A BRIEF HISTORY OF LUXURY AND FASHION

A JOURNEY AROUND THE TIMES

November 22nd 2017
In the beginning...

- One practice that distinguishes mankind from lower orders of animals is the way in which we dispose of our dead.
- Archaeologists who unearth burial sites do not merely find the bodies of the dead, but the items that were most precious to them: jewellery, weapons, horses, and even ships. These are the items that symbolized their power and prestige in life.
- This is one fundamental meaning of luxury: it is what distinguishes an individual from the masses.
Ancient Egypt...

- Look specifically to ancient Egypt, which was one of the most spectacular cultures to have existed.
- In life, the Egyptians expressed splendor and power by every available means. The consumption of certain goods was restricted to certain classes, and there are some things that were the exclusive demesne of the ruling class. Even the practices of preserving the body for the afterlife required highly sophisticated and costly techniques, reserved for a very small elite.
For the Greco-Roman civilisation, luxury meaning dichotomous: wealth and the things it purchases are the reward of virtuous action, yet the direct pursuit of wealth is seen to be at odds with the virtues of the common man.

This conflict is not confined to classical Europe, but can be seen in other cultures, including the Egyptian and Chinese dynastic periods, to the Tokugawa Shogunate in Japan (that persisted through the nineteenth century) and even to the Russian tsars of the early twentieth. Even in modern France, wealth is debated between those who perceive it as an insult to the poor and the source of skilled and steady jobs for the middle class.

AND WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT? IS IT STILL AN ISSUE OF PRESENT TIMES?
One thing to remember is that wealth and luxury has always been a major sociological issue in society, which has to do with social stratification, the notion of practical utility and waste, and decisions about the distribution of wealth. It is a politically charged issue, even in the present day, much of which hearkens to the early and primitive civilization.
19th Century

• The political, philosophical, and social upheavals of the nineteenth century had much to do with luxury:
• Economic liberalism (Adam Smith) suggested wealth as the reward of productive effort, presenting the notion that wealth was something anyone could obtain.
• Philosophers of the same era (David Hume) were able to separate wealth from morality, which were previously deemed irreconcilable in Christian Europe.
19th Century

• The switch to a money economy and general democratization of the west made luxury accessible to all as a matter of right (you could have what you could afford)

• The industrial revolution itself brought about a considerable life in living standards, and mass-production made quality goods available to all

• As society progressed toward the twentieth century, the culture turned in favour of legitimizing luxury.

• In the present day the process is not complete even in developed societies, but seems irreversibly headed in that direction.
19th century: stop to luxury isolation

• Much of humanity, up to the turn of the twentieth century, remained isolated and unchanged. An encounter with someone from another culture was a rare event. With the invention of ships, and later airlines, and later the Internet, cultures gained exposure to one another.

• To go a step further, in most economies the luxury segment has been virtually isolated from the rest of the economy. The producers of luxury were well removed from the majority of the population, who were living in subsistence economies.

• And in the same way, the luxury market evolved separately and in isolation for many centuries and developed a deeply idiosyncratic character.
19th century: stop to luxury isolation

- It was not until the mid-twentieth century that luxury ceased to be a world apart. More people see luxury, and more have access to it. In a sense, this is a bridge of land connecting the "luxury island" to the mainland of consumer society. And what we see is luxury leaking out and adapting itself, to some degree, to the larger society. There is even some degree of threat that luxury, in its original form, is largely disappearing, just as a species can become extinct when its environment and competition changes.

- AND HOW DO YOU SEE FUTURE OF LUXURY? MORE AND MORE FASHION OR STILL EXCLUSIVE?
20\textsuperscript{TH} Century: democratization

- Democratization implies that everyone has access to the world of luxury. That is, there are no restrictions of goods to specific social classes, and the only requirement for having a luxury item is the ability to afford it. (see what we have already seen last time)

- To some degree, this vulgarizes luxury: when any individual, even a member of the lowest classes, can possess a luxury item if he can scrape together enough coin to purchase it, then luxury loses its value as an emblem of social status.

[The democratization of luxury] means more people are going to get better fashion. And the more people who can have fashion, the better.

- Anna Wintour
Democratization implies that social stratification is gradually disappearing. It is not merely that the poor can assume the trappings of the rich, but that rich and poor are meeting in the middle. This assaults the very core of luxury - such that when all people are equal, there is not point in seeking objects that communicate distinction.
To summarized what globalization mean in luxury industry, please consider the following example

In some instance, a luxury product is rooted in culture. Buying a garment made in China is, in effect, buying a small piece of China, a distinct and foreign culture that is differentiated to native culture. In this sense a luxury good may offer an anchor point to a distant and distinguished culture. But in the same sense, globalization closes distances and erases distinctions. It "levels out: of all cultures and religions toward a perfectly globalized society that has only one language, only one class, and only one religion. The lack of distinction among peoples nullifies social distinction, which in turn nullifies luxury.
20TH Century: mass media impact on luxury

- The ability of the media to give everyone the awareness of the cultural richness and diversity of our planet and the many other possible ways of living has been a homogenizing factor.
- Movies and magazines, internet model the social elite, and make people covetous of a lifestyle of which they would not otherwise have even been aware.
- In some instance similar to a religious ceremony. Consider that Apple's annual presentation of new products is "just like some ancient religious ceremony" in which sacred artifacts were presented for the worshipping masses.
Luxury social impact and influences

- Provided luxury stable presence in the history of humanity let’s try now to explore some links and influences with other social and psychological events.
- In particular, with focus on present day society:
  - Luxury and ethics
  - Luxury and time
  - Luxury and money
  - Luxury and art
  - Luxury and religion

AND HERE WE GO LADIES AND GENTS, I’M BACK. AND STILL WANT TO LISTEN TO YOUR THOUGHTS ON ALL THE LISTED ISSUES!!!
Luxury and ethics

- To be a luxury, an item must elicit covetousness without contempt. Consider the change in the perspective of the American consumer toward coats made of animal fur.
- The misbehaviour of the diamond industry has also placed the luxury status of the gem in peril.
- The aim of luxury should be positive. To elevate someone socially by raising their own esteem, rather than by reducing the esteem of others.

Stella McCartney Bag
Luxury and time

• Time itself is a luxury, and the enjoyment of others things is derived from the time we spend with it.

• As such, people gravitate toward sources of entertainment that have a forced tempo - such as a movie or a television program that can be consumed in a specific amount of time, as compared to a book that does not have a set duration, but allows the reader to make time to read, and take his own time in consuming it.

• In terms of time, luxury is often quite timeless and does not yield to the fads or fashions of the day. A luxury item may appear modern in its style, or it may seem an anachronistic indulgence from the past - and in some instances the two are blended.
Luxury and money

• In fact, many luxury goods also happen to be expensive - but merely placing a high price on a commonplace item does not make it a luxury item, and the attempt to do so has not been sustainable for those who have tried.

• Spending lots of money is of interest to luxury-for-others crowd, so much so that they will readily speak of the high prices they pay for things. Consider that in certain cities in China, people will intentionally leave the price tags on their designer clothing, so that others might notice that it is new and expensive.

• Genuine luxury, for oneself, is an abstract concept: beauty and pleasure are not created by the purchasing transaction, not is a luxury item made more appealing by its price.
Luxury and art

• Art is created for pleasure, with little or no consideration of utility, which are also indispensable conditions for luxury. Both luxury and art are largely symbolic and demonstrative of social separation. The value of both are highly subjective, such that it is virtually impossible to get a consensus among all people as to what, in fact, is art and luxury.

• The two are compatible in some regards: Luxury is a great patron of the arts, as individuals who can afford luxury are often patrons of the arts. The application of artistic concepts to practical items is also what gives them their beauty, which is required for them to be appreciated as luxury - and likewise necessary for a luxury item to maintain its value over time.
Luxury and religion

• In ancient societies, religion was linked to transcendence, and was the exclusive demesne of priests and theologians. The arts were there to give them the ability appreciate this transcendence, and they were therefore focused on religious places. Luxury, religion, and are were therefore very closely linked.

• Around the time of the renaissance, the relationship changed. The separation of church and state set power apart from religion, and the consequence was to make the arts the servant of this new power. The objective of artists during this era were different: they no longer derived from religion, but instead sought secular aesthetics, still for the pleasure of the social elite.

• It was during the twentieth century that the nobility began to collapse and real democratic societies began to appear. These societies are extremely individualistic, hedonistic, and focused on gratification for its own sake. This totally changes the paradigm for the arts, making art perishable, temporary, and common.

• What we know as art in the present day is closer to fashion than to luxury, though it remains patronized and consumed primarily by the wealthy.
And today?

• There are thousands of fashion and luxury companies in fashion luxury industry.
• Every month there some new born and some shutting down
• Fashion and luxury products are present in more 100 markets in the world

AND AS YOU PROBABLY REMEMBER...
FASHION-LUXURY INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

• 2,4 Trillion USD: Global Fashion System Market Value in 2017

• It means like the 7th world economy after: USA, China, UE, Japan, Indian, UK

• 65.000 (Mln/USD): Italy fashion system (textile, leather goods, apparel, shoes)

Source: McKinsey, The state of Fashion
COMPANY STRUCTURE GENERAL

CEO

MANAGING DIRECTOR

STYLE

ITNFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

FINANCE & LEGAL

HUMAN RESOURCES

MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

ENGINEERING & GENERAL SERVICES

COMMERICAL & BRAND

RETAIL

REGION

E-COMMERCE & CRM

INDUSTRIAL

CUSTOMER SERVICE & LOGISTIC

LICENSES

FOOD
Visual Merchandising Manager

• Responsible for managing the day to day operations of visual merchandising programs.
• Typical Responsibilities Include:
• Trains visual merchandising staff on corporate display standards, brand concepts and signage for all channels of retail.
• Trains store management staff to properly merchandise fixtures and to maintain presentation standards.
• Conducts regular store visits to ensure that brand and visual merchandising standards are maintained in all stores.
• Resolves store specific visual merchandising challenges that require adaptations including store size, store type, volume, spatial constraints, and inventory levels.
• Implements visual merchandise strategy in alignment with corporate direction, as well as brand and marketing messages.
• Interacts with peers in marketing, supply chain, real estate and operations to drive visual merchandising strategies.
Store Operation Director

- Responsible for the daily operations of all stores of an organization on a country-wide basis. Builds scalable, sustainable operating capabilities in the country. Oversees key projects and initiatives implemented in the store environment. Partners with other departments of the organization to develop strategic initiatives designed to drive growth, profitability, financial efficiency and operating capabilities. Develop and ensure strategies. May also manage multiple relationships in different brands to accomplish strategic goals.

- **Typical Responsibilities Include:**
- Develops strategic initiatives designed to drive growth, profitability, customer satisfaction and/or productivity.
- Oversees the implementation of these initiatives within the retail store environment.
- Identifies opportunities for continual improvement in the daily operations of the field.
- Partners with other functions to define, prioritize and implement strategic projects and initiatives in support long-terms operation strategies.
- Oversees the development and implementation of total store solutions designed to continuously improve all in-store processes and enhance the customer experience.
- Works with different teams to design programs, methods and practices those are executable and effective at the store level. Leads across multiple levels, departments and divisions to ensure seamless, integrated store solutions.
- Works with all levels of brand leadership to educate, advocate and drive operating efficiency.