THE JAPANESE REVOLUTION IN PARIS FASHION

Yuniya Kawamura

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The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion

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Oxford • New York

To My Family
Yoya, Yoko and Maya Kawamura

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Yuniya Kawamura
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Introduction
Clothing and Fashion

Clothing and fashion are separate concepts although they are frequently used interchangeably. Both concepts have different sociological consequences. Specific styles are often the focus of fashion analysis,[1] but the illustration of particular fashions does not identify the basic nature of fashion per se (Lang and Lang 1961: 465) because fashion has little to do with clothing. Clothing is a material production while fashion is a symbolic production. Clothing is tangible while fashion is intangible. Clothing is a necessity while fashion is an excess. Clothing has a utility function while fashion has a status function. Clothing is found in any society or culture where people clothe themselves while fashion must be institutionally constructed and culturally diffused. A fashion system operates to convert clothing into fashion that has a symbolic value and is manifested through clothing. Fashion is not created in a vacuum but exists in a specific cultural and organizational context.

Rouse (1989) points out that for a particular style of clothing to become fashion, it has to be worn by some people and then acknowledged to be a fashion. For instance, any apparel manufacturer can produce a white shirt, and many people wear white shirts, but they are not a fashion. These white shirts have to be recognized as 'the latest style'. How are they recognized as such? Approaching fashion from a systemic perspective will explain how clothing may become fashionable. My research attempts to link structural processes in the production of fashion to the variety of styles of clothing which are produced by particular designers and legitimated by different institutions in the system.

This book treats fashion as a system of institutions, organizations, groups, individuals, events and practices that contributes to the making of fashion as a belief supported by these external factors. I argue that the structural nature of the system affects the legitimation process of designers' creativity and therefore, the inclusion and exclusion of foreign designers[2] in and from the system. My study is a macrosociological analysis of the social organization of fashion and a micro-interactionist analysis of designers using Japanese

designers in Paris as an empirical case study, that is non-Western outsider designers in what I have designated the French fashion system. It looks at major institutions and also focuses on what they mean to the individuals concerned. In addition, the interdependent social relationship between the system and individuals in the system will be observed. The entry of these Japanese designers into the French fashion system demonstrates the workings and the dominance of that system, and more generally, the workings of fashion as a system.

It is taken for granted that Paris has always been the fashion capital of the world, and fashion designers, French or non-French, continue to mobilize in Paris, but few have sociologically investigated why, how and through what social as well as cultural processes Paris became and remains the fashion capital. Is it because French designers are innately talented in designing clothes? How can we define designers' creativity? How do designers become famous? How is fashion culture in Paris perpetuated? Why and how has that belief in French fashion been constructed and maintained for centuries? How do social organizations and individuals make fashion happen? In order to address the social production process of fashion, which I argue is different from clothing, we must study the connection between the organizational and interpersonal factors in the making of fashion culture and designers in Paris.

I place 'fashion' within the sociology of the production of culture perspective and the sociology of culture and the arts because they serve as the foundation for my research questions. The production of culture perspective begins with the assumption that the production of cultural objects involves social cooperation, collective activities and groups, and it emphasizes the social arrangements used in making symbolic elements of culture which affect the nature and content of the elements of culture that are produced (Peterson 1994: 163). There is a wide range of studies that go into a study within the production perspective, such as art worlds, publishing companies and popular culture.[3] Because fashion can be treated as a manufactured cultural object, we can learn much from those studying symbol-producing cultural institutions. Cultural objects can be analyzed from both/either consumption and/or production perspectives. Likewise, fashion can be a matter of personal consumption and identity and also a matter of collective production and distribution. Like sociologists who focus on the production perspective of culture, I will discuss the production of fashion culture which is supported by a fashion system to which individuals, organizations and institutions belong. The consumption side of fashion is not insignificant, but in order to narrow my empirical study and also to clarify the production perspective first, I choose to pay attention to the production of fashion.

Fashion is legitimate to study as a symbolic cultural object and as a manufactured thing produced in and by social organizations. Since fashion is

neither tangible nor visible, it uses clothing as a symbolic manifestation. The production of symbols places emphasis on the dynamic activity of these institutions. Cultural institutions support the production of new symbols. This approach is most useful in clarifying the rapid changes in popular culture where the explanation of novelty is more pertinent than that of stasis (Peterson 1976). There is no more apt an idea to study than fashion where novelty is the very key in defining the concept. Therefore, within this theoretical framework, I will make a systematic comparison between custom-made and ready-made clothes, investigate the changes in the market structure over time, examine evaluation functions and fashion diffusion mechanisms within the system, and explain rewards provided by the system to the designers.

Furthermore, since my analysis of fashion centers on a concept of institutionalized system, I draw explicitly on White and White's work (1965/1993) on the nineteenth-century Impressionists in France among the empirical studies of cultural production. The work of the Impressionists would not have found acceptance through the existing Royal Academic system because of the traditional ideology and rigid precepts on style. Nor did the Academy have the capacity to deal with a growing number of painters who were considered marginal. It was dealers and critics who introduced and legitimated new painters and their work to the public as there was a new market of potential buyers for works of art. The dealer-critic system emerged with the decline of the Academic system. It is only through such an abstract concept as 'institutional system' that we come to understand the structural interrelations among the confusing mess of concrete events (White and White 1965/1993: 159). Any system is composed of subsystems or institutions. By looking at fashion as a system, we begin to see its internal framework as a whole and each institution and its functions within that system.

Whether fashion is art or not has been much debated, but it certainly follows what sociologists have postulated for art (Becker 1982; Bourdieu and Delsaut 1975; Bourdieu 1984; White and White 1965/1993; Wolff 1993, 1984; Zolberg 1990). Those who start from the premise that art should be contextualized in terms of place and time direct attention to the relation of the artists and artwork to extra-aesthetic considerations (Zolberg 1990). Becker (1982), Bourdieu and Delsaut (1975) and Bourdieu (1984) analyze the social construction of aesthetic ideas and values, and they focus on the processes of creation, production, institutions and organizations. A work of art is a process involving the collaboration of more than one actor and working through certain social institutions. Like art, fashion is social in character, has a social base and exists in a social context. Therefore, I align my observation also with Becker's study of art worlds (1982) in which he indicates that the making of artists is not the responsibility of one individual but a collective activity. I look at fashion

organizations and institutions in relation to the people whose collective actions construct the fashion system because there is a correlation between social structures and the actions of people working collectively. It is these cooperative networks that make fashion happen and repeatedly manufacture a symbolic meaning of fashion. Fashion is a collective phenomenon which cannot be created by an individual designer, and it cannot be interpreted apart from its social context. Very few have attempted to look carefully at the organizational setting in which fashion is produced.

What is most significant in placing fashion and fashion designers within the sociology of culture and art, is that neither treats the objects as the creation of an individual genius. This is the fundamental principle shared also by sociology of fashion. In opposition to the idea that cultural artifacts are simply the work of gifted individual artists from whom they are then filtered to the public, these sociologists believe that the elements of culture are fabricated among occupational groups and organizations that engage in a symbol production activity. For instance, Becker (1982) explains that his analysis is social organizational not aesthetic and argues that the creation of works of art is coordinated by 'shared conventions' and 'consensual definitions'. The cultural and social values of the art make the conditions for creative collaboration, which are deliberately invented by formal cultural organizations.

My analysis also includes the stratification dimension of producers of fashion, designers in particular, to understand social distinctions among those who design clothes in France. Bourdieu's cultural analysis (1984) emphasizes the significance of the stratification functions of cultural systems because social groups are identified by their cultural tastes or their abilities to create cultural institutions suited to members of their social strata. While Bourdieu is concerned with the differences between the groups who consume cultural symbols, I concentrate on the hierarchical structure within the occupational group of designers. The discussion of cultural differences is sociologically important because they are linked to fundamental patterns of social stratification which is maintained by various cultural attributes of people from different strata. The assignment of designers within their own system of stratification affects the products they produce because the designers' social statuses and positions reflect on the audience and consumers.

To form an overall view of the system in Paris, my data draw upon almost a year of fieldwork, made up of interviews with fashion professionals primarily in Paris and Tokyo (Table A.1 in Appendix A) and fashion show and trade fair observations (Tables A.2 and A.3 in Appendix A). The attempt has been made to contact those who were directly and indirectly related to the major fashion trade organization in Paris so that they could act as a sample of members from the whole organization. The data also come from organizational

documents and records. I selected five Japanese designers in Paris, namely Kenzo Takada (known as Kenzo), Rei Kawakubo, Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Hanae Mori to construct different types of designs which correspond to their positions in the French system. Although it is not the primary focus of my research, I did a content analysis of the works of the Japanese designers using a sample of Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter collection videos and reviewed past fashion periodicals published in France, Japan and the USA.[4]

Defining Clothing and Fashion as Separate Systems

There is not a single definition of the term 'fashion' (Hollander 1993: 350). Barnard (1996) makes an attempt to explain and define 'fashion', 'style', 'dress', 'adornment', and 'clothing' but suggests that it may not be possible to define a particular piece of clothing or a specific garment as an item of fashion. There is the difficulty involved in trying to provide a final definition of the meaning of any of these words because there is no single meaning or feature that is common to all of the words (Barnard 1996: 9–10). However, for the purpose of the discussion, I make only two categories: fashion and clothing/clothes. Clothing includes everything that is not fashion. All the synonyms of clothing, such as 'dress', 'garment', 'costume' and 'apparel', fall under the non-fashion category which I label as 'clothing' or 'clothes' because a major concern of this book is the concept and practice of 'fashion'.

From a historical point of view, Roche (1994: 47) explains that in the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, the notion of fashion had two meanings: on the one hand, custom, styles of life, ways of doing things, a conformism of practices; on the other, whatever changed according to time and place. There were fashionable objects, places and habits. The notion did not apply only to ornament and clothes, but to every means of expression (Roche 1994: 47). Still today, fashion in the broadest sense can be defined as the collective mode of behavior, thought or accoutrements valued in a given society at a given point in time. Change is inherent in the broader concept of fashion, which can be applied to virtually any social phenomenon, such as literature, art, gestures or attitude (Sumner 1906/1940). In the narrow sense, fashion refers to the particular phenomenon of 'clothing-fashion', that is the institutionally produced, marketed and valorized mode of dress characteristic of a given society or given groups within that society at a given point in time. Change is also inherent in clothing-fashion, which is a product of modern, nineteenth-century European industrial society. Sociological and other analyses of fashion typically move back and forth between the two perspectives, and it is precisely

that ambiguity which confuses the topic. The two should, however, be kept analytically distinct.

Most sociological analyses of clothing and fashion, classical ones in particular, have stressed consumption over production. Classical sociologists (Simmel 1904/1957; Spencer 1896/1966; Sumner 1906/1940; Sumner and Keller 1927; Tarde 1903; Tönnies 1887/1963; Veblen 1899/1957) treated fashion as a concept of imitation which forms a basis of a trickle-down theory of fashion. When the highest class adopts a particular style, the class next to it, wanting to move up or even to appear to have already moved up, will proceed to adopt the new style[5] which will continue a downward adoption through the classes until it reaches the lowest class economically able to afford it. As the fashion moves downward, its reproductions are usually made with less expensive materials and poorer workmanship. By the time the style has been consumed by the majority, it is no longer a sign of class status, and the highest class will have already begun the process over again by putting on a new fashion. This flow began in the late Middle Ages when a merchant and business class slowly flourished in the cities of Europe. The Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth century further accelerated the development of a class structure supportive of a trickle-down fashion flow (Sombart 1967). Without making a clear distinction between the phenomenon and the system, von Boehn (1932: 215) describes this phenomenon of fashion, which is possible only within an open class system, as the emerging system of fashion.

On the other hand, contemporary fashion scholars' definitions are diverse. Polhemus and Proctor (1978: 9) indicate that the term 'fashion' in contemporary Western society is also used as a synonym of the terms 'adornment', 'style' and 'dress', but Davis (1992: 14) points out that any definition of fashion seeking to grasp what distinguishes it from style, custom, conventional or acceptable dress, or prevalent modes must place its emphasis on the element of change. Delpierre (1997) also indicates that the essence of fashion even in eighteenth-century France was mutability. This change is considered ambivalent (Davis 1992) because it appears to occur irrationally and irregularly. However, if we concentrate only on the ambiguity and ambivalence of fashion as Davis suggests, it leaves nothing for sociologists to investigate. Ephemerality and fickleness without any rationale are the major reasons why fashion is not taken seriously.

Who or what causes the change? Is there any logic behind this continuous change, or is it a natural and random phenomenon? How does a fashionable style change from time to time? I ague that in the modern fashion system, it is the content of fashion that is constantly shifting and not the institutions. This book attempts to explain how this change is systematically produced and institutionally conducted and controlled in the past, today and will be so in

the future if any fashion center chooses to continue its hegemony. There is the interplay among fashion as a concept, a practice and a system. I shed new light on the interpretation of the concept and the phenomenon of fashion and the social process of making fashion happen by introducing a new perspective of fashion as an institutionalized system. Clothing is also a separate system which has rules and regulations as to how clothes should look and how they should be worn. Fashion can be represented by clothing in any shape and form because fashion is an ideology or a belief that is guarded by the institutions. Thus, as noted earlier, clothing and fashion are different concepts and are separate systems.

Before I present a set of structural components in the fashion system, I will review various conceptions of fashion systems that have appeared in the literature on fashion to show that my employment of the term 'fashion system' is different from that of others. While some writers employ the term 'fashion system', others confuse or make no distinction between fashion and clothing systems. They neglect the systemic nature of fashion production. One of the most popular approaches to clothing and/or fashion system is a semiotic one, which treats each item of clothing as a linguistic sign that has a meaning, although some, like McCracken (1987), believe that the treatment of clothing as a language is seriously mistaken. McCracken (1987) demonstrates in his research that no fixed, rule-governed equations are found in clothing language as in speech and writing, and the link between clothing and language is at best metaphoric.

Barthes (1967) and Lurie (1981) base their semiotic analysis of clothing and fashion on structural linguistics, initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure (1972). Saussure's theory of signs known as semiology helps us in making the distinction between clothing and fashion. A sign is any event or object used to express and convey cultural meanings, such as ideas, beliefs or values. Social facts are symbolic in nature because they are endowed with 'meanings'. The relationships between the symbolizing element, the signifier, and the meaning that is symbolized, the signified, as well as the relationships of similarity and difference among the various symbols of a given cultural system are often the focus of the semiotic perspective (Rossi 1983). The structural linguistic approach to fashion deviates from class differentiation and imitation models which classical theorists of fashion and some contemporary theorists (Bell 1947/1976; Bourdieu 1984) use in their discussions of fashion, and it tells us that the simple mechanism of imitation is inadequate to understand a process of contemporary fashion because fashion involves more than an imitation.

According to Barthes (1967) and Lurie (1981), clothes, not fashion, can be treated as part of a semiotic system that is used as means of communication. They explain how clothes communicate and what they communicate. Their

focus is on the specific items of clothing and the comparison between clothes and the features of language. Lurie (1981) argues that appearances 'speak' and employs the metaphor of clothes as language. She compares articles of clothing to foreign words and slang words, accessories and trimmings to adjectives and adverbs. In this way, she equates garments with words. People convey information and misinformation about occupation, origin, personality, opinions, tastes, sexual desires and current mood among others. According to Lurie (1981), clothing is a language and, therefore, it must have a vocabulary and a grammar like other languages. The vocabulary of clothes is like the vocabulary of a spoken tongue. She does not recognize any ambiguities inherent in the structure of appearance or the instability of meaning transmitted through clothing. While fashions or clothes do 'speak', it is unclear what they say. A semiotic approach, although limited, can be used to explain material objects, such as clothing, to some extent but not fashion which is an immaterial object.

Barthes's analysis of fashion (1967) is based on a system of meaning constructed from visual and linguistic details. He deconstructs each piece of garment in making a semiological analysis of 'clothing' although he calls it 'fashion'. For Barthes, fashion is a language in a structural sense. He looks at each item of clothing, but he uses the image of clothing in the fashion magazines and texts. He analyzes written fashion in technically linguistic terms, such as 'a jacket with open collar' of which 'a jacket' is an object, 'open' is a support and 'collar' is a variant. Object is a basic element or entity of dress. Details such as collar, sleeve or button are secondary elements, and each one of the 'supports' has 'variants' such as open/closed, wide/narrow and so forth. Numerous variations of objects, supports and variants, and meanings of fashion are found in these relationships and combinations. Changes in these variations create different fashions and what is fashionable. Barthes is concerned with the way fashion magazines depict clothes and what they say about clothes. His focus is the way it is organized and its rules.

However, despite the title of his book *The Fashion System* (1967), Barthes is not talking about a fashion system, but a clothing system. His analysis is useful in finding a distinction between these two separate systems. The clothing system teaches us the conventions about how and what to wear in a specific context because each social context conveys different meanings. There are assumptions about what Western clothes are supposed to look like. We have learned through socialization that a shirt usually has two sleeves or a pair of pants has two legs. Similarly, there are rules that we take for granted as far as dressing is concerned. These are unwritten laws, or 'folkways' in Sumner's term (Sumner 1906/1940; Sumner and Keller 1927), and these sartorial conventions make a clothing system. The standard clothing system for Western clothes helps us see the deviations from that system although the clothing system does not

explain the fashion system. My case studies of Japanese designers in Paris, especially the avant-garde, will show how they destroyed the traditional Western clothing system and invented a new clothing system, which fashion professionals in the West thought was based on the kimono system, while remaining within the traditional fashion system, that is the French establishment. I will examine that the concept of fashion encompasses more than clothes.

Similarly, Leopold (1992) relies on the notion of fashion as a system but not clothing. For Leopold, fashion system is the interrelationship between highly fragmented forms of production and equally diverse and often volatile patterns of demand. She argues that fashion incorporates dual concepts of fashion as a cultural phenomenon and as an aspect of manufacturing with an emphasis on production technology. She points out the important role of the clothing production and its history in creating fashion and dismisses the argument, unlike Blumer (1969), that consumer demand determines the creation of fashion. Leopold treats fashion as a material object and considers the fashion system as production determined by demand. On the other hand, Kroeber (1919) and Young (1939/1966) regard fashion as an independent system with its own logic of change and explain that there is a pattern of change established within the system. They take measurements of garments in fashion magazines and journals to present regular stylistic changes over time, but I question the accuracy and the significance of taking these measurements. It is also unclear whether they are studying fashion or clothing.

My employment of the term is probably closest to that of Davis's as he states (1992: 200): 'The study of fashion in the twentieth century . . . has for the most part been framed in terms of what I am inclined to call the "fashion system" model.' I share Davis's view (1992: 200) that 'the diffusion of influences from center to periphery . . . is conceived of in hierarchical terms . . . the core image of an innovating center, archetypically Paris with its highly developed haute couture establishment . . . remained securely in place.' However, Davis does not elaborate further what this fashion system consists of, how fashion spreads from the center to the periphery or the functions of this system. He takes Haute Couture as a highly developed institution as something that is given and does not explain why it is believed to be so exclusive. His analysis of the fashion system is, therefore, incomplete.

The system supports and perpetuates people's belief in fashion, and I define fashion as an institutional system, which is according to White and White (1965/1993: 2), a persistent network of beliefs, customs and formal procedures which together form an articulated social organization with an acknowledged central purpose. I argue that fashion systems exist only in certain cities where fashion is structurally organized. Drawing on these writers' notion of fashion as a system, I apply that concept to my understanding of the larger spectrum

of fashion, that is the system that produces fashion designers, who in turn, along with other fashion professionals, preserve and perpetuate the culture and ideology of fashion. In my analysis, I employ the word ' fashion system' but treat it as organizations, institutions, practices and individuals interacting with one another, and that legitimates fashion designers and their creativity but not to produce clothes which is a separate kind of manufacturing system.

Centralization of Fashion Hegemony in France

The phenomenon of fashion has historically been synonymous with French fashion, and anyone who is even slightly related to fashion or the fashion industry would agree that Paris has long been the fashion capital of the world because it has sought to position itself in that context and attempted to attract international business and investment. Some (Craik 1994; Finkelstein 1996) dismiss Paris as no longer the fashion capital and Haute Couture as elite fashion is no longer viable because fashion takes so many styles and forms that one cannot pinpoint one type of fashion. Craik (1994) suggests dissolving and reconstituting the term 'fashion' because it is often confined to the development of European fashion.

Before dismissing it or redefining it, I make an attempt to answer why the term 'fashion' has been used as an exclusive description of western elite fashion, French in particular. Fashion and clothing have been an important part of the French economy, and the garment industry was one of the largest employers of industrial labor in France and easily the largest employer of women workers. The garment trade in Paris employed the greatest number of Parisian workers in 1848 (Green 1997: 2), and later in the second half of the nineteenth century, the number of clothing workers almost doubled from 761,000 to 1,484,000 (Coffin 1996: 5). By 1946, clothing jobs had plummeted to 85,461 due to the Nazi deportation of many Jewish garment workers and increasing standardization in the industry, but again in 1962, the garment industry was the third largest in France employing over 90,000 people (Green 1997). However, the concentration of the garment industry in a particular city, whether it is New York, Paris or London, does not create a fashion center, nor does it produce fashion culture because the garment industry has nothing to do with fashion. France is not the largest importer nor exporter of apparel.[6] Moreover, it has become difficult to define French fashion as it has become international and complex. Kondo (1992: 178) explains:

> Multinational financing, licensing and the hiring of foreign designers have wrought dramatic changes in French design houses, refiguring the boundaries of 'Paris.' For

> years, Chanel has been the domain of the German Karl Lagerfeld. Milanese designer Gianfranco Ferré now heads the House of Dior, replacing long-regnant Marc Bohan. Where Japan is concerned, the multicultural mixing are equally significant. The venerable House of Grès, the epitome of French elegance, was purchased by the Japanese textile, apparel company Yagi Tsusho in 1988 . . . House of Cacharel, symbol of soft French femininity, hired a new head designer, Atsuro Tayama.

More recently, in 1996, two young British designers, John Galliano and Alexander McQueen, were recruited from the English fashion scene to design for Givenchy and Christian Dior respectively. The American designers, Marc Jacobs and Michael Kors, now design for Louis Vuitton and Céline respectively. The Dominican-American designer Oscar de la Renta withdrew as Pierre Balmain's couturier in January 2003 after ten years. Paris continues to be a site of aesthetic creation where cultural authority and hegemony are contested because of its international reception. Skov (1996: 133) states:

> It is hardly a criticism to say that Paris is but a myth, because this in fact is one of its strongest selling points. The haute couture houses – which for many signify the superiority of Paris fashion because here every single garment is made-to-measure – have experienced severe economic difficulties in the last decades . . . fashion houses make their money on perfumes, cosmetics and accessories-items that sell precisely because the mythical place of their origin, 'Paris' is part of their logo.

Many other fashion writers (Hollander 1994; Laver 1969/1995; Lipovetsky 1994; Perrot 1994; Remaury and Bailleux 1995; Roche 1994) also acknowledge the French authority of fashion and that it is the epicenter of good taste, but they fail to explain how, through what process and by whom this myth was created and is maintained. Steele (1988: 9) persuasively explains:

> The fashion leadership of Paris was not due to any particular spirit of frivolity or progressiveness on the part of Parisians. Nor is Paris fashion the product of individual creative genius, although this concept continues to play a large part in the mythology of fashion. The many anecdotes about the 'dictatorship' of the 'genius' of Paris fashion designers indicate a profound misunderstanding of the fashion process.

Fashion in France does not or did not emerge by accident nor was it a natural phenomenon. There are signs, which I will elaborate in subsequent chapters, that it is still the fashion capital although it is facing several challenges.

Ideology places a decisive role in creating any form of culture, and the fashion culture in Paris is no exception. According to Williams (1981), ideology is conscious or unconscious beliefs, attitudes, habits, feelings or assumptions, and there is also a connection between formal and conscious beliefs of a class

or other groups and the cultural production associated with it. Ideology is shaped by social relationships, human activity, values and consciousness. Williams (1981) further explains that the values and norms disseminated through culture create and sustain ideology and beliefs. Therefore, I explore how the culture of fashion, supported by the system, is produced, maintained and reproduced. Fashion is a kind of institutional subculture with specific functions and creates stratification within the system among the insider designers.

The French fashion trade organization, known as *La Fédération Française de la Couture, du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode*[7] (hereafter referred as the Federation), plays a pivotal role within this system and has been instrumental in creating institutions that control the mobilization process of fashion professionals and organize fashion events and activities in Paris. I place this trade organization at the core of my empirical analysis and elaborate the institutional network among organizations and individuals and examine the structural conditions influencing the decision of gatekeepers, such as journalists and editors, in the system of fashion. Fashion is very much the product of a chain of a great many individual decisions made by people interconnected within the various niches in the industry.

The institutionalization of modern fashion in France resulted in the demarcation between two groups of designers, just as it drew a line in the consumption of fashion between those who consumed the latest fashion and those who imitated what the other class wore (Simmel 1904/1957; Veblen 1899/1957). The designers in the system, whom I call 'elite designers', reaffirm their status through continuous participation in the official fashion shows which serve as a ritual that reproduces and reinforces the symbolic meaning of fashion, much like the Durkheimian analysis of religion (Durkheim 1912/1965). However, this demarcation is democratic, arbitrary and fluid not only for consumers but also for producers. With the modern version of the fashion system in place, once reserved for the elites, fashion has become more democratized and accessible to the masses. Institutional innovation has had an effect on the legitimation of new designers and new styles. It institutionalized elite clothes as Haute Couture (high fashion or high sewing) and Prêt-à-Porter (ready-to-wear or ready-made). Recently a new category Demi-Couture (half-couture) was added, although it is not yet an official institution, in an attempt to nurture and welcome younger designers to the group of Haute Couture. This system divides designers into those who are inside and outside the system. The insiders are granted a particular status and prestige in fashion and occupy the dominant position. Fashion is ideological in that it is part of the process in which a social group, that is a group of elite designers, establishes, sustains and reproduces the image of fashion.

Fashion Designers as Cultural Producers

Crane's several empirical studies (1997a, 1997b, 2000) on the fashion industry and designers are used as the point of departure from which I could start and narrow my empirical observation of Japanese designers in Paris. Fashion has always been analyzed from the perspective of those who are adopting or consuming fashion because prior to the institutionalization, fashion emerged out of the upper-class men and women, and thus the producer and consumer of fashion shared the same origin. Those who designed wore the clothes, and those executed the designs remained anonymous. Designer as an occupation is a modern phenomenon that began with the institutionalized system of fashion in France in 1868 which will be discussed fully. Fashion designated what elites wore. This presumption has faded with social change and democratization. Fashion is no longer only a trickle-down process coming from top to bottom as Tarde (1903) and others (Simmel 1904/1957; Spencer 1896/1966; Sumner 1906/1940; Sumner and Keller 1927; Tönnies 1887/1963; Veblen 1899/1957) argue but has also become a 'trickle-across' process as Spencer (1896/1996: 206–208) suggests in explaining competitive imitation or even a 'trickle-up' process as Blumer (1969) and Polhemus (1994, 1996) postulate. Although I do not deny the power of the wearer to convert clothing into fashion even in contemporary society, my research findings show that it is the institutions that determine and diffuse which clothes will originate from Paris and become fashion. Furthermore, none of the early writers had a place for designers' individual creativity, nor did they anticipate the changes in class structure and attitudes toward authority that would prompt some people to reject upper-class fashion.

Crane is one of the few sociologists who specifically focuses on a discussion of designers as an occupation (1993, 1997a, 1997b). She analyzes the social position of a designer in US, France, UK and Japan, and examines the styles that the designers create. Designers are rarely included in the sociological analysis of cultural producers, such as artists, painters, sculptors, writers, dancers, musicians or writers. While Crane (2000) argues that a single fashion genre, Haute Couture, has been replaced by three major categories of styles, each with its own genre (luxury fashion design, industrial fashion and street styles), I focus on designers rather than designs and classify according to types of designers within the system of hierarchy, and each group of designers constitutes a category, that is the designers who belong to the French fashion system and those who do not. Their placement inside or outside the system affects them socially, economically and symbolically. There is also a separate hierarchy among the insider designers.

Like Crane, Bourdieu (1975, 1980) insists on the importance of the producers of cultural goods. In case of fashion, it is the fashion designers. They are very

much responsible for manufacturing clothes which is the first stage of fashion production. Those clothes will later be legitimized and diffused as fashion. As aristocratic influences began to diminish, there was a need for someone else to create fashion. With the disappearance of clear class boundaries and having no subject to imitate from, the emphasis has shifted from the wearer of fashion to the producer and creator of actual clothing. The social positions of fashion designers have risen.

Crane (2000) examines how the nature of fashion organizations affects what is available to consumers and how, in turn, certain types of consumers influence what is defined as fashion, but she does not discuss how the changes in organizational structure would affect designers' reputation and status. The hierarchical structure that was the result of the French fashion trade organization must be included in the discussion of designers as an occupation. Although Crane (2000) implies the gradual disappearance of French fashion supremacy stating that by the late 1960s, the increasing decentralization and complexity of the fashion system necessitated the development of fashion forecasting, and fashion forecasters play a major role in predicting future trends and what types of clothing will sell, I find in my study that many of the forecasters rely on the designers' collections in Paris, make every effort to get into 'invitation-only' fashion shows and predict what may become the future trends. Company designers and retail buyers from other countries come to Paris to purchase fashion items as samples to 'steal' ideas.

Therefore, my analysis of designers is social organizational and not aesthetic. I do not define fashion as something more special and the great works of genius. Along with other fashion professionals, I treat designers as cultural producers. However, I will discuss the works of designers, that is Japanese designers in Paris, because the understanding of the social structure and organization of the fashion system includes, in addition to the designers' role in the system, what they produce. We cannot dismiss designers and their designs, their fabrics and silhouettes, and the manufacturing process of different types of clothing must be taken into account in order to fully understand fashion and clothing. Their conditions of work become clear and meaningful only in the context of the social institutions of the exclusive world of fashion. My intention is not to define creativity, but I question the meaning of creativity and its labeling process and also indicate how widely the concept of creativity can be interpreted. Fashion system converts clothing into fashion. Fashion is a symbol manifested through clothing.

The examination of Japanese designers in Paris and their designs helps us make a systemic differentiation between clothes and fashion which are two independent, autonomous entities. The actual relationship between these two systems, which has never been clearly investigated, varies according to time,

place, conditions, and types of clothing. It is fashion as a system that promotes clothing as fashionable and timely. Although fashion obviously relies on clothing as its raw material, it is highly selective and situates itself within a particular system of hierarchy of success, reputation and power. Fashion activities and events are regulated and controlled by specific individuals, groups, institutions and organizations that are responsible in making fashion. There are complex and interdependent roles undertaken by everyone involved, and they respond to the need of the system and carry out different tasks.

Fashion requires a mechanism to conduct the transformation process. The fashion system, that provides that mechanism, rests on shared norms and beliefs that creative designers are found in Paris. In addition to the questions about the structure of the system, the means of status-building, the patterns of rewards, the distribution of power among gatekeepers and the functions of various institutions within the fashion system must also be explained. The designers' decisions and behavior depend, basically, on the costs and benefits that they perceive. The French fashion system is not the only system, but I argue that it is the ideal type of a fashion system and is still the most influential in creating designers' reputation. It is reproduced in New York, London, Milan and Tokyo.[8] Los Angeles, Sydney and São Paolo are following suit. They are, however, weaker systems which work off and compete with the French system. I will briefly compare the French system to the Japanese system to point out some of the reasons that force Japanese designers to come to Paris.

Outline of the Book

This book has two parts: 'Fashion Culture in France' and 'Interdependence between Japanese Designers and the French Fashion System'.

The four chapters in Part 1 explain the fashion phenomenon in France before and after the formation of the modern fashion system and examine why designers and fashion professionals all congregate in Paris. In Chapter 1, I trace the history of fashion practice in France during the reign of Louis XIV and investigate how and where fashion originated. Chapter 2 is the discussion of the modern fashion system in France situating the fashion trade organization as the center around which all other parts in the system revolve. French fashion institutions have gone through several structural changes before it reached the current form in order to adapt to societal demands and people's clothing choices. The year 1868 is the turning point in the history of French fashion not only because that is when the organization started but also because this is when the relationship between client and seamstress was reversed. Chapter 3 examines the past and present global diffusion process and mechanism of

fashion information and the critical role that gatekeepers in the modern system play. The relation between designers and their publics are mediated through a variety of social mechanisms that provide institutional channels for the flow of their image and the clothes. Social and technical differences between Haute Couture, Demi-Couture and Prêt-à-Porter will be explored in Chapter 4 to understand the intrinsic nature of these different types of clothing.

The chapters in Part 2 focus on the interdependent relationship between Japanese designers and the modern fashion system in France. Chapter 5 begins with the discussion of the Japanese fashion movement in 1970. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8, I introduce three types of Japanese designers who became successful in Paris, as each type of designer provides a model for recognition and legitimacy.

A thorough investigation of the organizational structure of the French fashion system is necessary to understand how institutions create fashion. At the same time, it will enable us make the connection between the structural change of the organization and the entry of new outsider designers into the system.

Notes

1. For studies focusing on particular styles of contemporary clothing or clothing choices, see Craik (1994), Crane (2000), Davis (1992), Finkelstein (1996), Hollander (1994), Lurie (1981), McDowell (1997), Polhemus (1994, 1996), and Storm (1987) among others. For social history of costume and dress, see Boucher (1967/1987), De Marly (1980a, 1987), Delpierre (1997), Laver (1937, 1969/1995), Perrot (1994), Ribeiro (1988), Roche (1994) and Steele (1985, 1988).

2. Throughout this book, the term 'designer' includes those who design for Haute Couture and/or Prêt-à-Porter. Otherwise, specific terms, such as 'Haute Couture designers/Couturiers' and 'Prêt-à-Porter designers' will be used.

3. Work in the production perspective can be found in the study of art worlds (Becker 1982; Bystryn 1978; Crane 1987; DiMaggio and Useem 1978; White and White 1965/1993), publishing companies and literary culture (Clark 1987; Griswold 2000; Powell 1978), and popular culture (Kealy 1979; Peterson 1978; Peterson and Berger 1975). They address the production processes and institutions of cultural objects.

4. For the specifics of my research methods and process, see Appendices A and B in this book.

5. Herbert Spencer (1896/1966) calls this practice 'reverential imitation' as opposed to 'competitive imitation'. Reverential imitation is prompted by respect for the one imitated while competitive imitation is prompted by the desire to assert equality with a person (Spencer 1896/1966: 206–8).

6. China is the world's largest textile and apparel producer and exporter, and the US is the world's largest apparel importer (Ramey 2003: 2).

7. It is translated as The French Federation of Couture and Prêt-à-Porter for Couturiers and Designers of Fashion.

8. There are similar systems and organizations in other fashion cities: the Camera della Moda in Milan, the Council of Fashion Designers in America (CFDA) in New York, the British Fashion Council in London, and the Council for Fashion Designers (CFD) in Tokyo.

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Part 1

Fashion Culture in France

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1

Fashion Dominance in France: History and Institutions

The fashion practice begun at and dictated by French court society at the apex of the social structure in the seventeenth century is an origin of the modern fashion system that consists of various institutions. Fashion culture in the Old Regime received its structural support from the court of Louis XIV (1638–1715), also known as the Sun King, who provided the leadership of fashion and taste. Fashion is fundamental to any account of the historical development of Louis XIV's sovereignty because fashionable appearance was a specific feature of the national character (Roche 1994: 47), and dressing aesthetically was vital to elites of the period. The king used festivals and balls to exercise and maintain his political power not only in France but throughout Europe, and the adorned outward appearance was used as part of the political expansion strategy. Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683), Louis XIV's minister of finance, worked to centralize the French luxury trade, including fashion. The French court was the model for all the courts of Europe and was instrumental in initiating the fashion trends, many of which were copied. Fashion became a symbol of wealth, luxury and power. Wearing ostentatious clothes was always a sign of rank and prestige. Thus from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, a high degree of artificiality and decorative exuberance in dress was required of upper-class men and women (Roche 1994: 46).[1]

Prior to the modern fashion system that started in 1868, there were clear divisions of labor among fabric, trimming and clothes merchants, dressmakers, tailors and those who initiate a trend (Coffin 1996; Crowston 2001; Sargentson 1996). Each played his/her part in the culture of fashion in France. It was not couturiers who initiated and guided the fashion trends. They were not responsible for producing 'fashion' but were part of the guild system involved in the manufacturing of clothes. The clothes-making process was systematic and was institutionalized but not 'fashion', although the nature and characteristics of each institution are still reminiscent in today's fashion system. During the Old Regime the fashion phenomenon was controlled by those who wore the latest styles, but the change did not occur on a regular basis as modern

fashion does. As Zeldin (1977: 434) explains, women's fashions used to move very slowly, partly because making women's clothes, with all their lace and embroidery, took so long that they could not be worn until many months after they were ordered.

This chapter briefly explores the cultural history of fashion phenomenon that became dominant in France during the reign of Louis XIV and institutions of clothing production, which I distinguish from fashion production. I explain how fashion supremacy in France was sustained despite the revolutions that suppressed the guilds as well as the luxury and textile industries which supplied the basic ground for the French dominance in fashion.

Fashion and Social Mobility in Europe since the Fourteenth Century

Tracing back the political history of Europe, we see that fashion began not in France (Laver 1969/1995; Lipovetsky 1994; Perrot 1994; Steele 1988) but in Italy where it was closely associated with the rise of urban life and the middle class in the mid-fourteenth century (Steele 1988: 18), both of which favored the development of fashion innovation and competition.[2] This is when the radically new type of dress, which was sharply differentiated according to gender began to appear, and clothes for men and for women took on new forms. Something which we can already call 'fashion' was becoming a social phenomenon (Laver 1969/1995: 62). The beginning of fashion marks the beginning of gender-specific clothing for elites. Both men and women used to wear a long coat, a sort of beltless pleated smock that reached to the ankles, but then men's dress became shorter, exposing their legs, so that they were differentiated from women who continued to wear long robes (Perrot 1994).

According to Sombart (1967), in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Italy, fortunes were no longer based on the feudal economy, and capital accumulation came from trade with and exploitation of Asia, discovery of new sources of silver and other metals, and private money lending at high interest rates. Later in the fifteenth century, Germany followed this pattern of capital accumulation, and then after Columbus discovered America in 1492, Spain became politically, economically and sartorially dominant and influenced fashion in Europe. The power also shifted to France and Holland launching the dual path of French and Dutch fashions, and modern fashion spread to the court of Burgundy, which has been called 'the cradle of fashion' and 'the most voluptuous and splendid court in Europe' (Steele 1988: 19). Then England followed the growth of wealth in the seventeenth century. Therefore, there was an enormous increase in consumption of luxuries from about the beginning

of the seventeenth century, and by the end of the century, the increased wealth was prevalent in Europe.

European society was no longer dominated by an aristocracy as they were threatened by the bourgeoisie and losing its absolute social privilege. A major phase in the emergence of a new society had begun slowly, and social positions became increasingly mobile and fluid.[3] Wealthy men aspired to be admitted to socially superior classes not merely by virtue of the accumulation of money but also by the possession of expensive material goods although within the upper class circles during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was still not respectable to earn money by commerce (Sombart 1967). Acceptance into a socially superior class, the gentry or the nobility, was the ultimate aim of the wealthy man. The newly rich bourgeois cherished a longing for noble titles.

Sombart (1967) further explains that in France, this desire to rise socially was possibly even stronger than in other countries because the nobility was in a privileged position and to belong to it meant not only social but also material advantage. The number of wealthy merchants or bankers elevated to noble dignity increased greatly at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. The nobility used to have exclusive claim to the upper social stratum, but these *nouveaux riches* now also became a part of the ruling class. In the course of the two centuries between 1600 and 1800, an entirely new stratum of society had been formed from the amalgamation of the old nobility and the new wealth (Sombart 1967). The rise of fashion in France occurs precisely at this time. Thus, from the late fourteenth century, fashion had moved across a variety of trendsetting centers before it reached France, following patterns of trade and political power across Europe. It was the political fragmentation of medieval Europe that had an impact on the evolution of fashion and the development of fashion centers (Steele 1988; Lipovetsky 1994). Fashion prosperity parallels the change in the structure of European societies.

Louis XIV intended to create and was successful in creating the most magnificent court in the history of the Western world. He organized balls, masquerades and banquets at court. The enormous prestige of the Court of Versailles had resulted in the dominance of France all over Europe. It was the French court that set the tone of the latest fashion with the help of queens, princes, princesses and courtesans (Griffin 2001). Although fashion was not yet institutionalized, it was centralized in France by the king within the court who always wanted to be dressed in cloth of gold and silver and chains of diamonds; and it is a wonder the ostrich did not become extinct, the demands for its plumes were so great (De Marly 1987). As Veblen (1899/1957) notes, the social significance of appearance, luxury and fashion were a visual display of political power. Under Louis XIV, the French promoted expansively their

fashion and culture. Thus, the 'frenchification' of fashion began with Louis XIV who tried to make France the arbiter of Europe, not only politically but also in matters of taste. Every effort was made to make French fashion supreme.

De Marly (1987) gives numerous accounts of Louis XIV's obsession with his appearance and of how his attitudes affected others around him.[4] For instance, he spent an hour and a half a day getting dressed, of which an hour was devoted to waxing his moustache in front of the mirror, even when he was with the army. His ministers shut themselves up in a chamber for days to discuss the best position of a ribbon on a suit. A famous French aristocratic intellectual, Saint Simon (quoted in De Marly 1987: 64–5) describes how important appearance was at the time:

> Whether pregnant, ill, less than six weeks after a delivery, and whatever the ferocity of the weather, they had to be in the *grand habit*,[5] dressed and laced into their corsets, to go to Flanders, or . . . to dance, to stay up, attend festivities, eat, be gay and good company

This was what the king demanded. He set the fashion, caused beards to be shaved, or hair to grow longer or shorter. He gave the lead. The court followed suit, as did the rest of France, which took the court as its mode (Roche 1994: 48). As many classical sociologists (Simmel 1904/1957; Spencer 1896/1966; Sumner 1906/1940; Sumner and Keller 1927; Tarde 1903; Tönnies 1887/1963; Veblen 1899/1966) pointed out a century ago, imitation has always been the essence of fashion. As the king became older, white-haired wigs began to emerge towards the late 1690s, and although Louis XIV never wore them himself, these wigs became very common as if to honor the king's advancing years (De Marly 1987).

He also undertook his own image management seriously and carefully crafted and projected his image to the public so that his authority would not weaken. He was successful in staging his character. He had his personal painter, Charles Le Brun, responsible for the royal image (De Marly 1987). Since Louis XIV considered himself the equal of emperors, Le Brun enforced the imperial impression by portraying the king as an ancient Roman emperor. Image, which seems to exist in people's mind in an abstract sense, can be of critical competitive advantage. Image can be used to reinforce existing positive images, neutralize and change unfavorable ones, although it may take longer, or create new images where few or no images exist. The image of fashion, that is French fashion, originates with Louis XIV and has endured for more than three centuries.

Colbert and the French Luxury Industry

France's position as the leading historic fashion center owes much not only to the ambitious monarch of Louis XIV, but also his minister of finance, Jean Baptiste Colbert (1619–83) who was hired by the king's chief minister Cardinal Mazarin (1602–61) to look after his financial affairs. On Louis XIV's deathbed, Mazarin recommended Colbert to the king, who made him comptroller and general minister of finance in 1665 (Mongredien 1963). Colbert believed in the mercantilist doctrine that the expansion of the commerce was the key to state wealth. Mercantilism was a way of thinking about the government and society, and also the relationship between the government and the economy (Boucher 1985; Cole 1964). It de-emphasized the religious basis and put great stress upon the state's freedom to pursue its own interests. It was based on the principle that the entire population and all of its resources and talents were part of a single economic 'machine', guided and controlled by the ruler of the state. The government saw it as their proper role to intervene in the workings of the economy, to promote certain new industries, establish state-owned industries and grant special monopolies to companies and merchants whose activities would increase production and trade since any increase in production and trade created more income for the state (Cole 1964). His economic policies, what became known as *Colbertisme*, were all geared in this direction.

With the power and prestige of the French court that was crucial to the rise of French fashion, central to Colbert's policies was the luxury economy, which encouraged ostentation and imitation (Roche 1994: 48). His economic motivation was to centralize the manufacturing of the luxury goods in Paris and keep them domestic while promoting exports so that the power of France might be manifested throughout Europe to gain broader leadership. At the time, Italian artifacts defined the aesthetic taste and were central to European fashion and design (Mukerji 1997: 101), and it was from Italy that aristocratic elites were bringing back fashionable goods. Mukerji (1997: 101) explains how seriously the king and Colbert took this:

> For Louis XIV and his ministers, who took French claims to greatness more than seriously, having both the Great Tradition and trends in fashion located so firmly in Italy was unacceptable. If the French state was to become a center of European civilization, not just power, it had to take on cultural leadership. So, Louis XIV followed classical precedent and had his achievements monumentalized through artworks, while Colbert manipulated fashion to make French goods desirable to elite consumers throughout Europe. Material beauty was more a matter of power and glory than an aesthetic issue to these men . . . French works had to surpass anything made in Italy to make this reign an aesthetic as well as military success.

Colbert was aware that the tastes of the elites were becoming economically and culturally influential, and therefore, fashionable items were beginning to be recognized as forces affecting international trade. The state was trying to use legislation to regulate imports and promote exports. Sumptuary laws were enacted to limit clothing choices, and trade sanctions and duties were imposed to restrict access to foreign goods. Colbert believed that if elites imported clothing and other consumer items in order to remain fashionable, it could easily destroy local manufacturing so he wanted to make fine goods for aristocrats and financiers, who were the ones who had the money to spend on luxury items (Mukerji 1997). Colbert claimed he just wanted to get French consumers to buy French goods. To do this, he had to make the results fashionable. If local French artisans and craftsmen were able to produce goods that pleased aristocratic tastes throughout Europe, they could also receive financial benefits from the international market for their products. Through a state system regulating production, the royal and state-sanctioned manufacturers were set up by Colbert to design precisely to meet the demands of fashion. Colbert brought artisans from Italy to train French workers to manufacture fashionable objects, and they combined the newly learned techniques with distinctive French tastes, materials and craft traditions. The new arrangement shifted both cultural and economic power from independent artisans and city guilds to the state, making fashion a political tool for empowering the central government.

Since textiles were the foundation of the fashion industry, Colbert also worked to create the silk industry in Lyons. The French government initiated protective legislation designed to promote French silk weaving to compete with the Italian luxury textiles. By royal patronage, encouragement, through recruitment of skilled Italian craftsmen and by foreign market expansion, a prosperous domestic industry was established. Colbert's recognition of the importance of these industries to fashion supremacy is clear in his public statement (Sombart 1967: 50): 'French fashions are to France what the mines of Peru are to Spain.' Elites throughout Europe by the 1660s were already beginning to imitate French fashions (Mukerji 1997: 105), and the fashion supremacy in France now set the tone for Europe. Paris as a city was successful in creating an international reputation for luxuries. Latest fashions are found in Paris, and foreigners and Parisians make pilgrimages to the source of Paris fashions (Steele 1988). Charles de Secondat Montesquieu (1689–1755), a French philosopher, writes in 1721 in his *The Persian Letters* (Letter No.99):

> A woman who leaves Paris to spend six months in the country comes back looking antiquated as if she had been away for thirty years. A son will fail to recognize a portrait of his mother because the dress in which she had been painted seems so

> alien; he will imagine that it is a picture of some Red Indian squaw, or that the artist decided to paint some fantasy of his own.

Similarly, a half century later in 1772 the Marquis de Caraccioli (quoted in Perrot 1994: 17) sees fashion everywhere as a state of mind rather than a cut of clothes:

> To be in Paris without seeing fashions is to have one's eyes closed. Squares, streets, and shops, horse fitting, clothes, and persons . . . everything displays fashion . . . A fifteen-day-old outfit is already very out of date among the well-dressed. Fashionable people want new materials, the latest publications, modern ideas, and trendy friends. When a new fashion hatches, the Capital become infatuated, and no one dare appear unless decked out in the new finery.

With paternalistic plans and guidance, the splendor of court life and the quality fabric produced in Lyons and other centers prepared the foundation of the three-hundred-year span of French fashion (Sombart 1967). Colbert's success in concentrating the luxury trade in Paris is one of the most important factors in the development of fashion (Roche 1994).

The Guild Systems: Regulating Clothing Production and Sales

While fashion production was not yet regulated during the reign of Louis XIV, the process of clothing production was controlled. Those who sold fabrics, trimming or clothes, seamstresses and tailors, all belonged to respective guilds whose essence was regulation. A system of trade guilds emerged in the Middle Ages to regulate production in the artisan trades and sale of those goods. The guilds, as publicly recognized bodies, governed the labor market and how apprentices acquired skill to guarantee standards of quality (Coffin 1996; Crowston 2001; Sargentson 1996). Furthermore, by imposing specific criteria for entrance into a trade, guilds limited the labor supply, and by defining wages, hours, tools and techniques, they regulated both working conditions and the production processes. The guilds, which were monopolistic in nature, sought complete control over their own local markets and excluded outsiders.

In the clothing trade, guild regulations had carefully separated selling fabric from selling clothing and barred seamstresses and tailors from stocking and selling fabrics (Perrot 1994: 36) and encroaching on the domain of the textile merchants in order to regulate competition (Coffin 1996: 24), and this separation was found only in this trade (Coffin 1996; Perrot 1994). Those who wanted their clothes made bought cloth and trimmings from a fabric

merchant and took them to a tailor or seamstress. Thus the making and selling were confined to specific channels determined by the guilds' complex and meticulous regulatory apparatus (Perrot 1994: 36).

As Colbert set out to transform France into a great manufacturing and trading nation in the seventeenth century, his encouragement of the luxury goods sector extended not only to manufacturing but also to the corporation of merchants or mercers, who were given rights to trade more freely than any other Parisian corporation (Sargentson 1996). They had traditionally played a strong role in the luxury economy since their incorporation in the twelfth century, trading especially in imported goods.[6] With Colbert's support, they again played a pivotal role within the luxury market and were largely responsible for the introduction of new and exotic fashionable items into Paris, and especially during the course of the eighteenth century, their shops became spaces for the display, examination and consumption of novelty items. Although they did not engage in manufacturing, the mercers' access to the best craftsmen and manufacturers and also to imported materials denied to other trades, in addition to their rights to finish goods, enabled them to manipulate these fashion markets (Sargentson 1996).

Mercers, as described by Sargentson (1996), are those with a collective institutional identity as they considered themselves unique as a corporation of individuals which did not work with their hands, and they employed this distinction to position themselves within the hierarchy of the Six Corps.[7] Although the other five corporations within the Six Corps were all merchant bodies, many were engaged in manufacturing. The mercers were considered to occupy a higher social status, and they lobbied for privilege and used litigation as a means of protecting their rights against commercial competition from other groups (Sargentson 1996). To become a mercer required French nationality and three years' continuous apprenticeship, followed by a further three years' work. Since the twelfth century, the mercers had been governed by statutes which prohibited them from manufacturing but allowed them wide trading rights until a restructuring of the Parisian corporations in 1776. Until then, the regulations of 1613 remained more or less effective. Among the most important of their functions was the control of import and export of wares; the limiting of the number permitted in any trade; the regulation of wages and prices, and the inspection and standardization of goods (Roche 1994). Every member had to take an oath to obey the rules and ordinances and contribute his annual dues. As a reward for his membership, he was privileged to share in business transactions and in bargains, and was, at the same time, given a status in the community.

On the other hand, seamstresses and tailors who were part of the artisanal world of the Old Regime belonged to separate guild systems that strictly

regulated and controlled the production process of clothes (Coffin 1996).[8] The tailors' guild was not organized until 1402, when clothing became gender-specific, and men and women stopped dressing alike in robes and loose coats. The earlier garments required only basic skills on the part of the clothing manufacturers. By creating new imperatives in design, cut, sizes, pressing and sewing methods, the shift from the loose and floating system to a fitted one thus gave rise to the new craft of 'tailor' (Perrot 1994: 206). The tailoring trade consolidated in the eighteenth century controlling all clothing sales and production. Within this system, the most powerful guild tailors were merchants, and in the production sphere, master tailors ranked first, then came those who sewed. The tailors' guild was patriarchal in nature, and women who belonged to guild tailors' families, such as tailors' wives and daughters, were hired as sewers, and they were crucial to the business although women in general were often excluded from working in the trade.

In 1675, Colbert authorized female dressmakers to form a guild as there were disadvantages in having men dress women for modesty's sake (Crowston 2001; Perrot 1994: 36) although until 1781, the making of bodices for women and children remained the privilege of the powerful tailors' guild. The female dressmakers first handled not clothing but linens, such as household linens, babies' clothes, breeches for women, shirts, night-shirts and handkerchiefs. Unlike the tailors, the linen drapers formed a separate merchant guild selling others' goods. Then they began to produce and sell their own linens in the seventeenth century. To acquire membership, a girl needed to serve three years as an apprentice, two years as a worker and be at least twenty-two years old (Coffin 1996: 31).

Therefore, seamstresses, tailors, merchants and the luxury economy promoted by Colbert set the stage for French fashions to prosper. Although they were not insignificant in the dominance of French fashion, they were not yet responsible for popularizing the fashion trends. Aristocrats and the nobility were the indisputable leaders for styles that still originated at the court (Perrot 1994: 17) while the rest in the trade remained anonymous.

Sumptuary Laws: Regulating Fashion Consumption

Restrictions were imposed not only on tailors, dressmakers and merchants but also on consumers. The maintenance of status and class distinctions and separateness is the universal reason for sumptuary laws,[9] which intended to limit or regulate people's private expenditure, and such legislation has been evident in Western cultures since ancient Greece (Hunt 1996). Legislation for this purpose is most needed when money begins to be diffused downward so

that more people can afford to try to imitate the styles of their superiors. Thus, as noted earlier, in Europe in the Middle Ages, when the feudal system began to collapse and a merchant class began to acquire more of the resources of the nobility, the ruling nobles began enacting sumptuary laws designed to prevent the merchants from copying their lifestyle. For example, in the sixteenth century, it was the fashion among the European aristocrats to decorate their shoes with a rose; but, as the fashion continued, grew larger and more ornate with jewels and embroidery, the courts and the legislature tried to prevent the commoners from wearing these shoes and appearing to have a higher social position (Rossi 1976). In all European nations, governmental authorities made many attempts to hold back the flow of fashion by the use of sumptuary laws, which were instruments of political, social and economic regulation (Perrot 1994).

In France, according to Roche (1994: 56), the sumptuary laws promoted the growth of fashion in France by mobilizing the inventiveness of her artisans and by giving to the court the motor role in sartorial distinctions. As early as the thirteenth century, the French had laws regulating by rank the number of dresses one could own and the value of the materials used in them, and the laws slowly spread across Europe (Hunt 1996). The law not only regulated how much cloth a person was allowed to use for clothing, but who could wear what style. Fabric types were assigned by class, and anyone dressing out of class could be penalized. Nobility and royalty were assigned the fine materials, such as silk, and colors, such as red and purple, were restricted to the ruling class.

Louis XIV, who encouraged fashion to prosper, at the same time gave precise regulations for fashion consumption according to minute distinctions of rank. Details like gold braid and buttons were regulated according to one's social position and circumstances, and materials were even prescribed according to season: taffeta in the summer and light fabrics in the fall or spring; furs only on All Saints Day or at Easter (Perrot 1994). Occasionally he relaxed the laws restricting the use of lace, but he declared that the use of brocade belonged to himself, the princes of his family and those of his subjects upon whom he might be pleased to bestow the 'privilege', such as the right to wear blue embroidery (Steele 1988: 24). In the legislation issued in 1661 (De Marly 1987: 51), it stated that:

> decoration on clothes should not be more than two fingers high, and men might only have lace or trimming around the collar on the hem of a cloak, down the sides of canons and breeches, on the seams of sleeves, around the head of a sleeve, down the center back seam, and down the buttons front and around the buttonholes . . . Women might only wear lace or trimmings around the hem of the petticoat and

down the front of gown and skirts and around the bodices. Merchants who sold foreign lace and trimming would be fined.

Further restrictions were issued in 1664, and the declaration was renewed in 1778 banning the wearing of foreign lace and ornamentation. The authorities codified the cut, materials and colors. In many parts of Europe, aristocrats tried to confine fashion within their arena because fashion was synonymous with wealth and social power. Courtiers were less and less free to dress as they pleased. The king limited the process and extent of fashion diffusion to keep some items unreachable so that its exclusivity and scarcity were preserved.

Therefore, the consumption of fashion and the origins of the latest styles were restricted by the legitimate authority by means of sumptuary laws that controlled consumption and that limited what people could and could not wear. These laws centralized fashion at court, ensuring that the most fashionable styles could come only from aristocrats. Clothing reveals aspects of the structure and functioning of societies because it both supports and proclaims the hierarchization, regulation, mobility or immobility of social groups (Perrot 1994). These evident markers were displayed to preserve social distinctions, and thus the system of control was instituted. As the society became more democratic and social distinction less evident, the fashion authority shifted from the court to couturiers and designers. Modern fashion as a system comes with the established social position of those who manufactured clothes.

Suppression of Fashion during the Revolutions

Since clothing, fashion and appearance were all too important for the French, transforming people's appearance was the very first stage of the breakdown of the traditional ideology (Hunt 1984). The influences, which were to shape the French Revolution in 1789, were already at work before the reign of Louis XVI. On the eve of the Revolution, France had a prosperous population and a bankrupt government. A rapidly growing middle class, generally excluded from politics, an ineffective monarch and inefficient government machinery, an articulate group of philosophers, whose criticisms of the social and political ills were finding a wide audience, contributed to what was finally the end of the old order. The tide of the Revolution swept away courtly customs and aristocratic privilege along with luxurious items, such as brocades, laces, jewels and panniers,[10] of the Old Regime. A newly conceived democratic society, equality and liberty for people were starting to emerge. Under the Old Regime the different orders, many professions and trades, such as nobles, clergymen and judges, had been identified by their clothing, Revolutionaries wanted to

break with the system of invidious social distinctions, but they continued to believe that dress revealed something about the person: you could tell a person's political character from the way he or she dressed (Hunt 1984: 82).

Pre-revolutionary style was used to differentiate between the wealthy, the noble and the commoners. The revolutionaries had to eliminate all of those symbolic connections to monarchy and the king's body as revolutionary rhetoric insisted on a complete break with the past, and it called into question all customs, traditions and way of life (Hunt 1984: 55–6). Dress, the mode of appearance, was an important aspect of the definition of revolutionary practice. They used dress as a powerful, visual symbol of their opposition to the status quo: they simplified dress and brought it closer to working attire. Thus, the visually defiant emblems of the Revolution were the laborer's rough trousers and a coarse scarf known as *sans-culottes* and *sans-cravates*[11] respectively. The red cap, adopted from ancient Rome and Greece, where it was supposedly a badge of liberty, symbolized their republican sentiments. Hunt (1984: 75) explains how appearance was used as a political message:

> In the early years after 1789 revolutionaries emphasized the elimination of odious distinctions of dress . . . certain aspects of personal decoration might signal adherence or antipathy to the Revolution; the color of one's cockade and even the material of the cockade (wool was less pretentious than silk) were significant. After 1792, social equality became an increasingly important consideration in dress. Some aspiring politicians began to wear the short jacket, long trousers, and even the clogs of the sans-culottes, the urban popular classes. Militants of the sections in Paris frequently wore the red Phrygian bonnet or liberty cap (in wool, of course), though most bourgeois leaders disdained such displays and continued to wear breeches and ruffled shirts.

Furthermore, since the French silk industry had declined during the Revolution, silk had to be replaced. The new thin cotton and muslin replacements were most suitable to the loose, easy-flowing Empire style[12] that was in trend. Sheer lightweight formal gowns were worn over little or no undergarments. The bulky, high headdresses of the rococo period gave way to short haircuts and small hats or even none. The Revolution brought the end of fashion that originated in court society since it resulted in the acute crisis of the luxury trades, and the guild, with its master-apprentice system of practical training, had been dissolved during the Revolution (White and White 1965/1993: 27). The abolition of these restrictions gave manufacturers new and potentially lucrative ways to combine the two activities. Women's fashions soon began to regain their more elaborate form, while male fashions reflected a real change because a positive social value was now placed on work and working men were now viewed in a more positive light. Their new styles were most suitable to the merchant class, the new elite.

The year 1848 was again witness to revolution in France. The government was constituted as a Republic under Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte first, and then the Second Empire named him Emperor Napoleon III. The establishment of the Empire was nowhere more welcomed than in the drapery trade and the world of fashion (Saunders 1955). Court life with its balls and festivals again provided a stage for fashion experimentation, and fashion became highly competitive. Saunders (1955: 92) describes how fashion again became an important part of people's lives during the Second Empire:

> Dress now occupied the minds of women to an extent that scarcely seems credible to us today. Women's dress was taken seriously; it was talked of, discussed and considered even by men . . . Women of wealth concerned themselves almost exclusively with entertaining and being entertained, and essential part of their social lives was the display of dress.

Louis XIV's successors were not as fashionable, but the queens and courtesans were the fashion leaders. Courtesans in Europe were very different from today's mistresses or prostitutes as the chosen courtesans had to be acknowledged by the court, including the queen, and were formally and officially presented to the king (Griffin 2001). Like society ladies, they were expected to wear a different dress for each occasion, sometimes as many as eight times a day, and not only was it imperative to be in fashion, the successful courtesan had to stand out among fashionable women (Griffin 2001: 44). Newspapers and magazines celebrated them as trendsetters of fashion and treated them as celebrities. The culture of fashion again revived in France, and in the mid 1850s French fashion influence was once again virtually global. Surviving the revolutions, fashion remained a French preoccupation. This was also the era when the modern system of couture was introduced. Coffin (1996: 51) explains that where women once brought fabrics and trimmings to seamstresses and dressmakers, with whom they designed the dress, couture houses now began to sell fabric, clothing and design, and these combinations were called 'fashion'.

Conclusion

Fashion in France became dominant in Europe in the mid-seventeenth century during the reign of Louis XIV as political and economic power in Europe began to shift to France and as upward social mobility became possible with the declining of feudalism and rigid class distinctions. Under Colbert's economic policy, the government took an active part in developing the luxury industries that were state owned and operated, and clothing production and sales were controlled as separate institutions while sumptuary laws tightly regulated

fashion consumption and centralized the production of fashion at court. Despite the wars and the revolutions, the city of Paris managed to preserve its reputation for fashion, which forms the basis of the modern fashion system which I will elaborate in the next chapter.

Notes

1. For in-depth historical studies of clothing and fashion culture in France, see Roche (1994) for the period during the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, Delpierre (1997) for the eighteenth century, Perrot (1994) for the nineteenth century and Godard de Donville (1978) for the first half of the seventeenth century.

2. History of Italian fashion between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries can be found in Boucher (1967/1987: 203–5, 222–5).

3. According to Sombart (1967: 9), social elevations could be accomplished in the following ways: 1) through the conferment of a title, either on the grounds of distinguished service or in consideration of a suitable sum of money; 2) through the conferment of orders or offices to which hereditary nobility was attached; 3) through the acquisition of an estate to which hereditary nobility was attached. The aristocratic character of the noble class was preserved in that admission to it was not granted for wealth alone, but required the possession of qualities of an entirely non-bourgeois character. A certain distance from actual business life, as well as the cultivation of a family tradition, etc., which found expression in the invariable custom of the gentlemen to bear a coat of arms, were prerequisites to admission (Sombart 1967: 14).

4. For Louis XIV and fashion during his reign, also see Boucher (1967/1987: 230–41, 252–70), Ribeiro (1995) and Roche (1994).

5. *A grand habit* is a court dress for women with boned corsets, bared shoulders and shoulder frills.

6. According to Sargentson (1996: 7), the history of the merchant corporations, which is distinct from the artisanal bodies, has been little documented. Their finances, function and meaning are not easily defined, due in part to the scarcity of evidence.

7. The Six Corps include wholesale merchant mercers; merchant mercers of cloth of gold, silver and silk; merchant mercers of serge; mercer tapestry-makers; haberdashers and mercers jewelers (Roche 1994: 277).

8. Coffin (1996: 24–7, 29–31) gives a detailed historical account of the guild system in France.

9. The most detailed account of sumptuary laws in Europe can be found in Hunt's study (1996).

10. A pannier is a framework of wire, bone or other material formerly used to expand a woman's skirt at the hips.

11. *Culottes* are aristocratic knee breeches and *cravates* are the ties, both of which are signs of aristocracy.

12. Empire style dresses have a raised waistline with a horizontal seam right below the bustline and have a slender silhouette.

2

The Modern Fashion System in France

During the nineteenth century, Paris became the center of art for Europe and for the world (White and White 1965/1993: 8), and it was also undoubtedly the center of fashion, generally regarded as the epitome of good taste. The modern fashion culture to which I refer is one expression of the system that arose at this time. The system offers the institutional support for a fashion culture. What is new in the mid-nineteenth century fashion system is a combination of institutional factors, such as the formation of the trade organization which elevated the status of a couturier to a fashion producer, social arrangements of seamstresses, a hierarchy among designers and a diffusion mechanism of regular fashion shows. The organization, which contains ranks among those who design and make clothes, is a dominant component of French fashion. The positions that the designers fill have rules and regulations that specify, in varying degrees, what is expected of those positions. The structure of the trade organization went through several institutional changes which allowed new designers to enter the system since the French system is still almost universally accepted as legitimate by designers and fashion professionals. It also adapted to the social environments and changes in people's clothing demand and lifestyles. By examining social institutions of the modern fashion system in France, we understand their effects and influences on aspiring designers. One of the expectations attached to the position of a successful designer is that he/she must be recognized by the French, but it has never been clear in the literature on fashion who exactly these French were.

The decline and the destruction of the guilds in the revolutions also contributed to the emergence of the modern system. As discussed in the previous chapter, tailors and dressmakers, whom we call couturiers and designers today, worked in a rigid system of guilds where tightly fixed rules prevailed, but they themselves could not create 'fashion'. Nor could trendsetters start the fashion phenomenon without the actual clothing to wear. Thus, couturiers, designers and trendsetters were interdependent although there were stiff boundaries

between them. The trendsetters of fashion were neither tailors nor sewers but the consumers of fashion. Those who produced and were involved in the phenomenon of 'fashion' and those who made clothes which might subsequently turn into fashion, originated from different sources of the production processes. Fashion existed during the Old Regime, and France was dominant in fashion for centuries, but I argue that there was no institution to support 'fashion production'. Fashion as a system emerged in the mid-nineteenth century to take control of its origin and diffusion in and from France, which was in a sense, similar to what Louis XIV and Colbert had done, but now it was the couturiers who were in charge of fashion. The production process of fashion that was primarily controlled by the state was replaced by groups of designers that belong to the fashion trade organization. The new modern system had an ideological basis that derived from the Old Regime. Just as the growth in wealth and size of the middle class created a larger internal market for paintings in France in the nineteenth century, particularly during the Second Empire (White and White 1965/1993: 78), the middle-class women craved for and imitated what upper-class women wore. It is said that the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of the bourgeoisie to material and cultural predominance within France (Sombart 1967).

Therefore, the focus of my investigation in this chapter is the fashion trade organization that was established in the mid-nineteenth century because fashion cannot be understood without a consideration and an observation of its organizational context. I first analyze the background and general characteristics of the organization that is central to the whole system and then discuss its functions and consequences. The effect of the social structure of the fashion system on designers and their influence on that social structure will also be considered. Internal workings of each institution within the system and a relationship to one another must also be addressed. These institutions and individuals together produce a collective effect (Figure 2.1). It will make us aware of the efforts they have taken to continue fashion culture, to sustain Paris as the fashion capital and to keep the luxury image of French fashion.

Institutionalization of Fashion in France since 1868

At the center of the French fashion system lies *La Fédération Française de la Couture, du Prêt-à-porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode* (the Federation), which is the oldest and, arguably, one of the most powerful fashion organizations in the world. A chronological history of the organization (Table 2.1) shows a significant link between institutional innovation and clothing innovation. The change and the stability of the organizational structure has

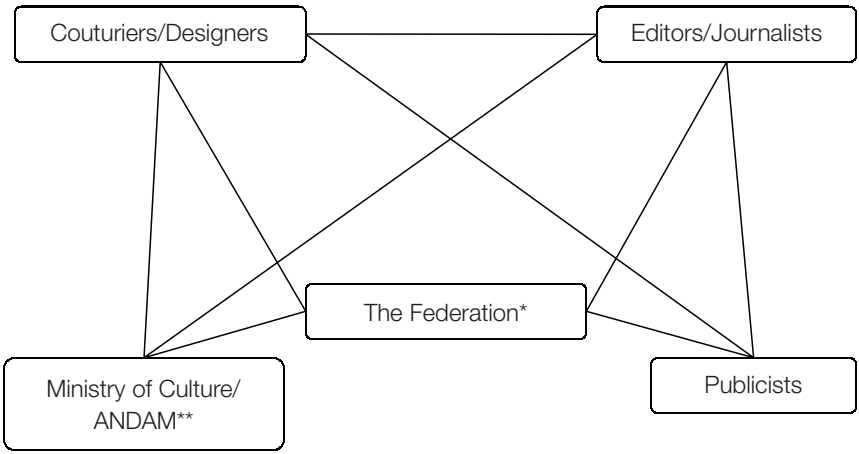

Figure 2.1 Institutional network in the modern fashion system in France. Source: Compiled from various documents.
* *La Fédération Française de la Couture, du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode* (The French Federation of Couture and Prêt-à-Porter for Couturiers and Creators of Fashion).
** ANDAM stands for *Association Nationale pour le Développement des Arts et de la Mode* (National Association for the Development of the Arts and Fashion).

affected and continues to affect the admission of new types and styles of clothing as well as designers into the system. Any organization is a structure of power and authority, and the Federation is no exception. It is a system within the larger social system that requires some mechanism that gives it legitimacy. The Federation constitutes a specialized power that exercises its own separate authority in fashion and that forms a distinctive culture from other cities or nations and acts as the central institution and value system for designers. Organizations are systems within the wider social system which result in intentional or unintentional, recognized or unrecognized outcomes. Therefore, one needs to study the outcomes of organizations for individuals, categories of individual, communities and society. Being a member of the organization gives privileged opportunities and rewards to the designers. As organizations are the process by which stratification is accomplished through its institutionalization (Hall 1999), member designers who participate in this organization earn a position in this stratified system.

If we are to understand the social institutions of fashion, the investigation of the Federation is inevitable because the French fashion system depended

Table 2.1 *Chronology of the Federation*

1868	*La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture et de la Confection pour Dames et Fillettes* (the Syndicated Chamber of Couture and Confection for Ladies and Girls) was established.
1910	The above organization was dissolved.
1911	*La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne* (the Syndicated Chamber of Parisian Couture) was established.
1945	The term 'Haute Couture' and 'Couturier' were regulated by the French government.
1973	*La Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode* (the Syndicated Chamber of Prêt-à-Porter for Couturiers and Creators of Fashion) was established. *La Chambre Syndicale de la Mode Masculine* (the Syndicated Chamber of Men's Fashion) was also established.
1975	*L'Union Nationale Artisanale de la Couture et des Activités Connexes* (National Couture Craft Industry and Related Activities Union) was added as a corresponding member.

Source: La Fédération française de la Couture, du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode

upon its central position, prestige and ideology. There is an understanding that everyone believes that Paris is the fashion capital, and it represents success for fashion designers. The values must be shared and known in common. Paris has remained the center of Haute Couture since the time of Charles Frederick Worth (1825–95),[1] not only because of nationalism and an abiding tradition of creative resources, but also of a powerful institution, *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne*. Paris remains what it has been for centuries, that is the symbol of luxury, elegance, refinement and taste. It has used strategy and slogans to market itself and made use of its particular history and heritage. The image of the city plays a significant role in imposing its hegemony on the members of the organization.

Consequently, fashion in France continues to be a highly institutionalized system with an organizational base, in which the French government, trade organizations, fashion journalists, editors, publicists, trade fair participants and fashion designers interact with one another and mobilize from all over the world six times[2] a year to preserve the system. The French fashion system

is an organized system that produces and consumes the exclusive image and belief, and it provides the added value to clothing that constitutes fashion. In order to keep the French hegemony over fashion, fashion professionals have made and continue to make efforts to perpetuate fashion activities and phenomena in Paris, and they continue to confirm that it is from Paris that fashion is born. Paris takes innovative designers so that it can remain the fashion capital while designers find Paris indispensable for receiving the worldwide attention and recognition necessary for legitimation in fashion worlds. It is the interlocking functions of these two factors that construct the centrality of Paris. Designers need Paris, and Paris needs designers.

As designers aspire to recognition, they need to be included in the established institution, that is the Federation. The institutional structure was the prototype of the idea of the centralization. The historical and institutional basis of this organization and their practice began in 1868. They have maintained a monopoly over the practice of fashion and the legitimation of designers. The entry into the French system is still the goal of French and non-French designers. It is believed that they set the established aesthetic conventions and that they acknowledge a new model of creativity because the Federation has been an unyielding cultural establishment. The criteria for inclusion in the category of Haute Couture are rather fixed (Hénin 1990)[3] while those of Prêt-à-Porter are imprecise and ambiguous. As a new modern institutional system of fashion developed, specialization and centralization were carried out.

The Federation is responsible for institutionally constructing a hierarchy among all producers of clothes. By distinguishing Haute Couture from other custom-made clothes, it put couturiers far above other custom-made designers. By separating Prêt-à-Porter from other ready-to-wear designers, it resulted in the elites and the non-elites among those who design mass-produced clothes. The social hierarchy of those who design clothes more or less corresponds to the production process of clothes. I classify designers in France in three categories in descending order of status:

1. *Couturiers* (Couture Designers/Couturiers) design Haute Couture, and their exclusive titles are awarded officially by the Federation. They belong to *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne* and are the most elite designers.
2. *Créateurs* (Prêt-à-Porter Designers) design Prêt-à-Porter. Those who design women's Prêt-à-Porter belong to *La Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode*. Couturiers are also members of this group since all of them design Prêt-à-Porter. Those who design men's Prêt-à-Porter belong to *La Chambre Syndicale de la Mode Masculine*. They are also part of the elite group of designers.

3. *Stylistes* (Company Designers) design for mass-produced apparel companies. These are non-elite designers who work in the garment district, such as Sentier in Paris. The names of company designers are never made known to the public.

Couturiers and Prêt-à-Porter designers belong to the system while company designers do not. Elite designers exist in relation to non-elite designers. By making the distinction among the types of designers and types of clothes, high culture and high fashion is linked by legitimizing the aesthetic taste of elite culture.

The original organization of the existing Federation comes from the one started in 1868 by Charles Frederick Worth, a successful British couturier in Paris. It was originally called *La Chambre Syndicale de la Confection et de la Couture pour Dames et Fillettes* (the Syndicated Chamber of Confection and Couture for Ladies and Girls), in which the difference between 'couture' (sewing) and 'confection' (making) was not yet clearly defined.[4] The title of the organization clearly indicates that there was little distinction made between the two modes of production (Baudot 1999). There were neither hierarchy nor social differences among designers or the kind of clothes produced. The original organization consisted of Parisian designers and was founded on the model of medieval guilds that regulated its members in regard to piracy of styles, dates of openings for collections, number of models presented, relations with press, and promotional activities, and the primary purpose of the organization was to ensure the labor conditions of the seamstresses who worked in the clothes-making business (De Marly 1980a), such as introducing proper insurance and pension schemes or giving holidays with pay. Many of these rules are still effective today. One of the couture house owners says:

> Couture workers are extremely well protected. The working conditions are very good in France. It is costly for a company to hire twenty or so seamstresses full-time with all kinds of benefits, insurance and so forth. The government is now talking about thirty-five working hours per week, instead of forty hours per week. It is going to be even harder. Before the collection, we sometimes ask them to work on Saturdays, and we would give them other days off after the collection, but we can never, ever ask them to work on Sundays. But haute couture for France is indispensable. It is unlikely that haute couture will ever disappear.

Working conditions for these seamstresses have been in place since the foundation of the original form of the Federation making the expensive couture business even more difficult to sustain. More recently, *La Chambre Syndicale* has taken on increasing responsibility for supervising improvements throughout the couture industry with welfare, pay, benefits and conditions. The result

is that there have been uniform arrangements regarding employers throughout the trade, instead of the old system of each couture house negotiating its own system.

Status Elevation of Couturiers and Designers

Worth is the founder of the designer name brand, and it was he who managed to inaugurate exclusive fashion as a business, which concentrated the value of the commodity in its intrinsic design, not in its association with a great public figure (Hollander 1993: 354). Fashion had been dictated by upper-class women (Simmel 1904/1957), and a couturier remained a mere tailor or a seamstress, and the poorly paid seamstress was often associated with the very image of poverty and women's vulnerability (Coffin 1996). They only executed designs as demanded by wealthy women and carried no social significance. Their names were hardly ever mentioned before the eighteenth century (Perrot 1994: 38). Generations of such tailors lived and worked and died unsung all over the civilized world while their patrons acquired fame for their own taste, and the work of the clothes designer was subsumed in the taste of his patron. (Hollander 1993: 353).

Worth reversed the whole structural relationship between a client and a couturier. Once marginal figures to the system of clothes manufacturing became the core of the new system. With the establishment of the trade organization, the 'clothing' producers became 'fashion' producers, and the couturiers and designers now had new definitions. They were no longer artisans or the higher type of servant. The new social status of designers granted them new power and privilege through the organization. This is very similar to the status of artists in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. White and White (1965/1993) explain that the artist had created a new social status for himself with new power and privilege through the medium of the Royal Academy organization, and although basic changes within the world of artists were to come, their higher social status remained (White and White 1965/1993: 12). Lipovetsky (1994) also points out that the social ascension of people can be linked with a much older set of claims, one inaugurated in the fifteen and sixteenth centuries by sculptors and architects who persisted in seeking for their professions the status of liberal arts, which was radically distinct from that of the mechanical or artisanal trades. Following the values characteristic of the modern age, the process to accede to the condition of artists and to enjoy social recognition was further enhanced (Lipovetsky 1994: 70).

Designers followed the same trend and promoted the view that their skill was as noble as that of poets and painters, and they behaved as if they

themselves were equal to nobles (Lipovetsky 1994: 70). They won recognition as artists of genius. Since the Renaissance, fashion had unquestionably enjoyed a certain degree of respect as a symbol of social excellence and of court life (Lipovetsky 1994: 71), but it was associated only with those who wore and consumed fashion. It was now couturiers who are associated with luxury, taste and power and considered as the trendsetters of fashion. Worth was a pioneer in integrating the material aspect of clothing production and the immaterial aspect of fashion production, which is a belief. The couturier created models designed with no particular client in mind. Such models might then be made several times to individual order in the designer's workroom, and the design might also be sold or exported and reproduced elsewhere. It would, however, still bear the designer's name and be protected by copyright. High fashion all over the world then began to be associated with the names of a few Parisian designers rather than with the names of a few great ladies (Hollander 1993: 354).

La Chambre Syndicale de la Confection et de la Couture pour Dames et Fillettes was dissolved in 1910 to form another organization called *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne* in 1911, in order to separate couture from confection, thereby giving couture a special status (Grumbach 1993; Lipovetsky 1994). Now the distinction between couture and confection was clearly marked. Since 1945, the terms 'Haute Couture' and 'couturiers' have been officially regulated and legally protected. They may only be used by those who have received the right to do so by the French Ministry of Industry although these terms are used rather loosely in common parlance. This is the beginning of the exclusive status of the name 'Haute Couture' that exists to this day. The organization not only controls the quality of garments but also screens the admission process of a couturier and protects the social status of those who design and make Haute Couture.

While it is the name of the couture house or the couturier that receives attention and applause, it is not the couturier that does the elaborate embroidery or the beadwork but the skilled craftsmen, seamstresses and tailors. The craftsmanship behind the process of making a couture dress is an established old French tradition of artisanal labor which is highly specialized. Milliners, glove-makers, feather-makers, embroiderers, lace-makers, pleat-makers, shoemakers and jewelry-makers among others, all participate in the creation of couture clothes. In 1994, the French Ministry of Culture appointed about twenty craftsmen involved in the making of Haute Couture as *Maîtres d'Art* (Masters of Art). In 1927, *Les Ecoles de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne* (School for the Syndicated Chamber of Parisian Couture)[5] was formed to train seamstresses to maintain the quality and the standard of dressmaking skills. Within the hierarchy, a seamstress starts as an apprentice,

Table 2.2 *Ranks and monthly wages of seamstresses at Nina Ricci Haute Couture (as of July 1998)*

Ranking	*Monthly Wages**
Secondes mains débutantes (Beginning seamstress with second degree)	7,550 FF ($1,258)**
Secondes mains qualifiées (Qualified seamstress with second degree)	8,360 FF ($1,393)
Premières mains debutantes (Beginning seamstress with first degree)	9,120 FF ($1,520)
Premières mains qualifiées (Qualified seamstress with first degree)	
Less than a year	10,390 FF ($1,731)
More than a year	11,195 FF ($,1866)
Maximum	11,840 FF ($1,973)

* Wages are based on 165 hours 30 minutes/month.
** All currency exchange rates are approximate.
Source: Nina Ricci Haute Couture (closed in 1998)

and then goes up to as high as the Qualified Seamstress with First Degree. Each stage lasts for six months and is usually followed by promotion to the next step. It takes about three years to reach the highest rank. The wage for each rank is negotiated and set between the union and the couture houses (Table 2.2).

However, there is a clear sign of decline in the number of Haute Couture houses (see Table 2.3), and this reflects on the total number of couture seamstresses employed, which dropped from 684 in 1996 to 656 in 1998 (*Syndicat CGT* 1998). There have been many changes in the couture business, both in size and organization, but one thing that has not changed is the structure of the couture house itself, for the couturier is still at the top, and the apprentice always at the bottom. Seamstresses never reach the position of a couturier unless they open their own couture house like Madeleine Vionnet did in 1912. Prompted by the establishment's continued relaxation and revision of the rules to encourage newcomers, the fashion workers' union called *La Confédération Général du Travail* (the General Confederation of Work) stage demonstrations outside several shows since 1997 during the fashion weeks to protest the decline of couture houses and the loss of jobs in defense of an old order which protected their jobs. One of the demonstrators said: 'I'm not an

Table 2.3 *Total number of Haute Couture houses 1872*–2003*

1872: 684	1956: 45	1969: 21	1995: 18
1895: 1,636	1957: 38	1970: 25	1996: 15
1945: 106	1958: 36	1975: 23	1997: 14
1946: 106	1963: 34	1980: 22	2001: 12
1952: 60	1966: 32	1984: 24	2002: 11
1955: 51	1967: 19	1993: 20	2003: 11

* The numbers before 1872 could not be acquired.
Source: Compiled from various documents.

ordinary seamstress. I'm an Haute Couture seamstress.' It is evident that they set themselves apart from other clothes-makers. The union claims that Haute Couture is not clothes for sale but a research laboratory of creation and also functions as a publicity that is vital for other related activities of a couturier. It should not be the houses' goal to make profits from couture business (*Syndicat CGT* 1998).

Furthermore, The Golden Thimble Award that was started by *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne* in 1976 to stimulate creativity lost its sponsors and lasted only until 1991. The award was given to the couturier who designed the season's most beautiful collection (Table 2.4). When the organization made an attempt to revive the award in 1992, nine couture houses out of the seventeen, such as Christian Dior, Emanuel Ungaro, Chanel and Hanae Mori, withdrew from the competition, and thus it had to be discontinued (*Journal du Textile* 1993: 47).

Organizational Efforts to Maintain Paris as the Fashion Capital

Ever since its inception, the Federation has been instrumental in maintaining the culture of fashion in Paris. The history of the Federation during the Second World War is the apparent evidence that Paris kept its hegemony over fashion although not often without considerable efforts. They also organized overseas trade fairs and expositions to demonstrate its fashion dominance, and in order to continue Colbert's legacy, *Le Comité Colbert* (the Colbert Committee) was established in 1954 to officially legitimize and promote French luxury products and furthermore, to keep French fashion styles exclusive, piracy issues are treated seriously by the French law.

Table 2.4 *Golden Thimble Award winners 1976–91*

	January (Spring/Summer)	*July (Fall/Winter)*
1976	–	Madame Grès
1977	Pierre Cardin	Lanvin by Jules-François Crahay
1978	Louis Féraud	Hubert de Givenchy
1979	Pierre Cardin	Per Spook
1980	Emanuel Ungaro	Jean-Louis Scherrer
1981	Lanvin by Jules François Crahay	Emanuel Ungaro
1982	Hubert de Givenchy	Pierre Cardin
1983	Christian Dior by Marc Bohan	Pierre Balmain by Erik Mortensen
1984	Louis Féraud	Lanvin by Jules François Crahay
1985	Philippe Venet	Guy Laroche
1986	Jean Patou by Christian Lacroix	Chanel by Karl Lagerfeld
1987	Nina Ricci by Gérard Pipart	Pierre Balmain by Erik Mortensen
1988	Christian Lacroix	Christian Dior by Marc Bohan
1989	Guy Laroche	Christian Dior by Gianfranco Ferré
1990	Paco Rabanne	Lanvin by Claude Montana
1991	Lanvin by Claude Montana	

Source: Compiled from various sources.

The Revival of Haute Couture after the Second World War

The war had a major impact on the fashion industries in France. The events during the Occupation demonstrate the importance of fashion to France, its national pride and identity. When the Nazi army first occupied Paris in 1940, it was expected that the fashion houses would be closed, but what the Nazis wanted was to take over the fashion culture of Paris with the intention of forcing the French to contribute to the German Reich (Taylor 1992; Veillon 1990). The Germans planned to turn French Haute Couture into an official body with head offices in Berlin and Vienna (Gasc 1991), and they were setting up a fashion industry, the textile industry and ready-to-wear manufacturers heavily subsidized by the German government. They demanded that high-level French personnel be sent to start a dressmaking school in Germany. The president of *La Chambre Syndicale* at the time, Lucien Lelong argued (quoted in Gasc 1991: 90):

> You can impose anything upon us by force, but Paris couture cannot be uprooted, neither as a whole nor in part. Either it stays in Paris or it does not exist. It is not within the power of any nation to steal fashion creativity, for not only does it function

> quite spontaneously, but also it is the product of a tradition maintained by a large body of skilled men and women in a variety of crafts and trades.

Export of a single dress made by a leading couturier enabled the country to buy ten tons of coal, and a liter of perfume was worth two tons of petrol (Gasc 1991). Therefore, the loss of the industry by the end of the war would put the future of French economy in serious jeopardy. The industry and skilled workers had to be kept in France.

During the Occupation, a number of elite couture houses were closed. Jacques Heim, who was Jewish, went into hiding, and Captain Edward Molyneux and Charles Worth moved to England. Main Rousseau Bocher known as Mainbocher and Elsa Schiaparelli left for the USA, though Schiaparelli kept her Paris salon open (Veillon 1990). But the vast majority, such as Jean Patou, Jeanne Lanvin and Nina Ricci, among others, kept their businesses. For those that remained open, the clientele was no longer international but restricted to local beneficiaries of the German regime. The clothes made during the German Occupation were intended by the various dressmakers to be fancy and were exaggerated, in order to taunt the Germans because any saving of material or labor would have only benefited the Germans (Taylor 1992). The international capital of fashion became cut off from the rest of the world (Laver 1969/1995). Those who remained continued to show small collections throughout the Occupation, but none of this was visible to the outside world. It was believed that the French hegemony of fashion had come to an end, and the rest of Europe and North America, which had traditionally looked to the French capital for stylistic direction and inspiration, had to look somewhere else (Lottman 1991).

A worker at Reboux, one of the most famous milliners[6] in Paris, explains the atmosphere in Paris during the war (quoted in McDowell 1997: 141):

> We wore large hats to raise our spirits. Felt gave out, so we made them of chiffon. Chiffon was no more. All right, take straw. No more straw? Very well, braided paper . . . hats have been a sort of contest between French imagination and German regulation . . . We were prepared to do without food, light, soap, servants; we were prepared to choke in overcrowded Metros and go everywhere else on foot: but we wouldn't look shabby and worn out. After all, we were *Parisiennes*.

Lelong finally persuaded the Germans that without the French cultural tradition which Paris alone could give, not only would it simply not survive, but without its inspiration, Berlin and Viennese fashion could also be menaced (Veillon 1990). His enduring persuasion seemed to have worked and his efforts paid off, and French fashion was to remain in Paris and to keep its independence.

After the Liberation, fashion slowly came back in Paris. By the end of the war, British and American designers had a stronger international reputation

with the development of mass-market, ready-to-wear clothes. Thus the French couture establishment knew that it needed to win back overseas buyers, especially those from the USA, who now felt less tied to Paris and its influence. In an effort to revive the capital, in 1945 French artists and designers collaborated to produce *Le Théâtre de la Mode* (The Theater of Fashion), a traveling exhibition of a twenty-seven and a half-inch wire-frame miniature mannequin dressed in couture clothing, and these dolls were used to publicize French fashion overseas. As Le Bourhis (1991: 128) states: 'For the French it was a theater of hope.'

Nina Ricci's son, Robert Ricci had the idea to create a little theater in which each artist would build his set, and the wire dolls dressed by the couturiers would be placed in them. The artists and couturiers were given complete freedom to create the sets and the clothes they pleased; some artists painted a theater or opera house decor, while some chose morning, afternoon or evening scenes so that the proper variety of clothes could be shown in a corresponding environment (Garfinkel 1991). About sixty Parisian couturiers participated in this ambitious project (Vaudoyer 1990). All artists donated their services, and the couture houses contributed labor and material used for costumes and hats for the exhibition. The project was a defining moment not only in the history of the Federation (it was still called *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne* at the time) but also the history of French fashion. The curtain rose on March 28, 1945 (Charles-Roux 1991: 24). The exhibition was so successful that it was prolonged for several weeks. One of the French government officials wrote to the French Ambassador in London (quoted in Garfinkel 1991: 76):

> I am writing to ask you to do everything you can to help the *Syndicat de la Mode* and the Daily Mail to set up in London the exhibition of the *Thêàtre de la Mode* which has had a brilliant success in Paris and which has brought in more than a million francs . . . France has little, alas, to export, but she has her appreciation of beautiful things and the skill of her couture houses

From Paris, the exhibition went to London, Leeds in England, then to Barcelona, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Vienna. It was also a great success in New York in 1946 and later, in San Francisco (Le Bourhis 1991: 131). Its main goal was to regain and develop its American and European clients. It resuscitated French Haute Couture, and Paris as a fashion capital was again reborn and known to the world.

By the early 1950s, the French couture houses were prospering again and, having served its purpose, the dolls were abandoned by their French sponsors and presumed destroyed.[7] It was Christian Dior who put Paris back at the

center of the fashion capital in 1947 by introducing a new style called the New Look, that received unprecedented worldwide attention. French fashion and French Haute Couture would have disappeared during or after the war without the efforts made by the Federation.

Le Comité Colbert: Promoting French Luxury Products

The French national economy is heavily dependent on the luxury industry, including fashion. As Colbert had done in the seventeenth century, France has systematically promoted its so-called luxury market to maintain the glamorous, high-quality and expensive image of the products manufactured in France which accounts for thirty-seven percent of all luxury goods market, worth 34.7 billion FF ($5.7 billion)[8] in 1995 (Piedalu 1997: 19). Of all duty-free sales worldwide, French goods accounts for 80 percent, with Italian 14 percent, German 13 percent and British 12 percent (*Libération* 1990: 7).

In light of Colbert's legacy, companies formed a trade organization to promote French luxury products worldwide just as Haute Couture was revived after the Second World War. *Le Comité Colbert* is the organization that conducts promotional activities for these products for its members. It is an association, initially called 'Groupement Colbert', of sixty-four luxury companies (Tables 2.5 and C.1), founded in 1954 by Jean-Jacques Guerlain, a perfume manufacturer, and Lucien Lelong, a couturier and the former president of *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne,* in which there are ten industry sectors, one of which is fashion and couture. The association acts as an ambassador for the industry, and promotes the idea of 'art of living' by using these expensive products of the member companies. A way to join is by co-optation. Each member must obtain seventy-five percent of the votes at the time of his admission and thereafter at each annual general meeting. According to an industry executive, the membership fees are between 90,000 FF ($15,000) and 300,000 FF ($50,000) depending on their annual total sales.

Among the member companies in the couture/fashion sector (Table 2.5), Céline, Chanel, Christian Dior, Givenchy and Pierre Balmain, correspond to the Haute Couture category, and the rest, La Chemise Lacoste, Jeanne Lanvin and Léonard belong to the Prêt-à-Porter. In the fragrance sector, Chanel, Christian Dior, and Givenchy correspond to the designer names found in the couture/fashion sector. Hermès and Lanvin in the fragrance sector are members of the Prêt-à-Porter organization while Jean Patou and Yves Saint Laurent, also in the fragrance sector, are well-known fashion designers although their couture houses no longer exist. To strengthen the image of fashion, *Le Comité Colbert* has promoted them worldwide and works separately to regulate fashion activities with the help of the government and to officially recognize them as the luxury items.

Table 2.5 *Members in the fashion/couture and fragrance sectors of Le Comité Colbert*

Fashion/Couture sector	*Established in*
Givenchy	1952
Christian Dior	1947
Céline	1946
Pierre Balmain	1945
Léonard	1943
La Chemise Lacoste	1933
Chanel	1912
Jeanne Lanvin	1889
Fragrance sector	*Established in*
Yves Saint Laurent	1962
Givenchy	1957
Christian Dior	1948
Hermès	1948
Lancôme	1935
Jean Patou	1925
Rochas	1925
Chanel	1924
Caron	1904
Guerlain	1828

Source: Le Comité Colbert (2002/2003)

Therefore, it is not without reason that France is renowned for the production of luxury goods more than any other products. It is not just a question of tradition, image and lifestyle. The luxury goods industry is a powerful force in the French economy employing almost 200,000 people, 66,000 workers directly and 126,000 indirectly, and is a major contributor to French exports. Profits produced by the members more than doubled in the last ten years (*Le Comité Colbert* 2003/2003). They have a strong commercial presence around the world and in people's minds.

Piracy Problems

There is a paradoxical relationship between the dissemination of fashion and the piracy problem which is the major concern for established couturiers and designers. When the brand image and goods are too widely diffused and gain

global popularity, the designers are forced to confront the problem of counterfeit products. The Federation and the designers are sensitive to the copyright of their names. Ironically, the success of the designer can be evaluated by the amount of counterfeit products diffused in the market at a much lower price. An industry executive says (quoted in Deeny 1994b: 11): 'Fashion is all about being copied, and we always welcome if we are copied because that means we are still alive and successful.' A struggling designer takes a similar view: 'I would be flattered if my logo or designs were copied like Yves Saint Laurent, Gucci or D&G because that means I've made it, and everyone knows my name.'

Counterfeiting has become a real industry in itself, generating about 500 billion FF ($83 billion) per year worldwide, or the equivalent of 5 percent of the world's trade (Vaysse 1993). This figure includes the losses of those who were being counterfeited. The Federation works with *l'Union Des Fabricants et l'Institut National de la Propriété Industrielle* (The National Institute for the Industrial Propriety) to enforce the trademark right and crack down on counterfeiters.

Occasionally, there is a clash in regards to the design copyright between two well-known designers. In 1994, Yves Saint Laurent, a French couturier, filed suit with the commercial court of Paris alleging that Ralph Lauren in France copied his Haute Couture double-breasted tuxedo dress (Deeny 1994a). The Ralph Lauren dress appeared in a December 1992 edition of a French magazine. The Lauren dress had darker buttons and a narrower lapel. Yves Saint Laurent's lawyer told the court (in Deeny 1994a: 15): 'the tuxedo dress belongs to the artistic patrimony of the house of Saint Laurent. It's a unique original and thus cannot legally be copied by anyone else.' According to the judge (quoted in Deeny 1994a: 14): 'Many industrial ready-to-wear producers have made the tuxedo dress, but Mr. Saint Laurent was the first to cut off the sleeves.' As the result, the commercial court found Ralph Lauren guilty of copying the dress by Saint Laurent and fined Ralph Lauren's European company Polo Ralph Lauren a total of 2.2 million FF ($392,000): 1 million FF ($178,000) for damages, another 1 million FF ($178,000) for selling 123 versions of the tuxedo dress and 200,000 FF ($35,715) for loss of income from potential sales to Yves Saint Laurent (Deeny 1994b: 11).

This is how seriously the French take styles created by couturiers and designers. The designer names, once well established, carry a great deal of value and are thus able to generate lucrative profits. If the purpose of the Federation is to legitimate and create the name value of the designers in Paris, it simultaneously aims to protect them from the counterfeit industry. Before John Galliano's first couture show for Givenchy, his collection was prepared behind closed doors and shuttered windows, allowed no previews and demanded release forms for the designer's abstract scribbles (Menkes 1996a: 8).

De Marly (1980a: 111) points that even in the nineteenth century, there were many piracy issues that couture houses had to deal with.

> Trade is greatly helped by advertising, but haute couture only became involved in such promotion of its product very slowly. When Worth opened his own house he only advertised in the trade press. The great deterrent to publishing illustrations of new dresses was the rampant piracy of the day. Dressmakers copied the engravings in fashion magazines, so if a couture house allowed a dress to be illustrated it might be reproduced hundreds of times over without the couturier receiving a penny for it. The theft of designs was also current. Thus a couture house faced many difficulties in the promotion field, and had to weigh the advantage of publicizing its products against the loss that would ensure in the unlicensed reproductions of its designs. If a woman could get a Paris dress copied by her local dressmaker, she was not going to send an order to Paris for the original creation.

The invention of photography accelerated and encouraged other dressmakers and tailors to copy the designs as they regularly appeared in fashion magazines, which created a major problem to the couture houses. Therefore, the couture houses insisted, and they still do today, that publication should not occur until after the collections had been seen by journalists, customers and buyers. Any magazines which broke this instruction would be denied couture photographs thereafter (De Marly 1980a: 112–13).

Institutional Support for Emerging Designers in Paris

As the former president of the Federation, Jacques Mouclier (Deeny 1995: 20) explains: 'The grand couturiers have reached the respectable age of sixty to seventy. The young designers are all by now between forty-five and fifty, and there's nobody behind them. So, we have got to find new people.' Many designers who represented the fashion image of France are aging (Crane 1997a), and the industry feels the necessity to nurture and support those who would pull the industry forward. The charisma of a designer cannot be created overnight, and the longevity of the designer is very difficult to maintain. Thus, there are efforts to encourage younger designers to enter into the couture business. The conditions enforced on Haute Couture which applied to companies started after 1945, the date the regimentation took effect, were updated in 1992 to simplify their control, and more specifically, to favor new talent (*Libération* 1992). The regulations have become increasingly less rigid. In 1992, it was announced officially by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce that the regulations for Haute couture would be slightly compromised, and the purpose as explained by Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the Minister, was firstly, to give younger designers the chance to enter the closed Haute Couture circle, and secondly, to tighten the link between Haute Couture and the rest of the

industry (*Libération* 1992). Jean-Paul Gaultier and Domonique Sirop, who had been invited to present their couture collections for several years as associate members, have now become official members of the Haute Couture organization: Gaultier in 1999 and Sirop in 2003. The invited members include the Russian Valentine Yudashkin, the Italians Valentino and Versace by Donatella Versace among others.

The Federation acts as an intermediary between the designers and the government that finances designers. A new division called *l'Association Nationale pour le Développement des Arts et de la Mode/ANDAM* (National Association for the Development of the Arts and Fashion) financed by the Ministry of Culture was formed in 1991. The organization gives out a number of fellowships (100,000 FF/$16,666 each) to designers every year. Since financial backing has been a problem for younger designers, the Federation works through SOFARIS (a government body aimed at helping fledgling firms) to finance small businesses. They guarantee 50 percent of any bank loans to twenty houses designated by the Federation and also negotiate with the Ministry of Finance to provide grants of 1 million FF ($166,666) to fashion houses, provided that they can find matching grants (Deeny 1995: 20).

Prêt-à-Porter: An Institutional System of Ready-to-wear since 1973

All institutions die hard (White and White 1965/1993: 100). No institutional system, however beset with contradictions, expires until successors emerge; so there is a second face to the problem of disintegration (White and White 1965/1993: 2). The underlying structures of fashion never changed as much or as quickly as between 1965 and 1975, with the introduction of new boutiques, freelance stylists, fashion stores, ranges of luxury ready-to-wear and designer Prêt-à-Porter (Baudot 1999). One of the major developments in French fashion in the 1970s centered around the phenomenon of *Créateurs et Industriels* (Creators and Industrialists), an alliance of interests founded by Didier Grumbach[9] (Baudot 1999; Grumbach 1993). It was set up on a fee-paying basis, to promote a group of designers assembled over a period of five years. Grumbach was managing director of a company which manufactured, among others, Saint Laurent Rive Gauche, Givenchy, Valentino and Chanel. He thought young designers ought to enjoy the same privilege as the couturiers and put their names to a product or a line. The intention of this organization was to redefine ready-to-wear, and it constituted an investment in the future of a distinctively Parisian brand of fashion. The term *créateur* (creator) emerged and was subsequently applied to the designers who represented the upgraded

version of ready-to-wear, which would later be called Prêt-à-Porter. The first to join were Emmanuelle Khan and Ossie Clark, followed by Jean Muir, Fernando Sanchez, Roland Chakkal, Issey Miyake, Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, Thierry Mugler, Claude Montana, Angelo Tarlazzi, Michel Klein and Jean-Paul Gaultier (Grumbach 1993). To promote young talent, the organization held catwalk shows with full-scale performances, with proper direction, lighting and music. Between 1971 and 1973, the type of fashion produced by these creators was distinguished from Haute Couture, and it also distanced them from the traditional couture salons.

In 1973, *La Chambre Syndicale Couture Parisienne* began to realize the importance of the ready-to-wear as the demand for Haute Couture was on the decline due to the transition of women's lifestyle. Thus, uniting with *Créateurs et Industriels*, it formed *La Fédération Française du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode* for women's wear. A similar organization for men's wear *La Chambre Syndicale de la Mode Masculine* was also formed simultaneously. While there had been no distinction among the ready-to-wear clothes, by creating the term 'Prêt-à-Porter', which means expensive designer brand ready-to-wear, it gave mass-produced designers a different kind of status and image. Furthermore, in 1975, *L'Union Nationale Artisanale de la Couture et des Activités Connexes* (National Couture Craft Industry and Related Activities Union) was added as a corresponding member of the

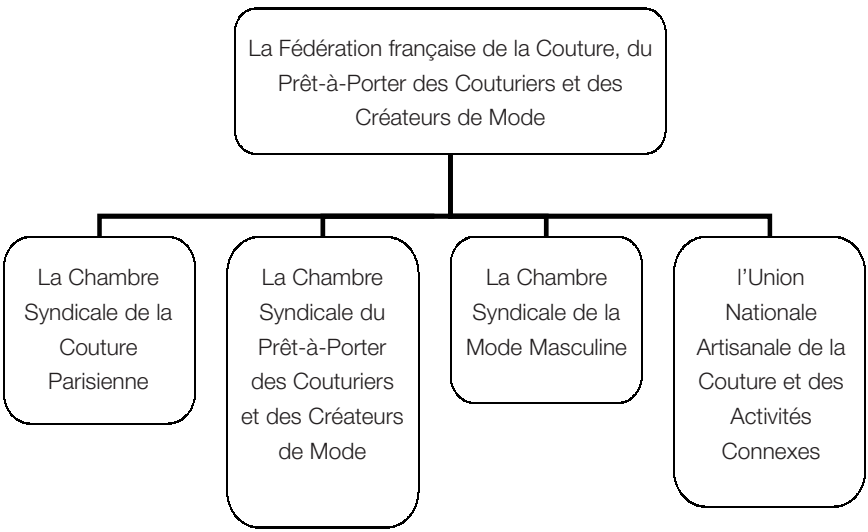

Figure 2.2 Organizational structure of the Federation. Source: *La Fédération Française de la Couture, du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode*.

Federation, and it is composed of couture dressmakers established in different administrative departments in France.

This new organization was designed to centralize all the power and dominance of fashion geographically and by specialty instead of allowing others to form an independent organization for ready-to-wear and a different valuation system for designers. Internal organizational changes affect the social structure through changing membership patterns (Hall 1999: 16). The new system was successful in part because it could and did command a bigger market than the Haute Couture system. The ready-to-wear designers contributed to and were sustained by the new system of Prêt-à-Porter. The decline of the Haute Couture system led to the alienation of the designers from the system and moved to more practical ready-made clothing. Prêt-à-Porter as an institution has a looser structure than the Haute Couture system, and the membership criteria for the Prêt-à-Porter are unclear. One of the new members explained to me the process, and he emphasized the importance of becoming a member:

> You send in a formal letter with a video of your collections to Denise Dubois. Then you have to keep calling them to make sure they received them, and try to make an appointment to see them. If they see you, you are almost in. It seems to me the decision depends on Madame Dubois and Jacques Mouclier[10] so if you know someone who knows them well, you have the advantage. It's all about who you know. You have to know people to get ahead in this business. You have to be a member of the Federation.

It had been the organization's policy not to allow non-French designers, who show their collections in Paris, to become official or associate members (Deeny 1995: 20), but since Jacques Mouclier became the president in 1977, many foreign designers have become not only associate but official members, such as the British Vivienne Westwood, the Belgian Dries Van Noten, the Japanese Yohji Yamamoto, Issey Miyake and Zucca among others. The French system which started only with couturiers as members expanded its boundary to include a new category of designers who create mass-produced clothes now known as Prêt-à-Porter. Insiders know that this invisible boundary is the key to designers' potential popularity. Although it is not impossible to become a known designer without being a member of the Federation or taking part during the seasonal fashion shows, it facilitates the legitimation process once the designer is inside the system.

Conclusion

With the establishment of *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture et de la Confection pour Dames et Fillettes,* Paris as the fashion capital, laid the

foundation for the modern fashion system. Fashion production is now initiated and controlled by couturiers and designers who are granted the higher positions in the system of organizational hierarchy. Membership of this system provides legitimation and recognition as the official producers of fashion, and at the same time, the public is assured that the clothes designed by them are 'fashionable' because they have been authorized by the French establishment, that is the Federation. Haute Couture separates itself from other custom-made clothes while Prêt-à-Porter distances itself from other ready-made clothes, and thus, many believe that Haute Couture is the ultimate quality one can find in clothes and also believe that Prêt-à-Porter is far better than conventional ready-to-wear clothes. In this way, the French system makes every effort to promote the ideology of fashion worldwide.

Notes

1. For Charles Frederick Worth's detailed biography, see De Marly (1980a, 1980b), Saunders (1955), Gaston Worth (1895) and Jean-Philippe Worth (1928).
2. In Paris, there are two Haute Couture collections/year in January and July, two women's Prêt-à-Porter collections/year in March and October, and two men's Prêt-à-Porter collections/year in January and July.
3. According to *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne*, for existing couture houses, the conditions include: (1) employ a minimum of twenty production workers in their own workshops, (2) present to the press each Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter seasons in Paris and (3) present a collection of fifty day and evening-wear outfits. For designers who wish to expand their activities to include couture, the conditions for the first two years are (1) employ a minimum of fifteen workers and (2) present a collection of at least thirty-five outfits per show.
4. Although there was no distinction between 'couturiers', who make couture clothes, and 'confectionneurs', who make non-couture clothes, the hierarchy among seamstresses had already been institutionalized in 1868.
5. Graduates of this school do not necessarily become couture seamstresses. Some go into mass-producing apparel companies, and others set up their own companies.
6. A milliner is one that makes, trims, designs or sells hats.
7. In 1985, these dolls were discovered in Maryhill Museum of Art in southern Washington by Stanley Garfinkel of Kent State University.
8. All currency exchange rates are provided for approximation.
9. Didier Grumbach is the current president of the Federation. For the past presidents of the organization, see Table C.2 in Appendix C.
10. Denise Dubois has since left the organization, and Jacques Mouclier is the former president of the Federation (1977–1999).

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3

The Global Diffusion Mechanism of French Fashion: Past and Present

Whatever is produced must be publicized in order for the public to know its existence and reputation. Likewise, whatever types of clothing that originate from the French fashion system have to be disseminated to other parts of the world so that the image of and the belief in French fashion are continuously strengthened. Publicity, production and reputation must go hand in hand. Social valuations are essential and, thus, it requires a system of valuation. No fashion as a practice or as an idea is spread without the diffusion channel. France is successful in reproducing the idea that fashion belongs to Paris. In order to understand why Paris is the source of fashion globalization, this chapter examines the past and present diffusion mechanisms that were implemented in France.

Prior to institutionalizing fashion shows in the modern system, the means of diffusion included dolls, illustrations, plates, magazines and trade fairs. French fashion had overcome a number of revolutions and wars which jeopardized the position and prestige of Paris as the fashion capital because the dissemination was restricted at some points in history. From 1794 through 1796, fashion magazines ceased to exist in France (Ribeiro 1988: 50), and also during the German Occupation in the Second World War, both exports and imports were forbidden, and press coverage was virtually nil because there were hardly any newspapers and magazines (Lottman 1991: 55). But Paris had the tenacity to survive as the fashion capital.

In the modern system, the roles of clothing manufacturer and trendsetter are combined, but there is still a specialized role for those who systematically spread fashion, and those who design clothes play no role in the diffusion process of fashion. Between designers and the public, there exist institutions and gatekeepers who transmit and filter the information and materials intended for consumers. They participate in the cultural process of dissemination by selecting and rejecting the content and determining what will come to the

attention of the various publics. They have the authority to define, promote and spread fashion. I shall explore various aspects of the roles 'fashion gatekeepers' play by highlighting the conditions that reinforce their functions in the maintenance of the system in Paris. I also investigate to what extent they are important in building the recognition and reputation and to what extent designers themselves are aware of the importance. Gatekeeping is a way in which affirmations, reinterpretations and rejections shape individual works and whole careers (Powell 1978). The term 'gatekeeping' has been applied when the focus is on judgments about admitting person or works into a cultural field (Peterson 1994).

Dolls, Plates, Periodicals and Trade Fairs as Fashion Diffusion Strategies

One's good reputation is the measure of talent and creativity. In order to create that reputation or prestige, the works must first be exposed for evaluation and then go through a system of validation although consequences are not always positive. Without reputation, it is difficult to prove one's design skills. Perrot (1994: 40) explains the importance of the designer's reputation in the nineteeth century:

> Talent was a pretty slim asset unless it was associated with a reputation, a name at first mentioned here and there, and then spread in praiseful echoes from salon to salon. A dressmaker or a tailor could become a means of social prestige whose ministrations had to be acquired at any price to gain elegance, style, distinction-markings that became symbolic capital, commercially profitable.

Fashion dolls were probably the earliest form of fashion diffusion. It was the device used to report the most fashionable modes. These dolls were made out of wax, wood or porcelain, and their clothes changed with the season with hairstyles, jeweled accessories and outer garments detailed in full. The extent of the latest styles displayed on the fashion dolls was complete. According to Roche (1994: 474),

> The exchange of fashion news quickly assumed two principal forms; innumerable ambassadors involuntarily spread far and wide the practices of external worlds; information was consciously sought from the centres of production and manipulation, the great commercial fairs and above all the network of princely courts. Princes and princesses listened to the descriptions of observers and began to have sent to them models of foreign clothes worn by 'fashion dolls'.

It is believed that before the invention of the fashion plate, information concerning the latest fashion was so hard to come by that Marie-Antoinette's dressmaker found it worthwhile to travel the Continent every year carrying dolls dressed in the latest *modes de Paris* (Laver 1969/1995: 147). All the shops in the center of Paris were quick to organize the manufacturing and adornment of these dolls wearing French fashion which, in the eighteenth century, were dispatched every month throughout Europe and the world. Court society across Europe was dependent on these Parisian merchants' dolls; they were displayed in shop windows (Roche 1994: 475). The use of traveling dolls and their purpose of revealing the latest fashions became an exclusively Parisian tradition. This method was again used after the Second World War, as explained in Chapter 2, to revive Haute Couture that was closed to the world during the German occupation. Therefore, *La Thêàtre de la Mode* derived from a well-established custom, dating from the Middle Ages, when traveling dolls were dispatched far and wide, their mission to present the elegance and prestige of Paris fashion to foreign courts (Train and Braun-Munk 1991).

Fashion plates or engravings had appeared sporadically since the sixteenth century and gradually squeezed the fashion dolls out of the information market because they were cheaper and more mobile and also because the capacity of the typographic presses to adapt and print in large numbers enabled them to convey their images well beyond aristocratic circles (Roche 1994: 476). In the second half of the eighteenth century, when the French began exporting fashion illustration (Steele 1988: 36), fashion began to spread widely, and they became an essential source of fashion information. The number of fashion plates produced increased from 102 for the period between 1600 and 1649 to 1,275 for the period between 1750 and 1799 (Roche 1994: 477). Many foreign fashion magazines entered into agreements with French publishers to purchase the right to reproduce French fashion plates, and with copyright laws little enforced, some prints were simply pirated by foreign journals (Steele 1988). The wider distribution and dissemination of fashion information helped to make fashion accessible to the rising bourgeoisie, those most determined and eager to acquire aristocratic clothing preferences.

France has the longest history of fashion magazines that played a significant role in forming and guiding public taste. The eighteenth century culminated in a massive explosion of fashion periodicals and journals which reported fashion changes, and they were also responsible for replacing the fashion dolls of previous years because like fashion plates, these publications could be presented as an alternative, almost guaranteed success, for these expensive, delicate dolls (Roche 1994). After 1750, French fashion periodicals were read far beyond the boundaries of France. They helped to reshape the dress of the European elites who were their readers, in line with French worldly sensibilities;

and the new means of communication allowed a new universe of symbols to be propagated and a new ideology to be spread, by projecting them in the materiality of things (Roche 1994). It was now based on a solid national and European market; for example, in 1761, *Le Journal des Dames* was distributed in thrity-nine French towns and forty-one abroad (Roche 1994: 481).

With the appearance of the first illustrated fashion magazines at the end of the Old Regime in the 1780s and with new ideas in the air, this decade sees the establishment of high quality fashion magazines. These magazines picked up the latest trends, explored shifting moods, temporary fads and educated their readers both in the latest fashions and in social and political issues, from which contemporary women's magazines originate. The treatment of fashion changed, and it was regularly described for its own sake and put on display (Lipovetsky 1994: 68). Among these magazines were the *Gallerie des Modes* (1778–87), a pioneer in the field of the fashion plate (Laver 1969/1995: 144); the *Cabinet des Modes*, later renamed as the *Magasin des Modes Nouvelles Francaises et Anglaises* (1785–9) with a wealth of material on the details of fashion (Lipovetsky 1994: 68; Ribeiro 1988: 20–1) and an adaptation and translation in England, Italy and Germany (Roche 1994: 487); and *Le Journal de la Mode et du Goût* (1790–3), the unchallenged leader of a genre which had started well before 1750 and which played a crucial role in the history of culture (Roche 1994: 471). By 1789, fashion periodicals were an established field in the publishing industry in France.

At no other time in history have politics and dress been so closely intertwined as during the French Revolution (Ribeiro 1988: 23). Before the Revolution print runs were limited and circulations were restricted. The Revolution made it possible for pamphlets and periodicals to proliferate. In 1789, fashion magazines were quick to exploit the links between fast-changing political events and costume; political allegiance as demonstrated in dress provided material for the pages of such periodicals as the *Magasin des Modes Nouvelles* (Ribeiro 1988). In the early years of the Revolution, the most flourishing fashion magazine was the *Journal de la Mode du Goût* whose early issues are filled with enthusiasm for the Revolution, which was to be toned down as it became obvious that the very concept of fashion, with its aristocratic and frivolous implications, was doomed. By the mid 1790s, there were no fashion magazines and it was politically tactless even to talk about fashion; records, either documentary, or in the form of actual garments worn by the rich, are rare until things were on a calmer footing (Ribeiro 1988: 23). Fashion magazines did not return until the summer of 1797 (Ribeiro 1988), and they revived again from 1797 with the first issue of *the Journal des Dames et des Modes*. The number of fashion magazines and journals multiplied rapidly from 1830 to 1870 (Steele 1988: 104). In 1890, they began to include photographs,

and their influence became even more pronounced. In cities throughout Europe, people fought over the latest issues from Paris. Actresses and well-known female figures featured in these magazines were the fashion models of their day. Illustrators, such as Paul Ribbe and George Lepape, drew exquisite fashion plates for these magazines that covered the most recent developments in fashion and beauty and all the events in a modern woman's lifestyles (Steele 1988).

Like the Paris Salon in the French painting world of the nineteenth century, which was an instrument in controlling review, reward and painters seeking official recognition, couturiers were encouraged to participate in international expositions in order to earn the public's interest in French fashion. The nineteenth century saw a great number of such fairs. There were large-scale world's fairs in Paris in 1855, 1867, 1878, 1888 and 1900 (De Marly 1980a). For the World's Fair in Paris in 1900, since couture was an important part of French exports, the government wanted participation by the couturiers, and they presented the first joint exhibition of Haute Couture. Since then, participation in international fairs became regular practice. Today, the tradition of expositions and trade fairs continues to promote the city of Paris on a much larger scale during the fashion weeks. One can find fashion-related events in Paris almost on a monthly basis (Table A.3 in Appendix A).

Fashion Shows in the Modern System as a Mobilizing Ritual

Institutionalized fashion shows organized twice a year first began in France in 1910. Fashion shows construct systematic interactions which are generally the mutual influence of members of the same groups. Influence is systematic only if there is a regular or orderly relationship among the units influencing one another. Designers organize fashion shows to expose their work to fashion gatekeepers. Shows first began as a trade event and have become a ritual. In the past thirty years the traditional runway fashion show has changed from a private commercial transaction conducted behind closed doors into a public spectacle as part theater, part performance and part entertainment (Sudjic 1990: 25), and therefore, comments from the audience or consumers, such as 'who can wear that?' or 'I don't want to wear that', are insignificant to the designers. Although these events have no religious implications, they contain a number of factors found in Durkheim's theory of ritual production of moral solidarity (1912/1965). According to Durkheim, the elements of a ritual are (1) physical co-presence of a group, (2) mutual awareness of a common focus of attention and (3) a common emotional mood. Once begun, (2) and (3)

recycle and intensify. The results are (4) symbols or 'sacred objects' representing membership in the group, and (5) emotional energy for participants.

By coming to Paris several times a year with a common interest in reaffirming existing talented designers and discovering new ones, all participants in the events during fashion weeks in Paris reconfirm its membership and reinforce the conviction that the best designers are found in Paris. Rituals create emotional ties and a collective consciousness that bind a group together and make the way it is organized unquestionably real. The participants strengthen the position of the dominant members of the group. If one looks at the ceremonies to which groups and societies attach great importance, one can see that they generally combine highly stereotyped rituals with large gatherings of people. Ritualistic interaction that occurs repeatedly among all individuals maintains the belief that Paris is the fashion center. It is through these practices that the particular groups of fashion elites reproduce themselves. Organizing fashion shows is not only a trade event but also a cultural event.

Thus, participation in the biannual fashion show weeks qualifies a designer for legitimate designer status in Paris. Failure to continue the shows means loss of status, unless one is as established as the French Pierre Cardin who terminated his couture show in 1992 and is no longer a member of the couture organization. Fashion shows for designers are analogous to gallery exhibitions for artists, sites where fashion professionals congregate, interact and judge. As several of my respondents made clear, it is a matter of 'life and death' for designers because the designer's reputation is so dependent on the evaluation of fashion gatekeepers. An industry executive stresses the significance of show participation:

> Fashion shows are very, very important for designers. That is where you expose a hundred percent of your talent. The Paris ready-to-wear collection is the most international in terms of accepting foreign designers although the star designer has to be French. Now it's Jean-Paul Gaultier . . . If you are a designer, you want to make it in Paris. It's also very competitive because everyone comes here. Milan and London are still rather closed, and foreign designers are somewhat treated as guests. Tokyo is geographically too far for non-Japanese designers.

Another industry executive also adds:

> Having a fashion show is the most important thing to do if one wants to be a designer in France and establish the name among fashion professionals. Even if you don't have the means to mass produce your clothes, you still have to have a show and continue every season. You must take part during the fashion weeks even if you are not on the Federation's list. That is the way to make yourself an official designer and make yourself known to the world eventually.

Some designers intentionally make clothes that are provocative to grab the media attention. A buyer visiting Paris from New York says: 'An unusual collection means a bigger audience next season. It's to get attention for their new names.' Fashion today is not about the wearability and the functionality of clothes. Many of the clothes shown on stage are never mass-produced or sold in stores. Extravagant or eccentric outfits create publicity and prestige that help sell more affordable and profitable items, such as perfume and cosmetics bearing the name of a designer. In an industry that values image so highly, fashion shows conceptualize the specific image that designers try to project to the public although many designers I interviewed were not able to verbalize their image. Issey Miyake, one of the Japanese designers in Paris (in Tsurumoto 1983: 99) remarks: 'I am neither a writer nor a theorist. For a person who creates things to utter too many words is to regulate himself, a frightening prospect.' Similarly, a struggling Japanese designer in Paris says:

> Designers are not articulate. You don't have to become a designer if you can explain what you have inside with words. We can't describe our feelings in words so we use clothes to express them. That's why there are fashion journalists and critics. It's their job to explain what message designers are sending to society. They are better at doing that.

Membership in the Elite Designer Category: Inclusion in the Calendar List

Organizing and setting the dates of seasonal fashion shows are the major tasks of the Federation. A list of fashion shows taking place in Paris is distributed to the member journalists and editors worldwide. The most lively fashion weeks are the women's Prêt-à-Porter shows in October and March, in which more than a hundred fashion designers take part. Designers on the calendar list have the privilege of using the official show site at the Salle de Carrousel du Louvre, which is located under the Louvre Museum. The rental fee is said to range from $22,370 to $63,985 depending on the size of the space (Weisman 1998: 24). No designer is prohibited from organizing a fashion show because they are not on the Federation's list. However, being on the list carries considerable weight, especially in the absence of formal criteria to designate a designer. The occupation of designer requires neither licenses nor qualifications. Some designers do not even have a technical training in fashion education. Therefore, a designer needs to be legitimated. The list offers the means of recognition and legitimation for designers. A designer who was on the list for the first time says:

> I did a collection five times without being on the calendar list of the *Chambre Syndicale*. I kept calling the organization to put my name on the list, but I could never get through to a person in charge. I wanted to go in and show my portfolio and show them what I have been doing as a designer in Paris. You don't have to pay to have your name on the list, but it is very difficult. The organization is very selective, and you have to know people. Then I found out that designers work with publicists. The moment I made a contract with an outside public relations firm, my name was on the list. I did not even have to show my portfolio. The difference between being on the list or not, I think, is the number of people who came to my show. But what was most important for me was that people who work with me became more motivated. All my friends and staff members were surprised and excited to see my name there. You suddenly become official. People look at you differently.

A publicist also shares the view:

> The *Chambre Syndicale* is very bureaucratic, and they require you to have some experience. For the first few times, you are put at the end of the calendar list. Still, it's important to be on the list because journalists make plans during the fashion weeks based on the list. If you are not on that list, journalists wouldn't find out about you unless you promote yourself widely.

While there are criteria for membership in the couture group, there are no official procedures to become a member in the Prêt-à-Porter show list. The official members of the Prêt-à-Porter organization (Table 4.2 in Chapter 4) have the exclusive privilege of choosing the date and timeslot for the show while the non-members are merely assigned a timeslot by the Federation. A young designer explains:

> If the show is early in the morning or late at night, journalists are less likely to show up. If the show is scheduled later in the fashion week, many have already seen the important, major shows and are less likely to stay until the end to see minor, unknown designers. If the show is before or in between important shows like Yves Saint Laurent or Christian Dior, journalists are more likely to skip it, in case there is not enough time to move from one location to the next. But when you are still new on the calendar, you just have to accept whichever timeslot you are given by the organization.

The number of shows during the ready-to-wear collection weeks in Paris has expanded and remains crowded. While designers are selective in choosing the journalists to send their invitations to, given the sheer number of shows, the journalists are selective as well. The show dates have become a major concern for fashion professionals. The fashion weeks in Paris, Milan, London and New York never overlap because the same groups of people, mainly

journalists and editors, cover these fashion shows. The fashion weeks in Milan and New York, which many French fashion insiders consider as the competitors, now take place before the Paris shows. The Federation is making an effort to expand the calendar to prolong the Paris collection weeks so that both French as well as foreign designers are well represented on the Paris schedule. It is the members of the Federation who vote for these decisions.

Every season before the collections start, an application form and a regulation note are sent to French and foreign journalists and editors who are officially recognized by the Federation. For the official recognition, they must file a separate application with information about the publication, size of circulation and types of readership. Then the organization releases to its member designers a list of fashion journalists and editors classified into countries and publications who may attend the fashion shows in Paris with their contact addresses and phone numbers. The privilege of being on the Federation's calendar list is that they receive this list of journalists and editors. Some designers are desperate to get hold of it. A designer who is still not on the list finds the means to get it:

> I have a friend who is on the list, and he gives it to me. These designers are not supposed to give this out to others because this is the privilege of being included in the Federation's calendar list. But he lets me photocopy this fifty-page list of journalists. There are about three thousand names, and I send about eight hundred to one thousand invitations every season, and about three hundred people would show up.

Exposure of the work in Paris is one step towards success. The fashion journalists and editors are aware of their power, and so are the designers. One of the designers explains an incident that occurred:

> It was my first collection. Madame X of XYZ came in a few minutes before we started, and she came without the invitation card which had a special sticker on it. This sticker means that this person is really important and gets the front row seat no matter what. But because she didn't have the card, a girl standing at the entrance put her in the third row! Can you imagine not putting her in the front row? She was obviously angry. She then got up and purposely sat in the last row, and that made a commotion in the audience because everyone knows that this woman always gets the front row seat. Then a lady who was sitting in the front row gave her seat to this famous journalist. It was a nightmare for us.

As a result, the show never appeared in her publication. She never attended his show again or allowed any of her assistants to attend. The designer wrote a letter of apology and even sent her a box of chocolates, but to no avail. Yet,

he still keeps sending her the show invitation. The designers are aware of the role that these gatekeepers play, and their attendance is an absolute must. One young designer confided to me that he provided a van for journalists so that they could be transported from the previous show to his show:

> My show was delayed for two hours because I wanted to wait for some of the editors from major magazines. Before me, there was Chloé by Stella McCartney, a daughter of Paul McCartney of the Beatles, and of course no journalists or editors would think of missing her show. We had a van waiting for these editors in front of her show site.

Most of the designers admit that there is no direct relation between sales profits and the amount of coverage in magazines or newspapers, but in the long run, it contributes to the diffusion of the designer name. Magazine coverage is equivalent to free publicity. Especially for those who still cannot afford to advertise in fashion magazines, being covered by the editors mean free advertising because they have a very wide distribution. Without these magazines, fashion designers do not gain recognition. For some store buyers, it is important whether a designer is having a show in Paris or not. As one designer explains that the show is part of the image creation:

> I choose my own show site that suits the image of my clothes. The image is extremely important because our business is to sell image. It's all about image. Once your image is damaged, it is very difficult to recreate it or reconstruct it. And there has to be a consistency in the designer image. That is what attracts consumers. They will return to buy your clothes for that image. They are actually buying my image rather than my clothes. Having a show in Paris builds and adds to my image as a designer.

For designers, fashion shows give them the opportunity to exhibit their image. Fashion today is less about material clothes and is more about the image the designers project. The owner of the show production company says: 'At the end of the day you want the editors who pull the collections and write about the collections . . . for a show, you are trying to get the maximum press coverage.'

Gatekeepers of Fashion: Editors, Journalists and Publicists

The dominance of France in forming the language and criteria of art journalism (White and White 1965/1993) is also reflected in fashion journalism. Fashion editors and journalists as critics function as part of the system, and their

rhetoric creates the charisma of the designers. For painters these include galleries, auction houses, curators, art journals, critics and other artists (Becker 1982). Counterparts for writers include agents, publishers, critics and reviewers (Clark 1987). They all act as cultural brokers in sustaining a culture. Fashion shows are used to mobilize the gatekeepers on a regular basis as they provide them the opportunities to judge designers. There are three major gatekeepers in the diffusion of the content of fashion shows and new styles introduced by designers. The principal fashion gatekeepers responsible for the global transmission of fashion are: (1) newspaper journalists, (2) fashion magazine editors and (3) publicists. To avoid confusion for the purpose of the discussion, I will refer to those who write in newspapers as fashion journalists and those who represent fashion magazines as fashion editors. Journalists and editors are directly involved while publicists play an intermediary role between designers and these writers in the print or electronic media.

Journalists and Editors

The medium that fashion writers use, such as newspapers and magazines, contributes to the institutionalization of fashion. They serve the same function of diffusing fashion, but their purposes differ. Fashion journalists act more as critics whereas fashion editors introduce new designers with new styles and convey the image of the designers to the public. During the fashion weeks in Paris, major French dailies cover the shows every day. Even when the shows are not on, dailies have an article or two about fashion or designers at least once a week. One of the most influential fashion journalists in Paris explained to me the meaning of fashion journalism and the difference between fashion journalism and fashion magazines:

> Fashion journalism is the same as any other journalism; it is about being a reporter and giving the readers information about fashion creativity, inventiveness, products to buy and the characters and aspiration of the people involved and the financial background to the different houses . . . the fashion editor also functions as a critic, like an art, film or theater critic, passing judgment on a show and analyzing it. But I believe the reportage side is the essence of journalism. Fashion magazines play a different role: they create images that define changes in fashion, which is also very important. But because they are dependent on fashion advertising, they tend to be uncritical and nice to all designers!

The extent to which reviews play a decisive role in the determination of the fame and reputation of designers cannot be measured. However, it is clear that reviewers occupy a key position within the fashion system given their position between potential or actual consumers, on the one hand, and the group of

creators and producers on the other. However negative or positive their evaluations may be, their presence is indispensable. A designer explicitly says:

> Even if it's a harsh criticism, it's still better than being ignored. But first, they must come to the show. It's really difficult to get them to come to the show. I don't want associate editors. I want the editors-in-chiefs coming to my show because they are the ones who decide which designers will eventually appear in the magazines.

Although fashion magazines are issued only once or twice a month, the strength of these magazines, especially the French ones, lies in their global distribution. Like the fashion periodicals of eighteenth and ninteenth century France, the fashion magazines that came out after the First and the Second World Wars, such as *Marie-Claire* in 1937 and *Elle* in 1945 have been influential on the lifestyles of women, including fashion. A rough list of the Parisian press (Zeldin 1977: 552) indicates that the number of fashion magazines in Paris increased from 81 in 1881 to 127 in 1901, and then to 166 in 1930. The diffusion of French fashion magazines contributes a great deal in the promotion of fashion not only in Paris but worldwide. *Elle* is published in 30 different languages with a 4.8 million readership while *Marie-Claire* appears in 24 languages with a 3.4 million readership (Falcand and Mongeau 1995: 34) The names and the visual images of the designers are repeatedly disseminated through editorials and advertising so that people can remember the names which represent the symbols for glamour, trend, timeliness and wealth.

Lang and Lang (1961: 465) explain the social process of creating Dior's New Look in the 1950s:

> The New Look (round-shouldered, hourglass fashion) of the 50s was planted. First adoped by famous designers and legitimated by royalty and celebrities. Then the New Look had to be disseminated to a wider audience. A full-scale, well-organized publicity campaign aimed at familiarizing people everywhere with the New Look well ahead of the time dresses in the style were available for sale in stores catering to the general trade. First, there had to be pictures. Women not only had to hear about the New Look; they also had to see it. Vogue and Harper's Bazaar featured the New Look, and by the time it reached other magazines of the fashion press, the New Look seemed familiar indeed.

This new style created by Christian Dior was promoted and sold to the public through certain tested and well-organized channels. As Lang and Lang (1961) point out, these networks of communication existed long before the New Look, and the change in styling was the initial result of an idea born in the fashion industry and nourished by promotion and publicity.

Designer coverage is also a reflection of the image a publication creates for itself. The editor is exercising some judgment concerning its suitability for the readership. Magazine articles about the shows and designers are an extension of the industry promotion and publicity. There is a link between the public relations activities of the industry and the selection of types of items created by the designers. A magazine editor explains the connection:

> I once tried to get an interview with a famous French avant-garde designer, but my request was turned down because his publicists think our magazine image and the designer's image do not match. Our magazine is catered to middle-aged women who are interested in fashion. If the designer appears in that kind of magazine, it may hurt his image. That was the explanation they gave me.

A publicist who works with young, avant-garde designers also emphasizes the importance of the image:

> Magazine editors call us looking for certain items of clothes for photo shoots, but if that magazine's target audience doesn't match that of our clients', we refuse to lend them the clothes. We don't want our designers' clothes, for example, in conservative, boring women's magazines. That would confuse the designers' image. We are very careful about controlling and keeping their image. It's difficult to rebuild the image once it's destroyed.

No fashion is diffused without the print media. Magazine editors and designers are interdependent in crafting the designer image, and both are cautious in maintaining the image and the types of audience that the magazines attract. Fashion magazines communicate through visual images of clothing, and fashion photography is integral to the ways in which women are viewed. There is also a status link between magazines and photographers involved (Aspers 2001) that is interrelated with the status of designers, which is an element shared by those who belong to the same chain of network. Fashion editors as transmitters of taste create aesthetic codes and ideals of femininity, many of which are artificially manufactured visions created by professional make-up artists, stylists and hairdressers.

Publicists

There is an intermediary role between designers and editors, that is, publicists, who may be in-house or independent. While the established designers employ their own publicists, the younger designers usually have a contract with outside public relations firms. It is the job of the publicists to link designers to the appropriate fashion magazines since each fashion magazine has a specific

target audience for the designer's image. The publicists are responsible for the formation of the brand mark and are careful in selecting which magazines the designers' clothes will be featured in so that the products reach the appropriate audience. A publicist explains that this is all part of the fashion business:

> I know it's not nice to say this, but I pick journalists and editors from wealthy countries where consumers have the money to buy designer goods. I rarely send show invitations to journalists from the Third World countries because their readers cannot afford them. Fashion is business. Designers have to make money, and we, publicists, help them make money, and that's our job.

Major fashion magazines that are said to be crucial in this image-making include: *Vogue, Marie-France, Elle, Jardin des Modes, 20ans, Madame Figaro, Cosmopolitan, Biba* and *Dépéche Mode* among others. The publicists have a strong worldwide connection with the journalists and editors, and they are influential enough to have the fashion writers sit in the designer's show even if the name is not on the Federation's calendar list. One of the public relations firm owners does not deny that her personal taste affects her choice of designers to work with:

> I never do business with a designer whose clothes do not suit my taste. If I do not like their clothes, I cannot back them up. I think it is the same with salespeople. If you don't like the product you are selling, it is very difficult to sell it, isn't it? All the designers I am working with are those who create the kind of clothes I like, and I like them as creators. Designers must know about people. Clothes are all about people. I do not want to work with people who have no future potential as creators.

Their job is to make a designer famous and successful. The fashion gatekeepers proclaim that objectivity is impossible or at least doubtful and are not embarrassed to claim their subjectivity. A fashion director of major fashion publications says (quoted in Sainderichinn 1995: 22): 'a good magazine has to be subjective. If not, it will only be a catalogue. And that . . . gives the magazine its personality.' Therefore, the designers must either find the right publicists to work with or satisfy them first before their works reach the public.

The fashion journalists, editors and publicists act as legitimators of fashion. Szanto (1996) explains legitimacy as the art world's measure of merit. It refers to rules and dispositions that make for a hierarchy of value among cultural artifacts. He argues that legitimacy is arbitrated through slowly evolving consensus. Time and interaction are required to reach judgments about who or what ought to be included in the art world's discourse of reasons and social field where that discourse is considered applicable. Legitimacy is the privilege to be judged (Szanto 1996) because without any judgment or evaluation,

artwork has no value. Fashion designers also achieve consensus on the value of their work. In the world of fashion in Paris, there are already the established processes and participants in the legitimation network chain with a particular mechanism for establishing these values.

Conclusion

Fashion institutions in France possess the methods of spreading fashion information worldwide. What started with dolls, plates and illustrations during the Old Regime was replaced primarily by regular fashion shows, which give couturiers and designers the opportunity to expose their works to editors and journalists who in turn, will choose the selected designers for distribution. The designers are aware of the importance of the gatekeepers' opinions in the current valuation system, and therefore, the designers need to be first noticed by them. For that, the participation in the fashion weeks and inclusion in the official calendar list become significant. This dissemination process is a crucial stage between production and consumption. An object is first manufactured, and then it is transformed into fashion through the process of dissemination. Finally, fashion, which is manifested by the object reaches the consumption stage.

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4

Social and Technical Differences among Haute Couture, Demi-Couture and Prêt-à-Porter

In this chapter, I first examine the intrinsic nature of Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter, the two types of clothes institutionalized by the Federation in 1868 and 1973 respectively. It is essential to discuss the technical production aspect of clothes-making because external descriptions of a garment do not give us a complete understanding of its quality. Clothes are tangible objects made out of raw materials; thus we must be able to explain the technical production processes of Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter, which represent different types of clothing, but it does not necessarily mean that the manufacturing methods are drastically different.

The industry classifies ways to make a garment into ready-made and custom-made. In both methods, the end products are garments, whose external appearances can be identical. The internal construction and production process differentiate one from the other. Custom-made clothes are considered technically superior to ready-made garments since they are made to fit one specific person, whereas the latter is made for the mass market. The difference can be detected only by professional designers, patternmakers, seamstresses or tailors, and occasionally, when the manufacturing standard is high, even professionals have difficulty distinguishing one from the other. However, that Prêt-à-Porter belongs to ready-made while Haute Couture to custom-made is not adequate to understand the social meanings of fashion, which is symbolic rather than material. Furthermore, the intrinsic and extrinsic nature of Demi-Couture, that was introduced recently and is not yet recognized as an official institution, will also be investigated. Who defines the true value of clothes and how is it defined? If Haute Couture is exclusive, why is it exclusive? What are the measures taken to make Haute Couture exclusive, elite clothes? I make an attempt to answer these questions.

Technical Production Process of Custom-made and Ready-made Clothes

The fundamental difference between ready-made and custom-made clothes is the customer for whom the designer is designing. For the ready-made, the size of a garment is more or less standardized to cover as many wearers as possible while the custom-made is one of a kind which is designed and made for the body of a specific individual. No human body is anatomically symmetrical, but the ready-made is designed symmetrically on both sides; by contrast, the custom-made can be adjusted in any way necessary to meet the wearer's needs and preferences, and thus it fits well on the body. Take shoulder slopes as an example. For a ready-made jacket, the shoulder pads are identical and symmetrically placed because the designer cannot predict the shoulder slopes of the wearer. A custom-made jacket has the right and the left shoulder pads adjusted and made differently according to the wearer's shoulder slopes. Thus a pattern for each side of the shoulder slope drafts differently.

Production Process of Ready-made Clothes

This type of clothing, which can also be classified as mass-produced apparel, accounts for the majority of the clothes produced and worn today. The quality of a garment, such as fabrics and sewing skills involved, may differ from manufacturer to manufacturer, but the overall production methods are the same.

1. *Fabrics*. Designers first select and purchase fabrics from textile manufacturers. Shapes and silhouettes have reached the limits so creative designers make an attempt to make fabrics with unique and original texture with the help of textile manufacturers. Today, designers must be knowledgeable about fabrics. Well-established designers can afford to order their own fabrics made to their specifications while those who are less established purchase fabrics that have already been manufactured. In this case, creativity or originality is not assured because some other designers may have already purchased the same fabrics.
2. *Design*. After fabric selection, designers start designing styles for appropriate fabrics. While some sketch finished garments, others design in such a way that the sketches only produce the atmosphere and the image of what may look like when the garments are completed. It is often believed that those who do not know about garment construction are more likely to design clothes that are unwearable or uncomfortable and that are impossible to manufacture. However, the ready-to-wear industry is unlikely to employ those without any knowledge of technical skills. This stage usually involves making a presentation board which generates the image and the mood of the seasonal collection.

3. *Draping/Drafting/Patternmaking*. The next task is to execute the drawings or the sketches in a three-dimensional form. Some designers start draping on a mannequin (a stuffed torso from the neck to the hip covered in beige cotton fabric) with muslin and pins to see the actual silhouette of the garment they have in mind. Sometimes this task is relegated to an assistant designer. When the style is draped and determined on the mannequin, specific parts and seamlines are marked so that when the pieces are taken apart from the mannequin, each pattern piece is recognizable because these pieces will be reassembled later. Then each piece, such as a sleeve, a collar or a front bodice, is traced onto paper to make first patterns for a sample.

4. *Sample-cutting and sample-sewing*. These pattern pieces are laid out onto the fabric, and a sample-maker cuts out the parts along with lining fabrics and canvases which are used for reinforcement, and sews the pieces together as a sample before putting it in factory production. Designers or assistant designers, who are the only ones with a clear picture of how the actual garment is supposed to turn out, instruct the sample-sewer if changes need to be implemented.

5. *Making production patterns and grading*. Pattern-makers change the patterns accordingly if there needs to be an adjustment and make the final production patterns to be sent to factories. Along with the standard pattern size, larger and smaller size patterns are also made according to the standard grading system.

6. *Writing specifications and drawing flat sketches*. It is assistant designers who write design specifications for factory sewers. These detailed flat sketches of a garment show neither the body nor the human face but indicate the details of the garment, such as rows and widths of stitches on the edge of a collar.

7. *Mass production*. Once they go into factory production, designers and assistant designers interact with the factory to ensure that the end product comes out as planned or like the sample made in the workroom.

The difference between Prêt-à-Porter and ordinary ready-to-wear or non-Prêt-à-Porter clothes is minimal. The quality of the selected fabrics, threads or trimmings, and the technical skills of factory seamstresses may vary, but the fundamental production procedure is identical. I find no technical difference between Prêt-à-Porter and non- Prêt-à-Porter clothes.

Production Process of Custom-made Clothes

Haute Couture is the combination of top quality craftsmanship with thousands of hours involved in creating a unique fabric and style, and it is believed to be the highest quality custom-made clothes. But this is too simplistic a statement. To understand the differences between Haute Couture and other luxury,

expensive custom-made clothes, an examination of the production process of custom-made clothes is also essential.

1. *Fabrics and Design*. With custom-made clothes, it is up to a customer to decide the fabrics and designs. Designers help the customer design. The customer has absolute control over what she wants or how she wants her clothes to look like. For Haute Couture, as couturiers stage a fashion show, they are the ones who design, and customers pick a style from the collection with some adjustments, such as the length of the sleeves or the colors.

2. *Draping/Drafting/Patternmaking*. Some custom-made dressmakers start with ready-made patterns, but draping on a mannequin that is close to the size of the customer is considered superior. The draping procedure is the same as that discussed in the ready-made production process. Since the garment is made for a specific individual, the size of the mannequin on which it is draped, is adjusted to make it as close to the individual's body size as possible. Then paper patterns are made.

3. *Sample-cutting and Sample-sewing*. As in the ready-to-wear processes, pattern pieces are laid out on the fabric and each piece is cut out with wide seams, in case of alterations. In preparation for the fitting, pieces are sewn by hand to facilitate taking out stitches wherever changes are necessary.

4. *Fitting*. Fittings are done once or twice depending on the price of the garment and the quality of the business. This is the most important part in the custom-made production, which distinguishes it from mass-produced clothes. The customer would wear the outfit and is fitted as accurately as possible to the anatomy of the body. For the first fitting, muslin may be used. For the second and third fittings, the real fabric may be used.

5. *Completion*. After the final fitting and when the customer is satisfied with the fit, the pieces that were stitched by hand are taken apart and seams are pressed. Now that the final structure and patterns are determined, linings and canvases are cut. Some seams are sewn together by a sewing machine, and others are hand-stitched. All the details, such as buttonholes, are completed, and the finished garment is ironed.

Institutionalizing Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter

By institutionalizing custom-made as Haute Couture and ready-made as Prêt-à-Porter, these types of clothes were socially and symbolically upgraded. So were the designers who designed them. Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter are the primary sources of French fashion. The two are ideological rather than tangible and material. The social distinctions between custom-made and Haute Couture, and ready-made and Prêt-à-Porter are bigger than the actual technical

manufacturing processes. These two as systems support that ideology and enhance the added values to clothing.

Social Significance of Haute Couture

French nineteenth-century haute couture was not simply an arrangement whereby very rich women had dresses designed and made especially for them by talented professionals (Hollander 1993: 353). The phenomenon that was later converted into a system was essentially what had been happening for centuries among the rich (Hollander 1993). Veblen (1899/1957) defined fashion as something that is non-functional, expensive and up-to-date. Haute Couture fits into all three and is the epitome of the most aesthetic appearance. But after investigating the technical manufacturing process of couture, we must pay attention to external factors that created Haute Couture. It is the symbolic production of fashion that gives credit to elite designers and couturiers. This exclusivity of luxury clothes was manufactured and manipulated by the fashion system. Fashion was in the hands of couturiers who were now in charge. De Marly (1980a: 22) describes the atmosphere of the couture house in the mid-nineteenth century:

> A lady did not go to Maison Worth as she would to an ordinary dressmaker and say that she wanted a dress in green silk by Friday. First she made an appointment, which was most unusual, and when admitted to his presence she would find that her own ideas counted for nothing. Worth would study her, note her colouring, her hair, her jewels, her style, and then he would design a gown which he thought suited her.

Haute Couture was special in terms of the way the couturiers selected and treated clients, the design prices,[1] the location of the couture house and the exclusivity of fabrics. For instance, at Worth, there was a room lit by gas and with all daylight excluded, so that clients could try on dresses for evening in exactly the same lighting conditions as they would encounter at a ball or dinner party (De Marly 1980a).

Designers who create custom-made clothes using the same methods as Haute Couture know that there is not much difference between Haute Couture and other custom-made clothes. For a Paris-based Tunisian designer, Azzedine Alaïa, who designs and creates couture-like clothes but is not a member of the couture circle, there is a fine line between well-made ready-to-wear and Haute Couture; the fabric he uses is woven by machine in Italy and sent to India to be embroidered or covered with sequins or tiny beads (Menkes 1996d: 11). Then it is returned to Paris where it is cut, shaped and finished like cloth. The method he uses is very much like couture, but Alaïa, who is not an acknowledged couturier member, has always refused to distinguish between couture and ready-to-wear.

An industry executive explains the high standard of today's ready-made manufacturing:

> By using the technology available today, designers can execute most stages of a basic garment to a quality equivalent, if not superior, to that of a hand-sewn item. It now appears that Parisian couture has no option but to merge with designer ready-to-wear, making use of machines where appropriate. But, at the same time, it must take care to preserve the tradition of manual skills that remain indispensable for certain processes.

As far as the technical process of the custom-made is concerned, there is no major difference between Haute Couture and the well-made custom-made. It is the systematic nature of the clothes themselves that is unique and special. It is not the content of couture clothes that makes the difference but how the Federation institutionalized the whole idea of elite clothes. Luxury clothes exist in relation to non-luxury clothes, and thus, the Federation requires a hierarchy. The actual difference would be the quality of fabrics, which consume many hours to create each season, and the canvases that are used to strengthen some parts of the garment. The French couture industry still uses the traditional type of canvases made out of horsehair which are hand-stitched onto the fabric in a way that are barely seen from outside and which requires much training.[2] The conventional custom-made industry and the ready-to-wear industry use fusible canvases which are pressed with a steam iron and are stuck instantaneously onto the fabric. Although I do not dismiss the breathtaking craftsmanship involved in Haute Couture, the difference between Haute Couture and custom-made clothes is more symbolic and social. It gives a privileged status and power to couturiers, but an industry insider questions the significance of the couture membership:

> There is an Italian designer who wants to be an official member of Haute Couture. There is always someone who votes against his becoming an official member so he said he would just do it on his own without being on the list, so we let him be an associate member. I wonder what the difference between the official, associated and invited member is. The public doesn't know the differences. Official members pay the highest membership fee which amounts to some percentage of the total sales. I sometimes wonder what the benefits are of being an official member. It's only the insiders who know these distinctions.

Official members have the right to vote on the admission of couturiers and designers (Tables 4.1 and 4.2). They have the power to decide who the official members of the organization will be, who can be on the Federation's list, who can use their official and prestigious show site under the Louvre Museum and

Table 4.1 *Members of La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne (as of January 2003)*

Couture house	*Couturier*	*Nationality/Sex*	*Elected in*
Balmain	O. de la Renta*	French male	1945/1991**
Chanel	K. Lagerfeld	German male	1923/1954***
Christian Dior	J. Galliano	English male	1947
Christian Lacroix	C. Lacroix	French male	1987
Dominique Sirop	D. Sirop	French male	2003
Emanuel Ungaro	E. Ungaro	French male	1965
Givenchy	A. McQueen	English male	1952
Hanae Mori	H. Mori	Japanese female	1977
Jean-Paul Gaultier	J.P. Gaultier	French male	1999
Scherrer	S. Rolland	French male	1962
Torrente	R. Torrente-Mett	French female	1974

Total: 11 couture houses

* Oscar de Renta's Haute Couture Collection for Balmain in January 2003 was his last.

** Balmain was closed once and reopened in 1991.

*** Chanel Couture was also closed once and reopened in 1954.

Source: Compiled from various sources.

participate in making 'fashion' in France. They are the ones in the establishment of fashion who regulate, control, guide and determine fashion in Paris and consequently, disseminate it to the world.

Not many women can afford clothes as expensive as Haute Couture, and since it is a labor-intensive, expensive business, fewer and fewer couture houses can sustain it. In addition, the demand for the kind of impractical clothes is hardly existent. The definition of fashion today is different from Veblen' definition (1899/1957). During the Gulf War, they lost clients from the Arab nations, and during the current Asian economic crisis, the Asian clients have disappeared. The number of couture houses, as noted earlier, is at an all-time low (Table 2.3 in Chapter 2), and the industry people talk about the disappearance of the Haute Couture system altogether. In 1946, there were 200 Haute Couture houses catering for a worldwide clientele of over 300,000 women (Rose 1993: 8). As of January 2003, there are eleven couture houses. Haute Couture has become a publicity investment. Companies are willing to spend millions on advertising because they expect the returns in terms of sales will be just as high. According to Rose (1993: 8), in 1993, couture advertisers spent

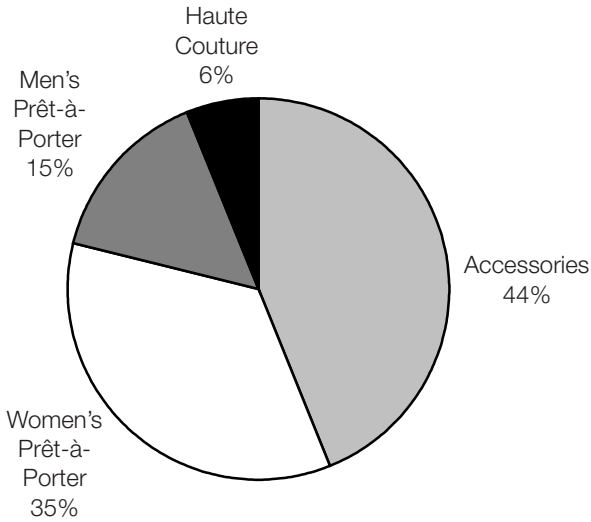
Table 4.2 *Members of La Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode and La Chambre Syndicale de la Mode Masculine (as of March 2003)*

Adeline André	Féraud	Loewe
Agnès B	Francesco Smalto	Lolita Lempicka
Akiris	Franck Sorbier	Louis Vuitton
Andrew GN	Gaspard Yurkievich	Marcel Marongiu
Angelo Tarlazzi	Givenchy	Montana Création
Balenciaga	Grès	Nina Ricci
Balmain	Guy Laroche	Paco Rabanne
Bernar Willhelm	Hanae Mori	Paule Ka
Cacharel	Hermès	Pierre Cardin
Céline	Hervé Léger	Plein Sud
Cerruti	Isabel Marant	Renoma
Chanel	Issey Miyake	Rochas
Chloé	Jacques Fath	Sonia Rykiel
Christian Dior	J.C. de Castelbajac	Thierry Mugler
Christian Lacroix	Jean-Louis Scherrer	Torrente
Comme des Garçons	Jean-Paul Gaultier	Valentino
Courrèges	John Galliano	Véronique Leroy
Dominique Sirop	José Levy	Vivienne Westwood
Dries Van Noten	Kenzo	Yohji Yamamoto
Emanuel Ungaro	Lavin	Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche
Eric Bergère	Lapidus	
Façonnable	Léonard	Zucca

(Total: 65 companies)

Source: La Fédération Francaise de la Couture, du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode

234 million FF ($39 million) in the French press but only managed to net 290 million FF ($48 million) in sales in which, Dior, Chanel and Yves Saint Laurent take 50 million FF ($8.3 million) each. By contrast perfume advertisers spend 524 million FF ($87 million) but were rewarded with 10 billion FF ($1.6 billion) in purchases (Rose 1993: 8). A smaller name, (Lecoanet Hemant which is no longer a member), had turnover of 6 million FF ($1 million). The two annual shows cost 10 million FF ($1.6 million). The company used to self-finance Haute Couture, but it did not pay for itself. It is paid for by licenses of scarves, ties, fabrics and sunglasses. The fragrance and cosmetic profits along with



Total sales in 1995: 5.2 billion FF (approximately $866 million)

Source: La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne in Nathalie Hamou (1998a), *La Tribune*, January 16: 9.

Figure 4.1 Sales composition of couture houses by sectors in 1995. Total sales in 1995: 5.2 billion FF (approximately $866 million). Source: *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne* in Hamou 1998a.

publicity generated by 700 journalists that attend the Haute Couture week are the real reasons why many companies continue to finance unprofitable couture lines. The shows net 1,200 pages of editorial pages of the designers in the magazines, which establish the brand name and then generate the benefits in licenses (Rose 1993: 8). Today, the social meaning of Haute Couture has shifted from the institution that produces expensive clothes to Haute Couture as the image-making institution.

Demi-Couture between Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter

The Haute Couture system is forced to relax its rigid rules in order to continue the system. It is trying to survive in a slightly modified form but still exists as the dominant force in the French fashion system. Thus Demi-Couture needed to be created. Menkes (1996b: 11) writes: 'Some like it hot, some keep it haute, but now comes a new concept: demi-couture. Faced with a hemorrhaging of houses from the haute couture calendar, French fashion's ruling body is enticing

ready-to-wear houses to join the ranks.' Demi-Couture, or half couture, falls between Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter in terms of production quality, such as the number of fittings, and they are not as subtly made as custom-made clothes but are not factory-manufactured like ready-made clothes. Couturiers, such as Hanae Mori, have introduced a Demi-Couture line to make these dresses slightly more affordable. They are less expensive than Haute Couture but more expensive than Prêt-à-Porter. The technical separations between Haute Couture, Demi-Couture and Prêt-à-Porter are becoming increasingly blurry as the quality and the level of Haute Couture is compromised and the quality of any ready-to-wear is becoming more and more refined. For instance, a industry designer says: 'Machine-made buttonholes look hand-stitched with today's machines. You can't tell the difference.' When he was managing the brand Thierry Mugler, Grumbach (in Menkes 1996d: 11) said: 'Our prêt-à-porter is couture – with new technology, the two métiers have become complementary and the clients are the same.'

Similarly, Prêt-à-Porter designers across the world are creating a less expensive line called secondary or Bridge Line. For instance, Georgio Armani has four categories: Georgio Armani Signature Line, Collezione, Emporio Armani and Armani Exchange (A/X). Yohji Yamamoto also has 'Yohji Yamamoto' as his Prêt-à-Porter and 'Y's' as his Bridge Line. Demi-Couture and Bridge Lines are not yet official systems, but the new hierarchy of designers' collections is being created as follows: (1) Haute Couture designed by couturiers, (2) Demi-Couture designed by couturiers, (3) Prêt-à-Porter designed by creators and (4) Bridge Line designed by creators.

Although the term 'Demi-Couture' did not exist when the system was first institutionalized by Worth, he had already utilized similar production methods. De Marly (1980a: 40) explains the production process of Worth.

> Worth was influenced by contemporary industrial practice, and adopted 'mass production' techniques into his dressmaking. With so many hundreds of ladies all wanting day costumes, dinner dresses and ball gowns all at the same time, and for each fashionable season, he had to evolve a very adaptable system. Maison Worth therefore came to operate with a range of interchangeable parts, using stock patterns of sleeve, bodice, skirt and drapery which could be combined in different compositions, like prefabricated parts. Such patterns did steady work, for they were used time and time again over the years. Fashions might change but the basic elements in construction did not. A bodice design of the 1887s could still be used in the 1880s by simply adding a flange to give it greater length.

As De Marly (1980a) makes clear, Worth partially used the mass production method. Applying previously used old patterns and developing a new pattern from them is a shortcut, simplified method which should not find any place in

custom-made clothes. This is neither an authentic custom-made nor Haute Couture. A pattern not made from a scratch is not one-of-a-kind. The same patterns used over and over again with slight adjustments constitute elements of ready-made. The method that Worth used, according to De Marly's account, is partially custom-made and partially ready-made. It might possibly be called Demi-Couture. However, Worth was considered the most popular and skilled grand couturier in the nineteenth century. This account indicates that the term 'couturier' does not guarantee the quality of the garment being made. Haute Couture is the result of the institutionalization of elite clothes. Once custom-made clothes are authorized by the system, they become Haute Couture. Thus, if we were to classify Haute Couture, Demi-Couture and Prêt-à-Porter according to their production methods, the divisions become ambiguous, and that is why we must focus not only on technical factors of these different types of clothes but also on social factors.

Prêt-à-Porter: Democratization of Fashion with Technological Invention

The advent of technology affects not only the manufacturing process of clothes-making but also the social meaning of the clothes produced, just as the technological changes during the nineteenth century in the art world had stylistic and social influence (White and White 1965/1993).[3] The technical transition from handmade to machine-made clothing for women occurred in the nineteenth century. The sewing machine that was first invented in France by the tailor Thimonnier, then refined by Elias Howe in 1846 and perfected by Isaac Singer in 1851, revolutionized the garment-making industry in the United States and Europe (Boucher 1967/1987: 358).[4]

The use of sewing machines requires less training for seamstresses which meant that the needs once fulfilled by the guild system, that used handheld needles, were replaced by the technological invention. Besides the sewing machine, patterns for specific clothing items and the development of an accurate system of body measurements were also major elements in this transformation (Crane 2000: 74–5).

Other technological advances supported the production of textiles and fabrics. For instance, Bauwens' loom revolutionized the production of woolen fabrics in Flanders. Jacquard further modified the mechanized loom to mass-produce laces making Calais a successful boomtown. Successive improvements in knitted garments made it possible to produce a one-piece corset. The introduction of the stitching clapper added strength as well as lightness to silk textiles and, in turn, improved the economy of Lyons (Boucher 1967/1987: 358). Heilman's embroidery machine, developed in 1834, also altered the industry by taking lace-making out of the hand-crafted phase into industrialized mass production (Boucher 1967/1987).

The mechanization of fabric production has also led to relatively less expensive fabrics that are used in greater quantity and variety and were available to more people, which led to mass production and the beginning of the democratization of fashion. The sewing machine converted garment making into a proper factory system. Manufacturing was profoundly transformed under the influence of an increased division of labor, and the ready-to-wear industry was achieved at the expense of the small tailor who mainly worked to order, and his working-class and petty-bourgeois customers deserted him day by day, and soon he virtually disappeared (Perrot 1994: 67).[5] Worth's couture enterprise would not have been possible without the technological developments of the day since the scale of his international dressmaking business producing hundreds of ball gowns a week would not have been possible without the improvement in sewing machines to do most of the seams although the finishing was still done by hand (De Marly 1980a). The invention was important in spreading his styles widely.

As department stores gained a foothold and as technology progressed and production costs were lowered, manufacturers diversified the quality of the goods that were offered to the lower and middle bourgeoisie. Fashion became more accessible. However, despite this progress, the organization of fashion remained unchanged; until the 1960s, all fashion industries were subject to the dictates of haute couture (Lipovetsky 1994: 56–7). As in the painting world, these technological factors have had such an influence only in combination with changing institutions (White and White 1965/1993: 159).

Sewing machines became widely used in the French ready-to-wear clothing industry after the 1860s (Coffin 1996) although these clothes were aimed at the working class and was generally of inferior quality and were scorned by middle-class women (Crane 2000: 76). Ready-made clothes before and during the nineteenth century meant literally that it is already made, previously made, altered, restored, and cleaned clothing in popular markets (Coffin 1996). Secondhand clothing was the first mode of purchasing prefabricated garments since clothing was made at home by and for the poor while skilled tailors and seamstresses fitted out the rich (Green 1997). The guild regulations had allowed used-clothing dealers to make and sell new clothing as long as it was inexpensive and required no fitting (Coffin 1996: 54; Roche 1994 329; Perrot 1994: 78–85). During the Revolution, this commerce expanded rapidly, and used-clothing dealers began to produce and sell inexpensive ready-made and used clothes on a wider scale (Coffin 1996: 54).

Therefore, although ready-made clothes as a type and as a manufacturing method existed long before the emergence of the Prêt-à-Porter system in 1973, the image of the ready-made was not very positive. Clothes manufacturing, although very profitable, was considered an unglamorous business, engaged

in debasing public taste, and mass-produced clothes had no prestige (Hollander 1993: 358). By the end of the nineteenth century, clothes had become widely distributed mass-consumer items. With the nineteenth century being called the century of the 'democratization of goods' (Green 1997), the democratization of fashion had started slowly. However, the prestige of Haute Couture was still very high by the time of the Second World War, although it was a matter kept in the hands of a few designers, a few clients, a few journalists, and a few photographers. The press made much, as it has always done, of the exclusiveness of the whole enterprise and its costliness (Hollander 1993: 358). Thus they needed the upgraded ready-to-wear with a better image, and that was Prêt-à-Porter although technically speaking, as explained earlier, its method is simply ready-made.

Shift from Material Production to Image-production

By understanding how actual clothes are made, do we understand the social meaning of the term 'fashion'? A designer may engage in clothes-making but in order to make clothes into a fashion, one must go through the requisite legitimation process. Clothes need approval and recognition in a particular social and organizational context. Similarly, clothes, whether custom-made or ready-made, must go through the institutionalized system to label themselves as fashion. By converting clothes into fashion, designers sell other products which are more profitable than clothes. The process of the social production of fashion in France can be summarized as follows:

1. *Creating a brand*. The brand name is created, which is often the name of the designer.
2. *Organizing fashion shows*. Fashion shows, at least in the French context, are an absolute necessity for designers.
3. *Being on the calendar list of the Federation*. The name of the designer needs to be on the list of fashion shows released by the Federation. The designer must put up a show that is provocative, sensational, and controversial enough to attract attention, which in turn compels the Federation to include the name in the list the following season.
4. *Passing gatekeepers*. Although the Federation plays the pivotal role in controlling the fashion system in France, there are other gatekeepers who, along with the Federation, play a key role in diffusing the designer name. Fashion magazines and newspapers play a part in the institutionalization of fashion by disseminating fashion information to an international public.

5. *Public Exposure*. Exposing the image of the designer is crucial in spreading the name and the brand. When the name and its image are accepted by the masses, extra values are added to the name. This eventually leads to licensing the name along with the image that becomes more meaningful and profitable than the clothes they design.
6. *Licensing*. The name of a well-established designer can be used for any product. It remains even after the death of a designer, as with Chanel and Christian Dior. The most profitable product for the designer are fragrance and cosmetics, which are the incontrovertible signs of success.

The quality of clothes and the production processes are becoming less important, and the role that the fashion system plays in constructing and distributing the image of the designer becomes more vital. Fashion in the twenty-first century is less about clothing than about image. Bernard Arnault (*The Economist* 2000: 15), who now owns major luxury fashion firms, such as Kenzo, Givenchy, Christian Dior and Céline among others, explains what he expects from the designers in very simple terms: 'I don't care what they do, so long as it's on the front page.'

Boundary between High Culture and Popular Culture

Fashion used to be a symbol of high culture, and it could not be reached by those lower than upper classes. Being fashionable or wearing up-to-date clothes was the privilege of the rich. The line between high and popular culture was clearly marked and reinforced. The French fashion system was instituted in such a way that fashion belonged to high culture, and it still makes an attempt to maintain these distinctions. Haute Couture, which is inaccessible to average people, can be a process of cultural exclusion and is also used as a symbolic boundary. Cultures have conceptual symbolic boundaries, which are the product of interactions between individuals and institutions. The elites construct the world of high culture consisting of institutions and organizations that they control and from which they exclude non-elites. As elites control different forms of culture, fashion elites in France control fashion-related events and activities. The membership in the system affirms the boundary between the elites and non-elites. However, fashion has become democratized and can be reached to the masses. The new types of clothes are institutionalized as cultural categories that redefine and slightly compromise the boundaries.

Creators of high culture still appear to have more status than those of popular culture, and the ranking is related to the perceived level of the cultural product in a system of hierarchy, but it also has to do with the status of the

final consumer (Crane 2000). There is a strong link between production and consumption in terms of prestige and reputation. Those who deal with higher-status consumers outrank those with lower-status ones. For example, to attain fame and fortune, it was essential that Worth should be patronized by a lady of the highest rank and influence who would wear his creations at social gatherings (De Marly 1980a; Saunders 1955). As Worth succeeded in getting orders from Empress Eugènie, his prices became the highest in Paris. When the audiences come from the middle and upper classes, the cultural products are defined as 'high culture'.

Distinctions between the two, high and popular, are one of the most frequently studied oppositions characteristic of all modern societies, but as in other areas of culture, the distinction is becoming arbitrary (Crane 1992). Culture is defined in terms of the environments in which they are created, produced and disseminated rather than in terms of their content, and therefore, solely making an analysis of clothes is not plausible as a study in understanding the link between culture and fashion. Fashion cannot only be identified in terms of its intrinsic content but must be associated with specific social contents. As Crane (1992) explains, if the music videos which have many of the characteristics of twentieth-century avant-garde art styles were shown only in art museums instead of on cable television, they would be defined as high culture rather than popular culture.

High culture is made to evaluate and create status groups and monopolize their privileges. This is what the French fashion system has done. Specific groups of designers and fashion professionals shape the standard of aesthetic appearance and taste preferences. Fashion in France developed institutions and organizations that defined beauty and articulated ideologies that acknowledge, in Bourdieu's term (1984), 'the legitimate taste'. Without a distinct institutionalized system, there would be no fashion. The hierarchy among designers is precisely what makes Paris unique.

Conclusion

Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter are two institutionalized systems in France which were created to separate themselves from the conventional custom-made and ready-made clothes by giving them the distinctive labels. Couturiers and designers who create Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter are given the privilege with the membership in the French system. The same prestige and status are shared by those who consume Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter. The principal changes in women's clothing trade are not found in production techniques but the organization and social arrangements of different types of clothes. The

production process of clothing and that of fashion are separate, and the two go through different systems of production.

Notes

1. For example, prices of Yves Saint Laurent Haute Couture: Long-sleeved blouse 45,000 FF (approximately $7,500); Daytime suit 95,000 FF ($15,800); Evening dress 150,000 FF ($25,000); Evening dress with embroidery 250,000–500,000 FF ($41,000–$83,300) (Beziers 1993: 44). Saint Laurent, who was a member of *La Chambre Syndicale* since 1961, retired from the fashion world in January 2003 and, therefore, his couture line is discontinued.

2. This is based on my observation of and conversation with couture seamstresses who were participating in the demonstration.

3. According to White and White (1965/1993: 159), the technological changes in art media occurring during the century, such as lithography, ready-made paint in tin tubes, new colors and new types of brushes for the manipulation of the thicker paint, and prepared canvases, had some undoubted stylistic and social influence.

4. The machines were not manufactured in France until 1870 (Coffin 1996).

5. The sewing machine created a panic among the tailors, and they rioted and destroyed eight machines at a factory (Perrot 1994: 67). Tailors attacked this new production with indignation or contempt, and the professional journals predicted the death of ready-to-wear and the return of custom-made clothing, which never happened.

Part 2

Interdependence between Japanese Designers and the French Fashion System

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5

The Japanese Fashion Phenomenon in Paris since 1970

Fashion design as an occupation is often neglected in sociological studies of fashion. When they do discuss famous designers, they often treat them as artists with special talents and gifts and focus on the designers' biography, training background and their designs. Otherwise, most sociological studies of fashion examine the phenomenon from the perspective of the clothing industry and the consumers, or in the context of clothing trends. As Becker (1982) did in his study of art worlds and artists, a sociological analysis must be first concerned with the social processes and then the quality of the work. It is important for production studies to focus on the micro level of interaction between individuals involved in the system of fashion because it helps us understand to what extent designers, especially foreign outsider designers, must rely on the system to receive their approval. In this chapter, I explore how the Japanese outsider designers managed to penetrate into 'Paris fashion that is larger, more complex, and substantially older than any of the other fashion worlds' (Crane 1993: 56). While using Crane's (1993) examination of the role, prestige and influence of the fashion designer in four countries, France, England, the United States and Japan, I narrow my focus to the entry process and the internal legitimation mechanism of Japanese designers within the context of the French system that will eventually lead to their recognition worldwide.

Institutional changes in fashion and designers' innovation ensure continuity of the system and culture. By understanding the process through which these designers were accepted by the system, we can confirm its structure and see how the system and the designers are mutually dependent on each other. The role that outsiders play may be as important in bringing about change as is that of established participants in the system. Kenzo, Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons, Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Hanae Mori are considered the most successful and internationally known Japanese designers in the West,

and they have solidified their position in the French fashion establishment. Fashion professionals recognize and accept their achievements because of their 'Japaneseness' reflected in their designs, and many called it 'the Japanese fashion' only because these clothes were definitely not Western in regard to construction, silhouettes, shapes, prints and fabric combinations. The source of their design inspiration undoubtedly comes from products that symbolize Japanese culture, such as kabuki, Mount Fuji, geisha and cherry blossoms, but their uniqueness lies in the ways they deconstructed existing rules of clothing and reconstructed their own interpretation of what fashion is and what fashion can be. These Japanese have proven firstly to Paris, and then to the world, that they are masters of fashion design proposing that Western societies reassess and redefine the concept of clothing and fashion and also the universality of beauty. They shocked fashion professionals in the West by showing something none of them had seen before. The idea of newness is a vital element in fashion although it should never be an end in itself. All new things are often considered eccentric first. Kawakubo (in Hirakawa 1990: 24) explains why newness is important:

> I would like the audience to feel their heart beat. I want them to feel something when they wear my clothes. If they don't feel anything when they wear my clothes my creations are meaningless. That is to say, my clothes have to be new. My greatest fear is that I won't be able to create anything new. I always have that fear.

It is crucial for each as an individual designer and also for the profit-making business, to be acknowledged and legitimated by the French fashion system. While Hanae Mori had been known throughout Japan since the 1950s, Kenzo was merely a company designer in Japan, and the other three were known only within the limited fashion circle in Japan before they came to Paris. Japanese designers could have remained on the periphery of the world of fashion and outside the mainstream Western fashion. In order to extend their influence beyond the confines of Japan, they needed professional guidance and association, that is with the French Federation, and admission into and acceptance by the Paris fashion world were indispensable. The distinct ethnic designs alone are not enough to explain the success of these Japanese designers. The fashion world in Paris is a channel that transmits new designers to the world, and they strategically utilized the system to their advantage. The incorporation of foreign designers into the establishment is also the manifestation of the valorization of new styles and new creators. There is some fluidity, openness to new possibilities and inclusiveness on the part of the French fashion system. Although these designers were formerly marginal to the fashion core, once they were validated and became the center of both negative and positive

attention, the aesthetic center, which Louis XIV first created, expanded its boundary to include these outsiders in order to keep the center firm instead of allowing an alternative recognition system. Being a Japanese designer in Paris is very rewarding, and a continuous flow of Japanese designers to Paris reinforces the idea that the city of Paris is the capital of fashion.

Marginality as an Asset

The Japanese fashion phenomenon in Paris began with Kenzo when he first showed his collection in his small store in 1970. It was not the first time that clothes with Oriental inspirations appeared in the West. Since the late thirteenth century, when Marco Polo brought the first marvels of China to the West, the East has provided recurrent resuscitation and expansion of Western dress (Martin and Koda 1994).

The opening of Japan's doors to the West in 1854 after two hundred years of economic and cultural isolation enabled the West to come into significant contact with Japanese culture for the first time. New trade agreements beginning in the 1850s resulted in an unprecedented flow of travelers and goods between the two cultures. By the end of the nineteenth century, Japan was everywhere, such as in fashion, interior design and art, and this trend was called '*Japonisme*'.[1] Western appreciation for Japanese art and objects quickly intensified. World's fairs played a major role in the spread of the taste for Japanese things. In an age before the media, these fairs were influential forums for the cultural exchange of ideas: London in 1862, Philadelphia in 1876, and Paris in 1867, 1878 and 1889 (Wichmann 1981).

Craik (1994: 41) points out that the Japanese influence has partially redrawn the boundaries of fashion away from 'western' ideals of the body, body-space relations and conventions of clothing, and the principals of western fashion have incorporated non-European influences, traditions and forms into mainstream practice. Many fashion writers discuss Japanese designers in Paris from a humanistic point of view, and they focus on their designs and clothes in relation to bodies and female aesthetic appearance, all of which are significant in understanding their popularity.

However, recent exhibitions, such as *Orientalism* at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum in 1994, *Japonisme et Mode* at the Palais Galliéra costume museum in 1996, *Touches d'Exoticism* at the Art Museum of Fashion and Textile in Paris in 1998, and *Japonisme* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York in 1999, show that Western designers have long been inspired by Eastern textiles, designs, construction and utility, including Japanese kimonos. For instance, Jeanne Lanvin's dress with a bolero jacket in the 1930s simulates

kimono sleeves. Similarly, at the beginning of the twentieth century, as boning and corsetry were reduced to a minimum, Paul Poiret's loose-fitting kimono sleeve came in, and the high-boned collar was abandoned for an open V-neck resembling the kimono. Chrysanthemum prints or exotic fabrics were used by many couturiers, such as Charles Worth and Coco Chanel. Those who were fascinated by the kimono's geometry, like Madeleine Vionnet, cut dresses in flat panels and decorated them only with wave-seaming, which is a Japanese hand-stitching technique. The East remained a fashion influence through the First World War. Western designers incorporated Japanese elements into Western clothing with Western interpretation while remaining within the normative definitions of clothing and fashion. Therefore, exposure of Japanese culture to the West was not completely new when Kenzo first appeared in Paris.

More importantly, what was new was designers from the East. Labeling and grouping based on their nationality is prevalent in press coverage. The initial reception of some of these designers from fashion gatekeepers in the West was mixed since Japanese designers are working on foreign territory. Western clothing is fairly new to Japan,[2] and thus, they could have been seen as 'imitators'. Kenzo's reception was immediate and sensational while Mori's entry into the French high fashion circle was treated with some skepticism. For the avant-garde designers, there was much criticism of their unconventional styles. However, Japanese designers continue to set the trends all over the world, receiving the highest compliments in the fashion industry using, whether consciously or subconsciously, their cultural heritage as their forte. They all have now become the favorites of the French and other Western press. A French journalist (de Faucon 1982: 8) wrote: 'Big or small, "our" Japanese touch all fashion creation.' Similarly, two years after Yamamoto's and Kawakubo's first shows in Paris, an American fashion journalist (Morris 1983: 10) explained: 'Japanese designers who began showing here a few years ago, to empty houses . . . Now everybody arrives a day earlier than usual to see their shows.' In regards to Yamamoto's collection in October 1998, an American journalist wrote (*Women's Wear Daily* 1998b: 6–7):

> How does he do it? Over the past several seasons, Yohji Yamamoto has staged one blockbuster after another. Each season, the fashion faithful show up full of anticipation, wondering what his message will be and if he can possibly outdo himself. To say everybody went away happy on Saturday night is an understatement. How often in fashion does nearly an entire audience stand in unison for a boisterous ovation? Yamamoto's brilliant spring collection was fashion, art and theater all rolled up into one gloriously great time . . . Neither Yamamoto's imagination nor his skills seem to be hampered by limits.

In this collection, Yamamoto used a technique that is typically found in classical Japanese kabuki theater where a person, known as a Kuroko, clad in black from head to toe with a transparent black veil over the face, helps actors get dressed or change into another outfit on stage in front of the audience.

What made these Japanese designers unique was not merely the clothes they designed but their position and status as non-Western fashion outsiders. The marginality of these Japanese has become an asset. Until Kenzo, there were no Asian designers in Paris. He was followed by other Japanese designers, namely Miyake in 1973, Mori in 1977, Yamamoto and Kawakubo in 1981. In a field that is predominantly Western, the Japanese designers began to use their 'race' card to be acknowledged by the French, and they discovered that there were considerable financial benefits that they could bring back to their own country and also to other parts of the world. With the Federation's approval, they became insiders. Zolberg and Cherbo (2000) explain that insider/outsider distinctions in the artistic world have become multilayered, multidimensional and must be conceptualized as matters of degree rather than of kind. The typologies I make in the subsequent chapters for Japanese designers in Paris demonstrate that degree of insider status and of assimilation in the French fashion system.

These Japanese have acquired means to enter the French system and at the same time used their ethnic affinity as a strategy. This is a strategy and a process used not only by designers but also by African artists (Zolberg 2000), Third World novelists (Griswold 2000) and Flamenco dancers (Corradi 2000). They must acquire access to insider status in the realms where artistic power is concentrated and where gatekeepers participate. Zolberg (2000) explains that the line between inside and outside the system is an issue about status and legitimation, and the inside boundaries provide privilege and status whose boundaries in the world of fashion can be expanded and manipulated through style experiments and innovation. Fashion professionals accept and welcome designers who push and test the boundaries because these are signs of 'creativity'. Once the designers are acknowledged as insiders, they slowly gain worldwide attention, although recognition is never permanent.[3] Fashion design is an occupation where prestige necessarily antedates financial success. Prestige, image and name bring financial resources. Until designers reach that stage, they struggle to achieve it, or once it is achieved, they struggle to maintain it.

The French system opened its doors to Japanese designers and subsequently, to many foreign designers. It is through Paris that charismatic designers are created, and the fashion institutions help manufacture one's charisma. Kenzo set the precedent for other Japanese designers. To affirm their uniqueness and the distinct qualities of their clothes, they took full advantage of their Japanese upbringing. The public is reminded of their racial and ethnic heritage every

fashion season with the references to Japanese cultural products and artifacts using every Japanese vocabulary familiar to Westerners. 'Hanae Mori resuscitates the splendors of millenial Japan and celebrates in her way the 1,200 years of Kyoto. With a kimono topcoat with silk Obi, cashmere jackets and dresses embroidered with Mount Fuji' (Hesse 1994: 8). 'The final, geisha in pastel satin' (Samet 1996: 12). 'Kenzo . . . the most Japanese among our creators, stays faithful to the image of flowers . . . Flowers of France, of Japan and somewhere else' (Mory 1988: 76). However, Kawakubo and many others are not satisfied with the label 'Japanese'. She explains (in Brantley 1983: 48): 'I am not happy to be classified as another Japanese designer . . . There is no one characteristic that all Japanese designers have . . . What I do is not influenced by what's happening before in fashion or by a community cultural influence.' Similarly, Yamamoto (in Marc 1992: 72) says: 'I am not a Japanese creator but just a creator.' Miyake (in O'Brien 1993: 23) shares the same view with the other two and remarks: 'I don't want to express Japanese culture. I've always wanted to be between cultures. More and more we are going to consider ourselves members of a global society, not just of one particular culture.' Miyake has been trying 'to create a new fashion genre that is neither Japanese nor Western' (Koren 1984: 80).

Neither does the younger generation of Japanese designers want to be labeled as one of those successful Japanese designers, but inevitably the fashion professionals constantly remind the public that they are Japanese, and it is Japanese fashion that they are looking at. They cannot escape their cultural heritage. Every time new Japanese designers emerge in Paris, they are introduced as 'the new generation of Japanese designers'. A young Japanese designer from Tokyo explains how he feels when he is categorized as such:

> Because I'm Japanese, French people want to label or classify me as one of the famous Japanese designers, and they always say 'your designs are like Issey' or 'I've seen something like that in Yohji's collection a few years ago'. Are they implying that I'm just copying? But what Kenzo and Issey have done to the world of fashion, especially in Paris, is so overwhelming that it's difficult to be better than them.

Another Japanese designer in Paris shares a similar view:

> Some French journalists told me 'Yours is like Kenzo's collection I saw last week.' It takes six months to prepare for the show, you know. How can you copy someone's collection from the week before? That's impossible. It really annoys me when people say that, and they don't realize what that means to a designer when they say something like that. It's quite insulting. Designers need to be creative. We want to be creative. Being creative means to make something completely new.

Japanese designers are expected to be Japanese, and thus when they are not, it deceives public expectations. When they do not utilize their race card and any Japanese cultural elements in their designs, a fashion writer wonders why. In commenting on Junko Shimada's collection, a French journalist (Samet 1993b: 8) wrote: 'If you didn't look at the label, you would never guess the designer was Japanese. Shimada's style which is sexy, skin-tight dresses is undeniably western.'

Although as unfortunate as it may be for the Japanese designers, their heritage is their very strength and weapon in Paris. As noted earlier, there had been many French designers in the past who used Japanese-inspired designs. Had the Japanese designers made Western clothes abiding by the Western clothing system, they would not have received the same kind of recognition. A major retailer from New York says (in Sudjic 1990: 84): 'There was no point in going all the way to Japan to find them doing straight down the line, traditional Brooks Brothers.' The combination of their distinctive styles as well as their racial origin attracted the audience in the West. It was easier to classify them as Japanese fashion although no one in Japan ever dressed like that until then. As Steele (1991: 188) makes it clear about Kawakubo, and this applies to all other Japanese designers: 'Of course, she has a point: She is a unique individual and an international fashion power . . . it is also significant that she is Japanese – and a Japanese woman, at that.'

Paris as Japanese Designers' Symbolic Capital

The five Japanese designers in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, all belong to the postwar generation where they were taught that whatever is Western is good. With the defeat of Japan in the Second World War and shattering of the belief that the emperor was God, they needed to devalue Japanese ideology and value whatever came from the West. Miyake says (quoted in Cocks 1986: 48): 'We are the generation who lived in limbo, and the first really raised with Western culture, the first who must look in another direction to search for a new identity. In fashion, I respect the European tradition. But they do it better.' Similarly, Yamamoto describes himself as part of a 'lost' postwar generation, educated to look to America or Europe and ignore Japanese tradition. So when his experiments in pushing the boundaries of shape and proportion were hailed as 'Japanese style', he was confused. Acknowledging their defeat after the Second World War, the Japanese in that particular generation had become introverted and peninsular. Yamamoto explains his frustration with working only in Japan (in Fukuhara 1997: 94): 'Japanese are not concerned about what the rest of the world thinks about them. They are concerned about how other

Japanese think about them . . . I thought it was just stupid so I decided to go overseas.'

It was predicted that if Japanese fashion revolutionized the international fashion scene, and it continues to do so, this is not just an indication of Japan's originality; it may be a proposal for clothing of the future that will transcend ethnic and gender differences and even the confines of an establishment called fashion. Indeed, fashion comes out of an establishment, and that is the French establishment, and more specifically, it is the Federation. However, even French professionals are not aware of the powerful system that France provides to the designers and give credit to the designers' talent. A French editor in my study says:

> Paris was lucky to have these Japanese designers. They are genius. They could've received the same kind of recognition and prestige in any other fashion cities. Only because they chose Paris to show their collections, we can brag about them as the Japanese designers in Paris and not the Japanese designers in Tokyo or else where. I hope they'll continue to do their shows here in Paris.

By showing in Paris, the Japanese were providing the international buyers with fresh reasons to come to France twice a year (Sudjic 1990: 84). The Japanese may have shocked the world of fashion, especially after the emergence of Yamamoto and Kawakubo, but they, in fact, are still under the validation of the French system. Skov (1996: 148) points out very accurately: 'It is ironical . . . that Rei Kawakubo, as one of the designers who brought "Japanese fashion" to fame, simultaneously reinforced the interest in the Paris collections. By reworking the premises of international high fashion, she also gave it a new vitality which has lasted until today.' Japan does not have an institutionalized system to legitimate fashion designers nor does it have the mechanism to disseminate designers to the world. For a city to become an international fashion center, it must attract thousands of fashion journalists, editors and buyers every fashion season. To do that, there needs to be a well-structured organization. Tokyo in that sense is far from being an international fashion city. Designers flock to Paris because Paris provides the kind of status that no other city can provide. Having a fashion show in Paris twice a year and having a store in Paris are a profitable future investment. A French saleswoman working in a Japanese designer's store says:

> This store is only for the designer's image. That is why we carry one or two pieces for each item, and the location, as you can see, is not very good. My boss in Japan tells me that this store does not really have to make any money. It is enormously important for a Japanese designer to do a show or have a store in Paris because it projects a good image. Fashion is all about image.

A young Japanese designer who comes to Paris only during the fashion weeks to show his collection also stresses its importance:

> It's amazing how everyone in Japan started treating me differently after I had my first show in Paris. Before that, they used to say to me that Europeans or Americans would never be interested in my designs because my styles are for cute women. Paris automatically gives you the value and status. It's instantaneous. Suddenly, I'm a creative designer. It shows Japanese don't understand a thing about fashion. They can't judge.

This designer no longer shows his collection in Tokyo and is concentrating on the biannual Paris collections.

The designers use the word 'Paris' as a brand to their advantage in two ways. One way is to base completely in Paris, and treat their native country Japan as the secondary market; this is what Kenzo did. They design for the French or European market since they find the acceptance by Western consumers more challenging and rewarding. One of Kenzo's former assistants says:

> My taste and my style are European. I'm confident that I can understand European taste and spirit as much as the European designers do. I know what European consumers want and what kind of fashion they are looking for. My audience is Europeans and not Japanese. That's why I live in Paris and not in Japan. I don't think I'll ever relocate to Japan.

Another designer, a former assistant of Miyake who is also based in Paris, says that 75 percent of his clients are from Japan. He explains:

> It doesn't bother me where my customers come from. They can be from Japan, Saudi Arabia or Africa. I have buyers from all over Japan, and they tell me that when a girl in the countryside sees my design and sees the label 'Made in France', she beams. It makes her feel cool to wear something designed by a Japanese who lives in Paris. That's why it's important for me to be in Paris.

The other way to take advantage of 'Paris' is to base in Japan and come to Paris twice a year to organize a show. There is a separate system of hierarchy between Japanese designers in Japan who participate during the Paris fashion weeks and those who do not. Most of the designers admit that factories and seamstresses in Japan are far superior to those in France. Yet, many choose to manufacture their clothes in the suburbs of Paris because the label 'Made in France' carries a glamorous image. Even Kenzo (in Vidal and Rioufol 1996: 60) once said: 'For the Japanese "Made in France" is important.'

Paris has become the symbol of fashion that adds values to designers' name because of the efforts taken by the system, as explained in the previous chapters, to maintain and reproduce that ideology and belief. Without the belief, no

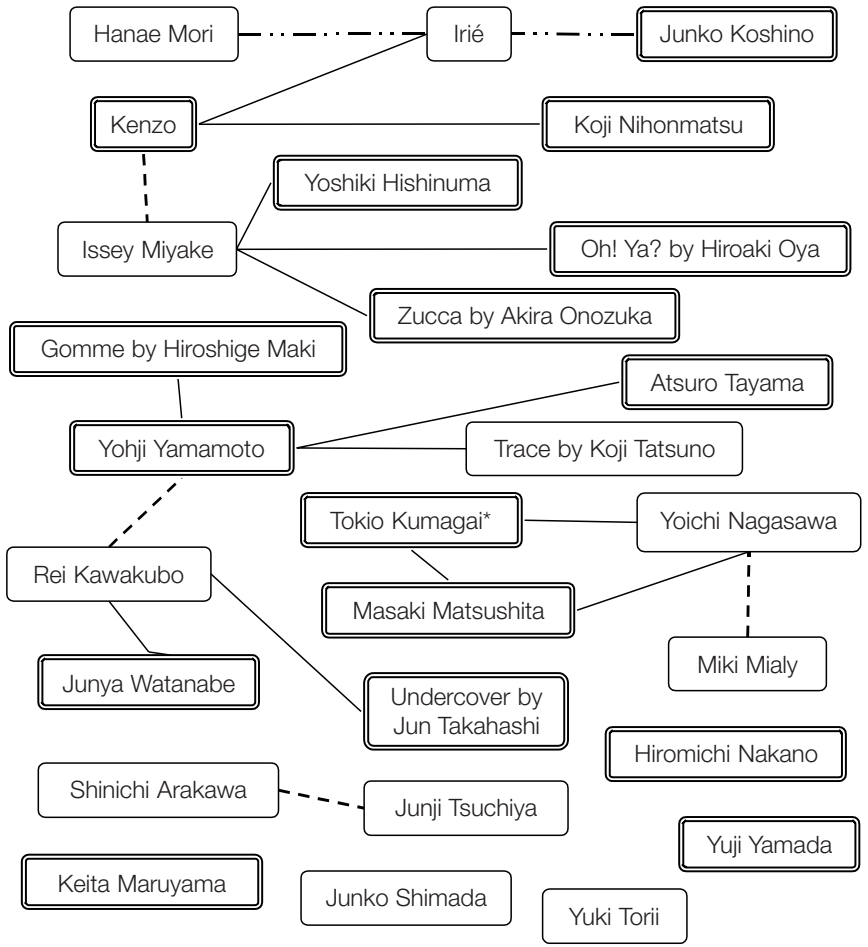
designers will mobilize in Paris, nor will Paris remain the fashion capital. A large number of outsiders are striving to become insiders because the recognition is identifiable and situated in a single institution such as the Federation, in addition to a number of gatekeepers who are influential at every level. Zolberg (2000) indicates that recognition may be founded on the fame and glamour of stardom or sales based on commercial success. But recognition is fluid, and the stature and reception of any art work, artistic, or movement are likely to change (Zolberg 2000: 5). A system of gatekeeping works to locate and validate their work. The role that these outsider designers play is important in causing a change in the system, and conversely, the system takes advantage of these marginal figures.

Influx of Japanese Designers in Paris

After the first generation Japanese designers, other Japanese are flocking to Paris one after another. The second, the third and the fourth generations are emerging in Paris. There are formal and informal connections among almost all the Japanese designers in Paris, some through school networks and others through professional networks. They can be traced back directly or indirectly to Kenzo, Miyake, Yamamoto, Kawakubo and Mori as they have learned the mechanism of the fashion system in France. The strongest and the widest link that can be seen in the network map (Figure 5.1) is the school network among these designers. The majority of them are graduates of Bunka School of Fashion in Tokyo. Kenzo first, Junko Koshino and then Yamamoto among others, provided the opportunities for others to present their shows in Paris. I did not include any personal network connections in the map as it is difficult to confirm to what extent they know each other personally, although I could observe some personal relationships at the fashion shows I attended. For instance, Yoshiki Hishinuma and Yoichi Nagasawa appear to be personally connected although they are not from the same school nor did they ever work together. Hishinuma was at Miyake while Nagasawa was at Tokio Kumagai.

By 1990, it was no longer new to be a Japanese designer in Paris. When Atsuro Tayama arrived in Paris, a journalist (Hesse 1990: 12) wrote: 'The Japanese Again! . . . Yet another Japanese creator is settling down in the Marais district.' Tayama was Yamamoto's representative in Paris. After Yamamoto's collection in Paris in 1982, Tayama returned to Japan. He explains (in Tajima 1996: 592):

> I felt the urge to go back to Japan because all my classmates at Bunka were setting up their own companies and brands at the time . . . I told my boss Yohji Yamamoto



* Tokio Kumagai set up his company in Paris and died in 1987.

Source: Compiled from *Modem* (1998, 1999) and various other documents.

Figure 5.1 Professional and school network among Japanese designers in Paris, 1998–9.

> that I would like to set up my own company, and then he invested half of the funds necessary for the start-up, and the rest, I borrowed from a bank.

Tayama opened his first store in Japan in 1985 and later became a designer at Cacharel Femme in 1990 (Hesse 1990: 12). He is now backed by a major Japanese apparel firm, World Co., which has been marketing several of his lines, such as Indivi By Atsuro Tayama, since 1996 (*JTN Monthly* 1998: 54). More recently, Hiroshige Maki who was designing for Yamamoto's secondary line, Workshop, set up his brand Gomme and now participates during the Paris collection. He is helped by an agent who used to work with Yamamoto in Paris. Yamamoto also encouraged Koji Tatsuno whom he met in London to move to Paris. Tatsuno says (Paillié 1997: 91–2):

> Paris is international and accepts Asians more easily than Londoners . . . In France, the system is more open. And my work is always appreciated here . . . I spent thirteen years in England, and I never felt I was English. I love Europe. I am convinced that if one wants to do fashion, it has to be in Paris and no where else.

Many of Miyake's former assistants are also part of the French fashion system. Naoki Takizawa to whom Issey Miyake relegated his men's collection (Pujol 1993) since the summer of 1994, has now replaced Miyake's women's collection after his retirement in 1999. Akira Onozuka who designs for his own brand Zucca worked at Miyake's design studio for seventeen years. Yoshiki Hishinuma, who is known for his distincive fabrics like Miyake, worked under him for a year. Hiroaki Oya who designs accessories for Miyake also started showing his brand 'Oh! Ya?' in Paris, and Miyake is said to attend Oya's shows every now and then. Yoshi Kondo, although not yet on the list of the Federation, also has his own brand in Paris and is marketing himself both in Japan and in France.

Kawakubo's disciple, Junya Watanabe, is also taking part in the Paris fashion scene. A fashion journalist in the study says: 'Junya is probably the hottest Japanese designer today in Paris.' Watanabe graduated from Bunka in 1984 and entered Commes de Garçons. After three years, he was chosen to design the line Tricot. His own label started as Junya Watanabe Comme des Garçons in 1992 and he showed his collection for the first time in Paris in 1993. His clothes-making philosophy is similar to that of his mentor Kawakubo's. He describes the use of metal for his two collections (Petronio 1998: 7):

> Last season my starting point when designing the collection was to get away from a normal clothing pattern making. The garment was a cloth that was wrapped around the body. But I needed something to hang the material from. It could have

> been anything, a pencil! But wire was the best solution. I'm not in a metallic period! But the idea of creating clothing without any normal pattern making technique is definitely carried into this new collection.

One of Watanabe's assistants explained to me the interaction between the two brands:

> Comme des Garçons and Junya Watanabe work in the same building but on different floors, and we never meet. They are very separate. We never share each other's designs. Junya and Kawakubo never exchange ideas for each other's collection. Working styles are different, too. At Junya, we all go home at the same time. We wait for others to finish their work and leave our workroom together every night. At Comme des Garçons, everyone seems to be more independent.

It is reported that Kawakubo is also lending a hand to another designer Jun Takahashi (*Women's Wear Daily* 2002b: 15) who designs the cult Japanese fashion label Undercover. With Kawakubo's encouragement, Takahashi joined the Paris fashion collection, but he plans to remain financially independent, and Kawakubo's support amounts to advice and encouragement.

Sueo Irié, Kenzo's first assistant of ten years since 1973, used to work for Hiroko Koshino, who is Junko Koshino's sister and used to participate in the Paris collection. After Irié left Kenzo, he set up his own brand and store. But unlike other designers, he never takes part in the Paris fashion collection, has no independent shows, no photos of collections so one has to go to his store to see his designs (Hesse 1984: 10), but he remains one of the established designers with a solid clientele. He has earned the legitimation of French journalists. A journalist in *Marie Claire*, (Copper 1993: 9) wrote: 'When he first opened the boutique, there was no inauguration nor press communication. We were there inside the store, women entered, looked, tried and asked some questions. Among them were some fashion editors who were thrilled by this first collection since the beginning.' Like Kenzo, he is said to be 'the most Parisian of all Japanese' (in Ollivry 1996: 62). Like many other Japanese, his emphasis is on fabrics. He insists (in Sykes 1994: 107): 'There is only so much you can do with the silhouette . . . It's prints and textures that make clothes extraordinary.' Kenzo's other assistants after Irié, such as Koji Nihonmatsu, Norio Nakanishi and Hiroki Yanagida, have all set up their own companies and are based in Paris.

Kumagai's former assistants have also set up their own brands after his death in 1987. Masaki Matsushita and Yoichi Nagasawa are on the Federation's calendar list, and Takashi Yamai, like Irié, does not have fashion shows but has his own brand. Based on my study in Paris, there were no designers who

were directly linked to Mori who belongs to the exclusive Haute Couture circle. She can be indirectly connected to Irié who was hired as a designer for Studio V run by Mori's eldest son, Akira.

With an influx of Japanese designers into Paris, their race card is no longer as effective as it once was, but the flow does not seem to stop (Table 5.1). Based on the official calendar lists of the Federation that I acquired, there were twelve Japanese designers in 1982, seven in 1984, eight in 1985, eleven in 1988, seventeen in 1997, sixteen in 1998 and twelve in 1999. Including those who are not on the list, the numbers added up to twenty-two in both 1998 and 1999 (*Modem* 1998, 1999) which roughly account for twenty percent of all the shows taking place in Paris. These numbers underscore the importance of Paris, at least, for the Japanese designers.

Structural Weaknesses of Fashion Production in Japan

Japanese designers continue to mobilize in Paris, permanently or temporarily, due to the structural weaknesses of the fashion system in Japan. When Japanese designers became known in Paris, it was believed that the widespread popularity of the 'Japanese fashion' in the 1980s was a decisive factor in placing Tokyo on the list of international fashion capitals (Skov 1996: 134). It has been more than thirty years since Kenzo's and twenty years since Yamamoto's and Kawakubo's appearance in Paris, but Tokyo still falls far behind Paris in the production of 'fashion'; that is, in setting the fashion trends, creating designers' reputation and spreading their names worldwide. Tokyo as a fashion city lacks the kind of structural strength and effectiveness that the French system has. Thus, lack of institutionalization and of the centralized fashion establishment in Japan forces designers to come to Paris, that is the battlefield for designers, where only the most ambitious compete and can survive.

Council for Fashion Designers (CFD)

Shortly after the Prêt-à-Porter organization was founded in Paris in 1973, Japanese designers mobilized and formed TD6 (Top Designers 6) in Tokyo (Otsuka 1995). The organization consisted of six famous designers, Isao Kaneko, Junko Koshino, Yukiko Hanai, Mitsuhiro Matsuda and Kansai Yamamoto. This was the time when Kenzo was becoming extremely popular in Paris, and Miyake had his first shows overseas in Paris and New York. But the members of TD6 felt that it is more meaningful to take part in making Tokyo a fashion center instead of going elsewhere. The organization dwindled for a while, and then it was restructured again in 1982 with twelve members,

Table 5.1 *Japanese designers' first collection dates in Paris*

Designers	*First Collection in Paris*
Kenzo	1970
Issey Miyake	1973
Kansai Yamamoto*	1974
Yuki Torii	1975
Hanae Mori	1977
Junko Koshino	1977
Yohji Yamamoto	1981
Comme des Garçons by Rei Kawakubo	1981
Junko Shimada	1981
Hiroko Koshino*	1982
Zucca by Akira Onozuka	1988
Mitsuhiro Matsuda*	1990
Trace Koji Tatsuno	1990
Atsuro Tayama	1990
Yoshiki Hishinuma	1992
Masaki Matsushita	1992
Junya Watanabe	1993
Shinichiro Arakawa	1993
Naoki Takizawa**	1994
Koji Nihonmatsu	1995
Miki Mialy	1996
Junji Tsuchiya	1996
Yoichi Nagasawa	1997
Keita Maruyama	1997
Oh! Ya? By Hiroaki Oya	1997
Gomme by Hiroshige Maki	1997
Hiromichi Nakano	1998
Yuji Yamada	1999
Undercover by Jun Takahashi	2002

Note: Not all designers in this list are on the official calendar of the Federation, but they organize fashion shows during the fashion weeks in Paris.

* Hiroko Koshino, Kansai Yamamoto and Mitsuhiro Matusda are no longer showing their collections in Paris but continue to design in Japan.

** Takizawa started designing for Issey Miyake's men's wear in 1994 and after Miyake withdrew from his women's wear in 1999, Takizawa took over the collection.

Source: Compiled from various documents.

Isao Kaneko, Takeo Kikuchi, Junko Koshino, Yukiko Hanai, Mitsuhiro Matsuda, Yohji Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo, Yuki Torii, Hiromi Yoshida, Hiroko Koshino, Yoshie Inaba and Takao Ikeda. In the following season, Issey Miyake, Kansai Yamamoto and Junko Shimada joined. The purpose had always remained the same: to establish unique Japanese fashion. Taking advantage of what the Japanese designers in Paris did and to promote Tokyo as an international fashion city, the Tokyo Collection had to be put in place (Otsuka 1995).

With the official start of the Tokyo Collection, the Council for Fashion Designers (CFD) was formed in 1985. Previously, there was no unified system in Japan for designers to stage a show or when to have a showroom open to buyers. In any fashion city, buyers are able to go into the designers' showrooms and order merchandize immediately after the runway shows. But in Japan, buyers would have to wait for two to three weeks after the show until the showrooms were open (Otsuka 1995). Therefore, the goal of the organization was to systematize all fashion-related events and activities in Japan to facilitate the relationships between designers, buyers and the media. However, at the time of the CFD formation, a French journalist wrote sarcastically (Piganeau 1986: 3):

> Is Paris going to have its Oriental rival soon? Those Japanese creators who do not look for the consecration on the Parisian podium are hoping some day to have the power to replace Paris with Tokyo. We are not there yet . . . Japanese are trying to include Tokyo among the traditional route of fashion, such as Milan, New York and Paris. But isn't it ironical that many of the Japanese brands are in fact French, such as Coup de pied, C'est vrai, Tête Homme, Ethique, Madame Hanai, Madame Nicole and so on. How can Tokyo replace Paris?

The writer's prediction was correct. It is not easy to replace Paris. In the 1990s, over a hundred brands have participated in the Tokyo collection, but by October 2002, the participating members dropped to fifty, and it leveled off for March 2003. Among the forty-eight official members of the Council for Fashion Designers in Tokyo, those who are taking part in the Paris collection are Zucca by Akira Onozuka, Junko Shimada, Naoki Takizawa for Issey Miyake, Yuki Torii, Hiromichi Nakano, Masaki Matsushita and Yohji Yamamoto. However, according to the lists of the Tokyo collection participants from 1996 to 2003, the only designer who is found both in the Paris and Tokyo collections consistently is Yuki Torii. She has been showing her collection in Paris since 1975. Hiromichi Nakano, an established designer in Japan, was in the Tokyo collection calendar until March 2002 but is no longer found on the most recent list. Rei Kawakubo is not found on the lists while Yamamoto

appeared in March 1999. Miyake is found in October 2000, March and October 1996. Mori showed her Hanae Mori Nouvelle Couture in October 2001 and appeared sporadically in October 1998, March and October 1996. Mori has been showing her couture collection twice a year independently in Japan immediately after the Paris collection. Many other younger designers who once were part of the Tokyo collection, such as Yoshiki Hishinuma, Yoichi Nagasawa, Keita Maruyama and Gomme by Hiroshige Maki, are now concentrating on the Paris collection.

The Tokyo collection lasts for about a month (Takeda 2000: 12) which makes it impossible for non-Japanese journalists to attend the entire collection event. For instance, the Fall/Winter 2003 collection in Tokyo lasted from the first show on March 26 to the last show on May 12. Unlike other seasonal collections in Paris, London, Milan and New York, the Tokyo Collection is never publicized in the Western media. There is a lack of worldwide diffusion mechanism. Japanese fashion journalists bring back abundant information from Paris or other fashion cities in the West, but they are not capable of introducing and legitimating Japanese designers to other parts of the world. Furthermore, many designers, including this young Japanese designer based in Paris, mention Japanese fashion critics' inability to criticize and evaluate fashion:

> The way people look at fashion is extremely sharp and severe in Paris. It's very challenging here although it is tough at times. These critics know so much about fashion, and they've practically seen everything and anything that it's very difficult to shock them or surprise them anymore. Japanese cannot judge fashion. No one can really criticize fashion properly. Fashion journalism in Japan is only descriptive, and it's boring.

Buyers at Isetan, one of the major department stores in Tokyo started ordering Miyake's Pleats clothes after they saw them at Galleries Lafayette, a French department store (Jouve 1997: 14). Yamamoto's former executive says:

> Once before the collection, Yohji was talking about a message he wanted to send across through his collection. After the collection, one of the French journalists read his message accurately and wrote about it. Yohji was ecstatic when he read this and said, 'That's why I love showing my collection here in Paris. They know exactly what I want to say. Things like that never happen in Japan. I'm going to send this journalist flowers'. But when these journalists criticize, they criticize really badly, but Yohji finds that challenging.

Kawakubo also has a similar view (in German 1986: 304): 'I like it when people say something opposite. In the Japanese press, they never say clearly what they

are thinking. I find a lot of energy and motivation in working in France. It's more exciting.' In response to some caustic criticisms her collections made by Janie Samet (1989b: 25; 1993a: 23),[4] who is one of the most influential fashion journalists in Paris, Kawakubo stopped inviting her to the show. Then, Samet (1996: 12) wrote again in her publication: 'creators all over the world choose Paris to show their collections . . . Comme des Garçons is making a mistake in not inviting *Le Figaro* . . . we did not make any unfriendly comments.'

Hiromichi Nakano, known in Japan for more than two decades, who started showing his collection in Paris since 1998 says (in Webb 2003: 12):

> I might be famous here (Japan), but that's all the more reasons to show in Paris. I don't value the praise of Japanese yes-men. In Paris, people speak their minds. If your show is bad even once, they just won't come again . . . In the short term, my ambition is just to be able to show in Paris next year, to keep my collection going. I haven't had 'bravos' in Paris yet . . . when I start getting bravos from the journalists in Paris, then I'll be satisfied.

His comments represent all the Japanese designers. The success of the other Japanese designers in Paris reinforced the aesthetic judgments of the French legitimators and undermined that of the Japanese.

Japan for Consumption

Japan became a fashion leader not in fashion production but in fashion consumption. Western fashion designers are generally favored by Japanese consumers more than their Japanese counterparts. The fact that, in the past decade, the major Japanese companies have been investing in young and exceptionally innovative Western designers suggests that the Japanese have not been able to satisfy their enormous demand for fashion talent (Crane 1993: 70). When the companies have sufficient capital to invest in designers, they back up Western designers[5] because of a strong preference for Euro-American brand apparel among Japanese consumers, and they have grown through license production of Euro-American brand product. A German designer based in Paris says that he was approached by a Japanese manufacturer to license his name for handkerchiefs. A Japanese agent who introduces new designer names to Japanese companies says:

> You find practically all labels in Japan that are taking part during the Paris fashion weeks, no matter how small a company may be. Japanese companies invest in them for two to three years, and if they can't produce any profits, they withdraw. Should any designer become as famous as Jean-Paul Gaultier, the backers or buyers want to say that they were the first to discover that designer.

Back in the 1960s, major Japanese department stores were making exclusive contracts with French couture designers (Otsuka 1995: 13): Hankyu with Jean Patou, Seibu with Louis Féraud and Yves Saint Laurent, Mitsukoshi with Guy Laroche, Isetan with Pierre Balmain, Daimaru with Givenchy and Matsuzakaya with Nina Ricci. Miyake (in Tsurumoto 1983: 103) explains what it was like when he first began working in Japan:

> I had to confront the Japanese people's excessive worship of things foreign and fixed idea of what clothes ought to be. I began by working to change the rigid formula for clothing that the Japanese followed even though it did not take into account their life styles or environments. Today, I am creating things that break through national boundaries.

Unfortunately, the situation in Japan has not changed much since the 1960s. For instance, Onward Kashiyama, a major Japanese apparel manufacturer and retailer, has the rights to several designer brands in Japan, including Calvin Klein and CK Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Sonia Rykiel Inscriptions. It has licensing deals with Jean-Paul Gaultier, Dolce & Gabbana, Paul Smith women's collection, Lolita Lempicka, Stefanel, Yves Saint Laurent men's wear and Cerrutti 1881 men's wear (Lockwood 1995: 8–9). Even for its local private label, such as Kashiyama's ICB brand, the company hired Michael Kors, the American designer who designs for the French brand Céline. Kashiyama also has distribution agreements for the signature collections of Gaultier, Helmut Lang and Marcel Marongiu. Another major apparel company in Japan, The World, acquired 75 percent of the brand Chantal Thomas in 1985 (Leroy 1990: 32).

However, such foreign investments, especially the Japanese, in prestigious French luxury brands were not always taken favorably by some French. When the department store Seibu-Saison of Japan and Hermès jointly acquired 76 percent of the French couture house, Jean-Louis Scherrer[6] (Pasquet 1990: 23), there was a concern that major Japanese corporations were beginning to monopolize the French luxury brands. At the instigation of Mouclier, the Federation's President at the time, the Ministers of Finance and Industry and Culture came up with the possibility of establishing a list of famous French luxury and fashion names and requiring official authorization before the sale/purchase of these brands (Pasquet 1990: 3). However, there were some industry insiders who supported the Japanese investments. Pascal Morand, Director of the fashion school *Institute Français de la Mode* (Piganeau and Sepulchre 1990: 4) says: 'Japanese understand that creation is an essential element . . . their approach is systematic whether it is for licensing contracts or distribution in Japan. They are very attentive to everything that goes on . . . European

financial groups are only interested in dead designers. The Japanese are interested in those who are still alive or young brands.'

According to Akira Baba (in Lockwood 1995: 8–9), the President of Kashiyama, there are two types of merchandise in Japan: products used for daily consumption and fashion goods. For Japanese consumers, 'fashion' is still a Western concept. In a society where people believe in homogeneity, they strive to make a subtle difference. Luxury goods function as a status symbol for Japanese because they are French and because they are expensive. The largest importer of the French luxury products of *Le Comité Colbert* in 1997 was Japan which accounted for 51 percent of the member companies' total sales in the Asia-Pacific region, followed by Hong Kong's 16 percent, China's 6 percent and Korea's 5 percent (Hamou 1998b: 11).

The Japanese appetite for Western fashion brands is never satiated. Japan is facing the worst economic recession in history, but Western designers, such as Dries Van Noten, Neil Barrett and Michael Kors, are opening stores one after the other in Tokyo (Hirano 2002: 3). When Louis Vuitton's world largest store opened in Tokyo in September 2002, hundreds of people lined up outside the eight-storey building from the previous night. Similarly, when Marc Jacobs, a designer for Louis Vuitton, opened his first store for his own brand to showcase all his lines in the major shopping district in Tokyo, his spokesman (in Hirano 2002: 3) exclaimed: 'about thirty to forty customers were lined up in front of the shop before its 9:30 a.m. opening. The popularity of the brand in Japan is tremendous.'

For Western designers, the Japanese market provides a great commercial opportunity, but for Japanese designers, it is not a country where fashion is produced. While Japanese companies entice foreign designers, Western companies entice Japanese consumers. There is no place for Japanese designers. Despite the number of fashion schools that train designers throughout Japan and Japanese apparel companies that invest in designers, Tokyo is still far from Paris. It is now the fashion capital of Asia, but not of the world. The diffusion mechanism from Japan to the West is still very limited, and thus if Japanese designers want to be known worldwide and sell their clothes worldwide, they are forced to leave Japan or show their collections in Paris.

The Three Types of Japanese Designers in Paris

In the subsequent chapters, I examine the steps taken by five major Japanese designers to enter the French fashion system, and their personal and professional backgrounds. I further explain how they were received by the fashion gatekeepers, how they used their status in the system as their symbolic capital, and how the following generations of the younger Japanese designers followed

these types. They have given a great deal of influence to other foreign designers, such as a group of Belgians in the mid 1980s and the early 1990s, and also have led the way to non-Western designers, such as Africans and Koreans, to come to Paris. They all use Paris as a springboard to fame and status which are valid in any part of the world. I categorize the five Japanese designers into three types:

Type 1: Kenzo
Type 2: Rei Kawakubo, Issey Miyake and Yohji Yamamoto
Type 3: Hanae Mori

The classifications correspond both to the characteristics of their designs and to their manipulations of the French fashion system. These five designers can be considered 'successful' based on various factors. Firstly, they are members of the Federation: Kenzo, Yamamoto, Miyake and Kawakubo are members of the Prêt-à-Porter organization while Mori is a member of both the Haute Couture and the Prêt-à-Porter organizations. This means that they are all included in the official show list. Secondly, they produce a number of fragrance products, which is the success indicator of a designer. Earlier designers, such as Chanel and Poiret, saw the potential of creating a fragrance that would appeal to the masses and be affordable to more people than the elite who bought their clothes, and thus fragrance and designers have become inseparable. Thirdly, museums across the world have featured their designs in the exhibitions.[7] For instance, Kawakubo was one of designers featured in the Three Women exhibition at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York in 1987 along with Madeline Vionnet and Claire McCardell. When the theme of the exhibition is related to Japan or the East, it is almost impossible not to find these five Japanese designers. Fourthly, they are all award-winning designers and have received prestigious prizes in Japan, France and else where (Table C.3 in Appendix C).

Conclusion

The younger generation of Japanese designers follows the methodology of Kenzo and others, taking advantage of the French fashion system and 'Paris' as their symbolic capital which will eventually result in their economic capital. They take part in the seasonal fashion shows twice a year and strive to be on the official list of designers released by the Federation. These designers share a lack of concern about satisfying the Japanese market, the critics or the public because acceptance in Paris will automatically bring recognition elsewhere. The French fashion system and Japanese designers in my case study are in a

mutually beneficial relationship. Each is indispensable to the other. Yet, however successful and famous the Japanese became in Paris, it was still not successful enough to make Tokyo an international fashion city.

Paris as a site for presenting one's works is open to any nationality. Many non-French designers, even those not based in Paris, come to Paris to show their collections because it is the shortcut for popularity and fame as a designer. No other fashion center consists of such ethnically diverse group of designers. Thus, by institutionalizing fashion in Paris and encouraging not only designers but all fashion professionals to mobilize in Paris, an interdependent link between the system and individuals is established, and neither of which can survive without the other. Japanese designers today are still able to use Paris as their social and symbolic capital while the French fashion system looks for new innovative designers who may be as talented as the Japanese designers in the 1970s and the 1980s to replace Kenzo and Miyake who retired at the end of 1999.

Notes

1. The term '*Japonisme*' was coined in 1872 by Philippe Burty, a French art critic, to describe what was essentially a new field of study about the influence of Japanese style on French art.

2. In the 1850s, Japan opened its ports, and from that time, Western clothing became a desirable symbol of modernization. Government workers were told to wear suits. French- and British-style uniforms were designed for the army and navy, respectively. By the 1880s, Tokyo socialites were attending lavish balls in Western-style evening gowns.

3. Some Japanese designers who were once popular in Paris, such as Mitsuhiro Matsuda, Kenzo's former classmate in Tokyo, and Kansai Yamamoto have left Paris and are no longer on the official list of the Federation.

4. For Kawakubo's 1989 collection, Samet (1989b: 25), wrote: 'where are we? At a fashion show or a psychiatric ward?' and again, for her 1994 collection, she (1993a: 23) wrote: 'those who don't understand the time of fashion must disappear.'

5. For instance, Onward Kashiyama was the first to discover Jean-Paul Gaultier's potential and backed him when he was still unknown to the world.

6. Jean-Louis Scherrer himself was later ousted from the company. Scherrer Couture is now designed by Stéphane Rolland.

7. Recent exhibitions on Japanese fashion include: 'Made in Japan' at Centraal Museum in Netherlands in 2001; 'Japanese by Design' at Kent State University in Ohio in 2000; '*Japonisme*' at the Brookly Museum of Art in New York in 1999; '*Japonisme et Mode*: 1870–1996' at Palais Galliéra in 1996; 'Orientalism' at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 1994; 'Japanese Design: A Survey since 1950', at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1994; 'A New Wave in Fashion: Three Japanese Designers' at the Phoenix Art Musuem, Arizona in 1983.

6

Type 1: Kenzo Complete Assimilation into the French Fashion System

Kenzo Takada, known as Kenzo, is the first Japanese designer to be recognized by French fashion professionals and continues to be one of the most influential ready-to-wear designers.[1] He is a pioneer in realizing a dream that many other Japanese were to follow after him. Kenzo is a bit of a deity and has been hailed by critics as 'the most creative designer' in Paris and 'the most imitated designer' (McEvoy 1997: 24). He has been a major fashion figure in the French fashion world for thirty years and is the best-selling Parisian designer as far as retail sales go (Quinn 1984: 12).[2] An astrologer in Paris in 1969 told then unknown Kenzo (quoted in Iwakiri 2000: 70): 'You are going to be world famous and rich . . . rich enough to travel around in a huge boat.' A strong believer in fate and obsessed with horoscopes and astrology, Kenzo told this story to his friends who all laughed at him. Today, everyone is impressed with the accuracy of the prediction.

He was born in 1939 in Himeji, the southern part of the main island of Japan.[3] His parents managed a small inn. By the time he was fifteen, he knew he wanted to make clothes. In 1959, there were no fashion or dressmaking schools in Japan at the time that would admit male students. He was studying in college in Kobe when he read a newspaper article that said Bunka School of Fashion[4] in Tokyo was starting to accept male students. He immediately dropped out of college and went to Tokyo to enter Bunka as one of the first male students. At Bunka, Kenzo was mesmerized by stories about France told by his instructor and mentor, Chie Koike, who had just come back from the dressmaking school in Paris, *l'Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale*.

After graduation, he worked as a company designer in Tokyo. He recalls (Morris 1972: 23): 'When I worked in Japan, it was no good for a designer. You had to follow European fashions.' He always dreamt of visiting Paris so he did not hesitate even for a moment to go to Paris when his landlord paid him ten months' rent to move out of the apartment so that it could be

renovated. He took off to Paris with his classmate Hiromitsu Matsuda[5] in 1964 by boat initially intending to stay for six months. They arrived in Marseille on January 1, 1965. He remembers (Altman 1986: 12): 'it was a life-changing experience. I knew right away I wanted to stay. And so I did. But not without worrying about money. My mother sent me money twice, and the third time I asked, she said no. That forced me to work.' The former editor of the Bunka publishing remembers Kenzo's first few months in Paris:

> I have known Kenzo since college. When I met him in Paris on my business trip, he told me he had no intention of returning to Japan for some time, and he will stay in Paris as long as he could and do whatever it takes to prolong his stay. I was worried about him because I knew he was getting broke.

These were Kenzo's early days in Paris without having any language skills, social connections or financial means. He was a complete outsider to the French establishment having no idea how to become a designer and make ends meet.

Taking Advantage of the French Fashion System

One could say that Kenzo accidentally stumbled into the French fashion system while selling his designs to stores in Paris. He began to step inside the system, and his interaction with insiders began. Kenzo would probably like to say that this was his fate. Without any knowledge of the existing fashion system at the time, he was introduced to fashion professionals in the system one after another, which led to meeting others who had the influence to legitimate him. He explains (in Tajima 1996: 378) how his life in Paris took off:

> I decided to drop by Louis Féraud's store to show my designs . . . the wife Gigi happened to be there and bought five of them for five dollars . . . I was really surprised that anyone would actually buy my designs. Money wasn't an issue . . . I was ecstatic. The next day, I became more bold and went to *Elle* magazine. Jack Dwyer bought 10 designs all in cash, 50 francs a design. I was euphoric. Then Dwyer sent me to a ready-to-wear manufacturer Pisante. I told the owner that I was looking for a job, then he hired me right there on the spot. I designed, draped on the mannequin and put them on paper. There was a skilled draper who taught me many things. I draped one or two pieces a day. I learnt a lot . . . Had I not stopped by Louis Féraud, I must've gone back to Japan. The next ten days, things moved along smoothly. It was unreal.

He worked as an industry designer for a while before setting up his own store and company. During those years, he learned the meaning of French fashion (*Kenzo* 1985: 10):

> For the first four or five years in Paris, I watched and observed what Parisian chic and elegance meant. Whether it's haute couture or prêt-a-porter, French clothes are well fitted to the body. Well-cut, fitted and finished impeccably, and they have curves. That is Parisian chic and elegance. Such clothes-making has its own rules for its shapes, fabric selections, color combinations, and it seemed to me that there are rules even for the way you wear these clothes. Those are all confined within a stubborn frame of mind. That was suffocating for me.

Then he stumbled into another fate and ran into an old woman who offered to rent him a tiny shop in the Galerie Vivienne. It was a dump, but it was cheap. Kenzo moved in, fixed it up and put in a sewing machine. Before the opening of the store, he took four or five items of clothes he designed to fashion editors at the major magazines, *Marie-Claire* and *Elle,* where Kenzo received a good response. He immediately sent out show invitations and did the show on the day of his store opening. He could not afford the fabrics he wanted so he bought fabrics at a flea market and mixed them all to create new ones. He explains how he came up with his first fashion show (in Tajima 1996: 486–7):

> I went back to Japan before the show and purchased lots of Japanese fabrics that looked different and new . . . Tunic style shirt made out of Yukata[6] and pants, dress made out of Obi. I had no intention of manufacturing them or try to sell them to other stores. I had no connection with buyers. The main purpose was to show them to journalists so that they might cover them in their magazines. That was all I dreamt for. That's exactly what happened. I had sixty styles and did the show twice. The first one was for journalists, and about 150 of them came. The evening show was for friends.

This is the story of Kenzo's famous combinations of plaids, flowers, checks and stripes. He combined scraps of fabrics he found in Paris along with scraps of Japanese fabrics. In explaining the success of Kenzo, critics talk about his unconventional ways of mixing prints and folklore-inspired designs, and he did indeed make a stylistic contribution to the West. There is something Japanese in the way he reconstructs Western clothing. Kenzo's designs have changed over the years, but many of Kenzo's distinctive characteristics are not lost (Figures 6.1 and 6.2). The combination of colors and fabrics and the quilting technique he used were all rooted in Japanese traditions. He realized that the 'exotic' elements were attractive to the French public, so he began to look elsewhere for other ethnic cultures. He also used straight lines and square shapes which are derived from kimono that do not have any curves. Although he kept the Western conventions of the clothing system which would later be shattered by avant-garde Japanese designers, it was Kenzo who paved the way for other Japanese designers to come to Paris. He himself explains (*Liberté:*

Kenzo 1987: 33) his styles as follows: 'No more darts, I like bold straight lines. Use cotton for summer and no lining for winter. Combine bright colors together, combine flowers, strips, and checks freely. This was the beginning of my style.' Many fashion authorities credit Kenzo with starting such recent trends as kimono sleeves, the layered look, folklore fashion, winter cotton, the explosion of bright colors, vests, baggy pants and workers' clothes (Dorsey 1976). As Kenzo's biographer writes (Sainderichinn 1998: 17): 'Kenzo is a magician of colour. Since the mid 1960s, when he moved from his native Japan to the city of Paris, he has devoted himself to the creation of wearable, vivacious clothing: a fashion without hierarchies.' Kenzo, although not single-handedly, democratized fashion. The 1970s was the decade when fashion became more and more accessible, and many new ready-made designers, such as Sonia Rykiel, made a major contribution to this new movement.

Figure 6.1 Kenzo from Spring/Summer 1996 collection. Kenzo was the first designer to mix prints and plaids that no Western designers ever combined. Photograph: courtesy of FirstVIEW.com.

Figure 6.2 Kenzo from Spring/Summer 2000 collection. Bright-colored flowers and straight lines with no darts are some of Kenzo's trademarks. Photograph: courtesy of FirstVIEW.com.

To gauge the impact of that first show, consider this statement of Mariella Righini of the *Nouvel Observateur*, a French weekly magazine (in Sainderichinn 1981: 8): 'His inspiration comes from far, very far. It is subtle and never obvious. Implicit and never explicit . . . One needs to look for his source of inspiration in the floral arts more than from kimono.' Immediately after his first show, one of his designs in Sashiko, the traditional Japanese stitching technique, appeared on the cover of *Elle* magazine in June 1970. Many designers today still believe that this is a step to success.[7] Kenzo was the first to bring to the West what was not considered to be fashionable in Japan, and he was able to turn it into fashion. He may not have been as radical or avant-garde as other designers who followed him, but he showed that making something unfashionable into fashionable depends on the context in which the clothes are placed and the process that the clothes have gone through. Then again, in March 1971, the magazine dedicated four pages in color to Kenzo with a praising preface:

> In his mixture of bold colors and prints, there are the subtleties of cherry blossoms and an hour of prayer, he knows how to etchings. And, as in his country people make a bouquet out of three branches and invent flower-dresses with three meters of cotton and a piece of braid, something never seen in Paris.

Kenzo is undoubtedly a very creative designer, but there is more to Kenzo's success than the design factors. No designer, however talented one maybe, is free from external forces. I locate Kenzo's unprecedented success as a Japanese designer and as an enterprise in his attempt to assimilate completely into the French fashion community. He is often described as the least Japanese and most Parisian of all Japanese designers who lived and became successful in Paris as if to compensate the loss of his Japanese identity. One of the most influential French journalists (Samet 1989a: 20) wrote: 'Kenzo . . . is becoming more Parisian every year. Him, Japanese? Are you joking? In Japan no doubt but not here.'

He took advantage of the structural changes that were taking place in the 1960s and the 1970s in the French fashion system. It was in the process of redefining the meaning of and creating the upgraded version of ready-made clothes. The emerging ready-to-wear designers could cater to the larger market and generate more profits. With the transition in people's lifestyles, the demand for Haute Couture or expensive clothes was on the decline, and couturiers were beginning to go into the ready-to-wear sector.[8] There was ready-to-wear designed by some couturiers, but they were still very expensive and rather unreachable by the masses. The clothes that the general public could afford were unsophisticated and unfashionable. The designers who specialized in ready-made, began to fill that gap in the market with innovative, interesting clothes at more affordable prices.

This was the founding of, as discussed in Chapter 2, *Créateurs et Industriels* (Creators and Industrials) initiated by Didier Grumbach. Kenzo was one of the designers who took part in the show events that introduced clothes completely different from Haute Couture along with other young designers who could cultivate an unconventional, almost countercultural image based on the counter culture movements of the 1960s. At the same time, the term *créateur* emerged. Very rapidly, in the 1970s, they moved into the lower echelons of the luxury clothing business, where they provided expensive, avant-garde clothes for a younger clientele than those served by the couturiers (Crane 1993: 59). Thus, Kenzo was included in this new movement that was taking place at the time when an institutional transition was occurring within the fashion system. Indeed, he happened to be in the right place at the right time; it was probably his fate.

By this time, Kenzo understood the system well enough to manipulate it to his advantage. His first show was in April 1970. Then he had two other shows in July and October of the same year, and then again in January 1971. January and July are when the Haute Couture collections are organized, and this is when journalists, editors and buyers mobilize. Kenzo took every opportunity to expose his designs, and from the beginning of the show in his small store, he was able to attract French press. With the show in April 1971, he attained international recognition. In October, 1971, Kenzo did a collective Prêt-a-Porter show with Sonia Rykiel and Yves Saint Laurent among others (Grumbach 1993), and this event motivated insiders to organize and systematize the Paris collection and institutionalize a new kind of ready-made clothes as Prêt-a-Porter, as explained earlier. Not until June 1975 did he take his show to Tokyo. For Kenzo, Japan is only the secondary market. This sent a message to designers in Japan that anyone who wants to become successful needs to be validated by the French, that is the Federation and its legitimators.

French Management and Japanese Creative Team

Unlike many other Japanese designers after him, Kenzo's management team was always French. From the beginning of his career in Paris, he had a native French who worked with him and took care of the financial side of his business. First it was Gilles Raysse,[9] then Xavier de Castelle[10] and François Beaufumé.[11] Before Kenzo sold all his shares, the company was partially owned by Bernard Arnault, one of the wealthiest businessmen in France and the current head of Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH), the world's largest luxury-goods group. In 1993, Kenzo agreed to sell all his shares and worked as a designer for six years, but with his last show in October 1999, he resigned while the brand name 'Kenzo' still continues today.

Although Kenzo always let the French look after the business side of his company, his design assistants were Japanese. Atsuko Kondo,[12] his old classmate from Bunka, his confidante and a supporter, worked with Kenzo ever since he set up his first store. One of Kenzo's former assistants explains what it was like inside the company: 'When I was at Kenzo, the whole creative team was Japanese. I was there for thirteen years. Many people stayed as long as I did. The whole atmosphere was rather Japanese.' Another former assistant of Kenzo's explains:

> I was there for five years, and that was considered very short compared to others. It's not in our culture to jump from one company to the next. In France, like America, designers change jobs after a year or two and step up to a better position and negotiate a better salary, but we are not like that at all.

Despite the Japanese atmosphere, there was a code within the company that no Japanese was to be spoken, even among the Japanese themselves. Kenzo's another former assistant shared with me an interesting story:

> It was a strange feeling. I had just arrived in Paris and could hardly speak French, and I am trying to ask my Japanese colleague something in French who also speaks French with a heavy Japanese accent. Something that would take two minutes to communicate in our own language would take twenty or thirty minutes. It seemed so absurd, but it was the rule that Kenzo made . . . As the company got bigger and bigger, it became more French or Western, if you want to put it that way. A lot of non-Japanese designers were then hired. After he sold his company to that rich French business guy, there was a rumor that Japanese employees are quietly being forced out of the company. But that's not why I left. I wanted to have my own company.

Kenzo has never directly trained younger designers to succeed him but those who worked under him have become independent and set up their own brand names. A designer remarks: 'Anyone who wants to be a designer definitely wants to create his own name brand. If anyone denies that, he is a big liar, especially if he is ambitious enough to come to Paris all the way from Japan.' One of Kenzo's former assistants, a graduate of Bunka who got the job through Kenzo's mentor in Japan, secretly admits: 'I knew my styles were not at all like Kenzo's, but I wanted to come to Paris, and working for Kenzo was a way to get my legal working papers.'

His major contribution to all Japanese designers was to let them know that even a non-Western outsider can gain status by using Paris as a base. The symbolic capital that he attained by being successful in Paris led him further to receive financial capital. They now use Paris as the added value to expand their business elsewhere. A Japanese designer in Paris says:

> I stay in Paris because I want to be recognized by Europeans. They have a more critical view on fashion. The challenge is bigger when you do it here and when you are based here. I don't want to come to Paris twice a year for the show just for the sake of adding extra values on my name and making it sound great in Japan although it's true that the prestige and the image of the Paris Collection are enormous at least for Japanese designers and consumers. Kenzo and Irié are the only ones who are completely based here. The rest are all based in Tokyo . . . For Japanese who are doing pretty well financially in Japan, having a show in Paris is not a big deal in terms of money. It's not all that expensive by the Japanese standard. Renting a show space in Tokyo is exorbitant.

The younger Japanese designers strongly believe that remaining in Paris means that they have put themselves in a more challenging but at the same time a

more rewarding arena. They value the European, especially French, assessment more than their own. This is why Kenzo is the most respected designer of all the Japanese designers in Paris. Some imitate the methodology and strategy that Kenzo took in the beginning. A Japanese designer in Paris says:

> When I first arrived in Paris, I used to go around stores selling my clothes and designs as Kenzo did. They would not buy them most of the time, but they would give advice and comments. For instance, there are only two sizes in Japan, but in France, you need at least four sizes. I stopped doing that after a while because I found out that it's more worthwhile to take part in trade fairs.

Another Japanese designer who lives in Paris but does business only with Japanese buyers explains:

> My clothes are not sold in Paris. I have a connection with a store in Nagoya, my hometown in Japan. As far as the design creation is concerned, it is more worthwhile to do it in Paris. There aren't many Japanese investors who understand what creation means . . . Japan has enough capital to nurture talented designers. I think some are talented enough to compete with Armani or Chanel, but it's really unfortunate that Japanese investors back Western designers. It's because Japanese consumers like them better. After all, fashion is business, and people must make money from it.

These designers pride themselves on living in Paris, but most of them have a business connection or financial sponsorship from Japan in order to survive as an enterprise. If consecration by French legitimators is the ultimate status, no one has had the same opportunity as Kenzo who did his first show in Japan only after he was established in Paris. The complete assimilation that Kenzo has acquired as a 'French' designer is not easy to reproduce. Using the Japanese 'race card' is no longer anything new. Since newness is the essence of fashion, it has become more difficult to come up with Japanese-inspired designs that journalists and editors in Paris have not seen. But a designer explains what all the successful Japanese designers have done for them is to let the French know that 'Japanese designers are talented, and we create good quality clothes. There is always that assumption in their minds which I think is very important. So every time a new Japanese designer arrives in Paris, it still makes them a little curious.'

Consequences in Japan of Kenzo's Success in Paris

Kenzo was a pioneer in the sense that he was the first Japanese designer to introduce Japanese culture to the Western world. This had consequences not

only for the French fashion scene but also back home in Japan. His success in Paris was reflected in the motivations of the younger Japanese designers. It shifted the value of Bunka from women's sewing and dressmaking school to a professional design school. Today, the school is the largest fashion school in Japan, and 50 percent of all students are male.

When he was a student, Kenzo won the So-En Award sponsored by Bunka, and as the result of his success in Paris, students believe that winning this award is the road to fame in Paris. A graduate of Bunka who graduated before Kenzo remembers: 'The So-En Award was not really a big deal when I was a student there. But after Kenzo received it, and he became so famous that the award itself became so important. Everyone thought that it was a way to become famous overseas, especially in Paris.' The So-En Award first started in 1956 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the magazine *So-En* published by Bunka Publishing. Japan's fashion at the time was behind what was going on in Europe and the USA. There were many dressmakers, tailors and dressmaking schools, but there was no one to initiate the trend. This award started with a hope, by the editorial director, Isao Imaida, of discovering 'real' designers in Japan.

This competition is open to public, and anyone, whether or not trained in fashion design or patternmaking, can participate, but students at Bunka are almost required by their instructors to take part. A recent graduate explains:

> When we were in our final third year, our professor would practically force us to design for this So-en Competition. She told us to choose a judge carefully and design according to their taste. These judges are all these famous designers, like Yohji and Junko Koshino. There was a monthly deadline so we did this every month, and for someone like me, it was getting excruciating. Some of us are just interested in working as a company designer. I love making clothes. That's why I came to Bunka. I'm not interesting in becoming like Kenzo. I'm not interested in going to Paris at all.

An applicant can choose one judge out of the five assigned judges. Every month five sketches are chosen, executed in actual clothes and are announced in the magazine, and every six months, the selected thirty outfits are staged as a fashion show in the auditorium at Bunka, and the final award is given to one individual. Many of the Japanese designers now in Paris or who used to be in Paris are So-En Award winners: Junko Koshino in 1960, Kenzo in 1961, Kansai Yamamoto in 1967, Tokio Kumagai in 1968 (Yamamoto was an alternate in the same year), and Yamamoto in 1971. Mitsuhiro Matsuda was an alternate in 1960 and 1961, and so was Miyake twice in 1963 (*So-En* 1995: 14). Kenzo along with other designers who became successful or known overseas, particularly in Paris, has raised the prestige of the award itself.

Kenzo is still close to his mentor, Chie Koike, who is now in her nineties and retired, and gives her credit for teaching him and other students what draping was when the Japanese apparel industry was still using flat patternmaking methods (*Liberté: Kenzo* 1987: 33):

> At school, Professor Koike's class was inspirational. She had just come back from her two-year study in Paris, and she always talked about Yves Saint Laurent who was in her class at the Syndicale. She talked a lot about Paris. There were Mitsuhiro Matsuda and Junko Koshino in our class, and also Atsuko Kondo, who later became my right arm in Paris . . . I began to understand what draping was. Clothes-making is like a geometry and architecture. Each line that's drawn has to have a reason.

Koike is a mentor to many Japanese designers who graduated from Bunka. She herself has become one of the charismatic figures in Japanese fashion. Yamamoto was also one of her students. Occasionally, Kenzo returned to recruit some students at Bunka as his assistants.

Conclusion

Kenzo was the first Japanese to introduce Japanese culture to the international world of fashion. Clearly, there was an interdependent relationship between Kenzo and the institutions of fashion in France. They are in a mutually beneficial relationship. No matter how creative one is, he cannot live outside the system; that is, the system that legitimates one as the designer in Paris. In order for the system to survive, it needs to accept stylistic innovations to prevent it from organizational deterioration. What Kenzo did was different and unique but was not as radical as the next set of Japanese designers in the 1980s. The next chapter will examine the three designers who created the Japanese avant-garde fashion.

Notes

1. He retired as a designer in 1999, but he recently started a new brand.
2. Sales jumped from 135 million FF (approximately $22.5 million) in 1982 to 750 million FF ($125 million) in 1991 (Forestier 1991: 15). By the end of 1980s, Kenzo had 400 employees.
3. His biography can be found in Sainderichinn (1981, 1998) and in *Kenzo* (1985).
4. The school is often referred to as Bunka College of Fashion instead of Bunka School of Fashion. Bunka also has a four-year college and a two-year college both of which are all girls' schools. The school that Kenzo and Yamamoto graduated from is Bunka School of Fashion to which I refer as simply Bunka.

5. He designs a popular brand called 'Nicole' in Japan.

6. It is a summer kimono made of cotton.

7. One struggling designer remarks: 'I dream of the day when my design is on the cover of the major fashion magazine like *Elle* or *Marie-Claire*. That is the dream for any designer who wants to make it here in Paris.'

8. Many couturiers went into the Prêt-à-Porter business and became 'créateurs' at the same time. All the eleven officially recognized couturiers today have Prêt-à-Porter lines.

9. It was discovered in 1980 that Raysse was using company funds for his personal expenses and eventually put the company was in debt. He was asked to leave the company.

10. Xavier de Castelle was Kenzo's partner who took care of the business aspect although he held no official position in the company. He passed away in 1990.

11. He was brought into the company by de Castelle, but after de Castelle's death, it is reported that he had sold company shares to Bernard Arnault, which soured his relationship with Kenzo.

12. Kenzo and Kondo together owned 65 percent of the company shares all of which they later sold.

7

Type 2: Rei Kawakubo, Issey Miyake, and Yohji Yamamoto Construction of the Japanese Avant-Garde Fashion

At the beginning of the 1980s a new generation of Japanese designers became key players in the international fashion arena, that is Paris. Rei Kawakubo, working under the label Comme des Garçons, and Yohji Yamamoto began to present their collections in Paris along with the already established Issey Miyake, who can be considered as the founding father of the avant-garde fashion. Those three together formed and started a new school of fashion (Mendes and de la Haye 1999) called the 'Japanese Avant-Garde Fashion' although it was never their intention to classify themselves as such. Kawakubo says (in Séguret 1988: 141): 'We certainly have no desire to create a fashion threesome, but each of us has a strong urge to design new, individual clothes which are recognizably ours. The common effect of this group of individuals, lumped under the label "Japan", did the rest.' Miyake (Wood 1996: 32) also explains the phenomenon: 'In the Eighties, Japanese fashion designers brought a new type of creativity; they brought something Europe didn't have. There was a bit of a shock effect, but it probably helped the Europeans wake up to a new value.'

While Kenzo is considered a pioneer among all Japanese designers, Kawakubo, Miyake and Yamamoto are the ones who created a new style characterized by monochromatic, asymmetrical and baggy looks. Their designs were unconventional. Some critics called them 'The Day After' and 'Post Hiroshima' (Withers 1987: 52). Some called it 'a sartorial revolution in Paris' (Yamamoto in Tajima 1996: 591). They set the stage for the beginning of the postmodern interpretation on the part of those who design clothes breaking the boundary between the West and the East, fashion and anti-fashion, and modern and anti-modern. Like Kenzo, these designers placed great significance on clothing inherited from the past, including Japanese farmers' clothes designed through

necessity and adapted dyed textile and quilting from ancient Japan, which Japanese would not consider fashionable. These designers presented them to the fashion world, gave the opportunity for 'the neglected' to make their existence known, and transformed them into 'fashion'. Their method constitutes a system designed to overthrow the existing regulations and norms of clothing and fashion.

This chapter attempts to explore how they came to be recognized and were received in the West[1] and why they were known to be avant-garde. Unlike Kenzo, these three had already set up their own companies in Japan before going to Paris: Miyake in 1970, Yamamoto in 1972, and Kawakubo in 1975. Miyake opened his store in Tokyo in 1971 while Yamamoto's first shop in a shopping mall in Tokyo was set up in 1976 coincidentally next to Kawakubo's Comme des Garçons. Yet, it is often presumed in the West that Paris represented a departure point rather than a stage in their fashion career, and it is often used as a point of reference because they were unknown outside Japan until then. It appeared that they had emerged to international prominence from nowhere and their success was instantaneous, but in fact, they had carefully planned their entry into the French fashion system, and they still strategically craft their presence in the system today.

The Entry Process

Miyake was born in Hiroshima in 1939, the same year as Kenzo. Unlike Kenzo and Yamamoto who formally studied fashion at Bunka School of Fashion, Miyake graduated from one of art universities, Tama University, where he majored in graphic design. In 1965, after graduating from Tama, he went to Paris, three months after Kenzo. They knew each other in Tokyo (Quinn 1984: 12), and both studied tailoring and dressmaking at *l'Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture* for a year. In 1966, he landed an apprenticeship with the French couturier Guy Laroche. Two years later, he served as assistant to another French couturier, Hubert de Givenchy. From there, he went to New York to work with American designer Geoffrey Beene before returning to Tokyo, where he founded the Miyake Design Studio in 1970. Like Hanae Mori, Miyake exposed his designs in New York helped by his friends. Kiyoshi Kanai designed a logo for the new company, and his wife Jun was an editorial assistant at Vogue. She took Miyake's samples to the magazine office and to Bloomingdale's. Both Vogue and Bloomingdale's were enthusiastic. Bloomingdale's was so impressed that Miyake got a small corner in the store for a specialized boutique. He came to New York with a small collection, which included Sashiko coats and fitted T-shirts dyed like Japanese tattoos. In 1973 when

ready-to-wear was institutionalized for the first time in Paris and officially became part of the French Federation, Didier Grumbach invited Miyake to Paris to do a show with seven others in April 1973 (*GAP* 1978: 32). He opened a boutique there two years later.

Thus, Miyake was showing in Paris long before Yamamoto and Kawakubo, but his presence was further emphasized by the emergence of the other two designers, and these three together are often called The Big Three who initiated the Japanese avant-garde phenomenon in Paris. Yamamoto and Kawakubo are often mentioned in the media side by side because of their simultaneous appearance in the fashion scene, which was not coincidental but planned. Referring to the designs of Kawakubo, Yamamoto said that Kawakubo was his 'very strong competition' and 'the start of my Olympic games' (in Menkes 2000b: 11). When a buyer gave Yamamoto his first corner in a store, it happened to be next to Kawakubo's.

Yamamoto was born in 1943 and Kawakubo in 1941, both in Tokyo. It happened that they were both graduates of Keio University, one of the private universities in Japan. Before forming the label in 1969, Kawakubo worked as a stylist in the advertising industry, which probably explains her control over the visual aspect of her work, on the catwalk, within retail environments and in the company's publications. Yamamoto after graduation went on to study fashion at Bunka School of Fashion as Kenzo did, where male students still accounted for only 1 percent of the total number of students. Like Kenzo, Yamamoto won the So-en Award and received a ticket to go to Paris where he wandered around for a year in 1968. He tried to sell his drawings to department stores and magazines, which is the method that Kenzo took, but no one wanted them so, after a year, he went home (Gottfried 1982: 5). After returning to Japan, he worked in his mother's dressmaking shop. He set up his own company in 1973, organized fashion shows in Tokyo and gradually expanded his business, planning to appear in the Paris fashion scene.

In 1978, Yamamoto sent one of his staff members, Atsuro Tayama, also a graduate of Bunka, to prepare for his show in Paris. He first set up a company, Yohji Yamamoto Europe S.A., and a store in Les Halles, a shopping center in the center of Paris. All merchandise was imported from Japan. Through a mutual friend, Tayama found a Japanese businessman in Paris, Osamu Saito, who was hired as an executive to prepare for the Paris collection. Yamamoto explains that it was his strategy to organize his first show with Kawakubo in 1981 during the official Prêt-à-Porter season so that the impact would be greater (in Tajima 1996: 587):

> I convinced Ms. Kawakubo to do the show with me in Paris. She was reluctant, but I finally managed to convince her. As a result, the fact that we did it together in

> April 1981 made a big difference, and it turned out to be very influential and powerful and gave an enormous impact to the French.

In Kawakubo's biography, Sudjic (1990: 53) explains that going to Paris was a long-term investment, and Kawakubo knew it would cost her a lot of money in the short term, but she was aware that if she was to be regarded as a truly international designer she would have to go to Paris as Western buyers and press were reluctant to make the trek to Tokyo to see Japanese designers' collections. Kawakubo brought five people with her from Japan and hired five models for the first show in Paris in April 1981, at the Intercontinental Hotel. Neither Kawakubo nor Yamamoto expected their shows to be successful and eventually receive such wide attention. Yamamoto's former executive says:

> His first show wasn't all that successful, I don't think. About a hundred people showed up for the show. It was not an overnight success as some people thought. After the first show, we were approached by a famous French publicist. He was impressed with Yohji's collection and offered to handle Yohji's public relations in Paris. After that, his success was phenomenal.

Knowing that he did not have a social network in Paris, Yamamoto also says that he did not have any expectations after his first show (in Tajima 1996: 587): 'I had no connection with journalists in France so I knew I wouldn't be able to attract that many people although I already had a store in Paris. I just wanted to do a small show in a small boutique. I didn't even have a showroom ready for buyers to see my clothes after the show.'

Although some of the responses to their first shows were mixed and critical, they were provocative enough to shake the French fashion world, and Yamamoto and Kawakubo were listed on the Federation's list in the following season, along with Miyake, who was already a veteran by then. By the second collection in Paris, retailers rushed to Yamamoto's showroom and stood in front of the surrounding mirrors to experiment with twisting, turning and draping some of the exquisitely complicated pieces from his spring collection (Foley 1998: 35). Yamamoto remembers reading a newspaper article about their shows with Kawakubo (in Tajima 1996: 591):

> I remember thinking that the French daily *Libération* overestimated our talent a thousand times more than what we really have. My reaction was 'I see, we've done a kind of sartorial revolution'. We were excited but felt responsible for the future and realized that there is no turning back. It was amazing how journalists can excite and motivate designers through their criticisms and comments, but at the same time it was frightening. After that show, so many buyers flocked to my showroom that the elevator almost broke.

Kawakubo also moved quickly to establish a firm presence in France and opened her first store in Paris in 1982, a year after her first show in Paris. It was also her strategy to start manufacturing in France not only to 'overcome the high retail prices created by a soaring yen' (Sudjic 1990: 54), but also to have the label that now reads 'Made in France'. About the aggressive style of her first show, Kawakubo simply says: 'a little game to put ourselves on the map' (Séguret 1988: 141).

After their shows in Paris, the success was immediately felt in Japan. A French fashion director (in Gottfried 1982: 5) who went to Yamamoto's show remembers:

> I was in Tokyo last November and he gave a show in a stadium the size of several football fields. It was filled with young people and the runway ran clear across the stadium. One by one the models came out. Everyone was quiet. When it was, over he came out and the place erupted. The kids yelled and carried on as if he were a rock star. They waited for him after the show to see him, to touch him.

Kawakubo, Miyake and Yamamoto have never missed a show in Paris: Miyake since 1973, and Kawakubo and Yamamoto since 1981. They continue to participate during the Prêt-à-Porter weeks. Miyake (Chandès 1998: 112) explains: 'putting on a show twice a year is like going for a thorough check-up at the doctor's.' He must add that this check-up has to be done in Paris and not in Tokyo.

Challenge to the Western Clothing System

The term 'avant-garde' implies a cohesive group of artists who have a strong commitment to iconoclastic aesthetic values and who reject both popular culture and middle-class lifestyle (Crane 1987: 1). They are generally in opposition to dominant social values or established artistic conventions. These three designers rebelled against everything that exists in society. They found it important not to be confined by tradition, custom or geography and to be free of any influences in expressing shapes, colors and textures. They challenged not only the conformity of Japanese society but also the norms of Western society. Kawakubo says explicitly in her rare in-depth interview with a Japanese fashion critic, Takeji Hirakawa (1990: 21):

> When I was young, it was unusual for a female university graduate to do the same job as a man. And of course women didn't earn the same. I rebelled against that. And when my fashion business started running well, I was thought of as

> unprofessional because I was not a fashion school graduate. Then, when I went to Paris . . . I rebelled against that as well. I never lose my ability to rebel, I get angry and that anger becomes my energy for certain. I wouldn't be able to create anything if I stop rebelling.

In her analysis of a new art movement, such as avant-garde, Crane (1987: 14) states that an art movement may be considered avant-garde in its approach to the aesthetic content of its artworks if it does any of the following: (1) redefines artistic conventions; (2) utilizes new artistic tools and techniques; (3) redefines the nature of the art object, including the range of objects that can be considered as artworks. All of these apply to styles that Miyake, Yamamoto and Kawakubo created collectively, and I will examine them in detail. They abandoned the conventions of clothes-making altogether, invented different and original materials as clothing fabrics and by doing so, introduced and redefined the meaning and nature of both clothes and fashion.

Redefining Sartorial Conventions

These designers reinterpreted Western sartorial conventions, which I call a clothing system, by suggesting different ways of wearing a garment – there can be two neck holes instead of one or three sleeves instead of two – and leaving it up to a wearer to decide which hole or sleeve one wants to wear. They also redefined what clothes look like or can look like. A salesperson in my study who worked as a dresser[2] at the back stage of Miyake's show in the late 1980s recalls the intricate construction of his garment:

> There was a garment that was totally out of shape and had four holes. You could hardly tell which holes are supposed to be for the arms to go in or the neck to go in. During the rehearsal, Issey's patternmakers would be going around the dressers making sure we knew which hole was for which part of the body. Models usually come running back from the stage to get changed to the next outfit, and it is our job to help them get dressed as quickly as possible with the right shoes, the right accessories and so on. It's a mad house at the back during the show. At that point, you have no time to think which hole goes where! Some dressers couldn't match the neck to the right hole. It was totally wrong. But who can tell? I'm sure even Issey couldn't tell.

A writer (Cocks 1986: 46) also observes:

> 'Issey,' asks one of his friends, standing in the middle of a bustling hotel lobby, 'how do I work this?' The friend is flapping about uncertainly in the enveloping intricacies of a new raincoat. 'I made it like this,' says the designer, improvising a fitting at the front desk. He unbuttons a half-cape that spans the sleeves, and puts the loose ends around his friend's neck. 'Like a scarf, you see?'

It is up to the wearer to decide how to wear it according to one's 'creativity'. The designer claims that simplicity is often the key to wearing his clothes, which are versatile.

Furthermore, they redefined the nature of Western clothing itself. Western female clothes have historically been fitted to expose the contours of the body, but these Japanese designers introduced large, loose-fitting garments, such as jackets with no traditional construction and a minimum of detail or buttons; their dresses often have a straight, simple shape, and their large coats with sweepingly oversized proportions can be worn by both men and women alike. The conventions of not only garment construction but also the normative concept of fashion were challenged. All of this came at a time when women's clothes by most traditional Western designers were moving in the opposite direction, toward a snugger fit and formality. Their view of fashion was diametrically opposed to the conventional Western fashion, and it was not their intention to reproduce Western fashion as Miyake said in his speech (1984):

> Away from the home country, living and working in Paris, I looked at myself very hard and asked 'what could I do as a Japanese fashion designer?' Then I realized that my very disadvantage, lack of western heritage, would also be my advantage. I was free of Western tradition or convention. I thought, 'I can try anything new. I cannot go back to the past because there is no past in me as far as western clothing is concerned. There was no other way for me but to go forward.' The lack of western tradition was the very reason I needed to create contemporary and universal fashion.

While the integration of some kimono elements into their designs is clearly evident, especially in their earlier works, these designers have also broken a rigid system of kimono with tight rules (Dalby 1993). It was the combination of the Japanese and the Western elements while destroying them both to reconstruct something completely new.

Kimono[3] refers to full-length Japanese clothing that is assembled from rectangular pattern pieces, with a few tucks and easements added (Kawabata 1984; Marshall 1988; Sato 1992). The most practical part of the kimono is that the garment can be let out as the wearer grows. It is one-size-fits-all as it adjusts itself to the body whether the wearer has a large waist or is very thin. Children's kimonos have additional tucks made at the shoulders and waist after the garment is sewn. It overlaps in front both for men or women. There is little difference between men's and women's kimonos. In terms of shape and design, they are almost gender neutral. The pattern and construction differ only slightly, but overall, the same general patterns are used. When men's and women's kimonos are placed flat on the table, the difference is that women's

sleeves have a slit opening while men's do not (Kawabata 1984; Sato 1992). Similarly, women's kimonos are designed to be folded at the waist under a wide sash called Obi, so that the garment drags on the floor if left open or, if cinched, without folding the fabric at the waist. On the other hand, a man's kimono hangs so that the hem just touches the floor when the garment is worn unbelted. Adding a sash shortens the kimono slightly, so the hem does not drag or get in the way. The most apparent gender-specific characteristics found in kimono are not the silhouette or the shape but the colors, fabrics and prints (Sato 1992).

The designs by Kawakubo, Miyake and Yamamoto were known for being gender neutral or unisex (Figure 7.1). Gender roles are determined only by social rules and regulations formed by society. Clothing constructs and deconstructs gender and gender differences. Clothing is a major symbol of

Figure 7.1 Yohji Yamamoto from Fall/Winter 1984 collection. Yamamoto's signature designs consist of large pieces of stiff fabric draped and folded around the body. Like Kawakubo's, they were unisex and shapeless, concealing the female body. Photograph: courtesy of Yohji Yamamoto.

gender that allows other people to immediately discover the individual's biological sex. These three Japanese designers challenged the normative gender specificity characteristic of Western clothes. Yamamoto talks about his idea (Duka 1983: 63):

> Men's clothing is more pure in design. It's more simple and has no decoration. Women want that. When I started designing, I wanted to make men's clothes for women. But there were no buyers for it. Now there are. I always wonder who decided that there should be a difference in the clothes of men and women. Perhaps men decided this.

Using New Tools and Techniques

Since their garment constructions were not conventional, they had to teach factory seamstresses their way of sewing the pieces together, which conflicted with craft standards much as Pablo Picasso's requirements for prints clashed with the printers' standards (Becker 1982: 68–9). Picasso's disregard for conventional lithographic processes created problems for printers because he would do his lithograph in an unconventional method. It is not Picasso who does the printing. Nor is it the designers who sew the final clothes. In order to come up with unconventional designs, there need to be people who cooperate in creating such products.

For instance, Kawakubo's clothes were deliberately designed to look unfinished and worn, defying common sense and challenging notions of perfection. At first she was regarded with revulsion, but this eventually gave way to amazement and admiration (Baudot 1999). Kawakubo (in Ayre 1989: 11) says that 'Perfect symmetry is ugly . . . I always want to destroy symmetry', and it is a perfect summing-up of postmodernism applied to fashion. She wants to question the notion of perfection as something positive and beautiful (Sudjic 1990: 80):

> machines that make fabric are more and more able to produce uniform, flawless textures. I like it when something is not perfect. Hand-weaving is the best way to achieve this, but since this isn't always possible, we loosen a screw on the machines here and there so they can't do exactly as they are supposed to.

However, some designers find this unacceptable. An assistant designer in my study who works for a Japanese designer in Paris explains why:

> From a design and technical perspective, Kawakubo's works are beyond our comprehension and also unbelievable for those of us who were professionally trained in fashion schools. Students are taught always to fold a hem about one inch in case

of a straight or semi-straight skirt, and about half an inch or even less for a flared skirt. Kawakubo would let the edge of the skirt unravel without a hem and utilize it as part of her style.

It becomes difficult for those who are trained to break the mold of conventions that define a fine quality garment. It is probably not a coincidence that Kawakubo was never trained as a fashion designer. The production and technical process of a garment is more or less standardized as explained in detail in Chapter 4, but there are no laws to regulate the production process of clothes. We do not live in an era where the production process of clothes is implemented by the guild system. Kawakubo is indeed organizationally innovative.

Fabrics have become a very crucial element in the Japanese designs, and the Japanese avant-garde designers experiment with materials by bonding rubber to fabric, or mixing natural and artificial fibers. The work is ensured strict confidentiality about the weaving of the fabric and the way it is treated afterwards. There are no rules for what can be or should be used as fabric. Anything can be clothing fabrics as long as they are harmless. For Kawakubo, textile manufacturers play a significant role in the making of a collection because the distinctive character of her clothes can be traced back to the selection of the thread used to weave the fabric from which the collection will be made. The method of communication for Kawakubo is the same with everyone. It is ambiguous and abstract. Her textile manufacturer (Sudjic 1990: 28–9) who has been working with her for some time explains: 'Between four and six months before a collection, she will call me to talk about what she has in mind . . . Usually it's a pretty sketchy conversation; sometimes it's just a single word. It's a particular mood that she is after, and that can come from anywhere.' He relies on his intuition to understand Kawakubo's abstract theme and comes up with sample swatches. Their conversations go back and forth until they reach the exact fabric that Kawakubo has in mind.

Like Kawakubo, Miyake focuses his attention on the fabric. In 1993, he introduced his most commercially profitable collection 'Pleats Please'. Traditionally, pleats are permanently pressed before a garment is cut, but he did it the other way round. He cut and assembled a garment two-and-a-half to three times its proper size, and the material was then folded, ironed and oversewn so that the straight lines remained in place. Then the garment was placed in a press between two sheets of paper from where it emerged with permanent pleats (Sato 1998: 23).

As early as 1976, Miyake began his concept of A Piece of Cloth, that is clothes made out of a single piece of cloth which would entirely cover the body (Figure 7.2). His most recent project on A-POC evolved from his earlier concept. The A-POC clothes consist of a long tube of jersey from which one

could cut, without wasting any material, a large variety of different clothes; made with an old knitting machine controlled by a computer, the clothes can be made in large quantities (Sato 1998: 60). His objective was to minimize waste and use all leftover material. These garments allow the buyer to size and cut out a small hat, gloves, socks, a skirt or a dress (Figure 7.3). Depending on the way the dress is cut, it may appear in two or three pieces. Miyake also worked on new techniques of sewing garments, such as heat taping and cutting by ultrasound, all of which were featured in his 'Making Things' exhibition in 1999 in Paris. Miyake collaborates with his textile director, Makiko Minagawa, who interprets his abstract ideas. It is she who gives life to his idea. She then works with textile mills.

Figure 7.2 Issey Miyake: A Piece of Cloth 1976. Miyake's concept of 'A Piece of Cloth' began in the 1970s. The clothes are made out of a single piece of cloth which would entirely cover the body. Photograph: by Noriaki Yokosuka, courtesy of Miyake Design Studio.

Image Not Available

Figure 7.3 Issey Miyake: A-POC 1999. Miyake's 'A Piece of Cloth' concept evolved into his most recent A-POC project. A garment is made from a single tube of fabrics from which the buyer can size and cut the sleeves, a dress, socks and other parts of the garment. Photograph: courtesy of Miyake Design Studio.

Yamamoto is no exception. He also spends much of his time traveling in Japan looking for fabric and old costumes. Yamamoto says (in Gottfried 1982: 5): 'Actually, I'm interested in keeping the shapes simple, and for me eighty percent of the collection is making new fabrics.' He is proud of his black and white wool jacquards and a washed wool in his collection because 'it's softer and looks second hand.'

Redefining the Nature of Fashion and the Concept of Beauty

Every convention carries with it an aesthetic, according to which what is conventional becomes the standard by which artistic beauty and effectiveness is judged. The conception of fashion is synonymous with the conception of beauty. Therefore, an attack on a convention of fashion becomes an attack on the aesthetic related to it. By breaking the Western convention of fashion, they suggested the new style and new definition of aesthetics. Some French took it as an offense not only against their aesthetic but also against their existing

arrangement of ranked statuses, a stratification system in fashion or the hegemony of the French system.

Their cutting edge concept that there is beauty in the unfinished, and that clothing can go from texture to fabric has had a major influence on today's fashion. Miyake says (in Mendes and de la Haye 1999: 233): 'I do not create a fashionable aesthetic . . . I create a style based on life.' He is opposed to the words 'Haute Couture', 'mode' and 'fashion', which imply the quest for novelty (Chandès 1998: 107). Kawakubo also remarks: 'I oppose trends so I want trends to exist (in Hirakawa 1990: 44). Fashionable clothes are often synonymous with the definition of beauty and aesthetics. Although Kawakubo says 'I don't have a definition of beauty. I don't have an establishment view of what beauty is, as my idea of beauty keeps changing' (in Hirakawa 1990: 73), one can find a common and consistent principle in her designs. For instance, she finds 'beauty in the unfinished and the random . . . I want to see things differently to search for beauty. I want to find something nobody has ever found . . . It is meaningless to create something predictable' (in Hirakawa 1990: 24).

Western clothing tends to be fitted to accentuate the contours of the body, and this is something these Japanese reject. Kawakubo (Jones 1992: 72) further explains that 'fashion design is not about revealing or accentuating the shape of a woman's body, its purpose is to allow a person to be what they are'. She (in Kondo 1992: 124) comments on the Western obsession with fitted clothing:

> I don't understand the term 'body-conscious' very well . . . I enter the process from interest in the shape of the clothing and from the feeling of volume you get from the clothing, which is probably a little different from the pleasure Western women take in showing the shapes of their bodies. It bothers Japanese women . . . to reveal their bodies. I myself understand that feeling very well, so I take that into account, adding more material, or whatever. It feels like one would get bored with 'body-conscious' clothing.

Similarly, Yamamoto (Gottfried 1982: 5) says: 'I like large clothes, the look of a woman in a big man's shirt. I find that very attractive.'

Unlike Western clothes, women's kimonos are geared toward a contourless body. Many Japanese women today have hourglass figures and find it necessary to pad out their waist to create a cylindrical appearance. When large-busted Japanese women wear the kimono, they first wear undergarments that help to flatten the breasts and create the graceful slope from the shoulders that is part of the definition of Japanese beauty and thus suppresses female sexuality (Sato 1992). The only exposed parts of the body are the hands, the neck and the face. Traditionally in Japanese society, sexuality is never revealed overtly, and this ideology is reflected in the style of kimono, especially for women

(Kawabata 1984). These avant-garde designers reconstructed the whole notion of women's clothing style; thus they do not reveal sexuality, but rather conceal it just like the kimono.

Yamamoto (Duka 1983: 63) says: I think to fit clothes tight on a woman's body is for the amusement of man . . . It doesn't look noble. Also it is not polite to other people to show off too much.' To be fashionable meant to dress up, but Yamamoto wanted to suggest otherwise (Menkes 1989: 10):

> when I first came to Paris to do a show, everyone was saying, 'Dress up, dress up, dress up.' So I hated it. So let's dress down, let's break. Why do you have to follow this special elegance? There are other kinds of elegance. We have to be free in front of many kinds of beauty . . . and when you remember the time of art nouveaux, La Belle Epoque, you can find so many kinds of useless beauty, nonsense beauty. But sometimes in your life, you have to understand that kind of beauty, because if you follow just simple convenience to live, you lose something. So I wanted to say, 'Let's have some nonsense, useless spirit on the clothes. Let's play.'

In March 1983, Kawakubo presented a collection which included coat dresses, cut big and square with no recognizable line, form or silhouette. Many had misplaced lapels, buttons and sleeves, and mismatched fabrics. More calculated disarray was created by knotting, tearing and slashing fabrics, which were crinkled, creased and woven in unusual textures. Footwear consisted of paddy slippers or square-toed rubber shoes. The models showing this collection had red-tied hair and bruised blue on their lower lips. These works were interpreted as an expression of feminism. She says she designs for strong women who attract men with their minds rather than their bodies. Kawakubo's designs are said to reflect herself, an independent woman, rejecting stereotypes of femininity and sexiness, and blurring gender categories (Figure 7.4). Like Yamamoto and Miyake, it has never been Kawakubo's intention to shock (Steele 1991: 185) although people have often found her work shocking. 'You don't have to talk to me, look at the clothes and then you see, you know me, what I want to say is there' (Kawakubo in Jones 1992: 72). Her controversial collections include an apparent anti-war statement, when army uniforms were deconstructed and remade; clothes misinterpreted as a reference to Auschwitz uniforms, and in the early 1980s, knitwear with deliberately gaping holes that were dubbed 'Swiss cheese' sweaters (Menkes 1998a).

Conformity to and Acceptance by the French System

They stretched the boundaries of fashion, reshaped the symmetry of clothes, introduced monochromatic clothes, and let wrapped garments respond to the

Figure 7.4 Comme des Garçons by Rei Kawakubo from Fall/Winter 2002 collection. Monochromatic colors and unisex features, which have been Kawakubo's trademarks, are said to have a feminist concern, and she expects her clothes to be worn by strong, independent women like herself. Photograph: courtesy of Comme des Garçons.

body's shape and movement. They destroyed all previous definitions of clothing and fashion. Their concepts were undoubtedly different, original and new compared to the rules of fashion set by orthodox, legitimate Western designers such as Chanel, Dior and Saint Laurent. The Japanese set the stage for the invasion of 'the Japanese look' in the fashion establishment. A fashion journalist (Dorsey 1985: 10) wrote with some skepticism questioning how long they may last:

> The first big day of the ready-to-wear collections was Thursday, which has become Japanese day. The question in everybody's mind was, 'Do the Japanese have anywhere to go?' After the culture shock they produced last season, and with the waves still being felt all over the world, the answer remains: If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, it will take a lot of looking before ordinary people can see it . . .

> Truth is that the Japanese have almost come full circle and they run the risk of walking through the same tracks. The asymmetrical draping, the strange layerings, the weirdo shoes and the equally weirdo make-up (with red ears and no lipstick) were all there, and so was the archaic feeling of the clothes.

Contrary to his prediction, these 'weirdo styles' managed to remain in the fashion scene, and they do not cease to fascinate fashion professionals and consumers worldwide. Their clothes have been accused of attempting to destroy the concept of fashion itself (Jones 1992: 72) and are considered to be 'difficult clothes' which are challenging to wear (Menkes 1998a: 11). As early as in 1982, Sainderichinn correctly predicted (in Righini 1982) the future of this new Japanese avant-garde movement: 'a profound movement which will take some time to refine and perfect itself before it can assert itself . . . but has a good chance of leaving an impression for the next twenty years to come.' Then in 1998, a journalist (*Women's Wear Daily* 1998b: 4) writes: 'As anyone who has been to a few fashion shows lately knows, true invention is rare. But invention is the norm at Comme des Garçons. The only expectation one can take safely to a Rei Kawakubo collection is that all bets are off.'

Yamamoto has a reputation as a designer of clothes for earnest intellectuals (Menkes 2000b: 11) while Kawakubo, long considered an avant-garde genius (Foley 1998: 33), is described as remaining 'consistently, even stubbornly, avant-garde' (Menkes 1998a: 11) and is a designer of purpose, strong enough to leave her mark upon the world (Morris 1983: 10). The intellectual, abstract approach have often given them a cult following. A French electronic musician Jean Michel Jarre defined Yamamoto's styles as follows (in Menkes 2000b: 11): 'His work is totally different from anything else. I like his quasi-religious approach he has to fashion. For me, a woman in Yohji is like a nymphomaniac nun. His clothes are at once sensual and very ritualistic.' Similarly, a Japanese fashion curator (in Withers 1987: 52) describes Kawakubo as 'the leader of a conceptual or religious movement.'

These Japanese designers are considered artists rather than mere designers. They work with painters, sculptors, opera, theater, craftspeople, installation artists, choreographers, photographers, ceramists, industrial designers and architects. Who designers cater to and who designers collaborate with affects one's status as a designer. Crane (1993: 57) points out:

> After World War I, the development of a fashion world in Paris that was linked to the highly prestigious art world by social contracts and mutual influence contributed to a substantial increase in the status of the fashion designer . . . For instance, designers collaborated with avant-garde artists: Chanel created costumes for major playwrights; Schiaparelli designed clothes with Dali, the surrealist painter. Designs were created for fun or for their shock value, not just for commercial purposes . . .

> In the beginning of the twentieth century, the designer in France acquired some of the charisma of the artist with the belief that their creations were the products of their genius.

Although when Kawakubo was asked if she is an artist, she said 'No!' (Menkes 1998a: 11) and explained: 'Fashion is not art. You sell art to one person. Fashion comes in a series and it is a more social phenomenon. It is also something more personal and individual, because you express your personality. It is an active participation; art is passive.' Miyake (in Tsurumoto 1983: 103) also remarks: 'Fashion design is not art. I don't think it should be considered art, or I an artist. I am not making clothes to have them displayed in a museum.'

However, all the three have collaborated with a number of artists. For instance, Merce Cunningham, a dance producer, incorporated her lumps-and-bumps collection (Figure 7.5). Miyake has been collaborating with the photographer Irvin Penn since 1986; he is often described as an artist who happens to work in the medium of clothes and worked with sculptors and painters for his exhibitions. Yamamoto has been involved in the costume design for Takeshi Kitano, an internationally famous movie director, among many others. Designers are image-makers, and their image must be carefully crafted. When they collaborate with artists, their status as a designer is raised to artist. These Japanese designers are no exceptions. In addition to their associations with the art world, both the nature of their clientele and the social organization of the occupation itself contributed to an elevation in the status of the fashion designer (Crane 1993: 58). The Japanese designers have benefited from such treatment of designers and artists in France. They are at the heart of the culture of French fashion. They are inescapably in the system that they challenged as outsiders.

Kawakubo's publicist since 1972, Chigako Takeda (in *Ryokou Tsushin* 1988: 40) stresses the importance of the French or Western press:

> The real job of an *attachée de presse* starts after the show. How did journalists react to the show? How are they going to write about it? . . . We want to understand their reviews to the best of our ability so we would call them, meet with them or write to them, particularly when the show was interpreted in a way that we never expected it to. In Paris . . . we translate all articles and editorials and read them right after the show . . . so we know which newspaper wrote what kind of articles. For magazines, we check if the right message is being transmitted or if the coordination is interesting, we check the name of a stylist who did it.

The avant-garde Japanese designers' arrival in Paris is said to have threatened the dominance of French fashion, but on the contrary, they underscored the importance of Paris as the influential fashion system. In order for them to be

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Figure 7.5 Comme des Garçons by Rei Kawakubo from Spring/Summer 1997 collection. Fashion critics christened the Comme des Garçons bump dress the ugliest dress of the year (Sykes 1988: 188) while Kawakubo explained it as 'rethinking the body'. Photograph: courtesy of Comme des Garçons.

acknowledged by the French system, they need to be involved in the network of fashion journalists, editors and publicists, and be legitimized, and the rhetoric of these gatekeepers' in the media creates this image and determines their placement in the system's hierarchy. These designers have challenged the clothing system but not the fashion system. They are constantly reaffirming the power of the French system. This applies not only to Japanese but also to designers everywhere. A publicist who works for a German designer in Paris says:

> In Germany, if you are a designer in France, that is a status. You are someone special. You are not like any other designers in Germany. You need to be in Paris to receive international recognition. If you stay in Germany, you are known only domestically.

Belonging to the French fashion system is part of the designers' image, and thus they must continue to present their shows in Paris in order to keep it as their symbolic capital. What these designers have done is perceived as the deconstruction of high fashion that signifies a collapse of symbolic hierarchies, but I argue that they may have deconstructed the system of clothing and redefined fashion, but with legitimation and recognition in Paris, they in fact became part of high fashion and members of the elite designer group. These designers continue to seek approval of the French fashion system even after twenty years. It is clear that Yamamoto now wants to be included in the Haute Couture organization by showing his Prêt-à-Porter during the Haute Couture week (*Women's Wear Daily* 2002a: 15). His Spring/Summer 1999 Collection was a major shift from his earlier designs to something closer to couture (Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.6 Yohji Yamamoto from Spring/Summer 1999 collection. Yamamoto's wedding collection is said to have reach its zenith. This is a major shift from his earlier designs to couture-lie styles. Photograph: by Monica Feudi, courtesy of Yohji Yamamoto.

Legitimizing and Defining Creativity

Fashion is a collective activity, and breaking the conventions is not an individual task. Neither does breaking all the existing conventions make one a creative designer. There is no correlation between creativity and challenging artistic norms. Creativity is an ambiguous, elusive concept in any artistic activity. What is most important in the French fashion system is who has the power to decide, judge and evaluate that creativity. It is the process of legitimation that needs to be focused in understanding the success of any designer. The avant-garde Japanese designers would not have been noticed by the fashion professionals worldwide without the legitimation mechanism of the French fashion system. There is the interdependence between the designers and the French fashion system that, on the one hand, grants the designers the reputation and recognition as creative and exceptionally talented designers, and on the other, sustains the fashion system through innovative designs. Any creative object is a product of a collective activity. Becker explains (1982: 13):

> Painters . . . depend on manufacturers for canvas, stretchers, paint, and brushes; on dealers, collectors, and museum curators for exhibition space and financial support; on critics and aestheticians for the rationale for what they do; on the state for the patronage or even the advantageous tax laws which persuade collectors to buy works and donate them to the public; on members of the public to respond to the work emotionally; and on the other painters, contemporary and past, who created the tradition which makes the backdrop against which their work makes sense.

Similarly, fashion involves large numbers of people although when designers invariably produce their collections with the collaboration of numerous assistants, their designs are always presented in the press as if they were the creations of a single individual working alone in the studio (Crane 1993). There is a division of labor in the process of making a garment, and the designer works in the center of a large network of cooperating people, such as assistant designers, pattern-makers, sample-sewers and cutters, all of whose work is essential to the final outcome. Whenever an artist depends on others, a cooperative link exists. The people with whom the artist cooperates shares his idea of how the work is to be completed. Then how much work needs to be done by the artist himself? Becker explains (1982: 19):

> The amount a composer contributes to the material contained in the final work has varied greatly . . . Some composers in the world of contemporary music leave much of the material to be played to the decision of the player . . . Artists need not handle the materials from which the art work is made to remain artists; architects seldom build what they design. The same practice raises questions, however, when sculptors

> construct a piece by sending a set of specifications to a machine shop; and many people balk at awarding the title of artist to authors of conceptual works consisting of specifications which are never actually embodied in an artifact.

The same could be said for the fashion designers. How much of the garment construction, pattern-making or fitting should the designer know to become a professional designer? How much or how little of the activity is necessary for a person to claim to be a creative, talented designer? Some designers merely scribble a sketch from which the assistants make a three-dimensional garment while others know the whole process of the garment-making and have the technical knowledge. I take Kawakubo as an example to make my point. She explains her collection in a very abstract sense (Jones 1992: 72):

> This particular collection I wanted to express something more spiritual. The starting point for making a collection is usually with two patterns. One way to start is that I have ideas, and abstract feeling of what I want to create. I used to use only patterns, but that was a long time ago, now I try to create more theoretically or spiritually.

Kawakubo was one of the first to show the designers that there is the process by which deviations from convention can become accepted conventions. While Kenzo and Yamamoto[4] have received a very formal and systematic training in dressmaking and tailoring, and Miyake some training in Paris, Kawakubo was completely detached from existing, traditional clothes-making or fashion design institutions. She instructs her pattern-maker (in Sudjic 1990: 34) as follows:

> Once she gave us a piece of crumpled paper and said she wanted a pattern for a garment that would have something of that quality. Another time she didn't produce anything, but talked about a pattern for a coat that would have the qualities of a pillowcase that was in the process of being pulled inside-out. She didn't want that exact shape, of course, but the essence of that moment of transition, of half inside, half out.

An assistant who has been working with Kawakubo confirmed this story to me and explained how her collection is formed:

> She gives out a concept or a theme for the following collection in Paris, such as The Ultimate Simplicity. Then we patternmakers individually work and try to figure out what she means by that, and try to come up with a number of styles that best materialize that concept. We would drape on a mannequin, make patterns out it, cut them out of muslin, sew the together, and put them back on the mannequin. When they are all done, we take them to Ms. Kawakubo. She would choose the

> ones she likes or those that best describe her idea of the Ultimate Simplicity, or sometimes she would ask us to change here and there. It's true that she was never trained as a designer, so she doesn't know garment construction as much as we do, but it doesn't bother me. To be able to come up with a method like that is her creativity. She is very good at hiring assistants who know how to interpret her ideas . . . It's a great feeling when she picks out some styles from mine . . . It's a thrill to see some of my designs in the major fashion magazine . . . It's exciting.

Her original concept is often communicated to the patternmakers without the use of drawings. When she started designing, she was relatively undaunted by her lack of any formal training in fashion. Kawakubo says (Sudjic 1990: 43–4):

> It helps to have had a fashion training of course, but I don't regret not having done it that way. If you can afford to take the time to train your eye and develop a sense of aesthetics in a natural way, it has a lot to recommend it . . . Some designers produce detailed sketches and have a pattern made that is based exactly on them. I begin with a much more abstract drawing and the patternmakers need to be able to interpret what I'm trying to do. They help me to design . . . There is no standard pattern which the patternmakers work with and adapt each time. They are expected to innovate . . . I want my people absolutely not to do things the way that pattern-cutting is taught at school.

Similarly, while working and communicating with a textile manufacturer, Kawakubo decides what kind of thread to weave for each collection, rough or smooth, thick or thin, depending on the mood. Each of her regular collaborators learns how to interpret the information from Kawakubo as concepts grow and evolve, right up to the last minutes (Jones 1992: 73).

Ironically, her assistants are well trained and many of them come from Bunka where sewing, dressmaking and tailoring are taught thoroughly in the first year, no matter which specialization students choose after their first year, such as merchandizing, patternmaking or fashion design.[5] To say that 'in the Japanese fashion industry, Japanese fashion schools provide inadequate training, especially in technique' (Crane 1993: 70) is unfounded. Hirakawa (1990: 36) says that 'in design school in Japan, students do not learn how to destroy and reconstruct, but they only learn method, which is the pitfall of Japanese design school.' In fact, it is the very advantage of these students. Those trained in fashion schools can afford to deconstruct and create clothes from abstraction based on their solid foundations. Anyone can destroy the existing shapes, but the reconstruction method is a skill that requires a solid training. Kawakubo surrounds herself with those who understand what she wants and who can visually read her abstract concepts because they have been her long-time

followers and fans. A graduate of Bunka who works as Kawakubo's pattern-maker:

> I'd been following Ms. Kawakubo's designs since highschool. I know every item of Comme des Garçons in the market. I went through collection pictures in fashion magazines, went to her stores and researched each and every piece of her design closely every season. Even when I was a student at Bunka, I was designing something very much like Ms. Kawakubo's style. I wore Comme des Garçons from top to bottom. I really wanted to get into this company.

Whether Kawakubo is a talented fashion designer, or whether she is merely borrowing ideas from her assistants and putting her label on her clothes becomes an insignificant argument. Kawakubo is undeniably famous and popular in Paris. She (in Koren 1984: 119) says: 'If you want a well-designed pattern and good sewing, you don't need a fashion designer.' Furthermore, this kind of method is used not only by Kawakubo but also Miyake who gives out abstract themes to work from. A journalist remembers: 'Issey Miyake telling me that all he said to the woman at the head of his fabric studio one season was the one word 'clouds.' Neither does he work from sketches. He (in Tsurumoto 1983: 103) explains: 'I create by wrapping a piece of fabric around myself. It's a process of manual labor. My clothes are born out of the movement of my hands and body.' Such method is possible when there is a trained designer or a patternmaker who can write technical specifications for factory production.

Even the greatest designer of the twentieth century, Coco Chanel did not know much about the garment construction or textile. Tobin (1994: 14) describes how Chanel instructed her seamstresses:

> she was irascible and autocratic. Apparently, she did not enter the workrooms herself, but after she had chosen the materials, would gather her staff together to explain to them what she wanted. She needed to prove her authority but at the same time often failed to find the correct terms in which to express her requirements to her staff. When the desired results were not produced, unpleasant scenes ensued. Chanel may have learned to sew at the convent, but she was often criticized for her lack of technical knowledge.

An assistant designer expresses her frustration working under the So-En Award winning designer who was never formally trained in fashion design:

> Sometime we get into a quarrel because he would ask me to do things that a person like me who is well trained in fashion design would never do. It is just technically not possible. It is quite frustrating working with him. He has a lot of pride in getting this award which I think was more prestigious back then than now, so he ends up

> saying that he got the award despite having no fashion education. He's proud of it. Maybe you don't need education. There are thousands of competent assistants who are technically skilled, and they can drape and make patterns for a designer. You just have to pay them to do all the technical work for you.

If fashion designers' creativity is not based on their design or technical skills, what are their evaluation and assessment based on? The concept and definition of creativity can be widely interpreted. Creating an image can also be part of the designer's creativity which is completely unrelated to the clothes-making process. Yamamoto's former executive says:

> A designer needs to maintain a strong identity and image. Although it is a new collection every season, there has to be a continuity but not repetition. Image is very important so if the designer keeps changing his image, there is no way that the designer is going to be successful. Yohji was able to reproduce the same kind of image.

A journalist (Kidd 1983: 7) also explains: 'Kawakubo and her staff . . . make careful inquiries about coverage planned for other designers, and especially Yohji Yamamoto, her close friend.' Likewise, she has also insisted on selling her clothes in carefully controlled environments, ordering not just the physical surroundings of the shop but also the ritual that goes with the way the sales staff approach and serve customers (Sudjic 1990: 13).[6] Every collection, they start with an image, and then the design, both of which are inextricably linked. For them, the clothes are used only as the means of expressing abstractions.

Conclusion

The combined presence of Kawakubo, Miyake and Yamamoto in Paris appeared to shake the very foundations of the established fashion capital, but in fact, they have reinforced the French supremacy of fashion. Participating in the French fashion system earned them the social, economic and symbolic capital that enables them to differentiate themselves from other Japanese designers without these resources. The Japanese designers in Paris move upward in the social stratification among all designers in Japan that gives designers no social rewards in the global world of fashion. The younger generation of Japanese designers receives the equivalent recognition as the previous generation did if they decide to play within the French system. It demonstrates how the social status of one generation of designers reproduces itself and passes on its privileges to the next generation. The use of this symbolic capital is crucial to its effectiveness as a source of power and success.

Notes

1. My intention is to review newspaper and magazine articles written by Western journalists since the primary focus of my analysis is the Western reception of these designers and not the Japanese reception.

2. Dressers help models change and get dressed from one outfit to the next during the fashion show.

3. All traditional Japanese kimono are styled for minimal cutting or waste of the fabric while achieving sophisticated and graceful lines. Contemporary fabric for sewing traditional clothing is about fourteen and a half inches wide in contrast to the standard fabric width of either forty-five or sixty inches. The narrow width of Japanese fabric necessitates a center back seam in all garments (except those for children) as well as a front opening. That is, two narrow strips are joined along half of their length to form the back of the garment and the other ends of the strips are brought over the shoulders to form the front panels. Nearly all cuts into Japanese fabric are made from width to width along the weft threads. Even when a pattern piece would be too wide, the Japanese avoid cutting along the lengthwise grain.

4. Yamamoto is said to be well trained in tailoring skills as Menkes (1989: 10) writes: 'Cut is king for Yohji Yamamoto and, not that he has stopped making his clothes deliberately complex, his immense talent showed through in neat cropped jackets in his favorite navy and wide cream pants, or in the longer sleeveless jackets that are emerging as a fashion story'. Yamamoto's former assistant told me: 'Yohji knows patternmaking and draping extremely well. He is concerned about every millimeter.'

5. The teaching style of Bunka School of Fashion is very much geared towards custom-made dressmaking and tailoring. By the end of the first year, those who have never even held a needle or used a sewing machine will be able to design, draft and sew a blouse, a skirt, a pair of pants, a dress and an evening gown. Their curriculum is very systematic and well-structured.

6. The public relations division at Comme des Garçons in Tokyo was initially reluctant to allow me to use their images for this book. They finally agreed to including them with the text but not on the cover.

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8

Type 3: Hanae Mori Attainment of the Ultimate Designer Status in Paris

Hanae Mori is one of eleven couturiers (Table 4.1 in Chapter 4) acknowledged by the Federation and is still the first and the only Asian couturière in the history of French Haute Couture. She remains exclusive among all Japanese designers in France and in Japan. As shown in the network map (Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5), Mori stands almost alone, and the only connection with Irié, as noted earlier, is indirect. Unlike the other Japanese designers in Paris, Mori, born in 1926, is from the older generation and was already known throughout Japan when she moved to Paris. She had sufficient economic and social capital to start as a couturière, the ultimate title a designer can attain in Paris, although she was completely unknown outside Japan. Kenzo and the avant-garde designers have all started as the Prêt-à-Porter designers. She waited ten years until 1987 to start showing her Prêt-à-Porter line in Paris. Her styles, methods of dressmaking and the clients she caters to in and outside Japan distance her from any other Japanese designers. When Kenzo was asked if he ever wanted to do Haute Couture (Vidal and Rioufol 1996: 60), he answered: 'Yes, of course, I always dreamt about it, but it's a totally different occupation that I don't know enough about.' While the avant-garde designers are said to have smashed the image of Haute Couture as the standard bearer of fashion, Mori's styles are far from avant-garde.[1] She has never made the kind of impact upon the world of fashion that they have because she conforms to the existing clothing system and provides impeccable dressmaking and tailoring techniques that only the best seamstresses can produce. As already proven in her half-a-century career, she believes in maintaining the longevity and stability of a design and enduring success rather than producing something provocative that disappears after a while.

Mori was born in Shimane, the southern part of Japan, more than a decade earlier than other Japanese designers I have discussed. When Japan entered the Second World War, she was a college student in Tokyo, and to this day she

remembers it as if it were yesterday. Her memory of the war is clear. She attributes her courage and boldness to enter the French fashion world to her war experience:[2]

> They were bombing everywhere. I was sick of running and hiding to protect myself. It came to the point where I couldn't care less anymore. People tell me that I am always calm and never nervous even before the big show. Having gone through that war experience as a young adult, I know I can do anything. I am not scared of anything. It made me so strong.

Immediately after graduating from a four-year all girls' college in Tokyo, she married Ken Mori, a textile executive. She was bored by the expected role of most women in Japan and enrolled in a school called Sugino Dressmaking School. Then she set up her first shop in Shinjuku, the center of Tokyo, across from a movie house that showed the latest films from the United States and Europe. One day a Japanese movie producer noticed the window display of her store and walked in and asked Mori to design costumes for his films. This is how her career as a costume designer began. Subsequently she designed for over 500 Japanese movies. She is probably the first person to create the occupation 'designer' in Japan.

Mori became as famous as some of the celebrities she designed for, but by the early 1960s, with the advent of television, the Japanese film industry was becoming increasingly unpopular and was losing audience. She once decided to quit designing altogether to become a full-time mother of the two sons, Akira and Kei. She explains her vacation in Paris in 1961 became a major turning point in her life:

> I visited Coco Chanel's couture house in Paris. This was when Chanel was still alive. An Asian client was still very rare at the time. She liked my long black hair, and she offered to make an orange suit for me, which I politely declined. Instead she used orange for the lining. I was fascinated by the impeccable tailoring involved and the sophistication of the design. That experience motivated me to continue as a designer.

Menkes (2001: 13) succinctly explains that there is a dialog between Japanese tradition and French couture technique in Mori's work:

> like onion-skin layers of kimonos, Madame Mori hides one skill behind another. First to meet the eye is the fabric and its decoration: delicate prints, bringing color and pattern; tactile textures from raw silk through deep-pile cashmere; and embellishment of appliquéd roses or those signature butterflies. Then there is needlecraft, when tiny pleats shape a bodice or fan across a skirt. Rivulets of ruffles, graceful drapes and a lattice or ribbons are all couture effects done with effortless

ease. Underpinning this lightness of hand and attitude is incisive cutting that can make an ethereal bias-cut chiffon gown or a tailored suit flow to the contours of the body. The result is an absolute mastery of the Western skill of cutting and sewing that is still perfumed with Japanese spirit.

Using Economic and Social Capital in France and Symbolic Capital in Japan

Initial investment to set up the business, as well as the costs of creating a collection twice a year in a prestigious location, setting up shops in several other countries and in France (Crane 1997a) can be very high. Haute Couture is a business that requires a certain amount of funding to start and also to maintain. Without the considerable amount of economic and social capital that Mori had, the designer could not rent a workroom in the most prestigious area of Paris, hire at least twenty-five full-time seamstresses with full benefits and organize shows twice a year. Her intention at the time was (in Brabec 1977: 7): 'French couturiers are making a fortune in Japan. Why can't I do that in Paris?' She explained why she was able to get into the exclusive circle of Haute Couture:

> Madame Grès was the president of the organization when I was included in the organization . . . People have said to me how fortunate I was to get into the conservative circle like that one, as an Asian. It's probably true, I was fortunate. It's probably because I am a woman, and Madame Grès thought that they need more female couturières in the future . . . Everyone wanted to know how I managed to get in. There is nothing special . . . only determination and hardwork. There is no border in the world of aesthetics. Everyone is looking for something beautiful and fresh.

The French fashion gatekeepers are aware that she has set herself apart from other Japanese designers who began as Prêt-à-Porter designers and not Haute Couture. A journalist writes (Brabec 1977: 7):

> The Japanese musketeers, Kenzo, Issei Miyake, Kansai Yamamoto[3] and Yuki Torii,[4] have not until now invested only in the Prêt-à-Porter. Hanae Mori takes on Haute Couture. She presents her collection on January 27 in her salon on the Avenue Montaigne, becoming the only couture house that has opened in the past ten years . . . She has only one objective: Paris, appreciating the ever lively prestige of our capital.

Mori was not the first non-French couturier as Elsa Schiaparelli was Italian and Cristol Balenciaga was Spanish, but an Asian couturier was unheard of

until then. A French journalist wrote (Lohse 1987): 'She is the first foreigner to be admitted to this closed club in Paris that is *la Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*.' The writer assumes that the rest of the non-French designers are not foreigners by using the word *étranger* (foreigner) to describe a non-Western designer. It indicates the rarity of an Asian designer attaining the ultimate designer status in the fashion capital.

Mori's wide international network which started in New York is the explanation of her entry into Haute Couture. Her first overseas show site was New York in 1965, and she was able to attract the interest of American fashion writers by sending out handwritten invitations on rice paper for the show at Delmonico Hotel on Park Avenue. Like other Japanese designers, she looked for the kind of fabrics that cannot be found in the West and found cushion covers which are typically Japanese and also expensive fabric for Obi, the kimono sash. She introduced dresses printed with cherry blossoms, butterflies and Japanese brush strokes of her own design, many of which still appear in her more recent collections (Figures 8.1 and 8.2). This is how she got to know the president of Neiman Marcus who ordered four outfits for his wife. Her connections began to snowball from here and eventually led her to Paris.

Prince Rainier of Monaco had bought Mori's clothes at Neiman Marcus in Dallas for his wife Grace Kelly, and it was Kelly who invited her to do a charity show in Monaco in 1975. On the way back from Monaco, she was encouraged to do another show for the first time in Paris. Kelly brought her friend Sophia Loren, and fashion journalists, such as the late Hebe Dorsey of the *International Herald Tribune*. After this show, Henry Berghauer, the husband of Hiroko Matsumoto who was working at House of Ungaro, offered to work with Mori to get into the Haute Couture circle. She showed her first official Haute Couture collection in her salon in 1977. While she was doing this in Paris, she was not getting much reaction back in Japan. Mori explains:

> It took a few years for the Japanese press to recognize what I was doing in Paris. Hardly anyone in Japan knew the difference between Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter at the time. They began to pay attention after I received prestigious awards in France.[5] They become curious when something is 'the only Asian' . . . As far as fashion is concerned, Japanese have a very strong inferiority complex towards Western fashion, so it is rather useless if a Japanese struggles to get recognition in Japan. Japanese tend to hold this value that whatever comes from the West is better. So I did not want to spend the rest of my life designing only for the Japanese consumers.

Legitimation by the Japanese becomes meaningless. As explained in my previous chapters, this is the ideology shared by many Japanese designers in Paris. Japan is a nation that does not encourage young people to become artists.

Figure 8.1 Hanae Mori from Spring/Summer 1989 Haute Couture collection. Mori's strength lies in combining impeccable Western dressmaking skills with the beauty of Japanese cultural elements, such as black and white calligraphy printed on a silk chiffon evening kaftan. Photograph: courtesy of Hanae Mori Haute Couture.

Being an artist is synonymous with being unemployed. No universities offer a degree in fashion design, which is an indication that fashion designer as an occupation was never an occupation for elites in Japan where education and official qualifications are highly valued. However, like Worth in the nineteenth century, Mori as a couturière in Paris raised the status of a designer in the minds of Japanese.

Figure 8.2 Hanae Mori from Fall/Winter 1993 Haute Couture collection. Mori introduces Japanese high culture and its aesthetics to the West. An enlarged kabuki actor's face is printed on the evening dress with a quilted hem, which is a technique used in a traditional kimono. Photograph: courtesy of Hanae Mori Haute Couture.

She utilizes the privilege of a couturière and hires the best seamstresses in Paris to produce Haute Couture. Mori (*Mori Hanae To Haute Couture Exhibition Catalogue* 1992: 25) explains her relationship with her French seamstresses:

> It took about a year to create cohesion among seamstresses in my atelier. They are very proud people, and there is a language problem between them and myself. It seemed to me that they were skeptical how much or what kind of work I can produce as a Japanese designer although Japan as a market is lucrative. Now they are all in my hand . . . A couturier is like an orchestra conductor, so it's up to a couturier, like a conductor, to produce music by conducting skilled experts.

Kei Mori also writes in his biography (1998: 232) how his mother interacts with her seamstresses in her atelier in Paris:

> It is interesting to see how my mother who is not very good at French communicates . . . She gives instructions to her seamstresses both in Japanese and English . . . 'Add more tulles. We need more volume,' 'Make an artificial flower in pale pink with gradation', 'Feathers need to be colored in gradation, too, and place it on the side of the dress' and so on . . . These seamstresses speak only French, and they respond to her in French. Then my mother would nod with a smile as if she understood. It worried me in the beginning, and I was wondering if they were really communicating . . . apparently they do. Everything she wanted turned out to be exactly how she expected them to. It's quite amazing.

Introducing Japanese High Culture and Breaking the Oriental Image

Haute Couture must be part of high culture. When it was announced that creative control of two of Paris's venerable couture houses, Christian Dior and Givenchy, will be in the hands of British designers, an American journalist (Spindler 1996: A1) wrote:

> it is a blow to French cultural pride . . . And not just any British designers. Alexander McQueen, 27, stepping in at Givenchy, and John Galliano, 36, moving from a short stint at Givenchy to Dior, are famously working class, wild and drawn to such provocative impulses as buttocks-baring trousers and spray-painted leather suits

Such reportage reflects the public consensus of acknowledging high fashion as the product of high culture or upper-class society. High fashion has nothing to do with working class. Buttocks-baring trousers and spray-painted leather suits have no role in high fashion. The writer adds that Galliano is the son of a plumber while McQueen is the son of a taxi driver. Is this relevant to the designing and creation of high fashion? The image and the background of the designers are important in creating high fashion which projects the image of high culture. There are still conscious intentions of maintaining high and mass cultures in today's society, and fashion is one of the means to keep that distinction, especially in France.

Mori's intention was not a challenge but a request for legitimation by the establishment. Unlike Kenzo, or the avant-garde designers, Mori did not break the system of Western clothing or the concept of aesthetics. She did not use fabrics initially worn by Japanese fishermen and farmers. She obediently stayed within the realm of Japanese culture, Japanese high culture that is. She brought

the ultimate luxury and beauty of Japan to the West using Japanese cultural products and applied them to the Western aesthetics. She did not challenge the established fashion system, but she wanted to be included in it. What she wanted to challenge was the negative image of the Orient and Japanese women. Mori raised Japanese fashion one step higher than Kenzo and other Japanese designers.

When she saw the opera Madame Butterfly in New York during her first visit in 1961, Mori was devastated to see how miserably a Japanese woman was portrayed and how little Americans knew about Japan. She swore that she would change that image as a designer. She did not want to be like a woman in the opera. She wanted a butterfly that flies like a 'jumbo jet!' Mori says:

> Japan is a nation where people wore kimono so it's very natural that people think that Japan is backward in designing Western clothes that come out of the Western tradition and lifestyle. It's true. But by adding the Eastern tradition to the Western clothing system, we can expand the meaning of clothes. I think that is what is expected of me as an Asian couturière in Paris.

Unlike the avant-garde Japanese designers, Mori does not hesitate to accept her cultural heritage and the role she must play as a Japanese couturière. She is expected to be Japanese and that must be reflected in her designs. If not, that deceives a fashion writer's expectations (in Kondo 1992: 69):

> Hanae Mori happily returned to her roots with fabulously painted on silk crepe, their motif lifted from ancient Japanese art screens. The fabric, uncut, formed flowing kimono evening dresses. What a lovely surprise to see Madame Mori return to her original source of inspiration after years of misguided attempts to imitate European style.

Therefore, her mission comes from the desire to express Japan's highest aesthetic standards, and in order to do that, she borrowed the French system to introduce and diffuse them into the Western clothing and fashion systems. She needed to have a new kind of high fashion approved by them to make it a legitimate taste. Mori remembers the beginning of her career outside Japan:

> In the beginning, I did pressure myself trying to break the image of inferior Japanese women. After the war, a lot of Japanese women were trying to land on American soldiers because they were richer than Japanese men. I thought these women were pathetic, and if that is the image that Westerners have of Japanese women, I thought it was pitiful. I wanted to tell the world that not all Japanese women are like that.

Mori continues to expand her international network and increase her social, economic and symbolic capital. Even in Japan, Mori is socially connected with

the wealthy and the elites. She has designed for members of Japan's royal family and every Japanese prime minister's wife since 1967. Social network and capital cannot be built overnight, and this is the kind of symbolic capital that other Japanese designers in Paris or in Japan cannot easily imitate. In order to attain the ultimate designer status, the designers need financial resources and expansive social connections.

The Changing Structure of Haute Couture and Mori's Enterprise

High culture attempts to separate itself from popular and mass culture, and with the gradual disappearance of the boundary between the two in contemporary society, the distinction between Haute Couture and non-Haute Couture is becoming less relevant because high fashion or high culture is being democratized in many ways and can be attained in different forms. This is evident in the declining number of couture houses (Table 2.3).

In the pre-war period, couturier firms were usually owned at least partially by the designer (Crane 1997a: 398). After the Second World War, the nature of French luxury fashion businesses changed. Post-war French couture firms represented a new type of fashion organization that relied on financial expertise, a substantial financial investment, and licensing of many additional types of products as additional sources of income. Couture businesses are now rarely owned entirely by the founding family, and many have been acquired by major corporations so that it is becoming difficult for small couture houses that are privately owned to compete against the ones that have major investors.

Mori's enterprise was no exception. Her company was privately owned and run by her family, first by her husband, and after his death in 1996, by her elder son, Akira. Mori's company used to maintain a tight cohesion among its employees, who have been working with her over twenty years although it started as a small Mom and Pop company. Mori attributes all her success to her late husband who handled the business side. In 2001, the company announced that Hanae Mori's Prêt-a-Porter and licensing divisions would be sold to a British investment group, Rothschild, and a major Japanese trading firm, Mitsui and Co. In May 2002, her Haute Couture division headquartered in Paris was also sold, although Mori remains to be the couturier of the brand Hanae Mori. Her younger son, Kei, explains: 'We always talked about what my mother wanted to do with her brand name in the future. Does she want her name to continue like Chanel, or does she eventually want her name to discontinue?' The family's decision was probably the former.

Designers take advantage of the change in the structure of fashion institutions as Kenzo was successful in utilizing the new institutionalized system of the ready-to-wear organization. Now it is Yamamoto who is making a move towards Haute Couture claiming that his Prêt-a-Porter 'Yohji Yamamoto' line is couture in spirit (*Women's wear Daily* 2002a: 15). His name floated during Bernard Arnault's high-profile hiring drama at Givenchy and Dior several seasons ago (Foley 1998: 8). This is the appropriate timing for him as Haute Couture has relaxed its regulations and is introducing Demi-Couture.

He had expressed his interest in couture as early as 1996 and explained to a journalist (Kerwin 1996: 8) that what intrigues him is the 'border between ready-to-wear and haute couture.' He is trying to create some kind of new Haute Couture feeling, but by still using the ready-to-wear methods (Kerwin 1996: 8). Again in 1998, Yamamoto remarks (Foley 1998: 8): 'In the last two years I have been trying to address the issue of so-called couture . . . I've been studying, I've been trying to make sense of those concepts in my way. With this collection, I wanted to explore where the future of couture is going.'

Although he is not included in the official list of couturiers, during the Haute Couture week in July 2003, Yamamoto took action and showed his Prêt-a-Porter, which he always shows in October during the Prêt-a-Porter weeks. Then what is he going to show during the Prêt-à-Porter weeks in October of the same year? He wanted to show his secondary, Bridge Line called 'Y's, but it was finally decided by the Federation that Yamamoto should not be allowed to show his secondary line 'Y's' on the official calendar (*Women's Wear Daily* 2002b: 26).[6] Consequently, he showed off-calendar, and thus he was no longer included in the official list of the Federation. Is Kawakubo going to follow the trend? How about Miyake now designed by Naoki Takizawa? In order for the system of Haute Couture to survive, the Federation may be required to implement further institutional changes as they did in 1973 with the ready-to-wear.

While the new members of Haute Couture are designing Demi-Couture and have fewer regulations, Mori continues to be part of the traditional couture group keeping the formal rules. Like Kenzo, Mori's position in the world of fashion in Japan and in France is unique and, therefore, is not easy to reproduce.

Conclusion

Mori remains special in the minds of Japanese because of her status as a couturière in France, a title that no other Japanese designers have so far attained. This was made possible by the economic capital that she acquired in Japan, and the social capital that she acquired in New York. In turn, she used

the symbolic capital that the French system gave her to further increase her economic capital in Japan. As a member of this circle, she was given the prestige that only a very few designers are privileged to receive. However, with the democratization of society, which affects people's preferences in fashion tastes and clothing choices, Haute Couture as a high culture institution is in question, and this is reflected in the declining number of couture houses, relaxation of regulations and introduction of a new type of dressmaking called Demi-Couture.

Notes

1. She said in my interview: 'I was considered avant-garde back in the 1950s, but now people say my design is classic!'
2. All her comments come from my interview with Hanae Mori which took place on June 3, 1999, unless otherwise noted.
3. Kansai Yamamoto took part in the Paris fashion weeks for a number of years.
4. Yuki Torii still participates in the show.
5. Mori was awarded *la Medaille d'Argent de la Ville de Paris* (on July 4, 1978) and *la Croix du Chevalier des Art and Lettres* (on March 26, 1984) by the French Ministry of Culture for her contribution to the prestige of Paris. For her other awards, see Table C.3 in Appendix C.
6. It has been the Federation's longstanding policy that secondary or diffusion lines are not allowed during the Prêt-à-Porter weeks as they would clutter the calendar as they do in Milan and New York (*Women's Wear Daily* 2002b: 15). The Federation has urged Milan to weed secondary lines out to shorten the European fashion weeks.

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Conclusion
Paris: the Battlefield of Fashion

The main focus in future sociological studies of fashion, as far as France is concerned, will be the Haute Couture system which has consolidated its monopoly of privilege since the beginning of the twentieth century. Will the organization survive with only eleven members? The disappearance of Haute Couture assumes fewer distinctions among all designers in Paris and the loss of high fashion culture which may lead to the collapse of the French hegemony over fashion because Haute Couture as an institutionalized system with its tight rules and regulations is found only in France. In order for the system to survive, what institutional changes must be implemented for its maintenance? If Paris loses its fashion dominance, which city would claim to be the next fashion capital? Where would the next centralization of fashion take place?

The organizational strains lead to the emergence of a new system (Crane 1987; White and White 1965/1993), and fashion in Paris is currently going through that process. Will Paris continue to be the battlefield of fashion that has become an image business? The Federation's main goal is to preserve Paris's status as the international fashion capital, and it has to act in the interests of not only established French couturiers and designers but also young designers who are getting started. At the same time, Paris needs to continue to allow foreign designers to show their collections in Paris.

Furthermore, the Federation, which is considered the most prestigious legitimating institution for aesthetic culture, is under the pressure of processing more than a hundred fashion shows every Prêt-à-Porter season, and it is becoming very difficult, as a single centralized organization, to control the diffusion mechanism, to evaluate and process so many designers using only one valuation system. The incentives and commitment on the part of the designers who may be jeopardizing the formal structure of the system will question its organizational effectiveness. In order for the French system to keep its hegemonic status, longevity and stability of the system itself, change is essential; that is, stylistic change in the content of fashion, which is clothing. Content stability would be fatal in fashion where novelty is given the highest

priority and value. Innovation of new products is welcomed and encouraged, but products that are too different or radical would be pushed outside the system. Designers need to negotiate constantly with the limits of this hegemonic boundary.

The Japanese designers, who were the key players in the redefinition of clothing and fashion, reinterpreted and some even destroyed the Western definition of the clothing system. Rather than isolating them as deviant and leaving them outside the French establishment, they were labeled as creative and innovative and were given the status and privilege that, until then, only Western designers have acquired. These Japanese managed to stay within the territory that is under the authorization of the system and the fashion insiders and gatekeepers. The gatekeepers, such as journalists and critics, are important when an artistic expression created in one creative community or culture is introduced into another. Acceptance of the new Japanese styles led to the next group of Belgian designers who also utilized the French fashion system well to their advantage. From the mid 1980s to the early 1990s, a group of radical Belgian designers trained at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp followed the path that the Japanese had taken (Mendes and de la Haye 1999): Dirk Bikkembergs in 1986, Martin Margiela in 1988, Dries Van Noten in 1991 and Ann Demeulemeester in 1992 among others. By tracing the success of new designers in Paris, we can see whether they are promoting and reinforcing the existing system, or they are impeding the stability of the system and proposing the emergence of a new institution.

In the production of fashion, social institutions affect who becomes a designer, how they become a designer, how they are then able to organize fashion shows, and how they can ensure that their work is produced, exposed and disseminated to a public. Judgments and evaluations of the designs are not individual aesthetic decisions but socially enabled and socially constructed events in which the fashion professionals play a major role in the spreading the names, creating the images and selling their clothes. Paris as the fashion capital cannot survive on its own without designers and needs them to sustain the belief that Paris creates the aesthetic standard of appearance and beauty. This particular belief, like any other belief with no concrete substance and is completely invisible and intangible, has the reality of its own. Because of this belief, fashion professionals and designers continue to mobilize in Paris. Fashion is a social construction.

Appendix A: Research Design

To address my earlier research questions, I chose a qualitative sociological approach. The data draw upon almost a year of fieldwork, made up of fashion show observations and interviews between July 1998 and April 1999 in Paris, between May and August 1999 in Tokyo, and between September and November 1999 in New York. The majority of the data came from interviews with people connected to the fashion industry in Japan, France and the United States. I have found both advantages and disadvantages from personal involvement in the fashion industry. I have made every effort to approach fashion professionals without preconceptions about the world of fashion, but to avoid certain biases was admittedly difficult. However, the advantage was that I did not have to spend time asking basic questions about the technical production process of clothes. Those questions only needed be confirmed, and the interviewees and I often referred to the same technical terminologies. In a word, I spoke their language.

I started my research in Paris by selecting the names of Japanese designers from a list of fashion shows in a small booklet, *Book des Créateurs* 1997 (Book of Creators 1997), I found in a fashion school. I found sixteen Japanese names on the list. For those who had an office in Paris, I found their addresses in the local phonebook and wrote each one of them a letter in Japanese requesting an interview. I also referred to *The Fashion Guide: International Designer Directory* (1998) to find the names of publicists if the designers had any. My letters were addressed to either the designers directly or to the publicists requesting the interviews with the designers. In my letter, I explained who I was, the purpose of the interview and the likely length of the interview. Out of the sixteen, ten were sent to the addresses in Paris, six to Tokyo. Three in Paris responded favorably to my request and agreed to meet me for an interview. For those who did not respond, I made follow-up phone calls, but they were either not reachable or had no time to meet me. When I managed to get an interview, I always asked for referrals. Then my interview research started to snowball. However, even with a referral from someone they knew, there were those who were reluctant to speak with me and turned down my request, citing lack of time. The interviews were semi-structured and seldom

progressed as planned. Some interviewees would sit down only for thirty minutes while others would speak for three hours. The first few interviews were general since I myself knew nothing about the French fashion system. After several interviews, as I began to realize what questions were important and what I need to find out, I called back some of them and asked them key questions over the phone.

In my very first interview with a Japanese designer, it took me a while to realize that he did not want the conversation to be taped. When I asked him whether it was okay to tape the interview, he said that he preferred not to, but if it was absolutely necessary it could not be helped. So I decided to tape it. However, as I began asking him questions, he became restless and he would get up to go to the bathroom or to get a glass of water. I finally realized that he absolutely did not want the conversation to be taped. This incident made me cautious about taping the interviews. For Japanese, saying 'no' is considered impolite and sometimes offensive. Similar events happened in other situations. I therefore decided not to tape most of the interviews because one of the purposes of speaking to people was to hear their real voices about the world of fashion.

I took down notes profusely, and always went home to type my notes into my computer within an hour after the interview. I never had two interviews in a row so that I would have time to go home and do this after every interview. In some instances, some wanted to see me after work in a coffee shop. In those situations, taking notes was not appropriate because the interviewees would stare at my writing which became a major distraction on my part, so I stopped taking notes but just jotted down points and later put them into sentences. I used Japanese to interview the Japanese, and mostly English to interview the French, Americans, Italians or other nationalities. For some French people, it was a mixture of English and French. In the Japanese interviews, I took notes in Japanese and then typed them into my computer in Japanese. As I started to analyze my interviews, I picked out the parts which were crucial as part of my data, and then translated these specific sections into English.

I interviewed a total of sixty-two people: forty in Paris, fifteen in Tokyo, and seven in New York (Table A.1). I have counted each individual as one interview although I have met some of them more than twice, and some have called me a number of times. The total number of interviews includes one individual who was unable to see me due to health problems but allowed me to send her a list of questions which she answered via email. I made an attempt to speak not only to designers but also to fashion professionals at every level to get the picture of the entire fashion system and to understand its structure. As some Japanese designers and fashion professionals were in Paris only for a short period of time during the collection weeks, I made arrangements to

meet them in Japan. I also conducted a number of interviews in New York through the contacts I made in Paris.

Besides interviews, I attended seasonal fashion shows (Table A.2) and visited trade fairs (Table A.3) that were taking place during the fashion weeks in Paris: the Haute Couture shows in July 1998 and January 1999, and the ready-to-wear shows in October 1998 and March 1999. Two weeks before the fashion weeks began, I wrote a letter to each public relations office (in-house or independent) requesting an invitation to attend the show. For collecting written materials and documents, I used research libraries that specialize in fashion, primarily at *Institut Français de la Mode* (French Institute of Fashion) and a research center at the *Musée des Arts de la Mode et du Textile* (Museum of Fashion and Textile Arts).

I accidentally came across a demonstration of couture seamstresses during the Haute Couture fashion week in July 1998, in front of a hotel where one of the fashion shows was taking place. It was the time when Nina Ricci Couture had closed down, and the seamstresses were there to protest the declining number of couture houses with their worktables, sewing machines and mannequins. Some were draping minute pleats on the bodice of an evening gown while others were marking seamlines with a thread and a needle. Canvases were stitched by hand. These time-consuming methods and techniques are never used in mass-produced apparel industries. I subsequently observed the demonstrations for four hours, which helped me see the similarities and differences between the conventional custom-made techniques and those of French Haute Couture, which are discussed in Chapter 4.

We cannot talk about fashion without clothes nor can we talk about fashion without designers because they are the ones who make these clothes. That is why fashion has often been examined in terms of its specific content, and many attempts have been made to relate that content to particular social trends or events. Likewise, in case of the avant-garde Japanese designers, the contents of their designs, shapes and fabrics are also significant in explaining why they are unconventional while simultaneously understanding the sartorial conventions. I searched their photographic materials in Japanese, American and French fashion magazines, such as *Vogue, Elle, Marie-Claire, So-En, More*, among others, and newspapers, such as *The New York Times, Women's Wear Daily, Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. I also watched a number of collection videos at Bunka School of Fashion in Tokyo and Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, so that I would be able to make a content analysis of their designs.

In sum, my research methods consisted of interviews, observation of shows and trade fairs, and collection of written and photographic materials in the libraries.

Table A.1 *Occupational breakdown of interviewees*

Occupation	*Number of interviewees*
Assistant designer	7
Designer	21
Editor	4
Government official	1
Industry advisor	3
Instructor	2
Journalist	3
Merchandiser	2
Patternmaker	2
Publicist	7
Publisher	2
Company owner	1
President of school	1
Retailer/ Salesperson	6
Total	62

Table A.2 *Fashion shows observed*

Collection category	*Designer*	*Date*
Fall/Winter 1999 Haute Couture	Dominique Sirop	7/19/98
	Yves Saint Laurent	7/22/98
Spring/Summer1999 Women's Prêt-à-Porter	Christophe Lemaire	10/13/98
	Corinne Cobson	10/13/98
	Dice Kayek	10/13/98
	Erotokritos	10/18/98
	Hanae Mori	10/19/98
	Hervé Léger	10/17/98
	Junko Koshino	10/18/98
	Koji Nihonmatsu	10/19/98
	Marcel Marongiu	10/14/98
	Michel Klein	10/13/98
	Sonia Rykiel	10/15/98
	Veronique Leroy	10/17/98
	Xüly Bet	10/16/98
	Yoshiki Hishinuma	10/13/98
	Yuki Torii	10/19/98
Spring/Summer 1999 Haute Couture	Adeline André	1/17/99
	Lapidus	1/18/99
	Paco Rabanne	1/20/99
	Yves Saint Laurent	1/20/99
Spring/Summer 1999 Men's Prêt-à-Porter	Christophe Lemaire	1/28/99
	Francesco Smalto	1/30/99
Fall/Winter 1999 Women's Prêt-à-Porter	Daniel Hechter	3/13/99
	Gomme	3/15/99
	Hanae Mori	3/16/99
	Hervé Léger	3/13/99
	Hiromichi Nakano	3/8/99
	Isabelle Ballu	3/8/99
	Jean Colonna	3/9/99
	Jerome L'Huillier	3/8/99
	John Ribbe	3/8/99
	Junji Tsuchiya	3/10/99
	Junko Koshino	3/16/99
	Keita Maruyama	3/10/99
	Koji Nihonmatsu	3/15/99
	Koji Tatsuno	3/10/99
	Marcel Marongiu	3/10/99
	Michel Klein	3/9/99
	Moon Young Hee	3/8/99
	O0918	3/8/99
	Veronique Leroy	3/12/99
	Yves Saint Laurent	3/8/99

Table A.3 *Fashion-related events and trade fairs in Paris: 1998–9*

Month	*Events*
June	Expofil (fibers) International Perfume and Cosmetic Industries
July	International Men's and Boys' Trade Show International Trade Show for Children's Wear and Juniors' wear Haute Couture Collection Men's Prêt-à-Porter Collection
September	Costume/Fashion Jewelry and Accessories Women's Prêt-à-Porter Men's and Boys' Wear Leathergoods Children's Wear Première Classe (women's ready-to-wear) Shoes
October	Fashion Trimmings and Supplies Première Vision (fabrics) Preview Material Fashion Première Classe (women's ready-to-wear) Paris Sur Mode (women's ready-to-wear) Atmosphère (women's ready-to-wear) Espace Carole de Bona (women's ready-to-wear) Workshop at Samaritaine (women's ready-to-wear) Women's Prêt-à-Porter Collection Eyewear Shoes Supplies
November	Light Footwear Volume Retail Fashion Première Démarque (discounted stock)
December	Expofil (fiber trade show)
January	Haute Couture Collection Men's Prêt-à-Porter Collection Costume/Fashion Jewelry and Accessories Women's Prêt-à-Porter Men's and Boys' Wear Leathergoods

Table A.3 *(continued)*

Month	*Events*
	Children's Wear
	Première Classe (women's ready-to-wear)
	Shoes
	Knitwear
	Lingerie and Corsetry
	Lingerie Fabrics
	Who's Next (Casual Wear)
	Children's Wear
	Children's Wear Fabrics
	Bridal Wear
March	Women's Prêt-à-Porter Collection
	Fashion Supplies and Trimming
	Shoes
	Première Vision (fabrics)
	Première Classe (women's ready-to-wear)
	Paris Sur Mode (women's ready-to-wear)
April	Shoe Supplies
May	Fabrics for Large Retailers
	Première Démarque (discounted stock)

Source: The French Federation of Specialized Salons 1998–9

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Appendix B: Interview Schedule

1. The following semi-structured interview questions were asked of designers and non-designers who are directly or indirectly related to the Federation:

What is the purpose of the organization?
What role does the organization play in the French fashion industry?
What are the organizational functions?
Why do you think the organization lasted for more than a century?
What was the purpose of creating the subdivision, the Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs?
Is Haute Couture realistic as business?
What are the difficulties in maintaining the couture houses and the organization itself?
Will the organization last despite the financial crisis of couture houses?
Who elects the members of the organization?
Is it more difficult for foreign couturiers to be a member?
Do you think Japanese fashion was legitimated by the French?
Does French fashion system dominate the world's fashion?
What are the advantages of being a member of the organization?

2. The following semi-structured interview questions were asked of Japanese fashion designers:

How did you get started in France?
Why are you (partially) based in Paris?
Why do you need to show your collections in Paris? Would you have the courage not to show your collections in Paris?
Would you be able to maintain your current reputation without showing your collection in Paris?
Would you have been this famous had you not come to France?
Being a foreigner, have you ever had any difficulties penetrating into the French fashion system?

What were the steps you took to be elected as a member of the Chambre Syndicale?
Were you looking for Western acceptance of Japanese style?
Would you ever pack up and go back to Japan permanently?
Do you consider yourself a Japanese designer or a French/Western designer?
What role do you play in creating fashion?
What is the difference between fashion and ordinary clothing?
What does being 'in-fashion' mean?
Do journalists have the power to make a fashion designer famous?
Where do designers get creative ideas from?
Is fashion important in our life?
Is fashion necessary in our life?
Who decides what is fashionable and what is not?
What is high fashion? What is mass/popular fashion? Which one do you design for?
How do you situate yourself in Paris, New York and Tokyo? Do you see any differences? What is your position in each fashion system?
How important is it for you to belong to the French fashion system or American fashion system? Why not just stay in the Japanese system?

3. The following semi-structured interview questions were asked of fashion editors and journalists:

What is the meaning of having fashion/trend-related articles?
How do you create fashion magazines?
What is the purpose of covering fashion news/collection news every season?
What role do you play in creating fashion?
What is fashion? Who creates fashion?
What is the difference between fashion and ordinary clothing?
Can you predict what will being fashion next?
What does being 'in-fashion' mean?
Do journalists have the power to make a fashion designer famous?
Where do designers get creative ideas from?
Is fashion important in our life?
Is fashion necessary in our life?
Who decides what is fashionable and what is not out of fashion?
What is high fashion? What is mass/popular fashion? What is the relation between the two? Which one do you design for?
Who wears high fashion?
How is the fashion system in France different from other fashion systems?
How does one situate Japanese designers in the French fashion system?
Are Japanese designers the product of the French fashion system?

Appendix C: Supplementary Tables

Table C.1 *Members of Le Comité Colbert, 2002 (excluding fashion/couture and fragrance sectors)*

Industry sector	*Company*	*Since*
Silver/Bronze	Ercuis	1867
	Christofle	1830
	Puiforcat	1820
Crystal	Lalique	1910
	Daum	1875
	Cristal Saint-Louis	1767
	Baccarat	1764
Leathergoods	Longchamp	1948
	John Lobb	1899
	Berluti	1895
	Louis Vuitton	1854
	Hermès	1837
Publishing/Decoration	Yves Delomre	1948
	Pierre Frey	1935
	Bussière	1924
	D. Porthault	1924
	Flammarion Beaux Livres	1875
	Souleïado	1780
Porcelain	Robert Haviland & C. Parlon	1924
	Bernardaud	1863
	Faïenceries de Gien	1821

Table C.1 *(continued)*

Industry sector	*Company*	*Since*
Hospitality/Gastronomy	La Maison du Chocolat	1977
	Lenôtre	1957
	Taillevent	1946
	Oustau de Beaumanière	1945
	Hôtel Le Bristol	1924
	Hôtel Plaza Athénée	1911
	Hôtel de Crillon	1909
	Hôtel Ritz	1898
	Hédiard	1854
	Hôtel Martinez	1854
	Dalloyau	1802
Gold/Precious metal	S.T. Dupont	1872
	Boucheron	1858
	Mauboussin	1827
	Bréguet	1775
	Mellerio dits Meller	1613
Champagne, wine and Cognac	Château Lafite Rothschild	1855
	Champagne Krug	1843
	Château Cheval Blanc	1832
	Champagne Bollinger	1829
	Champagne Laurent-Perrier	1812
	Champagne Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin	1772
	Champagne Ruinart	1729
	Rémy Martin	1724
	Château d'Yquem	1593
Total	46 companies	

Note: See Table 2.4 for Fashion/Couture and Fragrance Sectors

Source: Le Comité Colbert (2002/2003)

Table C.2 *The Presidents of La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne and the Federation 1868–present*

Despaigne	1868–69
Bernard Salle	1870–77
Dreyfus	1878–84
Worth, Gaston	1885–88
Marcade	1889–90
Brynlinski	1890–92
Felix	1893–95
Perdoux	1896–1900
Bonhomme	1901–2
Pichot	1903–4
Storch	1905–7
Reverdot	1908–11
Doeuillet	1912
Aine	1913–16
Paquin	1917–19
Clement	1920–27
Worth, J.	1927–30
Gerber, P.	1935–37
Lelong, Lucien	1937–45
Gaumont, Lanvin	1945–50
Barbas, Raymond	1950–77
Mouclier, Jacques	1977–99
Grumbach, Didier	1999–present

Source: Picken and Miller 1956, and compiled from various other documents.

Table C.3 *Awards received by Kenzo, Kawakubo, Miyake, Yamamoto and Mori*

Kenzo	
1972	Fashion Editors Club of Japan Prize (Japan)
1976	Bath Museum of Costume Dress of the Year Award (UK)
1977	Bath Museum of Costume Dress of the Year Award (UK)
1984	*Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* (France)
1985	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Award (Japan)
Rei Kawakubo	
1983	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Award (Japan)
1986	Fashion Group Night of the Stars Award (USA)
1988	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Award (Japan)
1993	*Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* (France)
1997	Honorary Doctorate from Royal College of Art, London (UK)
2000	Harvard Excellence in Design Award (USA)
Yohji Yamamoto	
1982	Fashion Editor's Club Award (Japan)
1984	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Award (Japan)
1986	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Award (Japan)
1991	Fashion Editor's Club Award (Japan)
1994	*Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* (France)
1994	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Award (Japan)
1997	Night of Stars Award from the Fashion Group (USA)
1997	Fashion Editor's Club Award (Japan)
1998	Arte e Moda Award from Pitti Immagine, Florence (Italy)
1999	International Award from Council of Fashion Designers of America Awards (USA)
Issey Miyake	
1974	Fashion Editor's Club Award (Japan)
1977	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Award (Japan)
1978	Mainichi Design Prize (Japan)
1978	International Prize from the Fashion Designers Council of America (USA)
1980	Pratt Institue, New York Award for Creative Design (USA)
1984	International Award of the Council of America Fashion Designers (USA)

Table C.3 *(continued)*

1984	Neiman Marcus Award (USA)
1984	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Award (Japan)
1985	Best Collection presented by a Foreign Designer-Award of Les Oscars de la Mode (France)
1986	Award of the Japanese magazine for the textile industry Senken Shimbun (Japan)
1989	Mainichi Fashion Grand Prize (Japan)
1992	Asahi Prize (Japan)
1993	Mainichi Fashion Prize (Japan)
1993	*Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur* (France)
1994	Tokyo Creation Award (Japan)
1996	Mainichi Newspaper Fashion Awards (Japan)
1997	Medal with the Purple Ribbon (Japan)
1998	Person of Cultural Merits by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Japan)
Hanae Mori	
1960	Fashion Editors' Club Award (Japan)
1967	The Rex Award from Maison Blanche in New Orleans (USA)
1970	The Rex Award from Maison Blanche in New Orleans (USA)
1973	Neiman Marcus Award (USA)
1976	The Rex Award from Maison Blanche in New Orleans (USA)
1978	*Medaille d'Argent de la Ville de Paris* (France)
1978	The Symbol of Man Award, Minnesota Museum (USA)
1978	The Best Award from the National Chamber of Italian High Fashion (Italy)
1984	*La Croix du Chevalier des Art and Lettres* (France)
1987	Night of Stars Award from the Fashion Group (USA)
1988	Medal with the Purple Ribbon (Japan)
1988	Asahi Prize as a pioneer of Japanese Fashion (Japan)
1989	*Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* (France)
1989	Person of Cultural Merits by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Japan)
1996	The Order of Culture (Japan)
1997	Fashion Editors' Club Special Award (Japan)

Source: Compiled from various documents.

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