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Not Just Pretty Clothes:

Fashion's progressive operationalization as seen in Baudelaire and Benjamin

A senior thesis for the Philosophy Department, with an addendum in fulfillment of the World

*Literature and Culture Studies Department's thesis requirement: **Anna Karenina's***

Appropriation of her Mortality Through Dress

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Trinity College; Hartford, CT

May 2020

Main Text

First Reader: Professor Erik Vogt

Second Reader: Professor Carol Any

Addendum

First Reader: Professor Carol Any

Second Reader: Professor Erik Vogt

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
I: Fashion as Materialized Spirit in the Beautiful: Baudelaire's Modernity	4
Beauty and Monsieur G.	
Beauty's Two Faces	
Modernity (Fashion)	
Spirit	
II: Forms and Figures :: History and Heroes	24
Ekardt on Benjamin and Simmel	
Form and the charm of boundary	
Operationalizations of Fashion as a Model of Time	
Heroes of the Modern Age: Benjamin on Baudelaire	
Poe's Detective Story	
Solitude	
The Heroes	
III: The Flâneur and The Dandy	71
Fetishization of the Inorganic	
Baudelaire's Dandy	
IV: Woman and Artificiality	83
Woman in Baudelaire	
Concluding Remarks	88
Addendum: <i>Anna Karenina's Appropriation of her Mortality Through Dress</i>	89
Introduction	
Beauty in Her Eyes and the Charm of Boundary	
Color, Texture, and Figure: Fashion in its Relationality	
Conclusion	
Works Cited	121

What's the first rule of civil society? Get dressed. Though dressing is perhaps our most habituated collected activity, fashion does not always receive the recognition of which it is due. Oftentimes, when this phenomenon is explored, thinkers, writers, wearers alike identify most immediately the aspects of fashion found in some of its more obvious tendencies. These tend to highlight fashion as frivolous, arbitrary, superfluous: the province of shallow and wealthy consumers, eccentric designers, and the unimaginative herd who follows whatever style is trending. Fashion is rarely considered far beyond its moneyed fetters, though some existent theorizations do provide alternative trains of thought, the nuanced relationality between which will make for the trajectory of the present investigation.

These propose various models by which fashion's philosophical significance is made evident. The first posits that, rather than being unnecessary, fashion is a key component of beauty, indeed *the* indispensable part of what makes something beautiful. In fact, it is impossible to truly and objectively evaluate what is beautiful without understanding the role of fashion. To investigate this view, I spend my first chapter looking to Charles Baudelaire's essay, "The Painter of Modern Life." In order to further develop the philosophical landscape upon which Baudelaire's insights on fashion from this and his other works gain significance, I turn my second chapter to the analyses of Walter Benjamin for theorization. I move through Benjamin's fashion theory as seen in his essay, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," in which he works through the French poet's insights about fashion and modernity latent in the myriad figures of the hero. This analysis is presented in juxtaposition with the insights immediately preceding, provided by Philipp Ekardt in his book, *Benjamin on Fashion*, throughout which he demonstrates the operationalizations of fashion found in Benjamin's *Arcades Project* and one of the former's sources, Georg Simmel. Ekardt further articulates the consequences of Benjamin's

investigation into fashion upon the latter's more general philosophies of time and history. While Ekardt's analysis generalizes the insights found in fashion's progressions beyond the scope of modernity, a look into Benjamin's essay and the modern heroes housed between its pages only strengthens this temporal fetter. For a closer peek into two of the more significant figures from both Benjamin and Baudelaire's works, the flâneur and the dandy accordingly, my third chapter highlights the former's connection with the fetishization of the inorganic and the latter's interactions with its own mortality. To finish this pursuit, I look to the Woman as she appears in Baudelaire's essay on Guys to exhaust the investigation, bringing the emergent insights back to those of the first chapter.

While this pursuit does not amount to any determinate conclusions, the parallels drawn between the myriad accounts for fashion's temporal and historical significance produce the semblance of some. Taken in generalization, fashion is found to be, as anticipated, particularly modern. In this, it serves to model the progression of both time and history as differentially and relationally mechanized. Fashion's operations serve to provide deeper insight into the mediation of the individual with the crowd. What all of these collectively understood yet differentiable axes upon which fashion is developed points to, however, is to experience life as feeling the consciousness of its ephemerality. In other words, fashion educates those attentive enough on that which categorizes modern living. To live modernly is to live in contact with death, to continually pursue an artificial immortalization that stands in opposition to unavoidable death.

I: Fashion as Materialized Spirit in Modernity
Beauty and Monsieur G.

For centuries, a conversation about beauty and its potential for evaluation has proliferated throughout various communities. The traditionally academic account of beauty traces back to antiquity, and was determinable through its accordance with mathematical principles in its synthesis (Sartwell). Aristotle established the harmonization of many parts through symmetry, or the golden ratio. Aquinas takes on this notion of the beautiful, identifying it with the perfection, or the Christian good. This account is necessarily classist, reserving art and beauty for the elite who can understand it. This emerges from an art world the content of which supposedly transcended time. Kant ruptured the academic tradition by bringing into account the subject who receives and experiences the beautiful object, its existence of the beautiful being brought about by its being received by someone in their subjectivity. This school of thought supports the complete subjectivity of judgments of the beautiful, which eliminates any possibility to sufficiently evaluate the beautiful, also carries through the masses. All persons, whether in a formal and academic sense or not, engage in a pursuit of the beautiful. Despite formal aesthetic education having never been available to all, the subjective nature of aesthetic judgments is carried throughout the ways people talk about their encounters with and feelings of beauty. Conversations about taste and art tend to support people vehemently defending their judgments as untouchable opinions. One of the most common topics for discussion is fashion. While high fashion caters to elite classes, all people (in modern society, at least) engage with fashion daily as they dress and present themselves. While a frame of ultimate subjectivity seemingly promotes the equal standing of all people's judgments ("beauty is in the eye of the beholder") it often takes a different character. In writing off differing judgments as merely difference of opinion, any dialogue about the judgments at hand becomes frozen and sterile. Shackled by a mutual feeling

of self-superiority, those who retreat to the infallible validity of this argumentative point are unable to facilitate a substantive or meaningful conversation about (judgments of) the beautiful. Feelings of condescension toward those who disagree (typically those of a different class or education) are continually recreated, and space is made for the illusory appearance of equality between tastes.

Even though most have accepted this attitude, people still engage in aesthetic dialogues, continually attempting to have intelligible and evaluative discussions about aesthetic judgments. This stubborn perseverance to discuss taste demonstrates that there ought to be some way by which we can evaluate judgements of the beautiful. In an attempt to resolve this problem, French poet Charles Baudelaire offers a different composition of beauty. In his essay, "The Painter of Modern Life," he constructs a new (modern) beauty, demonstrated by his depiction of a mysterious painter, Monsieur G, Baudelaire's fictional recreation of real-life journalist and painter Constantin Guys. Baudelaire writes Monsieur G. as the chief painter of the modern age, for he (as had Guys) holds the capability of extracting the both the transitory and eternal essences of beauty held by his subjects. In the nineteenth century, Guys shifted the critical attitude of the time held towards subject matter, producing paintings which illustrated the beauty present in daily life (as opposed to beauty being reserved for the elite). Baudelaire's discussion of Monsieur G., taken in tandem with his illuminations about beauty and modernity in general, form a comprehensive and evaluable construction of the beautiful; Baudelaire introduces the significance of his enunciations about the beautiful in his first section, 'Beauty, Fashion and Happiness.' Opposed to the academic concept, the nuance of his construction permits for intelligible discussion about aesthetic judgments, while more sufficiently supporting the equal footing of said judgments. In his essay, fashion comes to the surface as that the analysis of which

most completely fulfils the task of understanding the harmony between the transitory with the eternal, the individual with the collective: beauty.

Baudelaire's "rational and historical" account of beauty focuses on how and why we make certain aesthetic judgments. He frames beauty as analogous to man, as a dualism. While man's dualism lies between soul and body, beauty is

Always and inevitably of a double composition, although the impression that it produces is single...Beauty is made up of an eternal, invariable element, whose quantity it is excessively difficult to determine, and of a relative, circumstantial element, which will be, if you like, whether severally or all at once, the age, its fashions, its morals, its emotions. Without this second element...icing on the divine cake, the first element would be beyond our powers of digestion or appreciation. (Baudelaire, 3).

Beauty's often misunderstood dualism prevents most people and artists from being able to access the true eternal beauty, for we misguidedly stride for that and disregard the particulars through which it is found. This failure is where Monsieur G. excels. His ability to extract the eternal from the ephemeral, via attention to its detail, crowns him genius. Residing in Baudelaire's praise is his assertion that our affection towards certain things corresponds with their being sufficient embodiments of their time. He writes,

The past is interesting not only by reason of the beauty which could be distilled from it by those artists for whom it was the present, but also precisely because it is the past, for its historical value. It is the same with the present. The pleasure which we derive from the representation of the present is due not only to the beauty with which it can be invested, but also to its essential quality of being present. (Baudelaire, 1)

We love things of the past for their being of the past, the nostalgia we feel for them supplements their appeal. These things effectively pay homage to the past in their conversation with the ideas of its time. We see this often in the resurrection of past styles, which will later be identified by Benjamin as the retro character of fashion. As I write this (in 2020), styles from the 1970's and the 1990's are making resurgences. Our affectionate judgments of these things (wide-leg pants,

bright colors, and patterns) speak to our nostalgia for the free-spirited attitudes held in those decades. Affection for things of the past also manifests commonly in popular Halloween costumes. If you're dressing up as a 1940's gangster, or a 1920's flapper, and you consider what it was actually like to be of that era, what the morals and ideas of the time were, the costume is more likely to garner a higher aesthetic value, since it marks that the costume is distinctly of the past: we find their embodiment more beautiful if it embodies the ideas of the time. Further, this hinders our tendency to mistakenly, as Baudelaire warns against, "decide outright that everything about the garb of an age is absolutely ugly than to devote oneself to the task of distilling from it the mysterious element of beauty that it may contain" (Baudelaire, 12). To give deeper consideration to this distillation shines a light on, "the immortal thirst for beauty [that] has always found its satisfaction [even in those centuries which seem to us the most monstrous and the maddest," reifying the significance the pursuit of beauty plays in our lives (and always has) (Baudelaire, 3).

As he describes, this transfers to things of the present. Baudelaire offers that we judge as beautiful adequate representations of the present age because they are of the present. For example, we currently have an aesthetic appreciation for products which, in their material construction, offer consideration for their environmental impacts. Our contemporary attitude to fight climate change seeps into our judgments, making us more appreciative of certain styles (utility, reusable-looking, gender-non-conforming) which support that idea. Latent within Baudelaire's dualistic reconstruction of beauty and analysis of Monsieur G's genius is Baudelaire's demonstration of fashion as the quintessential means through which one accesses beauty.

The experience of the beautiful: Fashion (beauty) and The Spirit (the aesthetic attitude towards the beautiful)

As seen above, Baudelaire's reconstruction of beauty is of a "double composition" (Baudelaire, 3). To more clearly demonstrate the distinction and relationship between his dualism, and fashion's significant role in its interplay, is the task of the following pages. For the sake of consistency, where Baudelaire writes of the ephemeral, particular, transitory element of beauty, I will refer to manifestations of beauty, patterned in the image of fashion, emergent from four moments of consideration. Alternatively, his descriptions of the immutable and mystical element will translate into an explication of the aesthetic attitude towards beauty held by the observer in the spirit (*esprit*). While distinct, these sides together produce a single impression of the beautiful.

Modernity (Fashion)

In his fourth section, 'Modernity,' fashion takes the seat *as* modernity, the ephemeral side of beauty which functions as the gate to its eternal feeling. The first dimension's figure is fugitive, fluctuating within its context. It manifests materially in the details of the fashions of an age, the particularities of products as they evolve alongside the cultures which produce them. These details serve to lubricate the social world, signifying one's professional position or belief systems, and trigger their own change through this capability for communication. Fashion uniquely serves to communicate the spirit held within each person, that which informs how people interact. Clothing choices flavor our experience of other people's humanity, offer revealing insight to the experience of this distinct individual with whom we coexist (or at least what they, and we, choose to display to the social world). The power held by fashion to color – determine – one's experience in the social world, in turn, transforms it into a tool for

transcendental self-actualization. In layman's terms, fake it 'til you make it. This socialized, ever-mutating character, actualized via the ebb and flow of the fashion industry, embodies modernity. As a result, fashion is synonymous with modernity, which is further identified with particular beauty.

Further, for Baudelaire, interaction with this material composition of a present moment is the (only) means by which we access the beauty held within it; the beauty it holds for being a moment of the present; the spirit. It qualifies each present moment as a viable candidate for a position in antiquity if it, too, holds eternal beauty. Baudelaire defines the essence of modernity via Monsieur G, "He is looking for that quality which you must allow me to call 'modernity'...He makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distil the eternal from the transitory" (Baudelaire, 12). To highlight the profundity of Monsieur G.'s accomplishment, Baudelaire criticizes other artists of the time. He critiques their "[general tendency to] dress all their subjects in the garments of the past" (Baudelaire, 12). He finds fault in these artists who generalize time periods, hastily writing them off in their portrayals. He acknowledges those painters who make reference to the specific styles of the times which they portray, excluding this technique under his category of error. He offers these artists reprieve in that they "had no alternative" in choosing antiquated subjects (Baudelaire, 12). Instead, it is those who paint general and timeless subjects who are mistaken when they dress them as archetypes of past eras.

This failure to depict a subject in their proper time evidences the artist's blindness to the importance of these particularities in accessing the "mysterious element of beauty" (Baudelaire, 12). Baudelaire writes, "By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable" (Baudelaire, 12). These failed

painters lack an adequate understanding of modernity, of fashion, and its position in beauty's composition. Having solidified the identification of fashion with modernity as the side of the beautiful which resides in fleeting beauty, the following pages are intended to demonstrate the construction of this event. Each material manifestation of a spirit (whether that of a moment or an individual) must account for four moments: time, moral attitudes and ideas, profession or class, and circumstance. As Baudelaire describes, if all details are present, "everything combines to form a completely viable whole" (Baudelaire, 12). It synthesizes the individual with themselves, their singularity with a collective.

Time

Baudelaire utilizes the above criticism to bring the first and most essential moment in the beauty, time, into focus. Time is the first moment in the construction of the beautiful, that to which the other moments bind. Without temporal context, other particularities cannot fall into place. He warns,

Woe to him who studies the antique for anything else but pure art, logic and general method! By steeping himself too thoroughly in it, he will lose all memory of the present; he will renounce the rights and privileges offered by circumstance – for almost all our originality comes from the seal which Time imprints on our sensations. (Baudelaire, 14)

To withdraw a subject from the time to which they're bound (whether by a painter or a subject from their own time) puts them at odds to sufficiently materialize their modernity. Aligned with this failure are its consequences: an aimless and drifting attempt to access indeterminate beauty ("tumbling into the abyss"), and a lost shot at earning any significant placement in history or recognition as original (and what in modernity really matters, besides the new?) (Baudelaire, 13). Demonstrated via his depictions of Monsieur G., Baudelaire defends that all successful artists depict their subjects with an understanding of the value of and ability to reproduce the specific, ephemeral fashions in which their subject would dress which reveal their eternal beauty. We

value their work for its insight to a time through its own modernity. Most importantly, this is the only way by which the subject has something towards which to hold an aesthetic attitude, by which the feeling of the beautiful can be accessed. In detailing the contributions for a wholly constructed portrait, Baudelaire accounts for, “glance and smile (for each age has a deportment, a glance and a smile of its own)” (Baudelaire, 12). While this may not initially strike as relevant to the assemblage of an outfit, most people do not take into consideration their “gait, glance and gesture,” physical and energetic qualities such as these lay the foundation upon which we present ourselves.

Given that the fashion industry runs heavy operations through the entertainment and social media, actors, and Instagram models (‘model’ here is a loose term – the following trickles down to most women who participate on Instagram) clearly demonstrate the relevance of time in fashion. Professional acting programs dedicate a profound portion of curriculum to body work and archetype studies, using temporal context to inform character embodiments. Knowing the time period is an actor’s (dramaturg’s, costumer’s, —anyone working on the production’s) first responsibility. In the age of social media, particularly with the domination of Instagram, his conception of the ‘glance of an age’ shines through. Through the years since Instagram first gained popularity, different types of facial expressions and constructions have evolved as the platform aged. While this example may seem superficial, through this notion we can understand how poses like the “duck-face” have earned a spot in social media’s antiquity (this might be an absurd phrase because I don’t know if one could refer to social media – thoroughly modern - as having an antiquity). As the Kardashian family’s fame grew hand-in-hand with the rise of social media, they dominated over the platform alongside their waves of famous friends who all look more or less the same, resulting in the current phenomenon, the ‘Instagram face.’ In her recent

New Yorker article, “The Age of Instagram Face,” Jia Tolentino details its construction, connecting this emergent trend with the culture – and the time -- that produced it. She describes,

Professionally beautiful women, of a single, cyborgian face. It’s a young face, of course, with poreless skin and plump, high cheekbones. It has catlike eyes and long, cartoonish lashes; it has a small, neat nose and full, lush lips... The face is distinctly white but ambiguously ethnic—it suggests a *National Geographic* composite illustrating what Americans will look like in 2050, if every American of the future were to be a direct descendant of Kim Kardashian West, Bella Hadid, Emily Ratajkowski, and Kendall Jenner (who looks exactly like Emily Ratajkowski). (Tolentino)

In her article, Tolentino further details the depths of ways social media platforms and editing tools offer to refine your face and body to better prescribe to certain expectations. Social media filters are the kid sibling of cosmetic surgery, which she also reports as gaining popularity in recent decades. As the above quote points to, the Instagram face is, “a beauty ideal that favored white women capable of manufacturing a look of rootless exoticism” (Tolentino). It highlights the age in which it lives, one which is exposed to other cultures through globalization, which are welded together through the appropriation of “exotic” (black and brown) people by white people. Resting on the surface of this appropriation is a rhetoric of inclusive and thoughtful multiculturalism, which feeds and reignites its participants. The controversial, delicate, and ironic homogenization of a heterogenous population as an attempted means to appreciate cultural variation is sometimes celebrated for its ethnic unidentifiability but is also subject to much criticism. Whether the Instagram face is most indicative of physical expectations and standards for women and girls on social media, progress in the name of globalization and cultural coming-together, or stark appropriation and exploitation (as Instagram grows as a retailer, “Influencers” as models), is not of particular relevance. Collectively, however, they point to the second moment demanding consideration when constructing beauty: not just the time, but its moral attitudes and ideas.

Baudelaire introduces his essay, as discussed, by narrowing in on the kind of art and artists which garner his philosophical praise, namely, those thoughtful embodiments of a subject's modernity. After declaring at his departure that this condition of being present (or past – of its certain time) is the root of pleasure evoked, he begins his account of that out of which this temporal conscientiousness arises. He opens his praises in celebration of fashion plates,

[These costumes] are often very beautiful and drawn with wit; but what to me is every bit as important, and what I am happy to find in all, or almost all of them, is the moral and aesthetic feeling of their time. The idea of beauty which man creates for himself imprints itself on his whole attire, crumples or stiffens his dress, rounds off or squares his gesture, and in the long run even ends by subtly penetrating the very features of his face. Man ends by looking like his ideal self. (Baudelaire, 2)

Latent in this passage is an important implication that will later play a role in the spirit, that most people would recognize fashion serving. Fashion lets people transform themselves into their ideal version. It is a means of self-actualization. Human beings come to gain self-understanding from the social sphere. We learn our place through our interactions, understand others through how they present to us, how they dress (and the reverse is equally true). Accordingly, clichés like ‘fake it until you make it’ gain traction; if you dress as your ideal self, and the world treats you as such, that feedback reinforces the understanding that you *are* your ideal self. And, as Baudelaire points to here, this is in connection with moral, aesthetic, and philosophical ideas. The significance of this relationship -- between a fashion, its corresponding ideas, and what this means for wearers – will be further explained in latter sections, in my discussion of his praise of cosmetics.

Baudelaire demonstrates the marriage between a time's fashions and its ideas, simultaneously forming another connection to the spirit. He writes,

If an impartial student were to look through the *whole* range of French costume, from the origin of our country until the present day, he would find nothing to shock nor even to surprise him...And if to the fashion plate representing each age he were to add the philosophic thought with which that age was most preoccupied or concerned – the thought being inevitably suggested by the fashion plate – he would see what a profound harmony controls all the components of history, and that even in those centuries which seem to us the most monstrous and the maddest, the immortal thirst for beauty has always found its satisfaction. (Baudelaire, 3)

Baudelaire's insight here goes beyond the French and Monsieur G.'s particular ability to express Parisian society through fashion in general as it embodies modernity. The modern era, characterized by revolution, change, and progress, in each turn carries along its corresponding philosophies. At risk of not sufficiently exploring the nuances of ideologies within the population of any given age, Baudelaire identifies the dominant idea, one which a single fashion plate embodying the age would allude to, is just "most preoccupied or concerned." Baudelaire does not go much further to identify which ideas, whether the ruling or anarchic, etc., take this seat. However, this moment is dedicated exclusively to fashion's ties with ideas, which does not exclude an account of multiple ideas – and fashions - for one age. On the contrary, his remarks about harmony support a more dynamic relationship as such. These nuances are accounted for when considering the insights to follow.

In this passage, Baudelaire also asserts the significance of even the most absurd fashions, those produced from and emblematic of, "the most monstrous and the maddest [of centuries]" (Baudelaire, 3). He defends those fashions which we too simply dismiss as ugly as a valiant effort on behalf of "the immortal thirst for beauty" (3). Through the second moment, this account for attitudes, Baudelaire again asserts fashion as the lens through which the aesthetic attitude is brought about. Aligning an age's ideas with its fashions – materialized ideas, modernity – leads Baudelaire to his novel explication of beauty,

Beauty is made up of an eternal, invariable element, whose quantity it is excessively difficult to determine, and of a relative, circumstantial element, which will be, if you like, whether severally or all at once, the age, its fashions, its morals, its emotions. Without this second element...icing on the divine cake, the first element would be beyond our powers of digestion or appreciation. (Baudelaire, 3)

To lose sight of these particularities of an age leaves one in blind pursuit of an incomprehensible and inaccessible feeling of the beautiful. One would be remiss to write off the ideas dominating (whether loudly or whispering through the backs of peoples' minds) their age if they hope to understand its fashions or extract its beauty.

There is a constant resurgence of fashions and their techniques. How would Baudelaire evaluate the revival of certain trends in consideration of moral attitudes and ideas? I imagine that his response rests in the specific combination of circumstances in combination with our revisiting the past, as will be later witnessed in the heroes of his modernity, but what about people attempting to completely recreate an *age*, like the dandy? How does our attitude about past times, our nostalgia or disgust, manifest in the particularities of the present? Again, these questions receive further attention from the insights of other thinkers. This returns to Baudelaire's discussion on loving the past as the past and the present as the present. What about their synthesis, common in fashion? We encounter often an affectionate feeling towards items of the past. Well, on the other hand, we are constantly trying to run from our past and evolve, create, progress. Coming more into light is our (who the 'we' is, what group it refers to exactly, remains unclear) ambivalence towards the past. We have a character of nostalgia for the past, a longing for what was, an appreciation of its beauty for its being the past. We often return to our past; fashion is constantly cycling back to that which it abandoned (seen now in the reemergence of styles from the latter decades of the twentieth century). Part of this is that fashion necessarily is limited in the types of silhouettes, colors, and articles of clothing it produces. Its evolution is

undeniably cyclical, yet somehow manages to still change and evolve. The intricacies of fashion's operations pointed to in this brief investigative aside receive further attention through the models of fashion's processes.

He demonstrates our simultaneous tendency to write off fashions of the past as ugly. Why are we inclined to just think of entire ages as ugly? Is it a disdain for the moral attitude of the time that is manifesting in a distaste for the styles? This seems unlikely, for he seems to suggest that gaining a better understanding of the synthesis between moral attitudes and fashions would deepen our appreciation of a certain trend, or age of fashion, not reject it in its entirety. What exactly then does he mean by ugliness? How does it manifest? Many fashion trends have been undeniably (though I don't think I can really claim this) egregious. How can we distinguish ugly things, is it a lack of cohesion with a moral attitude? This seems unlikely. A feeling of dissonance or discomfort? This is too often indicative of beauty, or sublimity. What is the difference in practice between evaluating the beauty (cohesion with a moral attitude) of an age, as opposed to a trend, as opposed to a single article? In that certain garments, silhouettes, etc. are embodiments of a moral attitude, or represent a social group, or communicate a personal feeling; what is the difference between recognizing a certain item and understanding its value to modernity? In one's distillation of the item from its ephemeral essence, does it lose that beauty? Is it suddenly usable? To the naked eye, how could we tell between someone who has lazily included shoulder pads because they knew of the feature's popularity at a certain time, and someone who has properly distilled (does this imply a separation? That seems problematic) the item from its mystical beauty? If a painter is to create a portrait of a person from a *different* era, one past, what are they to do to adequately portray their subject? Is it then the artist's job to only find the ephemeral beauty in transitively ugly things? I digress.

Profession and social class

To recall, we've established that each age has its own glance, and dominant attitudes of an age bleed through its fashions. In his fourth section, 'Modernity,' Baudelaire brings into focus the third moment to consider, profession and social class. In a world beginning to be driven by capital and determined historically by class oppositions, by using the above (terms to be considered loosely) to inform any materialization of a subject's proper fashion one will arrive at a near-complete portrait. He writes, "Within that unity which we call a Nation, the various professions and classes and the passing centuries all introduce variety, not only in manners and gesture, but even in the actual form of the face" (Baudelaire, 13). To demonstrate the nuanced relationships within any population of a given age, begin by considering the professions and classes of your subject. At first thought, this dimension may lead one to produce a uniform, etc. While the dress of each profession is by all means of relevance and importance here, Baudelaire begins with facial construction. This makes sense, paired with moral attitudes, for different professions are more compatible with certain attitudes. Not only does the nature of any given profession inform the attitudes and ideas held by its workers, or merely require the outward display of a certain attitude, we understand our relation to one another via work. These ideas come through on our faces and help shape social relations and our understanding that the people with whom we interact are human beings too. While a more in-depth explication of how these considerations reveal our humanity comes in a later section, understanding the significance of the face is essential. It is hopefully evident the power and depth of variety proper consideration of this third moment can provide, through both the face and wardrobe.

Baudelaire more thoroughly demonstrates these relations in his eighth section, 'The Military Man.' Continuing to illustrate those works which he favors, he focuses on a certain kind

of subject. He writes, “Once more to attempt a definition of the kind of subjects preferred by our artists, we would say that it is the *outward show of life*, such as it is to be seen in the capitals of the civilized world; the pageantry of military life, of fashion and of love” (Baudelaire, 24). With its myriad traditions, standardizations, coherence between ideology and presentation, the military is the perfect display of the deeply nuanced relationships between professions, ideas, and outward appearance (namely, fashion). The military is an effective illustrative tool, for there are innumerable branches and divisions and ranks, each marked with a badge or a hat or a color story. Different roles demand different personalities, builds, uniforms. Baudelaire continues with remarks about the soldier’s virtues passing onto his physiognomy, as just discussed, but asserts this same passage through the, “outward splendour in which he is professionally clad” (Baudelaire, 24). Baudelaire resynthesizes professional consideration with the other moments in fashion’s construction, writing,

We have already spoken of the idiomatic beauty peculiar to each age, and have observed that each century has, so to speak, its own personal sort of grace. The same idea is applicable to the different professions; each derives its external beauty from the moral laws to which it is subject...It is like a characteristic badge, a trade-mark of destiny. (Baudelaire, 25)

He continues, drawing connections between the military man’s beauty and his essence as it is informed by an attitude associated with his profession. The military man’s attitude, affect, presentation, and profession form in him a cohesive unit. Consistent with his demonstrations thus far, Baudelaire cites the depictions in which he delightfully finds moral consideration as Monsieur G.’s. He writes of Monsieur G.’s sketches and watercolors, “Not one of these models, not one of these nuances is overlooked, and each is summed up and defined with the same love and wit” (Baudelaire, 25). From Baudelaire’s high praise of Monsieur G.’s considering time, ideas, and professions we see that these three alone make significant strides towards beauty. The

final moment of beauty still in need of consideration, however, completes the living synthesis of this construction. It definitively marks fashion as embodying of a pursuit of the beautiful.

Circumstances

Revisiting his section, 'Modernity,' Baudelaire offers a final dimension of how a particular modernity or fashion gains value. Amidst his critique of artists who attempt to imitate old painters, he writes,

The cut of skirt and bodice is by no means similar; the pleats are arranged according to a new system. Finally the gesture and the bearing of the woman of today give to her dress a life and a special character which are not those of the woman of the past. In short, for any 'modernity' to be worthy of one day taking its place as 'antiquity', it is necessary for the mysterious beauty which human life accidentally puts into it to be distilled from it. (Baudelaire, 13)

Baudelaire argues that all artists, to be successful, must masterfully portray their subjects in appropriate fashion details. What it means to account for particular circumstances is flexible, as this quote points to. The fourth dimension of fashion houses trend detailing, silhouettes, patterns, and accessories. Thoughtful consideration of circumstances -- be they geographic, cost, taste, shape, etc. -- is informative about those details regarding whether they can or cannot be dispensed of. Equally, if not more, importantly, it accounts for the, "mysterious beauty [instilled from] human life" (Baudelaire, 13). Here, fashion comes most clearly into focus as that which gets filled with this mysterious beauty. Clothes come live with us, breathe with us, move with us. Baudelaire celebrates those fashions which radiate life. He writes in his section praising cosmetics,

Every fashion is charming, relatively speaking, each one being a new and more or less happy effort in the direction of Beauty, some kind of approximation to an ideal for which the restless human minds feels a constant, titillating hunger. But if one wants to appreciate them properly, fashions should never be considered as dead things...Rather they should be thought of as vitalized and animated by the beautiful women who wore them. Only in this way can their sense and meaning be understood. (Baudelaire, 33)

Fashion is in the unique position to facilitate a thorough cultivation of a subject's modernity. Not only are the first three moments crucial, but fashion permits and demands consideration of the nuances in human energy, our fluctuations in vitality or mood, the fact that we live in bodies that feel and change. Fashion is a material manifestation of modern beauty, understood as that which depicts what it means to live as a modern human being. This points to the characteristic quality of the spirit, which will soon come into play, in that the spirit – *esprit* – consist in the human capacity to respond with quick improvisation to the unexpected. As beauty, modernity as fashion, harmonizes its components, the eternal feeling of beauty held by that cultivation (in virtue of its completion) becomes accessible. As suggested intermittently thus far, that which can now be extracted, as Baudelaire describes of Monsieur G.'s activity, is the spirit.

The Spirit (Esprit)

As regards the other side needed for an experience of the beautiful, I understand it to be the spirit. The spirit synthesizes the individual, material, ephemeral with the social, mystical, eternal. Thus far, fashion's significance has been in facilitating the immortal thirst for eternal beauty. The spirit holds the feeling of the beautiful, that which we seek in our cultivations, in the aesthetic attitude towards beauty, that upon their interaction, produces this sought after feeling. When we experience this, it feels like we learn some larger, unidentifiable, unquantifiable truth about the world and our experience within it. What is it that we want to learn in our pursuit of beauty? Some insight to what beauty's second face offers us comes from Baudelaire's comments on the parallel between beauty and man's composition. Because this feeling only emerges via harmoniously constructed particulars, as discussed, it is inextricably bound to individual things (portrait, article of clothing, person). However, the components of this individual moment are shared (time, moral attitudes) and social (professions) until particular circumstances breathe

individual life into it. Recall that these two faces, while distinct (and one further divided), produce a single feeling of the beautiful, as the soul and body exist simultaneously in one being. Baudelaire describes their relationship, “The perpetual correlation between what is called the ‘soul’ and what is called the ‘body’ explains quite clearly how everything that is ‘material’, or in other words an emanation of the ‘spiritual’, mirrors, and will always mirror, the spiritual reality from which it derives” (Baudelaire, 14). This relationship houses some implications.

While tempting, attempting to determine which may be the chicken or egg of the scenario is unhelpful compared to understanding these as being in constant dialogue with one another. The material manifestation of the first face (particulars, presentations) reflects “its spiritual reality” suggesting that each moment of its construction exists harmoniously in the spirit of that particular (which also holds its beauty). The spirit moves through fashion to communicate itself to others, then through those interactions reflects back on itself for self-understanding and actualization. It harmonizes the modern individual’s dilemma as a single yet social being. This synthesis is present in Baudelaire’s praise of Monsieur G. for embodying, through his work, the experience of, “an ‘I’ with an insatiable appetite for the ‘non-I’” (Baudelaire, 10). He sees beauty in the multitude. At risk of sounding overly simplistic or romantic, fashion here holds a more forgiving and inclusive role than is typically acknowledged. Instead of merely the exclusionary undercurrents which have historically determined evaluative judgements of taste and moved fashion along -- a constant game of chase between the classes, aggressive compulsions to either set oneself apart or fit in entirely -- one can take a more rational, patient, and thoughtful approach.

Consistent with his departure from an academic account of beauty, Baudelaire abandons nature as its place of residence. While traditionally, aesthetic philosophers keep analyses of

beauty closely bound with nature and its laws, Baudelaire credits human rationality and transcendence for the production of the beautiful. He discredits arguments favoring nature in his eleventh section, 'In Praise of Cosmetics,' writing,

The majority of errors in the field of aesthetics spring from the eighteenth century's false premiss in the field of ethics. At that time Nature was taken as ground, source and type of all possible Good and Beauty...But if we are prepared to refer simply to the facts...Nature teaches us nothing, or practically nothing. (Baudelaire, 32)

He continues, describing how Nature, contrary to our frequent praise, promotes nothing but shameless self-interest and evil. Nature goes no further than to ignite our appetites and compels us to do whatever may be necessary for their gratification. If human beings did not have inhibitions, our world would be even more grotesque. Baudelaire substitutes human reason for Nature's laws as the means through which beauty is produced. He makes a clear distinction between that which is brought about by each, writing, "Everything beautiful and noble is the result of reason and calculation...Evil happens without effort, naturally, fatally; Good is always the product of some art. All that I am saying about Nature as a bad counsellor in moral matters, and about Reason as true redeemer and reformer, can be applied to the realm of Beauty" (Baudelaire, 32). Here, he again explicitly draws the connection between morality and beauty. (To be clear, this is not an ethical filtering of aesthetics, as is the case with the ethical turn, but a parallel between how we arrive at each.) In other words, just as Virtue is "artificial, supernatural" in that it must be taught and worked towards using reason, beauty emerges through human activity (intelligent thought) being used to process that which nature supplies. The beautiful is nature as it has been filtered through humanity and formed into some ideal version of itself.

This is interesting: Baudelaire's beautiful, while no longer bound up entirely in Nature, continues using it as a source and model. Being beautiful is explicitly dependent on the intervention of human reason upon Nature (we recall this is the root of evil, *not* perfection).

While seemingly contradictory, this manifests in our products all the time. Everywhere we find fake house plants, fantastic depictions of natural scenes more charitably received than the scene itself had been, transcendent reproductions of natural occurrences, not to mention that much of the modern age has been characterized by our rationally cultivating the planet (think really *pretty* GMO fruit). We typically favor our beautified versions of things, preferring them to the mess and ugliness that Nature brings about. People like manicured lawns and seedless watermelon and big animals they can squeeze (think pugs, the human engineered carry- and snuggle-able mastiffs).

Continuing, fashion again epitomizes this pursuit. Baudelaire writes, “I am thus led to regard external finery as one of the signs of the primitive nobility of the human soul” (Baudelaire, 32). Fashion’s significance in the modern age, therefore, embodies the wit of human activity as understood by *L’esprit*. Most often, we think of philosophy or other thought pursuits as the final form of human reason, and I do not set out to challenge that outright. However, for high-level human activity, I appreciate fashion for its inclusivity. Baudelaire expresses the essential part of humanness to which fashion appeals, in contrast to the explicitly classist approach,

Those races which our confused and perverted civilization is pleased to treat as savage, with an altogether ludicrous pride and complacency, understand, just as the child understands, the lofty spiritual significance of the toilet. In their naif adoration of what is brilliant – many coloured feathers, iridescent fabrics, the incomparable majesty of artificial forms – the baby and the savage bear witness to their disgust of the real, and thus give proof, without knowing it, of the immateriality of their soul. (Baudelaire, 32)

II: Time and Heroes

Ekardt on Benjamin and Simmel*Fashion and time*

Philipp Ekardt begins his book, *Benjamin on Fashion*, with an introduction to the significance of fashion in Walter Benjamin's larger general theories. Ekardt lays claim to his mission throughout the book, namely, to demonstrate Benjamin's utilization of fashion as a model for his philosophies on history and time. He directs this investigation through the figure of the tiger's leap of fashion, which serves to facilitate a Benjaminian dialectical understanding of time. Ekardt writes,

Centrally, the figure that stands at the very heart of Benjamin's fashion thought and that serves as one of the primes mediators to his wider philosophy of time and history: the figure of fashion's tiger's leap into the past, by which fashion rearticulates the temporally disconnected manifestations of what has gone out of style. (Ekardt, 5)

In this quote, Ekardt points to several dimensions of time's qualitative measurements embodied through the lifeforce of fashion. In this, he suggests the framework which he will later articulate in greater detail, in which the present emerges from a re-appropriation of the discarded past, as understood through the cyclical character of fashion trends. He later writes, "from Benjamin's perspective, [all] of fashion tends toward 'retro,' an assumption manifest in his dictum that 'the stream gradient of every fashion-current...originates from what is forgotten'" (Ekardt, 40). This rearticulating serves not only as a model of time, but a form for the social. Fashion, as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, exists in the social sphere and serves as a tool of communication and embodiment of the general social form. Ekardt begins his conversation on forms,

We could perhaps point to a number of basic structural components, such as the temporalized processing of difference in the medium of forms, which travel through a

stratum that ties to a certain extent coextensive with social fields. And we could speculate that one reason as to why the question of fashion and fashions is most frequently posed in relation to manifestations of clothes could be that these vestimentary transformations are set against the cultural-temporal meta-stable ground of the human body—a stability against which the oscillations of styles a la mode are particularly visible. (Ekardt, 6)

He brings to light here one of the dimensions by which he will go on to categorize fashion from Georg Simmel, form (namely, of the social). Further, this quote demonstrates the humanity of fashion, and immortalization done of the human being. This insight has further consequences as these forms and temporal models fashion embodies home in on the role of death, or the concept of re/emergence, and the ways by which we relate to fashion. Death, as will be further articulated, plays a central role in Simmel's form and Benjamin's operationalizations of fashion. He lays the groundwork for his investigation into the relationship between these, and, "the intricacies of Benjamin's deployment of fashion as the temporalized processing of difference" (Ekardt, 7). These produce a multitude of phenomena by which Benjamin accounts for time as modeled by fashion, and the ways by which fashion is operationalized: the dialectical image of the tiger's leap (and its function in producing knowledge), the *Zeitkern* ("time kernel of historical cognition"), fashion as a temporal qualifier, a chronotechnics, producer of knowledge, and apocatastasis (Ekardt, 7-8). In short, "there is [a tendency in Benjamin's] thought to remove fashion from its status as a phenomenon in time and realize it as a model of time" (Ekardt, 8). Here, Baudelaire's previously articulated demonstration of fashion's presence within modernity is challenged. Before integrating these theorists, however, we turn to Ekardt's demonstration of Simmel and Benjamin's accounts of fashion and its significance.

Simmel's fashion form and the charm of boundaries

Ekardt moves into his demonstration of fashion as a social form. He begins by explaining the movement of fashion through the social sphere, as described by Benjamin. Ekardt quotes the latter,

No sooner is a new fashion at a slight remove from its origin and point of departure than it is turned about and misunderstood' ... Benjamin here clearly evinces insight into the genuinely differential character of fashion, which, if taken as seriously as it ought to be, would preclude the easy discrediting of fashion on the ground of it requiring 'slavish adoption' or 'uniformity' from those who execute it. Even if one grants that imitation *is* a central operation in the spread of fashions, it would defy basic logic to assume that imitation in fashion requires exact copying. Rather, the production of difference is already inherent in it. (Ekardt, 24)

As regards the differential character of fashion mentioned in the above quote, the consequences of this condition will be further expanded upon in the section on the tiger's leap of fashion. The insight to note here is the way Benjamin describes fashion's evolution, and its connection to Simmel's use of fashion as a form. In this sense, the operation of fashion is understood by its morphing through the spread of adoption. This points also to Baudelaire's use of fashion in his philosophies as mediating the social and the individual. Each framework similarly poses fashion as the collected adoption, and further individuation, of fashion trends. Ekardt clarifies this as Benjamin's distinction between uniforms and fashion.

He further articulates Benjamin's enunciations on how fashion changes. Ekardt provides, [Benjamin remarks] that it is fashion's movement of life to "change *little*" ... Benjamin's observation is correct on more than one level. It firstly accurately describes the empirical reality of fashion development in which the vast majority of implemented changes are actually minimal, slight transformations, minor modifications, and where the actualization of major modifications, the instantiations of a 'new look,' is rare enough to get duly noted (Ekardt, 28).

This observation points to the simultaneously limited and infinite characters of fashion. There are a finite amount of forms, shapes, and types of innovations fashion has to offer. We see this in certain staples of the fashion industry and categories of cuts. These enact their demarcation through small, detailed changes, like the width of a pant or the shape of a neckline. These emerge synchronously with the ebb and flow of the social world. Slight evolutions in trends ripple through the social sphere, again uniting, again differentiating, different spheres. It emphasizes the universality of the human form in contrast with the distinctions between groups and individuals among them. Ekardt writes, “In other words, fashion is relational and it is differential, not substantial” (Ekardt, 28). Latent in this evolution is a model of time as continually discontinuous, in that time as a whole can be understood by a series of constant small changes which move in tandem with culture (Ekardt, 34). Fashion then has a distinct function as an embodiment of the motions of time, the continuous tweaking of what already is. As time can be understood as morphing, “Fashion indeed could provide a nearly categorical example for constructing an instance of being from the perspective of modalities, i.e., accidents rather than essences” (Ekardt, 34). In this, as will also be later explored, fashion serves as a new model of the truth. Instead of considering truths of time and fashion as essential and eternal, these truths are specific to their context. If there be any unwavering truth, it is that of constant change.

This insight, as understood through fashion, receives deeper development from German sociologist Georg Simmel (Ekardt, 29). He focuses on the life and death force of fashion. Ekardt quotes Simmel, “A fashion always exists and it is therefore, as a general concept, as a fact of fashion as such, indeed immortal; and this seems to reflect in some manner or other upon each of its manifestations, although the essence of each individual fashion is precisely that of not being immortal” (Ekardt, 29). Here, Simmel makes explicit the simultaneity of fashion’s continuity and

individuation, its embodiment of the constancy of the cycle of life and death. Ekardt emphasizes this paradoxical nature of fashion as both general and particular. Fashion's role for Simmel, then, is, "as a constitutive structural feature of society" (Ekardt, 29). Society, here, also moves around the ebb and flow of life and death. Simmel sheds further light beyond the connection to the human body, and the slight change of physical forms in fashion. He points, as Ekardt enunciated did Benjamin, to the way this relation plays out between social spheres. The great equalizer and divisive tool, Ekardt describes its movement,

Besides the mentioned chiasma between the transience of fashions and permanence of fashion, the object's contradictory temporality can also be located in fashion's specific way of becoming: 'The essence of fashion consists in the fact that it should always be exercised by only a part of a given group, while the entirety is merely on the road to adopting it.' (Ekardt, 30)

Here, fashion embodies the movement and desire of social spheres. The elite circle continually presents the year's new styles, they more or less gradually spread in availability, the masses hope to catch up with the elite, the poor stay poor, and the elite continue one step out of reach. Again, we see fashion as synchronously collective and particular, equalizing yet differentiating. As Benjamin noted, its truly differential character shows. Further developing Simmel's proposal of fashion's being both immortal and not, fashions inextricably die. Fashion's life drives towards its eradication; once adopted by all, it is abandoned. Ekardt describes this layer of Simmel's sociology, emphasizing fashion's disappearance upon complete expansion. He quotes Simmel, "Every growth of fashion drives it to its doom, because it thereby cancels out its distinctiveness" (Ekardt, 30). Once fashion loses its condition of differentiation, it no longer is fashion. In this, fashion's lifeforce is juxtaposed harshly with its demise, producing a deep feeling of the present moment. It morphs the past, offers it as the new, and roots itself in anticipation of the coming future and its own end. As Baudelaire understood the aesthetic feeling

of the beautiful as emerging with the transitory in modernity, here time in general and the social are understood via that differential, though all are modeled by fashion.

Ekardt emphasizes fashion's continual re/emergence, writing,

By way of the aesthetic, fashion produces an emphatic experience of presence that plays becoming against disappearance, and thus permanently revokes and renews itself...

[Simmel:] 'The question of fashion is not 'to be or not to be'; but rather, it is simultaneously being and non-being, it always stands on the watershed of the past and future, and, as a result, conveys to us, at least while it is at its height, a stronger sense of the present than do most other phenomena.' (Ekardt, 31)

Here lies the significance of fashion for Simmel. While the mechanics of their thought processes differ, Baudelaire and he share an affectionate feeling for fashion as embodying presence.

Simmel's sociology provides what Ekardt describes as fashion's ontological signature, the above play on the famous *Hamlet* quote. This being and not being at once shines a glimmering light on the "charm of boundaries, or demarcations" which emphasizes a fashion's attractiveness, "thus marking what is 'in'" (Ekardt, 31-32). As previously enunciated this evolution moves through the social process. In other words, the social exists in the realm of boundaries, the dance between crowd and individual, and "fashion performs the 'double function' of comingling, 'in a unified act, 'the tendency towards social equalization with the tendency toward individual differentiation and variation'" (Ekardt, 32).

Simmel, as Ekardt further explains, understands this dimension of fashion and its relation to the social as a form. Ekardt writes, "Fashion must be understood in relation to the category of *form*...Fashion as a systemic activity can be understood according to formal concepts (here the form of the boundary, or the limit), because in total fashion *is* a form: 'a form of the social'" (Ekardt, 32). Fashion as a form, that of the social, places explicit emphasis upon its significance in supporting further, more general theories. Further, while Simmel's proposed relational

character of fashion and the social process are inimical of the previous chapter's enunciations of Baudelaire's valuably transitory position held by fashion, fashion as a form differentiates Simmel (and, as will become more explicit, Benjamin). The attraction provided by ephemerality is collectively agreed upon as the charm of boundaries present in fashion, yet Baudelaire restricts this analysis to the modern epoch. Baudelaire understood and demonstrated a connection between the social and fashion; Simmel and Benjamin further clarified the modeling relationship between these. The latter writers, contrarily to Baudelaire, broaden the time to which fashion's modeling is applicable, namely to all time. We recall Benjamin's offering fashion as a model of time, which in Simmel occurs as the form of boundaries, and understand Ekardt's analysis which mediates the two,

The second aspect of such an appreciation of the 'charm of boundaries' as form relates to fashion's temporal and experiential structure. It is clear that the particular intensity afforded by fashion is tied to what Simmel here calls demarcation, or boundary... Given Simmel's formalist approach, we could call this an exploration of fashion as a form of (temporalized) being. (Ekardt, 33)

Ekardt accounts for similar ontologies which functionally embody the present as a demarcation. However, unlike technological images and fiction stories, also characterized by boundaries and temporal limitation, only fashion is inextricably social. Its unique privilege is as a unified model of social and temporal processes, which exists in and through collective material production (Ekardt, 33). The differential, relational, immortal, and ephemeral process modeled by fashion poses its ontological experience as operational. Ekardt points to another of Simmel's analogies by which he, "conceives of fashion in terms of its operability": a picture frame (Ekardt, 35). Ekardt writes,

The border of the picture frame divides (and binds) that which is an image and that which is not an image, that which is art and that which is not art. [Fashion] allows for simultaneous social integration and differentiation—'holding a given social circle

together and at the same time closing it off from others'...It calibrates the tendency toward the particular with the movement toward homogeneity in a way that produces a non-linear process of social self-organization (Ekardt, 35).

Fashion's operational character, its functionality for Simmel (and further Benjamin), is to model in its processes those of the social world; to continually reproduce difference while in pursuit of inclusion; to demonstrate the distinctly temporal nature of this relational evolution. Fashion thus roots as the form of the boundary, the form of the social, the form of temporalized being.

The tiger's leap: The dialectical image: from a phenomenon in, to a model of, time

Ekardt further contextualizes Simmel's formal insights in Benjamin's larger philosophies. He credits Benjamin with expanding deepening fashion's seat in his accounts of not only the social, but time. Ekardt writes, "Whereas Simmel's sociological approach tracks short-term processings of emerging and vanishing differences, Benjamin probes temporal depth, exploring the steeper views that open up from the vantage point of the philosophy of history" (Ekardt, 36). As briefly mentioned in the opening section of this chapter, Benjamin focuses fashion's processes "on the differentials of time," using the former to gain insights of the latter. He demonstrates fashion's movement of readopting past styles, as an embodiment of the dialectical image, one of the means by which Benjamin conceptualizes history. Ekardt writes,

A well-known definition of the dialectical image from the *Arcades Project* states: 'image is that wherein *what has been* comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation....For while the relationship of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relationship of *what-has-been* to the *now* is...not progression, but image, like a leap' (Ekardt, 37).

Benjamin's account of a temporally progressive relational interplay between past and present which espouses a flash reemergence of discarded tendencies in new contexts stands in contrast to a continuous, linear understanding of history. It functions not as a smooth forward progression but is characterized by disjointed calls back to the past. The past is resurrected in conversation

with the positive movement of the present. The dialectical image, this constellation of different times within the overall continuous temporal movement by which Benjamin accounts for history and time, manifests in fashion's processes. Ekardt illustrates the explicit correspondence between these, laying the ground to further understand how fashion's evolutions model this temporal progression. He writes,

“The discontinuity of the relation between past and present exemplified by the Benjaminian image finally finds its correlate in the ‘tiger’s leap into the past’ ...and the model for this tiger’s leap is *fashion*. The trigger for fashion’s leap into the past [for that which has been temporally disconnected and forgotten] is the generation of the current [...a context where it sparks fresh fashionable difference]” (Ekardt, 37).

Here, the tiger’s leap can be understood by references to old fashion forms, as has been referenced. Given the finite amount of material to work with, Benjamin’s application of his account of time and history manifests in this leap through the re/appropriation and slight modification, namely interweaving into the present, modeling the process of fashion as illustrative of his larger ideas.

From this dimension, we could imagine Benjamin noting some the current moves backwards in trend emergence, namely the past decade’s being characterized by styles inimical of the latter decades in the twentieth century, and the current move even further into the cast aside, classical shapes and materials which echo the earlier parts of last century. Whether redefining the cut of denim, or incorporation of lace, fashion leaves behind breadcrumbs to endow the innovations to come. As Ekardt explains, “from Benjamin’s perspective, early all of fashion tends toward ‘retro,’ an assumption manifest in his dictum that ‘the stream gradient of every fashion-current...originates from what is forgotten’” (Ekardt, 40). While Benjamin’s insights are relevant to a specific time, this movement of fashion is “evidently inextricable from its existence” even as the epochs have shifted. In order for something to be fashion, that is (as we

have seen), it rides the momentum of this effort, conscious in its kind of the immanence of its demise. Fashion continues to time and again reify this differential and relational progression, framing bits from the past like nostalgic gems, filling and framing them with the current. Ekardt highlights the significance fashion's processes in Benjamin's larger thinking,

The linear and unidirectional motion of progressing time is interspersed with the turns and deviations manifest in fashion's recursions. Fashion allows here to remodel temporality. While a powerful factor, it comes into effect, once again, less as a phenomenon in time than as a model of time (Ekardt, 39).

In this, fashion's role is promoted to one of larger significance. The insights provided of time by fashion by no means deserve dismissal, yet Ekardt's analysis which removes fashion's evolutions from a specific temporal landscape overlook another of Benjamin's texts. His analysis provided above must be valued with a grain of salt; the paralleled movements of time and style through a dialectical leap are important, yet the attitudes enacted upon by fashion's changes are specific to the modern epoch. Baudelaire's previously enunciated points about modernity support its grounding these progressions, and Benjamin more deeply expands upon the connection of the so far explored analyses to modernity. These points will be more extensively articulated upon in the later sections of this chapter centered around the heroes.

In the tiger's leap, fashion's operation is one of qualitatively defining the new through a transformation of the most past. Ekardt reemphasizes this connection to history, writing,

Fashion thus converts the (temporally) disconnected and forgotten into the newest, the most recent. The mechanism of this sudden, jump-life—erratic—conversion is dialectics: 'This spectacle, the formation of the newest in the medium of what has been, makes for the true dialectical spectacle of fashion. (Ekardt, 41)

The deeply dialectical character found in the sudden ephemeral leaps into what is forgotten or cast aside. However, the specific mechanization of the pre-disposal does not treat all past as equal. That which serves as viable material for renovation includes those which are,

interestingly, either most removed or what has become most collectively adopted. Understanding the nuance of the modification of the latent and forgotten qualitatively differentiates the present from the past (Ekardt, 41).

Fashion as temporal qualifier

Ekardt begins describing the intricacies of fashion's progression, writing, "Beyond mapping a temporal relation that stands at the center of fashion, also *qualifies* this relation" (Ekardt, 41-42). He sets out to detail the processes by which past fashions are determined as the *démodé*. These insights emerge from Ekardt's attention to the same Benjamin quote which pointed to his remarks on fashion's dialectical progression. Ekardt quotes Benjamin, "'Each time, what sets the tone is...the newest, but only where it emerges in the medium of the oldest, the *longest past* [*Gewesenste*], the *most familiar* [*Gewohnteste*]" (Ekardt, 41). Whereas the first dimension of implications from this quote pertains to the tiger's leap of renewing the past, the second rests in this new investigation, the qualified relations of the discarded. Ekardt considers a purely chronological interpretation. He remarks that to simply take Benjamin's statement as a reference to the explicitly temporal demarcation, only the measurable distance of recency, would be an error. This approach overlooks the mechanism at work, stripping the relation between the past and present to its quantitative differentiation (Ekardt, 42). Instead, he looks to the German, adding a qualitative dimension to the translation. He writes,

Das Gewesenste thus translates as 'the most past,' that which is more past than any other comparable instance'—the 'pastest,' if you will—and *das Gewohnteste* follows a parallel logic, describing a state in which something is more habitual or common than in all other comparable instances, the 'most habituated,' or 'the commonest.' (Ekardt, 42)

By doubly utilizing both the gradations of pastness, and the degree of habituation, to together determine that which is most past, Benjamin permits these measures to function differently. His qualitative evaluation of these ungradable terms places the emphasis on the "intensification" of

these qualities (Ekardt, 43). The determination at hand is to be made in consideration with the qualitatively determined severity on both a temporal and habitual dimension. Ekardt remarks that this is not a mistake of Benjamin's use of language, but that gradation imposed upon each dimension informs the demarcation of the *démodé*. He writes, "They relate to moments in which something figures as particularly old or overly common. In this pairing they indeed already suggest the very quality that is under consideration here, namely what is outdated or 'out of fashion'" (Ekardt, 43). Ekardt nicely highlights the dualistic function of fashion's process. Not only does fashion, as is typically understood, continually produce the new, but it simultaneously demarcates the oldest and commonest phenomena of the past. One would be mistaken to take this as a merely quantitative evaluation instead of investigation fashion's movement as, "the *qualification* of a temporal relationship with aesthetic and formal manifestations (about to be) situated in the past. Fashion, in this sense, is a qualifier...a school of discontinuity [in the] sentimental education of the discontinuous" (Ekardt, 43). He again poses fashion as a model of the paradoxically continuous yet disjointed movement of time and history. Fashion moves forward through a process of differentiation via the appropriation of the *démodé* as the innovative transformations of the new. The dialectically differential character of fashion is determined through a qualitative evaluation of emergences being situated facing their qualitatively decided doom.

In a brief departure from Ekardt, this characterization rings like Benjamin's thoughts about the attitudes of the modern age. While these will be more deeply explored through the heroic characters he features in his essay on Baudelaire, the point to extract here points to the position of fashion described here by Ekardt. For Benjamin, being attitudinally situated within the trajectory towards one's own immanent erasure categorizes the mortal attitude of

Baudelaire's pre-consumerist modernity. It is then curious that Ekardt chooses this moment to remove his analysis at hand from a modern situation.

Ekardt interprets this movement of fashion, despite its attitudinal resemblance to Benjamin's elsewhere enunciations regarding modern the modern epoch. He highlights fashion's operationalization as a model of time in general, writing,

It is in the context of this differentiating operation that it is possible to, again, and even more clearly, discern the actual medium in which Benjamin epistemologically embeds fashion. Much rather than a negotiation of the problem of modernity, fashion is a model for rethinking history in its temporal articulation. (Ekardt, 44)

Ekardt does not restrict Benjamin's insights through fashion to the mortal turn of modernity, but attributes this feature to all turns of time and history. The disjointed relation of past and present that progresses these phenomena forward have, as is suggested above, moved as such forever, and will continue to. More specifically, it is a completely different measure by which to account for the discontinuous entirety of these movements forward. Ekardt defends his explications of Benjamin and Simmel as seen in *The Arcades Project* as the writers supporting this broadened applicability. He writes, "Both [Simmel and Benjamin] see fashion as intricately connected to temporality. But for Simmel it is the time of 'society,' for Benjamin the time of 'history,' if such sweeping generalizations are permitted for the moment" (Ekardt, 44). It seems as though even he knows that "such sweeping generalizations" may not hold, perhaps because he knows they overlook the inextricably modern character of this progression. Regardless, his considerations are worth noting.

Ekardt clarifies the distinctions between Simmel and Benjamin's similar accounts of fashion as a model of time. While both support Ekardt's proposed generalization, in that the production of difference through the progression of time, and utilization of discarded material in the emergence of new fashions, model time as a whole, the mechanics of their

operationalizations differ. He enunciates the intricacies of fashion's process for Simmel. He writes, "Simmel considers the outmoded to be forgotten and, in this voided capacity, a potential reservoir for the formation of stylistic options that register as new in relation to a given current fashion panorama" (Ekardt, 44). Simmel's account is merely "binomic," in that the production of the past occurs synchronously, not dialectically, with the emergence of the present. The past evolves on a merely progressive temporal basis, becoming in tandem with its erasure. In this, "what has gone out of fashion is only retained as a back-up, but is no longer qualitatively related to the fashion present—it has become disarticulated from the now" (Ekardt, 44). The present is unilaterally posed against the background of the emergent past. Its production is continuous and undifferentiated, as opposed to Benjamin. All discarded material is thus equally "suitable" for reincarnation in new fashion. It simply looks at the immediately removed, and the simple dualist relation between past and present (Ekardt, 45).

Ekardt then elaborates the distinctions found in Benjamin's account of fashion's evolution as a temporal model. He focuses on Benjamin's utilization of the *démodé* in his fashion philosophy, in which it "is situated at a constitutive remove from the present [producing a] temporal caesura, which has to be bridged when reactualizing past styles" (Ekardt, 44). Benjamin's temporal relationship between past and present is determined qualitatively and dialectical (Ekardt, 45). It permits for fashion to reach—leap—beyond the immediately preceding past, bridging the *démodé* with present styles. More than the production of the past being the production of fashion's undifferentiated material bank (as in Simmel), the process of demarcating the past in accordance with the evaluations of qualitative severity (regarding temporal distance and commonality, as described) is Benjamin's account of "the main axis of fashion work" (Ekardt, 45). Benjamin's fashion model of time, as Ekardt pronounces, has a

benefit over Simmel's in accessing history. Benjamin's fashion permits for time to reach back beyond the immediate past, "over the hiatus that is yesterday," and rematerialize the *démodé* in dialogue with the emerging present (Ekardt, 45). Through his mechanization of fashion, time, and history's, discontinuous glug forward, Benjamin accesses a new rationalization of truth in the *Zeitkern*, or time kernel.

Zeitkern: the time kernel of (historical) cognition and dialectical truth

While this dialectical forward progression is embodied in fashion through the tiger's leap, the way this motion manifests in Benjamin's philosophy of time holds deeper significance. As Ekardt reminds readers, time is evidently a profound feature of fashion's systemic operationalization (Ekardt, 45). The progression of time urges fashion on its immortal journey forward through its infinite modes. Where, "fashion has a [tiger's] nose for the current," time finds in the constellation of past and present phenomena nuggets—kernels—of truth.

The significant insight here is as follows. While many have become accustomed to comfortability with the idea of their being eternal truths, a differential and relational understanding of history which produces the time kernel rejects this creature comfort in favor of temporally specified truths. Ekardt quotes Benjamin from the *Arcades Project*, "'Resolute refusal of the concept of 'timeless truth' is in order...[T]ruth is not...a merely contingent function of knowing, but is bound to a kernel of time, lying hidden in the knower and the known at once. This is so true that the eternal, in any case, is far more the ruffle on a dress than some idea" (Ekardt, 47). Here, the parallel between the functions of fashion's tiger's leap and the time kernel emerging in the processes of time and history is made explicit. As a ruffle on a dress that has followed the motions of fashion will have integrated a forgotten flare with the emergence of the new into an embodiment seeping with presence, history readopts discarded pieces of the past

and synthesizes them with the now to reveal insights about the truths of the present moment. Ekardt emphasizes that this kernel is offered to them who recognize the connections across time held by these temporal constellations. He rejects an analysis restricted either to the eternalization or immanence of a moment of truth or the “aesthetic ephemerality” attributed to fashion, advocating,

Rather, the Benjaminian notion of the time kernel—which in its historico-epistemological form is said to exist in what is recognized and in the position of she or he who recognizes, which in its implementation in history indicates a distribution over discrete and disconnected instants—is thus structurally coextensive with the figure of the constellation. Or, even if at first counterintuitive, the time kernel is an analog figure to (fashion’s) tiger’s leap. While immanent to history, the time kernel is not a figure of (momentary) immanence; rather, it is a figure of temporal rationality. (Ekardt, 48)

In these remarks, we again see a harmonious dance between the ephemeral and the eternal, wherein history evolves continually through its momentarily bound connections drawn between then and now. In his tireless pursuit of models for the intricacies of this mechanization and their various implications, Ekardt provides two further analyses of fashion as an operationalized model of time.

Operationalizations of time: Chronotechnics and Apocatastasis

The core investigation underlying Ekardt’s illuminations thus far is one in pursuit of models for the ways by which Benjamin develops the operationalization of fashion. We have explored some of the nuances of fashion’s functions, with Simmel’s form highlighting the charm of the (social) boundary, the dialectical relation of time modeled by the tiger’s leap, the consequences of its processes through a qualitative model, and the emergence of the time kernel as a novel account of truth. What we have at hand in these mechanizations of fashion’s operations rests in what Ekardt identifies as fashion as a chronotechnics. Ekardt describes this phenomenon,

One of the basic assumptions that is crucial to the argument is that fashion can be considered a *chronotechnics*—i.e., a distributed, collectively actualized, and perpetually reactualized technique for operationalizing time...The implicit, and in most cases unreflected, address of temporality occurs either through the mentioned unquestioned subscription to the idea of a historic-systemic *passage* from which fashion springs, or through the always available semantics of the transitory—i.e., the fleeting moment that is readily ascribed to fashion phenomena (Ekardt, 18-19).

Here, he is describing the technique explored thus far. In this “distributed, collectively actualized, and perpetually reactualized” experience of fashion, we find the cross-temporal, continually discontinuous progression of history and time as modeled by fashion’s movements. As these perspectives are rarely undertaken, fashion thus appears as a mere passage through time, the simple forward progression we typically understand. However, fashion is undeniably characterized by the constant renovation of its forms, and continuously emergent production of the new. What fashion as a chronotechnics highlights is the technique of this production, in its flow of collective and dialectical re/actualizations. It should be clear why Benjamin then, “refers to fashion as a ‘measure of time’” (Ekardt, 19).

As the preceding illustrations point to, this cycle imitates that of human morality. The central point to note moving forward is the inextricable ties between fashion and death. Ekardt introduces death’s relevance, “Benjamin, in the style of an aphorism, playing on the vocabulary and imagery of the sweeping infrastructural reorganizations of the nineteenth century with their implementation of grand train terminals into city structures, juxtaposes ‘Death, the dialectical central station, fashion, measure of time’” (Ekardt, 20). While this could (likely) point to fashion as emerging with the break of the modern age, though Ekardt is not bound to this. He defends that, “Benjamin makes no express mention of ‘modernity’ at all,” though it is difficult to imagine Benjamin utilizing such a poignantly modern allegory with no intention whatsoever to frame this death alongside the “sweeping infrastructural reorganizations of the nineteenth century” (Ekardt,

20-21). Nonetheless, he provides further demonstrative support from *The Arcades Project*. As the image at play here is a duet with death, the emergent insights are not restricted (as death is not) to a specifically modern temporal context. He references Benjamin's use of Giacomo Leopardi's *Dialogue Between Fashion and Death*, enunciating the, "long-term game of catch, in which fashion, over centuries, mocks death: 'That is why fashion changes so quickly; she titillates death and is already something different, something new, as he casts about to crush her. For hundreds of years she holds her own against him'" (Ekardt, 21-22). Ekardt points to the final remark to support his departure from modernity, evidencing the longevity with which fashion has been operating. He highlights this as an eternal competition illustrated by Leopardi's *Dialogue*, the game of tag between fashion and death wherein fashion permanently recreates its own death to escape that being imposed upon it. This is juxtaposed, through fashion's context, against the inescapable mortality encroaching upon the human body. Fashion's finitude echoes man's, yet fashion achieves what man cannot, a waltz around and reappropriation of this impending doom. Fashion stuns death by continually enacting its own. Furthermore, fashion's life force is driven by that which death had once had in its grip. Understanding fashion as a chronotechnics, its continual production and further demarcation of the past defines its movement forward. The infinite attribute of chronotechnical operation rests in the continual, immortal, production of these discontinuous momentary emergences (the present). Through its spread to mass adoption, fashion moves towards its disappearance via the erasure of its differentiability (Ekardt, 56). Thus, this operation again requires the continued action of the former. Time moves with the emergence and vanishing of difference (Ekardt, 56).

Ekardt points to chronotechnical operations existing in time's being as such, posing it in nuanced contrast it with another of Benjamin's resembling phenomena. To close his exploration

of fashion as various forms and models of time and history, Ekardt mentions an ironically reappropriated term used by Benjamin. He provides, “Its keyword is the ancient Greek term *apocatastasis*, used by Benjamin in what he calls a ‘modest methodological proposal’ by which he vises the possibility of a process in which ‘the entire past is brought into the present in a historical apocatastasis’” (Ekardt, 52). One point to note here is that fashion in a model of *apocatastasis* moves towards history. Further, to differentiate this model from the scope of the prior (some similarities between the two will be highlighted in the remarks to follow), its mechanizations occur *within* time. To clarify: this model does not then serve for time, but for the pursuit of history within time. Its process of differentiation distinguishes the apocatastasis model from Benjamin’s previously illustrated qualitatively determined demarcations.

As can be inferred, the model of *apocatastasis* refers to a disposition adopting a commonly apocalyptic trait, “‘The restoration of all things after the end of times’” (Ekardt, 53). Its trajectory moves towards this devastation, conscience of its immanence, but looks boldly into the future lying in wait. After all, continuing with traditional apocalyptic thought, what this future holds is not grim. The end of the pursuit of history resolves in restoration. Ekardt further describes this model,

Apocatastasis – “the idea that eventually all souls will enter paradise...Implies the concept of an iterability of the history of the world...which he connects to the ‘cosmological idea of an integral keeping and palingenetic recreation of the original state of paradise, as well as the return of all the dead and forgotten’ (Ekardt, 52).

In this, fashion embodies a pursuit of this lost paradise shared by those who await the rebalancing of the universe to emerge from some impending apocalypse. Once again, fashion as a figure confronts its inescapable dance with death. The tone here, however, edges near saccharine with its optimism regarding what’s to come. Perhaps this model could offer fashion as psychological mediation to relieve wearers of the turmoil produced by death’s immanence.

Departing from a point assuming the functions of *apocatastasis* holds weight for Ekardt in its consequences on the mechanization of the differentiation process. Held in contrast with the dialectical process discussed thus far, Ekardt characterizes the tiger's leap in historical *apocatastasis* as introducing the good as, "a means to an end, the end of history" (Ekardt, 56).

Historical *apocatastasis*, not profoundly, moves forward through the differentiation of the past from the present in a continuous move forward. As its trajectory is directed through history, the demarcation here is made through a valuation of the productive. Ekardt quotes Benjamin,

It is very easy to draw divisions, according to determinate points of views, within the various 'fields' of any epoch, such that on one side lies the 'productive'...and on the other the abortive...The very contours of the positive element will appear distinctly only insofar as this element is set off against the negative. On the other hand, every negation has its value solely as background for the contours of the lively the positive.' (Ekardt, 53)

In this, the present is again set against the background of the past but moves as a rejection of the negative (for Benjamin, the "abortive"). Each era thus decides what will be productive in accordance with the values and goals held by, typically, those in power. Those past elements which move the society perceptively forward in history get marked as the positive elements of the past to be used again in the progressive grind. These elements are shaped by the fettering remains of past societies and are thus deservedly shed and cast aside to give the present depth.

Ekardt remarks how this process occurs in a Leibnizian fashion with a continuation of this divisive process, *ad infinitum*. Within the motion of this evolution, there perhaps lies insight to why we tend to regard history as repeating itself. That which is discarded as negative in the initial split receives another look, those fetters revisited for consideration. These are morphed to accommodate the onward chug of the present. Ekardt details this phase,

The valuating, separating, and discerning labor thus continues, and what was previously signified as 'negative' is again split, in order to produce the distinction between positive and negative anew. This is the process that Benjamin calls *historical apocatastasis*, and it

needs to continue ad infinitum—in infinity—until ‘the entire past is brought into the present’...It is clear that this method will never achieve an exhaustive working through. (Ekardt, 54-55)

The reemergence depicted here by Ekardt echoes the dialectical tiger’s leap of the chronotechnical model for fashion’s operationalization through time. Each progress infinitely by means of reincorporating the previously discarded. Fashion’s value lies in simultaneously produces the new and the qualitatively determined *démodé*. As is the case fashion’s tiger’s leap, the effort forward is affected by, “what Benjamin here calls the *Einbringen* (introduction, entering, bringing in) of the past into the present” (Ekardt, 54-55). However, the distinction between each model remains. The split is again determined in a progressive lens through the evaluation of each element’s potential. Recall, this is distinct from the chronotechnical mechanization for differentiation executed by means of a qualitative and relational determination of the *démodé*.

Is fashion modern?

Throughout his discourse, Ekardt defends the position that fashion, as Benjamin frames it, is not restricted to a representation of modernity. Through his insights regarding the significance of fashion as a model of time and history in general through Benjamin’s philosophies, he paints an image of fashion’s continually rupturing move forward being ascribed to all epochs equally. While his analysis holds some weight, the overwhelming relevance to the modern era keeps fashion bound tight. The core of Ekardt’s pronouncements becomes evident in his expression of the culmination of the juxtaposition posed by Benjamin, that between, “the *discontinuum of tradition* with the idea of *history as a continuum of events*” (Ekardt, 26). While he insists that these, “do not function as coattributes of the opposition of tradition and ‘modernity,’” he overlooks the other characterizations of the modern age that are compatible with his

enunciations. Instead, he opts to focus exclusively on modernity as a break from tradition, which would violate a continuously breaking progression of time. However, as will become clear, modernity's relevance to Benjamin's fashion theories thus far enunciated connects with fashion's attitudes towards and interactions with immanent death, and the interweaving dance between the ephemeral and immortal.

Heroes of the Modern Age from Benjamin in "The Second Empire of Paris in Baudelaire"

A note on the arcades

In his essay, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," Walter Benjamin illustrates a number of figures who embody the characterizations of the modern epoch and exhibit this attitude through their vestimentary choices. He articulates a number of frameworks through which modernity functions, and their correspondent political movements. His first section highlights the latter, working through the philosophical evolution driving France's revolutions, and modernity's emergence within this timeline. However, enunciating the intricacies of French politics are not the aim here. Benjamin's remarks on fashion bloom in the latter sections of his essay, in which he details the many heroes of modernity portrayed by Baudelaire in his works. He opens his discourse in this direction with an introduction to the arcades.

The arcades have particular significance in this context to provide the frame and world in which his insights play out. He brings this phenomenon into discussion to begin his second section, 'The Flâneur,' who becomes a profound figure in Benjamin's fashion philosophy.

Benjamin writes,

Flânerie could hardly have assumed the importance it did without the arcades. 'These arcades, a recent invention of industrial luxury,' says an illustrated guide to Paris of 1852, 'are glass-roofed, marble-paneled corridors extending through whole blocks of buildings, whose owners have joined together for such enterprises. Lining both sides of these corridors, which get their light from above, are the most elegant shops, so that the *passage* is a city, a world in miniature.' It is in this world that the flaneur is at home; he

provides the arcade—'the favorite venue of strollers and smokers, the haunt of all sorts of little *métiers*'—with its chronicler and philosopher. (Benjamin, 19)

The arcades are thus an inorganic miniaturization of a city. This passage highlights the relevance of the commodity in this manifestation, as the crowd bustles around shops. The role of the commodity in the interactions supplied by the arcades will be further investigated in the following chapter, as will the flaneur. The arcades offer a plentitude of observable content. They produce the social world of the petty bourgeoisie throughout which Baudelaire flitted. The arcades seep with elegance. The point to note here, however, stays close to the first elaborated. As seen in Baudelaire's essay on Constantin Guys, the fashionably valuable is determined through its artificiality. These praised fashion innovations admirably appropriate nature, endowing each renovation with essences of human's intellectual essence. This mere semblance of a city embodies the ideals of city dwelling, as is Baudelaire's operationalization of fashion.

Benjamin articulates the changes from modernity and the industrial turn which helped categorize the social world of this era. He describes a world based on sight, writing,

This world is one of visual interactions. It exists in the discomfort of when you can see but not hear. Interpersonal relationships in big cities are 'distinguished by a marked preponderance of visual activity over aural activity.' The main reason for this is the public means of transportation. Before the development of buses, railroads, and trams in the nineteenth century, people had never been in situations where they had to look at one another for long minutes or even hours without speaking to one another. (Benjamin, 20)

As these revolutions evolved, the market grew in tandem. As a result, each person existed competitively with one another. They moved around, to and from work on these means of transport, comparing themselves with the presentation of others. With the rise of the railroad, the ways in which average people dressed themselves gained new weight. With the relation to others as one of aversion, as Benjamin points to, people were restricted to visual interactions to make contact with others as another human being. In that artificiality is a material manifestation of

one's human rational power, and the inextricable bind between fashion and the human form, presentation rose as a means of communication within the crowd. The role of fashion in this situation was to humanize other people beyond just their occupation, as competitors. Through the insights offered at first glance by fashion, "[people were assured] that everyone could—unencumbered by any factual knowledge—make out the profession, character, background, and lifestyle of passers-by" (Benjamin, 20). Fashion thus mediates the social sphere, beyond its embodiment of the social as explicated by Simmel. The crowd plays a significant role in Benjamin's elucidations about modernity. As fashion exists in a social sphere, each character highlighted in the following pages is made distinct partially by its relation to the crowd.

Poe's detective story

Benjamin turns to the relevance of the rise in popularity at the time of Poe's detective stories, some of which Baudelaire translated. These stories first give contextual insight to the significance of the crowd for the individual, a key relationship highlighted by fashion's mechanisms. He describes the crowd as salvation for the abandoned individual, seeking erasure of their identity in the anonymity gifted by the masses. It focuses on the scene of the crime and the victim, the criminal, and the masses (Benjamin, 23). Benjamin writes, "The original social content of the detective story focused on the obliteration of the individual's traces in the big-city crowd" (Benjamin, 23). This erasure goes beyond the mere attraction of anonymity to a criminal, to why the criminal experiences the draw of the crowd to such a degree. It not only offers a place to hide but serves to engulf the victim of which they are in pursuit. Benjamin remarks upon a sonnet of Poe's which demonstrates the pull of an immersive crowd. Poe's third stanza offers particular insight, upon which Benjamin expands. He analyzes this segment,

'A lightning flash...then night!—Fugitive beauty, / Whose gaze has suddenly given me new life, / Will I see you again before the close of eternity?'

This sonnet presents the crowd not as the refuge of a criminal but as the refuge of love which flees from the poet. One may say that it deals with the function of the crowd not in the life of the citizen but in the life of the eroticist. At first glance this function appears to be a negative one, but it is not. Far from eluding the eroticist in the crowd, the apparition which fascinates him is brought to him by this very crowd. The delight of the city-dweller is not so much love at first sight as love at last sight. (Benjamin, 25)

In the loss of his victim in the crowd, Benjamin illustrates that the criminal finds the true passion of their pursuit, that of what escapes them. Benjamin's analysis translating this relation to the desperation of the modern poet hopeful to capture the fleeting points to the prominence of the provided excerpt. This is the draw of the crowd, it robs the individual of that eroticized object of desire, the ephemerality of the present moment. This feeling, however, produces a delightful feeling of the beautiful, if taken in consideration with the insights from the first chapter. The experience of the fleeting escaping individuals produces the titillating excitement brought about by interplay with the crowd.

On Solitude

Through his essay, Benjamin both offers favorable and critical interpretations as regards the value of solitude in the modern world of the crowd. His first look at the individual who sits removed from the crowd, observing from afar. In this, he illustrates the limiting scope offered by this kind of existence. He describes the distant spectacle sitting comfortably in their home in contrast to the man of the crowd as enunciated in the recently preceding sections. He writes, "On the one side, there is a multiplicity of little genre pictures which together constitute an album of colored engravings; on the other side, there is a view which could inspire a great etcher: an enormous crowd in which no one is either quite transparent or quite opaque to everyone else" (Benjamin, 27-28). The former experience illustrated here is that of the removed person, sourced in E.T.A. Hoffmann's depiction of a character peering at the world from the window of their

home. Benjamin highlights this as the same activity as the city-dweller who looks from a café, though marks the former as paralyzed by prudence, barring them from properly observing the world presented. Their experience of this world is fragmented, and not in the dialectical way we like. The nuance of the crowd outside eludes the posted observer, revealing its intricate relations only to the witness who does not fear participation. If taken with the time kernel, this person then lacks access to the truths of the present (the only truths at all). In this, it seems as though Benjamin rejects solitude as a praiseworthy position to hold in modernity.

Yet, later in his essay, Benjamin articulates the opposite position. He includes the private, solitary person in one of his categorizations of the modern hero, the poet (as modeled by the apache). While the dimensions of this character are to be further explored, Benjamin locates solitude in Baudelaire's subject. He quotes the latter's remarks about these previously unacknowledged figures, "Yet there are subjects from private life which are heroic in quite another way. The spectacle of elegant life and of the thousands of marginal existences eked out in the basements of a big city by criminals and kept women... We need only open our eyes to recognize our heroism" (Benjamin, 47). Benjamin continues, "The image of the hero here includes the apache. He represents the characteristics which Bounoure sees in Baudelaire's solitude... 'an encapsulation of the individual in his difference'" (Benjamin, 47). This analysis emerges from Benjamin's discussion of the poet, on the fringe of their social world and conscious of its immanent disappearance, left to pick up the salvageable scraps for a spot in antiquity. The apache too feels at a remove from the bourgeois, yet not quite ready to join the rise of the proletariat revolution. Baudelaire's look into the apache, and the beauty held by both the common person (as seen in the first chapter) and those in dialogue with their mortality, furthered his contributions in constructing the new, universalized, aesthetic consciousness. As

Benjamin notes, “Baudelaire was the first to tap this vein,” which gave commonplace characters such as the apache a place in literature (Benjamin, 47-48). Through a second lens, Benjamin seemingly espouses solitude’s previously rejected praiseworthiness in modernity. Perhaps this contradiction can be mediated by that which he sees in this second character. Benjamin depicts the attitude of this figure, “The poets find the refuse of society on their streets and derive their heroic subject from this very refuse” (Benjamin, 48). This should not come as a surprise, for these figures will all be characterized by feeling the imposition own mortality. The ragpicker, apache, and poet all undergo a removal from their social world, and through this make contact with the ephemerality of the present. Though these accounts of solitude promote opposing attitudes, each holds as its consequence for those who do not heed their warnings, the inaccessibility of ephemerality, the present, the time kernel of truth. Whether this emerges more profoundly from a constitutive removal from the crowd, or close immersive analysis, is perhaps the question to ask instead?

Hugo’s hero in the crowd, understood through nature

Benjamin turns his analysis to another writer who offers a rudimentary hero against which he will juxtapose the series of Baudelairian modern heroic figures to follow. To continue his earlier look into the political movements of history, he illustrates one of the heroes of this motion of proletariat upheaval. Benjamin pivots here (in his text, following his discourse on the fetishization of the inorganic) to detail the significance of Victor Hugo’s works in the emergence of the former’s phenomena. In this, the crowd earns a new role. Benjamin points to Baudelaire’s endorsement of Hugo’s works, and the latter’s knowing, “how to reproduce clear things sharply and distinctly but also reproduces with appropriate obscurity what has manifested itself only dimly and indistinctly” (Benjamin, 35). In other words, this praise puts Hugo in the so far

explored modern context through his ability to tap into the mutually “obscure” and “sharp” cognitive experience evoked by the crowd. Hugo, too, celebrates this subject. Distinct from Baudelaire, however, Hugo gains understanding of the crowd through his independent ventures to the coast. Benjamin describes Hugo’s experience in Jersey,

On his walks along the coast, the topic took shape for him, thanks to one of the extreme antitheses that were necessary for his inspiration. In Hugo, the crowd enters literature as an object of contemplation. The surging ocean is its model, and the thinker who reflects on this eternal spectacle is the true explorer of the crowd, in which he loses himself as he loses himself in the roaring of the sea. (Benjamin, 35)

The surging of the ocean serves to represent the rise of great nations through its people, as if by a natural force. In this, he naturalizes the rise and fall of history. He feels himself a part of nature, and further defends a communion of this sort as the passage by which to arrive at an understanding of the crowd. Hugo seems to defend an admirable look towards solitude to heroically shoulder the modern lifecycle. It highlights the powerful strength of nature, “[exercising] its fundamental rights over the city,” inimical to that of the people (Benjamin, 36). It frames the crowd as another “spectacle of nature” operating through the motions of naturalized, self-interested, social conditions (Benjamin, 36). Each person goes about the public sphere in accordance with their private concerns, evoking a utilitarian character for the mechanics of the crowd. The crowd is reduced to a mere accident of isolated interests coming together (witnessed in the artificial imposition of the arcades). The life force of social relations becomes a sterile, “statistical existence” (Benjamin, 36). Hugo highlights the vulnerability of a society such as this, subject to obligatory participation by totalitarian states who see in this interest-driven socialization a fertile ground for the market economy. Hugo’s naturalization of this process leaves the door open for these same leaders to defend the development of the market economy as the natural “fate” of the “race” in which, “the customers who, each acting in his

private interest, gather at the market around their ‘common cause’” (Benjamin, 36-37). Adopting wholeheartedly Hugo’s evaluation of the crowd, that force of which he felt himself a part of, was not the response elicited by Baudelaire. Baudelaire, while he was in touch with the existence of a crowd of this kind, did not fall in with it. He looked to it, but as Benjamin elucidates, but was apprehensive towards its connections with the rise of democracy. Baudelaire takes issue with Hugo’s account’s, “separation of the individual from the crowd” (Benjamin, 39). The divisive attitude of the social witnessed in Hugo is that of competitive apprehension, while Baudelaire leans toward mutual humanization and a consciousness of one’s position along the axis of decrepitude who is divorced from the crowd without the withdrawal into nature. He moves through the individuation found in Hugo to its harmonization with the mass.

Benjamin makes reference to Baudelaire’s making fun of Hugo’s obsession with nature. He quotes the latter, “L’océan même s’est ennuyé de lui” (“The ocean itself got bored with him”) (Benjamin, 35). Baudelaire does not endorse a departure from the masses as a means to understand their power, opting instead for the, “heartache and the thousand natural shocks’ which a pedestrian suffers in the bustle of a city and which keep his self-awareness all the more alert” (Benjamin, 35). The consciousness provided by the crowd comes from the experience of self which emerges from the interactions it offers. This must be brought about by participation in the rapid movement of this relational mass. Only through socialization can one arrive at a properly fleeting modern feeling and move beyond seeing others as mere competitors. While Hugo’s analysis defends its endowing each citizen with proper dignity, Baudelaire seems to reject this claim. A properly Baudelairian experience does not espouse Hugo’s interpolation of nature in the crowd. Benjamin launches from Hugo as a point of departure into his enunciations of Baudelaire’s heroic figures, in which, “Baudelaire [sought] a refuge for the hero among the

masses of the big city” (Benjamin, 39). He utilizes this moment in his text to open the closing section, ‘Modernity.’

Heroism in Baudelaire

The (poor/dispossessed) artist

Benjamin opens his final section, “Baudelaire patterned his image of the artist after an image of the hero. From the beginning, each is an advocate of the other” (Benjamin, 39). The artist is the first character highlighted for their modern heroism. Benjamin points to an insight from Gustave Kahn, regarding Baudelaire’s endowment of the artist’s activity with greater fervor than is typically attributed to the profession. He reports an analysis that emphasizes the athletic physical effort which resembles the exertion on the part of the artist. Benjamin focuses the lens of this comparison on, “the metaphor of the fencer [Baudelaire was fond of using] to present martial elements as artistic elements” (40). The fencer’s typically elite position in society does not determine this character, and instead the artist ironically finds its actualization in the poor and dispossessed. Rather, the parallel is drawn between their mechanics. Benjamin utilizes Baudelaire’s essay on Guys as one reference to highlight their semblance. He references Baudelaire’s depiction of the painter, writing,

Guys stands there “bent over his table, scrutinizing the sheet of paper just as intently as he does the object around him by day; how he uses his pencil, his pen, his brush like a rapier, spurts water from his glad to the ceiling and tries his pen on his shirt; how he pursues his work swiftly and intensely, as though afraid that his images might escape him. Thus he is combative, even when alone, and parries his own blows.” (Benjamin, 40)

The passage selected by Benjamin highlights the ephemerality characterizing the activity of both artist and fencer. Each conduct their movement with grace and delicacy, attending to detail in their continual adjustments throughout the “fantastic battle” also present, pointed to in a second reference to Baudelaire (Benjamin, 40). The brush stands analogously to the rapier, combating

that transience which he makes his subject. It is a fencing duel battled alone, wherein the artist combats the inescapable finitude of the present he seeks to capture. Here, the artist is reminiscent of the erotic draw of Poe's crowd, the compulsion to grasp the fleeting for its being such.

Benjamin references a third moment in Baudelaire, the final lines of which focus the psyche of this pursuit. Baudelaire's quoted poem describing the artist as fencer ends,

'I go out alone to practice my fantastical fencing, / Scouting opportunities for rhyme on every streetcorner, / Stumbling over words as though they were cobblestones, / Sometimes knocking up against verses dreamed long ago.' (Benjamin, 40)

To move forward with Benjamin's analysis, it is important to highlight the insights within these lines. The activity described here echoes that of the tiger's leap, embarking into the social, hunting for the vanishing amidst bearing witness to the reemergence of past phenomena intermixed with the rhymes of the present. It longs for freedom to move through this world, jumping between the fleeting lily pads, situated in the constellation between past and present illustrated in Ekardt's discourse. The artist experiences the present through sudden leaps of consciousness, attentive to the particularities of each moment, yet absentmindedly allows themselves to be blown between the "tiny improvisations" required to navigate their meandering for material. Benjamin taps into these insights through Baudelaire's move into prose with its the liberated form of which more suitable for this pursuit.

Benjamin pronounces Baudelaire's intention for this shift. Poetic prose better encapsulates the experiences illustrated above. Benjamin credits the poet for his insights as to how this form drives at the root of these experiences, which the latter expresses,

'Who among us has not dreamed, in his ambitious moments, of the miracle of a poetic prose, musical, yet without rhythm and without rhyme, supple and darting enough to adapt to the lyrical stirrings of the soul, the undulations of reverie, and the sudden leaps of consciousness? This obsessive ideal is born, above all, from the experience of giant cities, from the intersecting of their myriad relations.' (Benjamin, 41)

Baudelaire clarifies the “miracle” as it pertains to the preceding poem of the same ambition. Wherein his first poem hinted at the nuance of the artist’s working material’s relationality, touching upon the resurgence of pieces from the past, his insights above make explicit the operationality of the artist’s activity, as once again, a leap of consciousness. Given the context in which these insights have relevance, namely that of pre-capitalist bourgeois society embodied by the arcades, there is strong reason to tie the heroically modern psyche found in the artist (as fencer) to the tiger’s leap identified in Ekardt. In this, the motion of the world throughout which this figure conducts their observations ought to be fashion. Not only could this be drawn from the actual content of the artists of whom Baudelaire was fond, but further via the parallel between their operations. In that poetic prose frees the poet from the fetters of traditional form, the city fosters a free development of discontinuous progression. Baudelaire again humanizes this pursuit, identifying it with, “[adapting to the] lyrical stirrings of the soul,” and further the fragility of human life, that we have and will continue to witness be inimically produced by, in, and as fashion (Benjamin, 41). Recalling the moments on account of which beauty emerges in Baudelaire as seen in the first chapter, this ought to be seen as a reflection of the underlying moral attitudes of the era, characterized by a relishing in the soon to be obsolete.

Benjamin then specifies the distinction held by the activity demonstrated here in opposition to that of the flâneur. He references Baudelaire, the poet himself, and his absentminded disposition, as the point of comparison (Benjamin, 41). Benjamin writes, “In the flâneur, the joy of watching prevails overall. It can concentrate on observation; the result is the amateur detective.” –note, at this juncture Poe’s hero shifts from the criminal to the detective— “...Or it can stagnate in the rubbernecker; then the flâneur has turned into a *badaud*. The revealing representations of the big city have come from nether. They are the work of those who

have traversed the city absently, as it were, lost in thought or worry (i.e. Dickens drifting around London as a dreamy child)” (Benjamin, 41). As he remarks, the insights of significance at hand are those produced by the dreamy observer, not the investigative penetration of flânerie. This is the figure thus far enunciated, who moves about freely with the ever-changing surrounding atmosphere, the “fantastical fencer” from Baudelaire’s above referenced poem, who reappears in descriptions of Charles Dickens meandering about his streets. This character ironically digs deeper into the nuanced movements of the social by living it, by making direct contact with the erotic appeal of the crowd’s power and fate of erasure. To see, one must not think but live. They discover the truths of fashion, the social, and the temporal’s movement firsthand, highlighting the historical naïveté which separated Baudelaire from the flâneur, who had, “from the outset an awareness of the fragility of this existence” (Benjamin, 42). Benjamin demonstrates how, ironically, it is the activity which emerges from the former position that satisfies the “necessity” held in virtue by the latter (Benjamin, 42).

Benjamin deepens his explication of the relevance and value of Baudelaire’s ignorance of the larger historical movement at play. Benjamin’s appraisal of Baudelaire’s position here again reinforces a reading of the former’s text which espouses identifying the heroes, who embody the processes analyzed by Ekardt from *The Arcades Project*, with (Baudelaire’s) modernity. He defends Baudelaire against critics who regard his ignorance as a “defect” (Benjamin, 42).

Benjamin counters this position,

One might naturally and legitimately point out that a working poet could find it necessary and useful to keep his distance from the [historically exterior] world, and that idiosyncratic elements are essential to all productivity. But there is another side to the situation, one that favors the overtaxing of the productive person in the name of a principle: the principle of “creativity.” This overtaxing is all the more dangerous because, even as it flatters the self-esteem of the productive person, it effectively protects the interest of a social order that is hostile to him. (Benjamin, 42)

Here, his language suggests the empowerment of the artist by means of their innocence. The exact mechanics of this, however, is not made clear by his descriptions. By framing Baudelaire's "necessary and useful" distancing from the surrounding historical epochs as a counter to the critical interpolation of this as a defect in the poet, Benjamin seems to begin to identify Baudelaire as another mode of the hero. However, his next remarks revert back to the risks inherent to his position. Benjamin describes this side of his observations, commencing the appropriation of his creativity by the emerging capitalist social order.

How exactly this maps on to Baudelaire is complex, in that the "overtaxing of the productive person" of which he warns produces wealth and culture, yet a few lines down remarks that, "Baudelaire owned few of the material conditions for intellectual labour" (Benjamin, 42). His intermediary analysis of the consequences for the bohemian lifestyle (which, if not mistaken, typically refers to the flâneur, yet in this context could relate to the artist who also sits on the fringe of the social order) between these points, however, seems to perhaps include Baudelaire in its Marxist appropriation. Further, Benjamin positions his enunciation of the slavery imposed upon such a figure immediately preceding a reference to the suffering endured by Baudelaire in the time described. Perhaps his not owning the material conditions for his labor merely promotes his assimilation into the category bohemian artist (a contradiction?) subjected to the overtaxing of their creative power. He quotes a letter written by Baudelaire to his mother in which he reports his condition through a description of the unfortunate state of his clothes. The latter writes, "I am used to a certain measure of physical suffering. I am adept at making do with two shirts layered under torn trousers and a jacket which lets in the wind, and I am so experiences at using straw or even paper to plug up the holes in my shoes that moral suffering is almost the only kind I perceive as suffering" (Benjamin, 42). This look into Baudelaire's dress colors the

determination on his position in the framework throughout which Benjamin works. From Baudelaire's self-portrait, the free relationality offered by the mechanizations of fashion, also identified by the leaps of consciousness of the artist, does not seem to be at play. Benjamin ought not incite surprise upon closing his remarks on Baudelaire's naïveté, "Among the experiences which Baudelaire has transfigured in the image of the hero, experiences of [his] kind were the least equivocal" (Benjamin, 42-43). Though Baudelaire's life as a poet can be found in this archetype of the hero via his absentmindedness, the identification goes not further. Thus, it remains unclear to what Benjamin means by referencing the "poetic production" concerned in the necessity of the flâneur.

Clarifying the heroism of the artist intended by his depiction of this figure, Benjamin does not dismiss the relevance of Marx's "dispossessed person" who, "makes another appearance in the guise of the hero" (Benjamin, 43). As in Marx, the army took possession of "small-holding farmers who were transformed into heroes" (Benjamin, 43). In this, the poor artist serves as the reincarnation of this figure. Benjamin focuses this analysis on the poor musicians who continue to provide a purer gesture to revive citizens. Baudelaire illustrates the flood of this sound in lines quoted by Benjamin. Benjamin praises *these* artists as the disenfranchised population from which emerges the heroic. He analyzes Baudelaire's depiction,

The brass bands made up of the sons of impoverished peasants, playing their melodies for the city's poor—these represent the heroism that shyly hides its threadbare quality in the word "quelque" and that, in this very gesture, shows itself to be genuine and the only kind that is still produced by this society. In the hearts of its heroes, there is no emotion that would not also find a place in the hearts of the little people who gather round a military band (Benjamin, 44).

Both producer and audience here are found in the citizenry of the city. The offering given here is for everyone, demonstrated by its setting in the public gardens. It nurtured the workers, the

dispossessed, the members of a class who cling to the ownership of their productivity being plucked from its fingertips. Distinct from the flâneur's crowd, this class feels the impending decrepitude of their position. At this juncture, "This figure, of the many depicted by Baudelaire via Benjamin, is coined, "the true subject of *la modernité*," through its stubborn effort "to live modernity" (Benjamin, 44). It prospers on in an atmosphere hostile to its success (Benjamin, 45). This figure highlights the resistance necessary to live modernity; to live in the face of one's (literal and social) death. This attitude highlights Benjamin's next heroic feature of modernity, the passionate act of suicide through which fashion is located.

Suicide and its presence in fashion

Benjamin continues his reflections,

"The resistance that modernity offers to the natural productive élan of an individual is out of all proportion to his strength. It is understandable if a person becomes exhausted and takes refuge in death. Modernity must stand under the sign of suicide, an act which seals a heroic will that makes no concessions to a mentality inimical toward this will. Such suicide is not resignation but heroic passion. It is *the* achievement of modernity in the realm of the passions" (Benjamin, 45).

He makes explicit here that quality pointed to in his turn toward the proletariat in the previous section. The attitude at work here emerges with the development of a productive society which utilizing the labor of the masses. The rise in capitalist production brought the concept of suicide closer to the this exploited population. It served to represent the point of intolerability (as opposed to revolutionary shift) arrived upon as a result of the resistance imposed upon such an individual by their society, a resistance significant of their strength. In this, suicide is newly reserved for the strong (and dispossessed). In his descriptions of suicide's emergence as a positive and widely adopted phenomena that, in turn, came to color the experience of the masses, Benjamin draws a connection between the act's heroism as espoused by Baudelaire with Alfred

Rethel's *Dance of Death*. He writes of this relation, "Perhaps [Baudelaire] saw Rethel's *Dance of Death*, which he greatly admired, as the work of a subtle artist who stood before an easel sketching on a canvas the ways in which suicides died. As to the colors of Rethel's images, fashion offered its palette" (Benjamin, 46). Benjamin utilizes this point to expand upon his fashion theory. He offers a thorough account of the emergent fashions which correspond with such a mindset and lived experience.

Benjamin's analysis of Baudelaire's thoughts on fashions in this time are worth quoting at length. He remarks,

With the July Monarchy, blacks and grays began to predominate in men's clothes. Baudelaire concerned himself with this innovation... 'More than anyone else, *the painter*, the true painter, will be the man who extracts from present-day life its epic aspects and teaches us in lines and colors to understand how great and poetic we are in our patent-leather shoes and our neckties—May the real pioneers next year give us the exquisite pleasure of being allowed to celebrate the advent of the *new*... Regarding the attire, the covering of the modern hero,... does it not have a beauty and a charm of its own?... Is this not an attire that is needed by our age, which is suffering, and dressed up to its thin black narrow shoulders in the symbol of constant mourning? The black suit and the frock coat not only have their political beauty as an expression of general equality, but also their poetic beauty as an expression of the public mentality. In an immense cortège of undertakers—political undertaker, amorous undertakers, bourgeois undertakers. We are all attendants at some kind of funeral. —The unvarying livery of hopelessness testifies to equality.... And don't the folds around mortified flesh like snakes—have their own secret charm?' (Benjamin, 46)

Benjamin's insights here are significant in demonstrating the attention paid by fashion to detail, and its relevance not only to its specific temporal context but reaches its culmination point between the content of these evolutions with the general movement of its progression forward. Benjamin's utilization of the styles of the July Monarchy as a point of reference highlights the double-layered analysis. The particularizations of this style epoch, with its use of colors and silhouettes of mourning, adequately consider the four moments through which the beautiful

emerges. Lodged in its specific temporal context of the July Monarchy, the fashions here embody the society in which they emerge; in evoking feelings of dread and resistance, they keep contact with their wearers' moral attitudes and ideas; as this suffering manifests through the production of the society and appropriation of the working masses, each charm-laden materialization of the new pays homage to the profession and class of the individual; the life force of each individual brought about by the intricacies of their private life touches on the circumstances which inform their vestimentary choices. Finally, to bring the comparison to this model to that of another, these fashions evoke the spirit, completing the beautiful feeling brought about by fashion. The social existence inextricable from the fashions described aids the mediation between individual and collective done by the spirit, and wearers' lived feeling of inescapable mortality points to the power held by human intellect over nature (and the reverse). In this, Benjamin's articulations above also touch on Simmel's account of fashion as the form of the social, the boundary. These fashions demonstrate the attraction to the boundary of ephemerality, of class distinction. Ironically, they also offer a landscape open to all, at least all touched by the grief characteristic of the era, for participation. Death, and a consciousness of its impending inevitability, continuous to be of central relevance in Benjamin's account of the following modern hero.

The poet, apache, and ragpicker: the pursuit of antiquity

Moving from his first demonstration of the heroic in Baudelaire's modernity as the poor artist, who transforms into the proletariat, Benjamin keeps this proclamation in mind as he executes a nuanced shift towards another archetype of the modernly heroic. He turns to the French poet of the hour to navigate this drift. As alluded to in the section on solitude, this motion gears itself toward a private existence. Baudelaire makes mention of the proletariat here but

contrasts its relevance as articulated in the preceding pages with the cause of its frequent recognition as such. He remarks of its officiality as a mere consequence of the commonplace habit of writers who look to official subjects of revolution for their heroism. Baudelaire highlights what is lost on these writers, ““Yet there are subjects from private life which are heroic in quite another way. The spectacle of elegant life and of the thousands of marginal existences eked out in the basements of a big city by criminals and kept women...we need only open our eyes to recognize our heroism”” (Benjamin, 47).

The central figure in this wave of heroism is the poet who exists at a slight remove from their society, living and witnessing its decrepitude, one foot in the door. He recognizes the tendencies of this poet, whose retreat to privacy and solitude grants them access to the ephemeral, in two more figures which help detail the experience and activity of the hero as such. Further developing another connection referenced in the previous passages on solitude, Baudelaire takes a first look at the apache as someone through whom to understand the heroism at work. Benjamin writes of the insights from Baudelaire’s investigative turn, “The image of the hero here includes the apache. He represents... ‘an encapsulation of the individual in his difference’ ...The apache abjures virtue and laws; he terminates the *contrat social* forever. Thus, he sees himself as a world away from the bourgeois” (Benjamin, 47). This is a departure from the competition of the social world found in the contract abandoned by the apache, who sees in the progressive rise of the market economy the erasure of its people and itself. It speaks to the mission common through Baudelaire’s work, already highlighted in the pages on his essay on Guys, according to which Baudelaire focuses his lens on the beauty to be located in civil society and the private world of the common person who sits at a remove from their social sphere. Benjamin asserts the significance of Baudelaire’s interest in this subject, wherein Baudelaire

engenders a genre that was to last for (at the time in which Benjamin wrote) decades. This hero slinks throughout and away from the social with an investigative air about them.

Benjamin moves to the next Russian nesting figure for this hero, the ragpicker. He remarks about the activity of the poets who identify the heroes in this society, describing their search, “The poets find the refuse of society on their streets and derive their heroic subject from this very refuse. This means that a common type is, as it were, superimposed upon their illustrious type. This new type is permeated by the features of the ragpicker, who made frequent appearances in Baudelaire’s work” (Benjamin, 48). The ragpicker touches more closely on the activity of the hero here, particularly as it will take its full shape in the poet. As is consistent, this activity is characterized by a picking through of the discarded for its reformation, another intimate relationship to death. As in fashion’s tiger’s leap, and the correspondent discontinuous progression of time and history as such, the ragpicker works closely with refuse. Benjamin quotes Baudelaire’s sparkling depiction of the figure,

‘Everything that the big city has thrown away, everything it has lost, everything it has scorned, everything it has crushed underfoot he catalogues and collects. He collates the annals of intemperance, the capharnaum of waste. He sorts things out and selects judiciously; he collects, like a miser guarding a treasure, refuse which will assume the shape of useful or gratifying objects between the jaws of the goddess of Industry.’ This description is one extended metaphor for the poetic method, as Baudelaire practiced it. (Benjamin, 48)

More than simply echoing the tiger’s leap, this activity corresponds with fashion modeled through *apocatastasis*, in which what is reappropriated works for the benefit of its society’s progression. The salvaging demonstrated in the image of the ragpicker notes the true character of the heroically modern poet, a point at which Baudelaire himself appears. The ragpicker relishes in combing through the fleeting and discarded in anticipatory excitement of its transformation. By demonstrating the dual enactment of the poet’s heroism through both the apache and the

ragpicker, some ambiguity regarding the location of the hero in this model comes to the fore. Benjamin articulates this difficulty, revealing the dialectical character held by such a figure. He writes, “The poetry of apachedom appears in an uncertain light. Do the dregs of society supply the heroes of the big city? Or is the hero the poet who fashions his work from such material? — The theory of the modern admits both” (Benjamin, 48). The hero both shines as the (being) cast aside, and the reappropriation which follows.

The poet, smelling the smoke, tries to capture the fleeting and salvage the discarded within their modernity to try and earn its place in antiquity upon the realization of its demise. The poet sniffs out the modern epoch’s ties with its ancient predecessors, a destiny of doom. Benjamin looks to a late poem from Baudelaire in which he identifies himself, as the heroic poet, with his ancestors, “Lovers of whores / Are happy—fit and satisfied; / As for me, my arms are broken / from having clasped the clouds” (Benjamin, 49). Baudelaire divorces himself from the prostitution which characterizes the emergent capitalist marketplace that moves towards its devastation. The exhaustion in the closing lines demonstrates that the ephemerality this poet has hunted is escaping, leading to Benjamin’s remarking of the poet, “this abstinence is already inherent in the concept of the modern hero” (Benjamin, 49). Consumerist society does not function for Baudelaire’s hero, and it is in its final moments at this juncture. As the hero loses touch with the society that abandons them, they reach out for a final grasp of this modernity, to salvage its legacy into the hall of antiquity. The link between antiquity and modernity is constituted by decrepitude, sharing in, “mourning for what and lack of hope for what is to come” (Benjamin, 50). To mediate this dread, the poet works to preserve any of what was to make peace with what is to come. Benjamin identifies this pursuit, “That all modernity is really worthy of becoming antiquity someday...to give shape to modernity” as Baudelaire’s general

artistic mission, of which the poet remained aware. Fashion perhaps offers a framework through which to execute this mission given the relevance of its operations to the hero's poetic process.

The lesbian as heroine

Benjamin takes this opportunity to highlight another connection to antiquity through one of its figures Baudelaire extracts to model the present. Benjamin points to the sole place through the poet's works which pulls from Greek, instead of Roman, antiquity. He identifies the Greek heroine brought about by Baudelaire in his poem *Les Fleurs*. He writes, "The poem is devoted to lesbian love. The lesbian is the heroine of *la modernité*" (Benjamin, 56). This choice by Baudelaire is curious, and as Benjamin goes on to clarify, does not give relevance to the former's personal attitudes held towards the lesbian, or a commentary on homosexuality. Rather, his affection for her stems from her same doom characteristic in all of his heroes. While Benjamin notes that he, "did not view the lesbian as either a social or a physical problem," he also points to her fulfilling an erotic ideal of his, "the woman who signified hardness and virility [combined with] greatness in the ancient world" (Benjamin, 56, 57). Baudelaire supports a masculinization of the feminine, as witnessed in the lesbian's androgyny. Benjamin sources this image in Saint-Simonianism in which the world is directed towards an equal representation of both man and woman. He highlights one disciple of this school of industrialization Claire Démar, and her insights regarding the utopia towards which this thought strives. Her manifesto points to the essence of the theory at play, the reification of the industrial push as the force of progress (Benjamin, 56). Benjamin writes of Démar, quoting her text,

In the widely ramified literature of those days which deals with the future of women, Démar's manifesto is unique in its power and passion...In the concluding section, she writes: 'No more motherhood! No law of the blood. I say: no more motherhood. One a woman has been freed from men who pay her the price of her body,...she will owe her existence...only to her own creativity. To this end, she must devote herself to a task and fulfill a function....Only then and not earlier will men, women, and children be freed

from the law of blood, the law of mankind's self-exploitation.' Here the image of the heroic woman—an image that Baudelaire absorbed---is seen in its original version. (Benjamin, 56)

Démar's emphatic advocacy for ripping the woman from the family works in an effort to promote her equal status to her male counterpart. It is from a woman within this school who moves away from relations with men, then, falling in love instead with her fellow woman (Benjamin, 57). Through the rise of women in industry emerges the lesbian of relevance for Baudelaire (and thus Benjamin). She comes out and about as a result of the economic boom in the nineteenth century which promoted woman's place in the workplace. While the attention given to this development paints Baudelaire as a radical feminist for his time, Benjamin notes that this is not necessarily the case. Beyond endorsing the process of masculinization which resulted, Baudelaire, "sought to free it from economic bondage [thus reaching] the point where he gave a purely sexual emphasis to this development" (thought the details of this sexual emphasis Benjamin leaves obscure) (Benjamin, 58). Rather, his praise of the industrialized woman can be seen elsewhere, in the poet's commentary of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. He celebrates Flaubert for promoting the woman to human being by, "endowing her with the dual nature that makes up a perfect human being: a nature that is as capable of calculation as of dreaming" (Benjamin, 57). However, the intellectual working woman found in the "petty-bourgeois wife" here does not necessarily evoke the heroism of the lesbian for Baudelaire.

Rather, for the poet, the lesbian's heroic significance rests in her socialization. Benjamin references Baudelaire's final remarks directed towards this figure which call attention to this factor. Benjamin writes, "Social ostracism was inseparable from the heroic nature of lesbian passion. '[Descend, descend, lamentable victims, / Follow the pathway to everlasting hell]' were the last words that Baudelaire addressed to lesbians. He abandoned them to their doom, and they

could not be saved, because Baudelaire's conception of them comprised elements that are inextricably tangled" (Benjamin, 58). As before, while Benjamin makes explicit her fate, he does not elaborate its necessitation. The details which sentence the lesbian to a hell-bound descent, however, are not required to identify why Baudelaire finds in her modern heroism. The fragility of her existence, her being on the brink of destined doom, finds in her a satisfactory parallel of the heroic.

The dandy

Benjamin notes the instability of Baudelaire's grasp on the lesbian. In that the entirety of scope of relevance for his insights center around her ephemerality, though for some reason she is particularly sentenced to a descent into the dooms of hell, this can, and has extensively, be(en) said of people in general. The lesbian is not *real* for Baudelaire, however. Benjamin makes a turning point of Baudelaire's tendency to lose touch with the realistic element of things. He switches his views (on women, industrialization, etc.) rapidly. To quote Benjamin's reference to Jules Lemaître, "What is uniquely Baudelairian, I believe, is the readiness always to unite two opposite modes of reaction...One could call these a past mode and a present mode. A masterpiece of the will,...the latest innovation in the sphere of emotional life." Benjamin critiques, "To present this attitude as a great achievement of the will accorded with Baudelaire's spirit. But the other side of the coin is a lack of conviction, insight, and steadiness. In all his endeavors, Baudelaire was subject to abrupt, shock-like changes; his vision of another way of living life to extremes was thus all the more alluring" (Benjamin, 59). The unease with which Baudelaire rocks between the past and present, reality and his cherry-picked adoptions of its relevant consequences, evokes the motion of his near final hero of the modern epoch. While this figure and his significance in Baudelaire's modernity, particularly pertaining to his fashion

theory, will receive more devoted attention in the following chapter, this motion is the point to note at this juncture. Benjamin appeals to the image from which this hero emerges.

He emphasizes the “rocking rhythm” of the stanzas which grips the moored ships depicted in a poem of Baudelaire’s. He highlights the draw of these ships for the poet,

To be rocked between extremes: this is the privilege of ships, and this is what Baudelaire longed for. The ships emerge at the site of the profound, secret, and paradoxical image of his dreams: the vision of being supported and sheltered by greatness... There is a special constellation in which greatness and indolence meet in human beings, too. This constellation governed Baudelaire’s life. He deciphered it and called it ‘modernity.’ (Benjamin, 59)

The power of the ocean supports the shackled ships as the immortal, ongoing surge of time and potentiality carries the individual through the course of their life in society. Its continual urging reignites the spark of readiness laying await in the ship awaiting the tumultuous, unpredictable transience of the current; in the city-dweller who lives in anticipation of death or revolution, each a battle of its own. The airy nonchalance with which the ships bide the time calls out to that figure supported by greatness, trapped in idleness. Benjamin draws the parallel, “The hero is as strong, as ingenious, as harmonious, and as well-build as those boats. But the high seas beckon to him in vain, for his life is under the sway of an ill stay. Modernity turns out to be his doom...Here, in his last incarnation, the hero appears as a dandy” (Benjamin, 59). He points here to the erasure of the sphere throughout which the dandy strolls. This character thus becomes restricted to a life moored in the harbor, peering with titillation to the vast and ever-changing open sea that does not hold a place for him. Benjamin illustrates further the connection between the ships’ and dandy’s statures, supported by the greatness supposed by Baudelaire of his decadent ancestry. The forced idleness (as opposed to the chosen idleness normally characteristic of the dandy) resultant of the social evolution which moves beyond that of petty-bourgeois

industrialization freezes the dandy to the moment which marked the beginning of his disappearance.

As enunciated, the dandy takes his place with the nonchalant elegance of the moored, rocking ships. He floats in this strange existence, well versed in the art of maintaining his response to the unpredictable tremors of the landscape. Benjamin points to this as resultant from the dandy's emergence in the booming economic scene in England. He remarks,

[The dandies] took over the management of the [the extraordinarily varied, numerous] conflicts thus [created in the meshes of the global stock exchange]. They developed the ingenious training necessary to overcome these conflicts. They combined extremely quick reaction with a relaxed, even slack demeanor and facial expression. (Benjamin, 60)

They pleasantly endure the tumultuous progression of consumerist society. Benjamin highlights this as a skill lacking in Baudelaire. The poet had not the "gift of pleasing" which is the essential undercurrent coloring the appeal of the dandy's indifference (Benjamin, 60). Instead, his strange mannerisms put people off, exiling Baudelaire to hide behind the mask of his poetry. Benjamin, at his arrival of the poet himself, reaches the culminating point for the modern hero.

The poet as portrayer of heroes

Benjamin continues demonstrating Baudelaire's position on the edge of his society. He writes,

Unlike Gautier, Baudelaire found nothing to lie about the age he lived in, and unlike Leconte de Lisle he was unable to deceive himself about it...Because he did not have any convictions, he assumed ever new forms himself. Flâneur, apache, dandy, and ragpicker were so many roles to him. For the modern hero is no hero; he is a portrayer or heroes. Heroic modernity turns out to be a *Trauerspiel* in which the hero's part is available. (Benjamin, 60)

In this, the true shape of the hero shines through. Baudelaire, the identified figure, moves with the ease of the figures he lacks himself through the nuance with which each of the described characters emerge in the modern epoch. He evokes the proper mask for each relevant moment,

locating the hero's mechanization once again in the processes of fashion. Of the poet, Benjamin describes an ephemerality of his own appearance. Baudelaire reportedly appeared differently every day, changing his looks and facial expressions. He hid behind his poetry as a mask to preserve his incognito veil, as a city-dweller among the buildings (Benjamin, 61). This transitory masking process is the truly heroic modern action.

III: The Flâneur and The Dandy

Fetishization of the Inorganic: The Flâneur

Moving from his introduction to the arcades, a miniaturized version of a city, Benjamin articulates the flâneur's position within this *interieur*. He writes,

The flâneur is someone abandoned in the crowd. He is thus in the same situation as the commodity. He is unaware of this special situation, but this does not diminish its effect on him; it permeates him blissfully, like a narcotic that can compensate him for many humiliations. The intoxication to which the flâneur surrenders is the intoxication of the commodity immersed in a surging stream of customers. (Benjamin, 31)

Here, he begins his discussion of the fetishization of the inorganic, a prevalent concept within Baudelaire. To do so, he articulates the relationships between consumers and commodities, while likening them to one another. He deepens his insights, analogizing this relationship to that of an addict to their narcotic. While most often ideas the term 'fetishization' carries with it negative connotations, and situations of addiction raise our shackles, the fetishization of the inorganic has a much more humane interplay. The intoxication mentioned in the above quote carries with it all the feelings of bliss we normally associate with intoxication, while its gravities (the ugliness of the economic world) hover sheepishly on the perimeter.

This fetish shares ground with Karl Marx's commodity fetishism in that they both personify the commodity. However, in Benjamin's case, the commodity's personification is a more active subject, more acutely demonstrated in its likeness to the flâneur. While, as Benjamin writes, Marx only jokes about the idea of a commodity soul, Benjamin takes this notion on to introduce the character of the commodity. The commodity soul is first and foremost empathetic, empathy is the nature of this relationship of intoxication. He enunciates the fetish itself, "We hear the voice—speaking in different works--of the fetish itself, which Baudelaire's sensitive disposition resonated with so powerfully: that empathy with inorganic things which was one of

his sources of inspiration” (32). As is suggested here, Benjamin will continue to endorse this approach in his praise of Baudelaire. This ability for things to empathize with consumers and vice versa is something Baudelaire could see and represent in his poetry and prose, aiding his depictions of modern life. Understanding this relationship between commodities and people gives insight to the powerful role the crowd serves for the individual (particularly the outcast individual).

Benjamin moves further into his analogy of narcotics. Deepening the parallel between the intoxication of narcotics with that of the crowd, he references Baudelaire. Benjamin writes,

Baudelaire was a connoisseur of narcotics, yet one of their most important social effects probably escaped him. It consists in the charm displayed by addicts under the influence of drugs. Commodities derive the same effect from the crowd that surges around and intoxicates them. The concentration of customers which makes up the market, which in turn makes the commodity a commodity, enhances its attractiveness to the average buyer. (Benjamin, 32)

Here, Benjamin focuses on why this is not a relationship of harm, as we are most likely inclined to expect. Instead, it is one resembling nourishment. The intoxication given by the crowd echoes the nourishment described by extroverts when they socialize and reinforces a relationship of empathetic understanding. It romanticizes both individuals as commodities and consumers or crowd-members. Once again, this idealization is not a negative illusion, but consistent with Baudelaire’s affection for the inorganic.

The following pages attempt to articulate the fetishization of the inorganic through the relationships articulated by Benjamin. The crowd functions as, “the opiate of the outlawed and the abandoned” (Benjamin, 31). The flaneur is abandoned to the crowd. The flaneur is to the commodity as the crowd is to the customers and the market. Here, Marx’s fetishization of the commodity seems present in its being endowed with some sort of personification. However,

Benjamin goes beyond Marx in that the commodity itself has an experience of this relationship, modeled by that of the flaneur in the crowd. The crowd becomes a ‘hundred stimuli’ to intoxicate the flaneur, though the flaneur (as commodity) remains an attractive sexual object to this active crowd. It is a relationship of blissful intoxication. The basis of this relationship is empathy, in that the commodity soul is empathetic. As he mentions Marx joking about this soul, Benjamin explains it as, “bound to see every individual as a buyer in whose hand and house it wants to nestle” (Benjamin, 31). While romantic, it is this loving-toned relationship between buyer and object which triggers the fetishization of the inorganic.

There remain a few nuances of this fetish that remain concealed. Does each individual function as the inorganic, as a commodity? Or do individuals fetishize inorganic objects with which they empathize? Does ‘commodity’ function dualistically here for Benjamin? A few paragraphs down, he writes, “Only the mass of inhabitants permits prostitution to spread over large parts of the city. And only the mass enables the sexual object to become intoxicated with the hundred stimuli which that object produces” (Benjamin, 33). His description of the intoxication of the sexual object somewhat helps to clarify the fetishizing interaction and supports one of mutual interplay. This comes out of his descriptions of prostitution proliferating throughout the society in question. He credits the free market for the success of prostitutes, for in these relations, prostitutes lost no ‘advantage’ to commodities.

His metaphor shines light on the appeal of the crowd through his paralleling it to that charm endowed upon addicts by narcotics. This is an interesting perspective on the energy of a high addict, someone in bliss. Benjamin not only prescribes this energy to a commodity, high off the crowd, but this effect in turn increases the attractiveness of the commodity. Perhaps this is too literal an interpretation of the metaphor, but this would translate to the addict becoming more

attractive to the narcotic as they get higher. This makes sense, for it would manifest in the narcotic encircling the addict, as is consistent with a more popular conception of addiction, and the perpetual continuing of use. To turn it back, as a commodity gains popularity, it becomes intoxicated and radiates the charm of a blissed addict, drawing in further stimuli (consumers). Here, the addict and the narcotic, the commodity and the market, the abandoned and the crowd, all have a life force and a mutually intoxicating interplay. Each person is intoxicated by the social world, prostitutes their soul out for its effect, and are valued by the crowd through this process.

To reestablish the significance the fetishization of the inorganic plays in the lives of city-dwellers, Benjamin asserts the experience of the flaneur. He writes,

The flaneur only seems to break through this ‘unfeeling isolation of each within his private concerns,’ by filling the hollow space created in him by such isolation with the borrowed—and fictitious—isolations of strangers... ‘The pleasure of being in a crowd is a mysterious expression of the enjoyment of the multiplication of number.’ (Benjamin, 33)

Here, the ability to empathize with commodities translates to an empathy with one’s fellow person. It humanizes others into other beings who also feel isolated. This behavior lets each individual lower their arms against one another, in a sense. While getting lost among the crowd can hold some fears for the individual, to feel being one of the many is a comfort. While in Marx this leads to the outrage and eventual proletarianism of all alienated workers, who, upon realizing their commodification, revolt, this is not the case yet for Baudelaire. In Baudelaire’s world of petty bourgeoisie, as Benjamin explains, the awareness of being a commodity has not yet marinated into the pores of the people. And, it seems, this isn’t exactly an issue. In this context, fetishizing the inorganic, loving one’s society itself, can serve to pass the inevitable interim time of bourgeois society which flourishes antecedently to a proletariat revolt.

Benjamin continues, further articulating this passage of time. He writes,

To be sure, insofar as a person, as labor power, is a commodity, there is no need for him to identify himself as such. The more conscious he becomes of his mode of existence, the mode imposed on him by the system of production, the more he proletarianizes himself, the more he will be gripped by the chilly breath of the commodity economy, and the less he will feel like empathizing with commodities. (Benjamin, 33)

Is Benjamin criticizing or endorsing this approach? From what follows, I understand his endorsement, though I remain skeptical of the hypocrisy latent in this chosen ignorance. What is a proletarian-conscious person to do? He explains that this class merely has not yet had such an awakening, though it was on the horizon. Instead,

Many of [the petty bourgeoisie's] members would one day become aware of the commodity nature of their labor power. But this day had not yet come; until then, they were permitted (if one may put it this way) to pass the time. The very fact that their share could, at best, be enjoyment, but never power, made the period which history gave them a space for passing time. It was self-evident, however, that the more this class wanted to have its enjoyment *in* this society, the more limited this enjoyment would be. The enjoyment promised to be less limited if this class found enjoyment *of* this society possible. If it wanted to achieve virtuosity in this kind of enjoyment, it could not spurn empathizing with commodities. (Benjamin, 34)

What a strange unenthusiastic endorsement. It strikes me as odd that Benjamin would discourage proletarianization in favor of empathizing with commodities. I might understand if Benjamin is merely offering this empathy as a kind of coping skill for surviving the interim period of bourgeois living that persists throughout the preparation of a proletariat revolt. The piece of cake we get in the meantime is enjoying the society pretending like we don't know the situation we're in. He praises Baudelaire for his ability to have this love of society as someone moving on the outer perimeter. He could be sensitive to the charm of society while maintaining awareness of the horrible truths underpinning the social systems. He could recognize this, Benjamin explains, as an addict keeps touch with reality throughout a high.

The Dandy in Baudelaire

While Benjamin places a stronger analytic emphasis on the significance of the flâneur in modernity in his essay on Baudelaire, the former's text on Guys more heavily espouses the heroic figure found in the dandy. As witnessed by the previous chapter's working through of the myriad characters' evocation of the modern epoch's essence, Benjamin does note the relevance of the dandy in this heroism. He locates a model of the dandy's preservation of luxury in the image of the moored ship, anchored in the class distinctions of antiquity, bearing witness and feeling the shocks of the tumultuous rise and sea of the ocean that models the continuous chug of historical progression. Though elements of a dandied psyche can be evoked by any person seeking to mark their unique differentiation, Baudelaire binds the activity of the figure at hand to the elite classes reminiscent of aristocratic society. The section in which Baudelaire develops the dandy is brief, yet rich with fashion's theoretical implications that, demonstrated through the heroism of this character, map nicely onto the larger philosophical frameworks Benjamin will later work through.

Baudelaire opens his depiction of the dandy. He binds this figure from the outset to affluence, writing,

The man who is rich and idle, and who, even if blasé, has no other occupation than the perpetual pursuit of happiness; the man who has been brought up amid luxury and has been accustomed from his earliest days to the obedience of others – he, in short, whose solitary profession is elegance, will always and at all times possess a distinct type of physiognomy, one entirely *sui generis*. (Baudelaire, 26).

Unfettered by occupational distraction or financial strain, the wealthy man is free to indulge in life's pleasures. Nothing limits his acquisition of those objects and experiences of desire, coloring this life as that of luxury and uniqueness. In a mechanization similar to that modeled by Ekardt's account of historical *apocatastasis* found in Benjamin, the dandy continually reemerges throughout the progression of time, modified in accordance with the new, and carrying with him

the determinedly positive elements of the past which he fights to preserve against the revolutionary churn forward. He appropriates the characteristic features of the emerging consumerist society that casts him out, using his (inherited) wealth to defend the longevity of his. In other words, the dandy's existence is cross-temporal and dialectical, in compliance with the process of the tiger's leap, emerging from the attitudes of "great antiquity" yet finding corners of the "New World" in which to reappear (26). Baudelaire points to dandyism's particularized set of laws, which reflect neither that of general political society, nor religious doctrine. Instead, "Dandyism, an institution beyond the laws, itself has rigorous laws which all its subjects must strictly obey...These beings have no other calling but to cultivate the idea of beauty in their persons, to satisfy their passions, to feel and to think" (Baudelaire, 27). Its dogma actualizes through the attitudes, affects, and activities characteristic of dandy living. Dandyism prescribes the continual production in the air of the person as impeccable and impenetrable. Baudelaire reflects upon the look to the "spiritual and stoical" the edge upon which dandyism dances (Baudelaire, 28). He remarks upon his insight into the religiosity of dandyism,

In truth I was not altogether wrong to consider dandyism as a kind of religion [or system or gymnastics designed to fortify the wall and discipline the soul]...[other strict rule systems] were no more despotic, and no more obeyed, than this doctrine of elegance and originality, which also imposes upon its humble and ambitious disciples - men often full of fire, passion, courage and restrained energy - the terrible formula: *Perinde ac cadaver!* (Baudelaire, 28)

Translated as, "in the manner of a corpse," the formula dictated at the end of the above passage highlights the essential characteristic of this hero's existence. As has been the case consistently throughout this text, the presence of death is inextricable from a look into fashion. The conditions which necessitate that iciness emanated by the proper dandy emerge from all sides, dynamically shaping the mechanization and substance of the dandy's move through life.

Baudelaire reasserts the inherent wealth necessitated by this driving life force, continuing, “They thus possess a vast abundance both of time and money, without which fantasy, reduced to a state of passing reverie, can hardly be translated into action.” (Baudelaire, 27). Latent in this final remark, when posed against the image of the boat, lies the failure of the dandy’s preservation mission. At the bare minimum, the dandy requires riches to keep up with the unending modifications of the modern progression, though the activity on the behalf of which the dandy fights for continuation is restricted to leisurely characterization. Idleness gives this figure no competitive edge on which to stand in the world which encroaches upon him, leaving him to witness the ephemeral movement of the surrounding world, a sitting duck stuck in idleness. The dandy lives as a corpse in an effort in escaping mortality. Nonetheless, Baudelaire acquiesces to espouse such an existence, pitying that on the opposing side of the coin. He remarks, “It is sad but only too true that without the money and the leisure, love is incapable of rising above a grocer’s orgy or the accomplishment of a conjugal duty. Instead of being a passionate or poetical caprice, it becomes a repulsive utility” (Baudelaire, 27). Baudelaire utilizes this perhaps frustrating observation to further articulate that at which the dandy’s tastes aim.

Baudelaire’s mention of money and love, and then the dandy’s often observed “immoderate taste for the toilet and material elegance,” speaks to the potential held by each of these to be, from a certain perspective of their relation to the dandy, a possible contender for the dandy’s “special target” (Baudelaire, 27). He highlights these characteristic features of dandyism to then reject their being constitutive of the dandy’s pursuit. Instead, Baudelaire extracts the common feature coursing through these pursuits. Baudelaire draws the line of distinction between these elements and the larger activity shared by them, marking them as being, “For the perfect dandy...no more than

symbols of his aristocratic superiority of mind,” bringing into focus at last the true the end towards which the dandy directs his pursuit. Of the latter he offers a description,

[The dandy’s] eyes [are] in love with *distinction* above all things...What then is this passion, which, [becomes] doctrine? ... It is first and foremost the burning need to create for oneself a personal originality, bounded only by the limits of the proprieties. It is a kind of cult of the self which can nevertheless survive the pursuit of a happiness to be found in someone else...It is the joy of astonishing others, and the proud satisfaction of never oneself being astonished. (Baudelaire, 27-28)

This passage in Baudelaire’s text points to Simmel’s positing of fashion as the form of the social, its operationalization driven by the attraction elicited by the charm of boundaries. The dandy seeks to continually reproduce their distinction from the masses, threatening upheaval. They stand at the fore of fashion’s movement onward, marking the dedication with which this figure constructs and defines the boundaries of their selfdom. The continually discontinuous operationalization modeled by fashion appears in the trajectory of the dandy through his commitment to producing the astonishing that is, as seen in the previous pages, exercised by means of his integrating boundary he preserves with the constant sudden modifications of his present context modeled analogously with fashion’s tiger’s leap.

To clarify the dandy’s connections with some of the other concepts modeled throughout the present work as explicated in the section at hand. Thus far, the dandy mediates two of our models of fashion, the charm of boundary and the tiger’s leap, by his bringing about of the past in and with the present wherein the recovered past finds its substance in demarcating the aristocratic boundary of antiquity. He utilizes his wealth of money to keep up with the capitalist culture that operates through this language in which he has long been well-versed, the possession of which frees the dandy to perpetuate his life of leisure. This results in a religious account of dandyism, in which strict laws of impeccable stoicism discipline the soul. As is brought to light, the austerity

demanding by this school brings the dandy face to face with his erasure, evoking an embodiment of the enemy into which he peers coolly, thereby concealing any insecurity on the dandy's part. With his money, he can keep up this appearance of nonchalance, though the cadaverous affect to which he is sentenced serves as a constant reminder that he attempts his immortality in vain. It is at this juncture wherein the dandy stubbornly reifies his selfdom through his operationalization.

Baudelaire continues, describing this cult of men who fight to mark the boundaries of their personal originality that leads (instead of being abandoned by) the crowd through the movements of fashion. He defiantly adopts an air of impenetrability to mediate his discomfort with the slipping away of the ground beneath his feet. He confronts the rupture at work underfoot, enunciating these figures', "same characteristic quality of opposition and revolt," that positions the industrial revolution against the aristocracy, and the dandy against its erasure thus at work. He continues, "It is from this that the dandies obtain that haughty exclusiveness, provocative in its very coldness." (Baudelaire, 28). There is an appeal in the dandy's cadaverous being, located in its identification with Simmel's charm of boundaries. Living *as* death immediately juxtaposes the two in a compelling dance, wherein a glance at the dandy evokes a feeling of the consciousness of not only one's death, but also the demarcations of the social within which an observer may find themselves. Here, Baudelaire evokes the attraction of the crowd as witnessed in Benjamin's analyses offered on Poe's detective story. Recall that in such context, the crowd embodies the erotic pursuit of the fleeting object which escapes the grasp of its pursuant. The dandy's "haughty exclusiveness" functions the same, becoming more attractive in proportion with its unattainability.

The next point demonstrated by Baudelaire highlights fashion's mechanizations being bound to the modern epoch. He connects the emergence with the dandy to the ephemeral movements of historical revolutions of power. As the dandy descends as the reminiscence of

aristocracy in a bourgeois society, the point of titillation at which this figure sits rests in the developing stages of a democratic upheaval. His remark, which will soon follow, holds a key distinction for understanding Benjamin's analysis of Baudelaire's heroically modern figures. The notable observation here results from recognizing each of the heroes as a failure. Each sit at the commencement of their decrepitude, which always wins. Baudelaire situates the dandy as such, "Dandyism appears above all in periods of transition, when democracy is not yet all-powerful, and aristocracy is only just beginning to totter and fall" (Baudelaire, 28). Benjamin, Simmel, and Ekardt all demonstrate this situation in their analytic modeling of fashion's motion. He continues describing the leaps by which (in a quote seen earlier), "In the disorder of these times, certain men who are socially, politically and financially ill at ease, but are all rich in native energy, may conceive the idea of establishing a new kind of aristocracy" (Baudelaire, 28). The tension of opposition again describes the point at which, "Dandyism is the last spark of heroism amid decadence" (Baudelaire, 28-29). The dandy burns bright and cold, saturated with its own mortality. He takes on the essence of his demise, appropriating it in resistance, wearing it with powerful, cool indifference. The dandy sits proudly defending his seat at the head of the table until his inevitable eradication through the rise of democracy.

Baudelaire resituates the reader in the context of his painter, Monsieur G., reporting the source from which he drew inspiration for his dive into the dandy. He defends what he anticipates will be received as a digression from his main task at hand, "The moral reflections and considerations provoked by an artist's drawings are in many cases the best translation of them that criticism can make" (Baudelaire, 29). In recalling the position held by moral consideration demonstrated by the first chapter, as one of the moments which account for the experience of the beautiful (another means by which to understand the connection here between

the dandy, fashion, and beauty) it ought not surprise an attentive reader that Baudelaire investigates this dimension of the dandy in order to better understand his significance as a figure. Thus, given the profound depth and breadth of insights Baudelaire finds in those reflections provoked by Monsieur G.'s sketches of the dandy, the former would have been remiss to neglect a journeying through the dandy's "historical personality" as illustrated by the latter.

Baudelaire winds down this investigation, offering a stunning account of the personality captured *in toto* by his painter of modern life. His remarks on Monsieur G.'s talent are worth quoting at length. Baudelaire casts a last look at his hero,

Nothing is missed [by Monsieur G. in his sketches of the dandy's historical personality]: his lightness of step, his social aplomb, the simplicity in his air of authority, his way of wearing a coat or riding a horse, his bodily attitudes which are always relaxed but betray an inner energy, so that when your eye lights upon one of those privileged beings in whom the graceful and the formidable are so mysteriously blended, you think: 'A rich man perhaps, but more likely an out-of-work Hercules!

The distinguishing characteristic of the dandy's beauty consists above all in an air of coldness which comes from an unshakeable determination not to be moved; you might call it a latent fire which hints at itself, and which would, but chooses not to burst into flame. (Baudelaire, 29)

IV: Woman and Artificiality

Woman in Baudelaire

Baudelaire's move into a discussion on the central relevance of woman at the core of fashion's operations holds valuable insights, though his emphatic opening remarks will likely jolt someone looking to this text in the current social climate. Wherein there was a point at which Baudelaire may have antecedently adopted the attitudes later developed in feminist philosophy, the descriptions which he offers the woman in his essay on Guys decidedly rejects this hypothesis. While a substantive feminist critique of Baudelaire's claims through his section, 'Woman,' is not the aim here, and the relevant insights he develops in his rambling paragraph on the woman will carry greater weight for the pursuit at hand, reading this passage with a feminist lens offers another layer of operationalization, one likely overlooked by Baudelaire.

His opening remark locates Woman in, "The being who, for the majority of men, is the source of the liveliest and even – be it said to the shame of philosophic pleasures – of the most lasting delights; the being towards whom, or on behalf of whom, all their efforts are directed" (30). While not making explicit the degradation imposed here upon the existence of woman to such a being. She is endowed with the semblance of control over the men who comply with her demands only as the means to their pleasing ends found, as he notes, is determined either by or in her. This woman, though feminists will lament is degraded to nothing more than her utilitarian value determined by the extent to which she can provoke men to delight in her pleasures. While not completely deniable, a critique of this sort overlooks the nuanced power the Woman holds in shaping the modifications of society. She is what motivates the ongoing churn of production. Baudelaire includes reference to her position as such in fashion, somewhat aggressively extending her being into that,

for whom, but above all *through whom*, artists and poets create their most exquisite jewels; the source of the most exhausting pleasures and the most productive pains – Woman, in a word, for the artist in general, and Monsieur G. in particular, is far more than just the female of Man. Rather she is a divinity, a star, which presides at all the conceptions of the brain of man; a glittering conglomeration of all the graces of Nature, condensed in to a single being; the object of the keenest admiration and curiosity that the picture of life can offer its contemplator. 30

The extreme idealization with which Baudelaire promotes woman from object for man to Object for man. Here, his fervor is reminiscent of that quality of his reported by Benjamin, in which Baudelaire loses touch with the reality of things, instead expounding his idealized perceptions of things as an analysis of their being. Rather than rejecting those insights which emerge by means of Baudelaire's process, however, his proclamations simply demand consideration with a grain of salt which does not assume these analyses as constitutive or exhaustive of the Woman in modernity. The essences of the Woman, thus, are not the synonymous with those of women in general. This idolized version of the woman, to no surprise, is an elusive mystery to her male counterparts. He describes her further, "stupid perhaps, but dazzling and bewitching, who holds wills and destinies suspended on her glance," arresting men with the life force at work in her gaze. She embodies the labor characteristic of the spirit, one which asserts itself above Nature by means of immortalization and demarcation, as further expanded a few paragraphs below. Woman dialectically harmonizes the doubly transient and eternal characteristic of her persistence, though, "She is not, I must admit, an animal whose component parts, correctly assembled, provide a perfect example of harmony...this would not be sufficient to explain her mysterious and complex spell" 30. Woman manifests the magic of her mysterious existence through dress.

Baudelaire remarks of Woman's close ties to her vestimentary practices, identifying the two in each other,

Everything that adorns women, ever[y]thing that serves to show off her beauty, is part of herself; and those artists who have made a particular study of this enigmatic being do not less on all the details of the *mundus muliebris* than on Woman herself. Above all she is a general harmony, not only in her bearing and the way in which she moves and walks, but also in the muslins, the gauzes, the vast, iridescent clouds of stuff in which she develops herself, and which are as it were the attributes and the pedestal of her divinity; in the metal and the mineral which twist and turn around her arms and her neck, adding their sparks to the fire of her glance, or gently whispering at her ears. 30-31

The general harmony depicted here, contrasted with a perfect harmony that Baudelaire decidedly does not identify in her, highlights the effect brought about by the life into which she integrates her clothing and jewelry. In coupling clothes with their wearers, several of the considerations explored through the present text which analogize the operationalization and movements of fashion's processes with the those of the lived human experience are at last brought together into one being. Woman's vestimentary practices, thus, are (to close the circle at large) the material manifestations of her spiritual, divine existence. Baudelaire utilizes this opportunity to celebrate the artificiality at play in which fashion and finery are made valuable, recalling the human spirit's superiority over nature witnessed in the opening chapter. He moves to the next section of his text of the same title as that the following...

In praise of cosmetics

Baudelaire utilizes this moment to highlight the central significance of the artificial here.

Of Woman's mysterious charm, Baudelaire writes,

Woman is quite within her rights, indeed she is even accomplishing a kind of duty, when she devotes herself to appearing magical and supernatural; she has to astonish and charm us; as an idol, she is obliged to adorn herself in order to be adored. Thus she has to lay all the arts under contribution for the means of lifting herself above Nature, the better to conquer hearts and rivet attention. It matters little that the artifice and trickery are known to all, so long as their success is assured and their effect always irresistible. By reflecting in this way the philosopher-artist will find it easy to justify all the practices adopted by women at all times to consolidate and as it were to make divine their fragile beauty. To

enumerate them would be an endless task: but to confine ourselves to what today is vulgarly called 'maquillage' [makeup]. 33

Without digressing into the problematic relations at work here seen in Baudelaire's repeated use of compulsory language to describe the activity of Woman's self-artificialization for the enjoyment of men. Baudelaire describes the effects of makeup foundation as, "successfully designed to rid the complexion of those blemishes that Nature has outrageously strewn there, and thus to create an abstract unity in the colour and texture of the skin, a unity, which, like that produced by the tights of a dancer, immediately approximates the human being to the statue, that is to something superior and divine" (34). While quite obvious to us, Baudelaire's observation about the just-emerging rise in popularity of makeup of the time reveals what we, accustomed to and expectant of makeup's role in perfecting the planes of woman's face, take for granted. This illustration of foundation's – rice powder in Baudelaire's time – behavior combines a few of the models explored thus far in the text at present. As this quote is portioned from the same excerpts which produce the superiority of man's intellect over nature. This intellect, as demonstrated by makeup's base layer, evokes an image reminiscent of the dandy's likeness to a corpse in an attempt to immortalize his life force through the ephemeral unpredictability of his society. The divinity touched upon in Baudelaire's observation further develops this line of thinking, with makeup serving to remove its wearer from the particularizations of her mortal human existence always conscious of its encroaching end and likening her to the stability of the divine. It enacts the forgiving disappearance of the individual into the crowd, deemphasizing the particularities which mark her as a distinct individual. Lastly, this is compatible with the apparent "duty" women are fulfilling by increasing their attractiveness in such a way, one which demonstrates her, though appearing magical, human capacity for power over nature. Before she is abandoned

completely to this mass, the details of her face faded out into everyone else's, Baudelaire accounts for the charm of boundary that remains in her getting ready before the vanity.

Baudelaire continues to elaborate upon the tendencies of makeup, at this time in its basic phase of development. He writes of eye makeup,

As for the artificial black with which the eye is outlined, and the rouge with which the upper part of the cheek is painted...Red and black represent life, a supernatural and excessive life: its black frame renders the glance more penetrating and individual, and gives the eye a more decisive appearance of a window open upon the infinite; and the rouge which sets fire to the cheek bone only goes to increase the brightness of the pupil and adds to the face of a beautiful woman the mysterious passion of the priestess. 34

Here, the life force demonstrated by these more definitive aspects of the makeup catalogue has the relational character of Simmel's articulations of fashion as a form of the boundary. The eye makeup appears as another extension of the image of the picture frame which marks the boundaries of the infinitude of possibility in each human existence within the constancy of ephemeral change. It boldly marks the differentiability of each woman as herself within the plentitudes of beautiful made-up women, modeled by the relationality of the eyeliner to the rouge. The rouge merely colors the boundary of each woman with further depth, brightening the force of life which the unique circumstances of her existence breathe into those fashion and makeup elements which she integrates into herself in order to find in them opportunities to flesh out the boundary of this very existence. These elements aid the makeup look's ambition to surpass Nature, highlighting the glimmering life force brought into the light.

He continues, clarifying a point at which most confuse the intention of this operation. He writes, "If you will understand me aright, face-painting should not be used with the vulgar, unavowable object of imitating fair Nature and of entering into competition with youth" (34). The tendency for women's fashions to arrest a woman in the days of her youth, while a veritable

observation of the fashion industry and the some further social tendencies at work is not completely dispensable, it holds no weight here. The force that arrests the woman at the titillating point of her most saturated potential is motivated not by the fetishization of youth, but the resistance modeled by one's transforming their life force into a sterile embodiment of the fate that awaits them. Makeup is not, as is the case today (regarding typical everyday makeup, not the extravagant trends of recent decades) a sly attempt to convincing others of its being bare. It is not there to "lend charm to ugliness," instead further developing the material for the beautiful into an experience of such.

To conclude (without necessarily drawing any conclusions)

Throughout the development of the present text emerges a continual shift between the modifications that move a theoretical account of fashion between the approaches of different thinkers. The departing from Baudelaire, moving through Ekardt to Simmel and Benjamin, and revisiting of the former demonstrates the identifications possible between fashion and the temporal progression forward, the evolution of history, the activity of the social, and production of poetry all point to the central relation at work here. Each model, nuanced in its kind, compared with the evolutions of fashion, again asserting the latter as the chief phenomena that embodies and enacts the feeling of the modern present. As ran consistently through the models, this is marked by a feeling of one's impending demise. Modern life lives death. In this, fashion both fights for immortality in resistance to the encroaching decrepitude and enacts the reality of its immortality as the discontinuously continuous emergences of the new.

ADDENDUM

Anna Karenina's Appropriation of her Mortality Through Dress

Introduction

In addendum to my exploration the philosophical significance of fashion's processes, some of the mechanisms by which fashion progresses will be made operative in the discourse to follow. Philosophical investigations into such processes demonstrate fashion as a model for the progression of time, history, and the human life. In this text I will demonstrate my philosophically founded literary analysis of Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, and its titular character's vestimentary evolution. Throughout my discourse, I demonstrate the insights which emerge via analyzing fashion as an image and symbol throughout Tolstoy's narrative (originally published in 1877) in the context of fashion as a philosophical model for time, history, and the social. These latter foundations emerge in the decades to follow, as provided by Charles Baudelaire, and further explored by Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin. The insights from these writers supplement a thoughtful literary analysis of Tolstoy's power as a writer. Fashion, and its attendant properties of color, texture, and figure, point to several key observations about characters in the social and emotional standings, and plays an important role in the progression of the narrative. In the context of the novel, fashion may appear as a mere literary tool to describe character appearance, but with an understanding of fashion's philosophical significance, a new lens through which to understand the depth of Tolstoy's power as a write emerges. Fashion can serve as this lens because of the way it functions philosophically, through its charm of boundary in the tiger's leap of progression, and form of the social.

The previous investigation worked through several models by which fashion gives insight to account for the differentially forward motions of time and history. Its point of departure, an essay from French poet Charles Baudelaire, is the restructuring of the experience of the beautiful by which such an experience is composed as a dualism. The first side points to individuated

instantiations of beauty, as considered along four axes: time, moral attitudes and ideas, professions and classes, and circumstances. Once each of these four moments is given its due attention, the aesthetic attitude held towards beauty by a subject synthesizes with the resulting determinations from the first side to evoke an experience of the beautiful. In other words, the experience of the subject combines with the object, and together these produce the feeling of the beautiful. Only when each object is thoughtful in its construction, then aesthetically viewed by a subject, can the subject experience the object as beautiful. What are really at work in the fourfold construction of each instantiation, however, are a series of more complex philosophical operations. The specific mechanisms of such operations receive further substantiation from the insights of philosopher Walter Benjamin, as demonstrated by Philipp Ekardt, scholar in fashion theory. Ekardt details models from the former's *Arcades Project*, supplemented with analysis of texts from sociologist Georg Simmel, who offer fashion both as the form of the social (in the charm of boundary) and the tiger's leap of fashion which brings forth the *démodé* to synthesize with the present.

To recall, the charm of boundary comes about when a subject appropriates the finitude and ephemerality of nature and, using human power, artificializes nature's source material. Fashions of this sort emphasize the charm of boundary between mortality and immortality as a means of control over the uncontrollable: death. Rather than simply evading death, those who understand and interact with their fate, immortalize themselves by having a hand in the finitude of their life, get on more equal footing with the grim reaper (so to speak). As continuous particular modifications characterize the total progression of fashion, such is the case with a human life. The entirety of a human life is understood through individual decisions and actions, beginnings and ends. Among these are the various relationships and social worlds we move

through in our lives. This social dimension, the demarcation between social spheres by means of which we understand our position in the world, is the second component of the charm of boundary. Fashion's tiger's leap, to recall, operationalizes this charm. In other words, it reappropriates elements of that which it discards from the past (the lost, the ended), brings it into the present to immortalize itself, and progresses forward its evolution (towards eventual demise). The tiger's leap serves to model the operations of time, history, and the human life. In other words, the form of the social, of the boundary here immortalizes the relationship between the ephemeral and the eternal.

These analyses provide the differential element to fashion's mechanisms present, though not yet fully developed, in Baudelaire. With an understanding of the models Benjamin presents via Ekardt, the modern heroes found throughout Baudelaire's works who Benjamin expands upon bring into focus the key relation at play in fashion, a modern waltz with (im)mortality. The (failed) hero – for nothing and no one is exempt from death – is in contact with their impending decline and appropriates this through fashion. This way by which the individual resists their death points to the essence of human power over nature, witnessed in the composed artificiality of a person's toilette. The life each person breathes into their fashion is the active resistance, via appropriation, of their decrepitude, manifested by fashion's arrested youthful character. Fashion is a tool for immortalization, though not understood as the complete absence of morality. Instead, the immortalization at play is a move from a passive to an active role in one's own finitude; in committing to mortality, the constancy of change and ephemerality becomes the immortality at hand. The totality of an evolution, its power over its demise, comes about in a control and continuation of the fleeting. This is most exemplified by the person around whom fashion swirls, Woman. Woman's relation to her presentation is one of personal extension, through which she

enacts her humanity. The accomplishments of fashion are epitomized in her dress and makeup, the latter being the clearest example of the draw of artificiality which works within the charming demarcation of boundary (namely, the external immortality and internal mortality). As Anna's adulterous plotline unfolds, her dress serves as a dimension upon which to understand her progression colored by her impending doom. Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, the character, and her evolution models this operation. Throughout her life, she prepares for her death. In each love she walks away from, she prepares to walk away from her life. Her life is unified by her refusal of constancy (to be seen in her refusal to wear lilac throughout the book). Simple stability (as lilac will be shown to symbolize) misses the nuanced paradox, understood by Anna, with a solid grip on the charm of boundaries that conditions the radiance of her beauty.

To embark upon a closer look at Woman's relation to her dress still is too broad a point of departure for the illustration to follow. To narrow the subject at hand, a key distinction about the heroic figure of the dandy comes into play. As highlighted in the third chapter of my larger text, the dandy is brought into modernity from his ancestry in antiquity. While the mechanizations of fashion explored by Benjamin and others are particularly bound to the modern time of bourgeois power on its brink of eradication, their insights' applicability goes beyond such an epoch. French aristocracy had, at this point, been overturned, and the tiger's leap of the dandy's continuation through the decline of his sphere (the remnants of aristocracy in the petty bourgeois) the aristocratic boundary in play. Benjamin's insights are those from Baudelaire's world, that of the petty bourgeoisie, though the dandy demonstrates how these have trickled down from past social relation. To home in on this point, the wisdom of beauty passed down from the aristocrat, I look to Leo Tolstoy's depictions of Russian aristocracy in his prized novel, *Anna Karenina*. In mediation with the significant relationship Woman shares with her wardrobe,

some of the insights explored in my philosophical text will at present be demonstrated through the progression of the titular character's fashions as seen in Tolstoy's descriptions throughout the book. Tolstoy, too, was writing in a time of social upheaval, as the revolutionary movement in Russia undermined the monarchy. Though this is not the modern bourgeois landscape in which Baudelaire writes, through the similar social movements of these eras, some of the theories about fashion can be mapped onto the nineteenth century Russian aristocracy.

Beauty in Her Eyes and the Charm of Boundary

Another disclaimer to note, elements of Baudelaire's text (which predated Tolstoy's) can be found within to deepen Benjamin's explorations. Tolstoy instead writes alongside other Romantics, the school of thought whose determinations about beauty Baudelaire would go on to refute. While a realist, Tolstoy finds beauty and perfection in the marvels of nature. He highlights the vitality of the natural world. However, what he (perhaps unintentionally) highlights, is the power of artificiality that emerges when nature is supplemented by human reason. Tolstoy frequently makes mention of the eyes and smile in which his characters' beauty is found. While this initially strikes us as another praise of nature's creations, if considered in tandem with Georg Simmel's charm of boundary, and Baudelaire's insights on makeup, an alternative response is warranted. The eyes are instead considered as a demarcation of the boundary between inescapable mortality (that which conditions human vitality) and the human rationality which attempts to immortalize itself by appropriating this morality. This is particularly noticeable in Anna throughout the novel. Her frequently remarked beauty is sourced in her eyes, filled with life, mystery, and mourning. Anna is in touch with her mortality in a way her peers cannot understand, and so they find her fascinating. She is made ever more beautiful by the artificial spectacle of her toilette, through which she presents an air of calm, graceful wholeness. Anna continuously works to appropriate her finitude, be it of her stylish relevance, social regard, or life, by means of her dress, throughout the novel.

Two moments to highlight in which the beauty found in Anna's eyes is particularly profound are her meetings with Count Alexey Vronsky and Princess Kitty Scherbatsky, her relations with whom will be significant throughout this investigation. In Tolstoy's initial mention

of his titular character, she first encounters Vronsky, setting her plot in motion. Their encounter sparks their relationship, which will come to destroy her. Tolstoy writes,

The trained insight of a Society man enabled Vronsky with a single glance to decide that she belonged to the best Society. He apologized for being in her way and was about to enter the carriage, but felt compelled to have another look at her, not because she was very beautiful nor because of the elegance and modest grace of her whole figure, but because he saw in her sweet face as she passed him seething specially tender and kind. When he looked round she too turned her head. Her bright grey eyes which seemed dark because of their black lashes rested for a moment on his face as if recognizing him, and then turned to the passing crowd evidently in search of some one. In that short look Vronsky had time to notice the subdued animation that enlivened her face and seemed to flutter between her bright eyes and a scarcely perceptible smile which curved her rosy lips. It was as if an excess of vitality so filled her whole being that it betrayed itself against her will, now in her smile, now in the light of her eyes. She deliberately tried to extinguish that light in her eyes, but it shone despite of her in her faint smile. (Tolstoy, 56)

In this passage, many insights come into play. The first is brought about with the first line and highlights the social dimension through which fashion is made operative. Tolstoy makes immediate reference to both characters' placement in high Society. This demonstrates the symbolic significance of the vestimentary system, and the power of affect. Anna's grace and elegance, which radiates in and through her dress, marks her to passersby as a prominent woman. She is cognizant of this power, and utilizes it throughout the novel to declare, and later reclaim her position as I shall show. Further, Tolstoy asserts that this language of fashion and attitude is only understood by another of similar rank. The power displayed through these communications earns Tolstoy's characters regard from their peers and emphasizes their attractiveness. This serves as an example of the charm of boundaries elicited by fashion, in which an element of one's beauty is determined by the demarcation of their social class.

Class, as Baudelaire later establishes with more clarity, is an essential consideration to be made in the construction of instances of the beautiful (Trainor, 17). While dress is definitely at

play, Anna's face in this passage is the more significant player in her fashion. As is later the case with Baudelaire, social class manifests itself in one's face. Similarly highlighted by Tolstoy, Anna's face is that which instills in Vronsky his curiosity in the mysteriousness held within her glance. When the writer mentions, "Her bright grey eyes which seemed dark because of their black lashes," Baudelaire's insights about makeup come to mind. The French poet later remarks on the boundary of black lashes, "Red and black represent life, a supernatural and excessive life: its black frame renders the glance more penetrating and individual, and gives the eye a more decisive appearance of a window open upon the infinite" (Baudelaire, 34). While the significance of these colors is to be more deeply explored in the following section, the latter part of this quote is of relevance here. Anna's black lashes mark the boundary between the "elegance and modest grace" of her outer appearance, and the vitality of her inner being, a vitality, which will come to be understood as conditioned by its finitude. Her seeing Vronsky sparks the life force inside her, that which drives her straight to her destruction. This excites and scares her, her desire "betraying itself against her will," though she feels that it will mark her end, resulting in her described, "[deliberate tries] to extinguish that light" (56). She fights to preserve her calm exterior, one which exudes immortality and cohesion. Tolstoy uses similar phrasing to describe the candle burning bright and flickering out at the end of Anna's life. Here, we see a glimpse of the extinguishing Anna will bring upon herself. She begins the active control of her mortality, a destructive (and failed) defense of her relevance both as an attractive woman, and a relevant figure in society. It is the consistency of her endings which come to immortalize her, give her life cohesion.

Anna again appears as a collected and stable individual when first introduced to Kitty, shortly following the passage above. Tolstoy describes the latter's response upon meeting the former:

Anna was not like a Society woman or the mother of an eight-year-old son. The flexibility of her figure, her freshness, and the natural animation of her face appearing now in her smile, now in her eyes, would have made her look more like a girl of twenty had it not been for a serious and sometimes even sad expression in her eyes which struck Kitty and attracted her. Kitty felt that Anna was perfectly unaffected and was not trying to conceal anything, but that she lived in another, bigger world full of complex poetic interests beyond Kitty's reach. (Tolstoy, 65)

While both first impressions center around Anna's eyes, and the life held within them, Kitty's response to meeting Anna demonstrates more sophisticated understanding on her part than Vronsky's. Perhaps this is the female intuition; Vronsky cannot see the true condition of Anna's life as a constant state of decline for this is the mystery of the woman (particularly she who preserves her use such as Anna does). Kitty, on the other hand, as are all women, has an underlying cognizance of the constant threat of expiration. However, her grasp on the matter is still optimistically juvenile. She sees in this beautiful woman the potential for her own life, in which she imagines for herself (and thus for Anna) stability and calmness. Though she bears witness to the attractive sadness in Anna's eyes that colors the vitality with which she charms, she does not understand its significance. Instead, a more mature grasp on mortality is reserved for Anna in her "bigger world full of complex poetic interests" (Tolstoy, 65). She cannot see through Anna's perfect unaffected presentation. This point of tension between Anna and Kitty colors their relations, and the eventual conclusions of each woman's narrative. The mechanism in question by which Tolstoy illustrates the distinction between these two women, is their dress. He utilizes fashion's components of color, texture, and figure to highlight each mode of existing and its consequences.

Color, Texture, and Figure: Fashion in its Relationality

Tolstoy, in his use of fashion throughout the novel, highlights color, texture, and figure to demonstrate its significance and depth. Four colors are of note throughout the novel: lilac, black, red, and white. Through his mentions of each of these in various contexts and on various women throughout his prose, he illustrates the relations between each of them, and the significance of each of these colors with regard to their wearers' corresponding states of being, both socially and psychologically. An analysis of these is conditioned by the philosophical profundity of fashion's elements both in the differential relationality of the social sphere, and the evolution of each woman throughout the time of her life (in the novel). We turn first to lilac, the color of stability and contentment.

Lilac: light and dark

Lilac appears most significantly with regard to Kitty, and the evolution of her plotline. The color first appears, not worn by her, but spoken of. Just following her introduction to Anna, seen in the previous passage, Kitty appeals to Anna, requesting her presence at Kitty's upcoming premier ball. This woman, whom the young lady so admired, appears to Kitty as a fantasized version of her future self. In Anna's composure, Kitty sees an established woman, sure of herself, stable in the life she's built. Perhaps Tolstoy considered Monet's proclamation in his writing, that the color of the atmosphere is violet. The instability Kitty cannot quite identify, however, is what she does not realize endows Anna's beauty with its magical radiance. With her idea of the latter in mind, Kitty implores Anna to attend the ball. Their exchange reads,

'Will you go to this ball?' asked Kitty / 'I suppose I shall have to. / '...I shall be very glad if you go. I should so like to see you at a ball.' / 'Well, then, if I have to go, I shall console myself with the reflection that it will give you pleasure.' / 'I imagine you at that ball in lilac!' / 'Why must it be lilac?' asked Anna half laughing. '...But I know why you

are asking me to go to that ball. You're expecting much from it, and would like everybody to be there and have a share in it...Oh yes, it is good to be your age,' Anna continued. 'I remember and know that blue mist, like the mist on the Swiss mountains...that mist which envelops everything at that blissful time when childhood is just, just coming to an end, and its immense, blissful circle turns into an ever-narrowing path, and you enter the defile gladly yet with dread, though it seems bright and beautiful...Who has not passed through it?' Kitty smiled and remained silent. 'How did she pass through it? How I should like to know her story!' thought she, recollecting the unpoetic appearance of Anna's husband Alexey Karenin. 66-67

Again, Tolstoy's passage is found to be riddled with implications about fashion, and the color lilac. The first points to another significance fashion Baudelaire will argue has for women, the pleasure she causes others (Trainor, 83). Though in Baudelaire her pleasing most often is for the enjoyment of men, Tolstoy demonstrates that much of woman's dress is, in fact, dedicated to pleasing other women. Rather than using her power on men to do as she pleases, Anna uses it to assert herself above Kitty and maintain her position of admirability. Second, this passage demonstrates Kitty's social use of fashion, to create a model for herself. Fashion and its movements aid in peoples' personal evolution, and here Kitty requests to bear witness to her future self where she believes she will witness that projection succeed and find in Anna optimistic promise for the future that awaits her. Anna, understanding that she is not what Kitty envisions, to maintain her effect and position, laughingly rejects Kitty's proposal that she wear lilac, a color she knows is not compatible with her essence (an end). She then reasserts her position above Kitty, demonstrating an understanding of the latter's position she herself cannot grasp, and the former's own superiority for having moved beyond it. She softly tries to warn Kitty that this life in which she is about to make her debut will not go the way she plans. Though Anna reveals to Kitty the beautiful dread of a woman's adult life, the latter is ultimately unable to locate it and move beyond her expectations.

And maybe Kitty was right to picture a stable woman wearing lilac, for this was the trajectory of her path. Kitty's tumultuous beginning of her adult life at last finds resolution when she marries Levin in the later parts of her plotline. In the early days of their marriage, when they blissfully coexist in their unwavering love, their shared life ahead of them, lilac appears again for her. Tolstoy describes the couple:

They had just returned from Moscow and were glad of the solitude. He was in his study and sat at the table writing. She in the dark lilac dress she had worn during the first days of her marriage and which was specially memorable and dear to him, sat with her embroidery on that same old leather-covered sofa which had stood in the study through his father's and grandfather's times. (Tolstoy, 439)

Here, Tolstoy adds a dimension to the color, its shade. Though Kitty retains her stability and optimism for her life ahead, not fully grasping its finitude, the dark color of the lilac she wears in this depiction demonstrates the maturity she's developed through her suffering. She moves towards the color of mourning, but clings tightly to her youthful, opportunistic point of view. She has learned about endings but her life with Levin feels now to be eternal, both reaching into the past with Tolstoy's mention of the heirloom couch, and forward with his reference that time has passed, and yet this feeling remains - signifying it will continue to. Kitty has experienced loss, and it has matured her, but her overall life is conditioned by stability and consistency. Thus, she moves towards an understanding of mortality, but cannot move beyond the comfort of her stable life (and the hope she holds for its continuation) to reach this degree of cognizance.

Lilac's final appearance of note appears in the hours preceding Anna's eventual suicide. At such this point in her narrative with Vronsky, Anna has become jealous and unstable. Having been continually unraveling since their first meeting, the culmination point is reached when Anna is triggered into rapid deterioration upon seeing Vronsky speak kindly to a young woman in lilac. Tolstoy describes this turning point:

There had been a quarrel...Hearing that he was in the study she went to him. As she passed through the drawing-room she heard a vehicle stop at the front door, and, looking out of the window, she saw a young girl in a lilac hat leaning out of the carriage window and giving an order to the footman who was ringing at the front door. After some talking in the hall, [someone] came upstairs and she heard Vronsky's step outside the drawing-room. He was going quickly downstairs. Again Anna went to the window. There he was on the steps, without a hat, going down to the carriage. The young girl in the lilac hat handed him a parcel. Vronsky said something to her and smiled. The carriage rolled away; he ran rapidly upstairs again. The fog that had obscured everything within her was suddenly dissipated. Yesterday's feelings wrung her aching heart with fresh pain. 680-681

Anna, upon witnessing the exchange, leaves the house and goes to visit Kitty and Dolly briefly before heading to the train station where she enacts her demise. It seems as though, in seeing Vronsky in this friendly exchange with the woman in the lilac hat, she is reminded of Kitty's request from many years prior. She catches a glimpse of the woman she used to seem to be, she sees in this young woman what she supposes Vronsky (as Kitty had) once saw in her (and now this new girl). Anna goes to visit Dolly, her last hope in a confidant, to find her sister-in-law with Kitty. Anna's last grasp at help fails, Kitty sees Anna unraveling, and Anna feels even more acutely that she is at her end. Anna leaves for this meeting, adorned in her mortal costume, carrying the small life she lived (her little red bag) on her arm. In choosing, as she had at the ball long before, to dress herself in the colors and textures – black velvet and lace – of mourning and demarcation, the point towards which her evolution has moved explicitly since meeting Vronsky.

Black: velvet and lace – charming boundary of mortality and the social

Black plays a significant role in Anna's toilette and general presentation. Not only are her hair and lashes black, her eyes appearing black at moments throughout the book, Anna often drapes herself in elegant black materials. The first point to note about black clothing in the era is not, as is the case with the dandy in Benjamin, used primarily by the suffering worker (Trainor, 60). Black fabric dye was only available to the aristocracy for it was incredibly expensive to

make. Black required a saturated combination of all colors, thus in its construction represents excess. Further, its being a single unified color composed of all others is symbolic of the differential unification of human life and history. Through this operation, the singularity in the color emerges from a constant changing and intermix of factors, a whole from particulars, as is the case in the latter phenomena. Black is then, of course, the color of death and mourning, and in this combination of symbolic significances, adorns Anna in (im)mortality. The simultaneous fragility and strength in this color are witnessed by its doubly manifesting in velvet and lace. The former corresponds to the unity, strength, and heaviness of the color black's essence. The latter, on the other hand, the vulnerability for unraveling, detailed differential aspect, and sexual essence of Anna's affect. Anna wears her death and endows it with her life (which is colored by her death, and as such, her sex).

Anna, knowing lilac would not be suitable for her in her instability, wears instead a costume for such a position as hers. Tolstoy describes Kitty's realization that Anna is not the woman whom she'd first imagined her to be. He writes,

Kitty's eyes found...the lovely head and beautiful figure of Anna, in a black velvet dress...Anna was not in lilac, the colour Kitty was so sure she ought to have worn, but in low-necked black velvet dress which exposed her full shoulders and bosom that seemed carved out of old ivory, and her rounded arms with the very small hands. Her dress was richly trimmed with Venetian lace. In her black hair, all her own, she wore a little garland of pansies, and in her girdle, among the lace, a bunch of the same flowers. Her coiffure was very unobtrusive. The only noticeable things about it were the willful ringlets that always escaped at her temples and on the nape of her neck and added to her beauty. Round her finely chiseled neck she wore a string of pearls. (Tolstoy, 71-72)

Anna's vestimentary selections demonstrate that she has incorporated her mortality into her life via her fashion choices, that this is her distinct power. Anna, on the brink of the end of her youth, beginning of her decline, has appropriated these boundaries because she understands her own expiration, even though not with a full consciousness. This is unlike Kitty, who is not, as she

herself noted, in Anna's same realm of understanding. In this dress, Anna reels in the gaze of all the Society men, most importantly grabbing the attention of Count Vronsky, who at this juncture, Kitty intends to dance with. Anna exudes a calmness in her self-mourning, a unity of this finite self, in the velvet material of her black dress. Anna has yet to dismantle her position in society and demonstrates her resolute position with this material. However, her use of lace, and Tolstoy's mention of her escaped ringlets, signify that this is the moment her life's thread is pulled, unraveling her as her plotline further unfolds. Tolstoy's identifying the Venetian lace also plants a seed for their relationship to later grow when the couple journeys to Italy (the trip [and its ending] begins the decline of their relationship). Lace reappears in the final scene of her death, when the quality of her lace is remarked upon by onlookers as she approaches the platform to step off of it: "'It's real,' they said of the lace she was wearing" (Tolstoy, 694). Her use of pansies, a symbol of love and thought for another (derived from the French *penser*; to think) among her coiffure and lace demonstrate that this is the way she ought to be considered: fragile and on the brink of unraveling, beautifully delicate, alive and fluttering towards complete deconstruction.

Anna's paradoxically brief permanence is also noted in Tolstoy's description of the cut of her dress, and what it reveals. Anna's shoulders and bosom, "that seemed carved out of old ivory," are not only an image of Anna's essential radiant sexuality, but a note to both her timelessness and cruelty. Ivory, which will come in contrast with the comparison of Kitty's skin with marble, represents not the immortalization of the natural world's rock formations, but instead human cruelty (in this case upon elephants for their trunks) and inescapable mortality. Ivory, which requires importation, and thus massive wealth, further speaks to the power relations of the emerging global political sphere, and the power of money that will continue to rise in

importance. This is not necessary a political commentary but is more relevant to the human appropriation and artificialization of nature. Her ivory bust, here first seen coming in contact with Vronsky, foreshadows the murderous depiction of their first being intimate, wherein Tolstoy describes Vronsky's feeling:

The shame she felt at her spiritual nakedness communicated itself to him. But in spite of the murderer's horror of the body of his victim, that body must be cut in pieces and hidden away, and he must make use of what he has obtained by the murder. Then, as the murderer desperately throws himself on the body, as though with passion, and drags it and hacks it, so Vronsky covered her face and shoulders with kisses. (Tolstoy, 135-136).

This depiction of the love they share demonstrates that it will, in time, kill her. Another image from her presentation at the ball which alludes to her coming demise are the pearls hanging around her neck. Pearls, as is such with ivory, necessitate the chopping up and killing of the oyster which created it. Her descent is accompanied by a Societal devaluation, alluded to in the cut of her bodice in the previous passage. Anna's figure becomes increasingly sexualized, identifying her with the outskirts of society. As will be further demonstrated in the final part of this section, the figure highlighted by women's dresses plays a role of significance in their social demarcation. As Anna moves through many circles, her choice to don such a provocative neckline sets in motion her assimilation into the lowest of her three ranks, that of dishonorable women.

The first glimpse into the horrors Vronsky senses he and Anna will commit unto one another in their love is witnessed by Kitty as she defeatedly watches the pair dance. Tolstoy describes Kitty's observation:

On Vronsky's face [dancing with Anna], usually so firm and self-possessed, she noticed that expression of bewilderment and submission which had so surprised her—an expression like that of an intelligent dog when it feels guilty. Anna smiled—and the smile passed on to him; she became thoughtful—and he became serious. Some supernatural power attracted Kitty's eyes to Anna's face. She looked charming in her simple black

dress; her full arms with the bracelets, her firm neck with the string of pearls round it, her curly hair now disarranged, every graceful movement of her small feet and hands, her handsome animated face, - everything about her was enchanting, but there was something terrible and cruel in her charm. (Tolstoy, 76)

This passage highlights an insight that had come about in Baudelaire, whose essay on Guys preceded Tolstoy's writing *Anna Karenina*, wherein he articulates the bewilderment woman's mystery instils in men (Trainor, 83). He is awed by Anna's beauty to a point of fear, for her beauty holds within it both of their doom (Anna's demise, and Vronsky's societal devaluation). Her mystical, supernatural influence over him, her thoughtful guidance (perhaps aided by the pansies framing her face and figure), point to Anna's charm – namely, the charm of the mortal boundary she appropriates for her power (over both death and Vronsky, one and the same?). He allows Anna to dismantle his life, his career, for the sake of indulging in her pleasures. A paradox emerges in their relationship, as he dismantles all of Anna's boundaries, the boundary of her life comes increasingly into focus.

Anna wears lace again in her final moments, in which she comes to realize the finitude of all things, love and life the same, and gives thought to her personal evolution through her marriage and affair with each Alexey. She wishes to forget it all, to erase any knowledge of something she could have lost. Her tumultuous mental dismantling preceding her suicide is worth quoting at length. She unravels:

It is dreadful that one cannot tear out the past by the roots. We cannot tear it out, but we can hide the memory of it. And I will hide it! At this point she recollected her past with Karenin and how she had effaced the memory of him... She saw it clearly in the piercing light which now revealed to her the meaning of life and of human relations. 'My love grows more and more passionate and egotistic, and [Vronsky's] dwindles and dwindles, and that is why we are separating,' she went on thinking. 'And there is no remedy. For me everything [centers] in him, and I demand that he should give himself up to me more and more completely. But he wants more and more to get away from me. Before we were united we really drew together, but now we are irresistibly drifting apart; and it cannot be

altered'...Remembering Karenin, she pictured him to herself with extraordinary vividness as if he stood before her....and remembering the feeling that had once existed between MISSING WORD and which had also been called love, she shuddered with revulsion... 'Serezha? I thought I loved him, too, and was touched at my own tenderness for him. Yet I live without him and exchanged his love for another's, and did not complain of the change as long as the other love satisfied me.' (Tolstoy, 685; 690-691)

Here, Anna comes to clearly and distinctly understand for herself that she has met her end. As she has lost all that she thought she would not, the love of the three most significant male figures in her life, inescapable finitude comes into focus. Rationalizing what else could be meant by such colossal endings, she is left with nothing but the end of her own life (which, now highlighted, was only significant because of these now lost relations). She ignores these pasts, longs to forget her losses. She has accepted her loss, and wishes to depart from it altogether, her last ending to unify those throughout her life. Her last clutch at immortality is a complete effacement of all the evidence of her finitude. In the five pages between her first repressing these realizations, avoiding them as long as she can, and when they finally break through her, she calms in a way to accepting the significance of her life: its ending. She grabs hold of these endings, controlling them herself. She realizes, "I cannot imagine a situation in which life would not be a torment; that we all have been created in order to suffer, and that we all know this and try to invent means of deceiving ourselves. But when you see the truth, what are you to do? / 'Reason has been given to man to enable him to escape from his troubles'" (Tolstoy, 693). She assumes, for a final time, her air of elegant beauty. Adorned again with lace and grace, she moves calmly through the crowd, which now repulses her with its ignorance and optimistic stupidity about love and futures, towards the train which has been calling through her dreams since her first meeting Vronsky (wherein the peasant was crushed, and their affair sparked). In these final steps, she gathers the attention of all onlookers, not only particular men who would

normally pay her attention. Every head turns to watch her, with a firm control of her own mortality, move beautifully with vitality towards her doom.

Tolstoy paints the scene:

Two maid-servants, strolling about on the platform, turned their heads to look at her, and made some audible remarks about her dress. 'It's real,' they said of the lace she was wearing. The young men did not leave her in peace. Gazing into her face and laughing and shouting unnaturally they again passed by. The station-master asked her in passing whether she was going on. A boy selling kvas fixed his eyes on her. 'O God! Where am I to go?' she thought, walking further and further along the platform. She stopped at the end of it. Some ladies and children, who had come to meet a spectacled gentleman and were laughing and talking noisily, became silent and gazed at her as she passed them. She walked faster away from them to the very end of the platform. A goods train was approaching. The platform shook, and it seemed to her as if she were again in the train. Suddenly remembering the man who had been run over the day she first met Vronsky, she realized what she had to do. (Tolstoy, 695)

Anna has reached her maximum power. Even though Anna is in distress, and even has a moment of regret just before she dies, this does not undermine the immortalizing of her life force which occurs. Anna's regret for her losses carries through as consistently as the losses themselves. Her choice to resign to the uncontrollable demonstrates her control, even in her instability. Recall, Anna (as are Benjamin's heroes of modernity) is a failed figure. She fails in her attempted claims at relevance. This is not a contradiction in her attempts, she is not trying to immortalize herself and contrarily electing her elimination. Instead, the condition of human life is paradoxical, and consists in immortalization *through* mortality. Nothing can hurt her more deeply than the wounds she's already endured. She cannot lose more than her love, besides her life, which she stands ready to toss aside, in its locked totality, never to be understood by those she leaves behind. Her magic is magnified by her calm, sorrowful toilette. As she approaches the platform edge, she completes the last step of the tiger's leap of her life's movement forward. Held on her arm, Anna

carries with her until her end, the little red purse which holds in it the entirety of her past she's lived until this point.

Red: charming boundary Woman's mystery

Red, similarly noted by Baudelaire, is a color which further demarcates the boundary of Woman's mystery. In his essay, it appears as blush which aids in highlighting the life brought to the artificial made up face, putting focus on the opened eyes. In *Anna Karenina*, however, red appears in two moments of relevance to this exploration. Anna carries with her on the train a small, red purse. The purse represents the boundary of privacy Woman builds around her interior life. The contents of her purse are sacred and informative, and such is demonstrated in Anna's use of her purse. In other words, the purse serves as a container for her life, within are her secret thoughts, and the outside a striking boundary of the unknowable life within. Her red purse first appears when Anna is returning home from Moscow, after first meeting Vronsky. She is plagued with thoughts about him on her ride, with hints of excitement and torment. Tolstoy illustrates her behavior:

With the same preoccupied mind she had had all that day, Anna prepared with pleasure and great deliberation for the journey. With her deft little hands she unlocked her red bag, took out a small pillow which she placed on her knees, and locked the bag again; then she carefully wrapped up her feet and sat down comfortably. (Tolstoy, 91)

The care with which she opens her purse, reveals the vulnerability of her internal condition, and removes that from the stores of her mind which she is to consider along her journey home. Each item in her purse, the paper knife, her book, touch on an internal condition of her being. The care with which she treats her bag represents her beginning to address her emotional state. She treats this process with care, using delicacy with herself. She first pulls from the purse her means for comfort, to put her at ease. She surrounds herself with softness to dull her edges which have been, in the days prior, brought so sharply to her attention. She alleviates her weight with her

pillow, shelters herself in place by wrapping her feet, and holds here a moment, re-centering her private world before letting it roam. Shortly to follow, she removes also from her red purse a book and a small paper knife with which she caresses her face. As she reads to occupy herself, she finds in herself a desire to run away with the main character and thinks about her time with Vronsky. She begins to spiral in shameful self-loathing with a hot burning here, simultaneous horror and joy, life bubbling inside her. She loses her sense of self, and dreamily moves through the cabin. This experience, brought about by her unpacking her inner being, triggers a premonition from Anna in which she senses the peasant who was crushed by a train at her first meeting with Vronsky, and an inkling of her fate ahead.

Her red purse next appears in this fateful moment. Jumping forward six hundred pages, Anna's purse (and lace) again are mentioned. The role of her purse in this moment is significant, coming into its role as the entirety of her life. Anna first passes her purse to her coachman, to go and fetch her a ticket that will not be of use (Tolstoy, 691). She at some point reclaims her purse, and brings it to accompany her to both of their closure. Tolstoy writes the moments immediately preceding her suicide:

She wanted to fall half-way between the wheels of the front car, which was drawing level with her, but the little red handbag which she began to take off her arm delayed her, and then it was too late. The middle had passed her. She was obliged to wait for the next truck...At the very moment when the midway point between the wheels drew level, she threw away her red bag, and drawing her head between her shoulders threw herself forward on her hands under the car, and with a light movement as if preparing to rise again, immediately dropped on her knees. (Tolstoy, 695)

The first moment in this passage is the last time her life attempts to claim its continuation. The red bag, endowed with a sort of conscious life, holds her in the final installation of her evolution, the last particular of the entirety of her being. In the last moment her purse grants her, Anna appeals to the religious motions of her childhood, crossing herself, and seeing suddenly life

“with all its bright past joys.” In the moment of her culmination, Anna brings about all that has been discarded (as will be seen in the final section, is her tendency) to color her presence in the moment. Upon synthesizing her whole past into her whole present being, she arrives at the crux of her existence, which must be followed by nothing other than her demise.

White: pure potential

The final color which comes into play in significant ways for this exploration is white. White perhaps is the clearest symbolic color throughout Tolstoy’s mentions, particularly regarding the relational comparison of different women. Three moments in which prominent female characters wear white appear throughout the novel, highlighting the distinctions between Kitty, her sister Dolly, and Dolly’s sister-in-law, Anna. Kitty is first notably wearing white in the same scene in which Anna wears black. Kitty arrives to her first ball with every detail of her toilette accounted for, perfectly ready for her Societal ascent. Though sweet and perfectly lovely, Kitty is missing the beautiful and enchanting charm held in Anna’s costume. Tolstoy provides a detailed image of Kitty entering the ball, pure potential without yet a sense of ending, which is worth quoting at length:

Although Kitty’s gown and coiffure and all her other adornments had given her much trouble and thought, she now entered the ball-room in her elaborate dress of white net over a pink slip, as easily and simply as if these bows and laces and all the details of her toilet had not cost her or her people a moment’s attention, as if she had been born in this net and lace and with that high coiffure and the rose and its two leaves on the top. When, just before entering the ball-room, her mother wished to put straight a twisted end of her sash, Kitty drew slightly back: she felt that everything on her must be naturally right and graceful and that there was no need to adjust anything. Her dress did not feel tight anywhere, the lace round her bodice did not slip, the bows did not crumple or come off, the pink shoes with their high curved heels did not pinch but seemed to make her feet lighter. The thick rolls of fair hair kept up as if they had grown naturally so on the little head. All three buttons on each of her long gloves, which fitted without changing the shape of her hand, fastened without coming off. The black velvet ribbon of her locket clasped her neck with unusual softness. That ribbon was charming, and when Kitty had

looked at her neck in the glass at home, she felt that that ribbon was eloquent. There might be some possible doubt about anything else, but that ribbon *was* charming. Kitty smiled, here at the ball, when she caught sight of it again in the mirror. Her bare shoulders and arms gave her a sensation as of cold marble, a feeling she liked very much. Her eyes shone and she could not keep her rosy lips from smiling at the consciousness of her own loveliness. 70-71

Here, Kitty and her people have accounted for every detail. She is not completely unsuccessful at the ball, with myriad suitors approaching her, attracted to her youth and exuding possibility. The length at which everyone had gone to achieve her look has, by his mention of her seeming to be born as such, appeals to another insight from Baudelaire about Woman's relationship with her dress. Woman's clothes are an extension of her being for Baudelaire, a blurred boundary begging to be defined, which is further detailed in Tolstoy's utilization of figure. However, the fresh-flowered, delicate charm of Kitty's appearance at the ball, highlights her self-extension into her presentation. However, her need to be sure that everything was "naturally just right" serves as a contradiction, which perhaps contributes to her failure with Vronsky. The artificiality of perfection could not have emerged naturally, and so her mission is confused. She attempts to highlight her natural condition, but she only understands it to be perfect cohesion and purity, not the dismantling of life which Anna appropriates for her look in her wild curls and black lace. She succeeds in manifesting a lovely artificial presentation, but lacks the dimension of depth a cognizance of her finitude and mortality that would have endowed her with radiant beauty. The only detail about Kitty's toilette imitative to Anna's sophistication is the black velvet ribbon upon which her locket rests. Note that her own observation of its charm lies exclusively in that black velvet ribbon. Anna is completely adorned in black velvet; Kitty moves towards Anna's power but cannot reach it, thus only wearing a small item of black velvet.

White appears again later in the novel, this time on Kitty's elder sister, Dolly. Dolly is dressed in a humble white dress as she prepares her children and self for communion. She takes thoughtful care in putting together the children's outfits, assembling a cohesive image of a stable family. Tolstoy notes Dolly's efforts:

Several days previously she decided how all the children should be dressed. New frocks were made, old ones altered, hems and frills let down, buttons sewn on, and ribbons got ready...Dolly, who had been detained by the cares of her own toilet, came out in a white muslin dress and took her seat in the carriage. Dolly, somewhat excited, had dressed and done her hair with care. At one time she used to dress for her own sake, in order to look well and be attractive; later on as she grew older dressing became less and less agreeable to her, because it made the loss of her good looks more apparent; but now it again gave her pleasure and excited her. She was not dressing for her own sake, not for her own beauty, but in order, as the mother of all those charming children, not to spoil the general effect. She gave her mirror a last glance and was satisfied with herself. She looked well: not in the way she had wished to look when going to a ball, but well for the object she had in view at present. 239-240

The early lines of this passage demonstrate the ephemerality of fashion's evolutions. In order for Dolly – whose family's finances are faltering and whose children's father's infidelity runs rampant – to keep up appearances, she is obliged to fit the precision and evolution of Society's vestimentary expectations. It also highlights her family's, and by extension Anna's, thriftiness and personal tiger's leap. By remaking the dresses of her elder children for the younger, and another reference Tolstoy makes to Anna having old dresses remade to lead current styles, Tolstoy demonstrates Walter Benjamin's tiger's leap of fashion, which reappropriates the *démodé*, and modifies it for the present to be on top of the latest styles. Dolly's role in life has changed, her value no longer determined by her ability to garner the attention of the Society man's gaze, her sexuality's relevance has expired. Instead, her duty is to serve as the final individual piece to the cohesion of her family's image, one attempting to convey possibility and life, as their failing marriage still supported three young children. However, they cannot

completely conceal the decrepitude of their stability, showing through Dolly's material, economically responsible muslin. She no longer radiates her own beauty but serves as a component of the generally beautiful effect of the aristocratic family. She has successfully brought into her current circumstances the relevant elements of her past one, fully developing the image of her present being.

Anna appears donning white only twice, each with a distinct significance. The first is compatible with white's function for her sister-in-law (and her sister), wherein she wears a simple white dress with delicate embroidery. The second comes closer to her decline and carries with it an air of desperation. This latter ensemble emphasizes more prominently, however, her figure, and thus is reserved for the following section. Returning to the first, Tolstoy describes the scene:

This time Serezha was not at home, and Anna was quite alone, sitting on the verandah waiting for the return of her son, who had gone for a walk and had been caught in the rain. She had sent a man and a maid-servant to look for him and sat waiting. She wore a white dress trimmed with wide embroidery. . . and as she sat in a corner of the verandah behind some plants, did not hear Vronsky coming. Bowing her curly head she pressed her forehead against a cold watering-can that stood on the balustrade, and both her beautiful hands, with the rings he knew so well, were holding the can. The beauty of her whole figure, her head, her neck, and her arms, always struck Vronsky with new surprise. He stopped, gazing at her with rapture. 170

Anna is here about to tell Vronsky that she has become pregnant. Anna is aware that the pregnancy marks a definite moment of her defeat, she can no longer keep up any appearances. In an appeal for forgiveness, seemingly, for the rebirth along with her developing daughter, she adorns herself in the color of purity. She shuns her instinct which warns of her decline, opting instead for one which has not made contact with its mortality. She holds in this moment the possibility of life, which has yet to begin, and thus yet to begin to end. She soothes the anxiety boiling within her, bringing it to a simmer with the watering can, a cool, refreshing baptism of

sorts. Tolstoy mentions also Anna's rings, shining through her veil of naïveté, exposing her fixed failure. Her rings appear elsewhere, once of note. Karenin also makes note of Anna's many rings, stacked on her third finger, as seen in a portrait hanging in his study. Tolstoy writes this moment, "Above the arm-chair hung a beautifully painted portrait of Anna by a celebrated artist. To Karenin the splendidly painted black lace on the head, the black hair, and the beautiful white hand with many rings on the third finger, suggested something intolerably bold and provocative" (Tolstoy, 259). Through her rings, Anna completes a tiger's leap of her own. By wearing her wedding band on her third finger, she satisfies her obligation to mark herself as a married woman, she demonstrates her present condition. However, the other rings demonstrate her past popularity with suitors, and infidelity to come. She appropriates her past condition, integrates it with her present, and progresses forward into her future. Before this moment, in which their lives have all already melded and each faces the loss of their positions, when she first learns of her pregnancy and holds hope for what the child could accomplish for them, Vronsky notices her rings shining against the background of the watering can Anna uses to cool herself. She's stubbornly optimistic and will continue to fight her being discarded until coming to understand the true finitude of all loves and lives, witnessed in her thoughts referenced in the section on the color black.

Figure and form of the social

As witnessed by Philipp Ekardt, sociologist Georg Simmel models fashion and its operations as form; form of the social, form of the boundary (Trainor, 29). This function of fashion is made operative by Tolstoy throughout the novel. Most essentially, he uses fashion to demarcate his characters' social positions. As seen thus far, many of the colors he highlights in his distinctions – while definitively tied to the social world and its symbolic communications –

have a stronger correspondence with each wearer's psychological state. Tolstoy's utilization of form, on the contrary, points almost explicitly to one's social position within the Society of Russian aristocracy. Not only do modifications in form, as pertains to women's fashion, contribute to her attractiveness by highlighting her role as a sexual being, but they give Woman her charm by emphasizing the boundary. The boundary exploited is twofold, between that of her body and her dress, and her social sphere as opposed to another. The author offers a thorough demonstration of the ease with which Anna moves throughout the multiple circles of the larger Societal sphere. He details Anna's social sophistication and prowess:

The highest Petersburg Society is really all one: all who belong to it know and even visit one another. But this large circle has its subdivisions. Anna Arkadyevna Karenina had friends and close connections in three different sets. One of these was her husband's official set, consisting of his colleagues and subordinates...this bureaucratic circle of masculine interests could not interest Anna, and she avoided it. Another circle with which Anna was intimate was that through which Karenin had made his career... It consisted of elderly, plain, philanthropic and pious women and clever, learned and ambitious men...Anna, who knew how to get on with [everyone], had during the first part of her life in Petersburg made friends in it too. But now, on her return from Moscow, that circle became unbearable to her...The third circle with which Anna was connected was Society in the accepted meaning of the word: the Society of balls, dinner-parties, brilliant toilettes, the Society which clung to the Court with one hand lest it should sink to the *demi-monde*, for this the members of that Society thought they despised, though its tastes were not only similar but identical with their own. Anna was connected with this set through the Princess Betsy Tverskaya, the wife of her cousin ...[who] made fun of that [second set]. (Tolstoy, 115)

Anna's narrative moves her between the latter two spheres. She turns from a remarkable figure of sophistication and class, to the outcast *démodé* herself in the shunned woman. Anna morphs from Karenin— quiet, stoic, reasonable, honorable, Karenin's — wife, who accompanied him to the opera, and 19th-century networking events, to Vronsky — sneaky, devilish, charming Vronsky's — mistress. From Karenin's confidant in the Countess Lydia, center of the second circle, to Vronsky's cousin in Princess Betsy, she departs from her well-regarded position to

fraternizing with the Petersburg's other fallen women. From the moment of the above passage, Anna descends to her final position, fighting her decline by fighting to maintain her relevance in despite of it. As she attempts to appropriate her mortality, she lays claim to her immortalization of someone worth regarding with fondness in the face of her dishevelment. She hopes to immortalize her societal position. Along the way, Betsy introduces Anna to two figures to serve as a warning for her.

In one Society scene which marks Anna's transitions between social spheres, she meets the celebrity, a woman who has abandoned any expectation of family life, Sappho Stolz. Sappho runs in Betsy's circle, the *demi-monde* (*woman as démodé*), representing more broadly and symbolically the emancipation of women from domestic expectation. This is distinct from the emancipation present in Baudelaire, who remarks on the rise of her position in industrialized society, and moves towards a masculinization of form. Quite the contrary, the women here are sexually liberated, unashamed of their promiscuity. Tolstoy introduces this figure:

Sappho Stolz had fair hair and black eyes. She entered with a short, brisk step, in shoes with high French heels, and shook hands with the ladies with a firm grip like a man. Anna had never met this celebrity before, and was struck by her beauty, by the extravagant fashion of her costume, and by the boldness of her manners. On her head the delicate golden hair (her own and others') was build up into sch an erection that her head was as large as her shapely, well-developed and much-exposed bust. At each strenuous step as she advanced, the shape of her knees and thighs was distinctly visible under her dress, and one involuntarily wondered just where, behind, under her heaped and swaying bustle, the real graceful little body ended which was so exposed at the top and so hidden at the back and below. 272

Sappho demonstrates nicely the charm of boundaries at work. Each detail of her presentation distinguishes her. Sappho's eyes, as like Anna's, demonstrate some understanding of mortality and finitude; a cast-out woman, as Anna will become herself, she has experienced the downfall of reputation endured by a woman promiscuous such as she. Nevertheless, Sappho moves about

with dignity and lightness, clinging stubbornly to her pride, taking on the energetic attitude of a confident man (thus highlighting the gender boundary challenged by her behavior). She wears French heels, appealing to the liberalization at work in France, which also served to demarcate and blur various political bounds. Sappho's hair, an intermixing of, "her own and others'," first marks a demonstration of Baudelaire's observation, "Above all she is a general harmony, not only in her bearing and the way in which she moves and walks, but also in the muslins, the gauzes, the vast, iridescent clouds of stuff in which she develops herself, and which are as it were the attributes and the pedestal of her divinity" (Baudelaire 30-31). As is the case with her coiffure, the boundary between her upper and lower body, her exposed bust and concealed behind, is blurred and the mystery of Woman is reborn. As noted, she successfully grasps the attention of onlookers trying to find that charming little boundary.

Anna later adopts this affect once she has been sentenced to her social consequences amidst her affair with Vronsky. Nevertheless, as had Sappho, Anna clings with breaking fingers to the respect and admiration once held for her by all. She appeals desperately to this style dress, not only at the mark of her social depletion, but the decrepitude of her and Vronsky's fondness for one another. Beginning to feel again her inevitable expiration for his interest, she becomes jealous and irritable. As a response, she draws on her widely regarded desirability of the past to rack up attention from other men. Tolstoy describes a dinner shared by Anna and Vronsky with his friends, at the end of which she defiantly leaves to attend the opera and reclaim her status. He describes her affect, and its impact on Vronsky:

At dinner Anna was aggressively merry, seeming to flirt with both Tushkevich and Yashvin. After dinner Tushkevich went to get a box and Yashvin to have a smoke. Vronsky went with Yashvin down to his own rooms, but after sitting with him a while, ran upstairs again. Anna was already dressed in a light silk dress cut low in front and trimmed with velvet—a dress she had had made in Paris; and on her head she wore some rich, white lace, which outlined her face and set off her brilliant beauty to great

advantage. ‘You are really going to the theatre?’ said he, trying not to look at her. ‘Why do you ask in such a frightened way?’ she said, again offended because he did not look at her. ‘Why should I not go?’...Vronsky for the first time felt vexed and almost angry with Anna for her unwillingness to realize her position...Had he told her frankly what he thought he could have said: ‘To appear dressed as you are at the theatre, accompanied by the Princess, whom everybody knows, means not only to acknowledge your position as a fallen woman, but to throw down a challenge to Society—which means, to renounce it [forever].’ But he could not say this to her. ‘But how can she fail to understand it? And what is happening to her?’ he asked himself. He felt that his regard for her had diminished and his consciousness of her beauty increased simultaneously. (Tolstoy, 493-494)

Anna’s behavior here functions, if permitted, as a psychological tiger’s leap. In her desperation, she clings to the charm she once knew colored her essence to make contact with her lost power, that to intoxicate a man. Having reached the end of her mystery with Vronsky, flirting with his friends is her only option to assert herself, and perhaps draw him back in as she feels him pull away. She then withdraws and re-emerges, having laid full claim to the newness of her position; a woman who flirts openly with two men at the dinner table with the lover and father of her bastard child, her husband elsewhere: the *demi-monde*. In similar manner to the previous woman who fights for her relevance through her promiscuity, Anna adorns herself in imitation to Sappho Stolz. Something is notably different about Anna: she wears light silk, only trimmed with velvet. She has lifted the veil that had been over the charm of boundary in her black velvet, with the sheerness of such a material. Trimmed with velvet, she completes a tiger’s leap to her past privacy and heaviness (the black velvet of her ball dress), now freed and lightened with her disregard for expectation, though to be brought down again. Finally, she pays homage to her fragility by framing her face in lace. In contrast with her tendency, this time her lace is white. She fights to assert her fragile, vulnerable existence. She is ready to live with cognizance of her expiration but feigns optimism that this will be on a clean slate. She, with the white lace, asks forgiveness, for purity anew. Vronsky’s attempt to explain to Anna her position is in vain, and

Vronsky is painted a fool for thinking Anna does not have a perfect understanding of her actions. While she has a consciousness of her position and how to avoid its fall, her attempts are misguided and hopeless, as is then evidenced by her public shaming at the opera, and pathetic return to cry in her dress for Vronsky's claims of love. She has lost her power, her prowess. She cannot convince anyone that she remains mysterious, her boundaries are no longer charming. Despite Vronsky's continual commitment to being with her, she feels his feelings slowly erasing, and spirals slowly into her final phases of her decline.

Conclusion

Operating with an understanding of fashion's philosophical significance serves to supplement a thoughtful analysis of its symbolic role throughout the text of Leo Tolstoy's renowned *Anna Karenina*. As noted by Baudelaire in his poetry and prose, the composition of beauty is much more closely tied to human appropriation of natural phenomena. The most significant appropriation is that of the inevitable mortality of all human life, love, fashion, and eras in history. Thoroughly explicated by Walter Benjamin in his analyses of Baudelaire in which fashion is modeled by the reappropriation of the past for the present in the tiger's leap, and Georg Simmel's sociological insights about fashion as a form of the social and charm of boundary, an understanding of fashion is deepened to a broader significance. When supplementing a literary analysis of Anna's evolution throughout Tolstoy's narrative, these ideas and models serve to deepen the analysis available of her presentation. Fashion in the novel demonstrates Anna's consciousness of her finitude throughout her attempts at a life of vitality.

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