

The Study on How Chanel Influenced in Fashion Industry

Hyun-Soon, Kim*

*Dept. of Fashion
Design, Taegu Future
College Full Time
Instructor

CONTENTS

- I. Introduction
- II. Period Background
- III. Work Activities
- IV. How Chanel Influenced in Fashion Industry
- V. Conclusion
- References
- Abstract

I. Introduction

In the early 20th century when restrained human personality has begun to come out with material prosperity, women's history also has come to be more active. Women wished to have their own expression, became much interested in beauty, and, so, tried to create new artistic reality. The new artistic reality could be created by combination of an inborn genius designer with the given era. Therefore, many designers like Poiret, Vionnet made all their efforts to express the given era's beauty and eventually created a new fashion. Based on their works with the human body, namely, they attempted not only to suggest a value standard for newly changing beauty, but to express the given age's life and spirit.

A significant change in mode resulting from World War I made many women advance into society, and led to a practical mode. Couture in Paris was filled with a fresh atmosphere by new designers with high

talent and many designers promoted active activities of creation in 1920, when they were in all their glory. Chanel achieved the highest reputation for 10 years from 1920 to 1930. She anticipated in advance the trend of the changing age and formulated a new fashion philosophy. Chanel herself, who tried to be free from all of mental restraints, became a model of the given era under its trend to challenge against existing designers, and succeeded in showing her own unique style while designing things that she wanted to wear. Her design destroyed traditional social understanding and fixed ideas.

The purpose of this study is to analyse features of Chanel designs which affected in fashion industry. To achieve the purpose, this study was carried out by analysing a variety of information from literatures and fashion magazines. To survey and research these topics for studying, Chanel activities as a designer, and her influences in fashion industry were analysed on the basis of research on her life.

II. Period Background

In the 19th century when nobles' high grade of apparel life began in Haute couture and the mode also started to be common. Moreover, France tried to grow Haute couturinto a national industrial area where the 2nd export industry's development was available. Such circumstances were enough to produce many designers who could create high fashion. At the end of the 19th century, on the other hand, the United States of America having gone through World War faced a reform movement in economy, societyand culture, and attempted to accelerate industrialization. America's ready-made garments industry became active, and there was a great turning point in the fashion industry, when people experienced in the 2nd industrial revolution, development of capitalism and new materials for fashion while there was a significant change in formation art. The design in the early 20th century aimed toward functionality insisting that subjects' form had to be as simple as possible for them to be suited to achieving their certain purpose. Such functionalism featured combination of simplicity, non-

decoration, functionality, and practicality. With advancement into the 20th century, the standards for traditions and customs gradually collapsed, and people looked for freedom and modernization so that a new movement appeared in fashion design, as well as in art. Then, the designers also attempted to create dresses which complied with new requirements for functionalism.

In 1914 the war began in Europe, World War 1 greatly promoted women's rights, because women replaced men in previously all male jobs. Vogue reported in 1918, Now that women work, working clothes have acquired a new social status and a new chic.¹⁾ The postwar period saw new economic prosperity and shorter working hours. Moreover, the reaction of women to their new found freedoms. With the development of practical, simple clothes for men, most fashion emphasis has since been placed on women's wear. With Paul Poiret abolishing the corset as early as early as 1906 and creating his straight, loose tubular dress which was easy to wear, some women already had a taste of freedom. But the involvement of many women in the war effort of 1914-18 had they wanted their clothes to further reflect their new emancipation. The independent modern couture is a bridge between the class-structured fashion of the past and the democratization of fashion today. Orders from wealthy wean were mailed back to paris, where the gown were made to fit the customers requirements. however, most people couldn't afford couture clothes but managed to copy them to some degree.

The desire for fashionable clothing was fostered by its increased availability as well as by the invention of new communications media. The introduction of movies and radio played an important role in internationalizing fashion. As more women became aware of fashion styles through magazines and other forms of mass communication, their desire to wear those fashion increased, the faster a style was adopted by the entire public, the greater the demand was for more new looks.

1) Helen L. Brockman,
The Theory of Fashion
Design, John Wiley &
Sons, Inc., 1965, p. 69.

Ⅲ. Work Activities

With opening Chanel Mode, a hat shop in 1911, Chanel started to act as a designer. During World War I in 1914, she went to Deauville where Gabrielle Chanel, a boutique shop, was opened, and she used navy jersey for making simple dresses(Fig. 1). In 1916, she opened Maison of Haute couture in Biarritz where her first collections were successfully introduced. After the end of the war, she returned to Paris and settled down in Cambon, where her shop Salon de Couture actively started to do business. And then, she designed her own style dresses and regularly held her collections. In 1920, Chanel was at the highest of her prosperity. Having discovered comfortable, casual combinations Chanel struck to them. The these-piece cardigan suit eigned supreme throughout the 1920s. The post- war trend was for simplicity and informality.

At the time when Paris' famous designers including Poul Poire designed a luxury style of dresses for the high classes' women, Chanel introduced a young style of dresses, focusing on a middle class of working women who were a new consumer class. Her jackets with golden chain, Chanel Suit called an original Chanel style, and chemise dress and wool jersey underwears with gold-colored buttons showing the body line were introduced between 1920 and 1939. In addition, her works, such as cardigan similar to everyday dresses, and pleats skirt, were introduced, and imitation jewels also were used.

Her brand was changed to Chanel from Gabrielle Chanel in 1922, since then, which has been used until now. In 1926, she introduced the Little Black Dress which was related to her pursuing artistic simplicity in 1920. By the late 30s, Chanel felt that she was no longer relating to the new, structured look in fashion, and she decided to retire. One of the fashion surprises of the 1950s was the comeback of chanel and 1960 her collarless tweed suits were being copied everywhere. she died at age 88, still active in her business, having twice been a world fashion influence. From 1954 to 1971, she transformed jacket and practical tweed fabrics, hair style, necktie, and accessories having male characteristics to the dresses for women. With the change of the times and human values, she

designed women dresses featuring a male image and destroyed the concept of traditional dresses for women. In 1967 even when mini skirt became very popular, she kept on designing her own Chanel line and used tweed fabrics. Although her highest glory came to an end in 1971, her spirit has been kept.

The Spirit of Chanel was aiming to design dresses for women to be free from their traditional customs, looking for their freedom. Her short hair style, pants, little black dress, jacket, shoulder bag, and accessories had simplicity and functionality together with elegance, therefore, which played a role as the revolution in creating fashion.

Unlike other designers, Chanel expressed her basic ideas of dress aesthetics with comfortable, practical beauty included in her life, not various change in design for fashion tendency. Chanel felt that she herself personified this new spirit of independence and evolved a style of dress for the modern, liberated woman. Chanel was the first to cater to the public in its broader sense and to produce a standard which appealed every taste, the first to democratize the art of dressmaking for purely economic reasons. Chanel adapted it to clothes and she struck the right note. The post-war trend was for simplicity and informality. Many of her creations evoked the spirit of art movements such as Art Deco with examples of its very classic strand emphasizing purity of line and also of its sumptuous use of surface decoration. She refined it again and again but never fundamentally changed it, consistency being the hallmark of her style.

IV. How Chanel Influenced in Fashion Industry

1. Revolution of Fabric

Chanel excelled at fabrics, their interpretation, and an ability to use them. That she could handle materials was also attested early on when she worked directly on her models Chanel cutting the fabric with pins. Stories abound from her life attesting to her innate flair for the way a material felt and how it moved on the body.

That she was an innovator in textiles is confirmed by her introduction of jersey as a fashionable fabric. The name jersey in

the sixteenth century derived from a worsted made of wool from the Channel Island of the same name. By the late nineteenth century it was identified as a close-fitting yet elastic woollen that was likened to fine knitting. Sportsmen wore garments made of jersey and fishermen wore jersey sweaters. In 1915 she also made up some dresses in the synthetic fabric rayon, thus opening up the possibilities of the use of synthetic materials and making her designs widely available to women. Rayon, in particular, which was perfected in the 1920s and called artificial silk, became acceptable and smart, and eminently suitable for the little black dress because of its excellent draping ability. Chanel became interested in jersey in 1916. By this time it was used in the main for hosiery and deemed unsuitable for haute couture by dint of its drab, beige colour and hard-to-handle weave.

Chanel's combination of pure lines and plain colours often drew comparisons with the contemporary art movement, Cubism, with particular reference to the Analytic phase which ennobled humble materials and muted colours. She used a rabbit fur instead of expensive furs, and jersey for making an evening dress. In 1935, particularly, she constructed her own jersey factory to sell products with Chanel brand, and introduced her own unique design featuring jersey's elasticity. Her style which applied the balance of elegance and simplicity to selection of her design for materials was well accepted by people. To be smart in town it was now essential to wear a Chanel cardigan suit. Besides her very influential jersey and tweed cardigan suits, Chanel continued to assert her considerable strength with materials often making her suits in very delicate, feminizing fabrics. Jersey was in the category of materials that moved with the body and so she set about perfecting wool and silk jersey, especially its aesthetic and sensuous qualities.

2. Style of youth sportswear

Chanel popularized the Garçon look with sweaters and jersey dresses. The feminine ideal had always favored the mature woman, but the 1920s saw the beginning of a desire for eternal youth. Chanel herself stated, "Always dress to make yourself felt young"²⁾ Chanel realized that there also fashionable new women out working. Their

2) Brockman, op. cit., p.39.

had used up a great deal of physical energy and the natural corollary was to lead a healthy active life. Sporting activities were very much a part of their emancipation. Advances in communication, the explosion of fashion magazines, and developments in the cinema would guarantee that they were well-informed about fashion.

She wears a sports suit consisting of a long skirt and long jacket, very loose-fitting being made of tricot, and a white cotton shirt. The jacket had large patch pockets and a sailor collar, the provenance so obviously being masculine working dress. Chanel transformed attitudes to sports through her clothes, especially for women, and also put sportswear in the mainstream of fashion for the cocktail hour. Those who partook of these activities, the well-bred, wealthy, leisure class could afford to by Chanel's original haute couture designs.

3. Modernity of Fashion

(1) The little black dress (Fig. 2.)

Emerging in the early 1920s the little black dress derived from the straight lines and flat planes of the chemise dress. With her little black dress, Chanel institutionalized the *garconne* look. This was the emancipated, uninhibited modern woman. The name Chanel is usually identified with her cardigan suits and little black dresses. For luxury could never have any other purpose than to set off simplicity.³⁾ The newly designed one-piece was a simple type of black dress with no collar, button, or accessory, like a long chemise, which made the body of women at that time be free. It was a modern design expressing extremely restricted simplicity with respect to its cutting and design, which included her spirit coming from freedom. The color she mainly used for design included beige, navy blue, gray, and dark colors in addition to simple dress made of general fabrics, and she tried to mainly use a beige of those colors. Her interest in such color affected by cubism was transferred to a black color which was not used for women dress other than a mourning dress. In 1920, Chanel entirely stabilized her top position in Haute couture, and her own characteristics, simplicity and functionality, became very popular and were accepted by career women. Chanel's simple line

3) E. Charles-Roux,
Chanel, Collins Harvill,
1989, p.252

was used to visually express her simplicity which was not allowed for unnecessary things at all.

(2) The Chanel suit(Fig. 3.)

The Chanel suit of cardigan style emphasizing suitability and functionality was first introduced during World War I, continued to be popular until 1939, and then was revived again in 1950, when Chanel style was kept to look for simple, practical and modern rationalism which was a functional concept for dresses. The Paris fashion world gave her a cool reception. It was received in America and the new woman had found the pace of independence most quickening and it was inevitable that Chanel relaxed elegance.⁴⁾ Chanel suits were considered the epitome of elegance, and in the wardrobe of the American arbiter of fashion.

4) Marie, Grand
Duchess of Russia, A
Princess in Exile,
Cassell, 1932, pp.159-
60

The suit was made of tweed, wool, jersey, silk - the material governed by whether the suit would be worn for day wear or evening wear. The jacket was invariably short and fitted, decorated with pockets and fastened with gold buttons.(Fig.4.) The suit was meticulously lined with silk in a toning colour, being a decorative effect in itself. If a blouse was worn with the suit, it matched the lining in material and colour. All buttons always had holes to express her basic spirit with practicality rather than aesthetics. The skirt skimmed the knee as this was the part of the anatomy Chanel found unflattering. The jacket and skirt produce a flawless line. The understated elegance of a Chanel suit is as carefully made inside as outside. A gold chain is always used for weighting along the lower inside edge of the jacket. This makes the whole line of the suit very straight with not a bit of clutter or fussiness and when the model moved the jacket would not ride up. Another distinguishing attribute of a Chanel haute couture suit that is not found in ready-to-wear is that her pure silk linings have tucks in areas such as the shoulders, all the stitching done by hand, which means the suit can take a great deal of stress after continuous wear. In ready-to-wear darts are used which cannot bear the strain and invariably break open. but the secret of the Chanel suit is the armholes. In ready-to-wear darts are used which cannot bear the strain and invariably break open. If a Chanel suit is examined carefully it will

be noticed that the armhole is small and high, which, as a result gives the wearer a graceful long neck and fragile shoulders, enhancing femininity. The features of Minimal Art could be said to be those of Chanel's outfit : sculptural, simple and having a unitary form.(Fig.5) Her suits are being worn by women in all age groups. For the working women and the rich and famous alike, classic chic had come full circle. Her Chanel suit is a symbol of richness, career and social class. It is a tribute to her that she was so in touch with the twentieth century that women of so many generations in tandem have worn her clothes.

4. Dandy of fashion (Fig. 6)

Helped by the work effort of women during World War 1 when they wore men's clothing. Chanel in 1920 launched her masculine style baggy trousers and in 1922 her wide-legged flaring beach pajamas. The 1920s and 1930s were the heyday of her wide, baggy trousers for leisure.⁵⁾ This new look visually expressed women's new freedom. Chanel felt it was smart to look neither feminine nor rich, clothes were not as important as personal style. She was also the first to make high -fashion pants, popularizing the new category of sportswear for informal occasions.

Chanel's adaptation of the forms and details of masculine dress are often considered in relation to dandyism. This allowed for freedom of movement. While imbuing women's clothes with these elements she was able at the same time to enhance femininity. Chanel was always on the side women. She wanted haute couture to be comfortable which she didn't think was the case when it was designed by men.

5. Coordination of fashion Accessories(Fig. 7)

Costume jewellery was an inherent part of class chic. Jewels aren't made to give people a rich look, they're made to give an air of elegance or adornment, which isn't the same thing.⁶⁾ Chanel completed her classic with a group of accessories which complemented her classic chic with a group of accessories which complemented her clothing designs; two -toned shoes, beige with black toe caps quilted handbags with gold chains; scarves, a variety

5) Charles-Roux,
chanel ,op. cit., p.288

6) F. Kennett, Coco,
The Life and Loves of
Gabrielle Chanel,
Victor Gollancz, 1989,
p.100

of hats, black bows and white gardenias for the hair, and her distinctive costume jewellery.(Fig.8) For other dashing sports coats Chanel used tartan, another material she would use throughout her long career and also quilting, which has become a Chanel trademark being translated into handbag as well.

She showed fake jewellery on woollen sweaters during the day, something hitherto unheard of Chanel popularized costume jewelry and long strands of beads. Carefully placed fake jewellery, far from cheap as the sale of her casket of costume jewellery was an essential part of the essential part of the uniform of classic chic. It's was Chanel's savant-garde way with it not to mention her usual deceptive simplicity and supreme artistry that made costume jewellery. The bulk of her most distinctive costume jewellery, such as the pieces of Byzantine splendour mixing real and simulated stones. It was the unconventional way that Chanel wore pearls that caused such a sensation. one way was for day wear on her expensive throw-away cardigan suits and little black dresses. Chanel's jewellery ideas were so original and had such an impact that soon fashionable women were wearing their real jewels as blatantly as their fake ones.

Chanel had a love of flowers and leaves and they figure prominently among her jewellery themes. Flowers were fashioned out of beautifully coloured stones their hues set off by a sunburst gold background. One of her most striking and exquisite examples of the genre was a yellow gold brooch of fan design set with flowers made of multi-coloured stones. She was classic Chanel with her clean-cut stark little black dress setting off rows of gilt chains with large coins, the cuffs of the long sleeves embellished with stones and gilt and wearing earrings with matching stones and gilt.

Thus, gilt chain, pearl earrings, two-tone pumps, stockings of a shade which merged imperceptibly with the shoes, a quilted handbag with gilt chains and a hat, flat bow or gardenia in the hair all gave a soft, feminine effect. Every feature was special and individual to Chanel and what made the ensemble classic.

6. Popularization of fashion

The ready-to-wear apparel industry began to prosper when Poiret,

7) Chanel No. 1, Time, January 25, 1971, p.38
8) E. Charles-Roux, Chanel, Collins Harvill, 1989, p.17

Vionnet, and Chanel simplified styles and there by construction. Because individual fitting was not so important to their straight silhouettes, mass production of dresses became practical. Chanel liked to be copied. "I am not an artist" she insisted "I want my dress to go out on the street."⁷⁾ She was a creator of original designs who was only happy when being plagiarized by others.⁸⁾ Her thinking was that fashion had to be popular for as much people as possible. Buyers from America bought up all of her collections available for simple and easy imitation which resulted in her continuous popularity for a long time in America. Eventually she was a first designer who exported Paris' Mode to America.

9) Ibid., p.246.

While Chanel's haute couture designs were the prerogative of the rich new woman, more or less clandestine copies were going to become possible, by virtue of the simplicity of the models at a fraction of the cost and for far less wealthy women⁹⁾ While the rich could purchase mass-produced rayon copies which claimed to be light, comfortable and to give the wearer confidence and a feeling of liberty. Although she foresaw the vast market of the ready-to-wear industry and made innovations in that direction particularly in America

There had been much speculation on whether Chanel's little dress had in fact any connection with the blurring of class differences and the expression of democracy. She allowed other designers to imitate her own designs even after the beginning of the ready-made garments age because she thought that imitation would be a compensation for her popularity, and rather would show a propaganda impact.

V. Conclusion

Chanel was completely in tune with the twentieth century, understanding the changes in the lifestyles of women and also understanding how her clothes should cater to them. She designed classic clothes that had brought about a revolution in fashion. All Chanel fashions were based on the natural shape of the female figure. She placed emphasis on an aspect where she could almost

claim infallibility in fabrics. She designed dresses and sweaters with practical jersey, strap-patterned pullover, garments and accessories with cheap leathers which had an effect on popularization of fashion.

Through her egalitarian convictions about her clothes Chanel was not only advancing the ready-to-wear market and launching new ventures such as boutiques, she was also enhancing women's quality of life, giving them a belief in their own dignity and independence. Comfort and functionalism have such an essential, definite place in Chanel's design that her name is usually associated with her classic chic garments alone. But as well as these clothes, which must surely rank as her most significant creations. The Chanel look was a youthful, slender, boyish figure, short hair, comfortable clothes and short hemlines. And Chanel created a style for all ages.

In this study, the influences of chanel in fashion industry have been examined centering around her work activities. The influences are summarized as follows ; The First, Chanel influenced on Fabric Revolutionan in textiles confirmed by her introduction of jersey as a fashionable fabric.

The second is Style of youth sportswear. Chanel transformed attitudes to sports through her clothes, especially for women, and also put sportswear in the mainstream of fashion for the cocktail hour. those who partook of these activities, the well-bred, wealthy, leisure class could afford to by chanel's original haute couture designs.

The third is Modernity of Fashion. She tried to entirely eliminate exaggerated decoration and change it to a simple line to realized designs' multipurpose combined with simplicity, functionality, and practicality. Also, her aesthetic values with restricted simplicity and elegance appeared as the Chanel Look. Chanel's modernity, that changed gorgeous to ordinary materials and exaggerated decorative details to simple lines, formed the main trend of fashion design in the 20th century.

The forth is Dandy of fashion. Chanel's adaptation of the forms and details of masculine dress are often considered in relation to dandyism. This allowed for freedom of movement.

The fifth is Coordination of fashion Accessories. She placed fake jewellery, far from cheap as the sale of her casket of costume jewellery was an essential part of the essential part of the uniform of classic chic.

The sixth is Popularization of fashion. Her fashion was very high, and allowed for its copy while strictly maintaining its dignity. In so doing, she made it possible to achieve mass production of fashion with same styles and create fashion.

Finally, Chanel was the fashion designer who had the most significant influence on fashion industry in twentieth century

References

- 1) Helen L. Brockman, The Theory of Fashion Design, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1965, p.69.
- 2) Brockman, op. cit., p.39.
- 3) E. Charles-Roux, Chanel, Collins Harvill, 1989, p.252
- 4) Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia, A Princess in Exile, Cassell, 1932, pp.159-60
- 5) Charles-Roux, Chanel, op. cit., p.288
- 6) F. Kennett, Coco, The Life and Loves of Gabrielle Chanel, Victor Gollancz, 1989, p.100
- 7) Chanel No. 1, Time, January 25, 1971, p.38
- 8) E. Charles-Roux, Chanel, Collins Harvill, 1989, p.17
- 9) Baudot F. Chanel, The Universe of Fashion. Vendome Press, 1996
- 10) Boucher F. 2000 Years of Fashion. Abrams, 1987, pp.250-270
- 11) Brockman H.L. The Theory of Fashion Design John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1965 pp.30-70
- 12) Edmonde C. CHANEL and Her World. Vendome Press, 1981
- 13) Frings G.S. Fashion From Concept to Consumer. Prentice-Hall Inc. 1982, pp.13-23
- 14) Haye A., Tobin S. CHANEL : The Couturiere at Work. Overlook Press, 1995
- 15) Madsen A. Chanel : A Woman of Her Own. Henry Holt, 1991
- 16) Mauries P. Jewelry by Chanel. Little Brown & Co, 1999
- 17) Milbank C.R. New York Fashion. Harry N. Abrams Inc, 1989, pp.68-97
- 18) Peacock J. Fashion sourcebooks the 1920s. Thames and Hudson, 1997, p.62
- 19) Rudy J. The 1920s and 1930s. Butsford Ltd, 1994, p.32
- 20) Steele V. Women of Fashion Twentieth Century Designers, Rizzole, 1977
- 21) Stegemeyer A. Who's who in fashion. Third Edition, 1996, pp.44-45
- 22) Tate S.L. Inside Fashion Design. Canfield Press. 1977.
- 23) Wallach J. Chanel : Her Style and Her Life. Doubleday, 1998.

초 록

Chanel이 패션산업에 미친 영향에 관한 연구

김 현 순*

*대구미래대학 패션디자인과
전임강사

본 연구에서는 20세기 대표적인 디자이너인 샤넬의 작품활동을 통해 패션산업에 미친 영향에 대해 살펴보고자 한다. 연구를 위해 여러 문헌과 패션잡지를 통한 자료분석으로 문헌적 연구를 했다. 본 논문의 결론을 요약하면 다음과 같다.

첫째, 샤넬은 소재의 혁신을 가져왔다. 여성복에서는 사용되지 않았던 소재를 도입하여 패션에 자유로움을 제시한다. 둘째, 영 스포츠캐주얼 웨어를 디자인하여 제시함으로써 여성에게 젊음과 여유로운 생활을 유도한다. 셋째, 패션의 현대화로 디자인 뿐만 아니라 기능적이고 실용적인 심플한 실루엣을 제시하여 하나의 모드를 생성시킨다. 넷째, 패션의 댄디즘으로 여성 해방운동가의 입장에서 패션을 해석하려했다. 다섯째, 클래식한 슈트에 다양한 악세서리를 코디네이션하여 디자인의 변화를 가져왔다. 여섯째, 일부 계층만의 패션이 아니라 20세기 패션의 대중화에 앞장을 선 디자이너 중의 한 사람이었다.



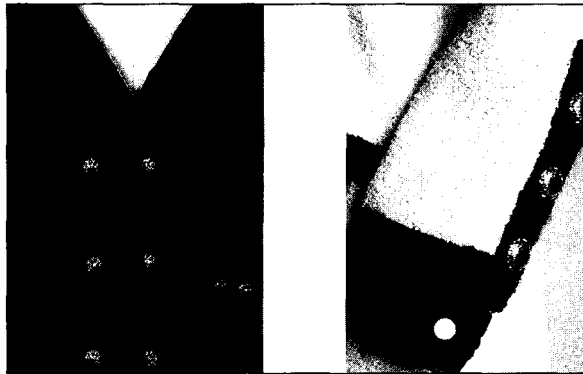
1. Fig. 1. Chanel jacker-skirt ensembles made of jersey (Les Elagances parisiennes, 1917)



2. Fig. 2. Little black dress of 1926 (Haute couture, The metropolitan museum of art, 1995)



3. Fig. 3. Chanel's classic cardigan-style suit of 1960s (Fairchild pub, 1982)



4. Fig. 4. Chanel's classic suit's details of 1960 (Musee de la mode et du textile, 1996)



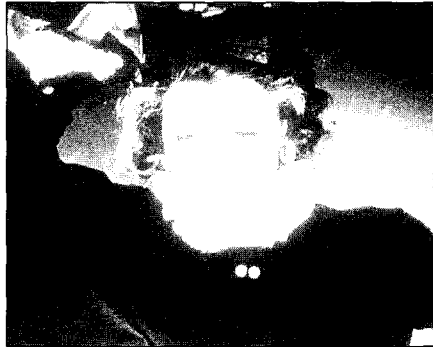
5. Fig. 5. Modes in the street of 1928
(Les Modes, 1928)



6. Fig. 6. Chanel trouser suit of 1937
(Victoria and Albert museum)



7. Fig. 7. CoCo Chanel of 1925
(The house of Chanel, paris)



8. Fig. 8. Chanel accessories of 1960
(Vogue, 1990)