Tractatus fashionablo-politicus

Ralf Wronsov

THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE CURRENT STATE OF FASHION
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Habent sua fata libelli et balli
[Books and bullets have their own destinies]

Ernst Jünger In Stahlgewittern
Dress to Kill  
Fashion, Red in Tooth and Claw  
The Lion and Lamb  
Beyond the Rage  
The Master's Privilege  
A Trap for Fools  
Doublelook and Facecrime  
Do You Want Total War?
Fashion lives in the *fashion coliseum*, the social battlefield of popular attrition where individuals and groups fight for fashion supremacy at all costs, driven by the brutal and beastlike “will to fashion” (*der Wille zur Mode*, or *Modegelüst*). Fashion, an arena of gods and beasts, slaves to serve and wolves to feast.

A primary struggle concerns the securitization of sovereignty, the definition of “in” and “out”, or “friend” and “enemy”, and the beastlike aesthetic violence or suppressing the ugly and weak. As political theorist Carl Schmitt argues, “The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation” (Schmitt 1932/1996). Likewise, being “in” or “out” demarcates who is an ally and who is a foe, and it is a distinction upheld by distributive force. The predators celebrate in the blood of the prey, harassing the unattractive, as the dove must fall beneath the eagle’s claw. A remorseless and aggressive mimicry in blood of Gothic proportions. A fashion to die for.

The *Tractatus Fashionablo-Politicus* is a collection of short treatises on the political approach of *The
Current State of Fashion, defining some of the basic concepts active in the execution of fashion supremacy in the social sphere. The social sphere is not under the rule of the “fashion system”, as this concept is far too limiting for understanding the violent struggles that is the politics of fashion, and misses the power dynamics between peers who engage in the struggle of being beautiful, strong and popular by any means possible. The slaves and “fashion victims” wail and whimper under the rule of hate and greed. They creep like sheep before the fashion Wolf-King, the fashion-able sovereign.

The ruler is dressed to kill. As Schmitt highlights on the issue of politics,

Emotionally the enemy is easily treated as being evil and ugly, because every distinction, most of all the political, as the strongest and most intense of the distinctions and categorizations, draws upon other distinctions for support. This does not alter the autonomy of such distinctions. Consequently, the reverse is also true: the morally evil, aesthetically ugly, and economically profitable need not necessarily become the friend in the specifically political sense of the word. (Schmitt 1996: 27)

Indeed, as Schmitt notices, “the political is the most intense and extreme antagonism” (29), and the same could be said about the fashion coliseum: “War is the existential negotiation of the enemy.” (33)

A comment on someone’s clothes may seem to address a piece of fabric, but strikes down to eliminate the wearer’s social standing, if not his soul. There is no soul-searching earnestness in fashion, only authority and the struggle for supremacy, to rule over the weak, poor and ugly.

The rule of the strong is the inherent logic of high fashion. Like the haute couture designer John Galliano’s famous bar discussion in 2011, when he made explicit that he did not want peace in the world, “Not with people, like ugly people.” (Galliano 2011) From the standpoint of fashion the ugly are unworthy of life, they have no value in the attention economy. They are unpersons.
Fashion is not ruled by the *system*, the system merely produces armament for the weaponized clashes at the coliseum. Similarly, the *spectacle* of media and simulacra is just the fertile soil soaked in the blood of victims of *meritocracy*. At the centre of the *fashion space* is the coliseum, where the weak and ugly are slain “because they’re worth it.”

At the fashion coliseum, the Other, wielding the sword fashion, is an *enemy to my very Being*. There can be no peace with the ugly, with the weak, with the cancer of evolutionary progression. The Other, the enemy, the unattractive, must be annihilated.

It is the logic at the heart of fashion: *exterminate all the brutes*. Make them pay. Make them pay for being unattractive. Dress to kill.

The age of fashion is the law of the strong, the wolf-age and axe-age. In its visionary excitement and forcefulness, fashion is the unconquered sun, the *Sol Invictus*, executing the *Lex Talionis*, the law of an eye for an eye, a Babylonian law of fashion. It is the rule of the strong, the law of beauty, attraction and popularity by the suppression of the ugly. Fashion is the ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture.
Global fashion today exists in a lawless state, with a surplus of cheap copies of horrible quality. It is a chaotic situation, similar to the "state of nature" which Hobbes noted to be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short". In resonance with Hobbes, Karl Lagerfeld, one of today’s greatest philosophers of fashion, has expounded how fashion is "ephemeral, dangerous and unfair." (Lagerfeld 2007) There is today an urgent need to administer fashion under the rule of law. As concerned fashionistas, we have assembled under the constitution of *The Current State of Fashion*.

The days of fashion tyranny dictated from Paris are finally over. We live in times where so many different and accessible fashions overlap that it may seem as if "anything goes". Yet, fast fashion and cheap consumerism is so ubiquitous and abundant that today, nobody can opt out of the sociality of fashion. The tyranny of fashion is replaced by what political philosopher Sheldon Wolin has called the "managed democracy" of "inverted totalitarianism", a corporate run legitimization of the culture of consumerism where voters are as "predictable as consumers" (Wolin 2008: 47). Fashion may have lost Paris but won the world.

There is a tendency to mainly regard fashion as an expression of lifestyle, or as a matter of mere symbolism. However, fashion is not a way of life in consumer culture, nor is it an identity issue, and this needs to be made clear: *fashion is an existential threat of the other to my own social well-being*. A garment is
a theatre of war in the battle for social status. Fashion guides the social relationships between me and other members of consumer culture. It negotiates rank, popularity and human worth in the attention economy. This makes fashion a political weapon in the arena of social warfare. You may be a pacifist, but your clothes are already on the battlefield, and today that theatre is ruled by chaos.

There needs to be laws of war and engagement, *Jus in Bello*, upheld by the Laws of Fashion. The Current State of Fashion aims to regulate and “bracket” the social warfare under the rule of law, and establish a more peaceful world order: a *Pax Fashionabla*. The first step towards order is to acknowledge the violence inherent in fashion.

From the State’s perspective, fashion is best approached through the lens of German political philosopher Carl Schmitt, who had a disagreeable career as a Nazi and anti-Semite, yet clearly articulated the confrontational aspects of politics in the social realm. Aristotle’s claim that man is the *zoôn politikon*, the political animal, and that the political life is the highest life for man, has to Schmitt some drastic implications. In Schmitt’s *The Concept of the Political* (1932/1996), “the political”, properly understood, refers primarily to the friend/enemy distinction, which in the realm of fashion must be translated as the foundational demarcation between in/out. This distinction is between inclusion and exclusion from the social community, in and out of the latest fashion.

To Schmitt, the “friend and enemy concepts are to be understood in their concrete and existential sense, not as metaphors or symbols” (27). On the social arena we need to take the consequences of Schmitt’s argument seriously, as he proposes that the “friend, enemy, and combat concepts receive their real meaning precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing.” (33) This is the “fashion coliseum.”

Thus the politics of fashion has to involve real conflict and the real chance for (social) casualties. A political perspective on fashion must involve inter-
personal violence. If there are no enemies, or no hostilities, there are no politics and there is no fashion. Even if not all political conflicts involve real casualties, or physical warfare, Schmitt makes clear that,

War is neither the aim nor the purpose nor even the very content of politics. But as an ever present possibility, it is the leading presupposition which determines in a characteristic way human action and thinking and thereby creates a specifically political behavior. (33)

We are thus approaching the brute sartorial reality of bullies, harassments, tyranny, and explicit social violence based on the judgment and hostile response to clothing.

For Schmitt the political antagonism should not be seen as personal hatred, instead the conflict emerges because the enemy threatens the other’s way of life, it’s an “existential threat to one’s own way of life” (49). An overall morality, of tolerance or liberty, only breeds more hostility. The ancient ideal of a cosmopolis, a community embracing all “humanity”, is a pacifist fiction neglecting both social dynamics and real politics; “whoever invokes humanity wants to cheat.” (54)

The current situation of overlapping and confusing styles and seemingly parallel fashions may mask some of the immanent conflicts of fashion, and the “democratization” of fashion may indeed seem “humanitarian”. Yet, it is nothing but a cheat. It is a masking of the necessary cruel nature of fashion. The only way there can be fashion is by demarcation and exclusion, judgment and social execution. The only way to be popular, to wield social power, is to defeat others at the fashion coliseum.

To Schmitt, power is the domination of the strong over the weak. This is indeed the aim of politics itself: to rule. Withdrawal from politics is a sure sign of defeat or even annihilation. He continues,

No one thinks it possible that the world could, for example, be transformed into a condition of pure morality.
by the renunciation of every aesthetic or economic productivity. Even less can a people hope to bring about a purely moral or purely economic condition of humanity by evading every political decision. If a people no longer possesses the energy or the will to maintain itself in the sphere of politics, the latter will not thereby vanish from the world. Only the weak people will disappear. (53)

Fashion that does not seek to rule is weak and will disappear. It will lack distinction and popularity and thus be annihilated and purged from the fashion coliseum and social realm. This is the cruel reality of fashion.

Schmitt reveals the flaws of liberalism, as liberalism is based on a perception that man is intrinsically good and seeks compromise. A similar view today would argue that consumer society disarms social conflict, and fashion theorist Gilles Lipovetsky even argues that fashion is part of such social pacification endeavor and thus defuses hatred and enmity (Lipovetsky 1994). However, Schmitt would argue the contrary, “all genuine political theories presuppose man to be evil, i.e., by no means an unproblematic but a dangerous and dynamic being.”(61) Indeed, as Lagerfeld argues, fashion is “ephemeral, dangerous and unfair”, and Schmitt would add that fashion needs to be so. The political world is by definition a world of friends and enemies, us and them, in and out, of existential confrontation, and thus ruled by the law of the strongest and most violent.

Yet, of course, the everyday fashionista refuses to see the blood on his hands, and wishes for an apolitical fashion. It may be of no surprise that the leading fast fashion and sissy style chains such as H&M and Acne emerge from Sweden, a pacifist, socialist, and petit bourgeois nation of revisionist cowards. Like the bourgeois, the fashionista is afraid to loose out, afraid of conflict, and clings to the safe ground of possessions and the shielded consumption of mainstream fast fashion and milksop manias. As Schmitt argues,

The bourgeois is an individual who does not want to leave the apolitical riskless private sphere. He rests in the possession of his private property, and under the justification
of his possessive individualism he acts as an individual against the totality. He is a man who finds his compensation from his political nullity in the fruits of freedom and enrichment and above all in the total security of its use. Consequently he wants to be spared bravery and exempted from the danger of violent death. (62-63)

However, even the consumption of mainstream fashion is engulfed in perennial violence, as the main mechanism of fashion is that of continuously evolving distinction or demarcation of “in” and “out”. It is a self-propelling machine, a perpetuum mobile (Bauman 2010). Consumers are pushed ahead by a social force, all too similar to that of Schmitt’s bourgeois, a status anxiety or social fear where ‘‘progress’ appears in the context of the avoidance of being excluded.” (Bauman 2010: 59) This makes war eternal, even within pacifist sissy markets. There are no ending conditions and everybody invested in the game needs it to go on forever. Here, fashion thus coincides with the everlasting state of exception or emergency, where George Orwell’s doublethink slogans of the Ingsoc Party resonate the core truths of fashion; “War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength.” (Orwell 1949)

This is why The Current State of Fashion seeks to administer the rule of fashion in a peaceful manner through a social contract of fashion. As our constitution says,

*We the People of the Current State of Fashion, in Order to form a more perfect sociality, establish The Concept of Fashion, insure global commitment to Consumerism, provide for the common Defence of the popular, promote Welfare for the few, and secure the Blessings of Possessions to ourselves and next season’s Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Current State of Fashion.*

Citizens of The Current State of Fashion have consented, either explicitly or tacitly, to surrender their freedom of dress and submit to the authority of Fashion in order to live lives of popular glamour.

We cannot liberate ourselves from fashion, and neither should we. A world free from fashion
would be depoliticized, make social life meaningless, mere dulled and distanced entertainment. We must recognize fashion’s power and celebrate it by consuming more and thus further its influence on the social arena in order to further our own will to fashion and cravings to be the popular, the beautiful, the included. We legitimate the authority of fashion over the individual and submit to the “contract of fashion” to take us higher into the realm of the political, to live as true Aristotelian beings, the true zoön politikon, the political predator of style, in a nature red in tooth and claw.

Nevertheless, we must recognize that fashion violence is usually a weaponized flanking manoeuvre. A comment on someone’s clothes seems to attack personal style, but it aims to strike at the soul of the wearer. It strikes not for defeat, but for annihilation. Every public citizen of consumer society is drawn into its crossfire. You may be invested in neither fashion nor politics, but fashion and politics is invested in you.

No weakness. No mercy. Dress to kill.
Fashion presupposes the concept of the fashionable. Fashionable is he who decides on the exception of the ephemeral demarcation of “in” or “out”.

Those who cry for “justice” or “democratization” in fashion fail to see that the very demarcation, of “in” and “out”, is based on the social and biological principle of emerging domination. The wolf eats the lamb. The winner kills the loser. Without the weak at the bottom there is no fashion, only the slave aesthetics of uniform cowardice. Fashion is the ephemeral triumph and the fire of Nero.

The consumer of today’s liberal fast fashion is a hero of self-deception. He refuses to acknowledge his ambition for popularity, or his “will to fashion” (der Wille zur Mode, or Modegelüst). Guiding man’s ambition for the fashionable is his pleasure of the feeling of popularity and the hunger to overpower the weak. The pleasure of fashion is analogous to the repression of the ugly. Fashion is an Ernstfall, the ever-present possibility of social death for the sake of appearance. Similarly, it is the rule of the sovereign to call for the Ausnahmefall, the exception.

E’ meglio vivere un giorno da leone che 100 anni da pecora
[It is better to live one day as a lion than 100 years as a lamb]

Fashion designer Benito Mussolini
Rome on 24 September 1928.
The only political motive for the “will to fashion” is the pleasure of executing power; of rising above others by manifesting the exception, the singularity of the “unique”, of being “someone”, as opposed to the spineless and anonymous “noone”. Solely the fashionable can use the property of being “unique” with favour; only he is fashion sovereign. The weak are “unique” in ways that only further undermines their abilities, they can only be subjects or slaves to fashion. Being ephemeral in essence, the “will to fashion” is the continuous re-incarnation of the motto: *It is better to live one day as a lion, than a hundred years as a lamb.*

Fashion is a property of the state. The subject’s degree of fashionability is built of properties, often in the form of goods, secured by the state, in exchange of obedience and loyalty. It may be left open what the state of fashion is in its essence—a machine or an organism, a person or an institution, a system or an empire, a society or a community, and enterprise or a beehive, or perhaps even a basic procedural order. Such definitions and images anticipate too much meaning, interpretation, illustration, and construction. The state controls the properties that make up the fashionable and the exception from the demarcation.

As a property, fashion both *demarcates* and *acts*. It has agency beyond the symbolic, a materiality beyond desire. Through domination it coerces ideal power; a sovereign authority situationally actualizing its laws, overriding any temporary insurgent order. It is statecraft in its purest Machiavellian or Hobbesian form, acting in conjunction with what Nicolai Hartmann called a “tyranny of values”, imposing a juncture between the emergence (*categorial novum*) of fashionability and (*evolutionary*) righteousness. Fashion imposes its values on the social by force and gives new meaning to Kant’s phrase: “*Sic volo, sic jubeo*” (By willing I also command).

The will to fashion, or to be popular (*Modegelüüst*) is an incarnate will to social power, and it
commands subjugation onto others in the form of aesthetic judgement and hostility. In alliance with fashion’s emphemerality, the will to fashion and popularity will strive to grow, spread, seize, and become predominant. It produces a rupture from any morality or immorality, because it is living and because life simply is will to power, the will to judge and suppress, the will to fashion.

There is thus no virtue of “good” in fashion. In fashion, as in life, might is right. Power and authority, executed by force or threat, legitimized by popularity, is the rule of law. This is our law; the rule of tooth and claw. The beautiful people lead, the ugly follow. The favoured and powerful punish the weak. Those with the right assets within the regime of beauty and material wealth are set to dominate those without. The strong do what they desire and the weak suffer. This is the fashion of Thrasymachus.

“Bad” fashion is that edgeless “humanitarian” fashion that tries to erase class, body and race distinction with style socialism and being accessible “for all”. It is a soulsearching earnestness squashed by the fanatical spirit of survival. There is nothing bad about ruling or being ruled. It is a natural law and the force of human progress, and it is what makes fashion such engine of desire, passion and rage.

Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of being fashionable, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of fashion, imagine a boot stamping on a human face — forever.
Far too long has the capacity of fashion been squashed under the paradigm of “desire”. After Freud, European culture submitted to the regime of psychoanalysis, with its crippling blend of Judeo-Christian moral, quasi-intellectualism and slave mentality. Two pathetic creatures, Narcissus and Oedipus, became prototype losers for human behaviour, their miserable desire and “lack” was to be models of the sadly trivial eroticism and “discontents” of modernity.

What has only made things worse is that the Freudian model of analysis now permeates fashion discourse and analysis. In order to subvert the “sinful” aspects of fashion, theorists have turned to acknowledge and celebrate “desire” as the guiding light. From this perspective we should pity the “victims” of fashion, while simultaneously glorify the liberalization of sissy style. By throwing out Judeo-Christian moral, theorists brought in even more miserable submission to the neurosis of Narcissus and Oedipus, simply for the sake of sanctifying self-admiring academics a place where they could safely mix work and pleasure. It is time to stifle this pitiful failure of thought and bring back a discourse of heroism, power, agency and domination into the realm of enclothed social engagement.

No, it is no accident that trends are also called “the rage”. While eroticism and desire may put light on some aspects of fashion, what drives its ephemeral and fanatical passion is indeed rage. Fashion is driven by the fury of power that the old Greek called
thymos, the rage that propels heroism, the expression of strength, accomplishment, glory, vanity, ambition and the hunt for recognition. As German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk argues, this is the rage of heroes like Achilles, whose deeds and accomplishments echoes through the ages, blazing from the impulsive center of the proud self. (Sloterdijk 2010: 11)

According to Sloterdijk, the Apollonian rage of action is supported through three pillars; the forcefulness of the hero, the retelling of the singer, such as Homer, and the support of the Gods.

With the first pillar, the hero enters the stage with the force of war. The thymos of the warrior is a divine flaming rage that common people can only dream of in their best moments. It is what makes the hero a forceful prophet “assigned the task of actualizing instantaneously the message of his force.” (11) It is the pride of war, where the hero, the guardian of rage, administers the gift entrusted him, making fighting also a form of thanking. (12) The hero and his rage are indivisible, just like to Homer, “war and happiness are inseparable.” (4)

The second pillar is the song that retells the heroic energy of the warrior, and the singer, Homer, is its mediator to the world of commoners, “just as
the singer could be the mouthpiece of a singing force, the hero feels himself the arm of rage, the rage that achieved the noteworthy actions.” (5) With its *epos*, the song elevates the rage “to the rank of a substance, out of which the world if formed” and as the singer recounts the divine force of *thymos*, ”the immortal hero dies countless times.” (6)

The third pillar is the support of the gods. The virtue of the hero allows him to become a mediator or a “vessel for the abrupt flow of energy from the gods”, and “just as the prophet is a medium in the name of the holy word of protest, the warrior becomes the tool for the force, which gathers in him abruptly in order to break through the world of appearances.” (8)

A similar trinity is enacted in the realm of fashion in the formation of fashionable properties, a world apart from that of the common people. Three analogous pillars support the enactment of the rage.

The first pillar is the fashionista, the virtuous hero of fashion. The fashionista is the forceful warrior, enraged conqueror of the popular, and the violent envoy of the sovereign, enforcing the demarcation of what is “in” or “out”. The fashionista is the heroic *justicia*, enacting the law of tooth and claw by acts of purified sadism. The judgement of the fashionista en-
ters the social realm in a similar way to how Heinrich Mann illustrated Napoleon in *Geist und Tat* [Spirit and Deed], namely, that it “enters the world like the bullet enters the battle.” (Sloterdijk 2010: 10)

The second pillar is the media, the singers of the fashion epos. Stories told of the deeds of the designers, the accomplishments of in-crowd and the legends of the heroes of the red carpets. It sings only of the worthy, the elevated ones, the beautiful. There are no news for losers. History tells of the achievements of champions, the popular, the luminary.

The third pillar is the *Current State of Fashion*, the guarantee of fashion virtues. It is the authority of the state that allows for thymotic virtues to flourish within the enclothed realm. As Sloterdijk argues,

> It is not by accident that the masterminds who helped to prepare the way for the nation-state, most importantly Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Smith, Hamilton, and Hegel, turned their attention again to the human being as the bearer of valuing passions. They were particularly interested in the desire for glory, vanity, amour proper, ambition, and the desire for recognition. (18)

Statecraft, which Plato notices in the dialogue *Politicus* also involves thymotic deeds, is the act of weaving a spiritual web by interlacing prudent disposition and public courage. Fashion is the same, a weft of taste and valour, style and honour. Aristotle agrees in his text *De Anima* [On the soul], where he states that, “Rage is necessary. Nothing can be achieved without it. Nothing can be achieved when it does not fulfil the soul and animate courage.”

*Fashion is the rage,* and it sweeps the land. It is the passionate eruption of the event, the enforcement of aesthetic submission. It is the forceful promise to slay the wicked, the enemies, or as the Bible says, to “hate them with perfect hatred.” (Psalm 139:22) It is the theatre of war which breeds fashion heroism. Fashion must be ephemeral, fanatical, self-glorifying and forceful in order not to ossify. It must be a flaming passion; it must be the rage. A rule that grows soft on
its enemies and slaves it is doomed to be dethroned and the empire to collapse.

Through the Current State of Fashion and its sanctioned economy, the thymotic agency and the properties of the fashionable is incarnated into goods. The presence and possession of these god-sent goods makes the hero or fashionista compete. The thymotic energy makes the hero redeem what he should possess, learn what he can accomplish, see what he wants, and enact the law onto the commoner. The Apollonian law of the thymotic and fashionable overman, the Nietzschean Übermensch. The egoism of the fashionista presents the best human possibilities, the most divine cause for social violence.

The fashionista is living proof that judgement, acts and deeds can also be done by humans, or overhumans, as long as their ambition, assets and divine grace allow them. Their fashion heroism clears them from the indifference and impotence of the slaves, and testifies of worthy deeds. The aesthetic violence of the fashionista is raised to shine like a warrior's sword. Just like the surge of rage makes the god of the battlefield speak through the warrior, the sadism of the fashionista is the forceful voice of fashion to its victims.

Fashion is the eruption of force. An ephemeral and passionate rage flaring up. A rage of aesthetic hostility, of derogatory judgments and loathsome sarcasm aimed at excluding others, killing them softly, or violently. Fashion suppurates slaves and sanctifies their suppression.

Fashion is the ephemeral two-minute hate that perpetuates cathartic eruptions of violence, the new overcomes the old, the young overthrows the old, the strong and beautiful overpower the weak and unappealing.

The rage sweeps across the social, washing the streets clean from the excrement, the ugly, the unworthy. The two-minute rage as the affirmation of evolutionary power and a celebration of fashion as the state, the governing regime of aesthetic heroism.
Fashion makes the state the guardian of true democracy, the democracy of the worthy, not the democracy of timid commoners, the meagre level of audacity for losers glorified by their dejected dreariness.

Whereas the victim goes to “vote with his pennies” at H&M, the defeated’s altar of humility, the fashionista votes haute couture “because I’m worth it.” As the slave resents achievement he is only worth the rags of the outcast.

Slaves are without courage, without dignity or the honour to commit suicide. They so lack character they cannot even imitate the heroic. They can only disseminate the scornful and cheap imitations of rage, only play the resentment game of gossipping and the cheap joy of paparazzi photography. The small, petty people have no virtues, no originality, so strength. The ugly, poor and annoying people have sovereignty, no lust for accomplishment. They are cowards and dress like cowards.

The cowardly bourgeois have no desire for individual heroism, only the mass-indignation of petty “justice”. With their copies, they pollute the purity of fashion. With their semi-rebellious obedience and lack of taste, they try to annoy the lord who takes care of them. They demand “respect” and “opportunity”, yet in their miserable lives they accomplish nothing, contribute nothing. Yet, as Sloterdijk observes, they cannot even “emancipate themselves from the concealed bigotry of psychoanalysis.”(19) They are losers, asking for compensation for their own “lack”, yet they lack the spirit to acknowledge their own insufficiency to be anything more than worms, creeping in their own ordure and misery.

They are so unappealing they must be penalized, their tears washing the coliseum clean from the sorrowful filth of their welfare cheques. Punished by the heroism of the fashionistas, in their state-supported rage, the poor and ugly will be made to understand they have no worth.

In the eyes of fashion, they are, after all, Untermensch.
Fashion, like warfare, demands heroes, glorified paragons, at the cost of casualties and victims. To be “in”, someone needs to be “out”. It is the virtue of domination, the virtue of power. Fashion victims are the slaves who do not hear the golden laughter of fashion, those who cannot laugh in an overhuman fashion, the laughter of the superior, the shining example. Bringing an opponent to their knees and trample on his pride is the life lust of this pure spirit. The selected ones, the dominating ones, like to jeer in their superiority. Theirs is the supreme joy and laughter, from a position beyond good and evil, beyond the demarcation of “in” and “out”: the powerful affirmation of the new Yes.

Friedrich Nietzsche, the esteemed German aesthetician, captured this demarcation as “the separation of the luxurious surplus of mankind: by means of it a stronger type, a higher type, must come to light” (Nietzsche 2008: 276). The luxury demarcation is a separation which leads to the higher type of human, the fashionable overhuman. With the arrival of the new season of luxury, the new demarcation, spring fashion is the new arrival of the Great Dionysia, the ecstatic
affirmation of the new. Similarly, the spirit of fashion emerges in Nietzsche’s classic work *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886/1998), where he notices that.

Almost everything that we call ‘high culture’ is based on the deepening and spiritualizing of *cruelty*—this is my tenet. The ‘wild beast’ has not been killed too at all, it lives and thrives, it has only—made a divinity of itself. (1998: 120)

Fashion is this *divine legitimization of affirmative cruelty*.

Interpreting Nietzsche today, this cruel divinity is the epitome of the “will to fashion” (*der Wille zur Mode,* or *Modegelüst*) that designates all effective energy into the brutal and instinctual pecking order within any living organization, from wolf packs to human societies. Struggles like these may be enacted in different degrees of hues of appearance—or with different **valeurs**, to use the language of painters. However, the palette is always that of crimson blood.

Fashion, some may argue, is not a real force of life; it is mere “fiction”. But following the argument of Nietzsche, “[w]hy should the world *that is relevant to us* not be a fiction?” (1998: 35) Creative inspiration, as well as thought, is a discipline, an order of fiction. There can thus be two **valeurs** of fashion, a **strong** fashion which rides with the muses, who please the diligent and powerful, and a **weak** fashion, a miserable copy of true spirit, an inferior fiction for the lazy, spineless and decrepit. The superior will to fashion defines the life-force, the freedom of strength and relevance, the expressive will of rage harbourled by the fashionista.

“The ‘unfree will’ is mythology,” Nietzsche argues, “in real life it is only a matter of strong and weak wills.” (1998: 21) Indeed, it is the *will to fashion*, that shapes the social position of the superior, the popular, “only the very few people can be independent: it is a prerogative of the strong.” (1998: 30) Indeed, only one without power would ask for freedom, justice or “equal power”, the powerful are *per definition* free, just
and equal, as freedom is “something one conquers.” (2008: 251). Fashion says, to equals equality, to unequals inequality: glamour to the fashionable, misery to the ugly.

Fashion designers are the philosophers of consumer society, they are the heroes of the Zeitgeist. As Nietzsche notices,

true philosophers are commanders and lawgivers. They say, ‘This is the way it should be’. Only they decide about mankind’s Where to? and What for? and to do so they employ the preparatory work of all philosophical workers, all subduers of the past. With creative hands they reach towards the future, and everything that is or has existed becomes their means, their tools, their hammer. Their ‘knowing’ is creating, their creating is law-giving, their will to truth us—will to power. (1998: 105)

A similar strong will is that of another German philosopher, Karl Lagerfeld, who argues that, “I’m kind of fascist with myself, you know. There’s no discussion. There is an order. You follow it.” (Lagerfeld 2013)
Like Nietzsche before him, he is the affirmative originator, the creator: “I am supposed to do, I’m not supposed to remember!” (Lagerfeld 2013) Lagerfeld, the famous aesthetic genius for Chanel, exposes the overhuman aggrandizement of the fashion designer and it is indeed as if Nietzsche speaks of Lagerfeld, the overhuman aesthetician, as he argues that “the philosopher is necessarily a man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, he has always been and has had to be in conflict with his Today”. (Nietzsche 1998: 105) Lagerfeld is in truth such a man of tomorrow, such overhuman, as he affirms the new,

The worst thing is when friends say, ‘Remember the good old days?’ Forget about the good old days! That just makes your present secondhand. What is interesting is now. If you think it was better before, then you might as well commit suicide immediately. (Lagerfeld 2013)

To the strong there is only the future, the next season. The philosopher genius seeks not to be dependent on any one person, as every person is a prison, and a nook, while the “[f]ree man is a warrior.” (2008: 251)

Like the strong, who honour their own strength and lordly pleasure, the designer leads the herd of slaves, the little people, “victims” of their own wormlike and mimetic suffering. Fashion for the masses is always bad-smelling: the odour of little people clings to it. There is usually a stink wherever the common people seek their degenerative instinct of glamour, and even in their places of reverence. Do not go to into H&M if you want to breath clean air.

Through his excess of power the strong need no approval, no judgment. Indeed, the very longing for freedom necessarily is a part of slave morals, as the strong seize freedom in action: “creating values is truly the master’s privilege” (1998: 157) The “morals” of liberal democracy and its “justice” is a miserable cry from the raped, the oppressed, the suffering, the shackled, the weary, the insecure, those who deserve to be at the bottom of society. Nietzsche continues,
life itself *in its essence* means appropriating, injuring, overpowering those who are foreign and weaker; oppression, harshness, forcing one’s own forms on others, incorporation, and at the very least, at the very mildest, exploitation—this is what should be expected by the weak (1998: 153).

And as Lagerfeld adds, “what I hate is nasty, ugly people. The worst is ugly short men.” (Lagerfeld 2013)

The blatant elitism of Lagerfeld may sound outrageous to the weak and brainless, the envious mummers in their socialist resentment. But what is fashion? Fashion is the golden happiness of popularity, of being seen, being cherished, being adored. What is happiness? Nietzsche celebrates happiness as,

> the feeling that power is growing— that resistance is overcome. No contentment, but more power; *not* peace at any price, but war; *not* virtue, but efficiency [...] The weak and the ill-constituted shall perish: first principle of our love of mankind. And one should help them to it. What is more harmful than any vice? — Active pity for the ill-constituted and the weak—Christianity... (2008: 256)

It is only the weak that want to abolish suffering. It is the weak that cannot learn to appreciate the delicate skill of cultivating suffering into strength. “The discipline of suffering, *great* suffering—don’t you know that this discipline alone has created all human greatness to date?” (1998: 117) Suffering cultivates strength and unites the *creature* and *creator* in the human being. However, the weak are so spineless they seek to escape suffering rather than endure it and cultivate it into new creative power. They have no aptness for the taste of greatness.

The recent “democratization” of fashion exposes the laggardly, protracting and regressing nature of inherited obedience among the weak and the “free thinking” of these *levellers*. Their cheap fashion, of *equal rights*, or “fashion for all”, is a new skin for flogged sheep.

Among humans as among every other species of animal, there is a surplus of deformed, sick, degenerating, frail, necessarily suffering individuals”, they are individuals of
a type that “will not thrive” but are instead doomed to be a natural surplus. (1998: 56)

They have been stuck on a lower rung of development and, like their meagre aesthetic standards, “ought to perish.” (1998: 56)

The weak cry for acknowledgement, they wish to escape the bonds of obedience, but their degenerated minds can never become masters, thus they succumb to the low piety and mimetic frailness of fast fashion, which may temporarily give them the illusion of a life of higher order. They ought to be punished. A refreshing, purifying exploitation of harshness is what’s needed!

There is an absence of commanders or independent people amongst them. And even if there are commanders, Nietzsche notices, they “act as if they too were only following orders.” Implicitly referring to the “democratic” design of fast fashion, Nietzsche calls this the “moral hypocrisy of commanders.” (1998: 85) Such designers say they may act as a “servant of his people” or an “instrument of common good” yet they only “adopt the herd phrases that are part of the herd mentality.” (1998: 85) Such is the sheep mentality which drives fast fashion. Slaves revolting to reproduce themselves as victims. Victims celebrating their misery on credit; the process of fashion socialism and herd-animalization.

The strong must use the “five hundred hands it requires in order to tyrannize καιρός [kairos] ‘the right time’, in order to seize the moment!” (1998: 168) The supreme opportunity, the Zeitgeist, must be forged, created by the strong; it will never occur amongst the chronic suffering of the worms. Kairos, like the fashionable moment, is the passing instant when an aesthetic opening appears which must be driven through with force to reach its potential, something only the noble self can achieve. As Nietzsche says, “the noble self reveres itself.” (1998: 172) Fashion is the forceful seizing of the current opportunity, the killing tide, the symbol of superiority, the mark of Cain.
The strong will wield the divine hammer to thrash out the sublime deformity of the slaves. It is the master’s privilege to ridicule the weak, to swing the hammer of *golden laughter*, the *strong*, fictional laughter of Lagerfeld, “I’m very much down to earth, just not this earth.” (Lagerfeld 2013)
A Trap for Fools
The Concept of “Democratic” Fashion

Fashion is a totality. Even though we know there are many styles, brands and economic models forming many systems of fashion, fashion is one: the sovereign style. To be in fashion means to be included into the sovereign style.

However, together with abstractions such as state and nation, fashion as a concept is a secularized theological concept, which emerged in its contemporary form together with the modern economy and constitutional state (cf. Wilson 1985). The omnipotent God became the omnipotent market, parliament and lawgiver. But also the systematic structure of theology was inherited, as argued by political theorist Carl Schmitt, where for example “the exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology.” (Schmitt 1985: 36) Similarly, to be fashionable became a new expression of divine grace, of being blessed by the gods, the beatific virtue of being favored, favored to define the exception.

The parallels between the state of fashion and the legalist developments of the state becomes evident when examining the recent development of “democratic” fashion, or fast fashion, as it implied a shift in perspective on the role and demarcation of the sovereign. With modernism’s secularized demarcations, Schmitt argues,

[th]e idea of the modern constitutional state triumphed together with deism, a theology and metaphysics that banished the miracle from the world. This theology and metaphysics rejected not only the transgression of the
laws of nature through an exception brought about by direct intervention, as is found in the idea of a miracle, but also the sovereign’s direct intervention in a valid legal order. The rationalism of the Enlightenment rejected the exception in every form. (36)

The divine rights of the king had to be abolished for the rule of law, ousting the will of the sovereign from the realm of the legal. Likewise the idea of the democratic will, or general will, emerged that would dethrone any aspiration for omnipotence.

The general will of Rousseau became identical with the will of the sovereign; but simultaneously the concept of the general also contained a quantitative determination with regard to its subject, which means that the people became the sovereign. The decisionistic and personalistic element in the concept of sovereignty was thus lost. (48)

This development led to a wider acceptance of democracy as a representational mode of society and even a metaphysics in itself, hiding the potential for a personalist will in the realm of the political, such as the absolute monarchy.

This unity that a people represent does not possess this decisionist character; it is an organic unity, and with national consciousness the ideas of the state originated as an organic whole. The theistic as well as the deistic concepts of God become thus unintelligible for political metaphysics. (49)

The general conception of legitimate power has become that “all power resides in the pouvoir constituant of the people, which means that the democratic notion of legitimacy has replaced the monarchical.” (51)

This brings us to the current “democratization” of fashion through fast fashion, which today has become a route of legitimizing fashion as the main value from which to judge individuals in social interaction. With the a “democratization” of fashion, the fashion of the people becomes the new sovereign, and thus it is the people’s power to demarcate between “in” and “out”, thus disseminating the properties of judgment to the
commoners. This has wide implications for the role of fashion in society, and affects both the rule and legitimacy of fashion, as well as the execution of power and punishment.

While fashion goods may be widely disseminated and more accessible through fast fashion, the visual currency and value of fashion, the *look*, is still in the hands of the sovereign. The *look* is the currency at the market of the social. However, this *look* is not defined by the legitimate power of the people, but by the monarchical powers of the sovereign; the strong-willed superiors of style. A value demands a unity in valuation, a monopoly to decide, and thus demands a peremptory monistic view: the one offered by fashion – the divine hand of action.

This means that even in times of a “democratic” fashion, the defining properties of the fashionable, the *demarcation*, is still controlled by the sovereign, the elite, the beautiful, the refined: The Current State of Fashion.

However, the mechanisms of fashion “democratization” also conceal the general powerlessness of parliamentary democracy. Democracy is not the same as the rule of the people; democracy is the mechanism that covers aristocratic rule under the veil of the “general will”, while this will is already shaped by the conditions of the powerful, private property and the sovereign properties of the *fashionable*.

In his essay “Elections: A Trap for Fools”, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre notices, in the historical development of democracy, that “the vote had been given not to men but to their real estate, to bourgeois property, which could only vote for itself.” (Sartre 1977: 198) The vote further isolated men from each other, as “all the voters were property owners and thus already isolated by their land, which closed around them and with its physical impenetrability kept out everything, including people” (198). This shaped a democracy based on the values of property, of individual cantonment and delineations, rather than a politics of common values and support of the
weak (as is often the myth of democracy.) This development can be seen as analogous to that of a “democratic fashion”, all about (cloned) individualization under the banner of property-centered equality.

Democracy may be a system that is legal, but as Sartre highlights, it is “profoundly unfair” – which draws out a difference between legality and legitimacy. The seeming “fair” election, between citizens with equal rights to vote, is a mechanism of isolation and fragmentation, or what Sartre calls serialization: “The voters, of course, voted individually and in secret. This was in order to separate them from one another and allow only incidental connections between their votes.” (198) Such fragmentation and individualization produces a lack of solidarity and a heightened individual competition between peers who would have all to win through larger organization and struggle for a better life, while simultaneously further abstracting other forms of deeper democracy, such as “popular” or “direct” democracy. As Sartre puts it, “legality massacred legitimacy.” (199) A “democratic fashion” induces a serialized fashion, a fashion that may be legal, and even seem equal, but which leaves consumers neither legal nor legitimate means for influence. It is a serialized fashion for slaves, for victims.

Sartre continues, “[w]hen we go to vote tomorrow, we will once again be substituting legal power for legitimate power.” (200) This articulates some of Sartre’s claims against participating in bourgeois elections, which aims to defend property while simultaneously serialize and reify the participants. As Sartre similarly argues in his essay “Justice and the State”, while state justice is codified and permanent, popular justice is irregular and primitive, and “if you choose one, you will be held accountable by the other.” (176) While legal power demarcates and has the “effect of separating voters in the name of universal suffrage”, legitimate power “is still embryonic, diffuse, unclear even to itself.” (200) Democratic fashion separates while the fashionable is the embryonic emergence of the now, the pure will to fashion, and can thus nev-
er be steeped into the cheap legal form of serialized commodities.

Instead of offering real dispersed power to the people, as the democratic myth proposes, the act of voting turns into a mechanism of letting your peers down.

The polling booth standing in the lobby of a school or town hall is the symbol of all the acts of betrayal that the individual may commit against the group he belongs to. To each person it says: ‘No one can see you, you have only yourself to look to; you are going to be completely isolated when you make your decision, and afterwards you can hide that decision or lie about it.’ Nothing more is needed to transform all the voters who enter that hall into potential traitors to one another. Distrust increases the distance that separates them. (200)

While the “voting” of democratic fashion is not hidden, but instead exposed to the public and even “hauled”, the traitorous element remains the same: the serialized individual places a vote on a brand, while simultaneously further fragmenting the social community through styled distance with no real impact in the political sphere. Thus, to Sartre, “participation in public elections is not only ineffective, it is a positive harm to the possibility of another system of participation and justice.” (Martin 2000: 81)

The creation of inauthentic and serialized individuals is a central part of fashion, as with any other industry, though this process is effectively concealed behind the idea of being “unique”. However, for Sartre, men are not born into isolation, instead,

They are atomized when large social forces — work conditions under the capitalist regime, private property, institutions, and so forth — bring pressure to bear upon the groups they belong to, breaking them up and reducing them to the units which supposedly compose them. (Sartre 1977: 200)

People are scattered and alienated by institutions and their limited choices, offered to them as bourgeois “freedom”. This is a very narrow funnel of existence.
However, with properties offered by institutions, the subject may form an illusion of self, becoming unique by being given a number, a mark of identification,

He becomes in essence identical with all the other members, differing from them only by his serial number. We say that he has been serialized. One finds serialization in the practico-inert field, where matter mediates between men to the extent that men mediate between material objects. (201)

Every member of the social body becomes a separatist, continually distancing himself from Others, wanting to keep them at safe distance, protecting the properties of his seemingly unique identity. “When I vote, I abdicate my power — that is, the possibility everyone has of joining others to form a sovereign group, which would have no need of representatives.” (201) As political theorist Bill Martin notices, when taking part in the election, I am taking part in a formula that is rigged against me,

At the historical point when this system is for the most part articulated, more sections of the population—working people, women, people of color, and others who have been formerly excluded—are “granted” what is the least part of this ideal, the “right” to make choices within a system that is set against their basic needs and set against their existence as real participants within a political community. (Martin 2000: 82)

Indeed, taking part in elections means less than nothing, that is, voters “have contributed to positive harm [...] in that they have (1) wasted enormous political energy and (2) provided a safety valve and therefore support for social systems that must be challenged on much more substantial levels. (Martin 2000: 83) As Sartre puts it,

Why am I going to vote? Because I have been persuaded that the only political act in my life consists of depositing my ballot in the box once every four years? But that is the very opposite of an act. I am only revealing my powerlessness and obeying the power of a party. Furthermore, the value of my vote varies according to whether I obey one party or another. (206)
While fashion may be the greatest fiction of society, a celebration of imagination, what could be less imaginative than channel one’s perspective on identity through the act of spending money, or “voting”, on predefined prototypes of affection, on brands? Indeed, the only thing a “democratized” fashion exposes is the powerlessness of universal suffrage in general, while the decisions are made by the sovereign, that is, those in control of the fashionable properties, the fashionistas. A democratic fashion is a rule of the weak, the secular and profane elevated into a “higher good”, or something “just”, while those engaged in this type of fashion are simultaneously effectively ousted from any substantial participation in the real polis, in any real fashion.

When it comes to fashion, there is however no need to stay naked, or for voters to refuse involvement in participatory politics. Instead new political frontiers must continually be opened and people mobilized beyond the voting booth. If people are strong, they can reclaim power. As Sartre puts it,

To vote or not to vote is all the same. To abstain is in effect to confirm the new majority, whatever it may be. Whatever we may do about it, we will have done nothing if we do not fight at the same time — and that means starting today — against the system of indirect democracy which deliberately reduces us to powerlessness. We must try, each according to his own resources, to organize the vast anti-hierarchic movement which fights institutions everywhere. (210)

With democratic fashion, as with liberal elections, the “people” may think they are the sovereign body, but in its profane everydayness, they are still ruled. Just the miracle is gone.
To all fashionistas and heroes in their palaces of mirrors. From the age of strength and beauty, from the age of fashionability. From an age of divine supremacy—greetings.

Fashion suppurates slaves and sanctuates their suppression. Those who are not in fashion are unpersons, they have no properties recognized as aesthetically and morally valuable. They have no truth in appearance. As Nietzsche reveals, our faith in truth and appearance has to remain unshaken,

This faith in truth attains its ultimate conclusion in us—you know what it is: that if there is anything that is to be worshipped it is appearance that must be worshipped, that the lie—and not the truth—is divine! (Nietzsche 1968: 523)

Consequently the ugly, those who cannot live up to the standards of glory, the scum in the gutters, they are not worthy of any social recognition. Their moral standing is, and must be, judged from face value. If it has no purity, no attractiveness, it has no worth. The social body needs to be cleansed from filthy pores and stained skin; those who commit to blasphemy against the higher values of divine morality, they commit to facecrime—the vile, deformed, repellent. They do not even deserve to be facehunted.

The look is both the facade and the judge, the justice of appearance dispersed through the social body. It is simultaneously the visual anxiety and the judgment of looks. It is the actuator of demarcation,
the punisher of the ugly, the untimely, the slaves. A world of truthful appearances continuously needs to be cleansed from filth by a look of hate.

Fashion is the two-minute hate that perpetuates cathartic eruptions of aesthetic violence, the arrival of the new, the “modern”, the latest demarcation between strong and weak. It is by necessity ephemeral, a rainstorm that washes out the dirt from the cesspools. The rage sweeps across the social, washing the streets clean. The two-minute rage is the affirmation of evolutionary power and a celebration of fashion as the state, the state being the governing regime of aesthetic heroism. Fashion makes the state the guardian of true democracy, the democracy of the worthy. I vote fashion “because I am worth it.” The rule of appearance is the just rule of might is right. The ugly slaves and their “victims” are not worthy my disdain.

Slaves and victims are without courage, without dignity or the decency to commit suicide. They so lack character they cannot be heroic, they can only disseminate the rage and hide behind conventions or sissy style. They are so unappealing they ought to suffer as they pollute our purity. They must be made to understand that the ugly have no worth. They must be made to feel ugly, undesired, undignified. They ugly are, after all, untermensch.

To facilitate the cleansing capacities of fashion, our social nature has evolved a sense of doublelook. Doublelook signifies the omnipresent double consciousness created by the subjects continuous search for verification through the eyes of fashion. It is analogous to what American sociologist W.E.B. du Bois calls double-consciousness.

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. (Du Bois 1903/2008: 12)

It is the feeling of having “two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals” (12)
continuously in conflict within the same body, using a standard that excludes you.

However, doublelook makes one see the moral value of fashion while genuinely believing in these values as the utter truth of social worth. It is a form of self-discipline, making sure one wears the values of fashion, continuously asking oneself reflectively, as judged through the eyes of fashion, “am I attractive?”, or, “am I ‘fresh’?” It is always asked with an element of anxiety and conflict, referring simply to fragility of life, that slaves are always at the will of the powerful, each life of the victim a tremulous flame which threatens at any moment to go out. The victims of the look are afraid, above all, always afraid. Always at the blade, at the instance of torture.

With a fractured sense of self the subject simultaneously holds two, often contradictory, opinions: the slave may feel free, but simultaneously feels everything controlled. As a fractal force, a double consciousness spreads its micro-branches of doubt into every level of human togetherness. To the slaves, fashion paradoxically becomes a both mobilizing force, a beacon of hope, yet simultaneously a force of just oppression. However, in the mind of the subject, there is no conflict, it is completely unaware of any contradiction: there is only a will to fashion, however weak.

Doublelook is the key tool of self-discipline under the rule of fashion. It is the amalgamation of two complementary forces. One the one hand, the state-legitimized fashion violence between slaves, as they judge, victimize and suppress each other. On the other hand it is the self-demoralization of the slave’s self-image and esteem, producing a surplus powerlessness. Together with the market forces, which veil the suppression not just from the slaves but also from the fashionistas, this soaks the whole social fabric into the controlling regime of doublelook.

It is critical to notice that this suppression is not executed by the hands of the state. It is done to the slaves themselves. They make themselves feel ugly, worthless, undesired and they execute the moral of ap-
pearance amongst themselves. Fashion itself has no part in the physical suppression of people. Fashion strangles the poor and ugly with the velvet gloves of peer pressure.

But most importantly, the continuous doubt of doublelook produces a self-hatred amongst the slaves which turns outwards as suppressed anger, ready to erupt as primitive rage, always channeled through acts of consumption. The fashion coliseum is smoothed out for battle and its motto of “the winner takes it all” promotes yet another excuse for aestheticized and divine violence.
Do You Want Total War?
Unleash the Fashion Beast Once More

If man is, as Aristotle argued, the zoôn politikon, or the political animal, then it must be argued that the conditions of fashion makes a beast of man. No formal political sovereignty is achieved in fashion by the rule of law, or a “natural” and constitutional agreement. Instead, fashion is instrumental in producing the savage beauty of social warfare and the armament and escalation of aesthetic violence. Fashion turns the political animal into a werewolf, and uncontrollable fashion fiend.

According to French cultural theorist Gilles Lipovetsky, fashion promotes “an ego that is more fully in charge of itself.” (190) Fashion is a social force that stimulates homo consumans to “take greater charge of our own lives, to assume more self-mastery, to achieve self-determination in relationships with others, to live more for ourselves.” (148f)

For Lipovetsky this self-mastery may come from hedonism, as fashion produces ephemeral and seductive difference that elevates the resourceful and vain, the egocentric. These mechanisms of differentiation, however mass-produced, establishes what Lipovetsky calls “the supremacy of the fashion form”, subjugating all other forms of sociality into an all-encompassing configuration of the social. He then calls it by its true name: “total fashion.” (133)

To Lipovetsky, the state of “total fashion” is a possible regime of equality through vanity. Yet, he also notices a potential hostility raised through fashion,
The consummate reign of fashion pacifies social conflict, but it deepens subjective and intersubjective conflict; it allows more individual freedom, but it generates greater malice in living. (241)

But most importantly Lipovetsky notices the key element in the full release of violence within the social realm, even if he does not dare to draw the full consequences of his discovery. He notices that total fashion glorifies novelty and removes the element of “guilt from the act of purchasing” and “the seriousness that went along with the ethics of saving.” (167f)

However, what Lipovetsky fails to see is that while it cleared the moral guilt from spending and consumerism, fashion also stripped social interaction from a weight of slave morals; it rid social conflict from the fetters of the commandment that “thou shalt not kill.”

It is stealthy as the wolf. The Nietzschean “active nihilism” of the strong natured, “which does not hesitate to offer human sacrifices, to risk every danger, to take upon wondelf whatever is bad and worst: the great passion.” (Nietzsche 1968: 19)

*Homo homini lupus est,* “man is a wolf to [his fellow] man.” This is the bestiality of fashion, the becoming-animal of man. The cry for fire and blood, of greed and hate. The striking appeal of total war.

Total fashion, just like total war, legitimizes and even celebrates the existential violence of attrition, the survival of the strongest, the wolf age. It is the theatre of war for a battle of the very nature of the human soul, a storm of steel, fire and fabric. The ultimate goal is sovereignty over the demarcation, the cruelty of exclusion, suppression and abusive defeat. The blue wolf, the attractive, formidable and unheimlich wolf-tyrant.

The beast conquers self-determination beyond the conventions of man, beyond the rules, the guarding fences around the slaves, the lambs. The beast acquires the means and ultimate power over the exception, the threat to kill. This can only be achieved by crossing through the ennobling steel storm of the
fashion coliseum, the struggle for social supremacy, of elevated and exquisite egotism. The heroic realism of the storm of greed and hate, the birth of a stout-hearted spirit. Warfare, authority, justice by force. A rule of the sovereign, a superiority baptized in the blood of the vile, the aesthetics of terror. “This is what I am; this is how I want it—you can go to hell!” (Nietzsche 1968: 191)

It is the rage of Wotan, or Odin in the north, the warrior god, the wolf skin-clad god of warlike fury, or wüten as the German would say; to be in fury, to ravage through warfare. Wotan the coronating god, who decides the sovereign King, who crowns the most violent, the war chief. Wotan the wolf-king, Sovereignty is his very essence. When he sits on the throne, he is flanked by two wolves, who are the insignia of his majesty, living coat of arms, the living heraldry of his sovereignty, two wolves to whom he gives everything anyone hands him to eat, for he himself does not eat, he only drinks (Derrida 2009:30)

It is like the voice of Karl Lagerfeld, Wotan, the sovereign King, only drinking diet Coke: “I’m beyond temptation. There is no weakness.” (Lagerfeld 2013)

In its most brutal and beastlike form, fashion, as an aesthetic violence, is an incomparable schooling of the heart.
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THE CURRENT STATE OF FASHION
Because man is by nature evil, he therefore needs dominion, power and popularity. He needs a demarcation between “in” and “out”.

Fashion is this demarcation, it is the rule of the strong, the law of beauty, attraction and popularity and the suppression of the ugly.

Fashion is the rage, an ecstasy of power, fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture.