

Journal of Fashion Business
Vol.26, No.6

ISSN 1229-3350(Print)
ISSN 2288-1867(Online)

J. fash. bus. Vol. 26,
No. 6:47-63, December. 2022
[https://doi.org/
10.12940/jfb.2022.26.6.47](https://doi.org/10.12940/jfb.2022.26.6.47)

The Advent of the 19th Century Bicycle and Women's Fashion -Focused on France-

Keumhee Lee*

*Professor, Dept. of Fashion Design & Marketing, Seoul Women's University,
Korea

Corresponding author

Keumhee Lee
Tel : +82-2-970-5627
E-mail : khlee@swu.ac.kr

Keywords

women's cycling clothing,
rational dress reform,
19th century, bicycle,
sportswear, bloomer

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the changes in women's fashion, focusing on the repercussions that bicycles had on women's life and fashion, centered on France in the 19th century, and then it examines the significance of the period to women's cycling clothing and its contribution to fashion. The research is based on literature and visual materials extracted from 19th century French newspapers, magazines, and posters. As a result of this study, the appearance of bicycles in the 19th century contributed to fashion as follows. First, the need for clothing suitable for outdoor activities promoted development of new designs with practical and functional features. Second, the clothing worn by female cyclists contributed to the introduction and propagation of new clothing, and pioneering wearing trousers. Third, the boom of bicycles in the 1890s led to the expansion of ready-to-wear items in department. The significance of the period to women's cycling clothing in the 19th century France is as follows. First, the era challenged customs and attitudes towards women's bicycle clothing and led to modernization. Second, a new and reasonable clothing design was presented that required a compromise to be accepted by the public. Third, although the clothing reform movement was not active in France, bloomer-style bicycle clothing was popular among fashionable women in Paris, revealing only its visual status as the capital of fashion in the 19th century.

This work was supported by a
research grant from Seoul
Women's University (2022-0224).

1. Introduction

There has never been a more innovative invention in history than the bicycle (Lessing, 2017/2019). And the 19th century is sometimes called the century of bicycles because innovation appeared greatly in the 19th century according to technological development and design shifts. In addition, as Herlihy noted, bicycles were not only "catalysts of reform" (2004/2008, p. 322), but also called "Freedom Machine" (Smith, 1972) and brought a sense of ownership to women's lives. As such, the advent of the 19th century bicycle acted as a catalyst for innovative changes and had a significant impact on women and fashion. Regarding the influence of bicycles, Dauncey (2007) viewed bicycles as a social good beyond sports, and Lessing (2017/2019) said that it was impossible to predict the widespread effects of bicycle influences. Thus, the impact of bicycles has been actively discussed in various research areas because of its considerable ripple effect. Particularly, many studies have been conducted on bicycles and women in the 19th century on the subject of feminism.

Looking at previous studies on bicycles and women's wear so far, in Korea, there have been studies by Lee Yu-Kyung and Lee Hee-Hyun (2007), Kang (2010), and Bae (2021, 2020), but only research on sports, bicycle poster, and clothing reforms have been conducted. There are no specific studies on women's bicycle attire in the 19th century. In overseas studies, such as Cunningham (2003), Christie-Robin, Orzada, and López-Gydosh (2012), Cohn (2016), Tobin (1974), Rush (1982, 1983), Hallenbeck (2009), and Hanlon (2017), have conducted various studies on discourses on women's bicycle clothing in the 19th century, and reform and innovation of clothing. However, most of the research is focused on the UK and the US, and there are not many studies on France.

The first bicycle was designed in 1791 at Celerifere, a wooden frame built by the French nobleman *Conte Mede de Sivrac*. Later, 'Vélocipède', meaning 'quick foot', appeared, and in the late 1860s, the Michaux-type bicycle with pedals became widespread. In addition, both

technologically and industrially, bicycles and bicycle manufacturing represented opportunities to radically transform the French economy through new processes and technologies (Dauncey, 2012). The origin of bicycles and social transformations associated with them can be traced in France, and the role of bicycles in France was important, thus this study will focus on France in the 19th century. This study develops research on sports, bicycle poster, and clothing reforms in France published by researchers in the journal *Proceedings* (Lee & Kim, 2018; Lee, 2022a, 2022b).

This study will interrogate how bicycles have changed women's lives, the image of women they painted during the period, who advocated or supported them, and the repercussions they had on fashion. And based on this, this study is to examine the changes in women's wear that appeared as the bicycles developed in the 19th century. In addition, it is intended to confirm whether there was a dress reform similar to that reported in England and the United States, and whether there was a trend such as the modernization of women's wear in the 19th century. The purpose of this study is to examine the changes that appeared in women's fashion, focusing on the repercussions that bicycles had on women's life and fashion, centered on France in the 19th century, and then to examine the significance of the period on women's cycling clothing and its contribution to fashion. Therefore, this study will present data and information on the life that women in the 19th century enjoyed through bicycles, the emergence of new women, and the process of accommodating and coordinating women's bicycle clothing. In addition, it will also look at the role of France in modernization of women's wear and fashion trends in the late 19th century.

As for the research method, literature research on bicycles in the 19th century was conducted in books, papers, and the Internet, and various visual materials were also used. Since the bicycles in the 19th century were used to promote various businesses through bicycle magazines and newspapers, research materials were collected from bicycle magazines such as *l'Auto-Vélo*

and *LE VÉLO*, as well as *Le Petit Journal*, *Le Petit Parisien*, *La Mode Illustrée*, *Figaro illustré*, *Arts Déco*, *Revue Illustrée*. Also posters were referenced in the bicycle section and department store catalogs in the digital visuals of the *gallica* in *Bibliothèque François Mitterrand*.

II. The advent of bicycles and in changes in French society

1. Cycling in French society and culture

For a long time, Cycling in France has occupied an important part in the society as a means of transportation, entertainment, sport or liberation. Hugh Dauncey, in his book "French cycling: A social and cultural history," presented an interdisciplinary analysis of the importance of cycling in French society and culture from the late 19th century. He regarded the *Tour de France*, France's representative cycling race, as one of the keys to understanding not only cycling but also France and French identity. In particular, he noted that 1869–1891 was a period when cycling and French culture and society both attempted to negotiate an evolving identity.

The origins of modern bicycles vary, but they empower France. The invention of the Frenchman *Pierre Michaux* in the 1860s greatly improved bicycle design. Previous bicycles had a simple structure made by connecting two wheels with a wooden axle, without pedals or steering devices. Then, with the advent of the *draisienne*, a bicycle with a steering function was born. Frenchman Pierre Migyo and his son Ernes Michaux devised a way to turn the wheel by attaching two footrests to the rotating shaft of the front wheel and stepping on the footrests on either side. In 1861, the finished bicycle was shown for the first time on the Champs Elysees in Paris. Parisians were enthusiastic about the new bicycle, with around 400 "Michaux-type bicycles" roaming the streets in 1865. This was widely known as the 'Velocipede'.

The first cycling club was founded in 1868 and five

velocipedic clubs were organized. By the late 1880s it was so popular that there were at least 100 cycling clubs. These organizations played a key role in the rise of the sport in France in the late 19th century. As cycling first developed into a leisure and sporting activity that was of interest to the leisure and wealthy class, clubs of aristocracy and bourgeoisie were established, contributing to the social establishment of the hobby (Dauncey, 2007).

Bicycles also provided many attractions. On May 31, 1868, the first bicycle race was held at the *Parc de Saint-Cloud* in Paris, drawing a large crowd of cyclists with high front wheels under the French flag (Figure 1).

It was then held in Toulouse (July 27, 1868) and in Bordeaux (November 2, 1868), attracting large numbers of spectators. After the Franco-Prussian War and Commune, cycling did not regain popularity until the mid-1870s. In February 1881, the *Union Vélocipédique de France* was born and the first race of the French National Championships was held 10 km from the *Place du Carrousel* in Paris. In the 1890s, cycling races reached a stage of maturity. The Bordeaux-Paris and Paris-Brest-Paris cycling races redefined the rules of road racing and aroused great interest and enthusiasm for racing in the society. From April 20 to September 1892, an advertisement poster for the 1st International Exhibition of Photography and Related Industry held at the *Palais des Beaux-Arts* in Paris featured a woman riding a bicycle (Figure 2). Also, at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1900, a large crowd watched a bicycle race at *Le Vélodrome Municipal* in Vincennes. As such, the development of bicycles became a part of the society and culture of 19th century France.

2. Changed daily life and appearance on the street

Paris was the first city to have a bicycle dispatcher unit. *Charibati* published a caricature on July 10, 1867. This is the first picture of a pedal-type two-wheeled vehicle published in the media (Figure 3). In the painting, velocipedists surround a wagon and block the

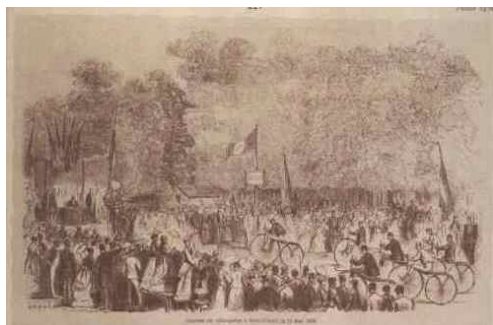


Figure 1. *Velocipede Race at Saint-Cloud*
(www.gallica.bnf.fr)

road. It was titled "*La Revanche des Vélocipèdes*" because many citizens complained about rude and disgruntled commercial wagon drivers. In addition to the *Jean-Goujon* street in downtown Paris, we also present the *Tours de vélocipèdes* opened in 1875 in the *Jardin des Tuileries* in Paris. An engraving from the October 1883 issue of *Man Illustrated* 20 years ago showed *Pierre La Le Mans*'s first test drive on a bicycle at the *Boulevard Saint-Martin* in Paris. With the invention of tube paint and the craze of impressionism, more and more painters were painting outdoors, and female cyclists were watching them in the 1890s (Figure 4). Not only were there women who wanted to ride bikes, but men were willing to teach them how to ride bicycles. In particular, the *Bois de Boulogne* in Paris was the gathering place for stylish Parisians to ride bicycles. They rode their bicycle to the Boulogne Forest or passed through the Madrid port. According to many sources in *Art Déco* and *Le Figaro Illustré*, the *Bois de Boulogne* was a popular destination for cyclists at the time. *Jean Béraud*'s work showcases the fashionable Parisian rider. In addition to that, enjoying cycling at the longchamp racecourse or *Saint-Germain* is conveyed through photography, chromolithograph engraving, and drawing. With the advent of bicycles, the activities on the streets of Paris changed a lot.

The advent of bicycles transformed social life greatly. The Illustration dated June 12, 1869 introduces the Paris



Figure 2. *Poster for the 1st International Exhibition of Photography and Associated Industries*
(www.loc.gov)

bicycle arena on the avenue *Jean-Goujon* in Paris; men riding bicycles indoors, women and children watching. As the number of bicycles gradually increased, an environment where people could enjoy bicycles was prepared in the city. The *Palais-Sport* in Paris was a place to learn and ride bicycles indoors as well as renting bicycles. It had a garage, horseback riding classes, repair facilities and a course of up to 1000 meters (Figure 5). Another example is an illustration showing the day the bicycle brand *Michaux* opened the practice range in 1868, and trendy people flocked to learn the new technology of bike riding. The showrooms were lined with the old curved frame models and the newly launched diagonal models. In addition, the factory displayed production of bicycles, and on the street it showed people riding bicycles. On March 5, 1897, *Le Petit Journal* published an illustration of a hotel waiter escorting a female cyclist to a bicycle depot. In this way, a bicycle parking lot was provided in public buildings. *Crespin Dufayel* on *Barbes Boulevard* in Paris also features a customer with a bike.

There were also bike trails where you could test the Velociped before buying (Figure 6). In addition, as featured on the cover of *Le Petit Journal*, a bride is pictured riding a bicycle. As the bicycle became more popular, *l'Auto-Vélo* of December 12, 1897, carried an illustration of a shoemaker riding a bicycle and delivering shoes. By this time, bicycles had gradually come closer



Figure 3. *Revenge of the Velocipedes Tyre*
(Herlihy, 2004/ 2008, p. 107)



Figure 4. *Components and the Fittings Warwick Tyre*
(www.gallica.bnf.fr)



Figure 5. *Palais-Sport Velocipedic Establishment*
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr>)



Figure 6. *Crespin Dufayel*
(www.meisterdrucke.uk)

to the public in every part of life.

3. French society and women cycling

In the 19th century, women's cycling was controversial in many ways. First, from a medical point of view, there were several controversies. Dr *Léon-Petit* was of the opinion that the structure and design of the bicycle was not suitable for women's anatomy, which would endanger their health or affect childbirth. Dr. *Philippe Tissié* also had a negative opinion. However, this tough stance against women riding bicycles changes, and women were encouraged to cycle. Regarding female

cycling, Dr. *Bellencontre* emphasized that bicycles should be considered a utility and a mode of transportation that can have a positive moral impact on the public, like, how much health benefits when applied to hygiene and gymnastics (Dauncey, 2007).

There has also been a lot of debate on women's behavior and dressing while riding bicycles. A woman's exposed legs while riding a bicycle was against the custom of traditional attire. Moreover, in the dress etiquette that maintained a woman's elegance, it was not acceptable in the public eye at the time to show the feet moving while pedaling. It was a time when modest was required even while riding a bicycle. In addition, women

were excluded from cycling clubs between 1867 and 87. Occasionally, women were allowed to participate in club activities on condition that they would not engage in club management and other non-sports activities. In the late 1880s, as the structure and design of bicycles improved, various experts who had initially opposed women's cycling expressed their opinions in favor of women's cycling, as well as socializing through clubs.

In the 1891 poster for *L'Etendard français*, by Jules Chéret a woman on a bicycle is holding a French tricolor (Figure 7). In France, since the French Revolution of 1789, there have been voices claiming women's political rights, but they have not been well received. In 1793, the National Association, which was then a legislative body, banned all women's assemblies, and all women's organizations were disbanded. The French women's suffrage movement became active again at the end of the 19th century under the influence of British and American women's movements, and it was only in 1946 that women were legally guaranteed the right to vote. The Bicycle was in the process of effecting the social emancipation of women, more surely and more quickly than the loudest advocates. The entry of bicycles into the morespa was made against a fierce resistance (Léon-Petit, 1904 as cited in Dauncey, 2007). 'Long live France!' Despite the slogan 'Let's ride a bike!', for women in the 19th century, biking had to be countered by medical, social, and cultural prejudices.



Figure 7. *Bicycles and Tricycles*
(www.gallica.bnf.fr)

III. The influence of bicycles on women's life and fashion

1. Changes in women's life

A modest woman riding a bicycle in public was ridiculed. Women cyclists were attacked in the *Bois de Vincennes* in Paris. However, writers or cycling advocates had encouraged housewives to ride their bikes. They believed that healthy, good cycling helps women build stamina, refresh, and get back to work. Moreover, with improvements in steering, safety, comfort and speed, bicycles became very popular among the elite and middle class in the mid to late 1890s. This radically changed women's life as they interact with new bicycle technologies (Hallenbeck, 2009). As the women gained freedom of movement by pedaling themselves, they expressed the freedom of riding bicycles as shown in the poster advertisement in Figure 8. It also gave women a new life where they could travel by bicycle. Just as the 'French Travel Club' organized in 1890 handled bicycle tours, bicycle clubs were created and many people enjoyed the trip. Figure 9 shows an ideal cycling society. Leisure cycling for women generally became a group activity. In addition, cyclists not only rode alone, but could also ride with others, and in situations where men and women were equal, love would sprout. Lessing (2017/2019) even compared it to a bicycle where love blossoms.

These features are often seen in illustrations from the 1890s. For example one illustration shows women having fun riding bicycles on the beach, drinking water while riding bicycles with each other in the suburbs of Paris, and talking while riding bicycles with an elderly person side by side. Occasionally, two women rode one bike and run along the beach. Advertisements for Gladiator Cycles also featured a couple on bikes. As such, cycling was considered to be not only a physical activity, but also a way of enjoying fresh air in nature. Richard Holt explains how cycling, a modern way of enjoying leisure and nature, helped the urban bourgeoisie to 'discover' the



Figure 8. *Cycles Liberator*
(www.commonswikimedia.org)

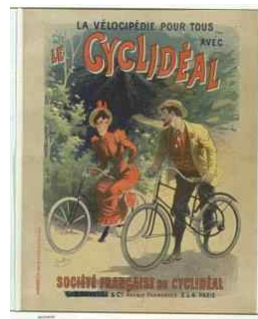


Figure 9. *The Velocipedia for All with the Ideal Cycle*
(www.gallica.bnf.fr)

countryside (Dauncey, 2007). During the first decade of the bike's rise, bicycle adoption increased as a recreational activity among female middle- and upper-class elites.

2. Changes in the women's image

In 1896, the Paris Feminist Congress celebrated the bicycle as a woman's emancipation tool, and Rubinstein (1977) believed that bicycles brought more complete gender equality than any previous sport or leisure activity. Furthermore, a woman riding a bicycle was defined as a third gender because her clothes and attitude were neither male nor female. This created an image that was neither male nor female.

Above all, with the advent of bicycles, the most representative image was that of a new woman. As if cyclists were called 'dandy horses', people with stylish clothes and body showed off by riding bicycles (Lessing, 2017/ 2019). These were mainly aristocrats and middle-class people, and young people who were sensitive to fashion and were strong spirited. Godey's, a women's monthly magazine at the time, described a 19th-century daughter who owned a bicycle as having declared her independence. The "new woman" of the 1890s and early 1900s was an independent, well-educated young woman prepared than women of previous generations to take a prominent and active

role in the public sphere. The representative image of the new woman at the time was the Gibson Girl. Gibson Girl appeared in a variety of forms, highlighting women's talents and interests, beauty, and social skills. In other words, the classic image of a Gibson Girl wearing a dress was replaced with a new look girl riding a bike (Figure 10). Scribner's in June 1895 highlighted the Gibson Girl's ability to engage in and enjoy vigorous physical activity. This image of a new woman spread to France as well.

As shown in Figure 11, the new woman walks into the drawing room with a very proud look and shows off her new cycling outfit. Affordable cycling dresses were quickly associated with the new woman (Sheilahanlon, 2017). When Bloomers first appeared, it was a rather radical outfit. The women who wore them showed off their status as advanced women because it was a costume that combined practicality as well as convenience of movement. Also, at that time, since the skirt was synonymous with femininity, taking off the skirt meant throwing away the woman's 'duty' in the family. So, women wearing pants and riding bicycles was perceived as 'new women' or 'feminists' of resistance and liberation (Simpson, 2001, p. 55). As such, bicycles created the image of a new woman and this perception began to change women's life as well as social perceptions of women.



Figure 10. *Scribner's for June*
(www.loc.gov)



Figure 11. *Bicycle Suit*
(www.wikipedia.org)

3. The emergence and role of woman cyclists

The first recorded women's bicycle race was held on November 1, 1868, in a park in Bordeaux, France. At that time, Bordeaux's Veloce club did not accept female members. Nevertheless, in the 1870s and 1880s, women participated in various types of bicycle races. Silverman observed that the emergence of women' racers in France during the period between 1869 and 1891 was easier than in England (Silverman 1992 as cited in Dauncey, 2007). In particular, the advent of the *Touring Club de France* gradually helped to make women's cycling more accommodating. In 1896, there were 5,000 female riders in Paris alone (Lessing, 2017/ 2019).

In these cycling races, the female cyclists' attire became a social issue. The women's lace had a special charm that they showed; this was a new outfit that had never been showcased before. In 1867, when upper-class women came to the Michaux store to learn to ride a bike for the first time, they wore stylish gymnastics attire. For a cycling performance by a female velocipedist in 1869, the rider wore a hat, satin jacket, knee-length shorts, long stockings, and mid-length boots. There was also an article in which women cyclists dressed like gangsters. However, there were reports that sometimes their elegance was seen differently depending on their outfits, the flexibility of the riders, and the way they handled their bicycles (Dauncey, 2007). In 1879, Ernestine Bernard, a French woman, won the three-mile

race in a tight-fitting outfit at a stadium in Toronto, Canada (Figure 12).

The outfit that had the greatest impact was the British Tessie Renolds costume. This was presented in an event that had a ripple effect in England, the United States, and France. Tessie Renolds set a record with her bike in 1893, from Brighton to London in eight and a half hours round trip. At the time, she did not wear a tight corset. The trousers, shirt, and coat outfit she wore were masculine but dress reform advocates supported her outfit. She was active in dress reform five years before the formation of the local cycling dress reform club and continued to dress regularly (Barlow, 2013). In particular, her "cut and tightened below the knee" trousers became a model for dress reform. To make bike riding safer and more comfortable, female cyclists refused to wear skirts and corsets. In France, it was worn by the actor and singer *Blanche d'Antigny* and presented to the public (Figure 13).

4. The repercussions of bicycles in women's fashion

With the advent of bicycles, various controversies arose around women's dress. A woman, *merveilleuse*, appeared in *vélocipède*, the origin of the bicycle early on. However, it was perceived dangerous to ride a bicycle for the sake of modesty of young women. The wind lifted the skirt and stuck to the pedals, cogs, chains and cans. After the French Revolution, a law was enacted to



Figure 12. *Ernestine Bernard's Cycling Suit*
(Herlihy, 2004/2008, p. 257)



Figure 13. *Blanche d'Antigny*
(www.gallica.bnf.fr)

ban women from wearing pants in 1800, so Amelia Bloomer's proposal to shorten the length of the dress and to wear pants was not accepted. Due to the gender symbolism of pants, which means masculinity and power, it faced severe criticism and counterattack, and the realization of the cause of reforming women's dress severely challenged.

However, in gymnastics, physical education, and other sports, 'reasonable doubles' had room for acceptance to some extent due to the specificity of sports and the exceptionality of the activity space (Cunningham, 2003). In 1897, *Illustrated Police News* reported of an incident in Paris where an enraged crowd forced a female cyclist to wear a bicycle outfit and scare people, then flee to a nearby cafe and escape through the back door. In the 19th century, caricatures conveyed negative feeling by expressing uncomfortable and funny cycle clothes (Lessing, 2017/2019). As such, the attire of female cyclists was not easily accepted by the society.

Nevertheless, bicycles are often associated with fashion and have been a necessity, especially among fashionistas. In particular, it had such a big impact that it became a must-have item for dandy. Stylishly dressed women rode bicycles to show off their superiority. Women's cycling clothing of the 1860s was associated with the wealthy and fashionable types who followed the latest trends and played the role of respectable progressive women. Until the mid-1890s, cycling was a top trend among fashionable women. As a result, the need for outfits that

were suitable for outdoor activities as well as cycling, gradually begun to be recognized. Long before the bicycle craze broke out, there was dress reform movement that criticized corsets and fashionable clothes that restrained and harmed women's bodies and suggested comfortable and practical clothes as alternatives. The representative clothing promoted by the dress reformers were women's pants such as bloomers, divided skirts, and kickerbockers (Bae, 2021). On the contrary, most of the interviewees of *M. de Loris* preferred skirt, which they claimed to be infinitely more graceful and becoming. They declared at will that a woman had remain a woman in all circumstances of life, and that only the long, flowing skirt could preserve her charm and mystery (Figure 14).

On the other hand, there were people who supported pants. Skirts were not suited to bicycle riding as they would be lifted up and inflated like balloons; this created great resistance to motion and in the process, the rider need to exert more effort to advance; the skirt also clung to the pedals, to the toothed wheel, to the chain, and would, when mounting or dismounting, cause serious falls. So the rational costume for the female cyclist was loose, pleated breeches with wide pleats all around the hips (Figure 15). Nevertheless, it was because of the novelty of this outfit that was not yet fully accepted by the customs that trousers were not approved. It required compromises to satisfy everyone.



Figure 14. *The Petticoat, after the Models of Mr. Redfern* (Régamey, 1898, p.94)



Figure 15. *Cycling Wear for Woman* (Régamey, 1898, p.95)

IV. Changes and reforms in bicycle and women's fashion

1. The development of bicycles and changes in women's fashion

The history of bicycles is divided into three historic periods; the early inventions of the 1790–1860s, the high-wheeling and tricycles of the 1870–1880s, and the cycling craze of the 1890s (Hanlon, 2016). The costumes of the 1790–1860s, the early invention of the bicycle, are as follows. In the early 19th century, bicycles were mainly for men, so in the 1818 Luxembourg Gardens, women were just spectators, wearing fashionable Empire-style dresses. Afterwards, women in the era of the hobby horse wore costumes that were not much different from the leisure gowns of the time. Figure 16 shows the side, front and back views of a woman riding a bicycle. They are riding the hobby horse in high fashion leisure outfits with bright overdresses, long frilled hemlines and statement-making bonnets. The women's hobby horse was almost identical to the men's, but the frame was modified so that women could wear the lavish dresses that were fashionable at the time.

Manufacturers were trying to make a machine that would prevent woman from taking off her dress. Mr. Steiner made a small bike powered by a lever on the

rear wheel. The machine was low, the rudder was hung to prevent tremor in the forearm, and the rider sat in a wicker seat that prevented dress from spilling out of the machine (Figure 17). A four-wheeled vehicle that moves the rear wheel with a simple connecting rod appeared for women (Figure 18). But everything was made of wood and it was too heavy for a woman to ride (Baudry de Saunier, 1893).

In the era of tricycles and high-wheel bicycle in the 1870s and 80s, only a few women enjoyed bicycles. Most of them were wealthy or aristocrats, sometimes a few circus performers. The need for clothing suitable for riding bicycles was recognized, but it was limited to gym clothes or clothes reminiscent of riding clothes. A side saddle high wheeler that mimics the side saddle position of an equestrian appeared, with a woman riding on the side saddle. It did not reveal the shape of the legs and accepted the conventional women's dress, so it seemed to have solved the problem of women's clothing from the customs and social viewpoints of costume. In addition, the newly emerged tricycle allowed noble women to wear long skirts without exposing the movement of their legs. Riding like this did not deviate from traditional attire. However, the pleated underskirt and the knee-length overskirt lifted the skirt every time the pedal was pressed. Cohn (2016) also stated that each type of bicycle required different clothing, which was determined



Figure 16. *Hobbyhorses for Ladies* (Baroni, 2008, p.21)



Figure 17. *The Bicycle Steiner* (Baudry de Saunier, 1893, p. 497)



Figure 18. *The Christian Quadrivèle* (Baudry de Saunier, 1893, p. 497)



Figure 19. *Female Velocipedist Performance* (www.sheilahanolon.com)

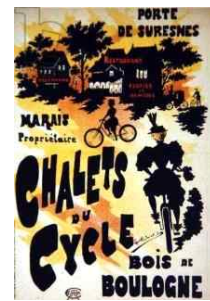


Figure 20. *Chalets du Cycle* (www.postermuseum.com)

by the construction of the machine and the types of clothing that were in vogue at the time.

Changes were also seen in the clothes worn by women learning to ride bicycles. During the golden age of Velocipede, which began with the advent of the 'pedal' bicycle in 1867, aristocrats and bourgeois women came to the Misho shop to learn how to ride bicycles. They wore stylish gym clothes. Two French female velocipedists cycle in 1869 at the Royal Pleasure Gardens in Woolwich, wearing a jockey hat, satin jacket, knee-length trousers, long stockings and mid-length boots (Figure 19). A few special-class women riding bikes wore tight-fitting jackets, short skirts, and bloomers. It showed that wearing a short skirt over shorts was established to solve the problem of women's cycling attire. At *Petit frères*, 23rd Avenue on the *Champs-Élysées*, a woman could learn to ride a bicycle under the guidance of a teacher if she accompanied her

husband. No special costumes were required for learners. However, changing into linen trousers brought freedom of movement. A simple round dress was enough for the first lesson. Even with a skirt, a beginner's pace was not fast enough for the folds of the dress to catch on the shelves (Baudry de Saunier, 1893). The *Chalets du Cycle* (Figure 20) was a favourite *rendez-vous* in Paris during the Belle Epoque for society and fashionable members of the Parisian smart set known as the '*Tout-Paris*'; the new craze for cycling gave a chance for both sexes to meet and to wear the exciting new sports clothing (www.aflo.com).

2. The bicycle boom of the 1890s and the reform of women's fashion

Since the mid-1880s, more comfortable and accessible bicycles started appearing. The advent of safety bicycle,

similar to today's bicycles, created a cycling craze in the 1890s. According to Gaboriau (1991), bicycles in France were at the center of civilization and became very popular between 1889 and 1903. The popularity of bicycle on continental Europe, especially in trendy Paris, gave the product a degree of prestige and glamour like never before. It facilitated the adoption of bicycle, especially among women. Moreover, by the mid-1890s, cycling was the top leisure trend among fashionable women. As women rode bicycles and enjoyed outdoor activities, they needed practical clothes suitable for the activities.

In general, women's cycling attire was a walking skirt style. That is, skirts, jackets, blouses, and hats in sturdy tweed fabric with skirts shortened by several inches. The colors were gray and dark green so that dirt and dust on the road would not stand out to the eye. Another cycling outfit was a riding-inspired. It was a tailored jacket and skirt with the front part cut long. It allowed leg movement while hiding the appearance of the feet and completely covered the shoes when the rider's knees were bent. It did not expose movement and was reminiscent of aristocratic female equestrians. The bolero or the short jacket was better suited to cycling than the silk blouse so often adopted. Wool was absolutely necessary to avoid colds. Only the boater and soft felt were allowed, with a sober trimming, consisting of a ribbon and a wing or a straight feather. For stockings, flashy colors and flashy checks were avoided. Preferably, stockings that matched the suit, or just black stockings used (Régamey, 1898).

In 1895, Alice Bygrave invented the convertible skirt in England, which was competing with France for bicycle technology. It can be fixed by pulling the strap from the waist in the center of the skirt, and it could be adjusted to the length desired by the rider. It looked like a skirt, but it was suited to the riding activity. Bicycle manufacturers also invented ways to fit conventional women's dress. Skirt guards were devised to prevent the wide width of the skirt from getting caught on wheels or pedals. This was patented in 1898, allowing women to safely ride their bikes without being disturbed by a

full skirt.

Cycling also affected underwear. The corset would lead fatigue of the vertebral column and was a hindrance when riding a bicycle. To reduce this discomfort, corsets were designed to better fit the hips, be looser, and have wire instead of bone. The ideal underwear would be a very soft corset, with flexible stays, no busks, much cropped on the hips and very low rise. Women who enjoy speed riding bicycles started refusing to wear corsets, because they did not leave enough room for the ribs and hindered breathing, they also hindered the movement of the hips and the legs. A corselet, a hunting corset, very low and very swaying, was to be adopted, without the combs. The waist may have been thin, however, but the chest and loins needed to be comfortable. Garters were also to be banned and replaced with garters attached to corsets and stockings (Baudry de Saunier, 1893).

Women generally preferred short dresses below the knee to loose trousers. Some women dressed completely like men, but the jacket's waist fits snugly. The most practical mod was wide and fluffy panties with a pleated dress that would be raised downstairs (Baudry de Saunier, 1893). Figure 21 shows various bicycle outfits for women. Even in the trend of fashionable dresses, mid-length skirts and bloomers were accepted as bicycle outfits for function and activity. A portrait showing fashionable female cyclist enjoying cycling at the *Bois de Boulogne* in Paris in the 1890s (Figure 22). This is proof of the cycling craze that started in Paris at the end of the 19th century, and show women's cycling clothing.

3. Bicycles and women's ready-to-wear

Department stores first appeared in Paris, France. Cycling clothing sold in *Bon Marché*, the world's first department store appeared in a commercial catalog in 1895. This outfit consists of bloomer-style trousers and a top with puffy sleeves. Left feature of Figure 23 is a heavy mixed surge outfit for cycling or hunting consisting of an open or closed bolero jacket and baggy Zouave trousers with open sides. For the consumer's



Figure 21. *Some Female Costumes*
(Baudry de Saunier, 1893, p. 503)



Figure 22. *In the Bois de Boulogne*
(www.wikipedia.org)

choice, there is also a cheviotte jersey suit made from Scottish wool for the same design. Right figure of Figure 23 is a bicycle rider costume made of cheviotte jersey. It consists of a pleated mouse at the waist, a large pleated skirt and baggy trousers. The Same design could also be produced with a big plain cheviotte. Left image of Figure 24 is a cycling suit in plain or mixed cheviot material. It consisted of a bolero and a skirt. This short-fitted jacket with leg of mutton sleeve. Skirts could be sold separately. Alternatively, the top was a bolero jacket of the same design, but the skirt was culottes. Right image of Figure 24 is a mixed surge cycling suit. It consisted of a blouse and culottes. Blouses and culottes were also available as separate items.

Hygienic knit shirts (*Chemises tricot hygiénique*) were also sold. The design is in natural shades, fine knits with or without collar. The material was pure wool. Also available in wool and cotton blends. There are also hygienic knit shirts for the night, which were made with strong stitches. It had a collar and side pockets. And also suits for cycling in tricot jersey. They were navy blue, black and marenge colors. They also sold special items such as pantyhose (*coulotte collante*), bloomers (*coulotte bouffante*) and swimsuit (*maillot*). These products were available by sizes such as small, medium, grade, and extra large.

In addition, special items for cyclists were also sold. In particular, stockings were essential for the shortened

trousers. The 1893–94 catalog introduced a variety of stockings, such as cotton stockings, ribbed, coarse ribbed stockings, wool stockings with fine ribs, and wool stockings with large ribs. English style stockings were ease bottom, ribbing, and fancy mottled. Scottish type stockings were woolen with large stitches. As for the colors, dark and dark colors such as black, blue, martens, and gray were predominant.

The Louvre department store (*Magasins du Louvre*) also sold cycling apparel. These products were introduced in *La Mode Illustrée*, the representative fashion magazine of the time. Figure 25 is a cycling outfit with a jersey blouse. It was a short length with the wide width of the pants gathered at the bottom. The model was holding a bicycle handlebar. It was a product of 1895. Figure 26 also introduced the cycling outfit sold at *Magasins du Louvre* along with the hunting-sport outfit. The woman leaning on her bicycle wore a fitted jacket with puffed sleeves and a pleated skirt with a slightly shorter skirt. It was a product of 1896.

As such, department stores introduced women's cycling fashion in the mid-1890s. It was ready-to-wear with the same design but different materials. In addition, by selling each bicycle outfit individually, it was provided that pants or skirts, jackets or blouses as well as stockings and other products could be purchased separately according to the consumer's taste.



Figure 23. *Bicycle Rider Costume*
(www.bibliotheques-specialisees.paris.fr)



Figure 24. *Cycling Suit Costume*
(www.bibliotheques-specialisees.paris.fr)



Figure 25. *Cycling Outfit*
(www.cdn.bridgemanimages.com)



Figure 26. *Cycling Outfit and Hunting-sport Outfit*
(www.cdn.bridgemanimages.com)

V. Conclusion

This study aimed is to examine the changes that appeared in women's fashion, focusing on the repercussions that bicycles had on women's life and fashion, centering on France in the 19th century, and examined the significance of the period and the contribution to fashion.

The changes in women's fashion following the development of bicycles in the 19th century were as follows. The clothing of the 1790–1860s, the earliest invention of the bicycle, was not very different from the leisure wear of the time, and the frame of the bicycle was modified so that women could wear fashionable dresses at the time. With the advent of the pedal bicycle in 1867, a small number of aristocratic and bourgeois women started learning to ride and wore stylish gym clothes. A female cyclist wore a jockey hat, jacket, knee-length trousers, long stockings and mid-length boots. A few women riding bicycle wore tight-fitting jackets, short skirts, and bloomers. Women were first seen wearing short skirts over shorts to solve the problem of women's cycling outfits. In the era of tricycles and high-wheel bicycles in the 1870s and 80s, a small number of women recognized the need for clothing suitable for cycling, but they still wore clothing reminiscent of riding clothes or gym clothes. However,

wearing tight-fitting jacket and a long skirt that did not reveal the shape of the legs still ensured safety from the customs of women's clothing and social gaze. The advent of safety bicycles brought about a bicycle craze in the 1890s, and cycling was the top leisure trend among fashionable women, so practical clothing suitable for outdoor activities was required. In general, women's cycling attire was a walking skirt style. That is, short-length, waist-fitting jackets or blouses, and skirts shortened by several inches to prevent snagging.

The emergence of bicycles in the 19th century contributed to fashion as follows. First, as bicycles, which brought changes to women's life, were adopted as leisure activities, the need for clothing suitable for outdoor activities was encouraged. In other words, it was directed towards cycling clothing with practical and functional activity. Second, although the clothing worn by female cyclists were criticized for being masculine, it contributed to introduction and dissemination of new clothing by refusing to wear corsets, supporting reasonable clothing, and pioneering the wearing of pants, which were considered a gender symbol. Third, the boom of bicycles in the 1890s made it possible for expansion of ready-to-wear items and select designs according to consumers' tastes by producing and selling ready-made bicycle costumes and related accessories in department stores.

The significance of the times to women's cycling clothing during the 19th century in France is as follows. First, just as the second half of the 19th century, especially 1869–1891, was an era in which French society and culture attempted to negotiate an evolving identity, women's cycling clothing existed in two versions: a skirt and pants. It was a time when customs and attitudes collided in terms of conventional women's dress and gender and were moving toward modernization of fashion. Second, to solve the problem of women's bicycle clothing in the 19th century, not only the structural and technological development of bicycles, but also new rational clothing designs were presented. It was a time when public acceptance and compromise efforts were needed in order to be recognized for new and innovative clothing that was unfamiliar with the customs of many people. Third, in France, there was not as much active effort for dress reform or rational clothing as in England or the United States, but the style of wearing a bloomer-style bicycle outfit became a hit among young Parisian women, especially fashionable women. It only showed its visible status as the capital of fashion in the 19th century.

Changes in women's cycling clothing and designs shown through reasonable clothing reforms began to receive popular support in the 20th century when the popularization of bicycles began, so more specific styles and specialized cycling sports clothing should be examined in follow-up studies.

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Received (November 8, 2022)

Revised (December 8, 2022)

Accepted (December 13, 2022)