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IN SEARCH OF THE PUNCTUM IN FASHION FILM

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This group paper¹ will reflect on a *punctum*² in fashion film. In this collective paper it is not our scope to redefine what a fashion film is, however our understanding of fashion film is that the innovation of film has been taken a step forward in the fashion industry, with fashion film being used as a new media. As suggested by Nathalie Khan in her article *Cutting the fashion body* (2012, 1), fashion film has challenged the more traditional forms of fashion media. Previously, designers used photography as their medium to capture images of their collections, whereas currently, many avant garde designers use fashion film as an alternative medium. Fashion film is a moving representation that reflects and challenges perception and object in a digital age³ that is influenced by the visual images, the motifs and narratives that are provided in this medium.

This paper aims to interrogate whether there is a *punctum* operating within contemporary avant garde fashion films. Our main hypothesis reflects on; what draws the viewer into the world of fashion film. As a group we agreed that there is a *punctum* at work in fashion films. To help us validate our hypothesis, we investigated and questioned our hypothesis by watching a number of contemporary avant garde⁴ fashion films, a number of discussions of the films were furthered interrogated, and for this collective paper we chose to analyse two avant garde fashion films that were used to introduce designers' collections. These films were displayed at the designers' fashion shows. The first fashion film, titled *Plato's Atlantis*⁵ was directed by Nick Knight in collaboration with SHOWstudio⁶. The second fashion film that was analysed was *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion* directed by Jeana Theron. Sarah Badat in her article in Times Live describes the film as 'examining, dissecting and refashioning garments with technical precision' (2011).

A descriptive analysis was conducted looking at the two fashion films⁷, followed by investigating the various critical similarities⁸, Nick Knight's *Plato's Atlantis*, an international film and Theron's *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion*, a local film, share a parallel in terms of possible common notion of a *punctum*.

¹ Part of the first Honours Degree in fashion at LISOF, this paper is a result of collective research.

² A *punctum* could reflect on what draws the viewer into watching a fashion film, what grabs the viewer attention and what pulls the viewer into keep watching the film.

³ Nick Knight ShowStudio, digital age a new medium being used in the fashion industry.

⁴ We looked at three contemporary local fashion films such as *Black Coffee*, *Clive Rundle* and *Suzaan Heyns* and one international film *Alexander McQueen*

⁵ As the title of the film suggests, *Plato's Atlantis* refers to the epic Greek tale, the dialogues of *Plato's Atlantis*, was once a great civilisation that was swallowed up into the sea.

⁶ ShowStudio (2000), found and directed by Nick Knight, are short fashion films of moving images used as new medium.

⁷ The two films selected for our research were decided and chosen based on their contemporary avant garde genre and they were not chosen by their origins.

⁸ Similarities noted here in the group discussion were based on their motifs and their narratives.

While conducting this paper the group agreed to focus on various theorists⁹ and using their concepts as our theoretical framework¹⁰. Fashion film therefore occupies an interesting domain, which interrogates fashion and modernity (Evans 2007). Contemporary fashion film has introduced a new visual dimension (Khamis & Munt 2010) to the narrative relationship between fashion and meaning (Barthes 1994); connecting links between fashion as a metaphor for modernity (Evans), reflecting current concerns and the visual impact of dislocated images (Khan) into which many narratives, histories and themes are condensed.

⁹ Barthes, R (1980), *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*; Evans, C (2003), *Fashion at the edge*; Kristeva, J (1982), *Powers of horror*; Benjamin, W (1936) *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*; Khan, N (2012) *cutting the fashion body*; Khamis, S & Munt, A (2010) *The three Cs of fashion media today*.

¹⁰ Throughout the Honours Degree in fashion programme, the group has done coursework, has read and has learnt about these theorists and other unmentioned theorists, but as a group we chose to focus on these theorists simply because we had a general knowledge and understand of their concepts.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Fashion film is introduced by Nathalie Khan in *Cutting the fashion body: Why the fashion image is no longer still*, as 'an integral part of the way fashion is represented on the internet' (2012, 236). While much has been written about fashion and fashion in film, very little has been written about fashion film, especially South African fashion film. Fashion film¹¹ offers a platform for research through various theoretical lenses beyond the scope of this paper, however an expansion on the perspective of the *punctum* could be constructed through Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist theory, Marxist theory, Laura Mulvey's writings on the Lacanian male gaze and feminism in film and postmodernism.

We have chosen to apply the theoretical frameworks of the ensuing works of noted writers on meaning, modernity and technology to two contemporary fashion films in search of the emotive factor - an aspect of fashion film that invites interaction with the fashion consumer, consistent with the shifting¹² role of the fashion image noted by Khan (2012, 236).

Caroline Evans' *Fashion at the edge* (2007) situates fashion at the centre of the turn to the preoccupation with trauma, death and decay. Evans explores the disturbing themes expressed through fashion during the 1990's¹³ and the relation of such visual articulation, to consumer culture and contemporary anxieties. Drawing on theoretical perspectives from Walter Benjamin to Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva, Evans uncovers a labyrinth of symbols and meanings to propose a new understanding of fashion's darker sides. Evans concludes that

the new and still evolving, visual economy in which fashion operates feeds on instability and alteration, always the defining characteristics of fashion. Now, however those characteristics typify the modern world, not just fashion, so that fashion becomes an emblem of modernity itself (Bruzzi & Church Gibson 2000,102).

Roland Barthes' enduring and influential contribution to literary theory set the groundwork for narrative analysis, which was applied to the fashion image in *The fashion system* (1990). Drawing from his seminal work in the field of semiotics, Barthes examines the themes of presence and absence, and the relationship between history and death in *Camera Lucida - Reflections on photography* (1994). Kasia Houlihan, in her analysis of Barthes' *Camera Lucida - Reflections on*

¹¹ Fashion film: In 2000 SHOWstudio, launched an online platform to showcase innovative and experimental fashion spectacles that could not successfully be translated into photographic stills, which developed into conceptual visual narratives, employing the technique's of cinematography.

¹² Implies a shift from the viewer as consumer to the viewer as spectator (Khan, N. 2012, *Cutting the fashion body: Why the fashion image is no longer still*. *Fashion Theory - The journal of dress, body and culture*, 16 (2), pp 236).

¹³ Avant garde fashion progressively challenged the mainstream by presenting the abject, fissured and traumatized body 'a form of the return of the repressed, suggesting fashion as an important arena for articulating the complexities of embodiment in the present' Evans, C (2000) *Yesterdays emblems and tomorrows commodities*. In: Bruzzi, S. and Church Gibson, P. *Fashion Cultures - theories, explorations and analysis*. London and New York: Routledge, pp 94).

photography, explores Barthes' concepts of the *studium* and the *punctum*, which Barthes proposes as being present in any image. According to Houlihan, the *studium* represents surface meaning (denotative), which is 'obvious to everyone' and is easily identified and processed. Houlihan also suggests that it is the *studium* that attracts the viewer and provokes the desire to study and so derive meaning from the image, including an understanding of the self in relation to the image. In contrast, the *punctum* relates to an attribute of the image, which evokes a personal and disturbing experience for the viewer (connotative). More importantly, because the *punctum* causes an (often unwanted) interaction with the unconscious, its nature is inseparable from the process of repression and repressed memories,¹⁴ which may account for the discomfort that it causes, and for its name, which is a Latin word derived from the Greek for trauma (Houlihan, 2004).

Julia Kristeva defines 'the abject' as a manifestation of repulsion and disgust, described in *The powers of horror - An essay on abjection* as a 'vortex of repulsion that maintains the border between life and death, and chaos and order' (1982,12). Kristeva further discusses a typical abject reaction following the observation of

the open wound, sewage, even the skin that forms on the surface of warm milk, as well as a corpse - the most abject of all objects, as a border from which the body must extricate itself in order to live (Kristeva 1982,42)

Kristeva equates abjection to the horror of the unrepresentable, linking the deepest fear, that of castration¹⁵, to the archaic mother. Fear of the 'phallic mother'¹⁶ is often visually represented as a cut, or a wound, or decapitation and various images of the female monster, the most fearsome of these being the Medusa¹⁷. In accordance with this notion Anneke Smelik in *Fashion and visual culture* describes how filmic means can objectify the female body, and depict the body in a fragmented way by cutting, framing and editing, focusing on a section of leg, a breast, the buttocks or face (2003, 164).

The abject as a concept is possibly relevant to Barthes' *punctum* in that abjection is a conceivable response to the observation of a *punctum* in an image - because the *punctum* reminds the viewer of something that has been repressed, it challenges the viewer's definition of his/her identity and therefore the manner in which that identity interacts with others and the world. Such an unsettling realisation would be the kind of experience that the *punctum* induces and the kind of experience that one would react to with abjection. Thus, it is in the destabilisation of a previously solid structure that the *punctum* finds intersection with the

¹⁴ The traces of the past surface in the present like the return of the repressed to address contemporary anxieties (Evans 2007,10).

¹⁵ Freud, S. (1922). *Medusa's Head*. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVIII (1920-1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works, 273-274

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

abject. Additionally, Kristeva's discussion of abjection as a reaction to the resurfacing of something archaic and forgotten, resonates with the concept of repression discussed by Barthes.

The rise of visual culture and online media conceivably enables an increase in abjection and instances of the *punctum*, given that both relate to visual responses. *The 3 C's of fashion media today: convergence, creativity and control* by Khamis and Munt states that, 'the image no longer stands by itself, but is informed by multimedia; it is usually integrated with text and music' (2010, 2). If a single image is capable of preceding abjection and the *punctum*, as Kristeva and Barthes suggest, then surely the combination of images, sound, and text, as well as the level at which humanity is exposed to media will inevitably lead to instances of abjection in response to the *punctum*.

Walter Benjamin's essay entitled, 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction' provides us with the opportunity to apply Barthes' theory of the *punctum*, to film. Benjamin discusses the 'shock effect' of film and explains that because of the dynamic nature of film, the viewer becomes distracted and is unable to contemplate the images separately and thus cannot, as he/she would in the case of observing a still image, 'abandon himself to his associations' (2008, 238).¹⁸ This chaotic situation represents a disruption of order and a breakdown in meaning which is consistent with Kristeva's conditions for abjection and, depending on content, potentially with Barthes' idea of the *punctum*.

¹⁸ Digital media creates a new spatial dimension consisting of virtual image information in 'real time'. The immediacy of this simulated experience negates the existential relation to reality, (Smelik nd, 162) for example the Kate Moss hologram in McQueen's 2006 F/W range, widows of Culloden.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

The similarities between Knight's *Plato's Atlantis* and Theron's *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion* are striking. Both Knight and Theron use a number of common visual motifs and themes to weave the fashion film narrative, however the actual narratives stitch different pictures. Working chronologically, starting with *Plato's Atlantis* and then looking at *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion*, we will begin by looking at the filmic means used to spin the individual tales and then we will investigate the common *point de capiton*¹⁹ that binds the narratives together in search of the element that draws the viewer into the world of the fashion film, in other words, the *punctum* (Barthes 1993).

Relating to the definition of descriptive analysis by Durrheim (2006: 44-5)²⁰, the focus of this study is to describe phenomena. Descriptions about the content of the chosen fashion films, definition of what the perceived *punctum* are and measuring relationships between the contents of the fashion film and the connections to the *punctum* were deemed as important, therefore we are approaching the research through descriptive analysis, specifically focusing on discourse analysis²¹. The study is qualitative in nature²².

Two fashion films were analysed, one film South African and the other international, in order to create a basis for further study in either South African fashion film or fashion film in general²³. These units of analysis can be defined as social artifacts as they qualify as products of human action (Durrheim 2006, 41). The research instrument in data collection was an open ended descriptive questionnaire²⁴ put together by the researchers. This questionnaire explored the opinions on what the respondents view as being a *punctum* of the selected fashion films. The questions²⁵ were chosen and identified by the researchers as being the various obvious physical

¹⁹ Lacan

²⁰ Kevin Durrheim is one of the authors as well as an editor of *Research in practice* which is a research methodology textbook.

²¹ Discourse analysis is "A form of textual analysis that shows how language is deployed to achieve particular effects in specific contexts." (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter: 558)

²² Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006: 272) refer to qualitative research methods as methods that try to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in human terms rather than through quantification.

²³ Once it has been determined whether or not there is a *punctum* present and what it might be, further studies into fashion film can draw on that information.

²⁴ The questionnaire is descriptive as we are exploring in depth opinions of a qualitative value.

²⁵ The questionnaire focused on exploratory questions regarding how the use of perspective, colour and lighting, music and sound, clothing and fabrication, and use of motifs inform the narrative within the two fashion films.

and abstract components that make up a fashion film and therefore might be able to produce a valid answer to the research question²⁶.

The target population of this paper is fashion or film researchers, lecturers, students and anyone in the fashion, film or related industries. The sample population is the researchers themselves who acted as the questionnaire respondents²⁷. This group of researchers consisted of six fashion design honours students²⁸, four of whom are also fashion lecturers or employed by fashion colleges²⁹. The respondents all have at least a basic knowledge of fashion film as there were class discussions on the topic prior to the study. Each respondent individually watched both the films and completed the written questionnaire on their own. The researchers analysed the outcome of this questionnaire by finding key themes³⁰ arising through the data.

This study is validated as the questionnaire does not contain any leading questions that could steer the respondent in a bias direction. A broad view had been obtained through gathering various opinions on a number of components and respondents answered the questions individually, privately and honestly. During the data analysis process, all responses were taken into equal consideration by listing all the themes that arose through the answers before identifying the dominant themes. The research question is answered. The data was analysed by more than one³¹ researcher as to ensure an unbiased outcome. There is no plagiarism in the paper. As suggested by Tredoux and Smith (2006, 167-8), in an attempt to provide generalisability of results, we used appropriate sampling techniques to ensure that the target population is correctly defined and that research participants were representative of the target population. Measures³² taken by the researchers are representative of the number of possible measures of variability. The fact that the researchers acted as the questionnaire respondents could impact the reliability of the paper due to possible pre-conceived views on the films³³

²⁶ We chose to approach the study from a viewer's perspective and not from a film theory point of view, seeing that the researchers do not have a strong knowledge of film study.

²⁷ The reason the researchers themselves acted as the respondents is to offer a subjective and personal view of the films.

²⁸ The researchers are students at LISOF.

²⁹ Three researchers are employed by LISOF, and one is employed by Studio05 School of Fashion.

³⁰ In the data analyses process the researchers identified all the dominant themes that were mentioned in the questionnaire.

³¹ Two researchers took responsibility for the data analyses

³² The number of measures refers to all the various components which could be measured in the fashion film relating to the research question.

³³ The researchers had discussed these films prior to acting as the questionnaire respondents.

Chapter 4 - Data Analysis

In *Plato's Atlantis*, the visual perspective identified by all members of the group was the aerial view, which positions the viewer looking down upon the woman in the film consistent with the camera angle used. In the two minute film, the viewer is welcomed by a body, ashen and corpse-like, lying in the sand. The body is fragmented by lighting effects, cutting (Khan 2012) and framing parts of the body, designating her as object of our gaze.

In terms of colour and lighting (question two of the research tool), it was noted by the six members of the group that the element of darkness³⁴ was consistent, while three sample members pointed out the soft lighting focused on the naked body. Waves of dark and light washed over the body, which according to a three members in the sample, indicated the passage of time or transition, the literal manifestation of the filmic means used.

The conceptual perspective then shifted from the realistic to the fantastic, and the mirror image of snakes winding gave way to her silhouette against a deep oceanic blue background of light, holding the pose of a crucifix, which could possibly symbolise the woman's resurrection³⁵. Another visual element noted in question two by two sample members was the kaleidoscopic effects that Knight used in *Plato's Atlantis*. Our mirror (Smelik nd, 168) split and split again into an eight-sided kaleidoscope, arguably referencing of the multiplicity inherent in growth³⁶.

In question 3 of the research questionnaire, the eerie, hollow sound of the wind and waves in the beginning of *Plato's Atlantis* were pointed out by all sample members, as well as the tribal music later in the film. The rhythmic drumbeat of the music then developed into techno music, which further emphasised the woman's visual transformation.

In our opinion, the human and the machine unite in this new world, through the rhythmic breathing through an underwater regulator, the steady, reassuring pulse of a heart attached to a cardiac monitor and the progression of a hand beaten drum to a synthesised beat.

Assessing the fourth question which related to clothing and (or lack of) fabrication, all six respondents agreed that the naked body was the main element. Two of the respondents discussed snakes acting as clothing, and another two viewed the body as being clothed with

³⁴ In this instance, darkness refers to the absence of light.

³⁵ In the Bible, Jesus is put to death on a crucifix, only to be resurrected three days later

³⁶ The process of growth involves a splitting and multiplication of cells, similar to the way the mirror splits and divides into the kaleidoscope

light, possibly representing the reptilian change of the skin as suggested in McQueen's press release³⁷ in which he motivates the use of the mythical Atlantis as his inspiration.

Strikingly similar themes and motifs are stitched in to the narrative of *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion*.

In *Dissecting the Anatomy of Fashion*, the film opened on a taloned hand, being sheathed in a green surgical glove. The use of the close-up, identified by five of the respondents, could signify a fragmentation of the body (Smelik nd, 164). The first whole body³⁸ evident in the film lay motionless on a hospital bed set in the middle of an otherwise empty room. The aerial view was noted again, once again objectifying the woman³⁹.

The scene then faded to black, and when it came to light again, we witnessed a mirror image - twin surgeons, one tying the others mask. The colour green, in this instance may acts as a visual symbol of the surgical, pointed out by three members of the sample group. This was in contrast to the blood red of the fabric spilling out of the patient, which was said by three respondents to represent her organs (question two in research tool).

As the film's narrative progressed, a butcher's saw screams to attention, which reminded two respondents of the sound effects used in the horror genre. In analysis, this draws to mind Kristeva's discussion of the abject (1983,42). The sounds of the tools, as well as the stillness before the deep breath of the patient were two main elements that were obvious to four and three members of the sample respectively. It was also pointed out that there was a beat, which could relate to the beating of the patient's heart.

Twin surgeons then entered from either side of the screen, their outfits billowing beyond the frame. Clawed fingers, resembling the surgical instruments, unzipped the patient's chest and blood-coloured fabric writhed out of the body. The fabric and its movement was pointed out by four members of the sample. The constructed, motionless fabric of the patient was pointed out by two respondents in question four. The serpentine movement of the fabric over and around the patient was also noted by two of the respondents.

Laces slithered through eyelets and fabric bunched up to form skirt⁴⁰. Snake-like braids (reminiscent of Knight's snakes in *Plato's Atlantis*) slithered around her head. The movement in

³⁷ <http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2010RTW-AMCQUEEN/>

³⁸ The first image in the film of the body as a whole - as opposed to fragmented.

³⁹ Reference this again (same as in the first film)

⁴⁰ Deleuze

her eyes can be read as a simple mechanical motion⁴¹ rather than a sign of life, similar to a child's doll⁴²: easily reproduced but lacking in a true human aura. According to five members of the sample, when the patient's outfit was complete, she came to life. The mechanical doll has been brought to life in a fashion operation; she literally has the life woven into her very being by the fabric that surrounds her. She breathes it in and it gives her life. It was agreed by five respondents that the bright light emanating from the patient's chest at the end of the film symbolised life and resurrection.

As is evident in the similarities in the data collected, *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion* is cut from the same cloth as *Plato's Atlantis*. In both we witnessed transformation. In *Plato's Atlantis* the transformation occurred from human to aquatic creature and in Theron's film we saw the transformation from lifeless figure to living being. Similarly there is a fascination with the interior body, the Kristevian abject (1983,42).

Three respondents agreed that the *punctum* of *Plato's Atlantis* was darkness while the other three respondents agreed that the *punctum* of *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion* was death and resurrection. Meaning can be ascribed to the ideas of death and darkness through the lens of Caroline Evans' *Fashion at the Edge* where she proposes that;

perhaps in the 1990's the imagery of death, decay and dereliction came to stand for mutability more than for mortality. Perhaps it sketched a contemporary sense of change, instability and uncertainty that had more to do with rapid technological and social transition than with death itself. (date, pg)

In *Plato's Atlantis*, the *punctum* was identified by two members of the sample as the flirtation with death and the mystical, recalling the fear of the unknown (Kristeva, 1983, 42). The idea of the unknown and the mystical was also identified as a possible *punctum* in *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion*. Through the research, it is understandable to see how this death, darkness and fear of the unknown could invoke the emotional response in the viewer, which may be described as the *punctum* of the fashion film.

It is important to note at this point that an alternative interpretation of these fashion films could have been surmised through the analysis of the data, by drawing on a different set of theorists through which to view the film. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that since the data analysis was written up by two members of the initial sample group, the analysis was done from their personal viewpoints.

⁴¹ recalling Benjamin's The work of art in the age of mechanical reproducibility

⁴² The dolls of Hans Bellmer where similarly fascinated with the idea of interiority

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

The descriptive discourse analysis between Knight's fashion film and Theron's fashion film aims to draw understanding from the visual representation of a woman's body, the digital image and the idea of a transformation. The aim of the research project was to see whether or not there is a *punctum* present within these fashion films.

Through the research process, that included reading various theorists work to give a basic understanding of fashion film, as well as watching the two fashion films and answering questionnaires. It became evident that Knight's and Theron's fashion films both use a number of common visual motifs and themes - such as snakes that may symbolise death, and the brightly lit heart that may symbolise life - that intertwine through the fashion film narrative. However the visual portrayal of the narrative illustrates different pictures. Knight's fashion film depicts a shift from the realistic to the fantastic and then into a digital kaleidoscope effect. Theron's fashion film however portrays the fascination with the anatomy of body using a metaphor of clothing; the dissecting and sculpting of each individual garment.

The visual perspective in both films use aerial views, which objectify the women according to the data analysis, and are used to depict cutting the body. Darkness is consistent in both the films and an element of light is introduced as well. The data analysis illustrates that the transition between the dark and light symbolizes a transition or passage in time. Both films include a bright light emanating from chest; and according to the data analysis, this represents life. Mystical sounds are used in both films to climax the transformations as well as create fear of the unknown. Both fashion films allowed the viewers to witness a transformation of life.

Kristeva's discussion of abjection as a reaction to the resurfacing of something archaic and forgotten and her discussion of the abject as a marker to a time before humanity deemed the process of categorization necessary, resonate with the concept of repression discussed by Barthes. According to Kristeva, an integral part of psychosexual development is the act of making the distinction between human and animal and categorizing ourselves and others necessarily. In doing so, we establish an identity for ourselves that is superior to the other we have identified. Subsequently, abjection would occur when this distinction is threatened and the repressed archaic memory resurfaces. It is in images, and particularly in the *punctum* present in images which is most likely to facilitate such a resurfacing and an abject reaction to it.

In the data analysis, respondents agreed that there is a *punctum* at work in these fashion films, which was drawn from the themes and motifs. Three respondents agreed that a *punctum* of Plato's *Atlantis* is darkness; the other two agreed that a *punctum* was flirtation with death, and

one agreed the mystical as well as the fear of the unknown was the *punctum*. Four out of the six respondents agreed that the *punctum* of *Dissecting the anatomy of fashion* was death and resurrection, whereas one more felt that it was the unnatural movement of the fabric that fascinated the viewer, and yet another was caught between the twin surgeons gaze. This mysticism, darkness, death and fear of the unknown invoke the emotional response from the viewer. In conclusion a *punctum* is present in both of these fashion films.

There are limitations in this study; the first being that this paper is a group research paper, which may have affected the scope of the paper as each person did a separate chapter. Another limitation is that only two fashion films were analysed in the research paper. More fashion films should have been evaluated and studied for this research paper to allow for the justification that a *punctum* can be applied to other films of the same genre. In addition there was a limited number of only six questionnaires handed out thus restricting the generalisability of the application of the research; perhaps there should have been more respondents.

It is recommended that for future study, more than two fashion films should be studied, and the number of respondents should drastically increase. The scope of possibilities for further study of fashion film is extensive, especially because there has been so little research in this area. In terms of the *punctum*, it would be valuable to look into this through the lens of feminism, post-modernity or even Marxism.

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