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Honors Thesis

A LOOK AT COCO CHANEL, FASHION, AND HISTORY:
AN INTRODUCTION TO AND TRANSLATION OF *LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE LA
MARCA PERSONAL DE COCO CHANEL A TRAVÉS DE SUS FOTOGRAFÍAS*

by
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ABSTRACT

A LOOK AT COCO CHANEL, FASHION AND HISTORY: AN INTRODUCTION TO
AND TRANSLATION OF *LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE LA MARCA PERSONAL DE
COCO CHANEL A TRAVÉS DE SUS FOTOGRAFÍAS*

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La construcción de la marca personal de Coco Chanel a través de sus fotografías was originally written in Spanish by Inmaculada Urrea Gómez as her PhD dissertation in 2015. This thesis includes a translation of the prologue, introduction to section 1, and section 1.1 of Urrea's dissertation, preceded by a translator's introduction. The introduction discusses the content of the translated text, provides insight into the translation process, and defines important terms for the reader. The introduction also explores the ideas of translation theorists Hans Vermeer, Lawrence Venuti, and Anthony Pym, comparing and contrasting their ideas in order to explain why the translator ultimately chose to adhere to a foreignization approach in translation.

The translated text discusses Coco Chanel's influence in the fashion industry as the creator of the modern woman. Chanel rose to prominence within the industry in the 1920s, but her brand still remains very influential and successful to this day. To analyze Chanel's lasting success as both a person and a brand, Dr. Urrea outlines the history of the fashion industry and discusses Chanel's personal history within that context. By

reading her words translated into English, readers will learn about the intersection of fashion and social issues throughout history.

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Translator's Introduction

Inmaculada Urrea is a freelance branding consultant in Barcelona, Spain, and the work that I have translated is her PhD dissertation: *The Construction of Coco Chanel's Personal Brand through her Photographs – Her Contribution to the Creation of the Modern Woman*. Dr. Urrea completed this dissertation in 2015, and this dissertation completed her PhD in the study of Consumer Culture at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. The dissertation centers around Coco Chanel, an iconic figure in the fashion industry who founded what is still today one of the most successful luxury clothing and cosmetic brands. Today's Chanel brand is most famous for its "little black dress," the Chanel No. 5 perfume, and the Chanel Suit (Forbes). Dr. Urrea explores the beginnings of the Chanel brand and its impact on the fashion industry through an analysis of Coco Chanel herself.

I chose to translate the first ~7,000 words of Dr. Urrea's dissertation, which includes the prologue, the introduction to section 1, and the entirety of section 1.1. I would have loved to translate the entire dissertation, as I find Dr. Urrea's choice of topic fascinating. However, because the full dissertation is around 400 pages long, that was not at all feasible for the time frame and scope of this project. I chose to translate the beginning of the dissertation because the prologue section provides great background on the topic along with an overview of Dr. Urrea's research, so a new reader will be able to understand the topic and structure of the full dissertation by reading the prologue. The first section then proceeds to discuss the history of the fashion industry and its influence in the lives of women throughout the years, so readers are able to understand the importance of Chanel's work and the changes she effected in the industry. Therefore, my

translation will provide as much information as possible to English-speaking readers while staying within the project scope.

Though I do not study fashion or cosmetology, both fields have always been interests of mine. As a hobbyist in makeup artistry, I have closely followed the beauty industry for many years. While I am not as familiar with the fashion industry, I have always enjoyed keeping up with clothing trends and I am familiar with the most iconic works of famous clothing designers. Therefore, I am very familiar with the Chanel brand and what it represents, and my interest in fashion and beauty was the main influence in my decision to translate Dr. Urrea's work. This project allowed me to combine my professional interest of translation with some of my favorite extracurricular interests, and I very much enjoyed this translation process.

Before I begin discussing my experience in translating this work, I would like to acknowledge that while Coco Chanel is famous for her influence in the fashion industry, she is also infamous for her known involvement with the Nazi party as an "incorrigible anti-Semite" (McAuley). While the text I have translated focuses on the good that Chanel has done through her work in women's fashion, her influence as an anti-Semite is undeniable and inexcusable. I am aware of this dark side of Chanel's personal history, but I have still chosen to translate this text due to its value in the academic conversation surrounding the fashion industry. The words I have translated are not my own and do not reflect my personal views of Chanel; rather, these words have allowed me to learn about the intersection of fashion, history, and social justice, and I hope that this translation will allow readers to become educated on this subject as well.

Translation Brief

The translation brief is a set of instructions and specifications provided to the translator at the beginning of a project, which the translator will then refer to in order to make decisions throughout the translation process. In my situation, I was not commissioned to do this translation by a client, so I was able to come up with my own brief at the beginning of the process.

Because I am translating a thoroughly researched and carefully written dissertation by a highly educated author, I decided that my translation should preserve the author's original voice as much as possible. This translation will be read by an academic audience, consisting of professors at Brigham Young University (BYU) and possibly fellow BYU translation students. For this reason, I feel comfortable preserving the academic language and terminology that Dr. Urrea uses in her writing, as she also wrote to an informed academic audience. Thus, the translation brief that I created for myself directs me to translate for an informed academic audience with varying levels of knowledge about the fashion industry, and to preserve Dr. Urrea's voice as much as possible in the translation.

Source Text Analysis

- Author's Intention – As a PhD student pursuing a career centered in branding, Dr. Urrea's analysis focused on the branding of one of the most successful companies in the fashion industry. Because the company's branding started with the personal branding of Coco Chanel herself, her research centers on Coco Chanel as both a person and a brand owner. Dr. Urrea seeks to analyze the characteristics and

methods of Coco Chanel that led to the iconic status of her brand in the fashion industry.

- **Intended Audience** – Though Dr. Urrea writes to an academic audience, her dissertation is now available online to any university students who have access to the media library in which it is stored. The intended audience of her work is most likely professors and students of fashion and/or personal marketing/branding. She occasionally uses terminology that may be unfamiliar to a reader with little knowledge of fashion, but the terms she uses are easily defined through a quick Internet search.
- **Medium/Channel** – The text is primarily available electronically, and that is how I accessed it myself. If Pompeu Fabra University functions like most universities in the US, they will have produced two or more print copies of Dr. Urrea's thesis for their university library and Dr. Urrea's personal library. Most readers of the dissertation will likely access it electronically.
- **Topic** – The topic of the source text is Coco Chanel, both as a person and as a brand owner. The text also discusses the brand of Chanel today, which continues to be highly successful even though Coco Chanel died in 1971. A thorough analysis of Coco Chanel's character and brand requires an expansive knowledge of the fashion and cosmetics industry, including the industry's history and how it functions today. Therefore, Dr. Urrea makes the assumption that the reader of her text will have some interest in Coco Chanel, branding, or the fashion industry, and the language that she uses in the text is consistent with those assumptions.

- Terminology – The terminology used in this text is commonly used within the fashion industry, but may not be common knowledge to a reader who has never been interested in fashion. However, the terms she uses are not highly technical, and generally reference certain styles of clothing (ex: “avant-garde”). Therefore, a reader who is not familiar with the terminology can view definitions and visual representations of that terminology by conducting a basic Internet search.
- Structure of the Text – The text consists of the full prologue, the introduction to section 1, and the first subsection of section 1 of the dissertation. The prologue begins with background information about Dr. Urrea’s interest in Coco Chanel, and then provides a brief summary of Chanel’s life and accomplishments. The latter part of the prologue outlines the structure of the rest of the dissertation and cites the main sources that Dr. Urrea used for her research. In the introduction to the dissertation’s first chapter, Dr. Urrea discusses the different fields of study that she will use as lenses through which to study Chanel’s construction of her personal brand. Section 1.1 then goes on to discuss the history of the fashion industry and the way that women’s lives and personal rights were affected by fashion trends of the time. By presenting the historical association of women’s fashion with women’s rights, Dr. Urrea establishes the importance of the fashion industry in women’s lives and thus sets up the rest of her dissertation, where she will discuss Coco Chanel’s role in moving the fashion industry forward.

Strategy in Translation

In the past couple of years that I have spent studying translation, I have become familiar with the works of many different translation theorists. Some translation theorists differ greatly in their opinions, and in my own experience I have found that there is no singular theorist whose ideas I can adhere to one hundred percent of the time. I believe that each theory applies better in some translation settings than in others, and the translation brief determines which theories I choose to apply in my translation process. For this project, I chose to adhere most closely to the theories of Hans Vermeer and Lawrence Venuti.

Out of all the translation theorists I have studied, I agree most with Vermeer. I find his *skopos* theory to be applicable to every translation. Vermeer defines the word *skopos* as a “technical term for the aim or purpose of a translation” (191). Essentially, a translator creates a *skopos* at the beginning of each translation project, in which he determines the intended purpose of his translation. He then gives himself a list of rules and guidelines to follow during the translation process in order to achieve that purpose. A *skopos* is can be created both by external sources (like the translator’s client) and the translator himself. The process of creating a *skopos* allows the translator to make decisions before beginning the actual translation process. For example, a translator could make decisions about word choice in his *skopos*, determining whether his translation will use more formal language or informal slang. After making such decisions and outlining them in his own *skopos*, the translator can then draw upon this set of guidelines he has created for himself in order to make decisions as he translates. This way, the translator is

able to achieve the intended purpose of his translation and ensure consistency in his translation methods.

Every translation theorist has their own ideas about which translation methods are most effective, and I find Vermeer's ideas about the importance of creating and adhering to a *skopos* to be most helpful in my own translation work. However, while I do adhere to Vermeer's *skopos* theory, I disagree with his idea of adequacy. He argues that "the target text...is oriented towards the target culture, and it is this which ultimately defines its adequacy" (193). While I do agree that the target text should be oriented toward the target culture, I do not believe that elements of the source culture should always be eliminated or changed for the benefit of readers in the target culture. There are some situations where that kind of adjustment is appropriate in the translation, but it all depends on the intended purpose of the translation (the *skopos*). I believe a translation can be perfectly adequate if it still maintains elements of the source culture, because if the *skopos* determines that the translation should do so, an adherence to the source culture would produce a more adequate translation for that particular project.

In the *skopos* I created for myself, I determined that I would adhere as closely as possible to the author's original voice. This text was written in Spain, and the author employs a writing style very typical of Spain by writing in long sentences and using rather flowery language where appropriate. Though a reader of the target text will be reading in English, I thought that it would best do justice to the author if her Spanish writing style were still present in the English text. The author writes in first person, so a reader of the source text is able to become familiar with her personal voice as they read. I wanted to recreate that experience for an English reader, even if that means the style of

writing in the text will feel less familiar to them. This way, the reader will be able to read the text in the author's voice and experience her long, carefully crafted sentences, and will thus be aware of her Spanish roots.

By translating Dr. Urrea's words in a way that preserves her voice, I am adhering to the practice referred to by translation theorists as "foreignization." A translator who foreignizes a text will purposely use words, phrases, or sentence structures that are unfamiliar or foreign to readers in the target culture. The opposite of foreignization is known as "domestication," which entails making drastic changes to the language and/or structure of a foreign text in order to make it feel familiar to the target readers. Translation theorists differ greatly in their preferences regarding domestication vs. foreignization, but like Lawrence Venuti, I believe that "the viability of a translation is established by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which it is produced and read" (18). In other words, I believe that the adequacy of a translation can be measured differently in each individual context, as the cultural and social conditions surrounding the translation determine its purpose. A translator must evaluate these conditions when deciding his translation's purpose and creating his *skopos*, and then his translation can be judged based on his adherence to that *skopos*.

To adhere to the *skopos* that I created for myself, I chose to employ principles of foreignization when translating this text. However, I did not completely foreignize the text, as I do want English-speaking readers to be able to comfortably read and follow the text without consistent interruptions created by unfamiliar words. By adhering mostly to principles of foreignization in my translation process, I aligned myself with translation theorists who prefer foreignization over domestication, like Lawrence Venuti. Despite

Venuti's statement that the viability of a translation must be evaluated within the cultural and social context surrounding it, he personally advocates for the foreignization approach in his writings. In his book *The Translator's Invisibility*, Venuti describes the domestication of a text as a "violent rewriting of the foreign text" (25). He argues that in an attempt to make himself "invisible," a translator sacrifices important elements of the source text and inevitably produces a target text that is devoid of cultural elements that were so significant to the source text. I felt that if I were to attempt to make myself "invisible"—that is, produce a translation so fluent that readers would not know it is a translation—I would be producing a work written in my own voice rather than the original author's. In order to avoid what Venuti would describe as a "violent rewriting," I chose to adhere to the author's sentence structure and word choice as much as possible while still creating a text that an English speaker can follow.

There are several translation theorists, such as Anthony Pym, whose opinions fall on the other end of the spectrum from Venuti's. Pym argues the importance of "natural equivalence" in translation, which entails translating source language phrases into target language phrases that "activate approximately the same cultural function" (8), regardless of how linguistically different the phrases actually are. As an example, Pym provides the two phrases "martes 13" and "Friday the 13th," arguing that "Friday the 13th" is the most natural equivalent to "martes 13" even though the unlucky day takes place on Tuesday in some Spanish-speaking cultures (8). Thus, theorists like Pym believe that the translator should make himself "invisible" by replacing elements of the source culture with cultural references that will be familiar to readers in the target culture, thereby eliminating any foreign elements and making the text sound like it was written in the target language to

begin with (as opposed to sounding like a translation). Creating that illusion of invisibility requires a heavy domestication of the text. While I did not choose to employ domestication principles in this particular translation project, I do believe that this method of translation is still appropriate in many situations. If the skopos involves pleasing a large and diverse audience with the target text, it may be beneficial to provide that audience with a domesticated text, as they will be able to relate to it more than if it were written in an unfamiliar foreign style. That's just an example, but the point here is that every translation theorist makes valid points when expressing their preferences regarding foreignization and domestication, and both methods are appropriate in the translation world as long as the translator uses one or the other (or a mix of both) to adhere to his skopos. As Vermeer states, "The point is that one must know what one is doing, and...what the effect of a text created in this way will be" (193).

In-Text Examples

Throughout my translation process, I referred to the translation brief and skopos that I had created in order to make decisions. The first such decision that I had to make was in the very first paragraph of the text, when the author refers to Coco Chanel as her "referente vital." This was a difficult phrase for me to translate, as I wanted to maintain the author's voice, but a direct translation of that phrase in English would not make sense. Calling Coco Chanel her "vital reference" in English does not at all encapsulate the meaning of a "referente vital," but instead sounds like something the author has to refer to in order to live. Instead of referring to Coco Chanel as the author's "reference" or "reference point," I opted to use the word "touchstone," which I felt was a better fit for

the concept that Dr. Urrea was trying to describe. The phrase “referente vital” thus became “fundamental touchstone,” which I believe fits the author’s voice and is consistent with her use of flowery vocabulary throughout her writing. Just as I don’t hear the phrase “referente vital” in everyday Spanish, I do not hear the phrase “fundamental touchstone” in everyday English, and yet, I understand what it means. This method of producing words and phrases that are equivalents but not direct translations of Dr. Urrea’s words is the method I used throughout most of the process, as I tried to imitate Dr. Urrea’s use of eloquent language without losing any of the meaning in the source text.

A challenging word that reoccurs throughout the text is the word “moda.” This word in Spanish can mean several things. The noun “moda” can refer specifically to fashion, or it can have a more general meaning encompassing design or style. Because this text centers around the fashion industry, the word “moda” appears over and over again in the source text. This reoccurrence of a word with several meanings challenged me each time I needed to translate it, as there is no English word that encompasses all of the same meanings that “moda” does. For example, in the first sentence of the text, the author describes Chanel as a “creadora de moda.” A simple translation of this phrase to “creator of fashion” does not work, because that implies that Coco Chanel created the entire concept of fashion. So, in that instance I decided to translate the phrase “creadora de moda” to “creator of fashion trends.” This way, the English phrase uses the noun “trends” to make the sentence more specific, instead of making it sound like Chanel created fashion as a whole.

In another instance, I translated the phrase “mundo de la moda” to “world of fashion design,” which is more broad than my previous translation of “moda” to “fashion trends.” That is because the context implied that the author was referring to the profession of fashion design as a whole, rather than referring only to specific trends. In a third instance, I was able to simply translate “moda” to “fashion,” because the source text employed the word “moda” to refer to the industry of fashion as a whole by preceding the word with the phrase “dos mundos profesionales.” These are just a few examples of the variations between different translations of the word “moda” that I encountered throughout the translation process, which provided a challenge for me as a translator each time I encountered the word.

Along with “moda,” associated words like “vestido” and “traje” are used consistently throughout the source text and pose a challenge to me as a translator, as these Spanish words have a broader scope than their English counterparts of “dress” and “suit.” In several instances, the author was actually referring specifically to dresses and suits when using these words. However, in other instances, she referred to more general concepts, like “el traje masculino” and “la sistematización del vestido.” In the case of the former, the term “traje” is used to refer to what working class men wore as a whole, rather than to refer specifically to the kind of outfit we know as a suit. Thus, in several instances I chose to translate “traje” into a more general English term, like “outfit” or “attire.” A similar rewording was necessary in cases where “vestido” referred to the concept of clothing or attire in general. This translation strategy resulted in better readability for English readers, but took away the consistency of the use of these terms that is found in the original text.

“Moda” was not the only word that I found challenging to translate, as there are many words in Spanish that hold different connotations than their so-called equivalents in English. In the introduction to the first chapter of the dissertation, there is a paragraph (found on page 12 of the translation) that describes clothing as a means of “seducción” in Spanish. After reading the full paragraph and the others around it for context, it became clear that the author was not referring to seduction as we know it in English, as the word “seduction” often carries very sexual connotations. This paragraph was not referring to clothing as a way to persuade others to engage in sexual action; rather, it discussed clothing as a strategy to make oneself more acceptable and likeable to others. Therefore, I opted to translate the word “seducción” to “enticement,” as the latter carries some of the same sexual connotations of “seducción,” but is also usable when discussing the concept of simply making oneself more likeable to others.

Throughout the translation, the reader will learn a lot about the differences between the upper-class aristocrats and the working class, both in terms of fashion and lifestyle in general. However, the constant discussion of the distinction between the two classes posed another challenge, as the author consistently refers to the working class as “la burguesía.” At first glance it seems like “burguesía” should translate to the French term we use in English, “bourgeoisie.” This quickly became confusing to me, as the word “bourgeoisie” has always been used to refer to the upper class in English, and is always distinguished from the working class known as the proletariat. In Spanish, though, “burguesía” can mean the property-owning upper class, but can also refer to the middle class. It became clear from reading the source text that Dr. Urrea was using the word “burguesía” to refer to the working middle class and distinguish them from the upper

class members of royal courts and, in later history, property and big business owners. Therefore, I consistently translated the word “burguesía” to “middle class” or “working class” throughout the translation, as that is what is being referred to. This is not to be confused with the lower class of servants and the economically destitute, who are never referred to in the portion of Dr. Urrea’s writing that I have chosen to translate, as fashion was not available to them in the time periods being discussed.

Another challenge of translating this text was navigating Dr. Urrea’s use of long sentences. As this writing style is typical of Spain, I wanted to preserve it as much as possible in the target text. However, there were times when leaving an entire sentence intact made the English text awkward and difficult to follow, so in those instances I opted to split up the sentences for comprehension’s sake. One such example of sentence division is found on pages 5 and 6 of the target text. In the source text, this sentence begins with “Como la literatura...” and ends with “discursos de sus imagenes.” If I had kept that sentence intact, the sentence would have started with “Since literature...” on page 5 and ended with “founder’s photos” on page 6. There is so much information contained in this sentence that I divided it into three sentences in the translation so that the reader would be able to understand the information being presented. However, I still followed the general structure of the original sentence, using a colon where the author used a colon, and keeping everything in the same order. Directly following that sentence is another on page 6 that starts with “In this regard...” This sentence is longer than the previous three and includes a semicolon, in the same place where the author used a semicolon in her text. In the source text, however, the author uses two semicolons in that sentence, which I have never seen in an English sentence. So, to adapt the sentence to

English conventions, I replaced the second semicolon in the source text with a sentence division in the target text. This way, the sentences in the translation follow the same structure and preserve the long-sentence writing style of the author, but the English sentences adhere to English grammatical conventions so as to be understood by English-speaking readers.

Through this translation process, I learned the importance of adhering to the skopos, even though the skopos was self-directed. Every time I came across a challenging word, phrase, or sentence in the translation, I made decisions based on my skopos rather than my own instincts as an English speaker. It would have been easier to rewrite this text in the way that I would write it if I were the author, but I am not the author, and I wanted her voice to be present even in the English translation. I believe that the translation decisions I made have allowed me to produce a text that preserves elements of the author's original voice while also maintaining readability in English.

Terminology and Concepts

Dr. Urrea's text refers to a lot of concepts and terminology that are specific to the fashion industry, which makes reading comprehension more difficult for readers who are not familiar with the world of fashion. Some of these terms were familiar to me, but others required a lot of research in order to be translated correctly, as there were times that Dr. Urrea used terms that I did not recognize in Spanish because I had never heard of them in English either. I understand that my audience for this project may also not be familiar with fashion terminology and concepts, so I have made the decision to define and discuss some of those terms here rather than within the translated text itself.

The first notable term is one the reader will find consistently throughout the translation: haute couture. Translated literally from French, *couture* means “dressmaking” and *haute* means “high” (Business of Fashion). The term refers to high-end fashion pieces that are customized and constructed by hand for a specific client. Haute couture pieces are always one-of-a-kind, as they are custom-made for one client and if they are ever reproduced, it is done by hand rather than by a manufacturer. Each garment is tailored specifically for the client’s measurements and body stance, and garments are often constructed from high quality fabrics using advanced sewing techniques. Dr. Urrea spends several paragraphs discussing the invention of haute couture by Charles Frederick Worth, which is a very important point in the history of fashion because haute couture brought credit to designers themselves, rather than crediting the clients who commissioned them.

On page 14 of the translation, the author discusses an important concept known as Veblen’s trickle-down theory of fashion. This part required a lot of research for me to be able to aptly translate it, as Dr. Urrea refers to the theory in Spanish as the “teoría clásica materialista,” which does not translate directly to the term’s equivalent in English. After spending some time researching theories of Simmel, Spencer, and Veblen in both English and Spanish, I was able to discover that the “teoría clásica materialista” is known as the trickle-down theory of fashion in English, and that the concept applies in all areas of the world where fashion is prevalent. This theory claims that fashion trends move vertically from the upper classes to the lower classes, as upper class members of society introduce fashion trends that slowly become accepted by lower classes. Each class imitates the fashion trends observed in the class above them until the upper class gets tired of wearing

fashion trends that are now associated with lower classes. The upper class then moves on to a different set of fashion trends, and the cycle continues (DeLong).

Though briefly mentioned, the principle of conspicuous consumption is another fashion concept that I had to spend a lot of time researching in order to properly translate. Dr. Urrea refers to it in Spanish as “el derroche ostensible” and cites Veblen as the first to define the term, so I was able to learn that the concept is known as “conspicuous consumption” in English. Veblen discusses this concept extensively in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, where he describes a society that is characterized by wasted time and money. The term is used to refer to consumers who buy unnecessarily expensive luxury items in order to showcase their wealth rather than to cover their actual needs. Thus, luxury products are bought by consumers and essentially wasted as a show of wealth that will lose its purpose once it goes out of style. This display of flashy luxury items to prove social status helps people to maintain or gain higher social status, while also affecting lower classes as they seek to emulate that behavior (Phillips).

In the first paragraph on page 16 of the translation, readers will find a list of examples of notable individuals who single-handedly popularized fashion trends during their time. This paragraph posed a particular challenge, as the names of important European figures are written in Spanish in the source text, and the source text also lists very specific types of clothing in this paragraph that were unfamiliar to me. I chose to translate the names into their English versions (like Juana de Portugal to Joan of Portugal) so that they will sound more familiar to readers of the target text. I considered inserting explanations or descriptions of some of the unfamiliar clothing items in this paragraph as well, but I ultimately decided to protect the integrity of the translation by

leaving that out and providing a few descriptions here instead. The following bullet points list each term that may be unfamiliar to someone with little knowledge of fashion, and provide brief explanations so as to give more meaning to this particular paragraph of the translation.

- Farthingale – An “underskirt expanded by a series of circular hoops that increase in diameter from the waist down to the hem and are sewn into the underskirt to make it rigid” (Britannica).
- Culotte – Trousers for women, with very full legs that resemble a skirt (Oxford).
- Justaucorps – A long-sleeved, knee-length coat worn as an outer garment by men in the 17th and 18th centuries (Barrett).
- Negligee – An informal style of gown worn at home by women. Negligee gowns in the 18th century were long and full, but loose-fitting (as opposed to the tight-fitting corsets of formal wear) and often made of sheer, soft fabric (Britannica).
- Chemise a la reine – Also known as the gaulle, this was a dress that consisted of layers of thin fabric loosely draped around the body and belted at the waist with a sash (Werlin).
- Majismo – A “cultural phenomenon that embodied the popular aesthetic [in Spain] from the second half of the eighteenth century, . . . majismo served as a means to ‘regain’ Spanish heritage” (Zanardi 16). Essentially, majismo refers to the popularity of clothing and customs that embodied the ideal traditional Spaniard.

Because I had never heard of most of these terms in English, let alone in Spanish, this paragraph was very challenging for me to translate and required me to spend a lot of time

researching these fashion concepts in both Spanish and English. I believe it will be beneficial for readers to know these terms before reading, as this will prevent constant interruptions that would happen if the reader wanted to look up each one of these terms while reading.

While there may be additional concepts and terms that are unfamiliar to some readers, I have chosen to define and discuss the terms that required the most research for me as a translator to understand them. As the author is very familiar with these concepts due to her studies of fashion and branding, I believe it is important for readers to understand some of these concepts before reading the translation in order to more fully understand Dr. Urrea's discussions of Coco Chanel and the fashion industry, just as it was important for me to understand them before translating Dr. Urrea's words. The research process for unfamiliar terms was the most time-consuming part of the translation process, and I feel that by using real terms rather than simplifying them, I was able to adhere to my skopos and preserve the author's voice.

Regarding French Quotations

Before I conclude my translator's introduction, I would like to make one final note about the translation regarding the quoted sections that are in French. In the source text, the author always quotes other scholars in their native language; hence, there are quotes in Spanish, English, and French all cited within the source text. From this we can infer that Dr. Urrea's audience was capable of understanding each of those languages, and that Dr. Urrea herself can understand them as well. However, despite my audience being purely English and Spanish speakers, I chose not to translate the quotes that were

cited in French. I translated a few of them using Google Translate for my own purposes, so I could understand the context when translating the paragraphs that refer to these French quotes. I felt it would be unprofessional, though, to include a Google translation of each quote in the target text, as Google translations are often not grammatically sound or correctly translated. My limited resources in this project did not include access to a capable French translator. So, to preserve the integrity of these quotes and the source text as a whole, I chose to leave these quotes in French. These are the only parts of the text that remain in their source language, as all Spanish text has been translated into English for this project.

Translation:

The Construction of Coco Chanel's Personal Brand through her Photographs

Her Contribution to the Creation of the Modern Woman

Author: Inmaculada Urrea Gómez, 2015

Prologue

Everyone who knows anything about me knows that Coco Chanel is, to me, much more than a creator of fashion trends. She is my fundamental touchstone, my idol. My personal interest in her does not come only from the clothing she produced, rather, above all else, it comes from the new model woman that she embodied and bequeathed to us. Chanel's personal brand has been the one to leave the deepest impression in my life, as I have been interested in her private life just as much as her public life, writing often about her. Most recently I wrote about her for an online magazine, and with a familiarity brought about by more than 25 years of dedicated study of her character, I titled the article "My Coco Chanel" (see Appendix 1).

This mythical name first appeared in my life during my youth because of my mother, a seamstress of haute couture, who was the first person to talk to me about Coco Chanel. However, she did more than just that. As I was the only child, she educated me in the values that I would later admire in Gabrielle Chanel: freedom and independence. She did this by enrolling me in a foreign co-

educational school, where I was taught using the Montessori Method in the sixties.

Later on, it was while I studied fashion design in the mid-eighties that Chanel returned to me, and during college I wrote a thesis devoted to her entitled “Coco Chanel: Fashion and Avant-Garde (1909-1971).” I presented this thesis during a now-long-ago June of 1994, examining Chanel’s persona and, above all, her strong connection to the artistic avant-garde styles of the historic interwar period, as I was presenting in the Department of Art History at the University of Barcelona, directed by Doctor Inmaculada Julián. Afterwards, I published that thesis in the form of a biography entitled *Coco Chanel, the Revolution of a Style*, which was later sold in two editions.

Having just turned fifty years old, I can affirm that I have spent half of my life dedicated to studying the character and brand of Coco Chanel. I have a habit of dating all of my books, and the first books that reference Chanel in my library date back to 1990. As a woman, her biography has fascinated me ever since I first read it, a perfect Cinderella story without the prince. A woman who, risen from a life of absolute misery, went on to build an empire without being a businesswoman, lying compulsively about her life. Traumatized by parental abandonment, forced to live as an orphan, discriminated against in her education, she built up resentment toward her family and did not resign herself to a life where her only destiny was marriage, as it should have been by tradition. She was a visionary, from a young age she knew very clearly that her independence would come through money. As for money, that would come through work. But in order to get that work, she first had to resign herself to help from men, although only from two of them. To be more exact, it was actually just one and a half. Chanel’s life path was carved out by men who opened doors to her, doors that opened up new worlds. She never wasted an opportunity to achieve her goals. Then, without conscious effort, she began her

escape from the Judaeo-Christian tradition that generally forced women into obscurity. Chanel was a woman who reinvented herself in a world dominated by men, prevailing as she used their same weapons. She wanted to become distinguished just like her male counterparts, and she made her own surname—a concept highly valued by the patriarchy—into a synonym for the most often imitated designs in the fashion industry, a synonym of success and power, as today the Chanel brand continues to be a key reference point for all in the world of fashion design and luxury.

Socially, the figure of Coco Chanel embodies the new liberated woman that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, introducing a new kind of femininity rooted in economic independence, freedom of action, and a natural, simple manner of dress. The great majority of contemporary contributions to the feminine wardrobe came from Chanel, as we will see later on. As she criticized the manner of dress common during her area, she became, as her friend Jean Cocteau described, its destroying angel. She understood the way that the modern woman would dress, and consequently, the way she would live.

She freed women from the burden of superficiality that had once restricted their movements, simplifying their wardrobes by means of a new uniform, introducing lighter fabrics, pants and low heels, and in doing so creating a new feminine ideal. This new ideal became a new identity intended for those women who, like Chanel, craved their own independence.

Innovative not only in the way she behaved as a woman, she found inspiration in that which was furthest from fashion: men's work clothes. At Chanel's hand, these clothing designs suddenly became desirable to a social class that had always abhorred blue-collar work, a social class who now paid handsomely to wear the designs they once ridiculed. In so doing, Chanel successfully exercised the

finest revenge against a social class to which she did not belong, but in which she had nevertheless placed herself.

Chanel made herself rich by creating a single perfume, a fetish of the 20th century, and by guessing the direction in which the fashion industry was headed. Her work did not merely entail selling creations of fabric; instead, it entailed (and still entails) selling perfumes and creating a brand. Chanel No. 5 continues to be the highest selling perfume in the world, according to Euromonitor International's annual study of perfumes (Perfumative, 2014). Here we would do well to remember that, in an industry worth 31 billion dollars as of 2014 (Edmon-Sargeant, 2014), the largest luxury fashion brands survive chiefly due to their sales of perfume and cosmetics.

The prestigious Time Magazine publishes a list of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century every year (2015), a list chosen by the most noteworthy people in each category. In the category of "Artists and Entertainers," Coco Chanel is considered one of those most influential people. As the only fashion designer on the list, she shares the list with huge names like The Beatles, Le Corbusier, Pablo Picasso, Charlie Chaplin, Frank Sinatra, and Steven Spielberg, just to name a few. Thus, her importance is universally acknowledged. Today, if we type Chanel's name into Google, the search engine will generate 151,000,000 results. Compare that to the 101,000,000 results generated by the name of Dior, another legendary name in fashion who was not only Chanel's rival in the fifties, but whose brand continues to rival Chanel's in the present day. The numbers make it clear that the name of Chanel continues to generate great interest.

Gabrielle Chanel was always her own best advertisement, as no one but her could embody that new feminine independence and poise which created a brand—first personal, then commercial—with a distinct identity that has withstood the test of time, coming

to be recognized as a synonym of timelessness and elegance. While she detested the fashion industry at the time, she managed to completely change it by creating timeless styles and making them available to millions of women, as they were easy to reproduce. Her success and ingenuity are found in this apparent contradiction, as her style continues to be the one most commonly imitated in the world of fashion.

Coco Chanel has marked the collective Western imagination, both as a fashion designer and as a woman. An icon in life, she was a person who became a (personal) brand, and who created a (commercial) brand that cannot live without her. She is a singular woman who became a global icon. Nobody has ever equaled her accomplishments (creating the contemporary woman's wardrobe) or her trajectory (she once again held the scepter of the fashion world at age 71, after a 15-year absence), and her biography continues to inspire literature in the 21st century.

Two of the most documented biographies were published recently, both in 2011: *Chanel: An Intimate Life* by Lisa Chaney and *Coco Chanel: The Legend and the Life* by Justine Picardie. Alongside those two biographies came another interesting vision of the historical figure, titled *Chanel: Couture and Industry* by Amy De la Haye, published in 2012.

Coco Chanel, as a historical figure, has come to encompass not only the part of women's history that most interests me—that of the beginning of feminine emancipation—but also my two professional fields of fashion and branding. When I decided to write a thesis, it was very clear to me that I needed to write about a topic that I was passionate about. Thus, when it came time to choose the central topic of the thesis, I had no doubt what I would choose. If in the nineties I studied Chanel's relationship with the world of art, I would now study her personal brand.

Since literature about Chanel is so abundant (biographies, fashion history, studies about commercial brands and luxury), I wanted to provide a new perspective to the academic world. For that reason, I have decided to center my investigation on two complementary pillars: personal brand and its construction through images, a previously unstudied subject that opens a new gateway to the world of personal branding. I do so because no one has ever before established the personal brand of a long-departed commercial brand founder using semiotic contrasts between the brand and the discourse of its' founder's photos. In this regard, one must take into account that Coco Chanel is one of the most innovative and important creators in women's fashion, with a wide photographic repertoire of portraits bequeathed to posterity; however, this methodology could also be applied to other creators, both of past and present brands, as long as they adequately employ visual representations of their founders. This methodology could be applied to other fields as well, like the world of celebrities or politics, by citing two contexts in which images and biographies are recurring. In the world of fashion, especially in the luxury scene, where the intangible is an indispensable element of the brand, it would be very useful to apply the findings of this study. These findings will be especially useful when it comes to resurrecting dying brands with important pasts centered on their founders, as this can allow the establishment of a coherent brand identity.

Because the most evident way to distinguish any personal brand at first glance is through images, and because Coco Chanel was photographed on multiple occasions by some of the most important photographers of her time—like Cecil Beaton, Man Ray, Horst P. Horst, George Hoeningen-Huene, Boris Lipnitzki, François Kollar, Roger Schall, Alexander Liberman, Henri Cartier Bresson, or Douglas Kirkland—I was interested in discovering whether or not there was a connection between the message circulated through these images and the definition of Chanel's personal brand.

Therefore, the principal objective of this work consists of studying Chanel's most publicized photos—such as those published in her biographies and those displayed in the 'Inside Chanel' section on her brand's website—and an analysis of the way these photos construct her personal brand.

I have three secondary objectives:

1. Analyze Coco Chanel's contribution to the construction of the modern woman from the perspective of fashion design, without delving into a scientific study of feminism.
2. Analyze the story of Chanel as a historical figure that has been constructed through biographies of people who knew her, and the stylistic contributions that have defined her.
3. Choose a theoretical model of personal brand construction that can be applied retroactively in order to determine the values and positioning of Chanel's personal brand.

Concerning methodology, a socio-historical focus relative to women and fashion specifically has permitted me to frame Chanel as a historical figure and to outline her circumstances with respect to the feminine emancipation that took place in the early 20th century. To investigate Chanel's persona I have drawn upon her historiography, working specifically with biographies that were written by the people closest to her. However, Chanel never wrote her own autobiography, and she manipulated many of her biographers because, in reality, she never wanted anyone to write about her life. That will soon be apparent. Thus, I complemented these early biographies with other, more recent biographies that offer new and well-documented contributions. The only sources with actual ties to Chanel are the biographies written by those who knew her, as well as those that were published around the same time as her disappearance from the public eye. These sources have produced not only Chanel's own versions of her life story—whichever one she felt like telling to each person—but also the

experiences that the authors had with her. However, there is one central problem with these accounts: at the end, one must trust in the “they said she said,” as the protagonist has never been documented talking about her life on film. Her personal life was a topic that she avoided above all else when speaking in public. The versions of Chanel’s life and stories that we know, aside from information that could be found empirically (dates, places, names), are no more than transcriptions of other people’s experiences and interpretations. This situation affects the phrases that are generally attributed to Chanel, as there is little verification that she actually said these things. I have drawn upon two types of sources in order to enter into the world of branding. On one hand, to find references regarding the relationship of branding with emotions and memories, I have drawn upon cognitive sciences, specifically strands like cognitive psychology, which helps us comprehend the basics about the functionality of memory. I have turned to the psychology of emotion, based on the affective relationships between individuals and objects (Norman, 2004) and brands, centering in particular on research about brand personality by Jennifer Aaker (1997, 1999) and Susan Fournier (1998). Alongside this research, I also studied cognitive neuroscience derived from LeDoux (1996) and Damasio (2000, 2006), as well as the contributions of Panksepp (1992) to affective neuroscience, all in order to understand the fundamental role of emotions in human life.

To the classic literature about brand management and marketing by Ries and Trout (1981), Aaker (1991, 2002), and Kotler and Armstrong (2006), I have added research that emphasizes its most emotional dimension, derived from Gobé (2001), Codeluppi (2001) and Roberts (2011); and neuromarketing (Braidot, 2009; Lindstrom 2010, 2011), whose function is to comprehend the logic of clients’ buying decisions and neuromarketing in order to nurture clients. This level of comprehension can be reached by conducting research about clients’ thoughts, feelings, and subconscious

desires. To complete my reflections upon branding as a structure of meanings, I have drawn upon Floch (1993) and Semprini (1995). Concerning personal branding, a very young discipline, I have turned to the classics of Tom Peters (1997) and Peter Montoya (2002,2003) in order to center my efforts upon David McNally and Kart D. Speak (2002).

To complete a discursive analysis of images, I have turned to different facets of semiotics: the discursive perspective of Greimas (1973), Barthes (1970) and Eco (1983). I did so in order to decode the meaning of visual signifiers, and I drew upon Véron (1984) to interpret the bond between the viewer and what is being viewed. In dealing with systems of signification created by culture, I have drawn upon the cultural semiotics of Lotman (1996). At the same time, the Bruner's cultural psychology research and Wertsch's Vygotskian perspective (1985a, 1985b) have permitted me to understand the way that the story of images is defined culturally. Additionally, it has been important to use a tool derived from cultural anthropology: the study of body language as nonverbal language.

Finally, I have used the semiotic studies of fashion centered in the reflections of Barthes (2003), Floch (2004), and Remaury (2004) to decode the meanings of each element of the Chanel style, while I have used Douglas B. Holt's (2004) research on political marketing and cultural branding, along with the more philosophical vision of Mike Parker (2012), has been fundamental to understanding Coco Chanel as a cultural icon.

Structurally, this thesis is divided into four chapters:

1. Chapter one serves to frame Chanel's character within her time period, addressing the birth of the modern woman and the relationship between feminine identity and fashion.

2. Chapter two centers on the life story of Coco Chanel from the point of view of the biographers that knew her personally, focusing on her relationship with the masculine gender, as well as unraveling the stylistic elements that she created.
3. Chapter three is dedicated to personal branding, delving first into the concept of branding and the importance of the relationship between emotion and memory, and later examining branding as an anthropomorphic entity. The purpose is to explain what a personal brand actually is, and to explore the different theoretic models of brand construction. The chapter ends by applying one of these theoretical models to Coco Chanel.
4. Lastly, chapter four explains the importance of the photographic image as a symbolic narration, then examines the photographic corpus of Chanel using the template of semiotic analysis.

In its final pages, the work ends with my conclusions, along with a biography divided by subject and an appendix.

1. THE CONCEPTUAL UNIVERSE REGARDING COCO CHANEL

To understand the magnitude of a figure like Gabrielle Chanel—who left her mark on fashion by creating a style of dress that is still the most commonly imitated, who constructed a new understanding of feminine identity by associating women with independence—one must contextualize her, analyzing her professional field of fashion design and the sociocultural situation of the time period.

Fashion is a particular system of clothing production and organization, which appeared in the West under certain sociocultural circumstances during the fourteenth century, and which developed due to the boom of commercial capitalism and technological advances (Codeluppi, 2002). To analyze the phenomenon of fashion itself, one must adopt a multi-disciplinary view, bringing together the perspectives of history (chronology), anthropology (culture), sociology (social changes), psychology (identity), art (aesthetics), semiotics (signs), and economics (sales). In this paper, I use every point of view with the exception of the last one, as this field of study lies outside the purpose of this thesis, as it is public knowledge that Chanel continues to be one of the most successful luxury brands today.

Fashion is a social phenomenon present only in human culture, just like the phenomenon of clothing itself. Since the beginning of time, man has always expressed the necessity to clothe himself for protection, decency, and ornamentation. While the first two motives are relative—protection is a circumstantial need, as it depends on the climate, and decency is a cultural concept based on habits and conventions—ornamentation is common to all cultures, as its existence or lack thereof highlights the most important

functions of clothing: to indicate social distinction, to attract—not only to please others, but also to fit in with a group—and to express one’s individuality. Clothing is the principal signifier in fashion, the concept of fashion encompasses more than clothing alone. As previously mentioned and will be explored later on, fashion is a system intended to instill the desire for what is new, thus making short-lived trends out of everything produced by fashion brands. The only exceptions to this cycle are the few brands that manage to withstand the test of time; usually these are luxury brands, as their timelessness is related to expertise in their craft and/or the iconicity of their creator.

It is important to note the close relation that exists between clothing and identity, and the function of clothing within nonverbal communication:

Le vêtement constitue le facteur d’identification individuelle et sociale par excellence, dans toutes les sociétés, dans toutes les cultures, d’une société à une autre. Le vêtement permet généralement de distinguer les sexes, l’âge, la fonction professionnelle et le rang social. Leurs symboles sont immédiatement lus par l’autre. L’affichage du statut social, hiérarchique, par le vêtement demeure cependant ambivalent. D’un côté, il permet de simplifier le contact humain (savoir-vivre), chacun sachant qui est l’autre. De l’autre, il affirme d’emblée s’il existe une distance (ou une proximité) sociale. (Waquet y Laporte, 2002: 66)

If in the past such social distinction was overall based on social status—as will be seen later, fashion was associated only with more affluent classes until the industry shifted their focus to “ready to wear” clothing the mid-20th century—it is now based on enticement as a strategy of reaffirming oneself before others. One of the ways to entice oneself to others is through clothing and ornamentation, and as Baudrillard wrote (2007:9), “Enticement is never part of the order of nature, but rather, it is artificial.”

The intention of using clothing as an enticement strategy is to incite interest that transcends the sexual level, to bring about the acceptance of one's identity within a determined group.

The groundbreaking style of dress that Chanel proposed is comprised of meaningful symbols: her functional suits, masculine pants, jerseys, and shoes with low heels are nothing more than the assertion of feminine autonomy through appropriation of traditionally masculine elements. Thus, Coco Chanel is clearly related with the emergence of the new feminine identity, and with the appearance that this new feminine identity acquired. The image of femininity that Chanel created owes its appearance entirely to the personality of its creator, who is described by biographers as a woman deviant from the norm, that is to say, different:

The woman Chanel, displaying a femininity that is far from generic, is the clear and constantly renewed affirmation of the principal feature of this biography, which is that of a unique femininity based on superiority of personality, intellect, identity, and in summary, of difference. (Remaury, 2004: 44)

This new feminine identity embodied by Chanel, but also acquired by many other women following her example, was manifested visually through clothing: pants and knit fabrics prevailed over all, because they married perfection with this image of a woman who seeks out her own affirmation as an independent subject, appropriating a traditional masculine characteristic: comfort (Hollander, 1994). Chanel knew how to interpret the moment, offering women what they needed:

Chanel a su saisir le moment où la Garçonne avait fait son chemin dans les esprits, où le scandale s'est éteint en allumant le besoin de se « montrer » libre, émancipée. Même celle qui reste dépendante d'un homme, même celle dont l'horizon demeure borné veut paraître en rupture complète avec l'univers de sa mère. (Desanti, 1984: 63, 64)

During the era in which Chanel introduced her style, wearing Chanel was, above all, a declaration of intentions: I dress comfortably and I wear pants because I am a modern woman, I am independent. Evidently, such a style is no longer a novelty today, but in that time and that social climate, it was a revolution led by a lower-class woman who would become a cultural icon of the twentieth century, as “the democratic president of modern fashion” (Howell, 2000: 48), because she created a style based on the usurpation of power, a value that was until then reserved purely for men:

The essence of her style was rooted in a masculine model of power, a direction that has dominated twentieth-century fashion. (The Fashion Book, 1998: 98)

This was a power that Chanel would successfully transfer to women, especially after the Second World War, due to her easily accessible ready-to-wear style (Chaumette, 1992).

1.1 Fashion as the Creator of Feminine Identity

Since the appearance of fashion in the mid-fourteenth century, its influence in Western society has done nothing but increase. Born as a means for the aristocratic upper class to distinguish themselves from the middle classes, fashion is now more than a sign of distinction; rather, it is a declaration of individual identity.

Paradoxically, however, fashion is, due to the dynamic of its system, an element that has equalized us ever since the democratic era was born from the French Revolution. This is because fashion, in contemporary society, is that which is most worn in the street. Though once a prerogative of the privileged classes, fashion has since been democratized, and is now accessible to an immense majority, especially since the arrival of low-cost brands.

Fashion, since its beginnings, has always been a landmark of modernity. In fact, it did not appear in Western society until the need to reject the heritage of the past became clear, as the previous model of traditional society was one that worshipped its inherited traditions and customs, including customary clothing. These pre-modern societies did not permit the emergence of fashion, because fashion trends require a separation from the past, that is to say, fashion requires novelty (Lipovetsky, 1990).

When this appreciation of novelty became a constant principle of normality, the system of fashion was born, a system that stressed the concept of modernity. This concept has since characterized the West, as the passing of Classical era and subsequent collapse of Classical civilizations at the hands of barbarian invaders brought about a new historical movement, known to us as modern society.

According to the trickle-down theory of fashion, upheld by 19th-century authors like Simmel, Spencer, and Veblen, and more recently by Bourdieu (1991) and König (2002), the appearance of fashion is due to the expression of conflict between social classes. Because of the pyramidal hierarchy in Western society, the recently-born middle class began to imitate the appearances and mannerisms of the aristocracy. The latter, at the same time, saw the need to change their appearance in order to maintain their distance from lower classes; that is to say, their manner of dress and ornamentation, once achieved successfully by their imitators, would change, resulting in a never-ending competition of imitation (Simmel, 2013; Spencer, 1947). From this constant double movement of imitation on one side and distinction on the other, the changeability of fashion was born.

Simultaneously, while the aristocracy kept up this bloodless war with the middle class, the former had to make themselves into a spectacle, a class obligated to constantly display their own power, distinguishing themselves through the cost of their appearance in

court society, a place of competition between noblemen, who sought to call attention to themselves and were required to do so by fighting against members of their own class. This is what economist Thorstein Veblen (2014) named in 1899 as the principle of conspicuous consumption, practiced by men and women alike on an individual basis, in order to show off their social status of extreme luxury in every single moment.

Though such a time has long since passed, we are now left with the legacy of some very contemporary characteristics: the affirmation of singular individual personality and the concept of hedonism as a lifestyle. Throughout the second half of the Middle Ages the individual took on a new position in relation to the collective, a fact reflected in society by the appearance of important royal subjects, who created and imposed different styles, emphasizing the importance of personal pleasure, a new idea, used to highlight the calling of attention to one's body through clothing.

Important examples include Philip the Good, who popularized the color black in the Duchy of Burgundy, while Philip II and later Philip IV did so in Spain; Joan of Portugal, inventor of the farthingale; Catherine de' Medici, the first who dared to wear the divided skirt, or culotte, for horseback riding; Louis XIII, to whom is owed the wearing of wigs; Louis XIV, who introduced both the justaucorps and heeled shoes for men; Mme. de Montespan and Mlle de Fontanges, two of his mistresses, who created hairstyles that became sensational; Mme. Maintenon, another mistress of Louis XIV, who brought negligee gowns into style; Mme. de Pompadour, promoter of cotton styles from India; the queen Marie Antoinette, who introduced the gaulle, or chemise a la reine; and Cayetana de Alba, who brought majismo into style in the court of Carlos IV.

On the other hand, the accepted morals of the aristocratic class at the time—which were based on a new conception of man known

today as anthropocentrism—became hedonistic. This made one's quest for beauty into a social requirement, especially for women, who as of the Renaissance had embodied 'the Fair Sex', decriminalizing female beauty by ridding it of its previous association with sin (Lipovetsky, 1997).

With the French Revolution came the end of four centuries of clothing luxury for both genders, bringing about the rejection of all that had to do with the aristocratic appearance. The new era, dominated by democracy and the middle class, drew men away from their once excessive preoccupation with their appearance, bringing about a great lack of interest in men's fashion as of the 19th century, making men's outfits into neutral and austere uniforms that brought about a never-before-seen corporatization of the male gender, twinning both the rich and the poor. As psychologist John-Carl Flügel wrote in 1930:

The increased uniformity in clothing has come with a greater sympathy among individuals and social classes. This is not necessarily because the general use of the same styles of clothing produces a sense of community, but rather because such uniformity eliminates certain separating factors that are normally produced by the difference in clothing. (Flügel, 1964: 145)

However, the new social class in power ended up becoming the imitator of the recently overthrown royalty:

Thus we see a strange occurrence, which is that the middle class, beyond the styles that they have spontaneously created since the end of the Middle Ages, appears to be a radical imitation of the old aristocracy in the precise moment that the latter has been definitively dethroned. (König, 1985: 168)

This was reflected in the creation of a new system of discrimination: the distinction between classes. Such distinction applied to life in general, dividing everything into first, second,

and third-class, and was solidified in fashion with the birth of feminine haute couture in the 19th century, a new mechanism of social inequality based on appearance. Haute couture was an unprecedented production system for dresses, based on customization and design without previous commission. These designs were created by a new figure—the fashion designer—who was different from the tailors and seamstresses of the past, who were merely implementers of their clients' commissions.

The inventor of haute couture was Englishman Charles Frederick Worth, who in 1858, after working in Paris for Maison Gagelin et Opigez, the era's most important French house of fabrics and garments, decided to establish his own business with the help of Otto Bobergh, a rich Swedish clothing merchant, creating the first house of couture at 7 Rue de la Paix in Paris. Just one year later he was already the official provider of clothing for the French court, thus achieving international fame.

With Worth, haute couture became not only a new system of production for dresses, but also a new system of communication that brought fashion into the modern era. Worth revolutionized the whole process of the creation of fashion, cementing its bases in the contemporary era. Until then, tailors and seamstresses, the majority of them anonymous, had worked to complete the orders of their clients, who presented them with the designs, fabrics, and decorations for their dresses while these mere providers visited them in their residences. As of Worth's time, the couturier would impose his own creations, designed in advance with fabrics and embellishments of his choice, which would be shown to his clients, who would then be limited to choose from the creator's designs and have them adjusted to their own measurements. Thus, the roles were reversed. Worth was the first fashion designer who dressed women to his own taste, becoming the contemporary model of a fashion designer. Worth also revealed himself as a visionary in marketing, since this new manner of designing came with a new

manner of displaying the designs: runway fashion shows. Previously, dresses were displayed on wooden busts, and Worth was the first to conceive of fashion as a performance, inviting clients to his luxuriously decorated halls and lining up a variety of attractive young women—who were called *sosias* or doubles as they were meant to share the same body type as the clients—dressed in his creations. Thus was born the concept of the model. Additionally, he found out how to identify fashionable women, calling them jockeys back then—like Cora Pearl, famous actress and sex symbol of the time—and celebrities today, bestowing his dresses upon them to foster desire in high society environments.

With Worth, fashion became a business of creation and of public performance, as well as a driving force of innovation and novelty. The couturier, after centuries of anonymity, became a modern artist governed by the essential law of innovation, reclaiming creative liberty in fashion, and, for that reason, Worth was the first to leave a signature on his creations, putting a tag with his name in each dress, thus creating the concept of a fashion brand. He was a pioneer of understanding that fashion was not only clothing sales, but also an identity, an imaginative work, a work with such value that must come at expensive prices.

Worth's own person was an excellent marketing tool. Conscious of his power, he achieved admission into high society, which was unheard of at the time. Having a whimsical, pompous, and rather bossy character, he dressed as if he were made of artistry, and at the peak of his success, a special introduction was required in order to be received by him, as he greeted his clients while reclined on a grand sofa. Worth became fabulously rich, and because of that he was capable of refusing to create for clients who he did not like, exalting himself as he dictated styles and tastes of the era:

Ces dames devaient défilier devant Worth, qui, observait leur démarche et ne leur demandait pas leur avis ; lui seul choisissait ce qu'elles

allaient porter sans même les consulter. Sa réputation était telle que même les femmes issues de la haute aristocratie s'en remettaient à lui sans discuter. (Cawthorne, 1998: 15)

It was from then on that fashion magazines began to list the names of the designers below the models, and the public began to consider them as people of great taste. Fashion brands began to acquire a great prestige that was more than just commercial. With the invention of haute couture, the middle class reverted to the flashy extravagance of the old aristocratic class, but now with a difference: men now refused to exhibit it directly and instead did so by indirectly displaying their women, bearers of luxury clothing and made into displays of power, creating an enormous visual polarity between rich and poor women while continuing to perpetuate traditional female objectification:

Paralyzed by uncomfortable clothing and by rituals of decorum, the woman is presented to the man as his property. Makeup and jewelry also serve to petrify her body and face. The function of such ornamentation is very complex; it has a primitive sacred history, but its main mission is to turn the woman into an idol. (...) The more rigorously submissive she is, the more desirable she is. The “sophisticated” woman has always been an ideal object of eroticism. (Beauvoir, 1998, I)

While this took place in women’s fashion during the second half of the 19th century, destining women to continue being the beacon of attention, men brought about “the great rejection” (Flügel, 1964), a symbol of the new industrial era and new middle class, whose new standards of democratic elegance were discretion, sobriety, and the rejection of colors and ornamentations, which was the polar opposite of the feminine world, and its manufacture had nothing to do with the frivolity and novelty of women’s fashion and its creators, while having everything to do with the expertise of tailors. The striking aristocratic attire, which had signified leisure, extravagance, and showiness, was replaced by dark and austere

clothing that hid the body of the wearer and which expressed a new social order, based in equality and the professional ethics of the working class. Thus, the new men's attire was comfortable, simple, and discrete, becoming a uniform that represented power. It would not be until Chanel's time that women would finally lay claim to this style of attire, and with it would come their empowerment.

This systematization of clothing, centered in haute couture for women and practical tailoring for men, dominated fashion in the 20th century until the emergence of *prêt-à-porter*, born as ready-to-wear in the United States at the beginning of the century and reinforced in Europe by France after the Second World War. Ready-to-wear was based on the industrialized manufacture of garments by size, with the added value of constant novelty, accessible to the immense majority of society—from this came the boom of large warehouses—and affecting women's clothing just as much as men's. A fundamental change in society, which had begun to take hold in the period between the wars of the 20th century, was the consecration of youth as the age of social reference. If until then the maturity of adults had been the age of reference, after the 1920s the model age was youth, a sign of new times, coinciding as well with the beginnings of the feminine emancipation movement, which reached its critical moment in the 1960s (Lipovetsky, 1990). This new principle of social imitation consisted (and still consists) of trying to appear young forever through veneration of the body, asserted initially through the practice of sports, which explains the triumph of the style known as sportswear—mostly among women—which was based on comfortable apparel, an effect of the reclamation of freedom of youth in opposition to the traditional formality of mature adulthood.

As previously discussed, fashion is closely tied to identity. In fact, fashion first emerged as a matter of identity in the mid-14th century with the appearance of different clothing styles for men and women: short and fitted for men, long and enveloping the body for

women (Boucher, 2009). While men wore bifurcated garments, which were ancestors of modern pants, women proceeded with the traditional custom of hiding their legs underneath skirts, which were descended from the tunics of the Classical period.

Because fashion is a phenomenon that reflects the events of every moment in society, this clothing innovation clearly indicated the position of each gender: men, possessors of power, displayed the silhouettes of their bodies and the individual autonomy of their lower limbs; while women, dependent and submissive, covered themselves with long dresses that hid their bodies. Almost six centuries would pass until women would discover their legs, a change that would take place in the 1920s, just as they were beginning to empower themselves.

Fashion, therefore, has been and continues to be an indicator of social identity for both genders. In its early days its use was a privilege exclusive to classes of noblemen, whose women, confined to lives of leisure, made the task of beautifying themselves into their greatest occupation—an occupation that came with luxurious designs that made them physically dependent on others.

Veblen analyzed this phenomenon very well in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, published in 1899:

The high heel, the skirt, the flashy and impractical hat, the corset, and, in general, the lack of consideration for the comfort of the user—something characteristically obvious in all the attire of a civilized woman—are other such evidences of a scheme of civilized modern life in which the woman is dependent on the man; in which, in a highly civilized sense, she continues to be a slave to men. (Veblen, 2014: 211)

For centuries, women's attire was marked by two important elements that impeded the freedom of movement: a stiff ribbed

bodice, which later became the corset of the 19th century; and a framed skirt that progressively transformed since the 15th century from the farthingale to the hoop skirt, to the crinoline skirt, and finally to the bustled skirt in the 19th century. Each of these elements was topped off with a shoe destined to make women into dependent and sedentary beings, as demonstrated by the chopines of the 15th century or the heels and grand hairstyles of the 18th century.

From this it can be inferred that for six centuries, female identity in the upper class was related to fashion, physical dependency, and leisure—very different from masculine identity. Women were considered inferior to men, confined to superficiality, and thus was born the concept of the ‘weak sex’ or the passive sex, destined to be displayed as a showcase of a man’s power (Beauvoir, 1998). Additionally, in Western society, female identity has been defined in relation to the perception of others, the Judeo-Christian culture being a fundamental element that instilled a permanent self-consciousness about one’s image and impact on others as a collective (Entwistle, 2000). It is for this reason that the worship of female appearance has been a manner of affirmation for women:

Les femmes n’exercent aucune fonction qui les définisse, sinon dans un rapport à autrui : mères, épouses, intendantes. Elles sont donc généralement regardées comme des êtres inférieurs. Consacrer du temps et de l’attention à leur personne représente une manière d’affirmer une dignité qu’on ne leur reconnaît pas selon elles, une manière d’exister. (Phan, 1987: 76)

This appearance, since the emergence of the category of ‘women of leisure’—defined by Veblen as women exempt from all productive work—has always been in agreement with the predominant rules of beauty in royalty. These rules have required the female gender to submit to them, due to the direct relation that exists between female identity and beauty, signified by the use of

certain codes (pale complexion, use of cosmetics, sophisticated hairstyles, corsets, hooped skirts, uncomfortable shoes) intended to signify a superior social status, as a woman with the amount of leisure time characteristic of the upper class would dedicate herself to beautification. This way, women have traditionally won over men using their beauty. Or, said another way, they have needed to seduce their ‘Prince Charming.’ Thus, a woman’s body—through beauty—and a woman’s attire—through fashion—have become her tools for exploitation. One emphasizes the other, and it was capitalist society that made women into sexual objects by creating fashion styles intended to present them as elegant and admirable objects of male desire, which was affirmed by both Veblen (2014) in 1889 and Beauvoir (1998) sixty years later.

In this sense, the emergence of Coco Chanel entailed a liberation of the female gender, as she used her style to create a new set of rules in fashion that spoke of freedom:

Mais Chanel ne fait pas que démoder une silhouette afin de conquérir la liberté et l’autonomie d’une gestualité moderne ; sa propre silhouette n’est pas seulement au service du mouvement. Elle est aussi constituée de pièces et de matériaux bien particuliers, qui ne trouvaient sens et valeur dans ces années 20-30 que dans leur référence à deux univers donnés à l’époque pour contraires à celui de la femme ou, plus exactement, à celui de la mode féminine : le travail et le vêtement masculin. (Floch, 2004: 22)

Thus, Chanel is considered a “pioneer of the new casualness,” as defined by Anne Hollander (1994), as comfort and practicality became identifying characteristics of a very recognizable style—now timeless—which brought about the affirmation of a new female identity based on the conquest of individual freedom on the one hand, and signified by autonomy of movement on the other, something which was denied to women by fashion trends until then, with the only exception being the brief Napoleonic era.

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