CULTURE COSTUME
& DRESS

REGARDING FASHIONABLE SOCIETY

Proceedings of the Second International Conference 2019

Edited by Anne Boultwood

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Birmingham City University
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Preface

The CCD conferences provide a unique opportunity to bring together researchers to share their research and explore common themes in an inclusive environment that welcomes contributions from any and all disciplines, as long as the discussion is about dress.

This was the case with this year's conference, which took as its theme *The Fashionable Society*. At first sight, this might suggest an interest exclusive to fashion theory, whereas in fact, it embraces many aspects of the study of dress. Fashion is not confined to our present times; it has been around as long as individuals have worn something different and others have copied them; and fashion has permeated all societies, throughout time, and in all cultures. It can also provide clues to the beliefs and attitudes of others; it can be a source of power; and of course, it offers scope for the study of self-expression and identity.

All of these themes came together in our conference, and we were fortunate in having a group of keynote speakers who between them offered a full range of perspectives. Robyn Calvert gave a fascinating insight into the clothing style of artists, designed to reinforce their creative identities, particularly focusing on the Pre-Raphaelites and Aesthetes, proposing a definition of what is meant by *artistic dress*. Eleri Lynn explained the symbolism behind the fashions of the Elizabethan court, and how it was used by Elizabeth to mythologise herself and her reign. Susan Vincent provided food for thought by questioning the concept of fashion itself, which, with all its multiple meanings, is both diffuse and ambiguous. Finally, Vide Martina Plok told us about the relationship of Modernist Women writers to fashion, how they responded to it, and how they deployed it in their novels.

A range of papers, some of which are presented here, were equally thought provoking, covering fashion in all its manifestations, including Islamic fashion, cultural expression, fashion as depicted in exhibitions, fashion journalism, and contributions that were as wide-ranging as they were insightful. Such a mix of perspectives and ideas generated some exciting discussion, and resulted in many serendipitous exchanges, which I am sure will bear fruit in the coming months and years.

As always, I enjoyed meeting colleagues that in other circumstances, I might never have come across. Their viewpoints elicited new insights into my own subject, and together we explored new synergies in our understanding of fashion.

I am grateful to all our delegates, and look forward to meeting again at CCD2021.

Anne Boultwood
June 2019

KEYNOTES

Dr Robyne Calvert
Mackintosh Research Fellow, The Glasgow School of Art

Dr Robyne Calvert is a Cultural Historian with research interests focused on the history of art, architecture and design in Britain. In her current role as the Mackintosh Research Fellow at Glasgow School of Art, she is charged with fostering innovative research projects arising from the Mackintosh Building restoration project. From this, she is writing a new history of the building to be published by Yale University Press in 2020. She is also a visiting lecturer in art history at the University of Glasgow, where she teaches and supervises students on the MLitt programmes in Technical Art History and Dress History.

While Dr Calvert moved to Scotland to research Glasgow Style art & design, her PhD research took a slightly different direction in focussing on the way artists dressed to express their creative identities. Inspired by Charles Rennie Mackintosh's "floppy bow tie", she studied nineteenth-century British artists and designers, including the Pre-Raphaelites and Aesthetes, to seek a clearer definition of Artistic Dress and how it was practiced. Her thesis "Fashioning the Artist: Artistic Dress in Victorian Britain, 1848-1900" (University of Glasgow 2012), for which she received a Pasold Fund PhD bursary, is currently being revised and expanded for publication.

Artfully Undressed: Artistic Dress and Fashionable Society in Victorian Britain

Eleri Lynn

Eleri Lynn is Curator of the dress collection at Historic Royal Palaces, the charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, Banqueting House, Kensington Palace, Kew Palace and Hillsborough Castle. She cares for a Designated Collection of 10,000 items of royal, court and ceremonial dress dating back to the sixteenth-century. She has curated a number of major fashion exhibitions, most recently *Diana: Her Fashion Story* at Kensington Palace, and is a tutor on the FutureLearn Online Learning Course on Royal Fashion (with the University of Glasgow). She is the author of *Tudor Fashion* (Yale University Press, 2017: winner of the 2019 Historians of British Art Award for exemplary scholarship pre-1600), and is currently working on the follow-up publication, *Tudor Textiles* (Yale University Press, forthcoming). She recently made news headlines for her work on the Bacton Altar Cloth, a ca.1600 item of elite court dress with an interesting provenance to Elizabeth I's own wardrobe.Eleri joined the Department of Furniture, Textiles and Fashion at London's Victoria and Albert Museum in 2003, and was the Assistant Curator of *The Golden Age of Couture: Paris and London 1947-1957* (2007). Whilst at the V&A she also authored*Fashion in Detail: Underwear* (V&A, 2010) and devised and curated the major international touring exhibition, *Undressed: 350 Years of Underwear in Fashion* (2014-5).

Power and meaning: the symbolism of dress at the Elizabethan court

The use of symbolism in dress developed throughout Elizabeth I's reign, both as a means of showing loyalty but also as a conscious device to mythologise her. However, a more complicated language of symbols seems to have taken hold at court around the mid-1580s when Geffrey Whitney published *A Choice of Emblemes* (under the patronage of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester). England was under threat of invasion from Spain and the book's illustrations were a helpful way to praise the Queen, especially when translated into embroidered motifs or jewellery. Elizabeth received 80 such jewels as New Year's gifts in January 1587, and high-born ladies would embroider gifts of dress for the Queen, resplendent with symbols of devotion and martial loyalty. A number of these motifs survive within extant textiles, dress and portraiture, and represent a complex language in which the Tudor court was thoroughly fluent.

This paper will present new research about the symbolic fashions of the Elizabethan court. Evidence from rare surviving garments and textiles (notably the recently identified Bacton Altar Cloth), documents, portraiture, and the warrants of the Great Wardrobe will provide insight into the visual culture of Elizabeth's court, as represented through dress.

Professor Vike Martina Plock
Associate Professor of Modern Literature and Culture,
University of Exeter

Professor Vike Martina Plock is Associate Professor of Modern Literature and Culture at the University of Exeter. She is the author of two monographs. Joyce, Medicine and Modernitywas published in 2010 by the University Press of Florida and in 2017 she published Modernism, Fashion and Interwar Women Writers with Edinburgh University Press. This monograph analyses the role that fashion played in the work of Edith Wharton, Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, Rosamond Lehmann and Elizabeth Bowen. Vike is one of the editors of the peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal Literature & History published biannually by Sage. From 2012-2014 she co-directed the AHRC-funded research network Tailored Trades: Clothes, Labour and Professional Communities (1880-1939): http://tailoredtrades.exeter.ac.uk/. She is currently completing her third book provisionally entitled Broadcasting to the Enemy: The BBC German Service during the Second World War for which she was awarded a Leverhulme Research Fellowship in 2017.

Fashion and Modernist Women Writers

Dr Susan Vincent
Department of History of Art, University of York

Susan is a Research Associate at the Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies (CREMS) at the University of York. Originally researching in early modernity, over the years she has expanded her interests to adornment in other periods. Her work now ranges widely over dress practices from the sixteenth century to the present day. Susan's publications include *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England* (2003), *The Anatomy of Fashion: Dressing the Body from the Renaissance to Today* (2009), *Hair: An Illustrated History* (2018), and, as general editor, Bloomsbury's six-volume publication, *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion* (2017).

Let's Talk about the F-word

In this paper I discuss the category of 'fashion' and the reasons I try to avoid its conceptual woolliness. Its meanings are contested and multiple, it changes over time, and it only ever exists in degrees, not as an absolute characteristic. The more you look at fashion as a category or a description, the more it dissolves. And in being insufficiently broad to encompass the nuances of our real and lived relationships with our wardrobe, it devalues the majority experience, both in the present and in our study of the past.

But despite my distaste for it, sometimes 'fashion' terminology does seem to be the unavoidable choice. The second part of the paper thus considers the way it can refer to an exemplary form of a new mode. It also aptly describes a method of acreative, coercive, ludic impulse that pushes dress to its extreme.

PAPERS

Moving images of Islamic fashion: changing representations from the newgen Malayalam films

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary Malayalam movies, which come under the umbrella term of New Generation Cinema, are more conscious in the figurations of ethnic identities. They showcase wide array of identities and ethnicities that demonstrate the cultural diversity of the region Kerala, a southern Indian state. This paper examines the dress style of Muslim women seen in contemporary Malayalam films and attempts to explain the shift in the representation and perception of Islamic clothing in Kerala. The primary focus of the analysis is the costumes of women characters in two films- Thattathin Marayath (2012) and KL10 Pathu (2015). Besides, I also tries to situate this analysis in the trajectory of Islamic representations in Malayalam cinema with some remarks from movies such as Neelakkuyil (1954), College Girls (1974) and Classmates (2006) to provide a borader picture of contemporary films. The moving images are suffice to understand the complexities and intriguing nature of the debates on contemporary Islamic culture. There is visible transformation in the representations of Muslims in the films, such as the revival of the Muslim fashion according to global trends, re-imagination of identity and self, and also a redefinition of religiosity and practices in terms of the changing sociopolitical and cultural environment. While the discourse of fashion redefines the religion in terms of material practices and appearances, the religion introduces a concept of ethical consumption into the unregulated global market. The trend of pardah and hijab among Muslim women shows the blurred boundaries of the intra-religious groupings within the Islamic community in Kerala. Apart from the religious prescriptions, it is argued here, the meaning of Islamic dress is decided by its relationship with the forces that constitute the dominant 'mainstream' and, the exchanges between different groups within the community.

KEYWORDS: *Muslim Fashion, Pardah, Hijab, Malayalam Cinema, South India*

Introduction: Islamic style, Malayalam movies and modern imagination

This paper is a part of my ongoing research project titled 'Costume and ethnic representations in Malayalam cinema,' which proposes to study the embodiment of religion, caste, class, gender, and the region as expressed in the costumes of the contemporary films. The current paper on Islamic fashion in Malayalam films primarily focus on the analysis of two movies released after 2010- *Thattathin Marayath* (2012) and *KL 10 Pathu* (2015) to trace the transformation in the representation of Muslim women and its cultural significance in the current social and political context. Besides, there are some remarks from earlier movies such as *Neelakkuyil* (1954), *College Girl* (1974) and *Classmates* (2006) to situate this analysis in the trajectory of representations of Muslim women in different periods. The study of ethnic identities in the post-2010s is very relevant in terms of contemporary Indian politics which marked by the rise of a militant political Hindutva that pushes the religious minorities into insecurity and fear. The region Kerala, having a significant population of Muslims with a strong presence of the Communist Party has responded to the political Hindutva regime differently. Such a tendency is visible in popular representations such as films. Dress and appearance are one of the areas where such cultural contestations can be found.

The debates on Islamic women's dress, particularly on *pardah*[1] and *hijab*[2] can be classified into two categories: one, the dialogue within the religion, between the reformists (Salafists or Wahabis) who advocate for a pan-Islamic identity among observants and adhere to the religious scriptures as a final word for practice of Islam, and traditionalists who stress on the importance of lived culture, practices and institutional structure. Sunnis, who constitute the majority in Kerala Muslims[3], mostly prefer the existing traditions. These varied positions based on group affiliations have blurred in the context of the scope of unregulated consumption, offered by the globalized market. Women belonging to Sunni, Mujahid, and Jamaat-e-Islami wear *pardah* and *hijab* irrespective of the ideals of religious groupings[4]. The proliferation of retail outlets of global brands and online market spaces have enhanced the choices available in the market ever before (Akou 2007). Another debate on Islamic dress revolves around the exchanges between the mainstream representations as expressed in popular media, such as newspapers, television channels, films and social media, and the practitioners of the religion. Besides, the contemporary academic scholarship on Islam has also contributed to it by juxtaposing women's rights discourse on the choice of women to adopt dress styles and practice religion within the constitutional and societal frameworks. The advocates of this discourse often posit themselves against the stereotypical portrayals and understandings of Muslims by the 'mainstream' and criticize the Western induced Islamophobic attitude towards the religion. For instance, the outsider's perception on wearing *pardah*, *burqa* or *niqab* tend to view it as a project of identity politics, or as an attempt to create a pan-Islamic identity or as a symbol of patriarchal repression. However, the ongoing debates on dress styles have created awareness to accommodate Islamic clothing as an expression of diversity and ethnic identity- the characteristic of a plural society.

The deliberations on Islamic dress, often women's dress, among religious observants in Kerala are much more complicated. In a recent book, Abdulla Angillathu and Dineshan Vadkiniyil attribute that 'the recent trend of wearing Islamic outfits in (colleges and university) campuses, did not exist till the end of the twentieth century. It got leverage as a part of the Salafi project which emphasized on the ideas of pure Islam and a desire to the creation of a modest Muslim women self' (2018, p. 67). They also argue that the homogeneous sartorial style advocated by the modern 'pure' Islamists has brought a vertical hierarchical structure of *savarna*[5]/subaltern among Muslims (p. 67). On the other hand, *Risala*, a weekly magazine aimed at Sunni students, in February, 2018, published a special issue on various perspectives on wearing *hijab* and *pardah*, in the context of recent concerns on this topic. The magazine offers insights into the ideological and cultural milieu of wearing Islamic dress and is supplemented by testimonials from female college students who practice such

styles. The discussions in *Risala* explore the transforming ideas of religiosity, and the challenges posed the young Muslim academics to the theological notions, consequent reorientation in the practice of the religion. This new politics of appearance is noticeable in popular expressions such as films, one of the most influential among them. Caroline and Filippo Osella remark, 'the new dress styles or fashion in Kerala, is heavily influenced by movies (2007).' They have supplemented their assumptions with testimonials from shopkeepers engaged in sales of Islamic clothing. As Arjun Appadurai notes the mass migration and the moving images have provided new resources for the imagination of selves and production of subjectivities (1996, p. 3-4). These new works of imagination are distinct from old structures of religious authority and are a part of practices in everyday life (Appadurai 1996, p. 5). The dissemination of new forms of visual materials become artifacts for the production of collective identities.

From the 1950s, when the ideas about the formation of Kerala as a linguistic state were active in the imagination, Malayalam cinema has endeavored to accommodate its diverse ethnicities in films. These imaginations were not free from tensions and conflicts. One of the much-acclaimed movies, *Neelakkuyil*[6] (1954) has shared some anxieties regarding the representation of Muslims women in the cinema. The appearance of Muslim women in public spaces was restricted or regulated in the early decades. In an interview published in *Bhashaposhini*, a Malayalam literary journal, Shobana Parameswaran Nair[7] confide that 'T.K. Pareekkutty, the producer of the film (who is also a Muslim), was very anxious about a Muslim woman character appeared in a song scene '*Kayalarikathu Valayerinjappo Valakilukkiya Sundari*' set in a teashop-a typical male political space of Kerala. The reason behind this anxiety was that it might hurt the religious sentiments of Muslims. The portrayal of the young woman had a distinct dress style which also informs earlier tradition of Muslims, comprises a thick-borderd white *mundu*[8] and long blouse in the upper part with a *thattam9*. The presentiment about Muslim woman's portrayal dissolved when the audience cherished the film along with the song sequences (Parameswaran, 2004). The movies in subsequent years show that the anxieties regarding the visibility of Muslim women fade away, and the films around the lives of the Muslims become popular.

The films in the 1970s earmark a change in imagining Muslim women in the modern state. The participation and visibility of women in public spaces considerably grown. Colleges and universities were some of the critical spaces among them. The cinematic imagination of college spaces provide ideas and experiences of the romantic love between individuals belong to different communities, and of idea of modern public self and appearance (Ritty Lukose 2006, Sharon Maftsir, 2019). *College Girl* (1974), a romantic comedy, runs around the story of women studying in a college, flag off some competing dimension in styling women. The conversation between two Muslim women characters- Saleema and Bichamina, respectively (college going) daughter - mother duo reflects disputation between accustomed community-clothing and customization that modern Muslim women ascribed to. Simultaneously, the portrayal of Hindu woman character, Radha, a friend of Saleema, also reveals a similar encounter in Hindu families, between elders in the family and her sartorial preferences. Her practice of leaving home wearing an acceptable costume (cream colored handloom sari or half sari) and change to stylish attires at her friend's house to befit to popular youth culture[9]. In *College Girl*, the garments of religious observance confine to the inner/ domestic sphere, and the people participate in public spaces adopt the 'modern' attires. The portrayal of Saleema in the 1970s suggests a different engagement with the notion of 'modernity,' informs the context of the evolution of a secular public sphere. The 1970s were also a period of varied changes in Kerala society, because of mass migration to the Persian Gulf after the oil boom and accelerated economic growth. Gulf migration brought far-reaching changes in the lives of people with the introduction of new forms of consumption, lifestyle, tastes and aspirations. Those who returned home from Gulf also brought new fashionable clothes along with television sets, video cassette players that resulted in an aesthetic shift in the visual culture and the ideas of selfhood and identity. It reflected in peoples dress styles as well, known as the 'gulf style.'

The post 1990s and the new ethnic turn

The 1990s, a period of '*Mandal, Mandir, and Market*'[10] was alarming for Indian Muslims. The rise of *Hindutva* politics and the fear and insecurity felt among the Muslims after the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, lead them to adopt markers of religion as an assertion of collective identity (Maidul Islam 2019, Osella and Osella 2007). Later, the Godhra riots, the Islamophobic attitudes developed after the 9/11 attack, and arrests of Muslim youths in different parts of the country, alleging terrorism, further escalated this fear and insecurity. Osellas cite two main currents in the usage of *pardah* among Muslims in Kerala context: 'a growing sense of marginalization and insecurity as a minority community' and 'a heightened sense of what is right and moral, prompted by social reform movements such as *Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen*(KNM)'(p. 241-242). However, the mainstream perception of *pardah* projected and circulated by the media and political parties always was that of conservativism or orthodoxy. Simultaneously, Malayalam cinema, and Kerala society in general gone through a period of ethnic revival, as a response to the globalized culture and its tastes, which is marked by the deployment of reinvigorated ethnic symbols- to be precise *savarna* Hindu symbols in the public sphere. Films in the early 1990s showed such fetishized images of Hindu ethnic clothes such as *Kerala sari, kasavu mundu,* and *pavada so on*. In most of these films, Muslim characters were either individuals surrounded by ambiguities, as repressive identities or hyperpatriotic citizens. We could also situate the trend of popularization of *pardah* among Muslim women on the other side of dominant Hindu ethnic revival.

Classmates (2006[11]) , one of the popular Malayalam movies, had a young Muslim *pardah* clad woman character named Raziya. The movie is set in the backdrop of students' reunion of an old batch in a college in Central Travancore- southern part of Kerala. The narrative of the film revolves around the rivalry between two youth wings of mainstream political parties and petty fights common during the student body elections. One of the lead characters in the movie is a Comrade, Sukumaran, enacted by Prithviraj, the leader of a

fictive organization SFK which resembles Students Federation of India (SFI), the student wing of Communist Party of India (Marxist). The figure of the comrade, a dominant masculine figure, and their relationship with Muslim characters are important in analyzing the subjectivity of

Muslims. Fellow students, including Sukumaran call Raziya as 'penguin' because of her *pardah*. This naming and its semantic associations are ambiguous and reflect Hindu dominated mainstream perspective. The connotations associated with the word penguin leads to an alienated subjectivity both geographically, socially, and culturally. The metaphor of the bird also detracts her from the fullness of human subjectivity. In another sequence, as Raziya walks hurriedly through the campus to the classroom, she collides with Sukumaran. He chides for her covering the face, and then he lifts her face veil. It can be perceived in two ways: firstly exercise of liberty in informal companionship (perhaps comradeship) between Sukumaran and Raziya. Secondly, as an outsider of the belief system, it shows his ignorance about the religious reasons behind covering the face of a Muslim woman. In *Classmates*, *pardah* is a garment that suggests the limits of a woman's desire, aspirations, and a symbol of patriarchal repression exerted by the religion. Raziya has a confidential romantic relationship with a fellow student Murali, a Brahmin boy and the son of faculty in the same college. She undergoes house detention as her father discovered her relationship. Presentation of her grieving image in *pardah* infers regressive ascription toward the attire that captivates women in perpetual religion and familial convictions. *Pardah* in this movie has a narrative function, as an object of vengeance, retribution, concealment, or suspense element of the story.

Thattam and Hijab: the Local and the Transnational

The New Generation films (hereafter *NewGen*), a phenomenon marked by an aesthetic and technological revival in Malayalam cinema occurred around the year 2010 imagined and reflected the culture, collectivity, and subjectivity altogether different ways. One of the distinct characteristics of the *NewGen* cinema is its attempted departure from then existed values, morality, and aesthetics that persisted for some decades which was dominated by the films with superstar culture, and prevailing *savarna*, patriarchal and nationalistic ideologies. On the contrary, the new filmmakers who were proponents of *NewGen* cinema brought diverse subaltern and marginalized identities into their films as a celebration of plural culture. However, *NewGen* cinema is not homogeneous in itself. For instance, contemporary movies capture a wide range of representations of Muslim identities. Two among them, *Thattathin Marayath* (2012, hereafter *TM*) and *KL10 Pathu* (2015) present different figurations of Muslim women subjectivities with an emphasis on sartorial choices grounded in Islamic culture. The narrative space of these films can be identified as Malabar region of Kerala, *TM* in Kannur and *KL 10* in Malappuram, two districts which have a higher population of Muslims[12] compared to the other areas. But these two regions are distinct in terms of their political, social, and cultural compositions, for instance, Kannur is known for its Communist influence and Malappuram for its 'authentic' Muslim culture. In both films, the higher education space such as college and university act as

a location for pre-marital romantic relationship and assertion of identity. Ritty Lukose identifies colleges as space understood to be producing modern secular subjects while at the same time being tied to state-supported community based projects of identity formation and mobility (2006, p. 44). So, the role of college spaces in the construction of identities will recur in the analysis intermittently.

Thattathin Marayath opens with a title acknowledging some of the political leaders of the locality, belong to CPI (M)[13], SFI[14] and Muslim League.[15] The first two names in the credit are Dr. MK Muneer and PK Ibrahim Kunju, who were ministers in Govt of Kerala when the film released and they are also prominent leaders of Muslim League. The rest of the credits extend to CPI (M) and SFI leaders, which shows its lineage to the Left organizations. The film presents the protagonist Vinod as a romantic lover, Communist party loyalist, and native of Thalassery, where the story of the movie unveils. Thalassery, one of the colonial settlements during the British period, is also known for the birth of the Communist Party in Kerala. The narrative of the film runs through the romantic relationship between a college student Vinod, a Hindu Nair youth and Ayisha, a Muslim girl who studies in another campus and from a traditional and influential family. One of the objects on which the narration of the movie depends is *thattam* that intensifies Vinod's desire to Ayisha. *Thattam* is an essential attire in the costume of *Oppana*, a traditional dance performed by Muslim women in Kerala. The word *thattam* also appears in the lyrics of songs and descriptions to portray the beauty of Muslim women.

The title of the movie *TM* also uses the aesthetic dimension of *thattam* in Kerala Muslim culture. One of the much celebrated moments in the film is Vinod's narration of Ayisha's allure as she walks through the corridor of a college campus when gentle breeze pass through her headscarf. The description is supplemented by a visual of Ayisha's figure adorned in headscarf and *salwar-kameez*. For Vinod, her veiled figure is a site of desire, which can be read as a fetish. It has psychoanalytical potential in the meaning-making. This figuration of fetish is attained by presenting Ayisha's veiled figure in slow motions and accompaniment of songs. Stella Bruzzi, in her study of film costumes *Undressing Cinema*, explains that 'the distance is the basis for fetishistic fantasy, perpetually denying and underlying desires through an interplay between metaphor, metonym and sexual object' (2000; 48).

"As your dress ruffles and swirls is it your beauty that it veils?"

Figure 1. *In Thattathin Marayath (2012, Dir. Vineeth Sreenivasan) the heroine Ayisha appears in white scarfs (thattam), embodies male desire to keep women in the notions of purity. (Image credit: DVD Harmony Entertainments)*

In *TM*, Vinod narrates his love story is in the police custody, a repressive space. The uncertainty surrounding his love

intensifies through the headscarf fetish in the film. Ayisha is introduced in the film in a white, semi-transparent *thattam* and *salwar-kameez* (**figure.1**) accompanied by Sanskrit song-lines in the background which suggest the figure of a Hindu goddess, connote purity of the woman. The whiteness[16] and semitransparency of the material in the Indian context signifies the purity of women. In this sense, the fetishistic gaze of Vinod is an expression of longing for the unattained subject whom he desires for, and to situate her within the notion of fixation around chastity and purity.[17]

Later in *TM*, Vinod opens a *pardah* shop in his locality which inaugurated by Ayisha. Here, *pardah*, the Islamic dress turns into a commodity fetish. The film image converges the aura of an object and individual desires by situating in an affective environment. The transformation of an object or a commodity to fetish occurs when it attains a value beyond its use value. The cinematic imagination often elevates ordinary objects into visual materials, which eventually circulated as commodity fetish- as moving images. While discussing the sociology of religious commodification, Pattana Kitiarsa writes that this trend provides 'some lively and open landscapes of interpretation across religious traditions and societies' (2010, p. 564). The commodification puts some tension between the prescriptions of the religious texts and the choices offered by the market. Kitisara sees it as a complex nature of fragmented postmodern social life. It is evident that there is a cleavage between the practice of piety and the consumer self. In other words, it is the reinvention of religion by adopting visual symbols available in the market, where the consumer attain a kind of agency from the choices they exercise from a wide range of commodities in the market. This attainment of the agency will lead to the development of a conflictual relationship with the old conservative religious leadership- where the faith, belief, and values are the measure of religiosity. The fetish, commodification, and the materiality of subjectivity can be further problematized in terms of contemporary psychoanalytical understandings. But, this paper would not intend to elaborate such dimensions, to contain within the limits of the paper.

New spaces of conversations (such as universities) on Muslim women's identity have elaborated the politics of veiling and appearance, in the context of pluralism and citizenship. Women's engagement in interpreting religion based on global feminist literature and theorization of local lived experiences forced the mainstream society to acknowledge manufactured invisibility of Muslims in public space, as mentioned in the Sachar Committee Report. It compelled the political parties to rethink the electoral strategies related to the Muslims, and some of the organizations has initiated projects to accommodate and 'mainstream' the Muslims in their front. In this process, organizations deploy visual symbols and images that represent Islamic culture during their campaigns. *Pardah* was one such symbol that appears in demonstrations and political meetings. Among the political front, the Left, including CPI (M) has played a role in mainstreaming Muslims. Such an attempt to meld the image of pious Muslim within the political Left to raise concerns about the stereotyped perception of Islamic women and their attires, is discernible in *TM*. When Ayisha decides to live with her lover Vinod, some of her family members oppose it. But her father Abdul Samad (enacted by

Sreenivasan) clarifies that the *pardah* is not to repress woman's aspirations and choices but to preserve the pride and modesty. However, in the broader analysis, we see *TM* has not overcome the limitations of stereotyped perceptions. For instance, Ayisha in the film is not free from restrictions of patriarchal, repressive structures of the family.

The movie *KL10* attentively evades from the stereotypical accounts on Muslims and attempts to visually valorize the lived culture of Islam. *KL10* does not show any woman clad in black *pardah*. It challenges some of the dominant perceptions of the 'mainstream' about Muslims. While *TM* opens with the acknowledgment of gratitude to members of the Left, *KL10* begins with a title 'Thank God,' and the film anchors into a space of a religious-cultural setting. When the credit titles end, it settles to a minaret of a mosque. Then a mythical character called the Djinn enters the scene and narrates the story. The central narrative element of the movie is the escape of Ahmed (played by Unni Mukundan) and Shadiya Mansoor (Chandni Sreedharan) from their homes to formally record their marriage as per the Special Marriage Act, without informing their parents. Ahmed is a student in a religious college and Shadiya, a professional architect, a working woman who ocassionally enjoy a superiority over Ahmed. Shadiya is introduced in the film as she wraps her *hijab* (**figure.2**).

Figure 2. *In the movie KL10, the heroine Shadiya is introduced as she wraps her hijab. The focus on the act of wrapping and following images of a variety of hijabs takes viewers attention to the diversity of Islamic fashion.* (Image credit: DVD, Satyam Audios)

One of the major attractions in the costumes of the film is heroine's fashionable *hijabs* and a wide array of apparels that showcase the diversity of the global Islamic culture. Reina Lewis points out that *hijab* was one of the predominant symbols of Islamic revivalism and the 'right to wear' movements. She also notes that '*hijab* was one of the key issues for British Muslims under age of thirty-five and they supported the 'right to wear' the religious dress at work and school (Lewis 2015, p 48). *Hijabists* believe that it can evoke transnational belongingness among Muslims all around the world. Through this focus on appearance and corporeality, young girls interpret religion in a different way from that of their parent's generation. The newness *KL10* introduces to the Malayali audience is its transnational sensibility that is attached to the *hijab* and Islamic fashion. Emma Tarlo explains Islamic fashion as a phenomenon emerged in the 1990s, draws our attention to 'the greater heterogeneity of Islamic styles of dress which were attractive and appealing for younger and more affluent Islamic women.' It converges dress styles of various Muslim populated

regions such as Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia and so on.

The material dimension of the religious self has been specifically highlighted in one scene in *KL10*. One day Ahmed comes to class wearing blue jeans and a denim shirt while the teacher was giving religious lessons about the importance of *karma* (dedicated work) and inner faith compared to the body and appearances. When Ahmed enters the classroom, the teacher asked him that what is wrong with his body and appearance, referring to his dress. Ahmed sarcastically replies that 'according to your lessons it is enough to look at my heart and work'. This response implies his dissent to the dress code existing in the college, incompatible with contemporary fashion. In Islamic religious colleges in Kerala, male students have to obey a dress code, usually a white *mundu* and shirt, and a tied cap. The college where Ahmed studies does not have traditional dress codes, yet there is a restriction for certain materials such as denim. Ahmed deviates from acceptable dress styles and adopts the fashionable dress style. In this context, Ahmed's response to his teacher is criticism toward the rigid nature of dress impositions in the traditional religious schools (such as *madrassas*[18]) and the colleges in Kerala. This criticism also grounds to the ongoing debates on 'the tradition' and 'the modernity' in Islam in Kerala, which often pushes *Sunni*s at one side and the reformists at the other side.

Dress codes for both men and women were one of the major talking-point in the intrareligious debates among Kerala Muslims. Each group interprets religious prescriptions regarding dress practices of observants according to their views and standpoints. At this backdrop, the absence of black *pardah* in *KL10* takes to the intricacies of regional practices of the religion. According to Angillathu and Vadakiniyil, the expansive use of *pardah* was effect of Salafi reformists who were trying to construct a pan-Islamic identity in Kerala (p. 67). Osellas observe that the expansion of *pardah* and its modern version *abbaya* is mostly a phenomenon that started after the 1990s (2007). *Pardah* brands like *Hoorlyn*, *Parzania*, and *Parvin* also became popular after this period. They cite De Jong's study on the use of *pardah* in Kerala that, the sale of *Hoorlyn* brand from its inception rose from 100 dresses in 1992 to

10,000 in 2002 (Osella and Osella, 2007). Osellas also point out that though reformist organizations now seem to distance from wearing *pardah*, they were the early promoters of this dress (2007). While *KL10* refrain from showing black *pardah* clad women, the *pardah* moments in *TM* have a different connotation. One day, Ayisha invites Vinod to campus to convey, her willingness to live together, despite the opposition she faces from her parents. Ayisha appears in this scene wearing black *pardah*, which expresses the decisiveness and boldness of the character. Ayisha's next appearance in black *pardah* is in a scene where she adventurously reaches to the inaugural function of Vinod's *pardah* shop. Black *pardah* here is attire for firmness and determination of a woman and a new identity as well.

There are some intertextual remarks in *KL 10* to *TM* which open up a comparative reading of these films. In *KL10* Ahmed and Shadiya go to another district Kannur to register their marriage confidentially. When they reach Kannur, a friend points to the girl and introduces her as the bride, to a communist comrade there. Then he inquires whether her name Ayisha and adds that is how it supposed to be. This references to the character from *TM*, who lives in the Communist-dominated Thalassery, a part of Kannur. It also criticizes the stereotyping in the naming of characters in popular Malayalam movies such as in *TM*. Further, an aide of the comrade figure in *KL10* makes a satirical comment that they may not promote people to wear such conservative attires-*hijab* worn by Shadiya- that can inflict communal feelings. Through such remarks that come from the mainstream perception of Islamic dress, *KL 10* criticize the dominant, secular, and stereotypical presumptions. Hence, the absence of black *pardah*, which might have become a target of the 'secular' mainstream, in the film seems strategical.

The discourse of fashion and the growing interest in it from the students and young women are indications of the emergence of an affluent class which may ultimately result in the formation of class hierarchy and distinction (Lewis 2015, Tarlo and Moores 2013) and is also contrary to the theological notions. But, in a post-colonial society like India, where caste and community hierarchies are an integral part of social status and ranking, sartorial preferences are a realm of contestation when subaltern communities try to attain status by adopting modern attires. Osellas' study of social mobility among Ezhavas in Kerala, elaborate on how consumption becomes a contested terrain for the backward classes to attain social status (2000). However, the realm of consumption is not free from the construction of hierarchies. One criticism against the *hijab* culture or Islamic fashion movement is that its proponents' inability to convert it into political representation. They are content with the pleasure offered by the market. Interestingly in *KL10*, there is a parallel narrative of a local body election in which Ahmed's mother Jameela contests. Ahmed's brother Roshan at the same time supports another woman Raseena Abdulla, a candidate having a Left lineage. Both these characters are shown in colorful *pardah* and *mafta*[19] and *sari* and *mafta*, respectively. They also do not wear black *pardah*. The generational difference between mothers and their children establishes their attitude towards politics and lifestyles. As in other narrative strands such as football matches, Ahmed-Shadiya relationship, the political contest is a playful event in this movie, and a disguised criticism on the overindulgence of electoral politics in the everyday life.

Beyond the generational divide, Islamic fashion advocated by young women engages in a conflict with the conventional religious system characterized by the patriarchal, privileged priest class. Material practices, such as fashion focus on the externality of religion rather, the latter's adherence on inner faith, submissiveness and spiritual achievements. Young practitioners of Islamic dress interpret the relevance of such apparels in political terms such as choice, and 'right to wear' rather older theological terms. This politics is also an intervention in the unregulated market of the Western-dominated global fashion. Islamic fashion introduces ideas of ethical consumption to the globalized market (Lewis 2015, Tarlo 2014). The conflict between the Western capitalist fashion and the 'ethnic' dress styles in Asian societies can be found in early colonial regime also. In India, during the nationalist movement, Mahatma Gandhi had introduced *Khadi*, as a form of resistance against the capitalist mode of production and its tastes, and the violence of the colonial

administration (Bayly 1986, Cohn 1996, and Tarlo 1996). While analyzing the dress preferences of Indian politicians, Dipesh Chakrabarty keeps hope in the adoption of indigenous moral garments such as *khadi* as 'a deeper structure of desire for alternative modernity which resists India's complete integration into the circuits of global capital(2001).' The practitioners of Islamic fashion, as Emma Tarlo (2007) cites, often link it to neo-Gandhian movements.

Conclusion

Public debates on Islamic dress, whether it is *pardah* or *hijab*, generally fall into the discourse of religiosity and its manifestations. This deliberation may further advance to the wearer's relationship with the public sphere and the nation-state. These discussions tend to place the topic within the binaries of freedom and repression, choice and seclusion, agency or patriarchy, and so on. Such evaluations of Islamic attires often miss the complexity and interconnectedness of sartorial practices. Contemporary films are fecund sources to elaborate on the intricacies of Islamic dress styles. Films combine perspectives of the insider and the outsider and unfold the interconnectedness of religious practices with different fields. The analysis of *Thattathin Marayath* and *KL10* provide insights to the recent transformations in material practices which re-interpret the idea of religion. A comparative analysis of these movies open up the diverse positions taken by the different groups within the religion about women's clothes. It complicates further when Muslim women try to devise strategies to evade the stereotypical portrayals appear in the mainstream. The growing popularity of *pardah* and *hijab* indicates the achieved mobility and participation in public spaces among Muslim women than that of seclusion. *TM* finds a connection between the political Left (here Communist Party) and Islamic culture in mainstreaming the garments like *pardah* and *hijab*. The 'comdrade' figure (*Sakhavu* in Malayalam) facilitates the access of Islamic practices into the mainstream. This relationship may vary according to the electoral strategies that parties held in various periods and sometimes it pushes Muslim subject into an ambivalent position. The movie *KL10* reflects such ambiguities in its narration. The recent emergence of women scholarship also has influenced the production of cinematic subjectivities of Muslim women. This new scholarship, as expressed in *KL10,* is connected to the transnational interactions with Islamic revivalism, facilitated by global circulation of commodities, images and ideas. The circulation of *pardah* and *hijab* are one of the manifestations of this trend. It engages simultaneously in the realm of conventional religion and responds to the contemporary consumer culture fuelled by globalization, by introducing a concept of ethical consumption.

ENDNOTES

[1]*Pardah* or *Pardha* is a long, black female garment popular among the Muslims of Kerala, particularly in Malabar. Osellas claim that contemporary style of *pardah* is a form of *abbaya* used in Gulf. *Purdah* in North Indian sense is a face cover for the seclusion of women (Osella and Osella 2007, Abdelhalim 2013)

[2]*Hijab* is a term for headscarf. Compared to traditional Kerala headcover *thattam*, *Hijab* is more modern and fashionable. *Hijab* can be wrapped in different styles (Reina Lewis 2015, p17)

[3]According to Census 2011, Kerala has 26.6 percent of Muslim in total population, among which 24.9 percent are Sunnis.

[4]There is an observation that the followers of Jamaat e Islami do not wear pardah to differentiate themselves from Sunni counterparts. Instead, they distinguish from others by wearing headsarves such as maftas and hijabs.

[5]Osellas cite anthropologist Aiyappan's (1944: 31) categorization of Hindu communities in Kerala, as a tripartite division which still holds good today: 'A' group consists of higher castes, the *savarna*s recognised under the modern state as 'forward' castes; 'B' group includes Izhavas and consists mostly of *avarna* groups classified as 'Other Backward Communities'; 'C' group comprises those of lowest status, recognised as 'Scheduled Castes'(2000, p. 29)

[6]*Neelakkuyil* is one of the landmark movie in Malayalam and won President's Silver medal for Best Malayalam film in 1954

[7]Shobana Parameswaran Nair worked in the prodcution of *Neelakkuyil* and was also a photographer.

[8]Muslim women's traditional dress was a white garment wrapped around the waist called *Katchimundu*. It will not have a silk or golden border as seen in Hindu attires, usually colour of border will be blue or purple. [9] *Thattam* is a traditional Kerala headscarf usually with a fine quality of polyester or silk that is wrapped around the head and with its ends covering the breast or hanging over the back of the body.

[9]Seclusion of women had existed among upper caste Hindu Brahmins in Kerala till early decades of twentieth century. Namboodiri women had a large palm-leaf umbrella to cover their face, not to expose them to men from other communities. *Antharjanam*, the term used to address Namboodiri women, means 'they are confined to home' (Saradamoni 1980: 129).

[10]The common parlance *Mandal, Mandir, Market* used to denote the interlinked social, political and cultural changes occurred in the early 1990s in India, which is marked by a). Mandal Commission Report 1990 which recommended reservation for Other Backward Castes(OBC) in central govt jobs, and subsequent protests raised by upper caste youth in north India, 2).the demotlition of Babri Masjid in 1992 by Hindutwa outfits, claiming that Ram temple(mandir) existed in the place of the masjid, and 3). Economic liberalization policies introduced by Indian government which opened up Indian market to foreign companies.

[11]The year 2006 was remarkable for Indian Muslims when Rajinder Sachar Committee raised concerns over the social and economic status of Muslims, and recommended for policy-level interventions to improve the lives of the community. Later, Indian government implemented scholarships for the minority students and reservation in the admission in the educational institutions.

[12]Kannur and Malappuram have 29.5 and 70.4 percent of Muslims in their population respectively (Zacharia, K.C, Religious Denomination of Kerala, CDS Working Paper 468, April 2016)

[13]Communist Party of India (Marxist)-CPI (M) is one of the major political party in Kerala and have a strong popular base in the region.

[14]Students Federation of India (SFI) is the student wing of CPI(M) used to contest and win in student body elections in Universities and colleges all over India

[15]Muslim League or Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) formed in 1948 mostly a state party in Kerala which have representatives both in Indian Parliament and Kerala Legislative Assembly. Muslim League in Kerala often contest in elections from the opposite front of CPI(M)

[16]C.A. Bayly writes that 'white was associated with purity and was thus proper color for Brahmins and widows. He also substantiate it with citing *Garga Smriti*, a Hindu scripture. It says Brahmins should wear white, Kshatriya should wear red, a Vaishya should yellow, and Shudra, dark and dirty clothes (1986, p. 291).

[17]In *'Oriental Style and Arabesques of Moulin Rouge,'* film scholar Rosalind Galt has mentioned about the aesthetic purity of veiled objects (2011, p154).

[18]*Madrassa*s are mostly the institutions run by the Sunni sect of the Muslims in Kerala. However, there are religious colleges run by Jamaat-e-Islami and Mujahid

[19]*Mafta*, as per Osellas description, is a headscarf of chiffon or polyester in a complementing shade and pattern. Maftas range from simple coarse cotton among working-class women to more glamorous and expensive soft fabrics for party wear, chosen carefully to match the salwar-kameez (Osella and Osella, 2007, P. 243)

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Dress, Coiffure, and Protest: Portraits of Late-Nineteenth Century Women Activists in the Women's Penny Paper (1888-1890).

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ABSTRACT

There is currently an inadequacy in research that pays attention to the non-verbal messages found in late nineteenth-century general feminist periodicals, and a disparity in inquiries that focus on the sartorial and hairstyle choices of feminist women of this period. This paper focuses on both of these two types of non-verbal communication, and the hybrid message they conveyed, especially as they appeared within the Women's Penny Paper *(1888-1890). It considers the portraits of women feminists published as part of the interview column; the message projected through the clothing and hair the sitters donned; and the ways in which these messages protested, or not, against the patriarchal ideals of the times. The paper reveals that these portraits included elements of "True Womanhood" combined with elements of "New Womanhood", arguing that women feminists of the period actively sought mainstream/fashionable, or alternative/niche styles of dress and hair as a means of acquiring power. Women's dress and hairstyles are examined, and the hybrid rhetoric of these portraits is discussed. This is a journey into the mysteries of the unspoken messages communicated through the dress and hair of late nineteenth-century women activists, the capacity of specific dress and hair styles to accommodate such messages, and the ability of this type of 'symbolic communication' to protest against established patriarchal ideals.*

KEYWORDS: late-nineteenth century dress, women's history, non-verbal communication

Introduction

Diane Crane argues that during - and especially by the end - of the nineteenth century, existed three generic types of female dress styles: the conventional feminine style, the dress reform style, and the "alternative dress" style. Crane defined this alternative dress style as "a set of signs, borrowed from male clothing, that appeared sometimes singly, sometimes in combination with one another, but always associated with items of female clothing" (Crane, 1999, pp. 242-243). This paper discusses some of the portraits printed in the general feminist periodical *Women's Penny Paper* (Oct, 1888 - Dec, 1890), focusing on the non-verbal messages communicated through the sartorial and hairstyle choices of the sitters. I argue that through these hybrid messages of dress and coiffure, the portraits attached to the interview column offered a diverse representation of the ways in which women choose to negotiate with established patriarchal ideals of femininity. More specifically, I demonstrate that the portraits included in the weekly column varied from one end of the spectrum, where sitters appear to encapsulate "True Womanhood" proper, to the other end of the spectrum, where sitters seem to have adopted a "New Womanhood' appearance.

Background

Before we move on to the individual case studies, it is important to define the terms "True Womanhood" and "New Womanhood" so we all have a basic idea of what they refer to. Barbara Welter (1966, p. 152) explains that True Womanhood "was a fearful obligation, a solemn responsibility", and could be divided in "four cardinal virtues – piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity". On the other hand, New Womanhood was a classification that was much more difficult to define. In the main, however, as Martha Patterson (2008, p. 1) writes, the New Woman was a woman that "demanded a public voice and private fulfilment through work, education, and political engagement". This conference focuses on the role of dress in fashionable society, and how the clothes we choose to wear act as socio-cultural signifiers. With that theme in mind, the following discussion concentrates on the non-verbal messages communicated through the portraits that appeared in the *Women's Penny Paper* interview column, and the significance of the sitters' hairstyle and dress - specifically focusing on the various combinations of conventional and "alternative" styles.

The general feminist weekly periodical *Women's Penny Paper* launched in October 27, 1888. It was printed and published by the Women's Printing Society, with Henrietta Müller as the sole proprietor and editor. The main column of the paper was a biographical piece, which often included a portrait of the interviewee – a combination that gave a very specific tone to the voice of the periodical. On the one hand, the "Interview" was written in a way that created a familiarity with readers, through references to conventionally feminine activities, which were traditionally associated with True Womanhood, such as home decoration. On the other hand, the interviews made sure not only to mention the individual feminine achievements of the interviewee, but also emphasized her interest in, and work for, woman's suffrage. This hybrid rhetoric of True and New Womanhood was further highlighted by the portraits that accompanied these biographical articles, which also combined stereotypical familiar elements of True Womanhood with progressive idiosyncratic elements of New Womanhood.

The Portraits: Dress and Coiffure as Non-Verbal Communication

Clothing and hair were an important part of a woman's portrait; a fact that was much more widely appreciated during the late nineteenth-century Britain than we might assume today. Crane (2000, p. 100) writes that in the nineteenth century clothing performed "a form of symbolic communication", which delivered information about "the wearer's social role, social standing, and personal character", and because upper- and middle-class women were "lacking other forms of power, they used non-verbal symbols", such as clothing, as "a means of self-expression".

A closer look at the portraits featured in the *Paper* reveals that True Womanhood was intentionally (or unintentionally) imposed upon them, in the same way True Womanhood was intentionally (or unintentionally) imposed on the interview/biographical sketch. For example, in the textual segment of the interview column conventional True Womanhood was challenged through references to progressive New Womanhood - such as descriptions of the interviewee's unconventionally feminine profession or achievements. On the other hand, the majority of portraits included in the interview column were used to enforce True Womanhood proper by means of

conventionally feminine hair and dress style, in order to dispute the caricaturist representations of the masculine, and unfemininely unfashionable New Woman. As a result, the majority of the portraits depicted women in mainstream fashionable clothing and hair, which in turn accentuated the idea that New Women could be, and were, conventionally feminine. Nonetheless, a small minority of portraits depicted women in "alternative style" clothing and hair, which in turn challenged conventional True Womanhood, by illustrating that some New Women would go as far as to "behave in defiance of the [patriarchal] social order" (Crane, 2000, p. 101).

Case Study 1: True Woman Hairstyle with True Woman Dress

An example of a portrait emphasizing True Womanhood is that of Mrs Florence Fenwick Miller, who appeared with a stereotypically fashionable hairstyle and dress in No. 18 (Fig. 1). In this portrait, and in all other portraits of Fenwick Miller I was able to trace online, Fenwick Miller wears long brown hair tied up in a conventional way - a hairstyle reminiscent of the 'brown, neatly combed heads of the virtuous governess and industrious wives' often depicted in Victorian fiction (Gitter, 1984, p. 941). Her conventionally feminine hairstyle and clothing exemplified "the doctrine of separate spheres", allowing her to appear non-threatening to any of her male contemporaries (Crane, 2000, p. 100).

In 2003, following a three-year qualitative study of a diverse sample that consisted of 44 Arizona-based women, Rose Weitz (2003, p. 147) discovered that they often used their hairstyle to express power. Furthermore, because the participants were acutely aware of cultural expectations regarding their hair, rather than simply consenting to those expectations, many of them often chose to intentionally "seek power" through an accommodation to those expectations, resistance to those expectations, or a combination of both (ibid.). In this case, our late-nineteenth century sitter, like many twenty-first century women in Weitz's sample, used her hair "to seek power" through a style that "de-emphasize[d] resistance and instead emphasize[d] accommodation to mainstream ideas about attractiveness" (Weitz, 1998, p. 138). Arlene E. MacLeod (1991, p. xiv) termed this kind of behaviour as "accommodating protest", which is a phrase she devised in an effort to describe the type of women's political struggle that displays an "ambiguous pattern" – for instance, when women seem to "both struggle in a conscious and active way against their inequality, yet who also seem to accept, and even support their own subordination".

Fenwick Miller's choice of conventional hairstyle and clothing allowed her not only to communicate that many New Women like her were feminine and non-threatening, but also to acquire a certain type of power that permitted her to achieve more as a professional female journalist and woman's rights advocate – than perhaps other women who were too unconventional. Of course, it would be unjust to claim that Fenwick Miller was successful in journalism and the women's cause merely because of her sartorial or hairstyle choices. Yet, the fact that she decided to assume an overall mainstream, feminine appearance would certainly have helped more in her pursuits, exactly because she was seemingly accepting of the

gendered standards that the patriarchal society had put in place, whilst not appearing as a threat to the conventional system of order.

Case Study 2: New Woman Hairstyle with True Woman Dress

The following example depicts an alternative style hair combined with a conventional style dress. This is Miss Alice Cornwell in No. 52 (Figure 2). Cornwell assumed a very short masculine hairstyle that demonstrated something quite different to accommodating protest: an opposition that aimed "to resist subordination and increase the power" of those considered subordinate (Weitz, 1998, p. 145). Cornwell, who was described by her contemporaries as "the most remarkable woman of the present day" and "the possessor of three-quarters of a million sterling" was only in her twenties and already a prolific gold mining industrialist and newspaper proprietor when she posed for this photograph (*Supplement to the Otago Witness*, 1889, p. 3). However, for Cornwell the short haircut was a dramatic hair change that came after her teenage years: portraits of her as an art and music student, taken prior to the beginning of her mining career, depict her with traditionally long hair, tied up in a fashionable style, secured with a fashionable hat.

In 1999, members of a socialist-feminist network based in Hamburg and West Berlin, with Frigga Haug as their editor, collectively published the book *Female Sexualization* (1999). In the chapter entitled *The Hair Project*, they explained that for many of them the introductory stage of their "integration into 'working life' [was often] marked by a change of clothing and hair style" (ibid., p. 93). Furthermore, Weitz (2003, p. 143) discovered that the white women of her sample leaned towards "new hairstyles that highlight professionalism and downplay femininity as a first step toward entering professional training or work". I would argue that a similar situation was true for late-nineteenth century white women who sought power through nontraditional ways, such as Cornwell. Her change of haircut, from long and conventionally feminine to short and conventionally masculine, was a symbolic ritual that placed "the frivolous toddler" in the past (Haug, 1999, p. 93), and in her place positioned the sensible young woman. It was Alice, the playful child, who dressed in fashionable clothes, donned long luscious curls, favoured fashionable hats, and mingled with London's high society. But, when she returned to her native Victoria in New Zealand seeking to save the family business from bankruptcy, she became Miss Cornwell "a matter-of-fact woman of the world, full of ambition, imagination, and energy" (*Supplement to the Otago Witness*, 1889, p. 3).

Cornwell the businesswoman donned a very short haircut that allowed her to partly defeminise her appearance, which permitted her to infiltrate the male-dominated mining sector. A short haircut, combined with a typically feminine fashionable dress, also allowed her to appear feminine enough to be respectable and non-threatening, whilst masculine enough, or rather professional enough, to be taken seriously as a business collaborator. At the same time, Cornwell used her appearance to protest against conventional True Womanhood, by proposing an alternative hybrid model of New Womanhood.

Case Study 3: True Woman Hairstyle with New Woman Dress

This following example depicts a conventional hairstyle combined with alternative style dress. Madame Olga Novikoff (Fig. 3) is pictured wearing a sailor's straw hat combined with what seems to be a conventional black dress and white blouse. Straw hats (or boaters) originally appeared in children's fashion in the 1860s, though by the end of that decade, they were already established accessories in women's fashion (see 'The Fashions', *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 1861, p. 261). During the 1880s, boater hats were very popular amongst men and women and were considered as a unisex accessory, a trend that continued until the 1900s (Lambert, 1991, p. 55).

Conventional women's hats, with their extravagant assembly of flowers, feathers, stuffed birds, and sometimes reptiles, were so difficult to fix on one's head, which impelled women to use various metal pins that often damaged their natural hair, and usually resulted in bald patches and restricted movement (Cunnington and Cunnington, 1959, p. 564). In contrast, straw hats offered a minimalist style, freedom of movement, and they were also considered very fashionable. This "alternative" combination of a straw hat and a conventional dress, therefore, communicated a message that expressed a revolt against established ideals.

Case Study 4: New Woman Hairstyle with New Woman Dress

The next portrait depicts an alternative hairstyle combined with an alternative style outfit. Lady Florence Dixie (Fig. 4) is portrayed wearing a sailor's outfit with a short mid-length haircut. Jo Paoletti (1983, p. 16) reveals that by the 1880s:

> Boy's clothing was unique to them, for while it reflected the prevailing modes in both women's and men's costume, it consisted largely of 'fancy dress' styles based on military uniforms or antique dress-Highland costumes and sailor suits are examples of the former.

A sailor's outfit was, therefore, conventionally masculine - even if it was meant for boys rather than men, which was adopted by the younger generation of New Women as a "symbolic statement" that would challenge established ideals about their status in society (Crane, 1999, p. 249). In addition, short haircuts, which were longer than the typical very short boyish cut, allowed the hair to be bouncy, lively, sometimes capable of offering "an autonomous pleasure" to the wearer, when it was "softly caressed by the wind"; a pleasure that in itself could have been considered an act of female emancipation (Haug, 1999, p. 110).

Furthermore, in Dixie's case, the sailor's outfit expressed a protest to True Womanhood far beyond the concept of alternative dress, because she was in actuality a traveller and travel writer. Monica Anderson (2006, p. 14) writes that latenineteenth century "women travellers, seemingly free of domestic constraints, challenged the strict boundaries of the woman's sphere while appearing to operate within it". By travelling abroad, women travellers "asserted their rights to selfdetermination and self-rule", whilst they had "to negotiate the discursive boundaries of Victorian Britain's ideological sex-role socialization" (ibid.). In fact, Lady Dixie wrote in her book *Across Patagonia* (1880) that she travelled to "an outlandish place so many miles away […] precisely because it was an outlandish place so far away" (Dixie quoted in Anderson, 2006, p. 14). As a woman in alternative dress and haircut, as well as a woman traveller and travel writer, Dixie was not only "located outside of the dominant tradition", but was also "doubly different" in terms of her "more socially conformist female contemporaries and to male travellers of the period" (ibid., p. 17).

Conclusion

This paper examined a number of cases in which late-nineteenth century protofeminists used dress and hair as a device for acquiring power, or a form of protest. Admittedly, the discussion focuses on a tiny fraction of examples from this period, but I have tried to include examples from across the New Womanhood spectrum, so we can understand that New Womanhood came in different intensities. Four different types of New Womanhood were presented, which were representative of the kind of portraits typically found in the *Women's Penny Paper*. Still, I do hope that, as I move forward with my research, I am able to include more examples, especially of Asian and Black New Women, and potentially New Women with disabilities, or Native American New Women. In the meantime, however, I hope this paper communicated that for us to draw a much more accurate understanding of late-nineteenth century womanhood, it is important that, as historians, we look much more closely into the non-verbal messages that are available but are often overlooked. This will certainly help us further expand our knowledge of art and design history, and women's history, and be able to identify the diversity of women's voices throughout the centuries.

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FIGURES

Interview.

MADAME OLGA NOVIKOFF.

WRITER, THINKER AND PATRIOT.

I called upon Madame Novikoff (née Kiréef) early one morning in the quiet and pleasant suite of rooms which she occupies at Claridge's Hotel, Brook Street, and which she considers her home during her yearly visit to this country.

"You like England?" I asked.

"I adore it," replied Madame Novikoff, "I had English governesses as a child, and it became the dream of my life to see England. I come every year, and it is where I do most of my work, for at St. Petersburg I am obliged to go out so much and to receive so much that I have little time to spare from my social duties; here I can do as I like. Although our residence is St. Petersburg we are Moscow people, both on mine and my husband's side. My brothers and myself are the Emperor Nicholas' god-children. He has always been very kind to my family. My two brothers were pages in waiting to the Empress, and my elder brother is Lieut. General to the Grand Duke Constantine. My mother, who became a widow when I was very young, was an exceedingly beautiful woman and most artistic. Her house was a centre of réunion for artists and musicians, and before I had 'come out' in society I was allowed to be present to hear the music. I am very fond of it and I sing a great deal. That is my speciality." "My younger brother," continued Madame Novikoff, "was the first Russian volunteer killed in Servia in the Slavonic cause. He was one of the noblest and most patriotic of men, and when he was gone I ardently desired to take up his work—to work for the Slavonic cause and for the peace and welfare of my country. I could not be a sister of charity, for I could not bear the sight of blood. But I did what I could."

"When did you first begin to write?"

"I never wrote a line till my brother's death in 1876. I began doing so in Mr. Stead's Northern Echo. When rumours of war with England were in the air, and M. Katkoff, editor of the Moscow Gazette, asked me to write a series of articles. I wrote in favour of an alliance with England and of Peace, I signed them 'O.K.,' for I could not put my name, my husband's brother being Russian ambassador at Vienna. So strongly did I advocate peace with England that everybody thought the articles were written by an agent of England."

"They must have considerably helped towards the maintenance of peace," I suggested.

"They may have done something, Katkoff's paper had a

great influence in high circles," replied Madame Novikoff, as if deprecating any credit to herself, to whom, however, as a matter of fact, great gratitude is due from both countries for her timely mediation, though people little thought those vigorous articles were from the pen of a lady.

In answer to further inquiries about her writings Madame Novikoff said her first book. "Russia and England," was published in 1880, and very favourably reviewed in the Nineteenth Century by Mr. Gladstone, who said, "Every Englishman should read that book." Her second work was "Skobeleff and the Slavonic Cause." She has written an article on Armenia in the Pall Mall Gazette the other day and quite recently for the same newspaper a warmly sympathetic notice of one of her countrywomen, of whom she said, "if there ever was a noble, an intelligent, a superior woman in this wretched world, it was Mdme. Anna Aksakoff, the widow of our celebrated Slavophile and poet, Ivan Aksakoff."

"There is a strong movement in Russia for Temperance," said Madame Novikoff, "and I wrote a magazine article on it some years ago in the Nineteenth Century. I also contributed to the Contemporary Review and to Fraser's Magazine. Occasionally I write letters to the newspapers; last year I wrote two to The Times in answer to some articles on the Prisons in Russia."

Adverting to the fact that there is no capital punishment in Russia Madame Novikoff expressed her sense of the barbarity and injustice of that system.

Both her books are out of print, and asking what she was especially engaged on now Madame Novikoff said, "I read everything concerning Russia that appears, and when a book wants answering I answer it. I only write when I have something that I feel must be said."

"English," I suggested, "has become to you as your mother-tongue?"

"One can never overcome little peculiarities of accent," was the reply, "but I can express my thoughts and feelings quite readily."

"Are you in favour of women voting?"

"We have voting in Russia, but not Parliamentary voting, because we have no Parliament. But in local affairs, in which the charges are paid by the proprietors of property, those who pay vote, whether men or women, and the latter freely exercise their right."

"Are you in sympathy with the Woman Movement?"

"I am not in sympathy with women on platforms. This does not commend itself to me as a means of propagating truth. I would do my best for every poor person, but I would not talk politics with them. I prefer to do that with persons educated in the same way as myself."

"Are you in favour of women voting for Parliament in England?"

"I have not studied the subject sufficiently to have an opinion. I have not made up my mind. But I am not a staunch believer in the Parliamentary system at all. Canvassing is abominable to my mind, with all its flattery, cajolery and falsehood. It is awful to me."

"Do you consider yourself Liberal or Conservative?"

"We have not the two parties as you have. I am of the Greek Orthodox Church, and I believe in Autocracy and the future of Russia. I belong to the Slavophile or National School. Sometimes one must support a Liberal and sometimes a Conservative measure."

Reverting to the Woman question, "Marriage," said Madame Novikoff, "does not deprive us of our property. If a woman marries rich she remains so. She is not obliged to pay her husband's debts, nor he hers. When a man dies his widow takes one-seventh of his property, and when a woman dies the widower receives one-seventh of hers. There is no law of primogeniture, the girls inherit one-fourteenth each, the boys share equally with each other."

"Are you in favour of women studying medicine?"

"Yes, oh, yes, we have excellent women doctors. We Russian women are very independent, and, owing to our married women's property laws we naturally have more love matches than in any other country. I am very much in favour of the economic independence of women,'and I have always felt I had my rights."

"How does the change in the position of women in England strike you?"

"I do not think they are always improving. Courage is useful and necessary, but you should not carry it too far, I do not like women being unladylike."

We referred, in the course of conversation, to the custom of women

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Interview.

LADY FLORENCE DIXIE.

COMMISSIONED by the Women's Penny Paper, I obtained a few days ago an interview with certainly the most remarkable woman which this age has yet given to us, Lady Florence Dixie. I found her ladyship seated in front of a large writing table, covered with papers, writing materials, flowers, photographs, piles of answered and unanswered letters, a huge bunch of manuscript ready for despatch, and a great number of book-proof sheets corrected. What immediately struck me as my eyes fell upon this array of confusing mixtures, was the extreme neatness with which everything was arranged. The papers lay with their headings ready shown, where the eye could catch them and the hand take them at a moment's notice. The writing materials were all arranged side by side in tidy racks; the flowers, dotted here and there on the table, surrounded the photographs of many and various well-known men and women, while the piles of answered and unanswered letters stood neatly folded in stands, marked answered and unanswered. The manuscript and proof sheets lay side by side, neat and orderly like the rest.

Her ladyship wore a short, kilted skirt, or rather kilt, reaching just below the knee in the tartan of the hunting Stewart, which her own family have the right to wear, stockings to match, and her feet were encased in brogues mounted with silver buckles; a plain, white, flannel shirt with tartan tie and grey loose shooting jacket, carelessly unbuttoned, completed the charming attire, which certainly became the wearer. Lady Florence wears her hair short. I believe in childhood it was a bright gold, but repeated cuttings have completely darkened it, and it is only when the sun shines on it that the gold threads are now seen. It is beautifully curly, and hangs upon her forehead in thick love locks.

Having explained my mission, she invited me to seat myself and to put what questions I thought fit. I naturally chose for my first question one relating to woman's position, one near and dear to her heart, and on behalf of which she is never tired of working.

"I have been reading, Lady Florence," I observed, "the February and March numbers of the St. Stephen's Review, in which your articles on 'Woman's Position' have been appearing, and which have attracted a good deal of attention. You feel very strongly on that point, I see."

She smiled quietly as she answered, "So strongly that it is no exaggeration on my part to say that to alter woman's position to what I think it should be I would willingly give my life."

"Although I am a man," I continued, "I certainly feel that in many ways woman's lot is hard, and I quite agree with you that girls and boys should be brought up together and given exactly the same education. That is what you contend for, is it not?"

"I contend for this," she answered gravely, speaking in a clear, sweet voice. "I contend for the absolute equality of the sexes. I say that no absolute difference should be made in the bringing up of the boy and girl, woman and man. The same professions and occupations should be thrown open to them; they should have the same aims, hopes, and aspirations in life; the

same allowances and chances. Physically and mentally they should be educated together, and be to each other what nature says they should be—companions and friends."

"I know you think women should be members of Parliament, stateswomen, &c.," I replied.

"Why not?" she asked. "It is not man's Divine right to rule alone. He has tried it, and failed. For centuries he has controlled the Government, laws, finances, everything. What is the result? The brutal degradation of womankind, immorality, crime, suffering, poverty and misery untold, producing what is now called the social problem, and the social problem will wax greater and greater until woman takes her proper place, for I attribute its existence to her degradation. What steps are our men legislators taking to cope with it? None. Year after year is wasted in Parliament by empty verbosity, and vain conceit. Will you tell me that the country gains anything by those long-winded speeches all about nothing, and the sham and humbug that goes on at Westminster? No, you cannot. Our Parliament is nothing but a big, comfortable club, to which men aspire to belong, but it is not what it should be, i.e., 'the workshop of the people.' Quite the reverse. Most decidedly women should be therein, as they should be in the County Council and in all other offices occupied solely by men. Till this is so, the same humbug will go on, the same sham and nonsense."

"Do you think the cause of woman is advancing?" I ventured to ask.

"Yes," she answered decidedly, "but not half quick enough. Women are not enough organised, they are too loose apart. I should like to see a great Central Institution for womankind, with affiliated branches in every town and country. Woman working hand-in-hand in generous co-operation, free from jealousy and bitterness, willing to sink fade and minor opinions in behalf of their great cause. If women would join, and help me to found some such an institution as I speak of, I feel sure that ere 1900 was reached woman's complete emancipation would have been effected. I have treated this idea, together with woman's present position, and what I know her future would be, if she would only combine as I suggest, in a one-volume novel which will be out very shortly, entitled 'Gloriana; or, the Revolution of 1900.' I would like every woman who does me the honour to read that book to write to me, and give me her opinion for or against the views and plans it contains."

"Who is to be the publisher?" I inquired.

"Messrs. Henry and Co., of 6, Bouverie-street," she answered; "a most enlightened and broad-minded firm, who are not afraid of strong opinions, so that they be just. They are able to look ahead and see what is coming."

"Strangely enough," she answered, "I received to-day a communication from Messrs. Lovell's, of New York, representative in this country on that very matter. Yes, I hope to arrange an American copyright. My sympathies with my sex are world-wide."

"I see that you have been lending the question of riding on the cross-saddle, and rational dress for women in the Daily Graphic."

"Yes," she replied. "Dress is inextricably associated with woman's position. It really needs changing. Woman's present dress covers her with ridicule, because therein she is neither natural nor at ease. Those who love to see her weak, and dependent, and helpless, advocate it, but no earnest champion of woman's advancement would wish to see present-day fashions continued. For myself I practise what I preach. You see my dress. It is simple, to one can call it hideous; it certainly is not indecent, and it is comfort itself. As for riding on the side-saddle or the cross-saddle, I never mean to ride on a side-saddle again. I have had full experience of both, and I know which is the most comfortable and natural."

"You have been a great traveller," I put in.

"Ah! who would not be so who could?" she replied quickly. "Yes, I have seen God's great world, and studied Nature in many and varied forms. I think travel should be afforded to all who by hook or by crook can indulge in it."

"You lead a very busy life," I said, looking at her table covered with letters and MSS.

"Yes," she replied, "I have my hands full. I get up at 5.45 a.m. and have a cold plunge. Then I dress, and write at a book till 7, when I call my two little boys and see them have their cold plunges. When they are dressed they come down and I teach them till 9, when I go and take a sharp run for a mile. Then breakfast, next household duties, then I teach my boys again for two hours, after which I see to my correspondence, which generally keeps me till twelve. I then take further exercise, walking or riding. Then comes lunch, then business and an hour's recreation, then two more hours with my boys at their lessons, and the rest of the evening writing or reading. I am generally in bed by 10. So, you see, I am pretty well occupied. My eldest boy is 13. I am preparing him for his Britannia Examination in June. I think he is away to pass. If he does it will be the first boy I think who has done so prepared by a woman. I wish my other boy had been a girl; if so, I should have brought her up just like her brother, and given her exactly the same education and chances mentally and physically."

"I read a book of yours lately issued," I said, "called 'The Young Castaways; or, the Child Hunter of Patagonia.' You inculcate therein the principles of the equality of the sexes."

"I wrote it for that very purpose—for the young idea," she answered. "Boys' books always make out the boy a superior creature; the girl feeble and helpless. It is a shame to put such nonsense into a boy's brains. I am now writing a sequel to that book called 'Aniwa; or, the Warrior Queen,' in which

"Safe, smart sanity, and wise vanity to boot": the smart and the literati in interwar British Vogue

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ABSTRACT

Dorothy Todd, editor of British Vogue between 1922 and 1926, is a figure of interest to literary historians because of her links with the "Bloomsbury Omnibus": she turned Vogue into a vehicle for their celebrity, publishing their creative and critical writing and promoting them through reviews and portraits. For Vogue's intended readership, the editorials hinted, these modern literati were the people to know; being smart meant not only being well-dressed, but also wellread and culturally up-to-date. When Todd was fired, it was argued that her highbrow tendencies had alienated readers. However, even during her period Vogue had looked backwards as much as forwards, publishing features on fashion history, contextualising trends, celebrating anniversaries and never dislodging itself from the rhythms of court, town and country life.

My paper will focus on the role of Vogue as a guide or service for modern life and of its editors as cultural agents and mediators for a specific set of readers: upper-class women with spendable income and leisure. It will analyse the ways in which this periodical articulated notions of good taste—meaning propriety, suitability to one's station and occasion, and interest in new developments—and parodied social snobbery, modern pretentiousness and excessive bohemian eccentricity, and it will take into account the aesthetic and affective dimensions of the editors' labour, which involved establishing relationships with fashionable society, hosting parties, describing and displaying material objects such as dress or decor and facilitating correspondence.

KEYWORDS: British Vogue, Interwar, modernity, women's periodicals, editors

When wartime restrictions caught up with Vogue, its British distributor persuaded owner Condé Nast to start a national edition, which was born on September 15, 1916. The early history of the magazine is of interest to Modernist, Gender and Queer Studies, but scholars have only found a handful of contemporary sources. Accounts of when, why and who took on which role and what it consisted of exactly are insufficient, as information has been lost, destroyed, biased or not even written down in the first place. Surviving sources include British Vogue itself, still unavailable in digital form; unpublished diaries (Harry Yoxall's in Cohen 2012, Alison Settle's in Coser 2017), references in contributors' correspondence, the odd interview and especially accounts by firsthand witnesses written after the fact, like editor-in-chief Edna Woolman Chase's 1954 memoir.

Dorothy Todd has been named as the founding editor of British Vogue by Mellown (1996) and Luckhurst (1998), who writes that "how Todd came to work for Nast at all is unclear; her period as founding editor was, in any case, extremely brief" (p. 17). She seems to have been called to New York for training (Cohen 2012, loc. 3365), from where she would return in 1922 to steer British Vogue in a different direction. So brief was Todd's first tenure that her successor Elspeth

Champcommunal is the one to be usually credited as the founding editor. The shuffling of staff behind the scenes was not a concern for the readers: their names rarely appeared in the magazine, and changes in editorial policy were hidden from view. Carrod points out that this "empower[ed] the magazine rather than any single author. Vogue would continually be associated with presenting unswervingly professional and unquestionably expert fashion knowledge without being influenced by the taste or viewpoint of an individual contributor" (2015, p. 76). This uniformity extended to the writing style that was required of each editor, as staff writers were called, and even to their personal style (Hammill 2007, p. 39). Unlike editors or copywriters, visual artists were named and celebrated, as their contributions connoted wit and elegance. This began to change in the mid-1920s, when celebrity contributors increasingly signed their articles and were announced in the introductions, and by the 1930s there was a masthead that named the Editor-in-Chief and the editors of each national Vogue.

British Vogue was a relatively minor venture during Champcommunal's editorship, as Madge McHarg, later fashion editor Madge Garland, recalled (interview with Flora Groult, 1986, in Cohen 2012, p. loc. 3270-3283). Most of the content, excepting portraits of British ladies and the odd fashion sketch, was sent directly from New York; features and reviews would be commissioned from British artists and critics as time went on. At a shilling an issue, twice as much as most books reviewed within the magazine, Vogue was intended for an affluent readership. It followed a roughly identical structure throughout the interwar period: an illustrated cover in lush colours; a number of advertisement pages; an introduction which may include a table of contents; a frontispiece portrait; fashion reports; lifestyle and travel features; an editorial essay; another portrait; theatrical, literary and/or artistic criticism; advice for the hostess; practical dressmaking instructions; and more advertising to bookend the issue. The advertisements at the beginning focused on fashion and lifestyle, while the ones at the back announced health and cosmetic products and services. There were also notices for drawing courses, including fashion illustration, and opportunities for commercial artists. Despite the odd insurance policy and professional opening, most advertisements were about the disciplining, adornment and display of one's body and home, which underscores how Vogue "firmly belongs to a tradition which links fashion with status, class, and wealth" (König 2006, p. 205). The bodies of society women and artists, their full names and titles, their evening clothes and designer costumes, their aloof postures, the photographers' signatures and prestige and their connections behind the camera suffused Vogue with wealth and glamour, and so did the images of far-away travel spots and the home interiors of the powerful. Sensorial pleasure went beyond bodies: it could be found in landscapes discovered and design traditions brought home. Houses and gardens were a vehicle for one's taste and knowledge and thus a source of interest, especially if they were connected to someone famous, but they were almost always photographed as empty stages, the owners' presence erased.

Concern about status—and consequently about gender, class and wealth—underpinned Vogue, especially in its introductions and regular editorial essays. Although they rarely

took an explicit political stand, "Convalescence" worried over the "'bad blood' between the classes" and "the deadly germs of Bolshevism" (1919, p. 51) and "The New Economy" faced the moral and aesthetic costs of the war (early July 1920). Essays like "The Alleged Decay of Manners" (early May 1920) positioned Vogue as a guide to modern social life: they often referenced the most visible products of modernity, like jazz music and aeroplanes, and satirised its prophets, avantgarde pedants, bohemians and eccentrics. But while the magazine kept poking fun at the ultramodern it soon began to try out a pose of sprezzatura in the first person of the plural: "We are the tyrants of Time, no longer his slaves. If we have not yet learned the old trick of making the Sun stand still, we are, at any rate, fast teaching him to jazz" ("No One Waits for Time or Tide" 1921, p. 63). Sheehan writes that Vogue, like Eve, "established their authority and their business model in part by taking up a pose of scepticism and irony towards fashion's novelties and vagaries", which "solicits the reader's confidence" and presents the periodicals as influential in the industry, as they can see right through it (2018, loc. 399.6). Vogue therefore presented itself as an authority on and participant in modernity, which Felski conceptualises as "particular (though often contradictory) experiences of temporality and historical consciousness" (1995, p. 9), an awareness of temporality that the magazine expressed by looking backwards as much as forwards, publishing features on fashion history—including an unfinished series that ran from 1921 to 1926—, contextualising trends, celebrating anniversaries and never dislodging itself from the rhythms of court, town and country life. Giles points out that "certain discourses of modernity, however, offer the possibility that the mundanity and monotony of everyday life can be transformed or transcended" (2004, p. 31). Vogue proposed to do so through the cultivation and display of taste.

"It is as conspicuous to be out of line with the modes, as to be too much in bondage with them. The happy medium, the adaptation of costume to character and condition (always with an eye to the prevailing trends of the times) is safe, smart sanity, and wise vanity to boot)" ("Fashion and the Fashion Makers" 1922, p. 53): this point, often repeated, parallels the recurring idea that there is an authentic self and that surfaces can be played with and rearranged ("Good Resolutions and the Daily Masquerade", early January 1922; "Vanity: Beauty's Effervescent Bubble", by Virginia Moore, December 25 1935). Readers were encouraged to do so, as Vogue delighted in the theatre and costume balls, and defended curiosity and playfulness over aesthetic conservatism. If beauty is unchanging, "charm is more subtle and is dependent upon a taste formed by each period in turn" ("The Importance of Being Charming" 1921, p. 44); it is historically located and artificial, and must be learnt. This implies that readers could and should use Vogue to learn about fashion and interior design, but also art and literature, and that all of these disciplines exist in the same plane: "For Fashion—whose other name is Change— though once looked down upon as a merely frivolous minx, is now revealed in a truer light as a combination of many of the more attractive virtues and a vast amount of wisdom […] In literature, the drama, art and architecture, the same spirit of change is seen at work, and to the intelligent observer the interplay of suggestion and influence between all

these things is one of the fascinations of the study of the contemporary world" (introduction, early April 1925, p. 45).

At first Vogue was willing to ease its readers into modernity—"If, through the fault of some eccentrics who are preoccupied with the idea of astonishing the world, modern furniture frightens you a bit, be confident and say to yourself that in all epochs new things have frightened the timid" (Iribe 1919, p. 70)—and gave them their blessing to fake it until they made it— "Ultimate relief must take the form of an Official Phrase Book for Use at Modern Exhibitions" ("Shining at a Private View" 1920, p. 55). Indeed, Howell points out that "Vogue, appealing to the mothers, found a tone of voice that combined tolerance with disapproval" (1978, p. 4).

Articles such as this one seem to confirm it:

Everybody goes to teas. […] In everything else, serious or otherwise, one has some personal choice. […] Some erratic souls prefer, above all else, those glad, gay, turbulent affairs called by the uninitiated, Bohemian tea-parties-which is merely to state that they are tea-parties for Cranks. Such artistic specialties seek to gather unto themselves who's who, what's what, how's how, and, for that matter, when's when. Celebrities are their first love, worshippers their second. […] One can pose on a lilac couch, smoking cigarettes or sipping tea, while a pallid youth, swaying rhythmically to and fro, reads a poem which mixes up a good many startling things about orchids, plumbers, crystalline heights, and blue fish scales. All this, he will explain, is symbolic. Only the truly great will understand it. […] A summer tea-party in a garden is, of course, a cup of a different colour. One cannot imagine the ponderous utterances of hungry dreamers or the sad sallies of disappointed and unrecognized geniuses mingling with this gay and debonair atmosphere.

("Prohibition Tempests in a Tea-Pot", 1919, pp. 39-40, 72)

Except that mingle they did, and often did so at the orchestration of Vogue editors. Dorothy Todd, returning as editor of British Vogue in 1922, developed a network of contacts that included the "Bloomsbury Omnibus", to use Sylvia Townsend Warner's phrase. She turned Vogue into a vehicle for their celebrity, publishing their criticism and promoting them through reviews and portraits. Vogue's temporary alliance with the Bloomsbury literati can be seen in a piece in which the narrator walks by Great Russell Street and the British Museum and gets "out at the Ritz to try to buy at the corner a quarterly magazine for which T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley and Gertrude Stein write; but one can never get it" ("How One Lives from Day to Day", late February 1926, p. 43). Behind the scenes, Todd and Garland introduced Sylvia Townsend Warner to Virginia Woolf in 1926 at a house party with food catered by Boulestin's, a restaurant that was often featured in the magazine. Similarly to hostesses like Ottoline Morrell, Vogue editors acted as mediators and patrons: both Woolf and Warner contributed to Vogue that year. The role of modern salonnière was a prestigious one, if also a target of fun, and readers were often given advice on how to gather and entertain.

When Todd was fired in late 1926 it was argued that her highbrow tendencies had alienated readers, which mirrors the narrative that the Bloomsbury Group itself was too much of a coterie, too elitist and disengaged (Reed 2006, Cohen 2012, Carrod 2015). After a brief interim period Todd was succeeded

in 1927 by Alison Settle, who was in turn followed by Elizabeth Penrose. Following Bourdieu's conceptualisation of embodied dispositions, Witz et al. describe aesthetic labour as the process through which corporations mobilise and objectify employees' bodily and aesthetic dispositions to convert them into economic capital (2003). While this idea results from the analysis of neoliberal practices and is thus anachronistic, it is still useful to describe the work of Vogue editors. They were expected to cultivate relationships with the social and cultural elite and to articulate the values of the magazine—modernity, elegance, experimentation within the socially acceptable—in their personal presentation. Vogue's position on the avant-garde visibly shifted during the interwar period from doubtful to modernist to middlebrow, from which we can infer that editors had a degree of freedom in their choice of aesthetics. However, they still had to work and live according to the values of the American management. Dorothy Todd's career shows the dissociation between the aesthetic labour that was demanded of her and the aesthetic labour she actually performed: while Condé Nast's management certainly objected to her transgressive sexual and familial affiliations, it was the highbrow bohemianism and the clique-ness of her Bloomsbury commissions that were used to defend her dismissal. To a lesser extent, Alison Settle also saw her life uprooted because of the aesthetic demands of her position as Vogue editor, as she was forced to move to a more fashionable address (Coser 2017).

To conclude, throughout the interwar period British Vogue encouraged its readers to strive for smartness and chic, "a special kind of beauty, a very civilised, sophisticated, subtle kind of beauty, worked out and applied by brains" ("The Importance of Vanity", early December 1924, p. 74); to keep up with modernity in all its manifestations and to delight in their potential for transcendence. If the magazine was a guide, its editors were mediators: through aesthetic labour and emotional affiliations they built a network of contributors from which Vogue benefitted, as it became associated with a modern smartness that went beyond sartorial elegance to include literary and artistic know-how.

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Fitting In:
An Ethnography of African American Women

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ABSTRACT

The exterior of the body acts as a shell, protecting and enclosing our inner identities. As a major part of our exterior selves, clothing protects and accentuates how we would like to be portrayed by outsiders. Women in the African-American community experience difficulties in using clothing as a form of expression, as options are limited. This includes what is socially acceptable and physically possible for African-American women to wear. Even though the same pieces of clothing are made and worn by their white American counterparts, when worn by AfricanAmerican women, they are deemed as looking hyper sexualized or unfit. This raises an issue for African-American women's identity, especially in places such as Los Angeles where fashion plays a large role in others identifying who you are and how well you fit into your social surroundings. I believe that these limited clothing options put the African-American's identity into question, as they do not feel African enough to wear traditional African garb, yet not American enough to fit into current American style and wear. The question asked is not "who am I?", but "who can I be?". Because this research project has yet to be completed, this paper will be based upon my personal experiences as an African-American woman. To examine this issue, I will use qualitative research methods and conduct semi-structured interviews among AfricanAmerican college-aged women in Los Angeles in July of 2019.

KEYWORDS: African-American Women, Identity, Fashion and Material Culture

Introduction

It was only until my college years in Los Angeles that I became concerned with the fact that I was physically and socially unable to wear the same trendy clothing that all of the other girls my age felt confident in (Seo, J., & Namwamba, G., 2017). As a result, I learned how to sew and would tailor my own clothes to underemphasize portions of my body I knew outsiders hypersexualized (Awasthi, 2017). I wanted to be taken seriously socially, personally and academically yet wanted my style to reflect who I was on the inside. I shopped for clothing carefully, as I did not want to be portrayed as looking too sexual nor too conservative and questioned whether or not it had a negative impact on other African American girl's self-esteem like it did to mine. Ultimately, it was a rarity to find clothing that fit well or reflected who I was as an African-American girl (Ordonez, 2014).

Now as a master's student competent enough to complete ethnographic fieldwork independently, I have begun to search for answers to my initial research question unintentionally posed in my early college years. I am seeking to answer how the influence of fashion shapes the identity of African-American women. This far, I have not found any literature pertaining to the direct influence clothing and material culture have on the identity of African American women. A gap needs to be filled, as a connection has not yet been made showing how and why the discrimination faced by African-American college-aged women is influenced by their exterior selves. This issue in particular poses a problem, in that the identity of an entire ethnic minority has yet to be examined.

Research objectives

My preliminary research objective is to understand and bring to light challenges AfricanAmerican women face living in one of the fashion capitals of America, Los Angeles, California. Both social and psychological factors will influence the answers given by participants, as well as their personal experiences. In seeking to find answers to my questions, my aim is to illuminate the identity of the African-American woman through examining their exterior material items, mainly clothing and accessories. The backlash African-American women face from outsiders regarding how clothing fits their body is oftentimes inevitable, and in my opinion, the reluctance of acceptance from outsides stems from the women's limited amount of clothing options. Through investigating and reporting about the circumstances and challenges most AfricanAmerican women are currently under or may be facing, I hope my research is used to perpetuate further and more in-depth discussions.

The specific objectives of my research include:
1. To identify why such a large population of African-American women feel shame when wearing the same clothing as their white counterparts.
2. To acknowledge the discrimination that African-American women face from outsiders.
3. To promote a sense of awareness of these unconscious prejudices that the general population may have against African-American women.

In addition to my main research question which is, "How does the influence of fashion shape the identity of the African-American woman?", I will be asking additional sub-questions to support my main research question and hopefully yield the best answers from my participants. The subquestions I will be asking are the following:
1. Do African-American women classify themselves as feeling neither fully African or American, a blend of both, or neither of the two?
2. How do the clothing choices made by African-American women shape how they are perceived by outsiders?
3. What contributes to the self-deprecating feeling of African-American women?

The main conceptual framework that I will be using in direct relation to my literature and research question is the interpretivist approach for qualitative research. I feel that this quote by Walsham perfectly sums up why I have chosen this approach:

> *"Interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers. Thus, there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science"*
> *(Walsham, 1993).*

This quotation emphasizes that the interpretivist approach is based off of subjectivity, not science, and human experiences

and interactions are placed at the center of the research. In my case, this is definitely a framework that fits well with what I am aiming to achieve before, during and after my research. As stated in my research question, I am seeking to record and further understand the discrimination felt by African-American women and uncover why it may be difficult for them to express their outer selves through the use of clothing. Authors, such as George Herbert Mead (2009), Herbert Blumer (2004) and Erving Goffman (1963), fit well within this framework and believed that social experiences are what make up one's reality. Using these authors as references, I will be interviewing and analyzing individual social experiences, taking into account their interpretations of what it means to fit into their surroundings and society.

Methodology

This research will be undertaken in order to gain insight and uncover what challenges AfricanAmerican college-aged women face while expressing themselves through the use of clothing. The number of participants I will be interviewing and observing is dependent upon how much time I have in the field and how much information each participant is willing to share. It is realistic for myself to interview and observe participants living in the Los Angeles area, as it is my hometown and place of birth. My role as an insider will aid in the research project, as I myself identify as an African-American college-aged female. In this instance, being an insider is a way in which I can streamline the project and gather information from participants in a simpler, more efficient fashion. This is because insiders are, for the most part, trusted individuals.

Fashion typically acts as an exterior interpretation of who someone is on the inside, and in this case the two vastly contradict one another. Therefore, I would like to use *photo-elicitation* as another qualitative research method (Noland, 2006). In this method of documentation, power is given to the individuals being researched, in that participants are able to take, choose and share pictures to help demonstrate their thoughts and struggles. This method of taking and sharing pictures will illuminate points in my research that cannot be conveyed by using words.

Anticipated findings

Because this ethnographic work on college-aged African-American women in Los Angeles has yet to be completed, I will refrain from predicting my potential argument and research findings. Although I am a part of the demographic in which I am studying, it does not necessarily mean that I can or should speak on behalf of the future African-American women that will be interviewed.

Conclusion

All of the elements in which my initial research question is comprised of, such as the identity of African-American women, the impact of fashion in Los Angeles and what contributes to the selfdeprecating feeling in women, have only been individually explored. Although these topics have been written about by previous authors, a connection has never

been made converging these ideas (O'Neal, 1998). I am personally interested in completing this research project because I myself am a college-aged African-American and Los Angeles native who has experienced this phenomenon first-hand. Becoming a master's student in social and cultural anthropology abroad and examining the up-rise of groups promoting women's empowerment have made me question how I fit into the world. I would like to carry out this research not only to bring to light my own struggles and experiences belonging to one of the most underrepresented populations on earth, but for others who have experienced the same struggle and do not have a voice in the world of academia.

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Fashion, Dress, and Identity in Muslim Women

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ABSTRACT

The decisions we make around clothes, including our response to fashion, are important signifiers of identity. To establish a coherent identity we must resolve a tension, fundamental to fashion, between the need to conform to group mores while at the same time asserting our individuality. While this experience is universal, for some individuals, group pressure may present a more significant challenge. Muslim women, for example, depending on their situation, may feel compelled either to adopt or abandon forms of dress. This is an aspect that has not previously been fully explored, particularly from the women's own perspective. This paper presents initial findings from an ongoing research project exploring Muslim women's attitudes to dress and their engagement with fashion. Research has focused on the women's clothing style, the relationship of this to fashion, and the role that clothing plays in the construction of their public and private identity. The research arises from the authors' previous research exploring these issues and their impact on self-awareness. This project addresses the same concerns from the perspective of a particular cultural group. The aim has been to explore the women's perceptions of dress, and to allow them to reflect on the nature and impact of fashion in relation to their values and cultural identity. Research involved semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 15 Muslim women, aged 20-40. The women came from a range of backgrounds and cultural groups. Initial analysis has sought to compare cultural attitudes and identify common themes. While there are clear indications of shared experiences and responses, certain differences in the role of dress in aspects of self-esteem, for example, the experience of body image, are apparent.

KEYWORDS: Muslim; women; dress; clothing; fashion; control; pressure; identity

This paper presents some initial findings from an ongoing research project looking at Muslim women's attitude to dress and engagement with fashion. Decisions we make around clothes, including our response to fashion, are important signifiers of identity. To establish a coherent identity, we must resolve a tension, fundamental to fashion, between the need to conform to group mores, while at the same time asserting our individuality (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). While this experience is universal, for some individuals, group pressure may present a more significant challenge. Muslim women, for example, depending on their situation, may feel compelled either to adopt or abandon forms of dress.

This research has focused on the women's clothing style, its relationship to fashion, and the role that clothing plays in the construction of their public and private identity. The aim has been to explore the women's perceptions of dress, and to allow them to reflect on the nature and impact of fashion in relation to their values and cultural identity. Discussion considered their reasons for choosing the clothes they wear, and the role that clothing plays

in the construction of self-image. Findings from this research are compared with the previous research findings of one of the authors (Boultwood, 2014; 2016)

A purposive sample was identified (Silverman, 2000), that is, one that is selected on the basis of specific characteristics to represent the population being investigated: in this case, women from a Muslim culture. While acknowledging the broadness of this as a criterion, we were exploring individuals' experience rather than conducting an in-depth study of any particular Muslin culture or community. Participants were recruited through an open call, involving the distribution of leaflets, and postcards left in appropriate public buildings, for example, the library. For this initial study, 10 women were recruited, with an age range of 18 – 35. Their occupations were professional/academic; three were also studying for a Phd. Of the ten women, five were British, from other family backgrounds (Indian, Pakistani, African), and five were from the Middle East, currently resident in the UK. None of the participants came from countries with extreme restrictions on women's clothing.

Research adopted a phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994), focusing on the participants' own view of their individual and cultural identity, and the impact of these on their attitude to dress. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately one hour. Interviews were audio-recorded, and photographs were taken with consent. Topics covered included interest and response to fashion, Muslim vs Western style of dress, possible pressure from others, and self-awareness and body image.

Initial analysis has sought to explore individual feelings, compare cultural attitudes, and identify common themes. In this paper we will briefly discuss three areas: participants' attitude to clothes, pressure from others, and body image.

All participants, whether or not their country of origin is the UK, adopted Western dress in this country, though this was within certain parameters. They chose clothing that covered arms and legs, and was not revealing. Participant M was typical, … *I cover my hands, cover my legs, cover my body, not very stretching* … All but two of the participants, wear a hijab. One (Participant R) exceptionally wears Western clothes that would be considered revealing by Muslim standards. By contrast, Participant T, who has lived in the UK for five years, adopted a staged approach to removing her hijab, though she Is still concerned that clothes should not be revealing. She was anxious to integrate into Western society, while at the same time maintaining the standards of modesty she was accustomed to. Removal of the hijab was clearly a challenge for her, but she felt that wearing it set her apart, *I think people are more comfortable talking to me sometimes if I'm not wearing a hijab*. While several of the participants said they were interested in fashion, and followed fashion trends, they would seek out fashions that were considered modest. Participant S, from Saudi Arabia, spoke of fashion being *adapted to Arabian taste*; and Participant T explained how Muslim fashion has been changing to correspond more nearly to global fashions. Viewing traditional clothing, such as the abaya, in fashion terms was also apparent. This accords with the findings of (DeCoursey, 2017). Some of

the younger participants were enthusiastic followers of Muslim fashion influencers, such as Habiba Da Silva (https://habibadasilva.com) or Dina Torkia (https://www.youtube.com/user/dinatokio).

This *relaxation*, however, changed when in a more traditional, Muslim setting. Those from Middle Eastern countries, while happy to wear more Western styles in the UK, nevertheless conformed to the conventions of their countries when there. Participant T, for example, was comfortable wearing jeans in this country, but when in Bahrain (her home country), she adopts the abaya (a long, fluid dress, traditionally of black). This seems to be a fairly widespread practice, though a self-negotiated one in some cases. In Saudi Arabia, for example, participants said that it is common practice to wear Western clothes, but to cover these with an abaya when outdoors. Participant M, who described herself as *crazy for fashion*, nevertheless covered her fashionable clothes with an abaya. The abaya would be removed when indoors, sometimes only in all female groups, but at times, in a professional setting perhaps, with prior negotiation could include male colleagues.

Those participants born in this country, also adopted more conservative clothing in certain circumstances: this might be for formal events at the mosque, or at family gatherings, particularly those involving older members of the community. In fact, this approach seemed to be general across all the participants, and various reasons were given for it: respect for their religion, consideration for the feelings of older relatives, and acknowledgment of their society's conventions. While no-one claimed to have been compelled to dress in a certain way, there was a sense of implicit pressure to conform. Thus, in Saudi Arabia, recent political and social changes have resulted in a less prescriptive attitude; women no longer have to wear the abaya. However, while there are no explicit rules, women are expected to cover their arms and legs, *they don't put rules for the colour … but they ask them to be more covered, not tight* (Participant K). Interestingly, two participants, Participant S from Saudi Arabia and Participant M from Kuwait, both said there was considerable pressure within their social circle to dress expensively, though this may be an indication of their social class. In some cases, women experienced pressure from their mothers to adopt traditional dress, even though generally mothers did not require it. Participants all said that there was no specific pressure from fathers to dress in a certain way, and while one participant, Participant T, said that her husband would point out to her if her clothes were too revealing, this was not typical. In general, any influence on clothing style seemed to be exerted by female family members. All participants adopted the hijab as teenagers, and all claimed this was their personal choice; however, they all agreed that their mothers, and other female relations, also wore the hijab.

The experience of pressure was never explicitly stated; in fact, in most cases, participants were at pains to emphasise their personal choice. This resonates with our understanding of group pressure and the nature of conformity. Group pressure is largely unconscious; as group members, we favour those who conform to group mores, and as individuals we feel the need to adapt our behaviour to correspond to the group (Asch, 1951). This is as true of dress as of any other behaviour. People feel uncomfortable when dressed differently to those around them. Wearing the right clothes acts as signifier of group identity, not least to the group itself; and gives the wearer a sense of belonging (Kaiser, 2002). This is one of the mechanisms that drive fashion, and it is possible

to perceive the same process operating on our participants. When in a Western setting, they will feel more comfortable wearing Western clothes; in a Muslim setting, whether that is within the family or in a wider social group, the same pressure will lead them to adopt a more conservative style.

Clothing is intimately bound up with self-awareness; the clothes we wear not only signal our identity to others, but also contributes to our self-image. Contrary to popular belief, our self-understanding is not a given entity. It is determined by our behaviours (Festinger, 1954), others' perceptions of us, and the meanings we assign to aspects of our life (Bem, 1972). This is why clothing has a powerful influence on how we judge both others and ourselves (Kaiser, 2002). The concept of enclothed cognition tells us that, because we invest items of clothing with symbolic meanings, clothes in turn endow the wearer with the same meanings (Adam and Galinsky, 2012). Thus, for example, Adam and Galinsky (2012) demonstrated that wearing a lab coat resulted in better maths performance in the wearer. Similarly, wearing clothing associated with a particular group is likely to emphasise an individual's affiliation with that group, and consequently, strengthen the connection (Johnson, Lennon and Rudd, 2014). One of the issues that we have not yet explored, is the possible dissonance experienced by participants when they cross from one culture to another; this will be the subject of future analysis.

The notion of control is also relevant here: both self control and the control of others. Whether or not it is explicit or acknowledged, the control of others is often a factor in decisions around clothing. Previous research has demonstrated that people will cite comments by their mothers as influencing their attitude to clothing, and the choices they make, even when this was not the mother's intention (Boultwood, 2014). In that research the influence was explicit; in this present research, participants may have succumbed to perceived pressure from their mothers' behaviour, rather than specific comments. The same previous research found that women were often the subject of control by their husbands, who had the power to veto certain clothing. As we have seen, in at least one participant, this was the case here also.

One of the most significant sources of control when it comes to dress, is that of the self. Boultwood (2014) found that women can be extremely controlling of their clothing choices, largely based on their body perception. Body image tends to focus on negative perceptions, and clothing is frequently considered in terms of its ability to enhance, or more usually worsen, that image. Clothing choice is based on the rejection of clothing that exacerbates perceived shortcomings of the body. Body satisfaction is known to be greater when wearing clothes, particularly when they address body issues (LaBat and DeLong, 1990). Body image, and by extension self-image, is an aspect we were keen to explore in this research. As we have seen, the essence of traditional Muslim clothing is that it shouldn't expose the body, either by uncovering it or by emphasising its shape with tight clothes. Would this kind of clothing make a difference to clothed or unclothed body image?

Analysis is still in its early stages, but initial findings suggest similar concerns to those who wear Western styles.

Participant K described herself as overweight, and struggles to find clothes,

> *Most of the time … I like the piece, but when I try it on my body, I don't like it. … before I was feeling depressed about my body … but now I focus on my studies. (Participant K)*

This resonates with the earlier research described above: the participants in that study would describe their negative feelings about their body, but claim that the were not concerned, and that they focused on other aspects of their lives. The notion of fit in this context is significant. When clothes don't fit, it emphasises the difference between the body and the idealised body that the clothes have been designed for; and rather than criticising the clothes, women tend to blame themselves. Participant S was also concerned with the fit of clothes. She said that her weight concerns were more severe in Saudi Arabia, because of the negative comments of older relatives, and the emphasis on looks within her social circle had persuaded her to consider having plastic surgery. Participant M had similar concerns, and in fact had had some surgery, as well as procedures such as Botox. In both instances, there is a sense of the controlling effect of negative criticism. This resonates with the findings of previous research, and appears to be just as harmful to the women's self-esteem. Participant T said she felt overweight, but was not concerned about it. At first sight, this seems to contradict the negative feelings of others, and we might be tempted to conclude that the negativity of others is the sole cause of body dissatisfaction. However, she goes on to say that she always chooses clothes that do not emphasise her middle, which suggests that she is more concerned than she is willing to admit. She also spoke of clothes being chosen for … *comfort rather than showing off the shape of the body*. When speaking of clothing, the notion of comfort is quite widespread. The comfort of clothing is rooted in its ability to diminish negative perceptions of the body, and it is therefore closely aligned to fit (LaBat and DeLong, 1990; Grogan, 2017; Grogan *et al.*, 2010). There is also a suggestion of psychological comfort. Comfortable clothes that do not emphasise the awareness of the body will induce a more positive body-image, and since this is so closely tied up with self-image, it follows that we will also have a more positive sense of self. This was the case with Gulamhussein et al (2015), who found that the loose clothing of Muslim women was associated with wellbeing.

It would be premature at this stage to draw definite conclusions. This paper has mainly focused on just four examples from a cohort of ten, and they need more in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, it is possible to see some consonance with previous research. The participants all tended to be influenced by the style mores of the communities they lived in; they all experienced the effects of group pressure, and adapted their own style accordingly; instances of control, in one form or another, affected their sense of self and its impact on their clothing choices. To this extent, their experience is similar to those who wear Western styles. The modest styles they favoured appeared to mitigate their negative feelings about their bodies. In the same way, Boultwood (2016) found that women selected clothes that addressed their body concerns by de-emphasising those aspects they were unhappy with.

However, the present participants were not as harsh in their self (body) criticism. Is it possible then that the prominence of the body in Western culture is the cause of such feelings, and by definition, a culture that emphasises the hiding of the body fosters a more forgiving attitude? In both cases, body image is a significant aspect of self-awareness, but there may be a difference in how it is managed. Further analysis will help to answer these questions.

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Ce N'est Pas un Costume: The Absence of the Object in Historical Costume Research

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ABSTRACT

When we explore the history of dress we often rely on two-dimensional images including fashion plates, photographs, portraits and drawings and primary sources such as wardrobe records and contemporary reports, and there is a plethora of history of fashion literature which examines changing trends and their relationship to cultural, social and political events. There is also recognition of the advantages of a material culture approach to historical dress through object-based research and analysis of extant garments, but how do we apply this methodology when the garments no longer exist or are inaccessible for study? Are we to rely solely on a two-dimensional rendering to fully understand the complexities of the three-dimensional object?

Pictorial representations of European court masque costumes of the 16th & 17th century exist in both contemporary costume designs and portraiture, however, there is little surviving physical evidence of the realised costumes. The costume design, while often taken as evidence of the costume itself, is imagined before the garment exists and may alter considerably through its interpretation to allow for practicalities of both the body and the performance, and the portrait, while presumably a painting of the realised costume, is often an idealised version of the sitter and the clothes they wear.

This paper will discuss the benefits of restoring the absent object, i.e.-the costume, to this narrative and its potential value as a tool for exploring not only the European court conventions of this period but the wider peripheral society engaged in the production of these extravagant spectacles.

KEYWORDS : Costume, Social History, Fashionable Society, Court Masque, Material Culture

Introduction

The concept for this paper and the research it proposes was initially inspired by Rene Magritte's *The Treachery of Images* (fig 1) which depicts a pipe with the words Ceci n'est pas une pipe (this is not a pipe) below. The painting creates 'a three-way paradox out of the conventional notion that objects correspond to words and images' (*Rene Magritte*, 2009) as what it portrays is not actually a pipe but the image of one. This theory can be applied to the historical costume design which is not actually the costume, but the rendering of an idea conceived before its creation. It cannot, therefore, be taken as evidence of the existence of the costume itself or be read as an accurate representation of the finished object.

Summary

There has long been acknowledgement of the value of contextualising historical dress through an object-based material culture approach. Analysis of extant garments enables a deeper consideration of their construction, an understanding of the craftsmanship involved in their production and an insight into the lives of the people who wore them. The reconstruction of these garments also provides the opportunity for preservation of these important historical artefacts by reducing handling of the originals by researchers and opening up accessibility to those with an interest in costume making and fashion history (North & Tiramani, 2011). The basis of this type of methodology is an appreciation of the importance of the object as a tool for investigating the chosen subject, and its value for exploring the broader anthropological context of the period, however, this practice can become problematic when the garments of interest no longer survive, are underrepresented in museum archives or are inaccessible due to conservation concerns or location.

This article explores the validity of reconstructing historical dress, in this case the court masque costumes of the 16th and 17th centuries, where the original garment is no longer available to use as a reference for construction, leaving a reliance on the interpretation of contemporary costume designs, tailors notes, financial records, inventories and portraiture. This is supported by a revue of a range of existing research and literature, and analysis of the reliability of primary sources as a basis for further inquiry.

Court Masque Costume

The elaborate court masques of the 16th & 17th centuries were specially commissioned, private events with dancing, music, extravagant costumes and lavish sets. They were fashionable throughout Europe during this period and were used to celebrate important occasions such as weddings and state visits as well as being used as a propaganda tool, promoting the virtues of the people in power through their personifications of classical gods and heroes (V & A Museum, n.d.) (fig 2).

Traditionally seen as the beginnings of costume design as we understand it today (Clancy, 2014), the court masque was arguably the first opportunity for realising costumes which were influenced by an earlier historical period, looking back to ancient times for inspiration and signifying contemporary ideals of heroism through allegorical symbolism. The costumes were highly decorated and it is known that the court masques provided employment for many professional embroiderers (Stewart cited in Synge, 1986). This translated into the costumes through 'scalloped hems, tassels, pendants and animals' faces, the simplicity of a classical outline broken up into complicated compartments with a multitude of motifs' (Marley, 1982: 86). Characters were often weighed down with figurative decoration (Kirstein, 1971) and many of the costumes featured 'prop' elements such as wings, mouldings and elaborate headdresses as well more structural elements which manipulated the body shape (figs 3 & 4). These ambitious designs would have presented challenges for the makers tasked with building them as they adapted their familiar pattern cutting and construction skills to develop alternative techniques and explored new materials, while considering practical demands such as movement, quick changes, durability and strength.

Review

In *The Early Stuart Masque* Ravelhofer discusses costume production for these elaborate events including the limited build time, communication between designer and maker, pattern drafting, the production of painted calico toiles of

several versions of a design and the necessitation of the various number of craftspeople involved in the production of just one costume. Ravelhofer's work is a useful starting point for beginning to understand the social history of the communities involved in costuming the masque performances and provides a link between the costume making conventions of the Stuart era and those used today. She also suggests that this is an area which has not been fully explored;

> Despite the obvious importance for contemporaries, costumes have not attracted much attention in criticism. In comparison to the massive amount of literature devoted to masque texts and their political implications, few studies comment on theatrical fashion…. Communication between rehearsing parties and the production teams was of vital importance but has not been sufficiently investigated (Ravelhofer, 2006:125-135).

In *The Medici Wedding of 1589* Saslow brings together archival records and texts along with visual sources to provide a picture of the yearlong preparations for this month of celebrations. The book references the exclusively male performers wearing fake breasts made from papier-mache and sculpted cardboard to depict nude females (Saslow, 1996) suggesting a disparity between Buontalenti's costume designs, one of which shows beautiful dancing ladies (fig 4), and the realised costumes. This illustrates the value of employing reconstruction methods to explore the reality of the transformation from the designer's drawing into the completed costume; by extricating and applying the evidence in a practical way we can ascertain whether the vision of the designer is achievable or whether sacrifices to the aesthetic must be made to allow for the actuality and practicality of the body and movement of the performer. This example also indicates the development of early prop costume production and demonstrates how the temporary nature of performance costume would have allowed the freer use of less durable and less expensive materials enabling a more experimental and creative approach to their construction.

Focussing on costumes for the finale of these celebrations, Hoenig and Pasqui's 2010 paper *A Talent to Amaze - Bernardo Buontalenti's Costume Designs for the Intermedi of 1589* presented research from The *Libro di Conti della Commedia* (Book of Accounts) preserved in the Florence State Archives which reflected Buontalenti's supervision of the creation of 286 costumes by over 50 tailors and revealed details about;

> The frenetic preparations, the daily acquisitions, the awaited consignments and the astounding quantity of materials purchased, together with the techniques of the many tailors and embroiderers working behind the scenes (Hoenig & Pasqui, 2010:35).

These collections of original accounts of this event are an invaluable resource as not only do some designs survive but they are supported by supplementary evidence regarding materials, construction methods and working relationships within the production team. Just as wardrobe departments use the records kept in the costume 'bible' to revive a show, often years after the original production, these accounts have potential as the basis for developing a tangible three-dimensional visual and practical representation of the processes described, complementing existing research by resurrecting objects that have previously only been understood in a two-dimensional format.

In 2014 the *Fashioning Opera and Musical Theatre: Stage costumes from the Late Renaissance to 1900* conference was held at the Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice. The call for papers suggested that;

> Costumes have always been a crucial component of any musico-theatrical event - defining characters, enhancing the sonic dimension of performance, and blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction, past and present, the human and the fantastic. Yet even as costumes have conditioned the reception of opera and musical theatre alike, the material traces of their histories have too frequently slipped through the cracks of our critical discourse (Anon, 2014: VII).

This quote stresses the importance of the role of historical costume as part of musical theatre and reflects earlier observations regarding the relative lack of research into the materiality of court masque culture, however, it also highlights how the experience of the event is crucial to the appreciation of the costumes and their purpose within the wider performance landscape. This idea is echoed in Ossicini's paper from the same conference, *Costume Archives: Prospects and Methodologies*, which considers the problems of archiving theatrical costume as 'a material object that lives in a specific and peculiar context of use which is the performing event' (Ossicini, 2014:586). Although referring to original garments, this idea poses questions around the validity of reconstructing a costume when it can never be part of the production for which it was originally designed, and whether this devalues some of its research potential. The reimagining of any historical artefact will, by its nature, mean that it can never be fully restored within the context of its original environment, however, this does not invalidate its value as an object for exploring that environment. Despite existing in isolation, the reconstructed historical costume can tell us not just about materials, construction and the maker but give us an insight into the physical experience of the performer, the visual experience of the audience and the costume's relationship to other elements of the performance such as lighting and set.

Ossicini also states that;

> The costume design is often envisaged as a certain documentary source when the stage costume often undergoes many transformations during the slow metamorphosis from paper to the event (Ossicini 2014:586).

This quote again demonstrates the fallibility of relying on primary two-dimensional visual evidence as, while the costume drawings show us the intention of the designer, they cannot be relied on as proof of what the realised costume looked like. The designer's sketches are a vision of their ideal and are not depictions of real bodies wearing clothes and often fail to give us the back or side view of the costume, leaving them open to interpretation, however, the tacit knowledge of an experienced costume maker would enable a practical but aesthetically appropriate solution which could be developed through their reconstruction practice.

Powell's paper *Henry Gissey's Costumes for Psyche (1671)* is another useful source of firsthand documentary evidence. Powell names the tailors who worked on *Psyche* as Claude Fortier and Jean Baraillon although, with somewhere in the region of 300 costumes to make, they presumably had a network of supporting workers. Gissey's designs are important as they often contain notes for the tailors which can give us an

idea of the colours, fabrics and trims used in the construction of the costumes and an impression of the relationship between designer and maker, providing another angle of investigation (fig 6).

In *Virtual Restitution of Costumes for French Court Operas: Prolegomena to a Future Workshop* Lauvernier explored the possibilities of using 3D virtual representations to create an archive of 18th century costumes. He discussed the challenges of such an undertaking including 'the recreation of the 'physics' of the costumes, since we don't exactly know what the structure of the costumes was like' (Lauvernier 2012: 594) as well as the limited number of authentic stage costumes to use as reference, the lack of back views, the misleading elongated proportions of some of the designs and the animation of the images. However, many of these issues might be solved through the reconstruction of sample costumes from the period, providing garments which could be worn by performers and captured digitally to give a realistic depiction of movement, drape of fabric, proportion and posture.

Lauvernier also lamented the lack of surviving costume patterns from this period but acknowledges the *Seventeenth-Century Dress Patterns* series by Susan North, Jenny Tiramani et al. as a reference source. These books were commissioned following Tiramani's work at The Globe Theatre where through an original practices approach 'the development of theatre costume was founded on historical research into the material culture of clothing' (Tiramani, 2007) (fig 7). Such works are crucial for understanding how clothing of this period was made and demonstrate the materials and techniques familiar to the tailors of the time, providing a starting point for exploring how they adapted these skills to produce the complex masque costumes. The *Dress Pattern* books also compare the extant garments used as the basis of their studies to contemporary portraiture, providing a helpful link between the object and its two-dimensional representation.

Courtiers from this period were often depicted wearing masque costume in paintings and the use of portraiture as a foundation for studying dress history is well established, a relevant example being Hughes' article *Masqued Identity at the Stuart Court: Isaac Oliver's Masquing Portrait of Anne of Denmark* (Hughes, 2014) which examines the iconography of the painting and discusses how portraits of sitters in their masque wear were a vehicle for emphasising the importance of their costumes in terms of their status as performers and position at court. Such portraits offer an alternative perspective to the costume design and can give a clearer idea of the weight and drape of the fabric, however, there are issues surrounding the interpretation of paintings of clothes, particularly when studying costume construction, as they cannot always be relied on for accuracy (figs 8 & 9). Arnold reflects on this in *The Handbook of Costume* suggesting that;

> 'The textural quality of the brush strokes can blur seam lines and the grain of the fabric. Details may be obscured by layers of dirt and varnish, while restoration may have falsified the evidence. Two-dimensional evidence for a three-dimensional subject can be misleading. What we must do is look at all paintings in the light of other contemporary evidence in order to interpret the information correctly' (Arnold, 1973, p. 8).

Conclusion

The above quote demonstrates the importance of using a range of primary sources to enable the accurate analysis and application of evidence in the development of historical garment reconstruction. Many of these sources have been evaluated in the works discussed, contributing to the vibrant research culture surrounding court masque costume and an interest in preserving this knowledge through innovative archival models and this proposed research has the potential to add value to this discourse by offering an aspect not fully explored previously. The reimagining of a court masque costume is an opportunity to decipher the primary information through an original applied methodology, however, while the examples discussed are all possibilities for the basis of such a project, further investigation is required before committing to a more focussed pathway.

Recreating a historical object presents alternative challenges to that of reconstructing a surviving one, however, the inherent knowledge of the researcher would enable a coherent interpretation of the primary evidence through personal professional practice and allow for experiential conjecture regarding any lost or missing information. The author's background as a theatrical costume maker, where the skill lies in the translation of a two-dimensional rendering into a three-dimensional garment, also justifies this ethnographic approach as an appropriate and effective way to explore the professional lives of our vocational ancestors. Becoming embedded in this kinaesthetic process offers a unique means of advancing existing research by utilising the researcher's very specific and specialised skills and applying experiential rather than theoretical knowledge to bring the court masque costume back to life. As the following quote suggests;

> 'The process of recreating ancient artefacts step by step can shed light on the lives and habits of the original craftworkers that no amount of armchair theorising can give'
> (Barber cited in Gordon, 2002).

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FIGURES

Fig 1. *The Treachery of Images* by Rene Magritte, 1929, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Fig 2. Costume design by Henry Gissey, *Louis VIV as Apollo the Sun God,* 1653, Chateau de Versailles.

Fig 3. Costume Designs by Daniel Rabel, a. *Drummer*, Ballet du Serieux et du Grotesque, 1627, © V & A Museum, S.369-1988, b. *The Entry of Music*, Ballet des Fées de la Forest de Saint Germain, c.1625, © V& A Museum, S.1163-1986, c. *Headless Character*, Ballet Royal du Grand Bal de la Douairiere de Billbahaut, 1626, © V & A Museum S.1166-1986.

Fig 4. Costume Designs by Inigo Jones, a. *Fiery Spirit* from The Lord's masque, 1613, Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, b. *Oberon* from Oberon the Fairy Prince, 1611, Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, c. Lady Masquer, 1610, Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth.

Fig 5. Costume Design by Bernado Buontalenti, *Dancing Ladies,* 1589, © V & A Museum, E.614-1936

Fig 6. Costume Designs by or from the studio of Henry Gissey for theatre, ballet and pageants in the court of Louis XIV, a. male ballet costume for the part of *Love*, 3rd quarter of 17th century, © V & A Museum, E.1300-1936, b. female ballet costume, c.1650 © V & A Museum E.1308-1936

Fig 7. Stephen Fry & Mark Rylance in *Twelfth Night* at the Globe Theatre, 2012, costume designs by Jenny Tiramani, photograph by Simon Annard

Fig 8. William III as *Mercury* after Jan de Baen, c. 1668 © National portrait Gallery

Fig 9. Woman in Masque Costume as *a Power of Juno* by John de Critz, 1606, possibly Lucy Russel in the masque *Hymenai* designed by Inigo Jones, Private Collection.

Fashionable Society in History: Exploring definitions of good and bad taste through the trend for kitsch.

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ABSTRACT

This paper will explore British high street fashion trends from 2000-2017, and debates the importance and value of a fast fashion archive in the context of culture, dress and society. Svendsen (2006) suggests that the nature of fashion is transient, and that fashion moves in cycles. Using research drawn from a high street garment archive housed in Nottingham Trent Universities School of Art and Design, this paper explores how trends have evolved over the last 18 years. A particular focus will be placed on the kitsch trend, and its consequent implications of good and bad taste. The archive contains an estimated 1900 garments and accessories. Research has found that trends in the archive are cyclical with certain trends re-emerging each year. This unique data has enabled the creation of a longitudinal map of high street fashion, which the paper draws from.

Clothing is never simply functional. Twigger Holroyd states, 'Clothes are vital to our selfpresentation, helping us to communicate our identity to those around us.' (Twigger Holroyd, 2016:54) Trends have a key role in constructing identity and given the fast pace of fashion have also led to an increase in style obsolescence. This is where certain items 'fall out of fashion.' By focusing on a range of garments from the archive, the paper will debate the roles that trends and style obsolescence have in defining fashion's impact on society. This is significant as it fuels the fast fashion industry, but ultimately and increasingly creates environmental concerns. The paper will conclude with an analysis of how investigating fast fashion trends could create opportunities for a more sustainable future for a fashionable society.

KEYWORDS: *trend tracking, style obsolescence, kitsch, sustainability through style.*

Introduction

Trends are at the centre of the fashion system, but they also evidence the complexities of sustainability in fashion. Veblen (1961) in Gronow (1997) notes how fashion is a typical form of waste. When styles become out of fashion, old clothes are easily discarded, even if they are in perfect condition. In order to explore the significance and meaning of trends, the fashion cycle will be examined in depth in this paper. This includes defining the terms 'fad' and 'classic,' as well as investigating short term and long term cycles. The relationship between class, taste and fashion will be studied, drawing on the work of key theorists such as Veblen, Simmel and Bourdieu. The kitsch style will be used as a case study, in order to demonstrate good and bad taste, and style obsolescence. The FashionMap archive at NTU is a primary research tool used to explain how the kitsch trend has evolved.

Methodology

This paper will use research drawn from a unique collection of high street fashion garments and accessories spanning from 2000 - 2017, that belong to the School of Art and Design at NTU. Second year Fashion and Textile Design students have created this collection through research projects that have explored seasonal high street trends. The archive is called FashionMap, and it includes includes over 1900 garments and accessories. FashionMap is a valuable resource for the longitudinal study of fashion on the British high street. The archive has been used to explore how the trend for kitsch has evolved over the last 18 years. Garments in the archive are a unique resource and enable the ongoing development of a longitudinal map that tracks trends since the new millennium. Tracy Potts (2012) is a key theorist in the subject of kitsch. Her work has been studied, and the fundamental principles of kitsch identified and applied to the FashionMap. By categorising trends over a 17 year timeline, this evolving map defines their characteristics, enabling patterns of similarities and trend re-emergence to be identified. The paper will flesh out some of the key issues that creating the map has raised. With particular attention to the role of style obsolescence, an analysis of the impact that trends have on sustainability will be considered. A systematic literature review using key words has also taken place. The literature search has included academic texts, reports and media sources. It has been grounded in key theories including the fashion cycle, the relationship between class taste and fashion, and kitsch. Fundamental theorists have included: Simmel (1957), Laver (1933), Veblen (1899), Bourdieu (1979) and Potts (2012).

The fashion cycle

Many theorists and researchers have attempted to create a comprehensive model, which lends to a better understanding and predictability of the fashion cycle. The fashion cycle can be described as:

> *'The theories of fashion flow or diffusion of fashion into the population, the rate and extent to which fashions are accepted by the consuming public, and the duration of, or interest in, a fashion frequently fall within the subject matter' (Strauss & Lynch, 2007:127).*

Fashion cycles typically fall into either short term or long term contexts. Short term cycles can exist from a month to a year, whilst long term cycles follow 'evolutionary style movements' and can be traced to last for as long as a century (Strauss & Lynch, 2007). Short term cycles can be described as 'fads.' A 'fad' is 'a short-paced, popular collective behaviour that fades out rapidly once the initial novelty has gone.' Simmel notes that, 'as fashion spreads, it gradually goes to doom' (Simmel [1957] in Rocamora 2016:76). In contrast, a long term cycle can be described as a 'classic,' which 'denotes a lasting significance, endurance, and long life span' (Goncu-Berk, 2015).

The word 'trend' was first used as a verb in the sixteenth century, meaning, 'the way that something bends' (Goncu-Berk, 2015). The typical twenty-first century meaning, referring to change, is relatively new. 'Trend' was used to describe stylistic and cultural changes in the 1960s, with the

term 'trendsetter' appearing in 1962 (Goncu-Berk, 2015). Easey, (2009) defines the fashion cycle as a 'bell shaped curve.' This curve typically has four stages: introduction, growth, maturity and decline. The introduction phase is where new fashions emerge, and may take time to gain acceptance. During the growth stage competition increases as the trend gains exposure and appeal. At the maturity stage, the trend has reached mass appeal, and finally the trend will decline, falling out of fashion (Easey, 2009), which creates style obsolescence.

The fast fashion accelerated business model evolved in the 1980s, and involves increased numbers of fashion collections every year. This generally means quick turnarounds and decreasing prices. It is crucial that brands are able to react rapidly under this business model, in order to respond to consumer demand (Environmental Audit Committee, 2019). Although fast fashion is a fairly recent phenomenon, James Laver notes in his 1933 essay entitled 'The Triumph of Time' that fashion is constantly 'speeding up due to several causes.' This includes, 'large scale production and the survival of snobbery into the democratic world' (Laver, [1933] in Carter 2003:123). Laver goes onto explain how the breakdown of social hierarchy has left women free to dress as well as they can afford, and they slight distinctions can be made by a superior cut of material, or adopting the latest fashions 'a little sooner than the neighbours' (Laver, [1933] in Carter 2003:123).

The business models of high street fashion brands have evolved dramatically since the 2000s, fast fashion can now be described as 'ultra-fast.' A 2019 House of Commons Sustainability of the Fashion Industry report raised concerns through their inquiry 'into the sustainability of the fashion industry that the current 'fast fashion' business model is encouraging over-consumption and generating excessive waste' (House of Commons, 2019:6). Indeed, 800,000 tonnes of waste is produced from the UK clothing demand each year (WRAP, 2019). However, Woodward (2009) questions the fastness of fashion, as some trends appear to be timeless. Woodward states, 'There is not a rapid shifting change of styles, rather street styles tend to emerge more slowly at the intersection between new looks and older styles' (Woodward, 2009:95). This links to the longitudinal map which I have been investigating in relation to my own research into kitsch. The fast fashion business model may seem to question the longevity of style. However, research into trends using the FashionMap archive evidences that trends do re-emerge frequently, which echoes Woodward's comments.

The relationship between class, taste and fashion

'Differentiation and imitation constitute the bedrock of fashion.' (Carter, 2003:68).

Veblen (1899) proposed one of the earliest theories about the distribution of fashion, which he describes as, 'a movement of adoption from one societal class to another in a vertically hierarchical society.' This is known as, 'The Theory of The Leisure Class' (Goncu-Berk, 2015:2). Under Veblen's theory, society is based upon economic principles, and social classes are dictated by conspicuous leisure and consumption activities (Veblen, 1899). Fashions emerge through the upper classes, who have the capital to innovate new forms of dress that are

sophisticated and expensive. This re-affirms their place of occupancy within society. Fashions and trends begin to spread as the lower classes imitate the upper classes. The lower classes aim to emulate the class above by differentiating from their own class (Veblen, 1899). Bourdieu believes that those with a high volume of cultural capital in society, generally speaking the upper classes, have the ability to assert their power, and determine what constitutes as good taste (Bourdieu, 1979). He describes the working classes as only holding 'the taste of necessity, which is characterised by functionality' (Bourdieu in Svendsen, 2006:47) Bourdieu shares similar ideas with the Veblen, maintaining that fashion is an upper-class invention, which is mainly used to create distinction between different classes. Bourdieu states that taste is not freely chosen, and, 'For anything to have a high value, it is imperative that others do not have it' (Bourdieu in Svendsen, 2006:50).

Georg Simmel is regarded as one of the 'great influences on the development on the sociological interpretation of fashion' (Rocamora, 2016:63). Like Veblen, he believed that fashions could be used as a distinguishing feature between classes:

> *The fashions of the upper stratum of society are never identical with those of the lower; in fact they are abandoned as soon as the latter prepares to appropriate them. Thus fashion represented nothing more than one of the many forms of life by the aid of which we seek to combine in uniform spheres of activity the tendency towards social equalisation with the desire for individual differentiation and change. (Simmel, [1904] 1957:543).*

In his 1957 essay 'Fashion' Simmel discusses fashion as a form of imitation. Fashion has the power to unite certain members of social classes, and segregate others. According to Simmel, the elite initiate fashions, which the mass then imitates. 'Fashion does not exist in tribal and classless societies' (Simmel, [1904] 1957:543). Carter (2003) comments on the work of Simmel (1904), and the links between class and fashion. Carter notes that the upper class need the lower class, because without their recognition, competition would not exist. (Carter, 2003).

Good and bad taste, a study of kitsch

Social patterns of taste are embodied in what Bourdieu calls 'habitus,' (Bourdieu, 1979). This enables us to believe that what we have chosen is in actual fact imposed on us, thus reinforcing the fact that taste is a 'direct reflection of an objective class affiliation' (Bourdieu in Svesnden, 2006:52). The idea of distinguishing between good and bad taste can be traced back to the seventeenth century. Svendsen (2006) writes how during this period, 'sumptuary laws' existed which dictated that certain items of clothing were reserved for certain social classes. Lower classes were forbidden to purchase particular items, even though they might be able to afford them. These laws were introduced in order to maintain class differences, but were frequently broken (Svendsen, 2006). Potts (2007) notes how, 'kitsch has now lost its class connotations.' (Potts, 2007:3).

The Tate defines the term kitsch as, 'the German word for trash, and is used in English to describe particularly cheap, vulgar and sentimental forms of popular and commercial culture' (Tate, 2019). Kitsch gained prominence during the 1920s. Historically, there have been strong links between kitsch and class, with kitsch largely considered to be a working class

phenomenon. Kitsch was once unwelcome in the art world, but from around the 1950s onwards, artists started to take an interest in kitsch, and popular culture. This influenced the explosion of pop art in the 1960s (Tate, 2010). As previously discussed, Veblen states how taste becomes 'vulgarised' as standards of good taste are adopted by the lower classes (Gronow, 1997). Vulgar taste emerges when once elitist products become readily available through mass production (Gronow, 1997). Potts (2007) however notes that 'the taste competition is now over' (Potts, 2007:1). Kitsch once operated as an indicator of social position, but this is no longer applicable as 'clear cut divisions between so-called good and bad taste have dissolved into bewildering configurations' (Potts, 2007:1). Coleslaw (2001) in Potts (2007) states that, 'Some things are so bad they pass through good bad and become bad again' This is reflective of the fashion cycle and the cyclical nature of trends. Social and cultural factors can dictate that once obsolescent styles may re-emerge again as fashionable. For example, in April 2019, Vogue identified the cargo pant as 'bang on trend.' This style first became popular in the 90s grunge movement, and channels 'modern minimalism.' (Smart, 2019).

Examples of kitsch in the FashionMap Archive

Potts (2012) states that kitsch often signifies excessive bad taste. The Oxford Dictionary's definition of kitsch places an emphasis on irony, 'Art, objects, or design considered to be in poor taste because of excessive garishness or sentimentality, but sometimes appreciated in an ironic or knowing way' (Oxford dictionary, 2019). A number of garments in the FashionMap archive have been identified as kitsch, building upon the fundamental characteristics of the trend which have been identified. Key words used to identify kitsch items of clothing have included; vulgar, cheap, mass produced, ironic, bad taste, garish and sentimental. This has led to a search for items which may include; bold colours, large prints, distinctive graphics and nostalgia qualities, such as an appropriation of styles from previous decades.

Ewen (1988) notes that kitsch items of clothing are often imitations of elite style aimed at the middle class and enabled by mass production. 'What makes an object kitsch is that it is a cheap, mass produced copy of some original object of model which was considered elegant' (Gronow, 1977:42). Several examples of kitsch items of clothing can be identified in the FashionMap archive. One of the earliest examples is the below t shirt.

Figures 1 & 2 – Oasis t shirt, 2000/2001, NTU ©.

This t shirt is from Oasis's 2000/2001 autumn/winter collection, and features a plain white background with a red cherry graphic. The cherry was a popular feature of the pop art movement, which emerged in the 1950s in Britain. This is reflective of Gronow's statement that kitsch often reflects a mass produced copy of an original model, once considered to be elegant. Interestingly, this particular design has remained timeless, it has not become style obsolescent. A strikingly similar t shirt can be found on Oasis's website, nearly twenty years on from the 2000 design. Oasis's 2019 t shirt is described as the 'cherry ooh la la tee' which will 'never go out of style.' (Oasis, 2019). This t displays the same cherry graphic logo.

A further example of kitsch in the FashionMap archive is the 2008/2009 trend identified as 'acid rain.' This can be seen below in Figure 3.
Figure 3 – Acid rain trend, 2008/2009, NTU ©.
This particular trend can be defined as kitsch in terms of 'guady, tacky or brash – inferring both cheap manufacture and dubious aesthetic quality.' (Holliday and Potts, 2012:47). Unlike the cherry t shirt, this whole outfit is no longer in fashion, it has become style obsolescent. Although, it is true that individual items from this look might still be considered as stylish today. This could be in an ironic sense, 'It's so bad it's good,' as Wayne Hemmingway (1999) states in Potts (2007).

Figure 4 denotes a further example of kitsch in the FashionMap archive. Leopard print has a controversial history in fashion, and often swings between sartorial elegance and bad taste. Similar to Figure 3, wearing this whole outfit today would be considered as bad taste. However, individual items from the chosen outfit could be incorporated into a stylish look for 2019. Leopard print can be considered as a 'classic' in terms of the trend curve. Writing for the Observer fashion column in 2018, Iqbal states, 'leopard print never really went away' (Iqbal, 2018). Leopard print can be linked to the earlier discussions of taste, as it has historically been affected by both class and wealth. Mrs Robinson, in the 1960s film The Graduate, frequently wears leopard print. She has been described as 'encapsulating fifth avenue elegance' (MarieClaire, 2014). This can be compared in stark contrast to EastEnders character, Pat Butcher, who is also known for her love of leopard print, but Iqbal notes that she 'makes it common.' (Iqbal, 2018).
Figure 4 – Leopard print trend, 2006/2007, NTU

Conclusion

Investigating fast fashion trends can create opportunities for a more sustainable future. Trend cycles are cyclical, and as displayed through the kitsch trend, some items of clothing are so 'bad' that they pass into 'goodbad' – thus extending the lifecycle of certain garments. Complete outfits from the early 2000s may be considered as bad taste twenty years later. However, certain aspects of these trends are still very much in fashion today. This is visible through the FashionMap archive, and in particular the acid rain and leopard print trends. Style obsolescence dictates that certain trends will become unsustainable due to their design. However, good quality and durable garments can stand the test of time, and may well re-emerge as fashionable again in the future. The FashionMap archive at NTU is a valuable resource used to study the progression of trends. The archive commenced in 2000, and it is predicted that this resource will grow in value over the next twenty years, as trends and the sustainability issues associated with the fast fashion business model evolve. Opportunities for further research include mapping the country of origin of garments, to track changes in production, which can be linked to environmental concerns. In addition to this, mapping the price fluctuations of garments between 2000-2017 will enable a study into low cost fast fashion, and its effect on the quality of high street garments.

FIGURES

Figures 1 + 2 – Oasis t shirt, 2000/2001, NTU ©.

Figure 3 – Acid rain trend, 2008/2009, NTU ©.

Figure 4 - Leopard Print trend, 2006/2007, NTU ©.

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Renegotiating the contract for participation with audiences of dress and fashion exhibitions

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ABSTRACT

With the increase of the fashion exhibition (Horsley 2014: 169- 245) this paper seeks to renegotiate the current contract for participation (Machon 2016:35-36) with contemporary audiences of exhibitions of fashion and dress.

Adapting and adopting Josephine Machon's term 'contract for participation' from her paper Watching, Attending, Sense- making: Spectatorship in Immersive Theatres *(2016) my research proposes a renegotiation of the modes of agency that exhibitions of dress and fashion currently employ.*

Writing of the 'occularcentrism' dominant in fashionable society in the Eyes of the Skin: Architecture of the Senses *(2012) Juhani Palassma acknowledges the '…hedonistic meaningless visual journey.' (2012:25) contemporary society is currently facing. Pallasmaa's observation within architecture parallels the shift towards the spectacular within fashion and dress exhibitions of recent years. Establishing that fashion exhibitions '…do not necessarily make museums reflective or particularly critical.' (2014:13) Marie Riegels Melchior and Brigitta Svensson in their text Fashion and Museums: Theory and Practice (2014) recognise the prevalence of the 'experiential' 'front stage' activity of the fashion exhibition at the expense of the 'back stage' dress archival activity's seen previously in dress exhibitions.*

As an ordinary, everyday collection of middle class dress the Kate Elizabeth Bunce Collection is not spectacular. The current contract for participation prevalent in fashion exhibitions demand the visually spectacular of the exhibits, the result being that dress collections including the Kate Elizabeth Bunce Collection are relegated to the store. A renegotiation of the contract for participation is needed to restore the agency of everyday dress beyond the ocular.

KEYWORDS: 'Contract for participation', fashion, dress, exhibitions

Introduction

This paper aims to consider how the gap can be bridged between the sartorial object and the spectator within the fashion and dress exhibition.

The contract of participation within an exhibition or museum environment has historically been the act of looking but not touching, seeing but not hearing, and contemplating but not experiencing. 'Cabinets of Curiosity,' the forerunner of the museum 'encouraged its participants to engage with the objects multi- sensorially, inviting spectators to touch, smell, listen and feel the weight of, and in some cases taste the artefacts'.

Dress, as a sense making object, is experienced through the act of dressing, purchasing clothes and seeing others clothed. Anne Hollander, in *Seeing Through Clothes,* maintains that, in what she terms our 'picture-making' society, the natural beauty of clothes has been taught to the eye by art. (1993: xiii) However, contemporary audiences have an array of media through which to learn about the beauty of clothes, including

Instagram, YouTube and fashion publications. Through my research of the Kate Elizabeth Bunce Collection, an ordinary collection of 'worn' middle-class dress, I am expounding the necessary renegotiation of the current participatory contract so as to ensure it is not only the spectacular that is exhibited within exhibitions of fashion and dress. I borrow from Riegels Melchior & Svensson's terms 'fashion museology' and 'dress museology', discussed in *Fashion and Museums: Theory and Practice* (2014), in order to distinguish between the 'front-stage' 'visible' and 'public' practice of fashion museology, and the 'back-stage 'hidden' but 'private' practice of dress museology, useful terms within the context of both my research and my professional practice within theatre.

The founding moment

Opening the boxes from the Kate Elizabeth Bunce Collection I have been privileged to experience the contents through all of the senses: the sound of the fabric, the weight of the dress, and the smell of its age, all of which have shared hierarchy with sight. It is believed that this collection was given to the Birmingham Municipal School of Art in 1927 as a study resource, and it is to this day used within teaching usually in the context of a studio/ workshop space.

Material culture analyst Jules David Prown observed that his students in the late 1960s experienced a 'sympathetic vibration' (Prown 2000:2) when in close proximity to particular objects, leading to the development of 'Prownian Analysis'- a method of material culture analysis used to reveal past biographies of objects. Bethan Bide, dress curator at the Museum of London, in her paper *Signs of Wear: Encountering Memory in the Worn Materiality of a Museum Fashion Collection* (2017), acknowledges how privileged she has been in having close contact with fashionable dress. Her study process has enabled her to discern narratives that have emerged through the study of objects over an extended period of time.

Unwittingly paralleling Bide's work, I have been engaged in the 'back stage, hidden' practice of dress museology: accessioning, photographing and materially analysing selected objects from the Kate Elizabeth Bunce Collection.

Jane Bennett's (2009:6) text *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* describes the 'curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce affects dramatic and subtle' and is useful in framing the agency that objects have. Within the quiet, closed space of the workshop, studio and archive, the 'thing power' of dress is witnessed through the participants' engagement with the 'material' narratives of the dress being studied.

The objects: exhibiting fashion and dress

Growing interest in fashion exhibitions since 1971 is palpable and is evidenced by Jeffrey Horsley's 'Inventory of Fashion Exhibitions' (Horsley 2014 169- 245). As Roy Ballantyne and David Uzzell have noted in *The Thoughtful Museum: Looking back and looking forward the visitor centred museum* (2011) the cuts in funding for museums have required them to find alternative funding sources. The authors have compared museum visitors as 'heritage twitchers' as a bird watcher might take photographs of a bird' (2011:89). This consumption of

heritage, and also of fashionable dress, can be seen in many museum and exhibition spaces, fulfilling the 'front stage' experience that Riegels Melchior and Svensson discuss within museums and exhibition spaces.

Alexandra Palmer considers the tactile limitations within dress and fashion exhibitions in *Untouchable: Creating Desire in Museum Costume and Textile Exhibitions (2008.* She acknowledges the demands to conserve dress that result in dress often being exhibited 'for the eyes only'. Juhani Pallasmaa's *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture of the Senses* (2012) although discussing architecture, has parallels to the privileging of the visual within exhibitions of fashion and dress. In current exhibition display, dress could be considered as "sense dead" (Di Bello. P., Koureas. G 2010: 5), the material sensual distance of *sensor* (spectator/ audience) from the *sense making object* being removed with the privileging of the visual. Pallasmaa's text asserts that the 'ocularcentrism' prevalent within contemporary society does not allow for 'human rootedness' (Pallasmaa 2012: 22). Peter Stallybrass, in discussing his deceased friend Allon's clothes in 'Worn Worlds: Clothes, Mourning and the Life of Things' (1999), reminds us of the material echo left behind by clothing, the power of the object experienced through the marks and scars left behind. Dress is an object that evidences its corporeal 'human' connection that '…receives the human imprint' (Stallybrass 1999:29) when the body is no longer present, reinforcing the human 'ness' evident in dress but absent within the fashion or dress exhibition.

Exhibitions: challenging the contract for participation

My professional work is as a costume practitioner within theatre but, because of my research and my practice I attend both exhibitions and performance spaces. Thus, as a frequent attendee of dress and/ or fashion exhibitions I am increasingly frustrated by the disconnect I have with the exhibit. As a researcher and maker, I understand the 'thing power' that dress has within an archival space, but this is somehow lost in dress and fashion exhibitions, the human rootedness that Pallasmaa discusses being absent.

Taking the form of an exhibition and theatre review the section below discusses five examples of events, attended as part of my research, where the contract of participation is challenged or extended. It includes Bath Fashion Museum's *Behind the Scenes: Glimpse into the Fashion Museum Archives* (January 2011- January 2016); Dennis Severs' house in Spitalfields; a permanent exhibition, the Fashion and Textiles Gallery, at Bowes Museum; a permanent exhibition of dress and textiles, *Cabinets of Costume* (May- June 2017); and two immersive theatre events, Les Enfants Terribles' performance of *Alice's Adventures Underground* (July 2017) and *Puzzle Creature* (October 2018) performed by Neon Dance.

Exhibitions

Bath Fashion Museum's *Behind the Scenes: Glimpse into the Fashion Museum Archives* (January 2011- January 2016) offered the audience a 'founding moment.' Dress was displayed ostensibly within archival storage spaces, with boxes and ephemera deposited around the displayed dress. Exhibited behind a glass panel, the curatorial approach to bring the 'back stage' 'front

stage' encouraged visitors to engage with the dress on display, paralleling the 'founding moment' experienced by the curator or researcher. In displaying the dress in this manner, they were challenging how audiences interact with dress and fashion exhibits. Although still privileging the ocular, their exploration of exhibition display is pertinent to my research.

Opening in 2010 the Fashion and Textiles Gallery has been commended for its innovative display and approaches to mounting dress. Joanna Hashagen, curator at the Fashion and Textiles Gallery in the Bowes Museum has employed a number of strategies to try to address the distance the visitor experiences from the fashion and/ or textile object. The paper 'Concepts in Practice: Collaborative Approaches in Developing Bowes Museum's Fashion and Textile Gallery' (Gresswell, Hashagen & Wood 2016) discusses the collaboration between Hashagen, Janet Wood and Blue DC https://bluedc.co.uk, a museum exhibition design company, to develop the Fashion and Textiles Gallery. This includes the development of transparent dress displays and the introduction of the 'glass cube'- a study/ presentation space. Gresswell, Hashagen & Wood's aim was'…to allow the textiles and garments to have their own voice', with the transparent displays facilitating visitors' 'thrill of studying the inside of the garment' (Gresswell, Hashagen & Wood 2016: 152) without distraction from the mannequin itself. The glass cube provided a space in which the 'act' of researching and talking about fashion and textiles can be performed and viewed by the visitor, offering a voyeuristic experience to the spectator.

Dennis Sever's house in Spitalfields provides the visitor with a sensorium within its walls. The museum stages itself as occupying the 'time space' that exists just after its real life inhabitants, a Huguenot silk weaving family, have popped out, staging a 'still life drama' (Severs 2015) that is immersive, inter-sensory and experiential. It engages its visitors on an emotional, physical, intellectual, and potentially spiritual level resulting in no two participant spectators having the same experience (Pine & James 1999:11). The addition of a live cat adds to the anxiety that the family will return imminently, and discover strange and unwelcome time-travellers in their home. The use of sounds, smells and sights particular to the periods being represented creates another world for the visitor to enter.

Immersive theatre: other worlds

Within the theatrical space we experience performance through all of our senses. This multi- sensory encounter has been harnessed to great effect within immersive theatre and performance. Josephine Machon's research on immersive theatre has developed my own ideas of how we might begin to modify how spectators and visitors to exhibitions experience the objects on display. In her paper *Watching, Attending, Sense-making: Spectatorship in Immersive Theatres* (2016) Machon proposes that an immersive theatre event has 'an in its own world-ness' and that this is established through a 'contract for participation.' This early adoption between the spectator and artist establishes an agreement inviting and enabling 'varying modes of agency and participation' (2016: 35-36). The relationship between the actor or 'actant' is discussed in Aoife Monk's 2010 text *The Actor in Costume.* Monk's establishing of the porosity that exists between the actor, the costume and the

audience reinforces my own experience of costume as a conduit that connects all three agents.

Adapting Monk's 'porosity', used within the theatre space, we might apply the trinity of the object, the spectator and the curator within the fashion and/or dress exhibition space. Used alongside Machon's 'contract for participation' can we relocate the museum and exhibition in the minds of visitors to the fashion and/or dress exhibition?

In July 2017 I attended Les Enfants Terribles' performance of *Alice's Adventures Underground,* in relation to which the company website told us to,

> *Fall deep into the Vaults, hidden beneath Waterloo station and*
> *lose yourself in a land far removed from our own. But this isn't*
> *Alice's adventure, it's yours...*

Entering the space, the audience is taken in to a room, the walls of which are papered with book covers and filled with eclectic, domestic objects. Alice appears in the mirror and she asks you first who she is and to help her as she is trapped. Led through a rabbit warren of corridors to a space where you are each invited to either drink or eat according to preference, the group is then split up for participants to continue into their own story. From the beginning to the very end the 'other world-ness' of the text and the performance is reinforced by the contract for participation the performers have negotiated with you as the participant. Each participant understands that they must actively engage with the story and the action.

Puzzle Creature (Oct. 2018) was performed by Neon Dance at the Patrick Centre at the Hippodrome in London. Participants were invited to remove shoes before entry to the studio space and leave any bags within a locked room. The staff invited groups of 10-12 to enter the space which was inhabited by a huge inflatable bubble and to unzip it for entry. Within the bubble and hanging from the ceiling were mod rock (mod rock being similar to the plaster used in plaster casts) forms of parts of the body. Dancers gradually entered the bubble, the performance reminiscent of promenade performance, where the actors move through the audience. The dancers 'try on' and engage with the hanging forms. Of interest to me was the form's dual positions as both prop and costume. Dancing with one another and exchanging the forms, the dancers move through the space in an animalistic manner eventually leaving the space of the bubble. The audience is asked to leave the bubble but remain within the studio space whereupon the performers dance and engage with the gradually deflating structure. A form of play ensues and participation is encouraged with the audience.

Conclusion

Framing the discussion using Svensson and Riegels-Melchior's terms 'fashion museology' and 'dress museology' has proved invaluable in allowing me to consider the different approaches to exhibition display. Their use of the terms 'front stage' and 'back stage' has allowed me as a theatre practitioner to better frame my own understanding of exhibition making in the context of the back stage activity within my previous professional practice in costume. This framing has allowed me to better locate myself within the research.

Ballantyne and Uzzell's discussion regarding the financial pressures on museums and exhibitions to be financially viable with the rise of 'heritage twitchers' has developed ideas about the manner through which current audiences experience dress and fashion within an exhibition. The privileging of the ocular discussed by Pallasmaa and the loss of 'human-ness' through the 'sense dead' display of dress and fashion within the exhibition space offers a challenge as to how the distance between sensor and sense making object might be traversed. In utilising both Machon's 'contract for participation', adopted and adapted for audiences of dress and fashion exhibition, and Monks 'porous relations' between the actor the costume and the audience, instead applied to the object, the audience and the story, we have an opportunity to renegotiate how a contemporary audience relates to dress within exhibitions.

The review of the exhibition and events has developed my own thinking about how we might renegotiate the contract for participation. With examples of practices within museums, and immersive theatre it offers creative solutions as to what the role of the exhibition and the exhibit might play in the future. My own response to exhibition display draws upon previous exhibition practices that encourage the immersive and a deeper participation with the archival object.

My research is seeking to establish an in 'its own world-ness' that challenges the contract for participation through a greater sensorial experience for the spectator. Employing costume practice that augments the fragmentary objects (dress) I am seeking to develop an 'object narrative' for each item of dress being studied. In creating this story, I hope to encourage the spectator to participate with the dress on display beyond the ocular. This theory will be applied, tested and explored through a series of 'test exhibitions' that challenge the 'world' created in contemporary fashion and/ or dress exhibitions.

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EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

Behind the Scenes: Glimpse into the Fashion Museum Archives [Exhibition] Bath Fashion Museum, Bath. January 2011- January 2016

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Lansley, O. and Seager, J. *Alice's Adventures Underground* (2017) [Waterloo Arches. July 2017].

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The Fashion and Textiles Gallery [Exhibition] Bowes Museum. February 2018

Big Hair and Authenticity: Country Glamour, Identity and Drag

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ABSTRACT

In Moschino's Fall/Winter 19/20 'The Price is Right' inspired show, the only things more extravagant than Jeremy Scott's collection were the hairstyles of the models. Sporting huge wigs in a pure kitsch, playful style. Dolly Parton has made a recent return to the limelight with a new album, Netflix film and being honoured at the Grammys so far this year. Is Big Hair back? This paper investigates the relationship between 'big hair', a coiffed southern style, and authentic self-expression. Using discourse and semiotic analysis of the hair of models in Moschino's most recent show, Dolly Parton and drag queen Trixie Mattel, to examine selfidentity, gender performance and authenticity. This paper acts as an introductory investigation for further research into hair as a marker of authenticity for fashionable identities.

Famed for her oversized hair, breasts and 'country glamour', Parton has commodified her 'fake' appearance. Using Scofield's (2016) work on Parton's simulated body to draw comparisons to Trixie Mattel, this project explores identity and transformation through the example of 'big hair'. "Hair is a performance, one that happens at the boundaries of selfexpression and social identity." (Powell & Roach, 2004. 79) Hair's position in the mid-ground between body part and accessory makes a compelling example of self-expression.

Hair is an important aspect of performances of femininity, particularly in drag. Voluminous hair is seen as essential to visual transformation. Trixie Mattel's appearance embodies an extreme example of exaggerating the cues of femininity. Drawing on theories of camp, kitsch and gendered performance (Greenburg 1939. Schachts 2002. Dyer 2014) the tenuous relationship between performed and authentic identity is investigated.

KEYWORDS: Hair, Authenticity, Identity, Moschino, Drag

In Moschino's Fall/Winter 19/20 'The Price is Right' inspired show, the only things more extravagant than Jeremy Scott's collection were the hairstyles of the models. Sporting huge wigs in a pure kitsch, playful style. But besides being fun *Big Hair* also carries power. Recent popular culture reflects and acknowledges this trend for hair inspired by America's southern states. In the film *Dumplin'*, Millie, a friend of the main character, receives a make-over from a group of drag queens, including a giant wig. The transformation is instantaneous and fantastical. With her new-found confidence and charisma, the audience stops seeing Millie as a clueless dope and start to share her self-belief. With this sudden resurgence of *Big Hair* in fashion and popular culture, could we see the return of southern Country-Glamour?

I am currently undertaking a Masters in Culture, Style and Fashion at Nottingham Trent University, this paper acts as the start of a project which I intend to become a PhD, investigating the importance of hair in creating fashionable identities and signifying authenticity.

Hair has, excuse the pun, been written about at great length, (Holmes 2014, Tarlo 2016, Barak-Brandes & Kama 2018, Vincent 2018) in this paper, I will be focusing on *Big Hair*, a style primarily associated with White, American women. This project deals with authenticity through bringing the 'interior' in line with the 'exterior', using hair as an example. I will be looking specifically at the Moschino Fall/Winter 19/20 ready-to-wear show and drag queen Trixie Mattel using Scofield's work on Dolly Parton.

One of the fundamental contradictions of Western fashion and dress is whether the 'outside' tells the truth of the 'inside'. The understanding of clothing is "fundamentally linked in to wider understandings of the relationship between the surface and personhood" (Woodward in Küchler and Miller, 2005. 21) Woodward goes on to say, "putting on clothing is a form by which one exposes one's 'self' to the outside world." (2005. 22)

Comparisons can be drawn between hair and dress Comparisons can be drawn between hair and dress and fashion. Hair, like any adornment, is an elemental part of cultural life and, to quote Entwistle, "the means by which bodies are made social and given meaning and identity" (Enwistle, 2000). As such, I will be treating hair as an extension of fashion. However, "a crucial factor in hair's power as a social symbol is that, unlike clothing, hair is an intrinsic part of the body" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang, 2008. 252). Hair shares the power of dress, in communication of cultural identity and performances of selfhood, but it grows from our head and body unbidden.

Moschino Fall/Winter 19/20

Moschino's recent show borrows a nostalgic aesthetic from 'The Price is Right', a popular gameshow that has run in its current format since 1972. The rectangular runway surrounds elaborate sets, showcasing prizes, glittering with sequins and lights. The models walk with the usual ferocity, however, once they have finished, they return to the set to act as the 'glamorous assistant' of the 70's gameshow, campily smiling at a reclining chair, gesturing enthusiastically to a tumble dryer or draping themselves over the bonnet of a Ferrari.

Gameshows of the 1970's allowed the 'average' person to imagine themselves winning the top prize, from the comfort of their own home. Jeremy Scott marries the glitz and glamour of television with the banality of the viewer's life, juxtaposing sequins, metallics and dollar signs with gaudy prints of mundane objects and campy bags in the shape of irons. The epitome of this clash is the TV dinner cape: a comedically oversized kimono with 3D vegetable medley on one side and buttery mash on the other. Moschino is a luxury brand that playfully combine 'high' and 'low' culture with a nod of nostalgia but in a way that is only accessible to the wealthy. With the upcoming Met Gala – a staple event for fashion's high society – setting the theme as 'Camp', we could wonder whether this has swayed the design of this collection.

Anitra Ford and Janice Pennington, the original *Barker's Beauties*, wore their hair coiffed and curled but not as radically as the Moschino models, who are, without exception wearing *Big Hair*. By increasing the size of their hair, the models become almost doll-like, looking more like Barbie than an average woman. The models' already exaggerated figure and willowy limbs are even more noticeable as they stomp around the runway looking like they may very well collapse under the weight of their hair.

Authenticity and Big Hair

It is worth mentioning that we are taking the stance that authenticity is socially constructed. By treating authenticity as non-binary, we can avoid thinking in terms of purely *authentic or inauthentic,* instead speaking of perceived or relative authenticity. For example, it is possible to consider natural un-styled hair to be in its most authentic state, "because it is genuine, because its origin or authorship are not in question" (Van Leeuwen, 2001. 392) .

Big Hair was highly fashionable in Eighteenth-Century British court life, where "excessive and expensive hair and wig styles for men and women visibly communicated luxurious expenditure of both time and money" (Cross, 2011. [online]). Historically, only the wealthy could afford the time and resources to pay high regard to their appearance. The act of putting work into the hair could be read as reducing its perceived authenticity, as it is a performance intended to raise status, rather than presenting the 'real' self of the individual.

In contemporary society, assuming that identity is fluid and fragmented, (Bauman, 2005) the *self* is created and curated rather than innate. One example of identity construction is Dolly Parton. Famed for her oversized hair, breasts and 'country glamour'. Parton has capitalised on her appearance, which she has created through plastic surgery and 'fakery', paying for bodily transformations to alter the exterior self. Parton's appearance is constructed, and she makes no attempt to conceal it. "People ask me how long it takes to do my hair. I don't know; I'm never there!" (Parton in The Telegraph, 2016) This tongue-in-cheek honesty makes her appear more authentic than another celebrity of a similar age, who may undergo the same procedures and yet insists that the key to looking youthful is beauty-sleep and water.

Clear visual parallels can be drawn between Parton and drag queen Trixie Mattel. Mattel comes from a similar 'mountain' upbringing and relies on an exaggerated country aesthetic and performance of femininity. According to Scofield, Parton "skilfully used her fakeness to claim realness", she "used her extraordinary simulacrum of a body to demonstrate her authenticity" (Scofield, 2016. 662). Mattel's appearance utilises a unique makeup style to emphasise the eyes and lips, to raise the brows and a heavy contour to sharpen the cheekbones. There is no attempt at *realness* or to *pass* as a woman, instead relying on blatant fakery to demonstrate authenticity.

When a connection between interior and exterior are visible, increased authenticity is perceived. Although Mattel is performing a gender which opposes their self-identified gender, the character of Trixie acts as a projection of their internal identity. "Authenticity is understood as the way in which the conscious self remains true and loyal to itself" (Smelik, 2011. 77) Parton's brazen fakery reads as authentic, as she behaves in the way any 'mountain' girl would with access to her fame, money and influence. A similar performance of a "backwoods girl's idea of beauty" (Scofield, 2016. 669) is evident in Mattel's extreme country glamour. Both conform to the aesthetics of their heritage to present an image of caricatured womanhood.

Smelik argues that "nostalgia for the real, or authentic, is the result of modern mass media turning everything, including reality, into a spectacle" (Smelik, 2011. 79). It becomes a

Baudrillardian simulation when fakery overruns the real and the system becomes selfreferential (Baudrillard 1994, written 1981). Our simulated society creates a desire for the real or authentic, where "in an increasingly unreal world, consumers desire something real, original, genuine, sincere" (Smelik, 2011. 79). Mattel gives a hyperreal and spectacular performance of femininity, but also appears to present themselves sincerely.

Parton claimed as an adolescent she was inspired by local prostitutes' "glamour with a deliberate projection of purity and innocence, channelling these complexities through knowing, campy performance" (King, 2017. 4). These traits are still visible in her aesthetic choices today. Similarly, drag also draws inspiration from radical performances of femininity.

Coiffed, voluminous hair is seen as a feminine attribute, and therefore essential when creating a visual gender transformation. When creating a female illusion, it is important to mask masculinity in the body and face, through contouring, padding and dress. "Big hair makes even large and awkward features look delicate and petite" (McCracken, 1995. 151). Furthermore, McCracken tells us "voluptuous hair makes for voluptuous bodies" (1995, 161). The silhouette is so affected by the outline of the hair that it draws attention from the figure and acts to signify femininity.

The same feminine signifiers can be used for comedic exaggeration. "Queens of the camp genre typically utilize exaggerated images of femininity as props to largely play the role of stand-up comedian!" (Schachts, 2002, 172). Camp is described as

"a characteristically gay way of handling the values, images and products of the dominant culture through irony, exaggeration, trivialization, theatricalization, and an ambivalent way of making fun out of the serious and respectable"
(Dyer, 2014. 176).

Mattel's wig at Drag-Con 2016 was so heavy (32.6kg) it induced migraine and vomiting, (Hey Qween, 2017) an extreme example of exaggerating the props of femininity.

This farcical exaggeration of femininity undermines the typically demure nature of glamour and extends into the world of kitsch. "Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations" (Greenburg, 1939. 10). The 'bad-taste' of kitsch has been blamed for the corrosion of 'high art' (Binkley, 2000). In terms of drag, kitsch aesthetic is used to mimic, mock and subvert traditional heterosexual culture, while adding glitz and glam.

There is a wealth of literature on the complexities of drag, its relationship to gender and the nature of gender itself (Butler 1990, Schachts 2004, Barret 2017, Brennan & Gudelunas 2017). With drag, performed gender may not correspond to self-identified gender. Speaking about the authenticity of gender enforces a naturalised normative perspective. However, within the scene, deception about sexuality and gender identity out of drag can open the individual up to critique. "The emphasis on being *real* in drag culture applies not only to the production of a realistic and believable performance of femininity, but also maintaining an honest, 'authentic' presentation of the self" (Barrett, 2017. 1).

In future work, I will develop themes discussed in this project, looking at hair as a marker of authenticity, in the context of fashionable identities. This project uses extreme

examples of *Big Hair* to highlight the need to comprehend that something so evidently 'fake' can remain a marker for authenticity.

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Barbara Goalen: The Face of British Fashion, 1947-55

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Victoria and Albert Museum

ABSTRACT

Barbara Goalen began her modelling career at the age of 26, in 1947. She quickly built recognition and by the early fifties was described as 'the Garbo of British fashion' and 'one of the world's most famous models'. She perfectly captured a moment in the cultural zeitgeist of the time, embodying the overarching 'look' of the era, and becoming forever linked to the fashion identity of the period.

Beginning with a brief outline of Goalen's biography and career, this paper will go on to explore how one woman's face and figure can become emblematic of a period of fashion culture. Far from being a passive agent, the early example of mid-century fashion model Barbara Goalen highlights the active role she had in creating a lasting fashionable persona, refining a particular vision of style, and reflecting the sartorial culture of the moment.

As Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wissinger argue in their sociological study of modelling, models have occupied 'an interesting influential place within the social world' and were 'integral to the development of modern consumer culture'. Through an examination of

Goalen's work and public appearances, and their coverage in media sources, this paper explores how her public persona was formed and how this model persona reflected the cultural and aesthetic shifts taking pace in the fashion industry at the time. Just as Raymond Durgnat argues in Films and Feelings that 'stars are a reflection in which the public studies and adjusts its own image of itself', I propose that by closely tracing the career of a notable fashion model we can better understand the public reception, significance and cultural power of fashion during the period.

Barbara Goalen began her modelling career at the age of 26, in 1947. She quickly built recognition and by the early fifties was described as 'the Garbo of British fashion' ("A Big Day", 1953) and 'one of the world's most famous models' (Stead, 1952). She perfectly captured a moment in the cultural zeitgeist of the time, embodying the overarching 'look' of the era, and becoming forever linked to the fashion identity of the period.

Beginning with a brief outline of Goalen's biography and career, this paper will go on to explore how one woman's face and figure can become emblematic of a period of fashion culture. Far from being a passive agent, the early example of mid-century fashion model Barbara Goalen highlights the active role she had in creating a lasting fashionable persona, refining a particular vision of style, and reflecting the sartorial culture of the moment.

As Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wissinger argue in their sociological study of modelling, models have occupied 'an interesting influential place within the social world' and were 'integral to the development of modern consumer culture' (Entwistle and Wissinger, 2012: 1). Through an examination of Goalen's work and public appearances, and their coverage in media sources, this paper explores how her public persona was

formed and how this model persona reflected the cultural and aesthetic shifts taking pace in the fashion industry at the time. Just as Raymond Durgnat argues in *Films and Feelings* that 'stars are a reflection in which the public studies and adjusts its own image of itself…the social history of a nation can be written in terms of its film stars' (Durgnat, 1967: 137-8). I propose that by closely tracing the career of a notable fashion model we can better understand the public reception, significance and cultural power of fashion during the period.

Barbara Kathleen Bach was born in Malay on the 1st January 1921, the daughter of a rubber plantation owner. At age eight she was sent to school in Wiltshire, England and on leaving school, studied Fine Art for a year. On the outbreak of the second World War, aged eighteen, she signed up as an ambulance driver and in March 1941, she married Ian Rankine Goalen, a commercial pilot, with whom she had two children, Rupert and Sarah. Just six years later, in 1947, Ian Goalen was killed in an air crash in Paris, leaving Barbara Goalen a widow with two young children.

It was at this point, aged 26 and in need of a source of income to support her young family, that Goalen looked to a new career. As she explained in a later interview 'modelling was the only thing I could think of' and so she enrolled at the Lucie Clayton Model School to become a fashion mannequin ("Crazy potted plants", 1954). Declared a 'natural', the school advised Goalen that she needed no further training after just three days – a fact gleefully repeated in media stories about her through later years (*Everywoman*, 1954).

Her first break came when the London-based Swiss fashion designer Mattli offered her a position as a house model, and a few months later, the agent Jean Bell asked her to model at the British Industries Fair (Prebble, 1949). She then continued working freelance for different houses, photographers and manufacturers, gaining skill and repute exponentially. Another early client, Julian Rose, reminisced a few years later 'I knew she was good…but I have never seen anything like the reaction we had to that picture of her, in that black dress, in Vogue of October, 1948' ("Barbara Faces the Future", 1950). From the very start of her career, Goalen's strength was as a photographic model and she quickly gained a reputation for her 'almost perfectly photogenic face' ("Barbara Goalen – Fabulous", 1952). Barbara Goalen's entrance into the fashion world came at a seemingly auspicious time. On the 12th February 1947, the Parisian couturier Christian Dior released his first collection. Breaking from the austere, boxy fashions of immediate post-war Europe, Dior sought to add elements of romance and fantasy back into women's clothes. Inspired by the corseted waists of the Belle Epoque, he created ultra-feminine silhouettes with sloping shoulders, curved bosoms, tiny nipped-in waists, and shaped hips. Initial reception of Dior's styles in Britain was mixed; some praised the elegance, glamour and chic of the 'breathlessly beautiful' (Lewis, 1947) luxurious styles, while others denounced the couturier's return to restricted waists and his liberal use of fabric at a time of rationing as 'Idiotic, ugly' and 'uneconomic!' (Proops, 1947). Nevertheless, New Look styles prevailed and became the norm in couture houses, department stores and dress pattern catalogues throughout Britain.

In discussing models' success, fashion historian Harold Koda suggests that 'ultimately, it rests in the conformity of an

individual's physical attributes to the zeitgeist' (2009: 13). With a naturally slender hourglass figure – of measurements reportedly 34-21-34-inches ("Secrets of that Chic Look", 1952) – and 'air of drama and sophistication', Goalen proved to be the perfect vehicle for the New Look fashions, indeed, a few years after its first release, one journalist asserted that Goalen 'personified the New Look' ("They Bring Beauty", 1951).

Running concurrent to the release of Christian Dior's covetable couture collections was the rapid growth and booming popularity of the ready-to-wear industry. Ready-made clothing that closely followed the styles coming out of Paris couture houses was available more widely, and to a higher standard, than ever before, meaning that a far greater proportion of society could now personally engage with and participate in the consumption of fashionable clothes. In her history of modelling, Harriet Quick argues that 'the model was essential to the process' of translating haute couture to mass market, stating that 'fashion needed an ideal, an aspirational model who could appeal across any national and class boundaries – a woman of the world' (1997: 69). The particular 'New Look' that Goalen represented was not only the untouchable haute couture creations from Paris photographed to perfection in fashion editorials, but, much more frequently, the trickled-down and inspired-by versions by both higher-end British designers and middle-market clothing manufacturers. She regularly modelled for companies such as Deréta, Hebe Sports, Phyllis Taylor, Astor models and Horrockses (AAD/2010/5). She was, arguably, the face of the British New Look: the unofficial flagbearer of British style. She demonstrated to British women that fashionable sophistication and elegance was (somewhat) within their grasp.

During the first few years of her career, Goalen's persona was built up through images alone. She was the anonymous – but increasingly familiar – face, perfectly made-up and artfully arranged, looking out from the pages of fashion magazines. With the proliferation of print media discussing fashion in the post-war period, fashion photography was a key medium of fashion dissemination, as Eugénie Shinkle argues, 'visual presentation of fashion quickly became as important as the production of garments' (2008: 3). Only a small fraction of the population ever entered high-end dress shops, and fewer still would ever go to a couture fashion show, but it was through the elegant images of newspapers and magazines that the majority of women caught a glimpse of the glamour of garments by leading fashion designers. In a way, the models encased within these clothes were the bridge between the lofty heights of the couture salon and the average woman flicking through the fashion pages of the daily newspaper. As argued by sociologist Elizabeth Wissinger, 'when models work to produce a desirable image' by posing in a particular way in a fashion image, 'they mediate our relationships with the products' (Wissinger, 2012: 173). The models of the 1950s, including Goalen, developed a 'repertoire of poses' that produced 'high stylised' images that were 'utterly desirable' to their audiences (Quick, 1997: 86).

Clearly Goalen had a natural talent for playing her part in creating these images and she was impressively prolific throughout her seven-year official career. Known for her 'mink and diamonds' look (McLoughlin, 1954), she had a style of posing that was artfully staged, conscious, and deliberate. As photographer Elsbeth Juda, who worked with Goalen on several notable shoots for *The Ambassador* magazine as well as others, recalled 'Barbara was very creative, she loved acting, she loved *producing* herself' (Breward and Wilcox, 2012: 59). Similarly, Henry Clarke remarked 'you put the dress on Barbara and she made it sing' (Derrick and Muir, 2010: 31). Extolling her unique skill at modelling, Freddy Grisewood of *Women and Beauty* magazine exclaimed 'no wonder a glimpse or a picture of her has such far-reaching effects on women's dress' (1954). One of Goalen's most important photographer-model relationships was with John French, whose 'exquisitely elegant images for the *Daily Express* revolutionised fashion in newspapers' (Quick, 1997: 69). Her popularity with photographers, designers and brands suggest that her face, figure, gestures, mannerisms and poses (her 'look') powerfully caught the imagination of the public.

It appears that Goalen's reputation was established enough by early 1948 that a written appeal to the Parisian couture house of Christian Dior for a job as a house model was immediately successful. A representative from the House of Dior replied setting out the terms of employment and her expected salary (Letter from Harrison Elliot, 1948). Perhaps the salary wasn't enough or perhaps preferring to stay close to her children, Goalen never accepted the offer of employment, but nevertheless modelled numerous Dior creations for magazine editorials throughout her career.

By 1949, Barbara Goalen was receiving name recognition in many of the publications in which she was featured. From this year onwards, stories about her and her career proliferated in the British and international press. To give only a few examples, in a feature on Spring fashions in January 1949, journalist Daphne Hubbard gave a six paragraph introduction to Goalen, the 'leading photographic model' (Hubbard, 1949). Both the *Yorkshire Evening News* and the *Sunday Express* devoted entire articles to Goalen, describing her as 'Britain's best-paid, most-photographed model' (McBain, 1949) and 'the top-line fashion model in this country' (Prebble, 1949). Interest in the profession of modelling grew in the 1950s, and wellknown models were, for the first time, seen as role models by aspiring girls and women. Goalen was featured in several articles and books published about professional modelling ("So you want to be a model", 1955; "Career Girl's Party", 1955). With her growing celebrity, Goalen became a fashion personality and was regularly asked for her opinion on fashion and beauty. She became a national authority on dressing fashionably. In the subsequent years Goalen enjoyed a fruitful career, including numerous appearances on radio and tv. Goalen's status continued to rise until her second marriage and part retirement from modelling in 1954, after which she continued to make appearances on tv and radio and write advice columns, weighing in on matters of fashion, as well as lending her face to advertising campaigns and charity events.

From 1949 onwards, then, the public identity and perception of Barbara Goalen was constructed through both visual and text media. In one sense, it was an unveiling; a stripping back of some of the glamour and mystique presented in the mute fashion photographs that had initially built her reputation. Arguably, however, the frequent articles claiming to give insight into the private life of Goalen are rarely, if ever, negative. The written representations of Goalen were just as carefully posed and constructed as the photographic ones.

It is here that we can borrow from and apply to a certain extent parts of Richard Dyer's framework for studying star theory. Dyer asserts that the study of stars should grasp both the sociological and the semiotic, stating that 'the sociological concern can only make headway when informed by a proper engagement with the semiotics of stars, that is, their specific signification as realised in media texts', and that equally 'the semiotic concern has to be informed by the sociological' (1979: 1). A greater understanding of the impact or significance of Goalen's modelling work can only be understood through analysis of the media surrounding it. The evolution from a mute face of fashion to a fully formed media personality meant that Barbara Goalen represented more than just the latest fashionable silhouette. She represented a 'look' as described by Joanne Entwistle and Don Slater in *Fashioning Models;* 'not (just) an image' but 'an object of calculation, something continuously worked upon, moulded, contested, performed' (2012: 17). Entwistle and Slater go on to argue that the notion of a model's 'look' can be equated to the idea of a brand 'enacted in and through specific objects, actions and signs…a kind of moving assemblage'. In her essay on modelling and ideas of glamour, sociologist Patrícia Soley-Beltran argues that just as it is a model's perceived 'professional duty to efficiently embody the collectively defined standards of visual identity', at the same time, 'their public personas are fashioned into sophisticated artefacts' (2012: 115). Goalen's persona was created through both the photographic representations, focusing on her face, figure and gesture, and the film, radio and text that gave insight into her personality; interviews, advice columns and biographies. These combined presented the public with two seemingly differing identities: the perfectly polished vision of high style, and the personable, approachable and down-to-earth personality. Alongside hyperbolic descriptions of her physicality, 'not only has she the essential poise of any beautiful woman, but she possesses a rare elegance and a face so structurally perfect that from any angle it is seen to an advantage' ("Faces are the Painter's Fortune", 1956), journalists began including accounts of her character. One journalist described her as 'a vivacious personality' with 'natural charm', adding 'she is very modest' ("Beautiful Dresses, Fabric, Model", 1952), another remarked on her 'personality which is magnetic yet likeable' ("They Bring Beauty", 1951), or 'extraordinarily charming' (Robertson, 1956) and these attributes are repeated again and again in coverage about her. The majority of features on Goalen make sure to report that she only came to modelling out of necessity, and include her matter-of-fact but uncomplaining descriptions of the unglamorous facets of the job; 'I adore being a model…but it is not easy and just glamorous…the hours are long. The expenses are very high' (I. M. W., 1950). Perhaps due to these two perceptions, in 1951 the Daily Express chose her especially to model in a spread that featured 'a mixture of the fabulous and the feasible' ("The Return of Barbara Goalen, 1951); her persona married these opposing two elements.

Goalen's identity was such that she was also deemed the perfect ambassador for British fashion worldwide. In 1952, Barbara Goalen was chosen by the textile manufacturer Miki Sekers of the West Cumberland Mills to accompany him on a promotional tour. With a 21piece wardrobe – some made up from *Vogue* patterns (Riding, 1952), some designed by top London couturiers such as Hardy Amies and Lachasse ("The Fabulous Goalen", 1952) – the pair toured Australia, New Zealand and the USA before returning to the UK and continuing in department stores across the country. This tour not only raised the profile of Sekers fabrics, but also Barbara Goalen, prompting a flurry of international press – even in countries not visited such as Germany and Italy. The personal nature of these shows, in which Goalen was the only model, and in which she interacted directly with the audience while modelling, made Goalen more than just a recognisable face; they made her a fashion personality. In the UK, newspapers reported on Goalen's 'informal' approach to the shows, with one picturing her posing on a chair and commenting that 'Miss Goalen had not merely the necessary physical qualifications but also an excellent head and the ability to comment in a more interesting and charming way upon the garments she wore and the fabrics from which they were made' ("World-famous Model Visits Dundee", 1952). Similarly reporting on the show in Leeds, Jean Stead described how Goalen asked the audience's opinion 'hands up those who like it', made last-minute accessory changes 'I suddenly thought this would look amusing. Do you like it?' and encouraged the audience to experiment with fashion 'you can do this too', 'never follow a pattern exactly…think up your own ideas' (1952). Accounts of Goalen's approach paint her as personable, humble and friendly – characteristics perhaps made not obvious in her fashion photography work.

However, she was not by any means representative of the 'everywoman'. Whilst, as discussed earlier, she modelled for sometimes middle-market (but still aspirational) brands that presented a certain level of attainability, she was still very much seen as (whilst not aristocratic), existing in elite circles. This perception is reflected in the descriptions of her 'look' as 'patrician', 'an aristocratic look which signifies the rightness of England, home and beauty' (McLoughlin, 1954). Many fashion editorials with Goalen placed her in luxurious settings or residing in elegant sets as though a guest at an exclusive party ("Dinner at Home", 1951). This connection to high society was also played out in the coverage of Goalen's private life: in the early 1950s she was often mentioned in the society pages, sometimes escorted to the theatre by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu or attending parties in the homes of the British aristocracy (Kenward, 1952). In February 1954, Goalen married her second husband Mr Nigel Campbell, a Lloyds underwriter, and had a third child the following year. After her marriage and official retirement from modelling, Goalen is treated very much like a society lady by the press – she is repeatedly pictured in her impressive home, or attending exclusive parties and premieres. In an article in *Home* magazine, Ruth Lynam describes Goalen's postmodelling life as 'a world of elegant dinner parties, business trips to exotic places with her husband, coping with young children and running a tall town house in fashionable Chester Square' (1963). The elements of Goalen's trajectory studied here fit well into Soley-Beltran's description of model personas as 'narratives of economic and social improvement, and obedience to the cultural values defining and regulating the normative standards for acceptable identity…icons of beauty and social perfection exemplifying success as a reward for conformity' (2012: 114). The notion of

'perfection', or of being a 'model woman', extends well beyond her physical attributes.

Barbara Goalen was a crucial player in the reintroduction of glamour into British fashion in the post-war years. Her public persona was formed at a time of cultural and aesthetic shifts and embodied a potent vision of fashion (in the full sense of the word) during the period. Her career coincided with the emergence of the New Look, more accessible fashion, a proliferation of print media that utilised striking fashion photography, and a growing interest in the modelling profession. Through studying Goalen's output and public reception, we can better understand the cultural power of fashion. The vast number of press clippings featuring or mentioning Barbara Goalen from 1947 until the mid-1960s alone demonstrates her importance in understanding the zeitgeist of those years. Through her artful posing and fashion photography work, and her work as a public figure, Goalen was representing, interpreting and influencing fashion: both reflecting and affecting how women perceived and experienced fashion in the period.

Whilst her continued engagement with the fashion media after her official retirement ensured an enduring legacy as a public personality for a further decade at least, her 'look' persisted far longer. As discussed, Goalen's image was so prevalent between 1947 and 1954, that she became forever associated with, and a signifier of, the distinctive style of the period. On the cover of the *Observer* magazine from January 1966, under the headline 'What's changed in ten years?', Goalen's face appears behind Jean Shrimpton's; the two respective models representing their own era. Similarly, in a 1979 article on New Look-inspired fashions, Barbara Goalen's name is used to represent the quintessential persona linked to that style (Everitt, 1979). Even if generations later her name has been forgotten, her image (in the form of fashion editorials) remains prevalent in media and scholarship about the period and her constructed 'look' endures as emblematic of that era of fashion.

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Utility is Chic: Fashionable Society in East London

Belinda Naylor

ABSTRACT

Artists have always colonised impoverished areas in search of big spaces for affordable housing and creative inspiration. East London has long had a thriving artistic community and a history of garment making. French Protestants, known as Huguenots were forced out of their country in the early 17th century and large numbers settled in East London. Many of these refugees had skills in textile manufacturing and created their own thriving fashion community. The same remains today; fashion designer's studios dominate East London and some of the UK's most successful such as Erdem Moralıoğlu and Christopher Kane base their workshops here.

While the aforementioned designers favour a more high-end look, the social and sartorial assembly of East London also brings about a collision of fashion and function. Traditional working clothes such as painter's smocks and boiler suits which were originally signifiers of artists or labourers are re-interpreted as highly fashionable outerwear. As occupations change, so does the clothing and a three-piece suit, the favoured uniform of city workers, is not necessary for baristas and art directors. Commes des Garcon and Japanese denim are the worker's dress codes for contemporary East Enders.

Does the fashion and textile history of East London inform what is worn in this location today? It is the idiosyncratic dress of artistic professionals and the dominant early industries of this area namely garment making and artistic pursuits in this part of the city that I wish to explore.

KEYWORDS: *Workwear, Trades, Fashionable Society, Authenticity*

I want to begin by quoting Diana Crane from her book Fashion and its Social Agendas (2000) in which she states:

> *Changes in clothing and in the discourse surrounding clothing indicates shifts in social relationships and tensions that present themselves in different ways in public spaces.Crane.D (P2)*

Whether you love fashion or are ambivalent about it; we dress for ourselves. In a public space we present ourselves in a certain way and are exposed to judgement, criticism and sometimes admiration. Clothes reveal our taste, our identity and a need to fit in or stand out.

The Oxford English Dictionary definition of work wear is *Heavy-duty clothes for physical or manual work.* The workwear I refer to is worn to make a fashion statement, and not to perform physical or manual work. This includes clothes such as smocks, jackets and boiler suits. I also include the word 'utility' to refer to the same types of garments. To some, these clothes may say fashion; to others, function. I will focus this 'fashionable society' on a small part of East London known as the Shoreditch Triangle, which incorporates Shoreditch High Street, Great Eastern Street and the Eastern most part of Old Street, extending across Brick Lane and almost meeting the City on Bishopsgate.

When I moved to East London for my job in 2003, it was from a tiny office at the top of the Garrick Theatre in the West End to the then, rather run down part of East London filled with warehouses, industrial spaces and narrow alleyways. I loved it. I bought bagels in Brick Lane, swam in the old swimming pool in Ironmongers Row and drank beer in the Bricklayers Arms. As I have continued to visit the area and observed the gentrification at first hand I have also noticed a proliferation of fashionable workwear. It has led me to consider the cultural and social significance of the people who wear such clothes and the public space in which they wear them. I call the members of this particular tribe, East London Adopters.

East London has a vivid working class history and with its historically cheap rents, always attracted a diversity of artists, including painters such as Tracy Emin who used to practice in a space called The Rag Factory, situated off Brick Lane and the late Lee Alexander McQueen who started his fashion design business from his flat in Hoxton, long before it became as trendy as it is today. The warehouses have become boutique hotels, factories have become art galleries and Spitalfield's meat market, which has had a site in that area for over 300 years, will soon be the new home of the Museum of London.

While the trades practiced in the area are varied, textiles have played a key role in its history. The City of London has been the centre of the textile trade since The Weaver Guild was established by Henry II in 1155 but it was in the eighteenth century, when thousands of Huguenots (Protestants) fled from persecution in France and were welcome in England that a change took place. Many of these refugees were skilled craftspeople and although there had always been a silk industry in East London, it was their particular skills and success in business that led to Spitalfields being known as Weaver Town. The wealth accumulated through these trades led to the more prosperous building highly distinctive houses with large eaves and windows, to house both their families and their workers. It is these houses, now restored to their former glory, that epitomise the gentrification of Spitalfields and the dwellings that were until the 1970s neglected and occupied by squatters are now listed buildings and sell for millions of pounds. This early domination of craftspeople in this location has arguably spawned the thriving fashion industry that continues in the area.

Fashionable Society

East London and specifically The Shoreditch Triangle, has become a sprawling contradictory mass of wealth and poverty. The artists and labourers who moved in to capitalise on cheap rent and bigger space have now moved out, unable to afford the soaring property prices in an area where gentrification has taken hold. In 1900 Britain's first ever housing estate, The Boundary Estate, North of the City, was established for the working classes whose professions included labourers, journeymen and seamstresses. Over 100 years later this public space has become one colonised by a different kind of journeyman; advertising executives, coffee baristas and graphic designers. It is a location where the original working class function of the area has changed and the social space now means something entirely different.

In her book, Adorned in Dreams (1985): Elizabeth Wilson refers to:

> *The nineteenth century urban bourgeoisie, anxious to preserve their distance from the omnipresent gaze in the strangely inquisitive anonymity of the crowd where 'anyone' might see you, developed a discreet style of dress as a protection. Yet*

paradoxically street dress became full of expressive cues, which subverted its own anonymity Wilson.E (p137).

The twenty-first century bourgeoisie – 'East London Adopters' – function as examples of these sectors of society who wear this elevated chic utility wear, loose fitting trousers, smocks or chore jackets. This is discrete, yet expensive dressing; subverted by its own anonymity.

The subversion lies in the fact that these working clothes no longer represent the Labourers who used to wear them, and who were very likely anonymous, but are a signifier of the more fashionable wearers who make a different statement entirely.

Areas such as Hoxton are minutes away from the financial industries situated in the City of London and a suit in Shoreditch appears to be a rarity. The 'suited and booted' populate the financial districts of Moorgate and Bank while 'East London Adopters' work from a coffee shop with merely a lap top and a smart phone and tend to eschew a suit.

There are many fashion brands based in this part of East London which promote chic workwear and could be viewed as cultural signifiers. 'Toogood' is a luxury clothing brand run by sisters Faye and Erica Toogood. Their designs frequently reference working clothes with names including the Greengrocer, the Beekeeper and The Milkman. While these clothes certainly fit the workwear definition of 'heavy duty clothes', being made of thick denim and felted wool; they are not fit for physical or manual work; rather they are designed for those who are unlikely to perform a task more onerous than sitting at a computer or promenading down Columbia Road flower market on a Sunday (although in the case of Columbia Road, the traders wear fleeces and high vis jackets and would doubtless have a different notion of what constitutes workwear). It is ironic that the 'Toogood' studio lies on the borders of the working class area of the Boundary Estate, still familiar with poverty and depravation, because the Gardener cotton dress retails at £750.00, equivalent to £11,000.00 in 1900. The original workers who populated this area bear little resemblance to many of the workers living there now.

On the 'Toogood' website; the company's USP states their garments are: "*Fashioned by industry, not the fashion industry, workers of the world unite*". They have spoken of the desire to celebrate trades people. Indeed, their website also quotes that of the Toogood sisters that "*one is a tinker, the other a tailor*". However, while the aesthetic of the trades is celebrated, it is the workers at the upper levels of the pay scale who can afford to wear such elevated workwear. It is unlikely that by wearing a Gardener's outfit designed by 'Toogood' makes you a better gardener or that a pair of artist's shoes aids one's brush strokes.

the most visible forms of fashion often have a ludicrous aspect that contributes to the erroneous assumption that neither fashion nor clothing has any social importance. (Crane.D, 2000, P66).

Perhaps the donning of these clothes indicates how 'East London Adopters' relate to their social space; a highly altered part of working class London. While utility wear is not always a visible form of fashion, its ludicrous aspects, namely, simple shapes and humble fabrics elevated to costly and exclusive items does indeed have social importance. It indicates that the wearers are part of a certain tribe, namely lovers of fashion who do not want to appear fashionable or are workers rather than labourers.

Trades

Plain speaking, plain eating: the working class meal is characterised by plenty.… and above all by freedom. (Bourdieu.P 1984, P192).

From the Jewish bagel shops and curry houses in Brick Lane to Smithfield meat market, the business of food is another dominant trade in East London and working class food has always played an integral part. The social assembly of dining out is a crucial signifier of 'fashionable society. The 'plain eating' to which Bourdieu refers has been re-imagined and popularized at restaurants such as St John's Restaurant, Rochelle Canteen and Lyles, all located in the Shoreditch Triangle. They have a similar aesthetic, with their stripped back brick walls and pale interiors in which this eponymous workwear feels right at home. The bourgeois of East London celebrate their freedom from formal dining by eating working class food such as pig's ears and bone marrow at St John's, located next to Smithfield Meat Market. Yet the cost of this 'plain eating' is, like the clothing, not always accessible to the economically challenged.

I want to make the link between plain eating and what chefs cook and wear because I believe, aesthetically speaking, their uniforms are not far from this baggy, simple clothing of lovers of fashionable workwear.

In 2007, Rei Kawakubo created her Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body, also known as the 'lumps and bumps' collection because it featured models wearing clothes that were padded with lumps and bumps, thereby challenging the shape of the body and restricting movement. This collection led to her being commissioned to create the costumes for the choreographer Merce Cunningham for his ballet Scenario. Dancers wore tightly fitted clothing in large checks and stripes which incorporated padded lumps and bumps and were designed to alter the shape of the dancer's bodies and challenge their movements. It is not just the checked material that is reminiscent of chef's clothing, but an examination of Cunningham's ballet and the performers as they duck and dive reminds me of the choreography in a busy kitchen when chefs execute their own form of dance to cope with the labours of a busy kitchen.

It is this highly elevated interpretation of workwear and the fusion of function (chef's work) and fashion (Commes des Garcon) that I believe is a good example of the chicness of utility wear in a certain social space.

Authenticity

In her book, Men and Women: Dressing the Part (1989), fashion historian Valerie Steele suggests that,

The two main criteria for work clothing are suitability for the job and suitability for the worker. In both cases, definitions of suitability may be practical and/or ideological (or symbolic).Steele.V, (P66)

I referred to this statement when I interviewed Steele in 2014 and I asked her "what do you think fashionable work-wear symbolises".

Steel's response was that… "it signified an attempt on the part of fashion designers to appeal to consumers by evoking "authentic" clothing; and that it was something this is not just

"fashion". She continued that, "it is like a sort of chimera that everyone is chasing after and that whilst we all know what phoniness is and fashion can seem pretentious and superficial it is authenticity that is somehow real.

For the purposes of this paper, I refer to the Oxford English dictionary definition of authentic as *of undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine.*

This authenticity to which Steele refers could be reflected in a designer jumpsuit that closely resembles that worn by a gas station mechanic but it is the latter garment that is somehow more authentic because it serves an actual purpose related to a job.

While the clothes to which I am referring are of undisputed origin, for example smocks and dungarees which were originally worn to protect the wearer from stains and the elements, are they *genuine* working clothes? No they are not.

Is it the *association* with labour and even nostalgia which makes a pair of dungarees or clogs appear more meaningful or is it simply clever marketing by luxury workwear brands such as 'Toogood'? In an age when authenticity has become a buzz word, where some of the most popular television shows demonstrate the 'traditional' craft values of baking and dress-making, and the continuing impact of Brexit causes many of us to retreat indoors and learn to knit and examine old family photographs, it seems a good moment to examine the appeal of fashionable workwear and what it symbolises.

The paradox is that while 'East London Adopters' may wish to invite admiration for their apparent commitment to such labours with the ersatz worker's dungarees and aprons they wear to perform these tasks, they may invite ridicule because such clothes including this year's on-trend boiler suit are most definitely for fashion and not for function. In an age of 'authenticity' those who wear such clothes as fashion could be regarded as the least authentic of all.

Thackeray's words still resonate today when he attacked the frivolity of fashionable society.

As occupations and social spaces change, so does the clothing that relates to them. A three-piece suit, the favoured uniform of city workers, is not necessary for baristas and art directors. Smocks and chore jackets have now become mainstream fashion. While fashionable people strolled down Rotten Row in Knightsbridge in the 19th century and were mocked for their frivolity and slavery to fashion, the same fashionable people now stroll around the trendy watering holes of Hoxton, Dalston and Shoreditch; and indicate their own sartorial superiority by wearing clothes that would have been worn by the gardeners and butchers they may have employed 100 years ago. They also practice trades that are unlikely to have been performed by the people that Thackeray mocked. Membership to the fashionable society of East London the dress code is not a suit and tie but a Commes des Garcon jacket and a Breton top, accessorised with a small dog and a push-bike. In East London, utility is chic.
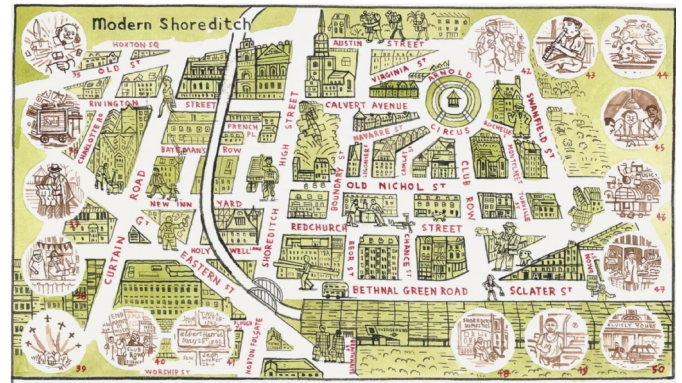
FIGURES

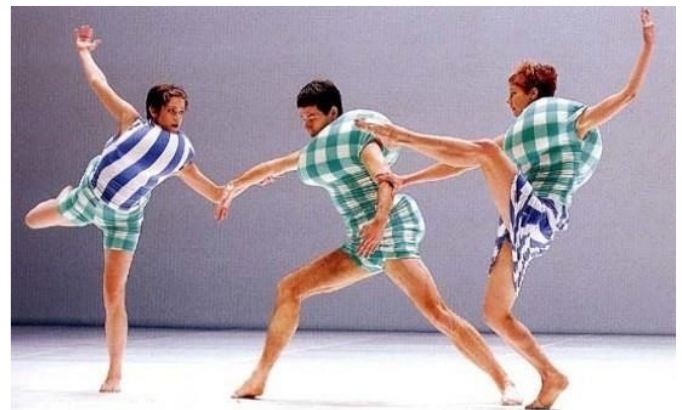Fig. 2, Workwear sign, East London

Figure 3 Commes des Garcons, Merce Cunningham, 2007
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Figure 4, A man, a dog and a chore jacket in East London

Figure 6. A laundrette in Calvert Avenue

Figure 5 – A chef in Redchurch Street, almost as fashionable as the man walking beside him. A collision of workers in East London

Figure 7: Artist's Shoes at 'Toogood'

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