

ThursdayStyles

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Citizen Anna

By CATHY HORNE

If there is one thing that no one doubts about Anna Wintour, the editor of *Vogue*, it is her power. To many she is the dominant figure in the fashion world, her influence greater than any contemporary editor and running close to a press baron, because she has sought through her magazine and its spinoffs to set the agenda for an industry and through her civic causes, like the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to influence the cultural life of New York.

And to millions of people to whom her power is less real (who know her only in connection with "The Devil Wears Prada") she is also a symbol: the small cross-armed woman in the front row, inscrutable behind her dark glasses and self-protecting English bob, her effect equal parts terrifying and calm, like the center of the storm she has dominated for 19 years.

Wielding power like a press baron, Anna Wintour extends her influence throughout the fashion industry.

For as much as Ms. Wintour, 57, is scrutinized, her deal-making within the fashion industry is one activity that has received scant attention. In recent years she has gone beyond the editorial domain and involved herself in the placement of designers at fashion houses. Her efforts fall across a spectrum of involvement, from outright pitching the name of a person she likes to a chief executive, to putting her weight behind a pending decision, to effectively make a marriage. She instigated the deal last year between the men's designer Thom Browne and Brooks Brothers, cultivating in a virtually unknown talent the idea of a larger audience and then urging the company's chief executive, Claudio Del Vecchio, to give him a chance. "She put a lot of pressure on me," Mr. Del Vecchio said. "She'd say, 'I think there's something here. Please keep talking.'"

This fall, Mr. Browne's designs will be in '90 Brooks Brothers stores — and, presumably, of course, in *Vogue*.

Ms. Wintour has also been busy trying to find a new employer for Phoebe Philo, the English star who left Chloé in 2005. Last May, Ms. Wintour invited Ms. Philo to a lunch in New York with François-Henri Pinault, the chief executive of PPR, the French luxury-goods group that owns brands like Gucci, Yves Saint Laurent and Balenciaga.

"It was quite simple," Mr. Pinault said of the lunch. "She

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