gernreich’s most famous suit designs [Figure 1.64]. Moffitt’s hair is slicked back in the image, and she looks directly out at the viewer; she wears the suit with her arms strategically raised across her breasts and her fingers lightly grazing her slightly parted lips in a seductive gesture of simulated modesty that is not altogether unlike

¹²⁷ Luther, *Looking Back*, 21.

¹²⁸ This is not to suggest that women of color did not, or could not, wear the suit - but that the panic surrounding the suit was primarily trading in the fear that white femininity would be irrevocably transformed by the design.



Figure 1.61: Claxton, William. *The 'Monokini.'* 1964.



Figure 1.62: Grossman, Henry. The *monokini* photographed for *LIFE* magazine. July 10, 1964.



Figure 1.63: Schutzer, Paul. The *monokini* photographed for *LIFE* magazine. July 10, 1964.



Figure 1.64: Claxton, William. Various Gernreich swimsuits, as the images appeared in *LIFE* magazine. July 10, 1964.

the pose of many a more bawdy and knowing Venus or Susannah—emerging from a series of their own not so private baths throughout the long history of Western art.

While such a layout might seem outdated or even a bit camp to contemporary audiences, a 2009 cover article from the women’s fashion and beauty publication *Allure* recently restaged the famous, full-frontal Claxton image in a feature on the then pop-sensation Stacy Ferguson, aka ‘Fergie,’ and in un-ironic proximity to a large, red pull-quote that floats in the text to the left of the image and proclaims that “*I’m not afraid to show my flaws, and I’m not going to be perfect,*” the magazine insisted that the singer who “gives new meaning to the term ‘mover and shaker’”¹²⁹ raise her hands over her breasts, so as to conceal them [Figure 1.65]. Apparently, Fergie’s willingness to ‘expose herself’ could only be celebrated by the magazine up to a point. While *Allure*’s editors claim to have chosen the Claxton image “in homage” to this famously audacious and revealing moment in fashion history and the audacious woman at the center of their cover story, they retreated from the image and the suit’s most quintessentially daring components.

When compared to this more recent image, the iconic and unobstructed image of Moffitt seems all the more aberrant [Figure 1.60]. Fergie’s slacked shoulders, slightly upturned face, and blank eyes make her appear to look out onto nothing, whereas Moffitt coquettishly raises her left shoulder to her chin and clearly, but coolly, sets her eyes out onto an object of desire that exists outside the confines of the frame. The droplets of water that run down Moffitt’s body imply a sense of action, while the arid climate of the re-staged shot evaporates any tension from the

¹²⁹ Hauser 134.



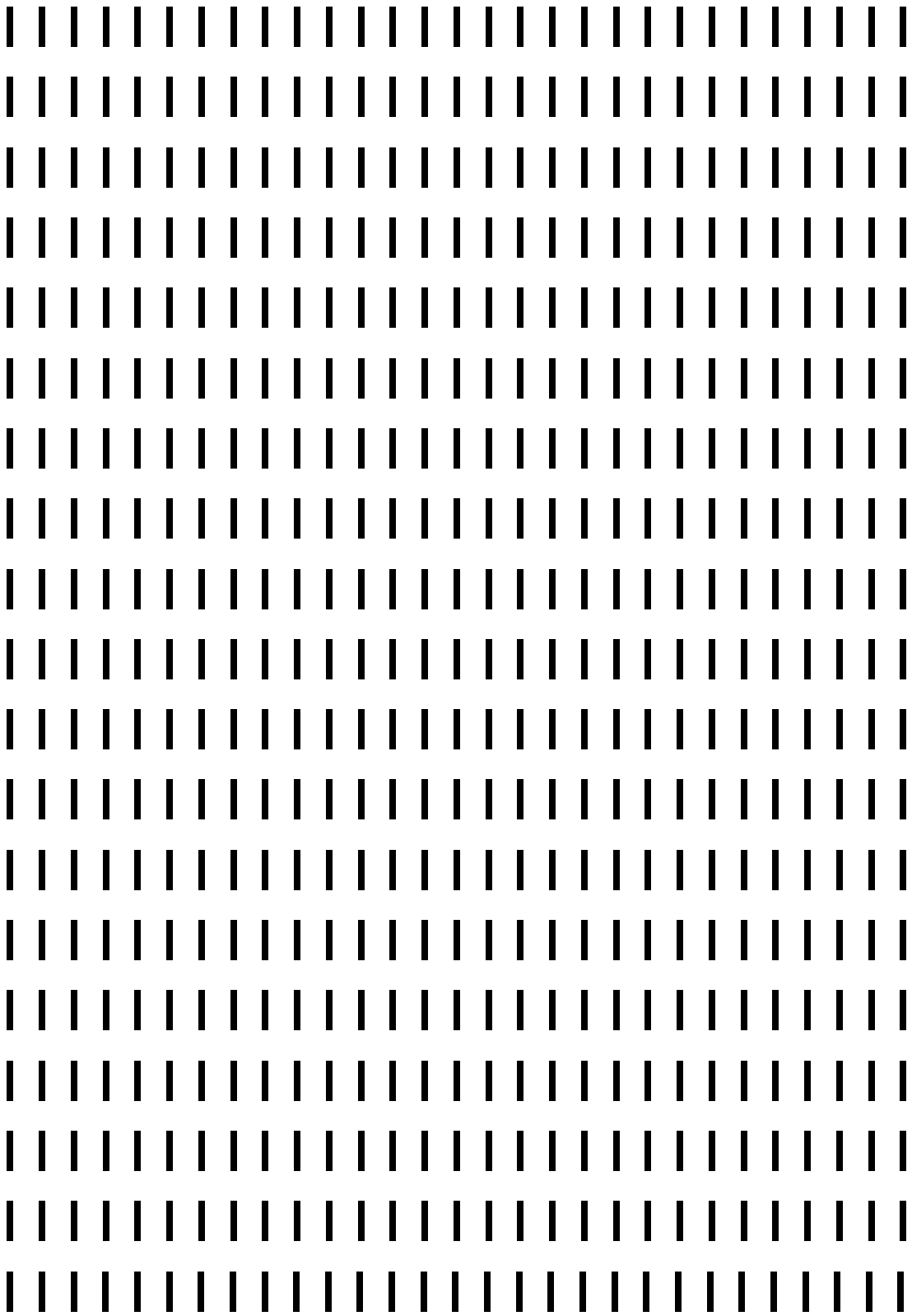
Ferguson in an homage to the iconic 1964 William Claxton photograph of model Peggy Moffitt wearing a topless bathing suit by designer Rudi Gernreich. Nylon Lycra swimsuit by Yigal Azrouël.

Figure 1.65: Thompson, Michael. Stacy Ferguson aka Fergie, photographed in homage to Moffitt and Gernreich, wearing a swimsuit by Yigal Azrouël. July 2009.

air. Generally speaking, the more recent image leaves one with the impression that the performer is little more than a puppet, or an object that desires simply to be desired, if anything at all. The Claxton photograph makes a much more critical statement concerning the popular image of woman and the possibility of female spectatorship. In setting her sights in the manner that she does and by simultaneously resisting any gesture of shame, Moffitt seems to be taking on the (still) rather perverse position of a woman who desires something, herself. And the difference between these images is not simply in the posing or quality of performance.

Ultimately, Fergie does not wear a *monokini* in the 2009 photograph. She tries to masquerade as Moffitt, but her hands are too preoccupied. Her body is never transformed and re-articulated in the way that makes Moffitt's vibrate. Moffitt's slightly blurred, right hand (eerily crawling down her thigh) is entirely more shameless than anything contained within the 2009 image. Cut from a different cloth, the monokini gives Moffitt her hands back; her femininity is defined by the perverse way that space and time bend around her subjectivity and stretch her fingers in new, inhuman ways, and not by a need for modesty.

The present tries to catch-up to its past possible future but fails, meanwhile Gernreich's designs continue to throw dominant senses of gender and sexuality out of joint.



“Well, I'm just a modern guy
Of course, I've had it in the ear
before.

I have a lust for life
'cause of a lust for life.

I'm worth a million in prizes
With my torture film
Drive a GTO
Wear a uniform
All on a government loan.
I'm worth a million in prizes
Yeah, I'm through with sleeping on
the sidewalk
No more beating my brains
No more beating my brains
With liquor and drugs
With liquor and drugs...”

– Iggy Pop, Lust for Life



THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG, PA. JULY 3rd 1863.

This terrific and bloody conflict between the gallant Army of the Potomac, commanded by their great General George G. Meade, and the host of the rebel Army of Virginia under General Lee, commenced on Wednesday, July 1st and ended on Friday, the 3rd, at 5 O'Clock P.M. — The decisive battle was fought on Friday, ending in the complete and utter rout of the rebel Army. — Johnson's Army, and a Sullivan's tanks, are seen also the heroic soldiers, who fought with such unflinching bravery, in this long and desperate fight.

Figure 2.1: Currier & Ives. *Battle of Gettysburg July 3rd, 1863.* c. 19th Century.

The New Regiments: Getting Down to the Details

MASS APPEAL: The now common practice of distinctly and uniformly “clothing all members of a [military] unit in similar dress, is a relatively late development in the long history of human conflict.”¹ Pursuits of a ‘totalized’ uniform only heated up when national, standing armies started to replace rag-tag, hired militias during the mid-17th century,² and uniform dress codes and styles could be centrally mandated and enforced as a means to simultaneously identify and secure the characteristics and boundaries of one nation and ‘its people’ as distinct from another.³ As late as the early 19th Century, it was often enough that professional

¹ Abler, *Uniforms, Military* 364.

² This is not to say that pre-Modern militaries never took up the habit of wearing *similar* combat dress or that specialized, combat clothing wasn’t worn prior to this time — but these clothes didn’t follow the same ‘uniform’ program that modern military dress does. In instances where similarities in dress weren’t simply owed to the soldiers’ own habits of wearing corresponding, ethnically or regionally marked costumes, but to a particular military mandate, there could still be a great deal of discrepancy. These discrepancies were largely owed to the fact that the production of these garments wasn’t centralized, their make and design was open to great differences in interpretation, available materials, and technical skill levels. This is also not to say that ‘modern militaries’ are completely uniform in the modern sense of the word either. For instance, the recent necessity for US troops currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, to purchase their own combat armor, after the government issued subpar equipment led to a fair amount of discrepancy between individual service members.

³ Vining 256; Craik 29.

military combatants simply wore ‘the colors’ of their group or faction.⁴

The wearing of fixed, hypervisible combat uniforms across all rank and file only became imperative after the large scale adoption of mechanized weaponry made it increasingly difficult to identify friend from foe through thick smoke, at longer distances, and in-between accelerated trigger times in conflicts such as the US Civil War [Figure 2.1].⁵ Shortly after its wider adoption, it became obvious that this more pronounced and less variable uniform had the acute capacity not only to visually symbolize a soldier’s declared allegiances, but also to shape a soldier’s “actions and habits, imposing a discipline that transformed individual strength into collective power in these modern, permanently mobilized armies.”⁶ As a technology of modern biopower, ‘the uniform’ became cemented as the primary mode of military dress both on and off the battlefield, making it difficult, today, for us to even to imagine ‘a proper conflict’ without the aid of this powerful, sartorial technology.

As textile and clothing manufacturing became increasingly mechanized and centralized, the extent of the modern uniform’s ‘uniformity’ opened-up onto scales that were previously unimaginable. The preceding cottage industries were simply incapable of producing the kind of unflinching visual and material consistency that industrialized garment cultures could deliver—a kind of consistency that nationalism required in order to achieve the kind of (hyper)visibility necessitated by the powerful place that ‘the image’ held within Western culture. ‘The uniform’ thus came to be known primarily through its imposing and disciplined ‘*look*,’ designed to transmit a

⁴ Where they were implemented, more expensive and elaborate garments identically cut from the same fabrics were regularly eschewed during active combat and worn only under special, ceremonial circumstances (Abler, *Uniforms, Military*).

⁵ Abler, *Uniforms, Military* 364.

⁶ Vining 256.

spectacular sense of patriotism, linearity, and forcefulness.⁷

By the turn of the 20th century, this powerful look had become willingly adapted across various walks of life and the bold repetition of certain color combinations, emblems, silhouettes, and regimented sizes came to demarcate not only the front lines, but also those production-, chorus-, and political border-lines that had come to increasingly delineate modern culture. Like their military counterparts, civilian uniforms aestheticized the most obvious indicators of difference in order to capture and harness the new forms of power that were being made available via new, mass levels of production and reception. These uniforms favored sturdy fabrics that maintained their shape under a variety of climates and circumstances, and repetitive designs aimed at producing a sense of ‘progressive sameness.’⁸ These garments insisted that ‘true beauty’ was *immutable yet reproducible*.

Here, the uniform’s increasing presence and authority starts to make sense in the context of modern power relations. As a symbol and an index of a state’s sovereignty, the uniform grants its wearer a particularly potent kind of recognition—recognition as someone who is authorized and equipped with the capacity to use deadly force against their rivals. At the same time, produced *en masse*, in its commodity-form, the uniform is intensely history-less. Soldiers should look the same at both ends of the conflict. In this sense, the uniform projects its wearer into an

⁷ Vining: “Patriotism, progressivism, and a widespread concern for military preparedness at the beginning of the twentieth century triggered a proliferation of civilian organizations in which members, women and men, wore uniforms with overt military features” (258).

⁸ It is not that hierarchical and ‘uniform’ modes of occupational, educational, penal, or religious dress did not exist prior to this time, as they most certainly did—but that distinctly modern forms of uniform dress started to take on a hypervisible and conspicuously militaristic character. Those uniforms that eschewed this were (and still are) regarded as pre-modern, nostalgic throwbacks.

endless present and grants them access to a certain sense of immortality.⁹ 'In uniform', one performs as a powerfully indestructible subject that is both singular and plural. The uniformed chorus dancer, bellhop, enlisted soldier, decorated officer, police sergeant, or prisoner are all granted access to very different kinds of power, within and across their respective organizations, but it's a scaled-up system of power nonetheless.

Unsurprisingly, critical readings of 'the uniform'—*or of early, ramped-up performances of uniformity (more broadly speaking)*—became squarely focused on the massive, linear visual patterns that ever-increasing numbers of sartorially regulated bodies were producing within modern fields of vision and the political and ontological effects that these embodied forms of pattern-making were having on the substance of 'the people' [Figures 2.2-2.3]. As Siegfried Kracauer writes in his influential 1927 essay on the politics of modern aesthetics entitled "The Mass Ornament":

Only as parts of a mass, not as individuals who believe themselves to be formed from within, are human beings components of a pattern. [...] The training of units of [dancing] Girls is intended ... to produce an immense number of parallel lines, and the desired effect is to train the greatest number of people in order to create a pattern of unimaginable dimensions. In the end there is the closed ornament whose life components have been drained of their substance."¹⁰

While earlier versions of standardized uniforms primarily valued the way that similar outfits discreetly worked to impress similar attitudes upon different wearers (uniting individuals in a common cause), critical analyses such as Kracauer's,

⁹ Here, I would direct attention to the powerful examples of military or police funerals and the lines of younger servicemen and officers who in wearing the same uniform of their fallen compatriot in a way that strangely multiplies the deceased's presence rather than absence.

¹⁰ Kracauer 68.



Figure 2.2: Still from *The Tiller Girls* appearing on *Sunday Night* at the *London Palladium*, hosted by Bob Monkhouse. 1967.

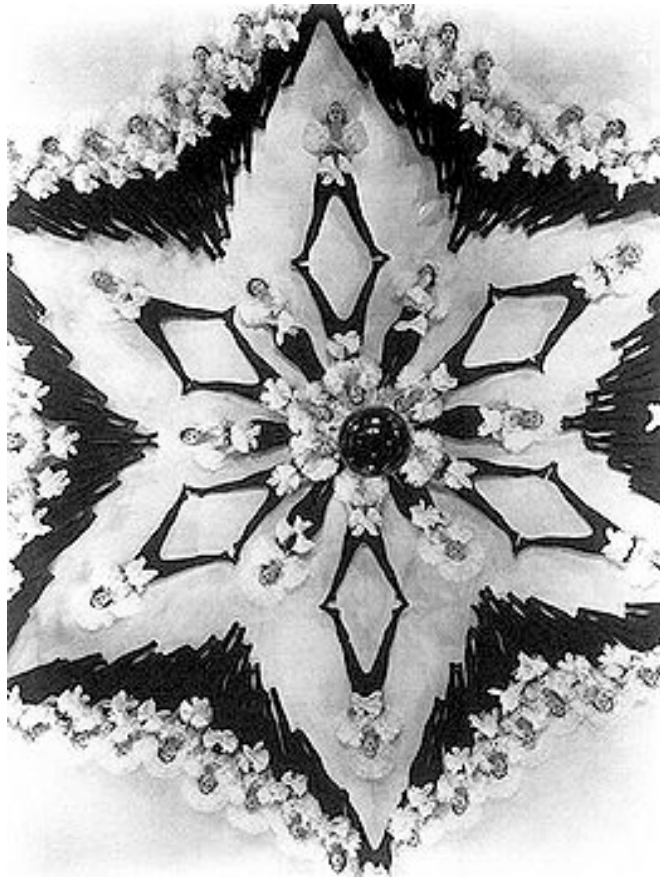


Figure 2.3: Berkeley, Busby (Choreographer). Film still of title song choreography, from *Dames*. 1934. (Director: Ray Enright.)

suggested that the ‘massified uniform’ worked more subversively. It insisted that each garment (and its wearer) could only work synecdochically—suppressing the acknowledgment of individually situated differences and asserting a kind of escalating sameness. In doing so, it made the limitless geometry of modern life seem not only possible, but patently desirable to those ‘individuals who had heretofore believed themselves to be formed from within.’ Rather than simply identifying and disciplining ‘a people’ in the service of a modern militarized nation state or empire, the uniform worked in this new, larger-scale instance, to produce ‘the masses’ in the service of an aggressively industrialized form of modern capitalism, which as Kracauer reminds his reader, “is indifferent to variations of form,” and “leads necessarily to the obliteration of national characteristics and to the fabrication of masses of workers who can be employed and used uniformly throughout the world.”¹¹ It is in these disparate, but coextensive scenarios that the uniform proved itself useful not only to what Foucault would call sovereign modes of modern discipline (i.e. the lethal, repressive force of the police and military), but also to increasingly sophisticated, biopolitical forms of control.

It is along these lines that the sartorial uniform, despite popular understandings which primarily located its power in its unyielding symbolic *stability*,¹² could come to dominate contemporary culture thanks to its inherent material *flexibility*, or its ability to indiscriminately lend itself to multiple interests along multiple scales and forms of power. Today, as the disciplined masses described by Kracauer

¹¹ Kracauer 69.

¹² A favorite example of such a sentiment is found in the pro-military, pro-USAmerica ‘these colors don’t run’ bumper-stickers, t-shirts, and other commercially produced ephemera that dominated the post-9/11 USAmerican landscape.

and emblemized by the ‘massified uniform’ are being increasingly displaced or overshadowed by the globalized ‘multitudes’ theorized by the likes of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, it might appear as though the uniform’s capacity to render the body as part of a spectacular, linear pattern is clearly less important—that this technology of power might be nearing its political redundancy. After all, the multitude does not demand that the body lend itself to the extension of consistent, bounded structures, but instead requires that it be susceptible to what Hardt and Negri refer to as ‘commonality’ and ‘networkability,’ for, as they argue, it is now the network that “tends to define our ways of understanding the world and acting in it,”¹³ and the network openly defines and distributes us “variably, unevenly, and indefinitely.”¹⁴ Despite what feels like an increasing political disavowal of the power of ‘uniformity,’ or sameness, the sustained viability of images of uniformity suggests that ‘the uniform’ is still central to the rhetoric and procedures of less spatio-temporally bounded, networked forms of politics and war that currently exist as “general phenomenon, global and interminable.”¹⁵

I would suggest that the uniform’s peculiar, but persistent presence in globalized politics is owed to the fact that beyond its potential to work as a sign (its capacity to grant ‘meaning’) or its potential to appear as a pattern (its capacity to generalize and boldly restructure the order of things), it is the uniform’s capacity to function as ‘a textile’ (its capacity to mediate difference beyond the registers of meaning and/or structure) that keeps it an active force within contemporary politics.

¹³ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude* 142.

¹⁴ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude* 55.

¹⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude* 3.

This is the uniform's dangerous secret. As a textile, and not just an image or symbolic representative of the textile (of the medium of our shared experiences), the uniform can equivocally work to fill-in and to deepen the terrifying gaps that occur between situated and contingent forms of knowledge (on the one hand), and more secure, but generically transmitted forms of ideology (on the other). The uniform's power is grounded in the unease produced by the double bind that makes the same bodies necessary to secure law and order the most easily locatable and most pervious loci through which to confront and delimit it. This is because the uniform is ultimately a form of dress that indifferently mediates the ungovernable relationship between materiality and meaning—and particularly the materialities and meanings of 'our bodies' vis-à-vis the materialities and meanings of modern, murderous institutions of power. If we are to understand the resilient authority of the uniform, we must recognize it as a kind of *material-semiotic medium*, to borrow from Donna Haraway, in which our desires are consistently spurred and then sublimated.

Military or civilian, ecclesiastical or lay, 'in fashion' or 'out of fashion' — the uniform supports modern regimes of power through the material-semiotic (dis)arrangement of those bodies required to both maintain and to threaten institutional authority. This is the uniform's *sui generis*. It does not simply come 'after the law,' it does not work merely to authorize one body to fight another, symbolically speaking. Instead, the uniform provides the very mode through which our bodies are rendered as the 'the stuff' of law. The uniform's worth is thus not only, or even principally, to be found in its ability to secure the meaning of certain violences, but in its capacity to produce the social fabric by serving as what Jacques Derrida might call the very force of law, itself:

law is always an authorized force, a force that justifies itself or is justified in applying itself, even if this justification may be judged from elsewhere to be unjust or unjustifiable. ... [There] is no such thing as law (*droit*) that doesn't imply *in itself, a priori, in the analytic structure of its concept*, the possibility of being 'enforced,' applied by force. There are, to be sure, laws that are not enforced, but there is no law without enforceability, and no applicability or enforceability of the law without force, whether this force be direct or indirect, physical or symbolic, exterior or interior, brutal or subtly discursive and hermeneutic, coercive or regulative, and so forth. ¹⁶

Interestingly, an appreciation of the uniform, as textile, or as the very force of law, becomes particularly clear in those relatively bloodless instances when, ironically or not, the most profuse amounts of symbolic information are written across the uniformed body [Figures 2.4-2.5]. In these cases, the uniform's matrix is patently revealed as key to its workings: as what makes it possible for so much orderly information to appear on the surfaces of our irregular bodies; as what transforms our varied corpuses into even, blank substances akin to the clean, crisp pages that these words appear on [Figure 2.6]. In these textually dense instances, it becomes clear just how much the uniform's material-semiotic '(in)consistencies' define it, because it is in these textures of the uniform that 'we' are knotted together in specific ways, and that 'we' come to provide the law with the substance that it, in turn, needs to enforce and manifest itself.

As the novelist Hermann Broch so eloquently explains in *The Sleepwalkers*—a collection of late-19th Century stories that appeared at the same moment when consistent, nationalized forms of military uniform became widely accepted and

¹⁶ Derrida, *Force of Law* 925, 927.



Figure 2.4: Charles, Larry (Director). Publicity still of Sasha Baron Cohen's title character in *The Dictator*, parodically displaying how the uniform can support the most 'absolute' articulations of power, not through the information symbolized in each of the badges, but in their neat profusion. 2012.



Figure 2.5: Judge, Mike (Director). Film still, in which the character Joanna (Jennifer Aniston) is scolded by her appropriately addressed superior for not wearing an appropriate amount of 'flair' (or cooky pins, etc.) on her waitressing uniform, from *Office Space*. 1999.



Figure 2.6: Beecroft, Vanessa. vb-39.005vb, performed at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, USA.1999.

adopted¹⁷:

It is the uniform's true function to manifest and ordain order in the world, to arrest the confusion and flux of life, just as it conceals whatever in the human body is soft and flowing, covering up the soldier's underclothes and skin. . . . Closed up in his hard casing, braced in with straps and belts, he begins to forget his own undergarments and the uncertainty of life.¹⁸

The modern uniform has always worked first and foremost to give modern forms of power a particular, predictable pliability that could be felt right down to our unmentionables and in stark contrast to our capricious flesh. It is through the production and management of these textures that the uniform attends to the individuated body and its localized, skin-deep sensations and concerns while also stimulating complicated multiplicities of bodies along vast networks of feeling and ideology. The fit of the jacket and the stiff fabric of the trousers produce more than an iconic or a reproducible portrait of power, they actively work to contain the unwieldy and incoherent grains of our bodies within those dependable and unmistakably meaningful arrangements insistently provided by particular organizations of power.

The multiple scales of sensation and knowing that organized forms of power need to encompass in order to stake their claims over our lives are brought into useful forms of relation with one another through the uniform's textures. This, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick details in the introduction to her book *Touching Feeling* (2003), is because:

¹⁷ Blakeslee 19.

¹⁸ Broch, 21, and as quoted in Fussell, 14. Please note that a similar sentiment can be found in the oft cited Virginia Woolf essay "Three Guineas," wherein she writes: "Man himself, the quintessence of virility, the perfect type of which all the others are imperfect adumbrations. He is a man certainly. His eyes are glazed; his eyes glare. His body, which is braced in an unnatural position, is tightly cased in a uniform. Upon the breast of that uniform are sewn several medals and other mystic symbols. His hand is upon a sword. He is called in German and Italian Führer or Duce; in our own language Tyrant or Dictator. And behind him lie ruined houses and dead bodies—men, women, and children" (168).

texture has everything to do with scale, [despite that] there is no one physical scale that intrinsically is the scale of texture. As your plane circles over an airport, texture is what a whole acre of trees can provide. But when you're chipping wood, a single tree may constitute shape or structure within your visual field, whereas texture pertains to the level of the cross-grained fibers of the wood in relation to sleek bite of the axe.

Furthermore, whatever the scale, one bump on a surface, or even three, won't constitute texture. A repeated pattern like polka dots might, but it depends on how big they are or how close you are: from across the room you might see them as a flat sheet of gray; at a few feet, the dots make a visible texture; through a magnifying glass you'll see an underlying texture of paper or fabric unrelated to the two or three rounded shapes that make a big design. Texture, in short, comprises an array of perceptual data that includes repetition, but whose degree of organization hovers just below the level of shape or structure.¹⁹

For the soldier, the uniform transforms their supple, uncertain and singular body into a hard, confident, and ordered instrument of the law that can deftly cut through the masses. Likewise, for the civilian subjected to 'the uniform,' the garment's sharp press and unnaturally even color are arguably more crucial than any insignia emblazoned across it. *It is largely in these details that one not only symbolizes but also embodies the law.* It is through these textures, or material-semiotic (in)consistencies, that the uniform comes to lord over the ambivalent, changing, but nevertheless 'precise space of the encounter between a language and a body.'²⁰ To borrow from Roland Barthes, "significations germinate 'from within language and in its very materiality.'"²¹ It is, therefore, towards these textures that critical attentions must be directed and resistance must come to take hold, because it

¹⁹ Sedgwick 16.

²⁰ Barthes, *Image Music Text* 181. (Please note that the Barthes text that I am paraphrasing here marks an encounter between the language and a voice.)

²¹ Barthes, *Image Music Text* 182.

is in these textures that the uniform, and similar technologies of power, make the law so very meaningful.

.....

(UN)AUTHORIZED FABRICS: In ocularcentric clothing and fashion studies that are traditionally rooted in semiotics (following from Roland Barthes' 1967 book *The Fashion System*), applied psychoanalysis (hailing from J.C. Flügel's 1930 *The Psychology of Clothes*), and socio-economic theories of value (commencing with Thorstein Veblen's 1899 *Theory of the Leisure Class* and Georg Simmel's 1905 *Philosophie der Mode*), the emphasis has continually been to recognize clothing's power almost exclusively in the socio-linguistic meanings it transmits as a kind of visual patterning and sign system. For instance, as Alison Lurie writes in the often cited first page of her 1981 book *The Language of Clothes*:

For thousands of years human beings have communicated with one another first in the language of dress. Long before I am near enough to talk to you on the street, in a meeting, or at a party, you announce your sex, age, and class to me through what you are wearing—and very possibly give me important information (or misinformation) as to your occupation, origin, personality, opinions, tastes, sexual desires and current mood. ... By the time we meet and converse we have already spoken to each other in an older and more universal tongue.²²

²² Lurie 3.

Critiques of Lurie's tendency towards universalism and her evasion of direct reference to race aside, her text provides a perfect example of the kind of dress and fashion studies that have dominated much of the last three decades. She continues:

... [I]f clothing is a language it must have a vocabulary and grammar like other languages. Of course, as with human speech, there is not a single language of dress, but many: some (like Dutch and German) closely related and others (like Basque) almost unique. And within every language of clothes there are many different dialects and accents, some almost unintelligible to members of the mainstream culture. Moreover, as with speech, each individual has his own stock of words and employs personal variations of tone and meaning.²³

This interest in determining what scopio-linguistic mechanisms and rhetorical styles are at play within specific 'fashion statements,' has certainly produced many engaging and carefully researched surveys of dress.²⁴ But such studies, generally focus on the visual symbolics of these garments—how they are (de)constructed in order to either communicate a direct assertion or a critique of social (non)conformity,²⁵ or how they serve as an embodied assertion of the naturalness of bureaucratic forms of authority.²⁶

Like any language, the uniform does not have to speak in complete sentences in order to communicate clearly. As Nathan Joseph explains in *Uniforms*

²³ Lurie 4.

²⁴ Examples include, but are not limited to: Rebecca Arnold, *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety: Image and Morality in the 20th Century*; Shari Benstock and Suanee Ferriss, Eds. *On Fashion*; Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*; Dick Hebdige, *Subculture*; Valerie Steele, *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power*; Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*.

²⁵ For examples, see: Francesco Bonami, et.al.'s *Uniform: Order and Disorder*, Bill Dunn's 2009 *Uniforms*; Jennifer Craik's 2005 *Uniforms Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression*, Juliet Ash's 2010 *Dress Behind Bars: Prison Clothing as Criminality*.

²⁶ For examples, see: Nathan Joseph's 1986 *Uniforms and NonUniforms: Communication through Clothing*.

*and Nonuniforms*²⁷:

The perfectly uniformed and easily recognizable group is rare and most likely to be found, if at all, in a garrison setting with access to supply, maintenance, and spit-and-polish discipline. In the field, these conditions are absent and deviations are the rule rather than the exception. The ‘imperfect’ field uniform must then be relied upon as a means of identification. A minimal symbol such as a helmet becomes all-important.

The Geneva Convention of 1949 attempted to solve the problem of identification legally by defining broadly the minimal symbols required to qualify clothing as uniforms. To obtain recognition as lawful belligerents, individuals must have a fixed sign and carry weapons openly. The requirement for a fixed and distinctive sign is fulfilled by a military uniform, as with regular troops, or by an item that cannot be taken off instantly nor assumed at will, as with irregulars, but must be part of the clothing or sewn to it. The Geneva Convention recognizes the need for a minimal symbol but does not, as indeed it cannot, prescribe the details.²⁸

By pin-pointing ‘the minimal symbol,’ Joseph and the Geneva Conventions recognize what few fashion theorists do (save for the incomparable Roland Barthes), namely that while there once was “a true grammar of clothing, something that was not simply a question of taste, and which one could not transgress without affecting the deeper organization of the world,”²⁹ that time has largely past.

In modern dress cultures, it is ‘the detail,’ the grain, or what I’d like to refer to as ‘the texture’ of a garment, that is pivotal. It is in the “knot on a cravat, the material of a shirt, the buttons on a waistcoat, the buckle on a shoe,” that modern subjectivity is determined. It’s in the textures of mass produced and disseminated clothing that

²⁷ It’s worth adding here that if one looks at the way the George W. Bush administration worked to critically refigure the uniform during its War on Terror—something I plan to do in the final section of this project—it becomes clear that some within the administration might very well have consulted Joseph’s book; the similarities between Joseph’s text and the administration’s figuration of ‘the unlawful enemy combatant’ is uncanny.

²⁸ Joseph, 25; Greenspan, *The Modern Law of Land Warfare*.

²⁹ Barthes, *The Language of Fashion* 65.

one might test the limits of their embodied identities, the rules that govern them, and begin to explore the scariest prospects of their singularity, which, as Barthes remind us, is knowingly “absolute in essence, but limited in substance.”³⁰ It is at the level of the detail, in other words, that the terroristic, un-uniformed figure is made possible.

On February 7, 2007, *The New York Times* reported the “Army is Going Winkle-Free; Velcro, No Creases, Is the Norm.” To the left of an article entitled “Many Voices, But No Debate,” in which “even President Bush acknowledges that the war in Iraq is sapping the [US] nation’s spirits,”³¹ and beneath a harried photograph of an Iraqi mother and son, collapsed on the floor of their home, and surrounded by heavily armed US soldiers [Figures 2.7-2.8], the article proclaims:

At military bases across the country and overseas, the era of the wash-and-war soldier has arrived. From Baghdad to Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Fort Drum in New York, the Army has been retiring its old starched and pressed Battle Dress Uniform [BDU] in favor of a wrinkle-free cotton and nylon version.³²

It had been a quarter of a century since any major adjustments had been made to the largest branch of the US military’s combat uniform and more than five years since the US War on Terror first started to mobilize troops in numbers unseen since the Vietnam Era. Little ground had been gained on ‘terror’ during this time, and it was determined that perhaps this new form of conflict required a new uniform: one that could take soldiers to different places by more practically accommodating the wearing of body armor, better regulation of a soldier’s body temperatures, better protection from insect bites in malarial terrain, and more effective dissimulation of

³⁰ Barthes, *The Language of Fashion* 67.

³¹ Hulse, *Many Voices, But No Debate* (emphasis mine).

³² Yardley A1,12.



Figure 2.7: New York Times Cover Page. February 7, 2007.



Figure 2.8: Furst, David. "An Iraqi man comforted his mother, who collapsed yesterday after he was questioned by American soldiers under a new security plan for Baghdad" (Page A1). *The New York Times*. February 7, 2007. (Image copyrighted by Agence France-Presse/ Getty Images.)

military personnel in fields of combat that had changed dramatically with the rise of digital technology [Figure 2.9].³³ The new uniform—no longer called the BDU, but the Army Combat Uniform (or ACU), was designed at the US Army's *Soldier Systems Center* in Natick, Massachusetts, where all the “food, clothing and shelter for soldiers”³⁴ is developed, and it represented many years of work and nearly a score of changes.³⁵

For the soldiers who wore the uniform, the most exciting changes were, as *The New York Times*' feature makes clear, that this garment ‘could just be thrown in the dryer,’ skipping the expensive professional dry-cleanings demanded by the sharply creased BDU. Secondly, that the ACU's ‘desert boots’ were made of sandy-colored suede, or the ‘rough side of the the leather’—saving soldiers from hours of black boot shining. However, the most dramatic change to the Army's combat dress, was something manifestly clear to both those internal and external to the organization. It involved the ACU's adaption of a digitally remixed, pixelated-camouflage pattern like the one created by the Canadian Armed Forces. This new “optical camouflage” was designed to be “effective in desert, ‘woodland’ and urban combat” so that the soldier could use one uniform for all conceivable, war-torn

³³ More: "Army To Retire BDUs In April."

³⁴ Vanderbilt 38.

³⁵ A more complete list of changes, as outlined in the *Army Logisician* magazine in June 2012 article entitled "BDU Replacement Introduced," includes: “• A mandarin collar that can be worn up or down. • Rank insignia centered on the front of the jacket. • Velcro for attaching the unit patch, skill tabs and recognition devices. • Zippered front closure that opens from the top and bottom. • Elbow pouch for internal elbow pad inserts. • Knee pouch for internal knee pad inserts. • Drawstring leg tie. • Tilted chest pockets with Velcro closure. • Three-slot pen pocket on bottom of sleeve. • Velcro sleeve cuff closure. • Shoulder pockets with Velcro. • Forward tilted cargo pockets. • Integrated blouse bellows for increased upper body mobility. • Integrated friend or foe identification square on both left and right shoulder pocket flaps. • Bellowed calf storage pocket on left and right leg. • Moisture-wicking desert tan t-shirt. • Patrol cap with double-thick bill and internal pocket. • Improved hot-weather desert boot or temperate-weather desert boot” (52-53).

Army Uniforms: Out With the Old . . .

Here are some of the shortcomings soldiers and officers reported with the Army's old uniform, at left, and the ways they were addressed by the new combat uniform, which is now being phased in.

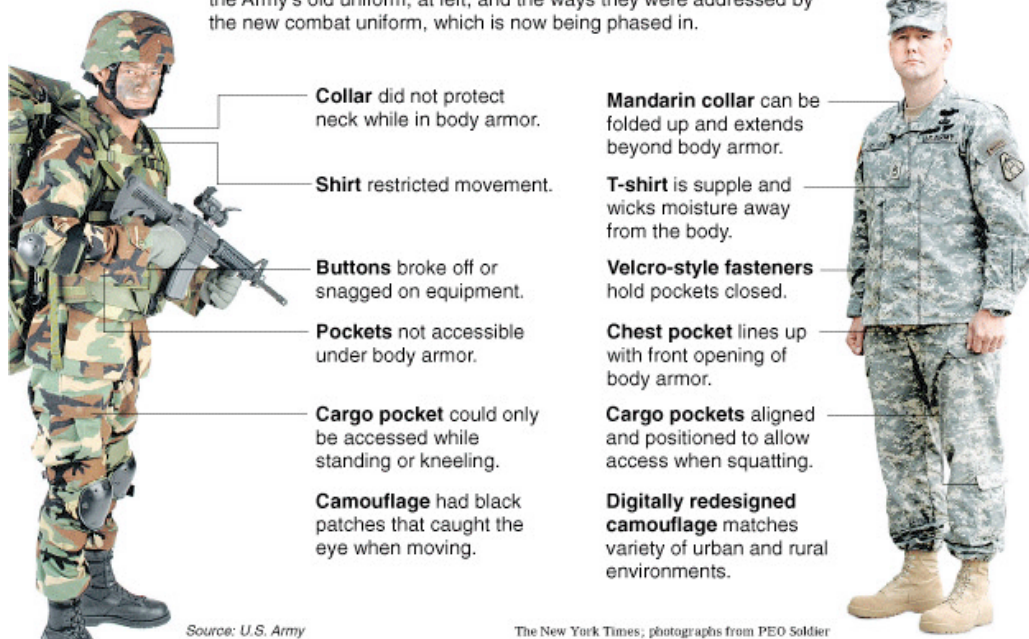


Figure 2.9: Infographic, produced by *The New York Times*, which details the differences between the US Army's new and old combat uniform. February 7, 2007. (Photographs from PEO Soldier.)

terrains, and the US Army could save money by further streamlining the dress of some 500,000 soldiers.³⁶

Unlike earlier escalations in the military's 'uniformity,' which adhered primarily to the heightened optical senses of the masses, this new uniform primarily extended its reach by engaging other perceptual fields and logics. Instead of trying to optically mimic the patterns of local flora and to color-match different uniforms to different environments, "Pixelated camouflage, the theory goes, is a kind of simulacrum: [its] shapes and colors are suggested without being fully realized, similar to what happens when a photograph or painting is seen at close range. You cannot make out any single object amid the noise"³⁷ [Figures 2.10-2.11]. Without solid and clearly visible (i.e. optically discernible) shapes and patterns, the ACU requires onlookers to turn to other senses, such as touch or even hearing or smell, in order to 'make sense' of the fuzziness they see. This positions the soldier within a field of 'optic invisibility'. In this new contact zone, the eyes aren't able to make sense of the camouflage, and a kind of haptic vision, or a way of seeing that demands what the scholar Eva Hayward describes as 'fingeryeyes,'³⁸ is engaged.

In thinking across these changes, it appeared as though the Army had clearly planned its 'new look' to be palpably *softer* than preceding ones. The ACU's loose camouflage and relaxed, *wash-and-war* care introduced a much slacker fit and feel

³⁶ Yardley A12

³⁷ Vanderbilt 38.

³⁸ Hayward, 580. For more on theories of haptic vision, one can also go back into the history of Art History and, specifically, to the work of Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style* (and to Margaret Iversen's more recent *Alois Riegl*; or to the contemporary film theories of Laura Marks, *The Skin of Film* and *Touching*.



Figure 2.10: One of several Battle Dress Uniform Camouflage Patterns, for the Temperate and Hot Weather BDU. c. 2000.



Figure 2.11: Universal Camouflage Pattern of the United States Army ACU (Army Combat Uniform). c. 2009.

into soldiers' everyday lives. Certain physical repertoires were amended along with the relieving of the garment's press, the addition of 'expansion pleats' in the shoulders, and the strategic repositioning of pockets across the uniform's surface and depths. Previously, soldiers could only fully access the contents of their pockets when stiffly standing, lying, or kneeling; now they could feel through all their uniform's compartments from a less rigid, crouched position. Hard and predictable right angles were being replaced by more capricious and baroque positions.

In large part, these changes appeared to be responses to what the members of the RETORT collective succinctly explain as the core condition of the War on Terror, in *Afflicted Powers* (2005). Namely, that the events of September 11, 2001 made it clear to the world that, "At the level of the image...the state is vulnerable. ... Terror can [always] take over the image-machinery for a moment...and use it to amplify, reiterate, accumulate the sheer visible happening of defeat."³⁹ Exposed in this manner, the state needed to regain control of its traditional image through the mass spectacle of 'a great war.' A new uniform would help show the world that the US understood the difference between *this* War and those that had preceded it, and now the US was better prepared to extend this war into all conceivable (or imaginable) terrains. The ACU's changes made it clear that the US understood that *this* War could only be 'won' if its military adapted itself to more clearly exert control over those terrains 'to come,' those terrains that exceed the logic of traditional modern warfare (the logic and rhetoric of the image).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it quickly became clear that something about the ACU *just didn't feel right* to those accustomed to the rhetoric of war through the BDU.

³⁹ RETORT 27-28.

Despite claims that the ACU was a safer, more comfortable garment, many were suspicious of the uniform. While this suspicion could be attributed solely to the radically different way that the BDU looked, the details of these complaints revealed a different story—one in which the uniform’s ‘feel’ was equally tantamount to its image. In the letters to the editor that followed the *New York Times* story, concerned citizens and veterans were quick to concentrate on how the ACU’s textures were dissimilar from those of previous combat dress. Sam Abrams, from Rochester, NY, registered his fears around the uniform’s new Velcro components: “[The] sound of Velcro being opened seems negligible when we hear it amid the constant buzz and murmur of our highly mechanized culture, but in the woods, as any hunter will testify, it is loud enough to alert prey, even at a considerable distance.”⁴⁰ Kevin M. Kelly, a US veteran of the Korean War, wrote about the dangers of idleness in combat zones, explaining that in his experience—times of little action could lead to disabling “hysteria.” Recently having shined his shoes “before going out to dinner with World War II veterans,” Kelly “remarked to [his] wife that these fellows [had] spent 60 months at war, waiting for action and shining their shoes.” The introduction of suede desert boots caused him to wonder: “What will prevent hysteria from inactivity when troops have no boots to polish?”⁴¹

These comments suggest that the uniform had always regulated a vast array of material-semiotic (in)consistences, and that the uniform’s main functions and features were never as ocularcentric as popular opinion and the Geneva

⁴⁰ Abrams A14. Interestingly, the Velcro has largely been replaced on the BDU’s, although for different reasons. Officially, the fine grained sand that is ever present in desert terrains easily found itself into the Velcro, making the Velcro’s closures unreliable. After testing snap and button closures, it was determined that the a 3-button closure was the best replacement. (For more, see: Burana,)

⁴¹ Kelly A14.

Conventions would lead us to believe. They underscore how changes to the material textures of the uniform also change the discursive textures of violence. More important than its function as a “fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance,” responses to the ACU chiefly addressed how the uniform needed to serve to secure ‘us’ from the sudden irruptions of difference that threaten to disrupt the stability of a given discourse,⁴² through the management of stable and hegemonic sets of textures that are produced across a complicated network of perceptual fields.

The US Military is hardly ignorant of how paramount the management of the uniform’s textures is, should they hope to effectively manage the desires of its troops. To the contrary, this is something that its various branches have long been cognizant of. The US Navy’s World War-II Era *Bluejacket’s Manual*⁴³ offers a 5-page section entitled “Chapter 2: Clothing,” which offers no information on how to wear or ‘read’ a uniform (that comes much later in Chapter 27), but there is extensive information on how to correctly mark, fold, and stow one’s uniform so as not “spoil the looks of your clothes.”⁴⁴ *The Naval Officer’s Guide* from the same era leads its chapter on “Uniforms and Equipment” with the semantics of the uniform (i.e. what combination of garments and insignia are to be worn by who, when, etc.). It also provides detailed notes on how to care for the uniform, explaining that:

No matter how well fitting a uniform, and especially the coat, is when new, it will not

⁴² A discourse, that in this case, that concerns war and the degrees of harm that we can bear to imagine ‘our soldiers’ enduring during its course.

⁴³ First published in 1902 *The Bluejackets’ Manual*, sometimes referred to as ‘The Sailor’s Bible,’ takes its name from one of the most iconic components of the U.S. Navy’s uniform. It is now in its 24th Edition (2009). In the current edition, the Chapter on clothing, entitled “Uniforms,” is now Chapter Four, preceded by Chapter One: Introduction to the Navy, Chapter Two: Naval Missions and Heritage, and Chapter Three: Ranks, Rates, Ratings and Paygrades, it is still the first ‘practical’/ training chapter in the manual.

⁴⁴ United States Navy, *Bluejackets* 9.

continue to look its best or keep its shape unless it is carefully put on and kept buttoned. The carrying of large or heavy objects in the pockets will speedily destroy the shape of the best coat. Uniforms should always be kept on hangers when not in use.⁴⁵

The literal foregrounding of how to materially care for the uniform in the enlisted soldier's manual (versus how to read it, as in the officer's guide) speaks volumes about the way class distinctions have historically materialized within military organizations such as the US Navy; however, the lengths that both books go to communicate how the "pride which should distinguish a naval or military uniform"⁴⁶ ultimately resides in the quality of care apparent in the garment's textures is worth noting.⁴⁷

In the decades separating these manuals from more recent editions, notable strides have been made internationally towards achieving universal literacy in the name of social justice,⁴⁸ and handbooks and supplementary publications on Naval

⁴⁵ Naval Officer's Guide (1943), 208. Note: The Chapter on Uniforms and Equipment comes later in the officer's Manual (Chapter Six), however it likewise follows the (more lengthy) 'general career information' and literally precedes the chapter on the "Assumption of Command."

⁴⁶ Ageton 207.

⁴⁷ Similar sentiments are shared by other branches of the US Military. The 1943 Army Officer's Guide explicitly leads with the idea that "In time of war, in case of capture by an enemy, the wearing of the official uniform entitles the officer or soldier to receive preferential treatment as a prisoner of war in a manner agreed upon between nations," and quickly goes on to state that "Clothes may or may not 'make the man'; but the very manner in which an officer maintains and wears the uniform stamps him, either favorably or unfavorably, in the eyes of all with whom he comes in contact" (137). Likewise, more recent US Army Officer's Guides states that "An old uniform of good quality that fits well and is clean, neat, and unfaded will look better than a new and costly one that is noticeably soiled or out of press. The care that should be given to uniforms and equipment need not be burdensome, but it must be done regularly and correctly" (Bonn 500). While the corresponding Enlisted Soldier's Guide ends the short, first paragraph of its chapter on the uniform by instructing soldiers that "The condition of your uniform and the way you wear it are also a reflection on your own self-respect" (Rush 182).

⁴⁸ Many have been quick to note how the literacy movement has been historically linked to class relations and debates in the US and elsewhere. For more, see work on post-reconstruction schools in the US South, the Highlander Folk School and the Highlander Center Project (TN), founded by Myles Horton (Glen). Internationally speaking, one can cite Cuba or the USSR and the nearly 100% literacy rate that was achieved within the span of a generation, in the name of social revolution.

uniforms all currently lead with how one should ‘read’ the garments.⁴⁹ Yet the proper care and maintenance of the uniform is still consistently expressed as being of foremost importance in both the enlisted and officer guides. For example, the Centennial Edition of *The Bluejackets Manual* (2002) clearly states: “You should always strive to ensure that your uniform reflects pride in your appearance. Bear in mind that your uniform is more than a set of clothing.”⁵⁰ And its 30-page chapter on “Uniforms” is supplemented by a 432-page publication on *US Navy Uniform Regulations (NAVPERS 15665)*, which goes into exhaustive detail on just how to maintain such a sense of dignity. In addition to a detailed account of highly proscribed personal grooming and care rituals, the publication instructs all naval personnel to be sure to keep uniforms “scrupulously clean, with lace, devices and insignia bright and free from tarnish and corrosion”⁵¹ and to understand that “NO ARTICLES SHALL PROTRUDE FROM OR BE VISIBLE ON THE UNIFORM, including such items as, pencils, pens, watch chains, key chain fobs, pins, jewelry, combs, large wallets, cigars, cigarettes, pipes, or similar items (jewelry, tie clasps, cuff links, shirt studs and earrings shall be worn as prescribed elsewhere in these regulations).”⁵² Sailors are also enjoined to “procure all components of US Naval

⁴⁹ This development is perhaps best evidenced in the Centennial Edition of *The Bluejacket’s Manual*, wherein the chapter on uniforms was moved from 2nd to 4th place, and revised to focus on how uniforms are to be read. The care of the garment is stressed, but details regarding their care was moved to a supplementary publication (*NAVPERS 15665*). The Chapter’s first paragraph explains, “While one of the main reasons that you wear a uniform is to look the same or similar to other members of the service, you will soon discover that there are a great many differences in uniforms that naval personnel wear. As you become familiar with these differences, you will be able to ‘read’ a person’s uniform in such a way as to tell a great deal about him or her” (56).

⁵⁰ Cutler 57.

⁵¹ *NAVPERS 15665*, Chapter 2: Section 1.3b.

⁵² *NAVPERS 15665*, Chapter 2: Section 1.3c.1

uniforms from certified sources⁵³ that use “only those fabrics which are approved by the Chief of Naval Operations [and] are authorized for the manufacture of naval uniforms.”⁵⁴

The briefest survey of the Navy’s authorized fabrics reveals that polyester and polyester-blended twills dominate the list.⁵⁵ This is hardly inconsequential. Twills are incredibly dense textiles that are “generally closer in texture than plain weaves,” making them “extremely durable in both abrasion resistance and breaking strength,” as well as averse to creasing and wrinkling [Figure 2.12].⁵⁶ “In twill weaving one set of yarns skips at even intervals over and under another set of yarns. The skips, or floats, progress forward one or more yarns in each succeeding row, thus forming diagonal ribs, wales, or stair steps in the fabric.”⁵⁷ In warp-faced twills, like gabardine, which are used in Navy dress uniforms, the longer threads of these finely ridged wales catch the light and produce a lustrous surface for the fabric that is clearly distinct from its flatter and duller underside.⁵⁸ The highest quality gabardines use two-ply worsted wool fibers, are famously soft, and drape beautifully. Less expensive synthetic(-blended) gabardines are much rougher and can be notably stiffer in their texture.⁵⁹ Unlike their higher-end counterparts, synthetic gabardines only enjoyed a short-lived life in ready-to-wear fashions during the 1950s and ‘60s,

⁵³ *NAVPERS 15665*, Section 5.2.b

⁵⁴ *NAVPERS 15665*, Section 5.3.a. Please note that a table (Table 3-1-3) is included in the Navy’s publication on uniforms and

⁵⁵ See Appendix A for the complete list, copied from *NAVPERS 15665*’s Table 3-1-3.

⁵⁶ Labarthe 17.

⁵⁷ Birrell 230.

⁵⁸ For further illustration of this, one might consider another, perhaps more ubiquitous twill woven textile that uses thicker, cotton fibers in a similar weave pattern, namely denim—a fabric that many could quickly identify as being face-up, or not.

⁵⁹ Kadolf 122



Figure 2.12: A 100% polyester gaberdine. 2012. (Image from the Wujiang Wanshiyi Silk Co., Ltd.'s catalog, product number HL942103.)

when the novelty of wash-and-wear suits made them appealing to certain demographics; however, they have consistently been used in outerwear and uniform manufacturing over the last century and a half. Today, wool, cotton and synthetic(-blended) gabardines are said to provide “the backbone fabric construction for men’s outer clothing and for [those] uniform fabrics in which durability is one of the most important considerations.”⁶⁰

Named after the loose, “smock frocks worn by agricultural workers in Surrey,”⁶¹ which, etymologically speaking, appear to have garnered their name from the resemblances they held to the coarse, utilitarian garments historically worn by almsmen, beggars, and certain Jewish populations,⁶² gabardine was invented in 1880 by Thomas Burberry—founder of the British clothing label that still operates under his name today. As the journalist Lauren Collins points out in an article for *The New Yorker* in 2009, Burberry developed gabardine by treating Egyptian cotton in a proprietary, waterproof solution and tightly weaving the fibers in a twill pattern in order to produce a dynamic, rugged fabric that could be suitable for “explorers, pioneers, and big game hunters in all parts of the world,” while also satisfying “the wants of ordinary men and women, engaged in the less formidable pursuits of pleasure or duty,” but were nevertheless equally “subservient to the daily necessity of trying to solve the meteorological conundrums of our [British] island Sphinx.”⁶³

Formed at the crossroads of “SPORT, COUNTRY, TRAVEL, TOWN, MILITARY, and including COURT and MUFTI [the latter being a sarcastic, colonial-

⁶⁰ Labarthe 14 and 17-18.

⁶¹ Collins 76.

⁶² "gaberdine, n.," *OED Online*.

⁶³ Collins 76.

era term for military personnel's civilian attire⁶⁴],⁶⁵ gabardine quickly reveals itself as a distinctly modern fabric, hauntingly conceived of and produced to resist not only any appearances of ruin, but also to accommodate the shifting terrains and inhospitable rituals of imperialism. Early advertisements for Burberrys' gabardine clothes ran regularly in colonialist publications, such as the short, 1912 English language book entitled *Indian Small Game Shooting for Novices*, and featured illustrations of gabardine-fitted, Anglo huntsmen standing in front of their semi-naked, native informants, who remained engulfed in the local fauna and dressed in scant, non-specific 'tribal wear' [Figure 2.13, top right]. The ads declared Burberrys' gabardine clothing as being "Ideal Equipment for Sport in Tropical Countries," thanks to how it met "the requirements of sport and everyday life in Oriental climates in the most masterful manner." Such unapologetic usage of the language of mastery is resumed in a free, turn of the century handbook provided and published by Burberrys, baldly entitled *Gabardine in Peace and War*, wherein the company goes so far, as Collins points out in her article, to rework "Napoleon's purported dictum: 'An army goes upon its belly, [adding] *but its skin must be covered*,'" and "asserted, of gabardine, [that] 'The direct benefits it has conferred upon the human race will, it is to be hoped, last quite as long as those derived from the world's decisive battles.'"⁶⁶ Here, gabardine twill, the fabric of the first and perhaps still most famous

⁶⁴ "mufti, n.2," *OED Online*.

⁶⁵ Collins 76.

⁶⁶ Collins 76 (emphasis mine).

BURBERRYS

GABARDINE WEATHERPROOF KIT

"Ideal Equipment for Sport in Tropical Countries."

Gabardine, woven from specially fine and light yarns meets the requirements of sport and everyday life in Oriental climates in the most masterful manner.

Unrivalled powers of withstanding wear-and-tear and a surface impregnable by thorns make Gabardine invaluable for jungle and hill work.

Exceedingly weatherproof, the ill-effects of heavy rains and mist are avoided, whilst neither excessive heat nor extreme cold can affect the protective powers of Burberry Proofing.

Proofed without rubber or any like deleterious matter, Burberry Gabardine Kit is naturally ventilating and healthful. Airylyght, its weight is practically a negligible quantity.

Densely woven and non-conductive, Gabardine serves alike to keep out the heat by day and the cold at night.

"Gabardine in Peace and War."
A handbook on the subject of equipment, and patterns of Gabardine, post free on request.

BURBERRYS
and Appointed Agents in Chief



The Burberry.
Reliably weatherproof, air-free, and airylyght.



Gabardine Suit.
Ideal for rough sport and hard wear.

Haymarket, LONDON;
Bd. Malesherbes, PARIS;
Cities throughout the World.

Figure 2.13: Ad for Burberry's Gabardine advertisement, as it appears in *Indian Small Game Shooting* written by C.A.G. Rivaz. 1912.

'trench coat,'⁶⁷ is absolutely evinced as the fabric of perpetual war.

Gabardine is equally well suited to weather Modernity's unique temporalities. There are also few textiles as immune to history, or change, as gabardine—especially when the cotton and wool yarns that comprised Burberry's cloth are replaced or supplemented with the ready addition of low-cost synthetics, engineered to provide unparalleled colorfastness and sustained resistance to wrinkling and damage caused by common household solvents, sunlight, mildew, or bacteria.⁶⁸ Synthetic fibers make cloth 'timeless,' imparting modern garments with a very different (product) lifecycle. Natural fibers fade more quickly, can be more prone to fraying or stretching, and need to be replaced at a much different rate than their chemically treated counterparts. Like all businesses operating under the auspices of capitalism, the textile and garment industries are ultimately time-based trades and the slightest changes in a key commodity's duration can have deep consequences to their workings.⁶⁹

The chemical time-shift that synthetic fibers produced had notable effects on

⁶⁷ Note that the 'trench coat,' a popular item in modern wardrobes, is so named because it was designed for wear by the British Army in the trenches of World War I. As Collins explains in the same New Yorker article:

During the Boer War, British troops had taken to wearing a Burberry coat called the Tielocken, which fastened at the waist with a sash instead of buttons, providing wraparound coverage. ...Before the First World War the British War Office commissioned Burberry to make a coat for its officers. Burberry added to the Tielocken silhouette shoulder straps (for epaulets) and D-rings (for satchels to hold hand grenades, compasses, canteens, or whatever else the subaltern required). The resulting garment, which was offered for private purchase, became known as the 'trench coat.' Later editions included gun flaps and cuff straps, the vestiges of which are visible in the coats that office workers favor today (76).

⁶⁸ Labarthe 280-286 and 317-330.

⁶⁹ Marx, *Capital: Volume, One, Book One*, "Chapter One: The Commodity".

labor values in the textile, dyestuff, and garment industries.⁷⁰ Turn of the century labor unions worked hard and fast to deride these ‘unnatural’ materials, not only for the way they were transforming the commodities central to the trade, but also for how they served to further devalue the traditional and artisanal forms of knowledge that had historically driven these industries, in favor of more scientifically-based research in chemistry and mechanization.⁷¹ But, as the inventories and business practices of contemporary uniform and fashion retailers alike make clear, the ‘synthetics’ surely won this war.⁷² The textile and garment industries compensated for the rise of ‘synthetic time’ by fostering a material culture in which styles change at breakneck speed and labor values are perhaps the lowest in nearly any globalized trade. Here, the significance the Naval dress uniform’s dependable, wrinkle-free luster is made even more explicit: created not only to endure the spaces of empire, the US Navy’s ‘authorized materials’ are also specifically authored to unfold in the time of advanced capitalism and through the highly specialized epistemologies of hard science.⁷³

This suggests that changing only the cut, color, or silhouette of a uniform—

⁷⁰ Please note that many years ago I had the pleasure of hearing a paper on how German dye companies and trade unions tried to make the use of the synthetic fibers and dyes illegal — for fear that it would dramatically alter cloth’s temporality, since the fibers and colors would ‘last longer’ and this would mean the end for much of the country’s famous dying industry. I have spent many years looking for a reference to this paper, which I heard at a conference on Fashion at Central Saint Martins in London in 2004. Even though I’ve been unable to find a proper citation, I want to thank the unnamed scholar for alerting me to this history and leading me towards my own research on the topic.

⁷¹ For more, please see: Thomas L. Ilgen’s “Better Living Through Chemistry” and Andrew Pickering’s “Decentering Sociology: Synthetic Dyes and Social Theory”.

⁷² For more on ‘fast-fashion’ and contemporary apparel industry, see, for example: Miriam Ching Yoon Louie’s *Sweatshop Warriors*; Edna Bonacich and Richard P. Appelbaum’s *Behind the Label*; Andrew Ross’ (Ed.) *No Sweat*; Angela McRobbie’s *British Fashion Design*.

⁷³ It is worth noting that labor and health advocates have also started to document the heightened number of carcinogens present in synthetic vs. non-synthetic fibers, which are regularly breathed in by workers in poorly ventilated shop room floors.

*which has long been a chief suggestion made by various political reformers*⁷⁴—will never redress the violences authorized by modern uniforms. Such suggestions really only address ‘the look’ of violence, or those textures that appear within the visual field, but the complicated textures of textiles, like gabardine, unfold beyond the visual spaces of appearance. They occupy many perceptual registers and spatio-temporal terrains. We need to learn how to map these, other unseen, but certainly felt spaces of subjection, should we hope to better apprehend and amend the uniform’s power. The US Military understands that much of the uniform’s power lies beyond its image. They have the ability to recognize the power of the detail, the power of the texture, the care and the cut. They understand that disrupting or altering the textures of the textile is a means to alter our individual senses of comfort and safety.

⁷⁴ The spectrum of individuals who could be included in a list of such reformers is fairly diverse and would be those feminists who insisted pants were central to the women’s liberation, prison reformers who have fought to allow inmates to wear ‘street clothes’ while jailed, or even policing organizations who have worked to amend their forces’ uniforms — so as to produce a friendlier image of the officers.

“La guerra è ... il detonatore del sadomasochismo che c’è latente in ciascuno di noi; quando c’è la Guerra lo Stato monopolizza la cricca sadomasochistica dei suoi cittadini, la scatena e la utilizza legalizzandola. Diventa così possibile essere vittime ed assassini con le carte in regola.”

-Liliana Cavani, Film Director

[“War is ... the detonator of the sadomasochism that is latent in each of us; when there is war, the state monopolizes the sadomasochistic drive of its citizens, stirs it up, and uses it, legalizes it. It, therefore, becomes possible to be victims or assassins within the terms of the law.”]

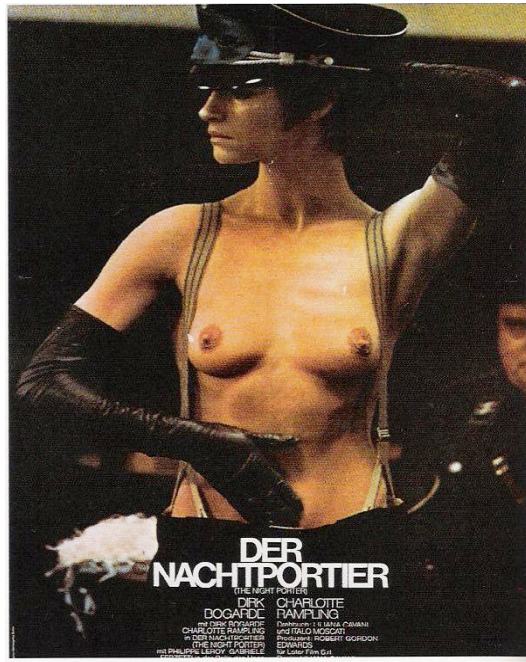


Figure 3.1: *Der Nachtportier* (*The Night Porter*), German Promotional Poster. 1974. (Director: Liliana Cavani.)

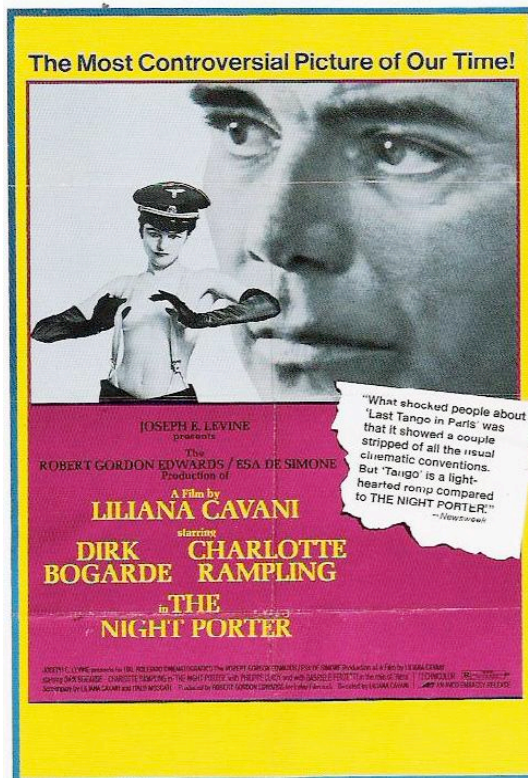


Figure 3.2: *The Night Porter*, US Promotional Poster. 1974.

Dirty Clothes, Perverting the Fantasies of Power

SUSPENDED ANIMATION: Exactly one decade after Rudi Gernreich's *monokini* challenged modern forms of sexuality and gender, playfully perverting the temporalities of the modern fashion system by figuring woman's 'unassimilable difference' outside the usual repertoires of shame and concealment, the Italian filmmaker Liliana Cavani ventured to *up-the-ante*. In her English-language film *The Night Porter* (1974), she used a similarly flagrant figuration of woman to unravel the tight, material logic of fashion's sartorial other—namely, *the hyper masculine uniform* [Figures 3.1-3.3].



Figure 3.3: *The Night Porter*, Criterion Collection DVD cover. 2000.

Unlike fashion, which erratically cycles back and forth between senses of the past and the future, the uniform weaves these distant moments together into a rigid web, securing the body within the tight, static space of the perpetual present. The buoyant feelings of freedom that fashion capitalizes on are effaced by the uniform to make room for the predictable pleasures of corporeal discipline. Power is thus figured as a form of predictability, of reliable sameness—or, to borrow from Sigmund Freud's metapsychological theories of those odd pleasures that provide no pleasure in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920): as the perpetual recurrence of the same thing.¹ When 'in uniform,' the soldier, police or security officer, and (in some cases) even the store clerk, are ostensibly stripped of their variable, situated 'interests' and made to uniformly measure-up to the dimensions of law and order—enabling and emboldening them to make if not the most important, then certainly the most mortal, of decisions.

In Cavani's debauched re-figuration of the uniformed body, power is presented as extreme, gendered (i.e. differentiated) profanity. It is resented as an impious woman who takes pleasure in toying with the trappings of order and consistency, and who makes a game of the death drive. So twisted and overtaken by perversion is the figure at the center of *The Night Porter*, that one cannot easily discern her significance, despite the clear meaning behind the *Totenkopf* affixed to cap. *Is this woman an assassin or victim?* While the assurance with which she wears the *Schutzstaffel* service cap suggests the former, the gap that opens up between her emaciated hips and her trousers' roomy waistband seems to confirm the latter..

¹ Freud, *Beyond* 23.

Unable to make clear sense of what appears before them, viewers are left to feel their way through the details; the rhetoric of the image starts to conform less and less with the habits of optic perception. The space between ‘us’ and ‘her’—the ‘viewer’ and the ‘image’—collapses into a mess of intimate and haptic details, of touching and texture. There is a scruffy quality to her hair — which juts out from below the hat’s edges at inconsistent, non-regulation lengths. *Is it growing back after a careless and violent shaving? The textile* trumps the image, and power is ultimately located in the ability to (re)articulate the aesthetic field.

Produced during the twilight of the Vietnam War, *The Night Porter* and its central most image (which I plan to focus attention on), used the pomp and circumstance surrounding the last ‘good war’ to critically interrogate the popular notion that extreme cultures of control mitigate occurrences of violence. It asked viewers to consider how modern technologies of acute corporeal discipline (such as ‘the uniform’), have altered the aesthetic field, making it increasingly desirable, if not necessary, for the instigation of ever more singular forms of (dis)pleasure within the practice of modern erotic and political life.

Today, some 40 years since the film’s first appearance in theaters, and in the midst of another series of endless wars, Cavani’s iconic portrait of the painfully thin, yet beautiful young woman at the film’s heart, who seductively wears a Nazi officer’s visor cap, while wearing nothing else but black, opera-length leather gloves and oversized men’s trousers, held-up with a pair of elasticized suspenders—remains one of the foremost icons of profanity. It suggests that the beauty and comfort of extreme order and corporeal control is still held to be sacred in contemporary, ‘post-Auschwitz’ culture—despite the exceptional forms of cruelty that have continually

cropped-up in the wake of modern, political cultures of consistency.

Secondhand versions of this figure abound, versions that all too easily substitute the Nazi raiments at *The Night Porter's* center for those of any number of other uniformed forces [Figures 3.4-3.10]. While much is lost between Cavani's ashen *femme fatale* (born within the *Camp*), and her varied imitations (born within the free market), this figure's foremost political challenge remains intact—even when it is perverted for the sake of sublimating its implications. All of these figurations ultimately 'work' by focusing a fetishistic attention on the way that 'the uniform' aestheticizes the deeply horrifying knowledge that orderly, modern forms of beauty not only survive, not simply thrive, but literally 'get-off' in hideous proximity to radical forms of violence. As Michel Foucault explains in a 1974 interview for *Cahiers du Cinema*, addressing Cavani's film, what these myriad appropriations of 'the uniform' (by disempowered female or effeminized male bodies) all seem to share is their ability to make the erotics of power palpable, in some generalizable sense, and their specific capacity to make the erotics of power *matter* in direct proportion to how clearly that power can be made desirable to those who are most brutalized by it, as Foucault explains:

[...In] *The Night Porter* the problem is — in general as in the present conjuncture — a very important one: it's that of the love of power.

Power has an erotic charge. And this brings us to a historical problem: how is it that Nazism, whose representatives were pitiful, pathetic, puritanical figures, Victorian spinsters with (at best) secret vices, how is that it can have become, nowadays and everywhere, in France, in Germany, in the United States, in all pornographic literature the world over, the absolute reference of eroticism? A whole sleazy erotic imaginary is now placed under the sign of Nazism. Which basically poses a serious problem: how can power be desirable? No one finds power desirable



Figure 3.4: Audrey Napoleon *Ornamental Egos* album cover. 2011. (Photographer unknown.)



Figure 3.5: *Interview* magazine cover featuring the actress Kiera Knightly. December 2007/January 2008. (Photographer: Sam Taylor-Wood.)



Figure 3.17: Schorr, Collier. *Night Porter (Matthias)*. 2001.



Figure 3.15: *Numéro* China magazine cover, featuring hat from Marc Jacob's "Night Porter" collection, modeled by Doutzen Kroes. December 2011. (Photographer: Tiziano Magni.)



Figure 3.8: Mariah Carey as 'a Sexy Firefighter.' October 2008. (Photographer: Unknown.)



Figure 3.9: Beyoncé in a still from her video *Love on Top*. October 2011.



Figure 3.10: "Sexy Arresting Police Officer" adult costume, produced by *Leg Avenue* (one of a score of 'sexy cops and firefighters costumes' category). c. 2008.

any more. This kind of affective, erotic attachment, this desire one has for power, the power of a ruler, no longer exists. The monarchy and its rituals were made to evoke this kind of erotic relation to power. The great apparatuses of Stalin, and even of Hitler, were also created for that purpose. But this has all disintegrated and it's clear that one cannot love [Leonid] Brezhnev or [Georges] Pompidou or [Richard] Nixon. It was perhaps possible, at a pinch, to love [Charles] de Gaulle or [John F.] Kennedy or [Winston] Churchill. But what's happening now? Are we not seeing the beginnings of a re-eroticization of power, developing at one derisory, pathetic extreme by the sex shops with Nazi emblems that you find in the United States.²

In other words, despite early critics' claims to the contrary (with their quick comparisons of *The Night Porter* to those films of Third Reich propagandists like Leni Riefenstahl and to exploitation films like Don Edmonds' *Ilsa the She-Wolf of the SS* [1975], Figure 3.11),³ Cavani's explicitly erotic citation was *not* a neo-Nazi attempt to advocate for pleasure to be taken in the Third Reich's most extreme abuses of power, *nor* was its goal to reduce fascism to nothing but "a pretext for exploiting themes of kinky sex."⁴ Rather, *The Night Porter* is a deeply textured exploration of the extent to which 'we' are all made to desire our own oppression within modern culture. And it pivots on how this desire materializes, not just within the rather extreme theaters of war, but within the more mundane performances of everyday erotic life and fantasy. The rather sensationalized figure located at the center of this film (and nearly all of its advertising materials) is an allegory through which to carry this project forward,⁵ beyond the limits of the film. It is not a prescription for how power *ought* to function.

² Foucault, *Anti-Retro* 165-166.

³ Giroux; Lichtenstein; McCormick; Sontag.

⁴ McCormick 31. For an critique of such analyses, please see: de Lauretis, *Cavani's Night Porter*.

⁵ For more on the allegorical dimension of *The Night Porter*, see de Lauretis, *Cavani's Night Porter*.



Figure 3.11: *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS*, US promotional poster. 1975. (Director: Don Edmonds.)

In step with such an analysis, it is worth noting that Cavani's controversial meditation on the erotics of modern power opens on a fairly somber note, a dozen or so years after the end of World War II. The haunting title song by Daniele Paris provides the soundtrack, and a wide, low grainy shot reveals the title character —'Max Aldorfer' (Dirk Bogarde)—quietly walking, unnoticed down the boulevards of a drab and drizzly Vienna at twilight. His carefully measured footsteps cease as he arrives at his final destination: the equally unassuming *Hotel zur Oper* [Figure 3.12]. Once inside, the music fades and Max removes his hat and overcoat to reveal his middling, albeit expressive, face, neatly slicked-back hair, and trim, middle-aged body—dressed in a sharply tailored and immaculately maintained hotel porter's uniform [Figure 3.13].

Max's workspace is as calm and unoccupied as the city's streets, the main action consisting of a curt conversation between himself and a subordinate, an elderly bellman named 'Stumm' (Giuseppe Addobbati). Save for the movie's title, Max's humble profession and dutiful demeanor suggest that this opening sequence serves as nothing more than an opportunity to establish the main location of the film's story – and surely not the identity of one of its main protagonists. Yet as the film's plot starts to unfold, one quickly realizes that it is the very neatness and anonymity of Max's modest occupation that makes him the perfect vehicle through which to tell *The Night Porter's* decidedly un-heroic story of violent compulsion.

Shortly after starting his shift, our night porter comes into successive contact with a series of more traditionally marked dramatic characters, most notably: 'Countess Stein' (Isa Miranda), an aging and opulent German aristocrat who lives in



Figure 3.12: Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still, title image from *The Night Porter*, with actor Dirk Bogarde appearing on the left. 1974.



Figure 3.13: Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still, Dirk Bogarde in *The Night Porter's* opening interior Shot. 1974.

the hotel and shamelessly uses Max and the other hotel ‘services’ to satisfy *all* her needs; ‘Klaus’ (Philippe Leroy), a mysterious, monocled lawyer who checks-in to his ‘usual room’ at the hotel and informs Max ‘not to worry’ because his (i.e. Max’s) “case is easy, [since there are] no witnesses to testify;” ‘Bert Beherens’ (Amedeo Amodio), a muscular male dancer who is quickly established as an intimate acquaintance of Max’s, and who requires the porter’s regular help with the lighting of his dead-serious rehearsals to Richard Strauss’ *Die Rosenkavalier*, and finally ‘Lucia Atherton’ (Charlotte Rampling), the strikingly beautiful young woman that film audiences are no doubt anxious to meet, considering her arresting appearance on all of *The Night Porter*’s promotional posters.

While most of the film’s characters are introduced individually, Lucia enters the story, and the hotel lobby, amidst a disorderly swell of wealthy opera goers returning from that night’s performance of *The Magic Flute*—an opera conducted by her husband, ‘Anthony Atherton’ (Marino Masé), a famous American maestro in the midst of a European tour. In all cases (save Max’s), Cavani noticeably makes her character introductions within the confines of a medium to tight shot—always resisting the urge to pull the camera back and produce wider, grander images of encounter and action.⁶ This strategy differs significantly from most filmic representations of World War II, which typically gravitate towards epic scales and highly organized, composite subjectivities that are so strikingly associated with

⁶ If one watches the film newly aware of this, it is striking how few wide shots Cavani uses, and her insistence on shooting ‘from below’ in those instances when she does choose to pan-back—for instance and for the sake of producing an image of the Reich, in a few brief frames within the scene where Bert dances for his fellow officers at the camp, during the war. Even in the scene with the ‘group of 5’ on a rooftop, reminiscing of their time as SS officers, Cavani chooses to maintain a medium shot and pan the camera around, rather than pan out and widen the shot.

fascist politics and aesthetics. By avoiding this aesthetic strategy and the sort of power that is produced when visual conversions are made (in camera and on screen) between the spectacular mass (of people, land, etc.) and the individual (subject or viewer), the director offers her audience the unique opportunity to consider the crucial role that cinema, itself, played not only in the establishment of modern totalitarian regimes, but in the ongoing maintenance of such power relations today, even in the absence of the Führer. This decision allowed Cavani to focus attention on more intimate registers of encounter—on those compulsive gestures that are unintended for mass replication or reception, and which get lost at larger scales, but effect our relations to one another, nonetheless.

Cavani understands film as a *medium*, in which our attentions are caught and conditioned, versus a flat *surface* upon which we straightforwardly project our fantasies.⁷ Armed with this unique approach, the director was able to introduce the power of the Reich via the intimate and complex tangle of tense threads that tether Max and Lucia to one another after they are unexpectedly reunited across the hotel lobby's desk. Instead of legions of marching troops [Figures 3.14-3.15], a more subtle cinematic montage carries audience members from the warm space of the hotel to the stark, and cold space of 'the camp'—a place where a young, teenaged Lucia is stripped completely bare (minus her socks, shoes, and a demure hair-bow), lined-up amidst a drove of other terrified and naked prisoners, and then subjected to the intrusive lens of Max's own, handheld Leica, while he stands there wearing an altogether different uniform than the one furnished by the *Hotel zur Oper*—arguably the most notorious and the most iconic uniform of the modern era [Figures 3.16].

⁷ For more on cinema as a kind of textile, please see: Grey.



Figure 3.14: Riefenstahl, Leni (Director). Film still, 'Opening of the National Socialist Party Congress,' from *Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)*. 1934.

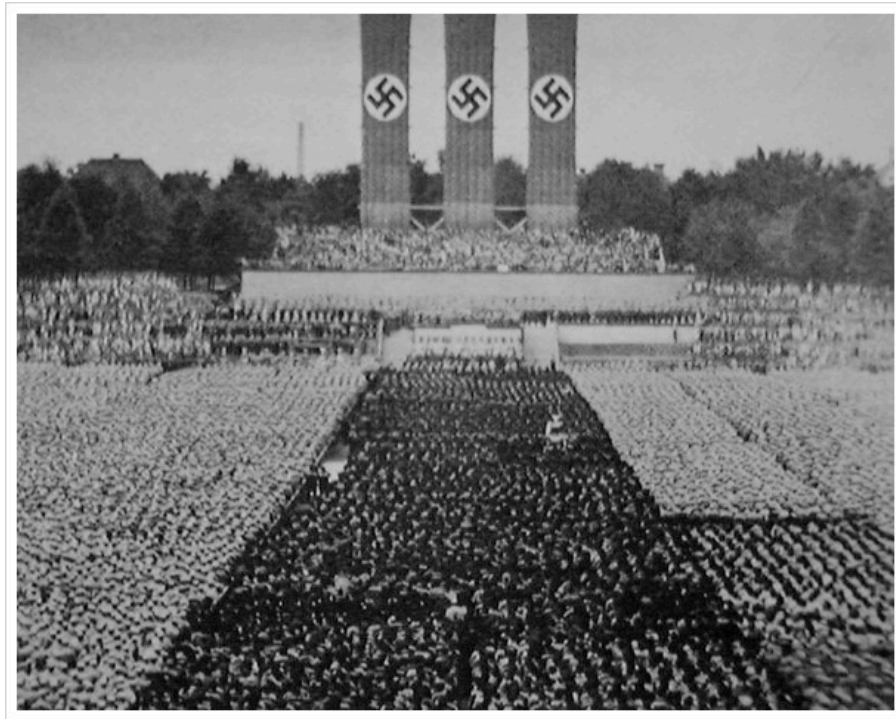


Figure 3.15: Riefenstahl, Leni (Director). Film still, 'The Rally Closing,' from *Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)*. 1934.



Figure 3.16: Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still, a younger and naked Lucia, in line with other prisoners being processed upon arriving at the camp, alongside Max, who appears in uniform with camera in hand, from *The Night Porter*. 1974.

It is through these gauzy, yet brutal, flashbacks, that one is first offered a clues to the meaning(s) behind *The Night Porter's* promotional material—to the spectacularly enigmatic image of Lucia, piquing the moribund, erotic curiosities of generations of viewers.⁸ Suddenly, one of the most horrifying prospects of this image, that she is, herself, a victim of Nazi persecution, comes into focus. She is *not* some 'deranged' Nazi operant or collaborator hedonistically donning the SS uniform, *à la* the main characters of so many mid-1970's, Nazi exploitation films, nor is she to be confused for a campy send-up of the War's powerful aesthetics, as seen in Mel Brook's Academy Award Winning 1968 film *The Producers* [Figure 3.17-3.18].⁹ This makes Lucia's clearly self-gratifying modeling of the SS garb all the more complicated, and our feelings towards *The Night Porter's* iconic image (and the proceeding film) all the more painfully ambivalent and difficult to parse.

This is not meant to suggest that the other images presented above do not have their ambivalent sides, or that death does not permeate them too. It would seem impossible (and undesirable) to try and completely sever the deadly realities of the Holocaust and World War II from *any* representation of Nazi aesthetics (regardless of its tenor). But unlike *The Night Porter*, the buxom and camp characters figured in *Ilsa*, *The Producers*, or Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) display a fecundity that Cavani's characterization does not. This fecundity strategically works to direct attention towards a fantasy wherein the SS's association with (the ecstasy of) death is triumphantly displaced by the

⁸ Beyond the promotional posters used to advertise *The Night Porter* upon its opening in 1974, all subsequent materials (including DVD covers or film splash pages) also feature the iconic, topless image of Rampling dressed in oversized men's suspenders and trousers and an SS hat.

⁹ Later, it is revealed that Lucia has been imprisoned for being the daughter of a 'Socialist' dissident, making her 'Jewishness' debatable.

'powerful, lively, reproductive narrative' that literally posited by these other, more campy characters' heaving breasts and the sartorial modifications, such as the addition of fish net stockings or the popping of shirt collar. These additions heighten the Nazi uniform's already dramatic and costume-ish character. Hence the reason a film like *The Producers* can go on to win an Oscar and then be turned into a Broadway hit in 2006, while *The Night Porter* is labeled a 'Nazi propaganda film'. A circumstance that is made even more ironic when one considers the aesthetics of actual Nazi propaganda films – such as Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1936), a film famously marked by the portrayal of countless bodies parading in time and in long rows [Figures 3.17-3.18] – a feature that Brook's film directly references in the 'chorus line' numbers performed by his 'singing, show-girl Nazis'. By choosing to promote her film with the eroticized body of Lucia, she critiques the way feminine sexuality is all too often mocked in the service of making the most violent of politics cinematically available.

The next difficult revelation for *The Night Porter's* audiences to ponder is that Max and Lucia had become lovers while Max served as an SS officer who performed barbaric medical experiments on camp prisoners.¹⁰ Together, the two learned to take great pleasure in the extreme forms of violence that the camp made differentially available to them: the feel of a gun in one's mouth, the exhilaration of having a bullet whiz-by one's naked skin, and the strange comfort of having a wound dressed by the very person who inflicted it [Figure 3.19]. Never meant to meet again, their encounter

¹⁰ When I say this is a difficult revelation, I am absolutely speaking from personal experience. It took many viewings of this film to realize that Lucia confronts Max in the hotel not as a woman encountering her rapist, but as a spurned lover excited to see her former partner. This is not owed to the quality of Rampling or Bogarde's acting, or of the screenplay, but to my own incapacity to see any possibility in which these two might have been consensual lovers.



Figure 3.17: Riefenstahl, Leni (Director). Film still of the Labor Corps, from *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*). 1934.



Figure 3.18: Brooks, Mel (Director). Film still of Nazi chorus girls, from *The Producers*. 1968.

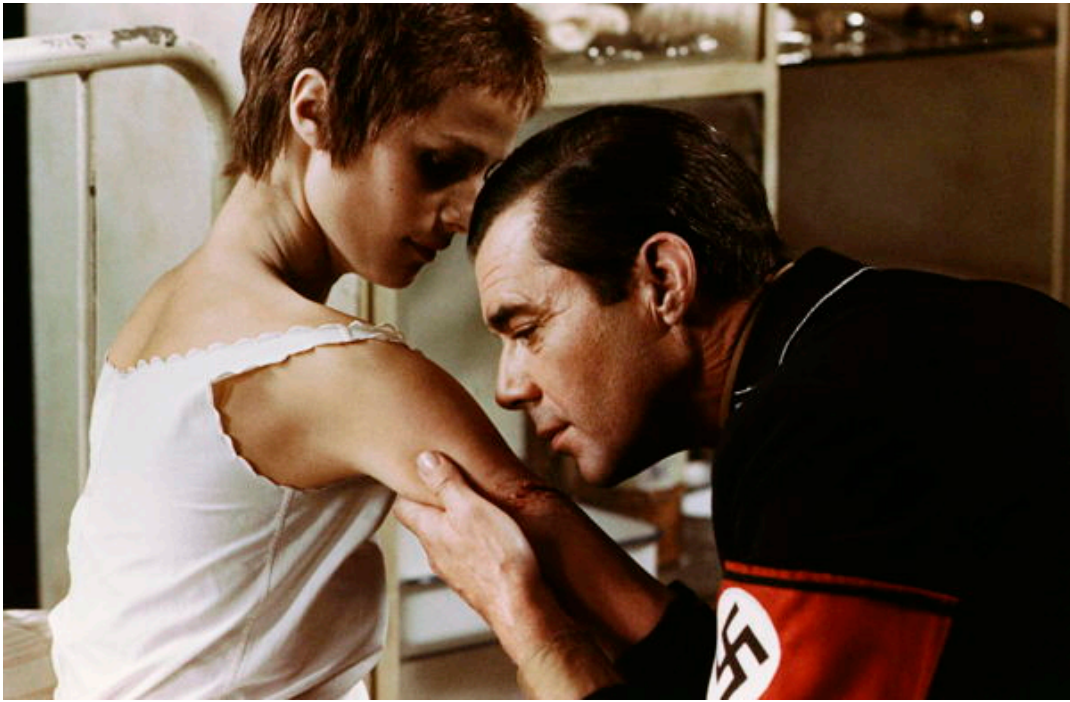


Figure 3.19: Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still of Max cleaning Lucia's wound and kissing her arm, while in the Camp, from *The Night Porter*. 1974.

at the *Hotel zur Oper* compels them to revisit their sadomasochistic relationship and to reproduce the conditions of its possibility within a post-War context.

These conditions, are not simply met in the recreation of a certain ‘image’ of their shared past, but by the lovers’ rekindling of a critical, aesthetic engagement with their respective relationships to power. Under the circumstances of modern biopolitics—which are ruled, as Foucault has famously formulated with the edict to ‘make live and let die’—Max and Lucia needed to reconnect with what was historically both the SS’s most repulsive and most attractive characteristic, namely the SS officers’ sovereign-like relationship to death (i.e. their right to ‘take life and let live’).¹¹ This power was of an altogether different substance than that of normal, social and political life. There was no pretense of personal ‘freedom’ (or the right to live, as one pleases) under the law of the SS and the camps that they governed. The ‘special treatment,’ or *Sonderbehandlung*, that SS officers meted out with impunity to the prisoners held at the camps was ‘special’ only insofar as such actions were manifestly aimed at death. After all, the SS were, in fact, ‘of’ the law, itself, and hardly an exception to it. It’s just that their’s was the law of the death drive, a law that recognizes that “the aim of all life is death”¹² (to return to Freud’s speculations on the

¹¹ Later, I will show how Cavani accomplishes this in her characterization not only of the film’s protagonists, but also her individual and collective characterization of the larger group of ex-SS officers with which Max continues to circulate after the war. Please also note that I’m borrowing the phrase/formula ‘to take life and let live’ from Foucault’s lecture entitled ‘Society Must Be Defended’ (see page 241 of the lecture for more).

¹² Freud, *Beyond* 46.

nature of [dis]pleasure), a law that betrays the purported logic of biopolitical power.¹³

Uninterested in simply constructing a fantasy (or an imaginary scenario), in which they pretend to regain what they once had together, Max and Lucia work to experience and ‘make present’ a quite common agony that both precedes and exceeds the War. The lovers attempt to widen the tear that their reintroduction creates in their respective Post-War ‘realities.’ They let the unsettling prick of their violent desires disrupt and rip through the feigned consistency of their normal lives—thus opening their experiences onto a potential(ly endless) encounter with the ‘Real’ (Jacques Lacan’s term for that which lies beyond our fantasies and serves as the cause of our desires).¹⁴ Max and Lucia’s love of this other, twisted sense of power, the particular way that this other form of relationality excites their senses, is what becomes paramount.

Shortly after their encounter in the hotel lobby, Lucia leaves her husband to rekindle the affair with Max [Figure 3.20],¹⁵ and the two lovers begin to violently turn away from a world that can’t support the kinds of aberrant feelings they most desire. Max unapologetically kills the one man whom he thinks can identify his ‘little girl from

¹³ Some might protest my decision to bring Foucault and Freud’s theories into such close proximity, here—especially considering Foucault’s regular disavowals of Psychoanalysis. However, I’d claim, in step with the thinking of the theorist Teresa de Lauretis, that “far from being mutually exclusive, Foucault’s and Freud’s theories are both necessary to articulate the psychosocial phenomenon of sexuality in its complexity... [and] that only together can they outline a materialist theory of the sexual subject” (de Lauretis, *Freud’s Drive* 43).

¹⁴ Lacan’s *Four Fundamentals*, also Žižek’s comments in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, in which he argues “‘Reality’ is a fantasy-construction which enables us to mask the Real of our desire” (45).

¹⁵ It is worth knowing that prior to assuming their roles in *The Night Porter*, Bogarde and Rampling played opposite one another in Luchino Visconti’s 1969 film *The Damned*, which similarly attempts to explore fascism’s sexual politics, while also interrogating the class politics that underwrote the rise of fascism. It’s worth further noting that, like *The Night Porter*, *The Damned* also uses an infamous, burlesque or cabaret-style image of its main protagonist in order to typify its critique (in this case the actor Helmut Berger’s character, ‘Martin,’ performs in drag as Marlene Dietrich’s character in *Blue Angel*). In both cases, it seems that these two films’ directors do this to force the question of how certain pleasures taken, pre-War, are inflected within wartime atrocities.

back then' (a restaurateur and former Camp cook named Mario, played by Ugo Cardea), and then quits his job. Killing Mario with impunity reinstates Max's sense of sovereignty, and sets the stage for his and Lucia's dangerous liaisons. He amasses a stash of food and other supplies, so as to diminish their reliance on the outside world, and holes-up in his small apartment with Lucia. Max does this much to the chagrin of his former Nazi compatriots (Kraus, Bert, Countess Stein, and others) who are all, themselves, working to collectively deal with their diminished roles within 'post-'fascist society, by systematically erasing each other's Nazi pasts in a kind of strange group psychotherapy session.

Together, the former SS officers analyze their wartime careers and confront one another with testimony concerning this time in their lives. They, then, work to psychically expunge one another of any residual 'guilt complexes,' so they can 'move on' and regain whatever power they believe has been stripped from them as a result of losing the War. Meanwhile, the group bands-together to murder any 'witnesses' who survived the War, people who could potentially turn them over to authorities actively prosecuting war criminals.

Lucia and Max's reunion coincides with the scheduling of Max's 'case.' Having presumably murdered all his victims while still in the camp, Lucia appears to be the only survivor of Max's cruelties, the only one who could meet his taste for discomfort, and the only potential witness against him and his associates. After learning of her reappearance, the group determines that Lucia needs to be 'filed away,' like all the others. Bearing this in mind, Max and Lucia resolve to live out their final days, together, in his apartment—playing violent sex games until their rations run out and hunger drives them to no choice but suicide.



Figure 3.20: Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still of Max and Lucia, years later, after reuniting and rekindling their affair, on the floor of the *Hotel zur Oper*, from *The Night Porter*. 1974.

Midway through the film's narrative, we arrive at the point in *The Night Porter's* story that produces the now iconic image used in the movie's promotional posters. Cut to one of Max's gauzy flashbacks, which fantastically combines the aesthetics of a Weimar cabaret (as painted by Otto Dix), the imagined horror of an 'officer's club' located in the heart of a death camp, and the Orientalist story of the biblical *femme fatale*, Salome. At the center of this unbelievable scene, Lucia commences a kind of sadomasochistic parody of Dietrich's playful and burlesque, cross-dressing character from the 1930 film *Morocco* (Mlle. Amy Jolly), and slowly sings a low-key version of one of Dietrich most popular songs "Wenn Ich Mir Was Wünschen Dürfte" ("If I Could Have Wished for Anything") [Figure 3.22].¹⁶ The film's gifted costumer, Piero Tosi, replaces Dietrich's famous 'industrialist drag,' or tuxedo [Figure 3.21], with dour, SS fetish-gear, and the rest is history.

As the young, frail Lucia sings her dirge alongside a band made-up of Nazi soldiers, wearing party masks, baroque ruffs, and pancake makeup, she positively saunters around the room (much to Max's delight): holding her small breasts in her gloved hands, teasing the other officers with a tasseled party favor, and pretending to offer them a look into her trousers [Figure 3.22]. These men's 'dates'—*other prisoners who appear less complicit in the evening's affairs*—seem to be made more nervous by Lucia's presence than by the officers they are presumably being forced to escort [Figure 3.23]. The fear that these other young women have of Max's 'little girl' is shortly confirmed, when Lucia ends her performance and (like Salome) is

¹⁶ This choice of song, versus one from the more popular film *Blue Angel*, and its preoccupation on 'the wish'—in a film that directly engages the terms and rhetoric of psychoanalysis—helps to further suggest that *The Night Porter* is, indeed, a film about the politics of modern erotics, which one could venture to define as the discourse of desire.



Figure 3.21: Paramount Pictures publicity photo of Marlene Dietrich from *Morocco*, dressed in her famous tuxedo drag. 1930. (Director: Josef von Sternberg.)



Figure 3.22: Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still of Lucia, dressed in Piero Tossi's infamous costume and performing with the cabaret band of Nazi soldiers, from *The Night Porter*. 1974.



Figure 3.23: Cavani, Liliana (Director). Film still of Lucia, dressed in Piero Tossi's infamous costume and performing for a group of Nazi soldiers and other inmates, serving as the soldiers' 'dates,' from *The Night Porter*. 1974.

presented with a gift from her patron—a box containing the head of another inmate, aptly named Johann, the subject of a complaint Lucia had once made to Max in passing. As she bites down on her fingers, a look that is equal parts revulsion and loving excitement washes across Lucia's face.

The markedly ambiguous and unpredictable body at the heart of *The Night Porter*, does not just put a kink in our usual senses of order and 'rightness,' it perverts any sense in which 'the uniform,' with its consistent textures and predictably legible array of signifiers, might serve as a trope for comfort or as grounds for love. It revels in that which we cannot *not* want to feel (i.e. arousal in the face of radical evil), and it suggests that the perversion of our normal sensibilities is precisely what contemporary erotics must be built upon should we ever hope to get out from under the sway of certain, highly organized forms of power. For so long as 'the uniform,' *any* uniform (from the most detestable to the most subversive), is allowed to mark the limit of our desires, it will work to powerfully draw our desires towards its highly regulated terms. It will be what primarily sets the terms of our aesthetic and ethical fields. And when uniformity or sameness is law—then violence (i.e. the violation of law) necessarily takes exceptional, unique forms, like Max gifting a severed head to his lover.

What *The Night Porter* primarily asks is what are the consequences of living in a culture where a form of comportment defined by its claimed ability to arrest our unpredictable, chaotic desires, and thereby render our bodies as instruments of 'the greater good' reigns supreme (through its standardized textures and silhouettes)? Through 'uniform cultures,' good and evil are transformed into predictable,

identifiable qualities—no longer marked by their singularity, as in the pre-modern ethico-aesthetic terrains investigated by Foucault. Once recognized as a technology of the self that works to give modern ethics a rather specific look and feel, thereby disarming our ability to engage more complex textures of experience, why and/or how do we continue to submit ourselves to the uniform's formalities?

In Classical, Western Culture, according to Foucault, 'right' and 'wrong' didn't appear to one and then impose their textures on one's life and across one's body. Instead, one learned how to discern 'right' and 'wrong's' variable substances through careful, self-reflections on the qualities of one's perceived (dis)pleasures. One's 'ethical substance' was determined by the way one's actions linked their desires and their senses of (dis)pleasure.¹⁷ One's ethical substance did *not* result from dutifully aligning one's actions with a set of externalized and standardized interdictions at the cost of one's desires. In the modern ethico-aesthetic tradition, uniforms work to produce 'right' versus 'wrong' sensations, 'right' versus 'wrong' bodies, and in those moments when we slip in and out of our respective uniforms, our bodies' ethical substance becomes incoherent. This incoherency is untenable within rational narratives of comportment, it must be brutalized. This incoherency is precisely what is so horrific about *The Night Porter's* central image.

No 'innocents' lurk in the shadow of this image. It implicates everyone who looks at it. The bare chested young woman at its center arouses its viewer's interests even before the meaning of the pins affixed above her hat's brim become fully legible. In the time and space between one's initial seduction and the horror produced by the growing recognition of this uniform's particular significance, 'we'

¹⁷ Foucault, *Ethics* 264.

all, become implicated in what the theorist Sadiya Hartman astutely identifies as a kind of primal scene of subjection—an episode of power’s staging in which pleasure and terror meet head-on, leaving one wanting the kind of discipline that will allow them to master those scenarios where one is terrorized by their own desires.¹⁸ We are quickly inaugurated as ‘modern subjects’ precisely through the horror of recognizing our capacity to violently pervert the order of things, which the uniform works to normalize. Our subsequent submission to increasingly strict circumstances of control is due to the uniform’s promise to help us elide such horrifyingly ambiguous episodes in the future.

Contrary to popular belief, which claims that a picture’s power lies in its ability ‘to speak a thousand words,’ *The Night Porter’s* infamous image of the actress Charlotte Rampling suggests that the power of any image—from the most banal to the most extraordinary—conversely lies in its ability to do what no number of words can. The filmmaker’s allegorical depiction of the erotics of power, and our strange desire for discipline—reminds us that “makers of images,” as the art historian Leo Steinberg succinctly writes, are those who “[ask] intimate questions that do not translate into words, at least not without disrespect.”¹⁹ ‘Makers of images,’ such as Cavani, are those who give the most sacred and the most profane notions a particular form—a texture, weight, or color. In so doing, these image makers are required, as Steinberg explains, to risk the most vulgar and sacrilegious of questions: “whether, for instance, Christ clipped his nails short or let them grow past the

¹⁸ Hartman.

¹⁹ Steinberg 16.

fingertips”²⁰ Whether a prisoner of the camps could have had the means, or could have had the desire, to not role play as a Nazi, but to take palpable pleasure in the wearing of those garments directly imbued with the power of their oppressors?²¹

It is by no accident that these difficult questions, and their ugly, attending feelings, are raised by this image. Cavani developed the screenplay for *The Night Porter* while haunted by a series of interviews that she conducted in preparation for a 1964 television documentary on World War II’s female partisans, which was produced for a series funded by *Radiotelevisione italiana (RAI)* entitled *Prima Pagina* (Front Page). During the interviews for *La donna nella Resistenza (The Women of the Resistance)*, more than one woman appeared to be plagued by the uniquely gendered forms of violence and survival that she had sustained during her time in the Resistance—the ways her femininity effected the treatment that was meted out towards her and how it offered her particular ways of doing her work and gathering information from her targets, or in some cases—her captors. Cavani was keen to bear witness to the most unsettling sides of these experiences, and to try and help these women address those scenarios that required that they develop sexual, and in some instances confusingly romantic, relationships with their enemies—encounters that would occasionally become markedly erotic, forever confusing one’s senses of pleasure and pain. Far beyond the tortures they suffered, it was these unfathomable pleasures that seemed to be most irreconcilable.²² *The Night Porter* refuses to divert

²⁰ Steinberg 16.

²¹ More appallingly than an image of a prisoner being *forced* to dress in the uniform of her captor, this image presents a prisoner who rather confidently *chooses* (albeit in the extremely constrained terms) to wear these garments. This is made clear in the way Lucia squarely sets her eyes on those looking at her, and the assured way that she cocks her hip.

²² Marrone 91; Scherr.

the responsibility that the cinema (or modern aesthetics, more broadly speaking) owes to these women, it refuses to mask these complicated erotics and impending politics.

Within standardized love stories and wartime romances, there is no way to memorialize, or speak truth to the shame of being what one woman described as an ‘un-innocent or a complicit victim,’ particularly not within the rhetoric of a nationally televised documentary.²³ There was even less of a capacity to deal with the pain of having lost an unexpected, but undeniable, lover in the midst of the war and its political resolution—especially if you developed these relations along vectors of extreme violence. To have been seduced by the aesthetics of your persecutors, or by what the author Susan Sontag adeptly refers to as ‘fascinating fascism’²⁴—was to tangle the neat distinctions between victim and assassin, distinctions that were often inoperative during the war, but exceedingly crucial in its wake. Determining which axis you and your actions lie on is what allows you (and the culture at large) to work-out how you ought to deal with the aftermath of war.

Understood in this regard, it becomes clear how *The Night Porter’s* central image has gained such iconic status, how it’s managed not only to dislodge itself from the scope of Cavani’s film, and to stand alone, but how it’s come to be endlessly cited by countless individuals—all similarly interested in investigating (or even capitalizing on) the erotics of power. This image is an invitation to critically

²³ Scherr.

²⁴ Sontag develops this figuration in her famous essay of the same name: an essay that was published shortly after *The Night Porter’s* release, and which fleetingly critiques the film’s aesthetic strategies as absolutely uncritical. While I find many of Sontag’s insights within this essay invaluable, and I will mobilize many of them throughout this essay. I take issue with her refusal to acknowledge the criticality of *The Night Porter*—a refusal that many other critics and filmgoers took-up in her wake.

experience and 'make present' the all too common agony that both proceeds and exceeds the Second World War. As the fashion historian and theorist Valerie Steele explains in her book *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power*.

Military uniforms are probably the most popular prototype for the fetishist uniform because they signify hierarchy (some command, others obey), as well as membership in what was traditionally an all-male group whose function involves the legitimate use of physical violence. Soldiers can shoot or stab without constraint. The erotic connotations of military uniform derive, in part, from the sexual excitement that many people associate with violence and with the relationship between dominance and submission.²⁵

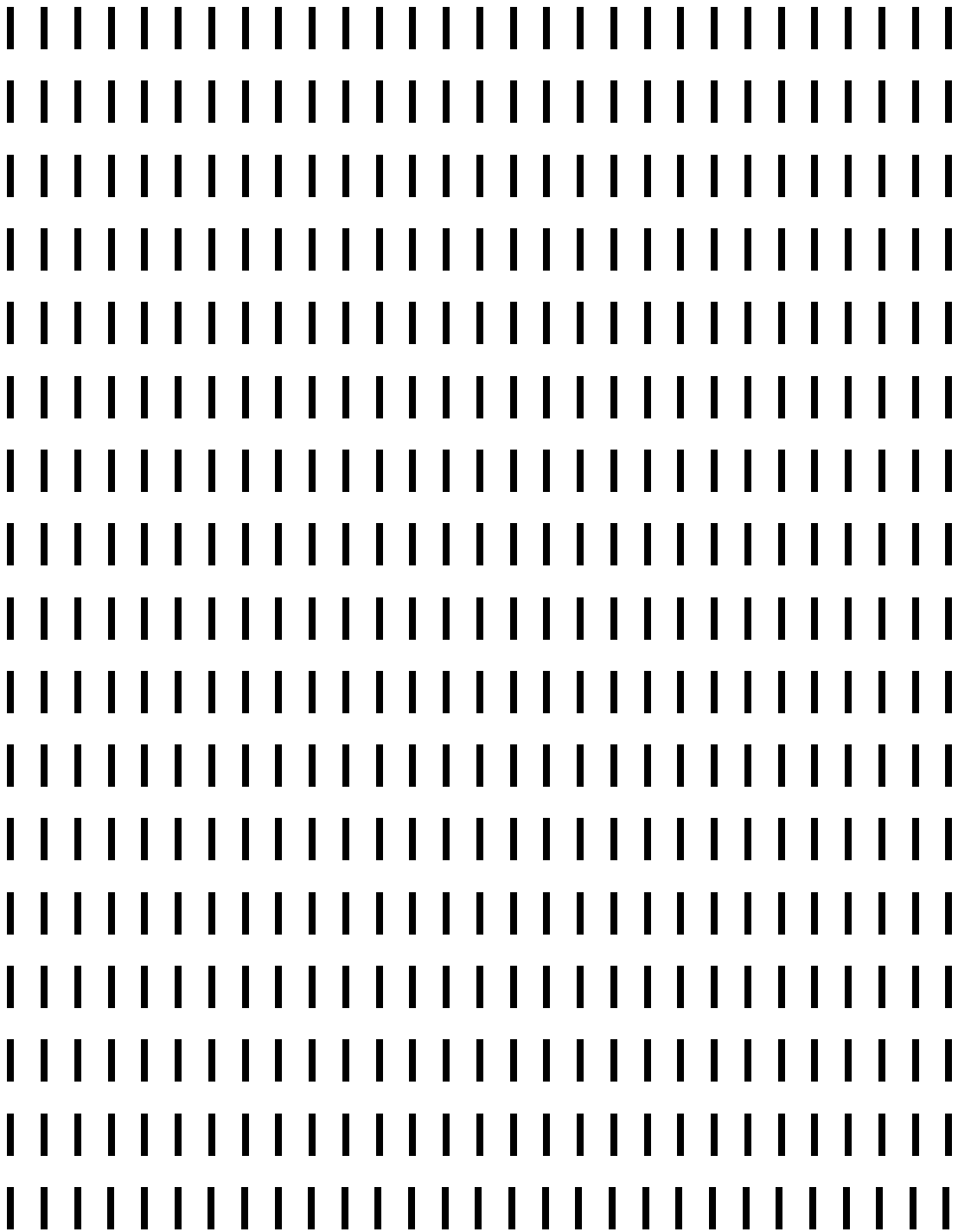
While fashion is manifestly interested in occupying the erratic power of our desires, the uniform works to aestheticize a more stable and immediately fulfilling sense of power, a sense of power that is less capricious and more immanently available and trustworthy. The uniform avows to produce an ostensibly immutable and powerfully predictable body—a body that is 'traditional,' but 'history-less' and stands in opposition to the jumpy, inventive, and volatile corpuses captured by the fashion system. Positioned beyond the unpredictable, fashion-obsessed civilian body's limits, the uniform becomes a perfect object of desire. Situated outside the purviews of civilian life, its inaccessibility also gives it (and its wearer) the decisive ground needed to militarize the textile, itself, or to produce the circumstances and terms under which 'justifiable' forms of lethal, corporeal violence might be enacted by the selectively dressed few.

It is 'the uniform's' primary providence, regardless of whether it is State sanctioned, subculturally elaborated upon, or commercially produced, to articulate

²⁵ Steele, *Fetish* 180.

the key forms and official languages of modern conflict. The uniform accomplishes this by weaving certain kinds of bodies into a set of violently stark, oppositional relations with others. Popular belief and practice would lead one to believe that the 'other bodies' in this arrangement are naturally those dressed in an opposing faction's uniform, be this the garb of an offending nation, opposing sports team, corporate competitor, or a criminalized class under a given police state. However, the figure of perversion at the heart of *The Night Porter*, patently complicates this framework and gestures towards the idea that the uniform works, *as a textile*, primarily to entwine our bodies in a struggle against their own radical, unregulated potentiality. That 'we' are our own worst enemies.

Together, fashion's flexibility and the uniform's rigid stability ostensibly provide modern society's woof and warp, but in reality work along a much more complex and variably textured continuum. The prerogative isn't to simply transform one mode of dress into the other, but to keep the different corporealities that they produce in productive tension with one another. In this, our desire for freedom is tempered by the comforts provided by discipline, and the material conditions of the erotics of power and violence are made manifest.



“A war, an occupation, is inevitably a huge tapestry of actions.”

**–Susan Sontag,
“Regarding the Torture of Others”**



Figure 4.1: Herbert, Gerald. Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey at the American Enterprise Institute, shaking the had of AEI President Christopher Demuth, after delivering his address. July 21, 2008. (Image copyrighted by Associated Press.)

Security Blankets: The Production of Terror

FIGURING IT (-OUT): To a warm round of

applause, United States Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey took the podium on July 21, 2008 at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI), a conservative Washington DC-based think-tank with close ties to the George W. Bush administration. Mukasey's address on "national security and ... the legal approach in the war with al Qaeda"¹ was owed to the confluence of two, high-profile US Supreme Court decisions that directly questioned the legitimacy of the US's legal treatment of those individuals captured in its 'Global War on Terror,' and the administration's subsequent need to reframe these decisions so as to convince, or 'to urge,' the United States Congress to pass legislation that would lend support to the very policies and procedures that the Court's decisions were intended to limit. He explained:

[T]oday, I am urging Congress to act — to resolve the difficult questions left open by the Supreme Court. I am urging Congress to pass legislations to ensure that the proceedings mandated by the Supreme Court are conducted in a responsible way and, as the Court itself urged, in a practical way. I believe that there are several principles that should guide such legislation.²

¹ Robinson.

² Mukasey, *Department of Justice Transcript*.

The main case prompting these remarks, *Boumediene v. Bush* (2008), had concluded one month prior. The decision held that individuals detained by the US Military without charge had the right to contest the legality of their detentions and to file writs of *habeas corpus* with US federal courts. The named plaintiff, Lakhdar Boumediene, had been captured by Bosnian forces in late 2001, stripped of his Bosnian-Herzegovian citizenship, and then, at the request of the United States military, transferred to the Guantánamo Bay detention camp (Gitmo) in Cuba on suspicions that he and four others had planned to attack the US Embassy in Sarajevo.³ After being held by the US for over six years without formal indictment, the decision won Boumediene and hundreds of others the right to contest their indefinite imprisonments.⁴ This set political tongues wagging. It was a clear strike against “The Bush Doctrine” and the unorthodox military and penal practices it had set into motion.

The second Court case, lurking in the background of Mukasey’s comments, concerned the Yemeni national Salim Ahmed Hamdan who, unlike Boumediene, had been formally charged by the United States Government. As a chauffeur and alleged bodyguard for Osama bin Laden, Hamdan was detained by militia forces in Afghanistan during 2001 and transferred to Gitmo in 2002. He was formally accused on July 14, 2004 of offenses “triable by military commission.”⁵ However, before military officials were able to pass judgement on the then-36-year old defendant’s

³ Biskupic; Federation News Agency.

⁴ Please note that Boumediene and five other detainees were eventually released from Guantanamo on May 15, 2009, after a US Federal Judge found that “the Bush administration relied on insufficient evidence to imprison them indefinitely as ‘enemy combatants’” (Bravin).

⁵ *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, argued March 28, 2006 and decided on June 29 2006.

case, his trial was halted by a US Federal court that deemed the military commission's proceedings as unlawful. Two years later, the Supreme Court supported the decision in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* (2006), declaring that the military tribunal assembled to try Hamdan had been established "without Congressional authorization" and thereby lacked "the power to proceed because its structures and procedures violate[d] both the [Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)] and the four Geneva Conventions."⁶

After some adept political maneuvering, the Bush administration managed to successfully convince the US Congress to pass legislation that would override (or supplement) the ruling in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, in the form of the *Military Commissions Act of 2006 (HR 6166)*. Signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 17, 2006, the Act "authorized the creation of military commissions with procedures [that deviated] from the traditional rules of the Uniform Code of Military Justice."⁷

In the wake of *HR-6166's* passage, Hamdan was made available to stand trial before a newly convened military commission. This trial would earn the rather onerous distinction of being the first war crimes trial that the US had held since World War II⁸—and it would commence, *interestingly enough*, on the very same day that

⁶ *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*; Greenhouse, *Justices, 5-3, Broadly Reject Bush Plan*.

⁷ According to analysts at the Center for Constitutional Rights, "Among other shortcomings, the MCA rejects the right to a speedy trial" (*Factsheet: Military Commissions*).

⁸ By the trial's end, the jury had found Hamdan "not-guilty" of the conspiracy charges levied against him and suggested relatively light sentencing for the degree of 'material support' they deemed him of having provided to bin Laden, as a driver making approximately \$200 a month for his services (Glaberson A1). Then, in October 2012, the US Federal Appeals Court overturned the decisions against Hamdan and vacated all previous charges, claiming that the crimes he had been accused of were never 'international war crimes' to begin with.

Mukasey chose to address his fellow neoconservatives at AEI.⁹

Boumediene v. Bush and *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* stood to severely limit a host of rather exceptional policies that the US had implemented to more fluidly pursue its War on Terror. These policies exploited “the advantages of treating terrorists as enemy combatants instead of criminals,”¹⁰ suspended many of the protections that applied to ‘lawful’ combatants under the Geneva Conventions, and stretched the administration’s bonds with both the judiciary branch and with many high-ranking military officials to the point of breaking¹¹—not to mention riling the international legal community and international human rights watchdogs.

Despite these messy and contentious circumstances, Mukasey’s address proceeded as the absolute picture of neatness and courtesy [Figure 4.1]. Stood amongst allies, and dressed in a dark suit with the requisite, post-9/11 American flag lapel-pin affixed conspicuously over his heart, the Attorney General coolly argued that the High Court’s judgments concerned only “the process afforded to those we [the United States] detain in our conflict with al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and associated groups, *not* about whether we can detain them at all.”¹² By delivering these particular comments on this particular day, it appeared as though Mukasey had been sent to brazenly confirm that the executive branch had no intention of recognizing the Supreme Court's recent decisions, and that these decisions would in no way halt the

⁹ Glaberson and Lichtblau, A12. Its worth noting that this was a coincidence that went un-noted at the *AEI* event.

¹⁰ Reid 1.

¹¹ Most famously, General Colin Powell, the then Secretary of State and arguably the most high-profile member of the U.S. military, publicly chided the Bush administration for boldly sidestepping the Geneva Conventions in this way. He reportedly did this for fear that U.S.American soldiers would have their own human rights justifiably suspended, should they be captured within this war by ‘the enemy’.

¹² Mukasey, *Department of Justice Transcript* (emphasis mine).

policy of handling prisoners, *namely detainees*, as ‘unlawful enemy combatants’¹³—a designation unrecognized by international law and serving solely to back the Bush administration’s view that these individuals were “undeserving of full protection under the 1949 Geneva accord on the treatment of prisoners of war.”¹⁴

Mukasey did not to submit a detailed list of the criteria used in the application of this exceedingly prodigious detainment status (unlawful enemy combatant),¹⁵ nor

¹³ ‘Unlawful enemy combatant status’ was contrived by U.S. officials via the combined manipulation of Article 4 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which denies those non-state combatants who ‘hostilely threaten the security of the State’ the protections and due processes afforded to ‘lawful combatants’ and Article 4 of the Third Geneva Convention, which outlines who qualifies as a ‘Prisoner of War,’ and states that (lawful) combatants must, as part of their identification, wear “a fixed distinctive sign [of their allegiance] recognizable at a distance.”

As Daniel Moeckli explains in a 2005 article written for the *Journal of Conflict & Security Law*, “Any detainees recognised [sic] as POWs could not be compelled to give any further information than their name, rank, date of birth and identification number and would have to be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of hostilities” (77). As ‘unlawful enemy combatants,’ peoples detained in the War on Terror do not need to be afforded such considerations. Instead, the U.S. maintained they could be held without criminal charge or access to a lawyer, and that deeply questionable methods of information and evidence gathering were permissible (See also: Maxwell, Sands, and Watts and Harris). This is why the issue of ‘detainment status’ is so central in talks concerning the torture, such as ‘water boarding,’ that so many Gitmo detainees have reportedly been forced to endure during their imprisonment and why, in those few cases where criminal charges were filed, detainees were made subject to military tribunals rather than to civilian criminal proceedings.

Before the development of the unlawful enemy combatant designation, the U.S. had customarily tried all terror suspects in domestic criminal courts. Charging the detainees as (unlawful) war criminals changed the space of jurisdiction. Under military law (i.e. the UCMJ), the U.S. was conveniently spared the burden of proving that each detainee was individually culpable of criminal acts. Instead, the government merely needed to determine some level of collusion with hostile, unlawful entities, namely Al Qaeda and (to a different extent) the Taliban. By Mukasey’s estimation, it was the technical formats of these military commissions and other judiciary procedures that the Supreme Court’s decisions had affected—not the legitimacy of these peoples’ detentions or the acceptability of their unlawful enemy combatant status and subsequent treatment.

Since taking office in January 2009, Barack Obama and his administration have officially distanced themselves from the ‘unlawful enemy combatant’ status, and have formally stated that it will no longer be in use (see: Mikkelsen; Wilber and Finn). However, this is not to say that the circumstances governing these individuals’ treatments and detentions have become any less fraught. In March 2011, President Obama issued an executive order establishing “a formal system of indefinite detention for those held at the U.S. military prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, who continue to pose a significant threat to national security” (Finn and Komblutt).

¹⁴ Sanger 16. Also see Seelye, A7.

¹⁵ As a matter of fact, and as the Supreme Court, itself, noted in *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* (2004), the U.S. government has “never provided any court with the full criteria that it uses in classifying individuals as such” (Moeckli 77).

did he choose to enumerate the specific, exceptionally violent, and/or subversive criminal acts purportedly performed by the individuals held at Guantánamo. Instead, the Attorney General emphatically turned to the figuration of “*a dispersed group of non-state terrorists who wear no uniforms*”¹⁶—a hazy, worrying image of an unknowable army. It was not what these enemy combatants did or did not do, it was what these men did or did not *don* that was at stake. In his own words:

Although our [Country’s] right to detain enemy combatants is clear, determining what if any rights those detainees should be granted to challenge their detention as been more complicated. This is not surprising, because the laws of war governing detention of enemy combatants were designed with traditional armed conflicts in mind. However, as the President emphasized shortly after the attacks on September 11, 2001, the war on terror is a different sort of war.

We are confronted, not with a hostile foreign state whose fighters wear uniforms and abide by the laws of war themselves, but rather with a dispersed group of non-state terrorists who wear no uniform, and abide by neither the laws nor the norms of civilization. And although wars traditionally have come to an end that is easy to identify, no one can predict when this one will end or even how we will know that it’s over. It is after all rather hard to imagine Al-Qaeda and its allies laying down their arms and citing articles of surrender on the deck of an American warship.

But those difference do not make it any less important or any less fair for us to detain those who take up arms against us. Over the past seven years the three branches of our government have been engaged in a dialogue, and, to put it candidly, at times a sharp debate, over the appropriate legal process for detaining combatants in this new kind of conflict.¹⁷

This was not the first time such a strategy, based on dress, had been

¹⁶ Mukasey, *Department of Justice Transcripts* (emphasis mine).

¹⁷ Mukasey, *Department of Justice Transcripts*.

mobilized to justify the treatment of prisoners at facilities such as Guantánamo.¹⁸ Shortly after the first detainees arrived in Cuba and were incarcerated at Camp X-Ray in January of 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld explained to reporters that those in custody were not to be considered prisoners of war because while “captured on a battlefield, [... they] did not behave as an army. *They did not wear uniforms. They did not have insignia.* They did not carry their weapons openly.”¹⁹ In the half dozen years that separated Rumsfeld’s comments from Mukasey’s, multiple shifts in policy and leadership had, of course, occurred. But this equation between the wearing of a legible sartorial uniform and the right to access the sanctuary of the law remained a constant refrain.

Mukasey’s figuration of the unlawful enemy combatant speaks volumes as to how ‘the textile’ produces and maintains the limits of legitimate versus illegitimate state violence within contemporary life—especially in instances where the text, or word of law, is suspended or stretched to its absolute limit. In relying on the figuration of ‘terrorists who wear no uniforms’ to justify practices and policies that the Supreme Court condemned, the Bush administration shifted the conversation in a particular, material direction. They openly copped to the knowledge (conscious or not) that while few might put stock in their words, or even the wording of laws and international treaties most seminal to the regulation of modern warfare, *many* were prepared to place their confidence in cloth and its ability to articulate something ‘real,’ something reliable, about our current conditions and the ensuing necessity of

¹⁸ ‘Dress,’ as Alison Lurie describes it, is a more expansive term that “includes not only items of clothing, but also hair styles, accessories, jewelry, make-up and body decoration” (Lurie 4), and the way these items are worn.

¹⁹ Rumsfeld, *Department of Defense Transcripts* (emphasis mine); Seelye A7 (emphasis mine).

corporeal violence.

Cloth has long provided a key, material-discursive means to both mark and manage the dangers we put ourselves in simply by socializing with one another; but it also acts to connote and denote the degrees of protection that we extend to each other under these same circumstances.²⁰ Cloth does this, not by simply coming after the body and shielding it (materially or symbolically) from those violences that *naturally* befall it, but by actively making the body that which is, in and of itself, susceptible to violence and in need of safeguarding.

As the briefest survey of Western Art History will show, the body's most mortal and most fantastic contours have long been produced through the folds, twists, and swells of cloth [Figure 4.2-4.3], as have its corresponding regiments of handling and care [Figure 4.4-4.5].²¹ Different kinds of materials yield differently articulated and differently susceptible bodies: chain-mail stops the blade, directing the sword towards the mesh's edges; a hefty felt will obscure the contours of a ribcage while producing a more limited range of physical motion; a tanned animal fur

²⁰ Here, I would remind the reader of my debt to Sigmund Freud's work in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Across these works, it becomes clear that anxiety, or "the reaction to danger" (Althusser 82), is perhaps the most crucial social bond, and that 'civilization' is a way of managing the anxiety and constant threat of danger that we present to one another. Cloth is a cultural medium that has long marked 'the occurrence of civilization' (the 'working through' and quelling of this anxiety) in many cross-cultural, secular and religious texts. In addition, I would note my debt to Jacques Lacan's work in his lectures on the ethics of psychoanalysis (*The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*); especially his reading of St. Martin which helped to elucidate the complicated ways in which notions of 'care' are woven into modern fabrics and garment cultures.

²¹ I owe a great debt to the work of Mark Wigley and Anne Hollander in the development of this point. In particular, Hollander's work on the impossibility of nakedness—or the imagining of a body without clothes—in her incredible 1975 book *Seeing Through Clothes*, and Wigley's discussion of the textile's 'textuality' in an article entitled "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" (1996), in which he recognizes textiles not as a covering for the walls/ architecture of a building, but as a key agent in the production of space itself.



Figure 4.2: *Ludovisi Throne*, detail. c. 460 BCE.



Figure 4.3: Buonarroti, Michelangelo. *Pietà*. 1498-1500.



Figure 4.4: Reubens, Pieter Paul. *The Descent from the Cross*. c. 1617-1618.



Figure 4.5: Magritte, Rene. *The Lovers (Les Amants)*. 1928.

exponentially multiplies and extends the follicles, producing a kind of hierarchy between the skin of the human-animal and those ‘other creatures’ that wander the earth with no apparent claim to their own pelts.

Woven textiles, with the binary threads of meaning and the dualistic modes of being that they work to produce and neatly intertwine, absolutely dominate Western material culture and thought. Images, acts, and metaphors of weaving implicitly or explicitly shape all of Western modernity’s most stalwart figures. The fabric of modern nations, bodies, and languages are all ‘woven,’ not felted, tanned or crocheted. The mechanized loom is the direct forebearer of the computer [Figure 4.6],²² and serves not only as an emblem of the West’s Industrial Revolution, but as one of ‘the First World’s’ most important emissaries in much more recent modernization efforts.²³ An incredible amount of significance is attached to how ‘raw fibers’ are (directly or metaphorically) woven together—are folded, flipped over, dyed, washed, wrung-out, ironed, unpicked, frayed, mended, cut into discreet and stable portions, or stitched together in deeply consequential ways. Weaving provides the primary technical procedure through which ‘modern life’ is given its particular twofold, or ‘textilic,’ form. It offers the primary rhetorical procedure through which these doubly articulated materials are made into an array of meaningful signs. Weaving’s essential ‘realness’ is self-reflexively substantiated at every turn. ‘The textile’ is presented as both the most neutral medium and the most reliable index through which to think and experience all forms of modern life and power. The diverse social,

²² For more, see Sadie Plant’s article “Ada Lovelace and the Loom of Life,” and James Essinger’s *Jacquard’s Web: How a Hand-loom Led to the Birth of the Information Age*.

²³ For more, see: Palitza; Thoburn.

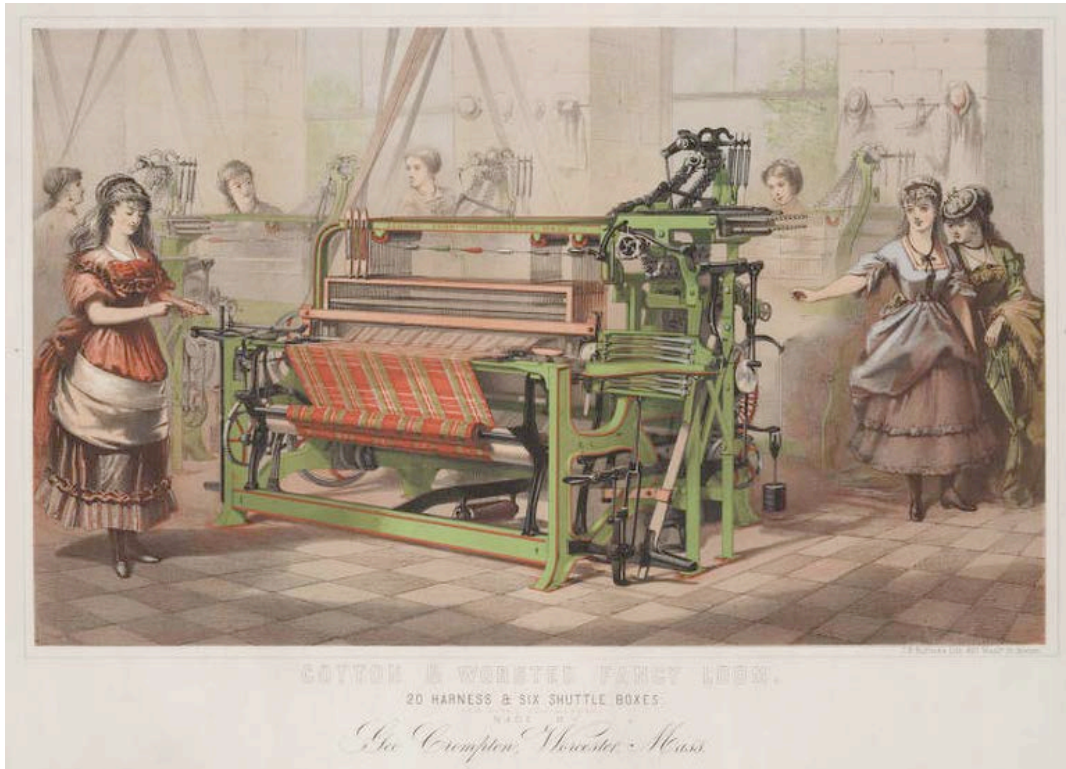


Figure 4.6: J.H. Bufford's Lithography. *Cotton and Worsted Fancy Loom*, an advertisement for Brompton Loom Works in Worcester, MA. c. 1869-1872.

political, cultural, and psychological effects of the hegemony of the loom are perhaps nowhere better charted and adjusted than through modern repertoires of dress.

The textile implicitly or explicitly serves as both the substance and the letter of all modern sartorial systems, and ‘the un-uniformed, unlawful enemy’ combatant is designed to compromise and capitalize upon this fact. It becomes clear that if the Bush administration wanted to radically alter the terms of contemporary warfare and violence to best meet their needs, they would ultimately need to do so within the terms and textures of ‘the textile.’ More than a simple neologism made by a loophole in Article 4 of the Third Geneva Convention (which outlines who qualifies as a prisoner of war, by stating lawful combatants must wear “a fixed distinctive sign [of their allegiance] recognizable at a distance”²⁴), the un-uniformed, unlawful enemy combatant is a schismatic figure transforming the very medium and meaning of contemporary warfare and unraveling the patterns of relation that have characterized the practice and maintenance of modern life versus modern death.

.....

CLOSET TACTICS: Upon first

blush, the unlawful enemy combatant may seem exposed, or metaphorically naked, setting the stage for one of the most mundane dualisms available to Western

²⁴ *Geneva Convention III, “Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.”*

imaginations. But close considerations reveal that this is not the case, nor can it be. To say that these individuals ‘wore no uniforms’ is not to say that they were naked prior to their captures.²⁵ The unlawful enemy combatant does not, and *cannot*, appear to wear no clothing, nor even the wrong clothing prior to capture. Do not confuse the unlawful enemy combatant with what one might call a ‘non-uniformed’ enemy,²⁶ or an enemy whose comportment bears little or no relation to modern systems of dress. Because a *non*-uniformed enemy would still warrant a modicum of protection under the law, albeit via a logic of exclusion.²⁷ The terroristic enemy ‘who wears no uniform’ is afforded no such refuge. These *un*-uniformed enemies are more nefarious. They are intrinsically resistant to the law itself (according to US policies), hence the desperate and unprecedented need to submit these individuals to an altogether different kind of (il)legal, physical, and ideological category.

Strictly speaking, an unlawful enemy combatant is an enemy ‘*who wears the right clothes wrongly*,²⁸ he actively disavows modern systems of comportment by

²⁵ That familiar, figurative kind of ‘uncivilized nakedness’ is definitely intimated here. It is an image that has been brutally mobilized throughout the West’s (neo-)colonialist campaigns, and is brazenly recycled by the almost exclusive application of unlawful enemy combatant status to men of color. As Phillipa Levine explains in her essay, “States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination,” nakedness is a condition clearly marked by race: “While the sculptures and the statuaries of ancient Greece that celebrated the heroic, naked male body were, and often continue to be, read as the pinnacle of a civilized aesthetic, the unclothed African, Australian, Aboriginal, or Pacific Islander signified rather an absence of civilization” (189-190).

²⁶ Here, I’d like to note how works such as Nathan Joseph’s *Uniforms and Nonuniforms* (1986), which was previously sighted, considers the question of uniforms only in terms of their presence and absence, i.e. uniforms or non-uniforms. Such works don’t pick-up the idea of the un-uniformed (à la the Bush admin example), and thereby miss the mark by collapsing pre-modern nonuniforms into (post?)modern un-uniforms, an altogether different form of figuration and comportment.

²⁷ Here, I am referencing ‘the state or place of exception,’ as posited in the work of Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*, et. al.—a critical formulation that has come to dominate theoretical conversations concerning the War on Terror, for better or for worse.

²⁸ Here, I am reminded of Theodore Adorno’s famous aphorism under ‘Refuge for the Homeless’ in *Minima Moralia* where, in the standard English translation, the final line is simply that “Wrong life cannot be lived rightly” (39).

actively un-doing, or deconstructing them. To apply the thought of the theorist and critic Paul de Man, one could say the unlawful enemy combatant is a critical, theoretical figure put in place to uncharacteristically manipulate the textile so that it might provide negative knowledge about the reliability of cloth.²⁹

Always prefigured by the ‘hidden enemy’ (that former President George W. Bush promised to vanquish within days after the attacks that took place in the US on September 11, 2001),³⁰ it is implied that these un-uniformed enemy combatants eschew proper and easily identifiable forms of combat dress in favor of civilian garb so that they may introject everyday civilian life with their violent, terroristic objectives.³¹ This radical transgression (or perversion) of the everyday occurs, according to the administration’s clever figuration, “just below the level of shape or structure.”³² The un-uniformed, unlawful combatant is an uncanny, ghostly figure who sneaks into our wardrobes, tries-on, dirties, and stretches-out our clothes, and then transfers their indelible traces onto our bodies. This opens up the possibility that every citizen is a potential enemy of the State. When we no longer trust our clothes, we stop trusting each other.

The eerie doubling of ‘their’ and ‘our’ clothes and presences—*of the un..un...i...form*—makes it difficult to discern where their place ends and ours begins.

²⁹ From Paul de Man’s ‘Resistance to Theory,’ wherein he speaks to the critical power of theoretical, literary figures and their ability to make us attend to how literature might critically function “as the place where ... negative knowledge about the reliability of linguistic utterance is made available” (10).

³⁰ McFadden.

³¹ This has, of course, long been a major facet of the image of the terrorist as an ‘unpredictable enemy within our midst’. One early and particularly poignant and critical figuration of this facet of the terroristic enemy is in Gillo Pontecorvo’s 1966 film *Battle of Algiers* during the sequence of female freedom fighters trading their veils for Western dress in order to infiltrate a French cafe and plant a bomb.

³² Sedgwick 16.

This threatens to completely unravel the social fabric, to actively ambiguate the difference between our ‘warp’ and their ‘weft,’ and to create a culture of incessant insecurity. To best address this situation one need not hold this enemy to the letter of the laws of engagement, but to the basic terms of the sartorial/material order they have corrupted—*to the terms of the textile*.

Enter the keenly central role that fabric has come to play in the current War on Terror. The textile looms large in the images that have come to supplement this new enemy’s rhetorical figuration. Any mention of the unlawful enemy combatant conjures images of men either clad in the hypervisible, punitive orange jumpsuits that are synonymous with Guantánamo [Figure 4.7]; stripped naked with laundry or sandbags pulled over their heads, as standard operating procedures, in the leaked cellphone photographs of torture that emerged from Abu Ghraib prison in 2004 [Figures 4.8-4.10]; or being mercilessly water-boarded, a rather medieval interrogation technique that (in this particular substantiation) requires the wrapping of a prisoner’s head in fabric that is drenched to the point that it seeps down into their tilted back noses and mouths and makes them feel as though they are drowning [Figures 4.11].

Accounting for this figure, its attending images, and the iconography of terroristic reprisal that they give substance to, a clear narrative of sartorial (and not strictly legal) restitution emerges. The stark contrasts posed between ‘our’ civvy-dressed bodies, ‘their’ neon orange, naked, or hooded frames, and the starkly uniformed (para)military personnel who are always situated somewhere between



Figure 4.7: Prisoners arrive at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba's U.S. Military Base.
Photo by Petty Officer 1st class Shane T. McCoy, U.S. Navy, for the U.S. Department of Defense.
January 2002.



Figure 4.8: A hooded and wired prisoner (identified by the involved MP's as Abdou Hussain Saad Faleh, nicknamed Gilligan), held at the Abu Ghraib in Iraq by U.S. Army personnel and additional U.S. government agencies. The photograph was taken by Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick II. November 4, 2003.



Figure 4.9: A prisoner is hooded and handcuffed to walkway railings, after appearing to collapse. November 3, 2003.



Figure 4.10: A prisoner is stripped naked, hooded, and handcuffed to jail doors. c. late 2003.



Figure 4.11: Serrano, Andres. Special for the *New York Times Magazine* feature "Interrogating Ourselves." June 12, 2005.

'us' and 'the detainees,'³³ clearly support the notion that the right to use extreme, or 'irregular' methods in the upholding of an organization's sense of law and order is established in the interstitial time-and-space where the slip and stutter between the un/uniformed occurs. There is an anomalous opportunity created when 'we' no longer appear in clear contrast to 'them,' and the social weave starts to slack and disintegrate. The opening allows those uniformed bodies, typically formed in the strictly regulated spaces between 'our' and 'their' cross-hatchings, to take on more aberrant shapes, to adapt to more aberrant practices and possibilities. In this respect, the Global War on Terror appears to demand that we primarily work to re-secure the territories not of 'our nation' (especially during a time when this form of collective identification has become increasingly fraught), but of 'our closets'—should we wish to return to a more 'secure world,' where our government needs not act in such extraordinarily violent ways.

Nowhere is this made more clear than in the photographs from Abu Ghraib that show a male prisoner stripped naked, zip-tied, and handcuffed either across a bed frame or with his arms pulled behind his back in the style of a 'Palestinian Crucifixion,'³⁴ all the while being forced to wear women's underwear over his head and face [Figures 4.12-4.13]. Typically cast alongside more iconic photographs from Abu Ghraib [Figure 4.8], these images are principally read as acts of defacement and emasculation that are geared towards dehumanizing the prisoner in question and

³³ Military personnel are repeatedly 'put in the middle' either through their direct visual insertion with certain images (as in Figure 4.7), or via their roles as these images' technical authors.

³⁴ This form of torture is so-called, because it was popularized by the Israeli Military in the torture of Palestinian captives; as the individual's arms tire and they slump forward, their breathing is affected. If not removed from the binding—it can result in death by crucifixion (Mayer, for more).



Figure 4.12-4.13: Photos taken with cameras owned by Cpl. Charles A. Graner Jr. and Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick II. A detainee regularly referred to as “H---- ----,” but sometimes referred to as “W---- ----” (or “The Taxi Driver”), stripped naked and handcuffed in various stress positions, to a bedframe, with women’s underwear over his head. According to a Salon.com report, both prisoners described eerily similar abuse. “H---- ----” told the military Criminal Investigation Department officials that “They [Graner et.al.] gave me woman’s underwear that was rose color with flowers in it, and they put the bag over my face. One of them whispered in my ear, ‘Today I am going to fuck you,’ and he said this in Arabic” (Scherer and Benjamin). October 18 and 19, 2003.

coercing him 'to talk' so that the acts of humiliation and objectification might cease.³⁵

These images are also read as semi-spontaneous 'photo opportunities' by (para)military personnel. They are dismissed as the misguided actions of a few soldiers blowing off steam—relieving tensions born from submitting other human beings to incessant torture and duress and inserting a clear, optically rendered distance between one event and another, in this case: the event of physical, ritualistic torture, and that of informal, cellular photography.³⁶

While both readings are certainly valid in a number of ways, they seem to too neatly circumscribe these images (and all the persons at the center of their making) within a certain kind of 'art history'—be it the centuries-long narrative of retributive iconoclasm that has dominated discussions of 'Eastern' versus 'Western' art and visual culture,³⁷ or the shorter, but no less powerful story of how the camera and the photograph have each been used to depersonalize and promote acts of extreme violence within the modern era.³⁸ This is problematic not because these images aren't a part of these histories, but because these interpretations move too quickly to limit responsibility for the acts represented. They shift the conversation away from real bodily harm and state sanctioned violence towards one regarding the nature of violent imagery, or even pornography. This reduces the War on Terror to a War of

³⁵ Mitchell.

³⁶ Here, I am primarily referring to the 'bad apples' defense that various right-wing TV and Radio personalities, such as Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly, offered in defense of the Abu Ghraib photographs (for more, see Ricchardi).

³⁷ Sedra.

³⁸ For a particularly poignant example of this, I would direct reader's attentions towards the photographs taken at the infamous S21 prison, by Khmer Rouge officials, in advance of prisoners' executions (for more, see: Brink and Oppenheimer and the documentary film *S21: Khmer Rouge Killing Machine*).

Images, a war that rhetorically increases the distance between us and the events of history. Art historians have indulged long enough in the fantasy that the history of art and visual culture is primarily a visual one. If the visual turn has taught us anything, it is how art and culture operates beyond the politics of vision, strictly speaking. We must be open to the possibility that there is always power to be found beyond the optical circuits of the gaze. Or at minimum, we must learn to regard the gaze as a multi-sensory apparatus of power that produces as much friction as it does distance—as a medium of relationally that must be unconsciously felt (near or far), if it is to do its work.

As Susan Sontag powerfully explained in an essay written shortly after the appearance of the Abu Ghraib images, the Bush administration chose to address the leaked images from Abu Ghraib ‘as photographs,’ thereby offering the President a way out of having to account for the political and extra-legal conditions inherent in their very existence. Sontag writes:

[In response to the release of these images, the] Bush administration and its defenders have chiefly sought to limit a public relations disaster—the dissemination of photographs—rather than deal with the complex crimes of leadership and of policy revealed by these pictures. There was, first of all, the displacement of the reality onto the photographs themselves. The administration’s initial response was to say that the president was shocked and disgusted by the photographs—as if the fault or horror lay in the images, not what they depict.³⁹

Instead of addressing these images as a form of iconoclasm or photography, we must critically consider them, and the practices they depict, within the terms and textures of those textiles and sartorial practices that make them possible. The

³⁹ Sontag, *Regarding the Torture of Others* 25.

detainee's face is not simply erased or rubbed out by a pair of women's underwear. Instead, his ability to sense the world with his nose, mouth, and ears is being critically re-mediated through this pink, synthetic-fabric, and through the physical traces (*real or imagined*) that this underwear's original wearer presumably passes on.

His skin, stripped of its usual sartorial coverings, is transfigured not only as a kind of garment of shame,⁴⁰ but as a newly exposed sense organ, uniquely poised to read the differences in temperature between a metal bed frame and handcuffs, the difference in viscosity between water, mucus, and blood. To ignore the textile is to ignore that these images gesture towards an act of violent, aesthetic transformation, and away from more conventional acts of symbolic emasculation or dehumanization. It is to ignore, in many regards, 'the art of war,' in favor of 'art about war' or 'art in proximity to war'.

As if such a neat discursive cleave was even possible.

It is critical that we not conflate the violent torture and transfiguration of these mens' bodies, with the kind of aesthetic transfiguration that is happening on the home-front—causing citizens to reevaluate or distrust their sense of themselves in relation to the law. But there is a parallel. There is a kind of corporeal transfiguration that is happening on multiple registers across the War on Terror.

Beyond the politics of vision, the War on Terror is being waged within the politics of the textile. We have been conditioned to accept the material form of the

⁴⁰ Here, it's worth noting that naked flesh is often seen, especially in the Abrahamic traditions, as a kind of garment of shame and not as a bare, 'garment-less' surface.

textile as the natural order of things. So when that structure was undermined, when we were stripped of our proverbial security blanket, fear and anxiety took hold. The Bush administration's War on Terror opened holes in our everyday lives. They presented us with an enemy that did not fit within the logic of the textile, within the cozy binary of the warp and weft, of good and evil, and introduced an un..uniformed enemy.

What the figure of the unlawful enemy combatant and the images from Abu Ghraib underscore is the way a radical reconfiguration of the textile is situated at the heart of the War on Terror. Rested from their place between one's thumb and forefingers and wrapped around one's heads, pulled off one's torso and cast in front of their eyes or stuffed into their mouths, 'our' security blankets cease acting as such. We are left, on all sides of this conflict, without anything to hold onto. Unmoored and set adrift in this way, the possibilities are brutally endless. The most 'standard' forms of torture used by US military personnel and contractors literally betrays 'our' sense of the textile. This violence is evidence enough, that what is most disturbing is what these images don't 'reveal,' i.e. the threat that they pose to the consistency of our everyday lives.

Unable to discern the detainee's face through the pink hood, their proximity to us is certainly thrown into question—as is our ethical obligation to them.⁴¹ We are not off the hook. In order to make sense of this scenario, we are forced to read this image with our shoulders and the relative aches that they've experienced; our skins and the relative amounts of exposure they have endured; our noses and how the

⁴¹ Levinas.

world collapses when a cloth is pulled-up over our faces. In this regard, the power of this image is as much haptic as it is optic, as much olfactory, or heat and cold-sensitive, as it is digital. Considered from the register of the textile, this image insists on new ethical forms of relationality. Defacement does not abdicate our responsibility to one another.

Anyone familiar with contemporary art has certainly become accustomed to seeing 'the hood' deployed in any number of critically important ways: from Fernando Botero's monumental paintings which explicitly reference the images associated with Abu Ghraib [Figures 4.14-4.15] and Hans Haake's re-appropriation of the American Flag as an instrument of torture in *Star Gazing* [Figure 4.16], to less explicitly referential, but nonetheless important images—such as Thorsten Brinkman's series of pseudo-historical and blatantly 'backwards' portraits that were produced in the wake of the Abu Ghraib photos and images of sensory deprivation from Guantánamo. These portraits find their sitters with their heads and hands conspicuously hooded and muffled by the very materials that are normally used to clothe and protect them and their most important possessions [Figures 4.17-4.19]: laundry bags are turned on top of heads, as are neoprene laptop cases and decorative pillow covers.

In 2010, the artist Allison Smith used her series *Needlework* to look back towards the material culture of World War I and II and the homemade gas masks that people would make to protect themselves both on the front lines and during urban air raids [Figures 4.20-4.23]. In light of the images of hooding produced by the War on Terror, these masks take on a horrifying quality—transformed from means of



Figure 4.14: Botero, Fernando. *Abu Ghraib 60*. 2005.



Figure 4.15: Botero, Fernando. *Abu Ghraib 43 (triptych)*. 2005.



Figure 4.16: Haake, Hans. *Star Gazing*. 2004.



Figure 4.17 and 4.18: Brinkmann, Thorsten. [L] *Jr. Whitestripe*. 2007 and [R] *Lady Glittersky*, 2009.



Figure 4.19: Brinkmann, Thorsten. *Milkymaid*. 2009.



Figure 4.20: Smith, Allison. *Untitled (02)*, from *NeedleWork*. 2009.



Figure 4.21: Smith, Allison. *Untitled (09)*, from *NeedleWork*. 2009.



Figure 4.22: Smith, Allison. *Untitled (04)*, from *NeedleWork*. 2009.



Figure 4.23: Smith, Allison. *Untitled (05)*, from *NeedleWork*. 2009.

protection towards icons of torture. The traces of these largely ineffective and somewhat folksy devices are primarily deposited across the internet and museum collections in the form of haunting, low resolution photographs. This led Smith to try and reproduce these masks using whatever everyday materials seemed to best approximate their textures and forms, as they appeared in the photos. The bottoms of plastic water bottles serve as goggles, cheap muslin and naugahyde cover the surface of the face or head, and simple paper napkins recall the earlier hoods of clansmen. When installed, often alongside her own photographs of her recreated masks, viewers are quick to connect the materials that make-up these masks to their everyday material culture, implicating the cloth napkins, car interiors and knit caps that are readily available in most homes to not only the current War, but the ongoing culture of violence that leads to such conflicts. It is reminiscent of Martha Rosler's ongoing project *Bringing the War Home* (1967-72, 2004 and 2008), a reminder that we are all implicated in the horror of war and that many of the comforts that we experience stateside provide the textures of the violence that others are subjected to on the battle field.

While some works, such as Botero's, seem primarily aimed at the rhetoric of the image (or the iconic anti-war statement), all of the artists listed ask us to consider the textures of the war and activate our haptic sensibilities. These works get under our skin. They ask us how we feel about the war, and they ask us to feel the war. They contend with the pivotal place of the textile within this conflict.

A work that makes this particularly clear is the performance artist Elana Mann's 2007 piece *Embroid/Embroid*, in which Mann takes the outline of what has



Figure 4.24: Mann, Elana. Document from the performances of *Embroid/Embroil*. September 11, 2007.

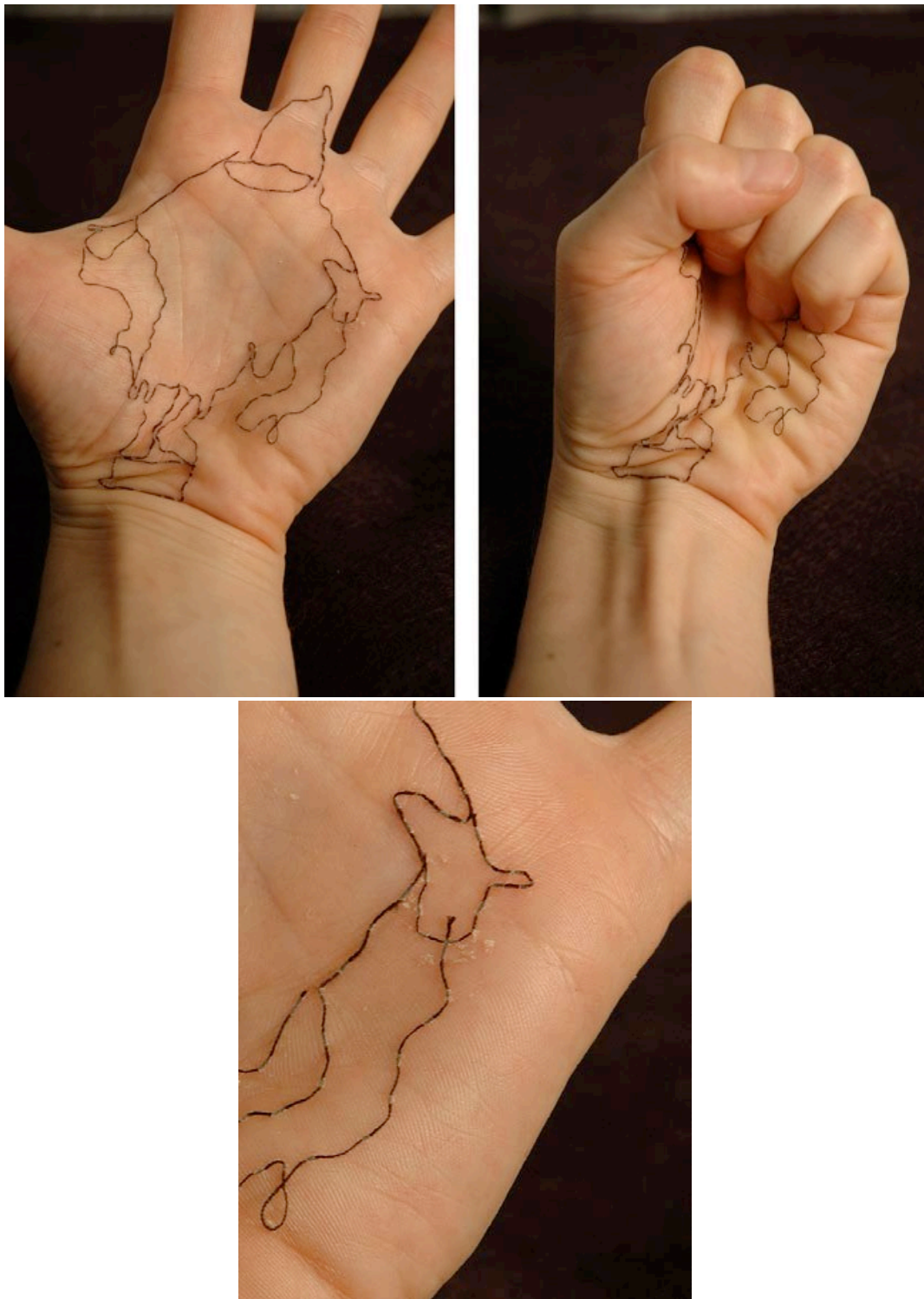


Figure 4.25, 4.26, 4.27: Mann, Elana. Images of the artist's embroidered hand, following her performance of *Embroid/Embroil*. September 11, 2007. September 11, 2007.

arguably become the most iconic image of the War on Terror and proceeds to stitch it directly into the palm of her hand. She is dressed in all black, in front of a monumental embroidery of the White House draped with black bunting across its facade [Figures 4.24-4.27]. The two figures are undoubtedly dressed in mourning. At the performance's end, after Mann has completed the embroidery, she stands and extends her hand to each audience member. This gesture asks us to stop looking at the image, to hold it in our palms for a moment. It produces a jarring sensation; the smooth topography of the handshake is replaced by the strange, unpredictable sensation of loose thread. Something has come undone between us, and any illusion of being neatly bound together has been disrupted.

According to The Bush Doctrine, the extent to which state sanctioned violence might be 'reasonably justified' depends upon how close an interaction brings 'us' to the place where our consistency is adulterated, the place where things stop 'feeling the same,' and 'we' become overwhelmingly haunted by the sense of our loss (of wholeness).⁴² In 'the terrorist who wears no uniform,' the Bush administration produced a radically dislocated figure of extreme horror that works to draw us "towards that place where meaning collapses,"⁴³ but power remains—the place of abjection.

As Julia Kristeva explains in her theorizations of abjection, "The abject is

⁴² Bearing the resemblance that this situation has with Jacques Lacan's descriptions of the tuché, or that 'encounter with the Real' which Psychoanalytic practice aims itself at, one might be tempted to consider how the sartorial uniform functions as none other than the screen of phantasy that "conceals something quite primary, something determinant in the function of repetition,"(Lacan, *Four Fundamentals* 60). One might be tempted, in other words, to consider that in dealing with the uniform, we are always already primarily dealing with the (dis)order of our senses through the operation of our desires.

⁴³ Kristeva 2.

perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them.”⁴⁴ When governments turn to the figure of the uniform to tailor international law to their liking, they activate certain, perverse material means of policy-making, a means of policy-*making* that operates on the word of the law as if it were a material.⁴⁵ They finger those places where the law is frayed and they re-cut, fold, and cinch it to fit their needs. They invite us to fetishistically run our hands over the material, to decide how it suits us. When the fit and the feel don’t add up, our precarity becomes palpable and the horror sets in.

The idea of a “hidden enemy” that would need to be aggressively rooted-out in a war against terrorism was put into circulation only days after the spectacularly violent events of September 11, 2001.⁴⁶ Its evolution into the notion of the ‘unlawful enemy combatant,’ who wears no uniform and thereby relinquishes access to the law’s full protections,’ became the centerpiece of the Bush administration’s most extraordinary political strategies.⁴⁷ As the members of the RETORT collective succinctly explain in *Afflicted Powers*, the events of September 11, 2001 made it clear to the world that, “At the level of the image...the state is vulnerable. ... Terror

⁴⁴ Kristeva 15.

⁴⁵ Here, please note that I am paraphrasing Jean-François Lyotard’s reading of Sigmund Freud’s study of the dream-work, in which Lyotard writes that the work of the dream relies on “procedures that are non-linguistic, and which hence must operate on the text as if it were material” (Lyotard 21).

⁴⁶ For example, on September 15, 2001, a story on the front page of the *New York Times* highlighted President George W. Bush’s “resolute vows to deal with America’s hidden enemies around the world” (McFadden A1).

⁴⁷ Particularly, its charge that ‘new,’ terroristic forms of conflict rendered ‘old’ legal precedents, international treaties, and political timetables redundant. Under the guise of ‘national security,’ new political subjects had to be forged and presidential power had to be expanded in order to generate attend to this situation in ‘a secure and timely fashion’ (Shane and Liptak A1).

can take over the image-machinery for a moment...and use it to amplify, reiterate, accumulate the sheer visible happening of defeat.”⁴⁸ Exposed in this manner, the U.S. absolutely needed to regain control of its image, however, it also needed to exert control in ways that exceeded the vulnerable terms of the image.

It is in this sense that one must realize that while the figure of ‘the unlawful enemy combatant’ is grounded in certain, distanced and Cartesian fields of vision, this does not wholly account for the particularities of its most prominent features. The un/uniform that is repeatedly placed at the center of this figuration does not solely function as a technology of vision. Rather, it sets in motion an array of aesthetics and politics which requires a body that not only sees, but that feels things a certain way. To understand this, we need to understand what it is to wear a uniform, or for that matter not to. It is not the significance of the uniform being called into question (for example, the uniform’s capacity to signify friend from foe), it is the texture of this sartorial technology that is being manipulated.

Like the ancient figure of Penelope, sitting at her loom unpicking the day’s work by lamplight, the figure of the unlawful enemy combatant critically unworks the tight weave of modern comportment, so as to make ‘another body’ and another world possible. As threads come off the loom and fall to the floor, their clearly defined differences (warp versus weft) are lost and made strange; singular spaces open up in the fabric of everyday life and conflict. In the midst of the confusion, uncommon or even adverse bodies are able to slip though the loosened matrix, the way a thumb might eschew the cuff of a shirt and emerge, half-ways through a spot where the

⁴⁸ RETORT 27-28

weave has loosened—emerging deterritorialized, through the slack of a warp thread, no longer a thumb, no longer able to wield tools or distinguish ‘man’ from ‘monkey’. Here, something less than human but more than mere animal starts to form. In the Penelopean myth, one could claim a kind of radically liberated body is achieved through the unworking of the usual weave—whereas the figure of the unlawful enemy combatant serves to incite alarm and justify the most conservative of behaviors. Both figures dispel prevailing logics of difference and open-up the space-time of deviant possibility, but the latter serves to justify unprecedented forms of State sanctioned violence.

Unless we take on the responsibility of re-imagining a social fabric—produced off the loom—the powers that be will continue to tailor the world to fit their interests.

Appendix A



Figure A.1-A.2: Shonibare, Yinka. *Vacation*. 2000.

Appendix B



Figure B.1-B.3: Author's photos of Gernreich's sketches for the militaristic, 1971 resort wear line that was designed in response to Kent State shooting (FIDM archive).

Appendix C

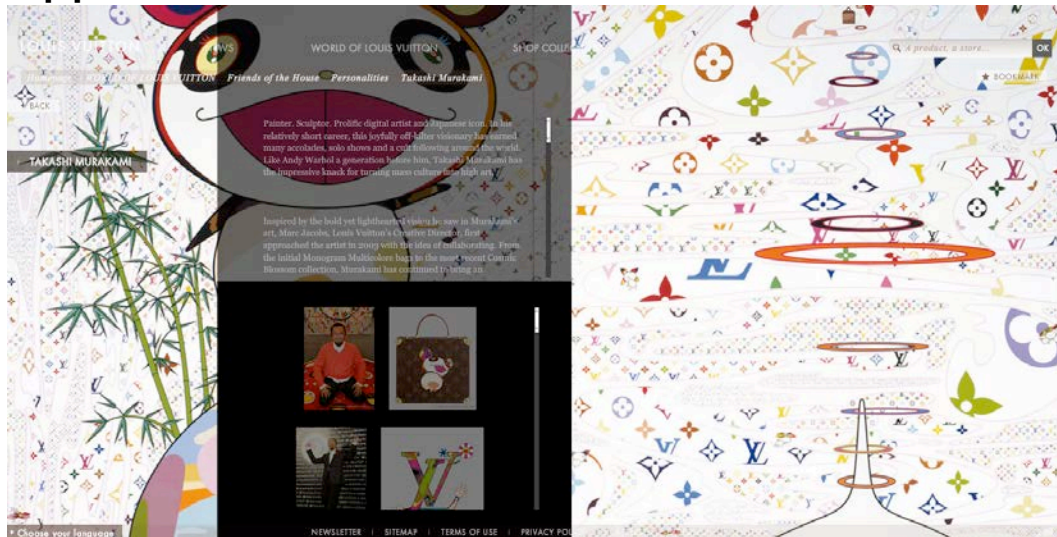


Figure C.1-C.3: Screen-grab and Images from www.louisvuitton.com (last accessed 13.Jan.2012).

Appendix D

FABRIC CHART (TABLE 3-1-3)

Uniform	Components	Authorized Fabrics
Aviation Working Green (M & F)	Coat, Trousers, Slacks	100% Wool Elastique, 19.0 oz 55% Polyester/45% Wool
Dinner Dress Blue Jacket (M & F)	Coat, Trousers, Skirt	55% Polyester/45% Wool Gabardine, 11.0 oz 55% Polyester/45% Wool Tropical, 9.0 oz 100% Wool Gabardine, 11.0 oz 100% Wool Serge, 12.0 oz 100% Wool Serge, 15.0 oz 100% Wool Tropical, 9.0 oz
Dinner Dress White Jacket (M & F)	Coat (Trousers, Skirt same as Dinner Dress Blue Jacket)	100% Polyester, Certified Navy Twill, 6.7 oz 65% Polyester/35% Rayon Gabardine, 8.0 oz
Service Dress Blue (M & F) (Dinner & Full Dress)	Coat, Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	55% Polyester/45% Wool Gabardine, 11.0 oz 55% Polyester/45% Wool Tropical, 9.0 oz 100% Wool Gabardine, 11.0 oz 100% Wool Serge, 12.0 oz 100% Wool Serge, 15.0 oz 100% Wool Tropical, 9.0 oz
Service Dress Blue (M) (Dinner & Full Dress)	Jumper, Broadfall Trousers	100% Wool Serge, 15.0 oz
Service Dress White (M) (Dinner & Full Dress)	Coat, Trousers	100% Polyester, Certified Navy Twill, 6.7 oz
Service Dress White (F) (Dinner & Full Dress)	Coat, Slacks, Skirt	100% Polyester, Certified Navy Twill, 6.7 oz 65% Polyester/35% Rayon Gabardine, 8.0 oz
Service Dress White (M & F) (Dinner & Full Dress)	Jumper, Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	100% Polyester, Certified Navy Twill, 6.7 oz
Service Khaki (M & F) (Effective 1 Oct 99 poly/cotton may be worn only as Working Khaki (excluding maternity).	Shirt, Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	100% Polyester, Certified Navy Twill, 6.7 oz
	Shirt, Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	75% Polyester/25% Wool Tropical, 10 oz
	Shirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Poplin, 4.2 oz

	Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Twill, 6.5 oz
Summer White (M & F)	Shirt, Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	100% Polyester, Certified Navy Twill, 6.7 oz
	Shirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Poplin, 4.2 oz
	Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Twill, 6.5 oz
Tropical Khaki (M & F)	Shirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Poplin, 4.2 oz
	Short Trousers, Short Slacks	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Twill, 6.5 oz
Tropical Utilities (M & F)	Shirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Chambray, 4.5 oz
	Short Trousers	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Twill, 7.5 oz
Tropical White (M & F)	Shirt, Short Trousers, Short Slacks	100% Polyester, Certified Navy Twill, 6.7 oz
	Shirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Poplin, 4.2 oz
	Short Trousers, Short Slacks	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Twill, 6.5 oz
Winter Blue (M & F) (Winter Working Blue)	Shirt, Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	75% Polyester/25% Wool, Washable, 10.0 oz
Working Khaki (M & F)	Shirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Poplin, 4.2
	Trousers, Slacks, Skirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Twill, 6.5 oz
Coveralls (M & F)	Coveralls	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Twill, 5 to 6.75 oz
Utilities (M & F)	Shirt	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Chambray, 4.5 oz
	Trousers	65% Polyester/35% Cotton Twill, 7.5 oz

Bibliography

Abler, Thomas S. *Hinterland Warriors and Military Dress: European Empires and Exotic Uniforms*. New York: Berg, 1999.

----. "Uniforms, Military." Ed. Valerie Steele. *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 2005. 364-369.

Abrams, Sam. "Ten-Hut! This is Your New Uniform, Soldier: A Letter to the Editor." *New York Times*. 10 February 2007. A14.

Adams, Parveen. "Out of the Blue." Ed. Gill, Carolyn Bailey. *Time and Its Image*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. 61-68.

Adorno, Theodore. "Veblen's Attack on Culture." *Prisms*. 1967. Trans. Samuel and Shelly Weber. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981. 73-94.

----. *Minima Moralia: Reflections of a Damaged Life*. London: Verso, 2005.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1998.

Ageton, Arthur A. *The Naval Officer's Guide*. New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc. 1943

Alexander, Hilary, Elda Daneses and Kat Debo (Eds.). *Unravel: Knitwear in Fashion*. Tiel, Belgium: Lannoo, 2011.

Alexander, Matthew with John R. Bruning. *How to Break a Terrorist: The US interrogators who used brains, not brutality, to take down the deadliest man in Iraq*. New York: Free Press. 2008.

Alexander, Shana. "Fashion's Best Joke on Itself in Years." 10 July 1964. *LIFE*. 56-62.

Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*. Trans. Ben Brewster. Ed. Frederic Jameson. New York: Monthly Review Press. 2001.

"Anti-Fashion." *California Stylist*. 20 October 1967. 34.

Archer, Nicole and Ana Luz Gonzalez, Kimi Lee, Simmi Gandhi, and Delia Herrera. "The Garment Worker Center And The 'Forever 21' Campaign." *Working for Justice: The L.A. Model of Organizing and Advocacy*. Eds. Ruth Milkman, Joshua Bloom and Victor Narro. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010. 154-164.

Arnold, Rebecca *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety: Image and Morality in the 20th Century*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 2001.

"Army To Retire BDUs In April." *National Guard*. 62.2 (2008): 18-19.

Ash, Juliet. *Dress Behind Bars: Prison Clothing as Criminality*. New York: I.B. Tauris. 2010.

Balla, Giacomo. "The Antineutral Suit: Futurist Manifesto." 1914. Braun, Emily. "Futurist Fashion: Three Manifestos." *Art Journal*. 54.1 (Spring 1995): 34-41.

Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. 1970. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.

----- *The Pleasure of the Text*. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.

----- *Image Music Text*. Ed. and Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press, 1977.

----- *Camera Lucida*. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Vintage, 1980.

----- "Dandyism and Fashion." *The Language of Fashion*. New York: Berg. 2006.

Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Trans. and Ed. Jonathan Mayne. London: Phaidon Press, 1995.

"BDU Replacement Introduced." *Army Logistician*. 36.5 (2004): 52-53.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. 1955. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zorn. London: Pimlico, 1968.

----- *The Arcades Project*. Ed. Rolf Tiedman. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1990.

Benstock, Shari and Suzanee Ferriss, Eds. *On Fashion*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 1994.

Birrell, Vera Leone. *The Textile Arts: A handbook of fabric structure and design processes: ancient and modern weaving, braiding, printing, and other textile techniques*. New York; Harper. 1959.

Biskupic, Joan. "Court to decide detainees' rights; Justices try to balance protection of nation, protection of individual." 27 November 2007. *USA TODAY*. 7A.

Blakeslee, Fred Gilbert. *Uniforms of The World*. New York: EP Dutton & Company, Inc. 1929.

- Bolton, Andrew. *The Supermodern Wardrobe*. London: V&A Publications, 2002.
- . *Bravehearts: Men in Skirts*. London: V&A Publications, 2003.
- Bohami, Francesco and Maria Luisa Frisa and Stefano Tonchi, Eds. *Uniforms: Order and Disorder*. Milano: Edizioni Charta. 2000.
- Bonn, LTC Keith E. *Army Officer's Guide*. 49th Edition. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books. 2002.
- Bonnacich, Edna and Richard Appelbaum. *Behind the Label: Inequality in the Los Angeles Garment Industry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Boumediene v. Bush, 128 S. Ct. 2229. *Supreme Court*. 2008.
- Bourdon, David. "Help!" 14 October 1965. Village Voice X.52. 4 January 2012. <http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2009/10/clip_job_warhol.php>
- Boyreau, Jacques. *Trash: The Graphic Genius of Xploitation Movie Posters*, San Francisco: Chronicle Books. 2002.
- Braun, Emily. "Futurist Fashion: Three Manifestos." *Art Journal*. 54.1 (Spring 1995): 34-41.
- Bravin, Jess. "Judge Orders 5 Gitmo Inmates Released." 21 November 2008. *The Wall Street Journal*. 22 April 2013. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122719994241444547.html?mod=googlenews_wsj>
- Breward, Christopher. *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1995.
- Brink, Jorem Ten and Joshua Oppenheimer, Eds. *Killer images: documentary film, memory and the performance of violence*. London: Wallflower Press. 2012.
- Broch, Hermann. *The Sleepwalkers: A Trilogy*. Trans. Willa and Edwin Muir. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, Inc. 1996.
- Broudy, Eric. *The Book of Looms: A history of the handloom from ancient times to the present*. London: University Press of New England. 1979.
- Bunn, Timothy T. "Ten-Hut! This is Your New Uniform, Soldier: A Letter to the Editor." *New York Times*. 10 February 2007. A14.

Burana, Lily. "Army's Fashion Fatigue: Op-Ed." 5 October 2006. *New York Times*. 22 April 2013. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/05/opinion/05burana.html>>

Burgin, Victor. "Perverse Space." *In/Different Spaces*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. 57-76.

Cain, Patricia A. "Litigating for Lesbian and Gay Rights: A Legal History." *Virginia Law Review* 79 (October 1993): 1551-1641.

"California Shows New Sportswear: Variety of Fabrics Captures Most Interest—Costume Versatility a Second." 24 February 1951. *The New York Times*. 21.

Carlson, Julie E. and Elisabeth Weber, Eds. *Speaking About Torture*. New York: Fordham University Press. 2012.

Cartnal, Alan. "Gernreich: Fashion's Rocket Launcher." 1 October 1976. *Los Angeles Times*. G1

Cavani, Liliana. *Il portiere di notte*. Torino: Einaudi. 1974.

Cave, Damien. "For Iraqis, a New Rule of Life: Don't Trust Anyone in Uniform." 3 August 2006. *New York Times*. A1.

Center for Constitutional Rights. *Factsheet: Military Commissions*. 22 April 2013. <<http://ccrjustice.org/learn-more/faqs/factsheet:-military-commissions>>

Chambers, R.W. "The Army Uniform Again." 19 January 1896. *New York Times*. 13.

Collins, Lauren. "Check Mate: Burberry's Working-Class Hero." 14 September 2009. *The New Yorker*. 72-81.

"Comments on Rudi's 70s Look." 22 January 1970. *Los Angeles Times*. D6.

Craik, Jennifer, *Uniforms Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression*. New York: Berg, 2006.

"Cult of California has Arrived." October 2012. *Plus Model Magazine*. 71-86. 12.January.2013. <www.PLUS-model-mag.com/Oct2012>

Cushman Jr., John H. "Appeals Court Overturns Terrorism Conviction of Bin Laden's Driver." 16 October 2012. *New York Times*. 10 March 2013. <www.nytimes.com/2012/10/17/us/politics/appeals-court-overturns-terrorism-conviction-of-salim-ahmed-hamdan-bin-ladens-driver.html?_r=0&pagewanted=print>

Cutler, Thomas J. *The Bluejacket's Manual*. Centennial Edition. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press. 2002.

Davidson, Joe. "Uncle Sam Didn't Welcome Gay Employees." 2 March 2012. *The Washington Post*. 5 January 2013. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/uncle-sam-didnt-welcome-gay-employees/2012/03/01/gIQAny0PmR_story.html>

D'Emilio, John. *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970*. 1983. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

de Lauretis, Teresa. "Cavani's Night Porter: A Woman's Film?" *Film Quarterly*. 330.2 (Winter 1976-77): 35-38.

----- . *Freud's Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film*. London: Palgrave MacMillan. 2010.

de Man, Paul. *the Resistance to Theory; Theory and History of Literature, Volume 33*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1986.

Deresiewicz, William. "An Empty Regard." 20 August 2011. *New York Times*. 7 January 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/21/opinion/sunday/americas-sentimental-regard-for-the-military.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print>

Derrida, Jacques. "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority'" Trans. Mary Quaintance. *Cardozo Law Review* 11 (1990): 919-1045.

----- . *Spectres of Marx*. 1993. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Diehl, Digby. "Q&A: Rudi Gernreich." 30 January 1972. *Los Angeles Times*. W16-17.

Drohojowska-Philp, Hunter. *Rebels in Paradise: The Los Angeles Art Scene and the 1960s*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2011.

Dunn, Bill. *Uniforms*. London: Lawrence King Publishing. 2009.

Essinger, James. *Jacquard's Web: How a Hand-loom Led to the Birth of the Information Age*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2007.

Executive Order 10450 -- Security Requirements for Government Employment (1953). 21 April 2013. <<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html>>

Faderman, Lillian and Stuart Timmons. *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics ad Lipstick Lesbians*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Fani, Vincenzo [aka Volt]. "Futurist Manifesto of Woman's Fashion." 1920. Braun, Emily. "Futurist Fashion: Three Manifestos." *Art Journal*. 54.1 (Spring 1995): 34-41.

Farnsworth, Clyde H. "Topless Cocktail Gowns Being Sold in London." 22 June 1964. *New York Times*. 30.

Federation news agency, Sarajevo, in Serbo-Croat. "Central government strips five terrorist suspects of Bosnian nationality." 29 November 2001. *BBC Monitoring Europe*. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.oca.ucsc.edu/lnacui2api/delivery/PrintDoc....2827%3A324156559%2Fformatted_doc&fromCartFullDoc=false&fileSize=5000>

Felderer, Brigitte. "Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion." *Rudi Gernreich: Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion*. Ed. Brigitte Felderer. Koln: DuMont, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum; University of Pennsylvania Institute of Contemporary Art, 2000. 11-19.

----- "Rudi Gernreich." Ed. Valerie Steele. *The Berg Companion to Fashion*. Oxford: Berg, 2010. 364-367.

Felshin, Nina. *Empty Dress: Clothing as Surrogate in Recent Art*. New York: Independent Curators Incorporated, 1994.

Finn, Peter and Anne E. Komblutt. "Obama creates indefinite detention system for prisoners at Guantanamo Bay." 8 March 2011. *Washington Post*. 22 April 2013. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/07/AR2011030704871.html>>

Flügel, J. C. *The Psychology of Clothes*. 1930. London: Hogarth Press Ltd., 1950.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge. 1972.

----- *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume I*, trans. Robert Hurley, New York: Vintage Books. 1990.

----- *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 1975. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

----- *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth., Essential Works of Foucault, Volume I*. 1994. Trans. Robert Hurley et.al. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Penguin. 1997.

----- *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976*. Trans. David Macey. Ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana. New York: Picador. 1997.

----- "Anti-Retro." Trans. Annwyl Williams. *Cahiers du Cinema Volume 4 – 1973-1978: History, Ideology, Cultural Struggle*. Ed. David Wilson. New York: Routledge. 2000.

Franco, Mark. *Dancing Modernism/ Performing Politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 1961.

----- *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 1961.

----- *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. 1933. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 1965.

----- *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. 1922. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 1989.

----- *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. 1959. Trans by Alix Strachey. Ed. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 1989.

----- *The General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology*, ed. Philip Rieff, New York: Touchstone. 1997.

Fussell, Paul. *Uniforms: Why We are What We Wear*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 2002.

"gaberline, n.". *OED Online*. March 2012. Oxford University Press. 16 May 2012 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/75918?redirectedFrom=gaberline>>.

Gaile, Robinson. "And on Your Right ... Hop Aboard, Folks, for a Tour of the Places that Put L.A. on the Style Map." 22 October 1993. *Los Angeles Times*. 2.

Geczy, Adam and Vicki Karaminas (Eds). *Fashion and Art*. Oxford: Berg, 2012.

Geneva Conventions (1949 Conventions and Additional Protocols). *International Humanitarian Law - Treaties and Documents*. International Committee of the Red Cross. 22 April 2013. <<http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/CONVPRES?OpenView>>

Gernreich, Rudi. "Fashion for the '70s." 9 January 1970. *LIFE*. 115-118

----- "Rudi Gernreich on Unisex Clothing." c. 1950-60s. *History.com*. 4 January 2013. <<http://www.history.com/speeches/speeches-rudi-gernreich-on-the-development-of-unisex-fashion#speeches-rudi-gernreich-on-the-development-of-unisex-fashion>>

----- Interview with Claire Loeb. *The Sour Apple Tree*. KPFFK, Los Angeles. 18 January 1971. Pacifica Radio Archives. 4 January 2013. <<http://archive.org/details/pr-a-BB4225>>

"Gets Jury Trial: Toni Lee Shelley." 23 June 1964. *Chicago Tribune*. 3.

Gilvarry, Alex. *From the Memoirs of a Non-Enemy Combatant: A Novel*. New York: Viking. 2012.

Giroux, Henry. "The Challenge of Neo-Fascist Culture." *Cinéaste*. 6.4 (1975): 31-32.

Glaberson, William. "Below Surface, A Terror Trial Reveals Itself." *New York Times*. 29 Jul 2008. A1.

Glaberson, William and Eric Lichtblau. "Guantanamo Detainee's Trial Opens, Ending a Seven-Year Legal Tangle." 11 July 2008. *New York Times*. A12.

Glen, John M. *Highlander: No Ordinary School*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996.

Gould, Claudia. "Introduction and Acknowledgements." *Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum; University of Pennsylvania Institute of Contemporary Art. Rudi Gernreich: Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion*. Ed. Brigitte Felderer. Koln: DuMont, 2000. 7-10.

Gomez, Alan and Emily Bazar. "Jury Selection Today in Gitmo Trial." 20 July 2008. *USA TODAY*. 10 March 2013. <usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/washington/judicial/2008-07-20-gitmo_N.htm>

Greenhouse, Linda . "Detention Cases Before Supreme Court Will Test Limits of Presidential Power." 18 April 2004. *New York Times*. A1, A20.

----- "Supreme Court Blocks Guantánamo Tribunals." 29 June 2006. *New York Times*. 22 April 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/29/washington/29cnd-scotus.html?_r=1&oref=slogin>

----- "Justices, 5-3, Broadly Reject Bush Plan to Try Detainees." 30 June 2006. *New York Times*. 22 April 2013. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/30/washington/30hamdan.html?pagewanted=all>>

Greenspan, Morris. *The Modern Law of Land Warfare*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1959.

Grey, Ros. "Chinese Whispers: Variations on Textile." *Textile*, 1.2 (2003): 158-173.

Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 548 US 557. *Supreme Court*. 2006.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

----- . *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Books, 2004.

Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1997.

Hauser, Brooke. "Dancing Queen: Fergie (Interview)." 1 July 2009. *Allure*.

Hauser, Kitty. "A Garment in the Dock; or, How the FBI Illuminated the Prehistory of a Pair of Denim Jeans." *Journal of Material Culture*. 9.3 (2004): 293-313.

Hay, Harry. "An interview with Stuart Timmons: Secret Love." Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum; University of Pennsylvania Institute of Contemporary Art. Rudi Gernreich: Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion. Ed. Brigitte Felderer. Koln: DuMont, 2000. 59-63.

----- . *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of its Founder*. Ed. Will Roscoe. Boston: Beacon Press: 1997.

Hayward, Eva. "Fingeryeyes: Impressions of Cup Corals." *Cultural Anthropology* 25.4 (2010): 577-599.

Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Routledge.1979.

Hollander, Anne. *Seeing Through Clothes*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1993.

Honeyman, Katerina, Ed. *Textile History (and the Military)*, *The Journal of the Passold Research Fund, Ltd.* 41.1 (Supplement, May 2010).

Hulse, Carl. "News Analysis: Many Voices, But No Debate Dueling Agendas Stifle Senate Action on War." *New York Times*. 7 Feb. 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/07/washington/07cong.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0> 21 April 2013.

Hurewitz, Daniel. *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Ilgen, Thomas L. "Better Living Through Chemistry: The Chemical Industry in the World Economy." *International Organization* 37.4 (Autumn 1983): 647-680.

Insdorf, Annette. *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust, Third Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2003.

Iversen, Margaret. *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1993.

Jay, Martin. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in 20th Century French Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Joseph, Nathan. *Uniforms and NonUniforms: Communication through Clothing*. New York: Greenwood Press. 1986.

Kadolf, Sara J. "Gabardine." Ed. Valerie Steele. *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion. Volume 2*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 2005. 122.

Keen, Lisa and Suzanne B. Goldberg. *Strangers to the Law: Gay People on Trial*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.

Kelly, Kevin M. "Ten-Hut! This is Your New Uniform, Soldier: A Letter to the Editor." *New York Times*. 10 February 2007. A14.

Kirtland, Susan (Producer). "The Future of Beach Fashions." *Look*. June 1964. 59-63.

Kracauer, Siegfried. "The Mass Ornament." Trans. Barbara Correll and Jack Zipes. *New German Critique*. 5 (Spring 1975): 67-76.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1982.

Labarthe, Jules. *Textiles: Origins to Usage*. New York: Macmillan. 1964.

Lacan, Jacques. "Radiophonie." *Scilicet* 2/3 (1970). 55-99.

----- . *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. 1973. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977.

----- . *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: 1959-1960, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*. Trans. Dennis Porter. Vol. VII. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992.

-----. *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. trans. Bruce Fink in collaboration with Héloïse Fink and Russel Grigg. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002.

Laplanche, Jean and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1973.

-----. "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality." *Formations of Fantasy*. Eds. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan. London: Methuen, 1986. 5-34.

Larson, Barbara. "Curing Degeneration: Health and the Neoclassical Body in Early Twentieth Century France." Eds. Lurinda S. Dixon and abriel P Weisberg. *In Sickness and In Health: Disease as Metaphor in Art and Popular Wisdom*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004. 166-186.

Lelyveld, Joseph. "Interrogating Ourselves." 12 June 2005. *New York Times*. 13 March 2013. <www.nytimes.com/2005/06/12/magazine/12TORTURE.html?pagewanted=print>

Levinas, Emmanuel. "Ethics as First Philosophy." *Levinas Reader*. Ed. Seán Hand. 82-84.

Levine, Phillipa. "States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination." *Victorian Studies*. 50.2 (Winter 2008): 189-219.

Lewitsky, Bella. *A Life in Motion: Bella Lewitzky* interviewed by Richard Cándida Smith, UCLA Special Collections.

Lichtenstein, Grace. "In Liliana Cavani's Love Story, Love Means Always Having To Say Ouch." 13 October 1974. *New York Times*. 173.

Louie, Miriam Ching Yoon. *Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take on the Global Factory*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. 2001.

Lowe, Elizabeth D. "Polyester." Ed. Valerie Steele. *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 2005. 52-54.

Lurie, Allison. *The Language of Clothes*. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, Inc. 1981.

Luther, MaryLou. "Rudi Gerneich Holding Out for Fashion Reality." 20 Januaruy 1974. *Los Angeles Times*. H1.

-----. "Topless Creator, Gernreich Dies: Fashion World Saw Him as Its Most Innovative." 22 April 1985. *Los Angeles Times*. B1, 14.

----- "Looking Back at a Futurist." Moffitt, Peggy and William Claxton. *The Rudi Gernreich Book*. Koln: Taschen, 1991. 10-35.

----- Telephone Interview: On Rudi Gernreich. 29 January 2009.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Lyotard Reader*. Ed. Andrew Benjamin. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Maran, Jon. *The Temperamentals*. New York: Chelsea Station Editions, 2011.

Marrone, Gaetena. *The Gaze and the Labrynth: The Cinema of Liliانا Cavani*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2000.

Marks, Laura U. *The Skin of Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2000.

----- *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2002.

Marsh, Graham and Nourmand, Tony. *Film Posters of the 70s: The essential movies of the decade*, Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press. 1998.

Marx, Karl. *Capital, Vol. I*. 1867. Trans. Ben Fowkes. New York: Penguin Classics, 1976. III vols.

Mayer, Jane. "A Deadly Interrogation: Can the CIA Legally Kill a Prisoner?" 14 November 2005. *The New Yorker*. 22 April 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/11/14/051114fa_fact>

Maxwell, Mark David 'Max' and Sean M. Watts. "'Unlawful Enemy Combatant': Status, Theory of Culpability, or Neither?" *Journal of International Criminal Justice*. 5.1 (2007): 19-25.

McCormick, Ruth. "Fascism a la mode or Radical Chic?" *Cinéaste*. 6.4 (1975): 31, 33-34.

McFadden, Robert D. "A Day of Mourning: President in New York, Offers Resolute Vows Atop the Rubble." *NYTimes*. September 15, 2001. A1.

McRobbie, Angela. *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* London: Routledge, 1998.

"Me? In that!" 10 July 1964. *LIFE*. 54-55.

Mikkelson, Randall. "Guantanamo inmates no longer 'enemy combatants'." 14 March 2009. *Reuters online*. 4 December 2010. <<http://www.webcitation.org/query?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.reuters.com%2Farticle%2FnewsOne%2FidUSTRE52C59220090314%3Fsp%3Dtrue&date=2009-09-27>>

Mitchell, W.J.T. *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2011.

Moeckli, Daniel. "The Us Supreme Court's 'Enemy Combatant' Decisions: A 'Major Victory For The Rule Of Law'?" *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*. 10.1 (Spring 2005): 75-99.

Moffitt, Peggy and William Claxton. *The Rudi Gernreich Book*. Köln: Taschen, 1991.

Moore, Booth. "All the Rage - Paris Fashion Week: Louis Vuitton's Fetish Ball." 9 March 2011. *Los Angeles Times*. 6 July 2012. <latimesblogs.latimes.com/alltherage/2011/03/paris---fashion---week---louis---vuittons---fetish---ball.html>

Morris, Bernadine. "Rudi Gernreich, Avant-Garde Designer, Dies (Obituary)." 22 April 1985, late edition. *The New York Times*. B12.

Morris, Errol. "Will the *Real Hooded Man Please Stand Up*." 15 August 2007. *New York Times*. 12 March 2013. <opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/08/15/will-the-real-hooded-man-please-stand-up/?pagewanted=print>

----- "The Most Curious Thing." 19 May 2008. *New York Times*. 20 December 2011. <<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/19/the-most-curious-thing/?pagemode=print>>

Moten, Fred. *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

"mufti, n.2". OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press. 16 May 2012 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/123323?rskey=Mo92k5&result=2&isAdvanced=false>>.

Muir, John Kenneth. *Exploring Space 1999: An Episode Guide and Complete History of the Mid-1970's Science-Fiction Television Series*. Jefferson, North Carolina: 1997

Mukasey, Michael. Transcript of Remarks by Attorney General, Michael B. Mukasey at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (08-633). 21 July 2008. *United States Department of Justice*. <www.usdof.gov>

NAVPERS 15665: United States Navy Uniform Regulations. 2006 January. <buperscd.technology.navy.mil>

Negrin, Llewellyn. "Aesthetics: Fashion and Aesthetics—A Fraught Relationship." Geczy, Adam and Vicki Karaminas (Eds). *Fashion and Art*. Oxford: Berg, 2012. 43-54.

Newton, Helmut. *Helmut Newton Portraits*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1987.

Nielson, Layne. "Rudi Gernreich: 'That Mad Viennese from California.'" *Rudi Gernreich: Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion*. Ed. Brigitte Felderer. Koln: DuMont, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum; University of Pennsylvania Institute of Contemporary Art, 2000. 11-19.

Nochlin, Linda. "Courbet's 'L'Origine du monde': The Origin without an original." *October* 37 (Summer 1986): 76-86.

----- *Courbet*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007.

O'Brien, Miles and Marsha Walton. "Got Silk?" 3.May.2010. *National Science Foundation*. 8 January 2013. http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/science_nation/spidersilk.jsp

Pagán, Eduardo Obregon. *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon: Zoot Suits, Race and Riot in Wartime L.A.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Palitza, Kristin. "Lesotho: Government to Turn Its Back on Textile Industry." 28 October 2011. *allafrica.com*. 16 August 2012. <allafrica.com/stories/printable/201110280156.html>

Papadopoulos, Dimitris and Niamh Stephenson & Vassilis Tsianos. *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the 21st Century*. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

Pavitt, Jane. *Fear and Fashion in the Cold War*. London: V&A Publishing. 2008.

Pickering, Andrew. "Decentering Sociology: Synthetic Dyes and Social Theory." *Perspectives on Science*. 13.3 (Fall 2005): 352-405.

Plant, Sadie. "Ada Lovelace and the Loom of Life." Eds. Joan Livingstone and John Ploof. *The Object of Labor: Art, Cloth, and Cultural Production*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 2007.

Ravetto, Kris. *The Unmaking of Fascist Aesthetics*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press. 2001.

Reid, MAJ Scott (US Army). *Terrorists as Enemy Combatants: An Analysis of How the United States Applies the Law of Armed Conflict*. A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the

Department of Joint Maritime Operations. Newport, RI: Naval War College. 9 February 2004. <www.fas.org/man/eprint/reid.pdf>

RETORT (Iain Boal, T.J. Clark, Joseph Matthews, Michael Watts). *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War*. New York: Verso. 2005.

Riccardi, Sherry. "Missed Signals: Why did it take so long for the news media to break the story of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison?" *American Journalism Review*/ August/September 2004. 22 April 2013. <<http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=3716>>

Riegl, Alois. *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1992

"Rita Perna Establishes a Series of Firsts for Montgomery Ward." 26 October 1979. *CA Apparel News*. 44.

Rivas, C.A.G. *Indian Small-Game Shooting for Novices*. London: Horace Cox, "Field" Office, Windsor House, Bream's Buildings. 1912.

Robinson, Christy Hall. "AEI Press Release: A Speech by Attorney General Michael Mukasey." 22 July 2008. *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*. 22 October 2010. <<http://www.aei.org/EMStaticPage/1762?page=Summary>>

Roche, Daniel. *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime*. Trans. Jean Birrell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1996.

Rosenberg, Carol. "Gitmo Jury Deliberates; Driver Phones Home." 6 August 2008. *Miami Herald*. 22 April 2013. <www.webcitation.org/query?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.miamiherald.com%2F835%2Fstory%2F630450.html&date=2008-08-08>

Ross, Andrew (Ed.) *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade and the Rights of Workers*. London: Verso, 1997.

Rudi Gernreich Archive. Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) Museum, Special Collections, Los Angeles.

Rudi Gernreich Papers, c. 1933-1985. Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California Los Angeles Special Collections.

Rumsfeld, Donald. "Secretary Rumsfeld Media Availability en route to Camp X-Ray." 27 January 2002. *United States Department of Defense*. <<http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2338>>

Rush, CSM Robert S. (Ed.) *Enlisted Soldier's Guide*. 6th Edition. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books. 2003.

Sands, Phillippe. *Torture Team: Rumsfeld's Memo and the Betrayal of American Values*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2008.

Sanger, David. "The Treatment: Prisoners Straddle an Ideological Chasm." Jan 27, 2002. *New York Times*. 16.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. 1943. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1984.

Savage, Charlie. "State Department Shuttters Office Working to Close Guantánamo." 28 January 2013. *New York Times*. 10 March 2013. <www.nytimes.com/2013/01/29/us/politics/state-dept-closes-office-working-on-closing-guantanamo-prison.html?pagewanted=print>

Sayre, Nora. "'The Night Porter,' Portrait of Abuse, Stars Bogarde." 2 October 1974. *New York Times*. 58.

Scherer, Michael and Mark Benjamin. *Special Report on Abu Ghraib*. 14 March 2006. Salon.com. 21 April 2013. http://www.salon.com/2006/03/14/chapter_1/

Scherr, Rebecca . The Uses of Memory and the Abuses of Fiction: Sexuality in Holocaust Fiction and Memoir. *Other Voices*, v.2, n.1 (February 2000): <<http://www.othervoices.org/2.1/scherr/sexuality.php>>

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

Sedra, Paul. "Imagining an Imperial Race: Egyptology in the Service of Empire." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 24.1 (2004): 249-259.

Seelye, Katherine Q. "First 'Unlawful Combatants' Seized in Afghanistan Arrive at U.S. Base in Cuba." Jan 12 2002. *New York Times*. A7.

Seiliger-Baldinger, Annemarie. *Textiles, A Classification of Techniques*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994.

Serlin, David, Liping Bu and Lisa Cartwright. *Imagining Illness: Public Health and Visual Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Shane, Scott and Adam Liptak. "Detainee Bill Shifts Power to the President." 30 September 2006. *New York Times*. A1.

Sontag, Susan. *Under the Sign of Saturn*. New York: Picador. 2002.

----. "Regarding the Torture of Others." 23 May 2004. *New York Times Magazine*. 24-29, 42.

"Soviet See Signs of Decay." 22.June.1964. *New York Times*. 30.

Steele, Valerie. *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power*. New York: Oxford Univeristy Press. 1996.

----. "Sunshine and Design: Rudi Gernreich and the L.A. Art Scene." *Rudi Gernreich: Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion*. Ed. Brigitte Felderer. Koln: DuMont, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum; University of Pennsylvania Institute of Contemporary Art, 2000. 65-68.

----. "Museum Quality: The Rise of the Fashion Exhibition." *Fashion Theory* 12.1 (March 2008): 7-30.

Steinam, Gloria. "Gernreich's Progress; Or, Eve Unbound." *New York Times Magazine*. 31 January 1965: SM18.

Steinberg, Leo. *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion. Second Edition, Revised and Expanded*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1995.

"Swimsuits ... More or less?" *Look* 2 June. 1964: 59-63.

Timmons, Stuart. *The Trouble with Harry Hay*. New York: Alyson Books, 1990.

"The Textile Industry: The Looming Revolution." 11 November 2004. *The Economist*. 16 August 2012. <www.economist.com/node/3375500/print>

Thoburn, John. *The Impact of World Recession on the Textile and Garment Industries of Asia*. Vienna: United Nations Industrial Development Organization. 2010.

Trudeau, Michelle. "Study Illuminates How Babies Learn to Speak." 24 July 2006. *All Things Considered*. National Public Radio. 4 January 2013. <<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5578636>>

"Up, Up & Away." *Time* 90.22 (1967): 78. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 4 Jan. 2013.

United States Army. *The Officer's Guide: A Ready Reference on Customs and*

Correct Procedures Which Pertain to Commissioned Officers of the Army of the United States. 9th Edition. Harrisburg, PA: The Military Service Publishing Company. 1943.

United States Navy. *The Bluejacket's Manual*. 10th Edition. Annapolis: United States Naval Institute. 1940.

Vanderbilt, Tom. "Invisible Man: The Future of Camouflage." *Modern Painters*. 20.3 (April 2008): 38-40.

Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. 1899. Dover Thrift Editions. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994.

Vernant, Jean-Pierre. "Dim Body, Dazzling Body." Trans. Anne M. Wilson from "Corps des dieux," *Le temps de la réflexion*. 7(1986). Ed. Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi. *Fragments for a History of the Human Body: Part One*. New York: Zone Books, 1989. 18-47.

Vining, Margaret. "Uniforms, Military." *Dictionary of American History, Vol. 8, 3rd Edition*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 2003. 256-258.

Wallis, George W. "Chronopolitics: The Impact of Time Perspectives on the Dynamics of Change." *Social Forces*, 49.1 (September 1970): 102-108.

Werner, Stephen and Eric Gans. "In Memoriam: Oreste Pucciani, French Los Angeles." *Calisphere* (1999): 179-180.

White, C. Todd. *Pre-Gay LA: A Social History of the Movement for Homosexual Rights*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Whitfield, Stephen E and Gene Roddenberry. *The Making of Star Trek*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1968.

Wigley, Mark. "Untitled: The Housing of Gender." *Sexuality and Space*. Ed. Beatrice Colomina. Princeton: Princeton Papers on Architecture, 1992. 328-389.

Wilber, Del Quentin and Peter Finn. "U.S. Retires 'Enemy Combatant,' Keeps Broad Right to Detain." 14 March 2009. *The Washington Post*. 22 April 2013. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/13/AR2009031302371.html>>

Wilson, Elizabeth. *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*. London: Virago, 1985.

Woo, Elaine. "Oreste Pucciani; UCLA Teacher Helped Bring Sartre's Ideas to the U.S." 5 May 1999. *Los Angeles Times*. 5 January 2013. <<http://articles.latimes.com/1999/may/05/news/mn-34183>>

Woolf, Virginia. *Three Guineas*. Ed. Mark Hussey. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc. 2006.

Yardley, William. "Army is Going Winkle-Free; Velcro, No Creases, Is the Norm." *New York Times*. 7 January 2007. A1, A12.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso. 1989.

----. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. Boston: An October Book, MIT Press, 2000.

Zola, Émile. *The Ladies Paradise*. Trans. Brian Nelson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Filmography

Battaglia di Algeri, La (The Battle of Algiers). Dir. Gilles Pontecorvo. 1966.

Basic Black. Dir. William Claxton. 1967. Film.

Blaue Engel, Der (The Blue Angel). Dir. Josef von Sternberg. Perf. Marlene Dietrich. 1930. Film.

Caduta degli dei Götterdämmerung, La (The Damned). Dir. Luchino Visconti. 1969. Film.

“Catwoman’s Dressed to Kill.” *Batman*. Season 3, Episode 14. Greenway Productions, 20th Century Fox. 14 December 1967. Television.

Dames. Dirs. Ray Enright and Busby Berkeley. 1934. Film.

Dictator, The. Dir. Larry Charles. Perf. Sacha Baron Cohen. 2012. Film.

Donna nella Resistenza, La (The Woman of the Resistance). Dir. Liliana Cavani. REI. 1965. Television.

Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS. Dir. Don Edmonds. 1975. Film.

Morocco. Dir. Josef von Sternberg. Perf. Marlene Dietrich. 1930. Film.

Night Porter, The. Dir. Liliana Cavani. 1974. Film.

Producers, The. Dir. Mel Brooks. 1968.

Office Space. Dir. Mike Judge. Perf. Jennifer Aniston. 1999. Film.

Olympia 1. Teil - Fest der Völker (Olympia, Part One: Festival of the Nations). Dir. Leni Riefenstahl. 1938. Film.

S-21, la machine de mort Khmère rouge (S21: Khmer Rouge Death Machine). Dir. Rithy Panh. 2003. Film.

Space 1999. Season One. Creators Gerry Anderson and Sylvia Anderson. 1975. Television.

Standard Operating Procedure. Dir. Errol Morris. 2008. Film.

Star Trek. Creator Gene Roddenberry. 1966. Television.

Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will). Dire. Leni Riefenstahl. 1935. Film.