

EDITORIAL

Why fashion matters

Masoud Yazdani
 Publisher and Chairman, Intellect

For some people fashion and luxury seem to go hand in hand, and this may be why so many people underestimate the importance of fashion in a cultural context; but by focusing on street style we can see that fashion is in fact part of the human condition. This notion is demonstrated very visually through the colourful and diverse street fashions captured in *Shanghai Street Style* (ISBN: 9781841505381), the first in Intellect's Street Style series. With over 200 colour photographs capturing 'ordinary people wearing not-so-ordinary clothes', Fung Chan's stunning photography of passers-by on

is a term derivative from 'cloth', to cover the body, whereas fashion alludes to the glamorous, the ephemeral and the avant-garde. We wear clothes, but imagine fashion – an unattainable ideal. *Clothing Cultures* (ISSN: 20500742) offers a forum for the discussion of textiles and their significance in the production and consumption of clothing, and thus solicits papers from textile historians, designers and design professionals.

We also interviewed Andrew Reilly, editor of *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion* (ISSN: 2050070X), about his new journal and its aims, the importance

Fashion is part of the human condition

Shanghai's bustling streets, coupled with in-depth commentary and analysis from Toni Johnson Woods and Vicki Karaminas, showcases the city's diverse breadth of character that is, quite literally, worn on its sleeves. From the quirky and avant-garde to dash-out-of-the-house chic, Shanghai is the perfect starting-point for our Street Style series, with future titles commissioned for Mumbai and Sydney. Turn to p. 12 for a fascinating perspective from the authors of *Shanghai*.

2014 will be an exciting year for our fashion portfolio with the launch of three new journals.

Fashion, Style & Popular Culture (ISSN: 20500726) is an exciting and dynamic new platform for fashion academics and practitioners publishing innovative scholarship in all aspects of fashion and popular culture. On p. 2 we interview the editor, Joseph H. Hancock, II, about his vision for the journal, and gain an insight into the world of fashion and popular culture. We also feature Maria Mackinney-Valentin, one of the contributors for the first issue, with her discussion of subversive beauty ideals in contemporary fashion marketing on p. 6.

Following the rise of fashion theory, on an everyday level, we all understand that our clothes 'say' something about us, about our times, nation, system of values. Yet clothing is not fashion; clothing

of fashion studies, publishing in the field, the ITTA and its mission, and the satisfaction he derives from wearing bright socks! To read more, turn to p. 36.

If this weren't enough to whet the appetite, there's also Susan B. Kaiser's chapter from *Fashion in Popular Culture: Literature, Media and Contemporary Studies* (ISBN: 9781841507163) on p. 22, offering a fascinating reading of Stieg Larsson's heroine Lisbeth Salander's clothing in *The Millennium Trilogy*. Kaiser shows how fashion can, in a very versatile manner, embody and reflect the very soul of a character. Diana Crane reflects on the price of fashion collectibles at auction in her piece from *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty* (ISSN: 20404417) on p. 38, and we've also included an extract from Celia E. Stall-Meadows' *Why Would Anyone Wear That? Fascinating Fashion Facts* (ISBN: 9781841507279) on p.4.

Fashion, alongside films, drama, art and design, is our culture's mode of expressing itself. Fashion offers us something to project our identity onto, and over the years it helps build an individual's as well as a community's life story. It is for this reason that fashion publishing has a natural home at Intellect, and we look forward to pursuing this important cultural avenue as we grow our portfolio. I hope you will find this an exciting taste of what's to come!

INTERVIEW

Joseph talks style and substance

.....

Joseph H. Hancock, II
Editor, *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture*



You are the editor of the new *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* journal. Can you tell us about how it came into being and your experiences launching a new journal?

First of all, this journal could not have even been developed without my associate editors (Shaun Cole, Patricia Cunningham, Susan Kaiser, Anne Peirson-Smith and Jessica Strubel) and our operational editor (Lee Halper), who have made this journal possible. These individuals are the driving force behind this journal and are extremely supportive.

The main reason we started this journal is because there was a need for scholars, practitioners and educators of fashion to publish innovative works and scholarship. Fashion is a creative field and innovative area, and what is so ironic is how most academic journals 'play it safe' and only publish works with the same tired research methods and/or theoretical frameworks. None are really 'pushing the envelope' of fashion studies and evolving it into the twenty-first century, allowing for fresh and new ideas. Most importantly, 'style' and 'popular culture' have really never been addressed in other journals, thus leaving two very important areas untouched. For me this journal's goal is to be all about inclusivity and innovative high-quality scholarship.

Additionally, we have found most journals only publish the works of what are perceived to be the 'key scholars' of fashion studies, therefore creating an elitist attitude and non-inclusive environment (and that's not what fashion is all about). Too

many scholars have become quite upset with these journals and their operational (and quite frankly boring) structure, where only the principal editor makes the decision about whose name appears in the journal. In our journal, the principal editor *and* the journal team make decisions on who is published. The reader will note our advisory and editorial board is comprised of new, innovative, and fresh faces, some of whom you might not have heard of if you are a fashion scholar...and we are excited about that.

Finally, the Fashion, Style, Appearance Consumption and Design Area of the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association has grown to over 100 participants per year at the annual conference. As this area grew, we began to realize there was a specific niche market for a journal such as *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture*. Each year individuals come up to me and say 'where can I publish my conference paper?', indicating to me that there was a need for this journal.

What do you look for when you're choosing an article to include in your journal?

Fashion, Style & Popular Culture is a peer-reviewed journal specifically dedicated to the area of fashion scholarship and its interfacings with popular culture. We want to provide an interdisciplinary environment for fashion academics, educators and practitioners (around the world) to publish innovative scholarship in all aspects of fashion and popular culture

relating to design, textiles, production, promotion, consumption and appearance-related products and services. Articles related to history, manufacturing, aesthetics, sourcing, marketing, branding, merchandising, retailing, technology, psychological/ sociological aspects of dress, style, body image and cultural identities, as well as purchasing, shopping and the ways and means consumers construct identity as associated to *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* are welcomed. Those papers that address new teaching methods are welcome as well.

The journal offers a broad range of written and visual scholarship and includes works done through various methods of research. We welcome conceptual, theoretical and translational applied research in the areas of fashion, style and popular culture. The journal hopes to stimulate new discussions in the fashion disciplines and to push the envelope of scholarship by welcoming new and established scholars to submit their works.

What do you perceive to be the hot topics in fashion and popular culture, and what do you think will be important over the coming years?

I think we are at a very exciting time in fashion and popular culture. Right now there are so many styles on the streets that it is an *anything goes* environment. I do see scholars examining those individuals and consumers that were once perceived as unimportant to fashion. For example, Christina Lindholm of Virginia Commonwealth University has written an excellent piece on 'the branded abaya' in our new sample issue of *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* illustrating the importance of the abaya as fashion in our cultures. In this same issue, Maria MacKinney-Valentin of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts has identified that the new 'faces of fashion' include models that are disabled, geeky, and transsexual, exemplifying mass changes in fashion and popular culture. Fashion and style are becoming extremely diversified and will continue to become more so...I want this journal to be a part of this phenomenon.

What first attracted you to the world of fashion?

Like many young folks, I was attracted by celebrities wearing cool, hip and unique styles. It was really MTV that influenced my style through such 1980s bands as the Thompson Twins, Bananarama, Fun Boy Three, Eurythmics, Paul Young and Big Country. I dressed like Tom Bailey of the Thompson Twins by wearing big oversized shirts, baggy short pants and espadrilles. Back in the 1980s, dressing like your favourite bands was not just a trip to the mall. In addition to the mall, a person had to go to vintage clothing stores, army/navy surplus stores and thrift stores. Style was more fun because it was physically a scavenger hunt, not an Internet search and buy. What is really ironic is that this was over 30 years

ago, and I still find myself wearing these same clothes...fashion really does repeat every 20–30 years.

Not stereotyping, but being a gay man probably also really sensitized my following 1980s fashion styles. In high school I was pretty much a social outcast so I focused my energies into my studies and working part time at the local mall. I worked for a now defunct retailer called County Seat that sold all types of big-name 1980s designer jeans such as Calvin Klein, Gloria Vanderbilt, Guess, Bongo, Zena, Bugle Boy and Nuovo Industrialé. Eventually, I went to work for The Gap, where the other sales associates and managers were very encouraging and gave me lots of positive reinforcement. I felt accepted there and to this day I wonder what ever happened to that group of women, because they really helped me to develop as a young man. I would love to thank them for what they did for me.

How do you think fashion is a reflection of the human condition?

Fashion is an essential part of the human condition. I think textiles and clothing surround us so much that it is impossible to escape them. Did you use a coffee filter to brew your coffee this morning? Did you use toilet paper? Did you drive a car to work, does it have a leather or cloth interior, does it have tyres? Did you get dressed today? Are you wearing clothes now?! If you said, 'yes' to any of these questions then textiles, clothing and fashion are part of your daily life and therefore are essential to your existence.

Could you tell us a little bit about your forthcoming projects and what we can expect from them?

I just completed editing a new book *Fashion in Popular Culture* (see page 22) that is really meant to be a prelude to the journal. It was done with my two colleagues Vicki Karaminas and Toni Johnson-Woods. My next project is a book that I am writing with my colleague Clare Sauro at Drexel University. We are doing a wonderful coffee-table style academic book titled *Jeans* (Berg Publishers, 2015). It is both a cultural history and a contemporary look at the importance of jeans in our global culture. And I am also writing a new textbook with my colleague Anne Peirson-Smith of the City University of Hong Kong tentatively called *Introducing Global Fashion* (Berg Publisher, 2016). This will be the first introductory fashion textbook for undergraduate students that is non-western cultural specific, it embraces eastern influences and business practices in the world of fashion as well. I think today's fashion student realizes fashion is global, and not just a western practice and phenomenon. And of course, this journal *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* will be my focus until I turn the editorship over to the next person.

Read on

Joseph H. Hancock, II | Drexel University
Editor: *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture*, ISSN 2050-0726



WHY WOULD ANYONE WEAR THAT?

Extract

Fascinating fashion facts

.....

Celia E. Stall-Meadows, Author,
Why Would Anyone Wear That?
Fascinating Fashion Facts

'Clothes are never a frivolity; they are always an expression of the fundamental social and economic pressures of the time'. (Laver 1968: 10)

What is a fashion? Many researchers study the term and offer definitions of varying lengths and scholarship. Simply put, a fashion is a style with group acceptance. Before a style can be transformed into a fashion, it requires a group of people to adopt it. An opinion leader may wear a certain style of clothing that appeals to the followers in his or her social circle, but the clothing may only be described as that individual's style until others choose to adopt the same look. Without imitation, there is no fashion.

Those who study fashion may define fashion as 'change'. When the newness of a fashion wears off, when its life cycle is complete, it is no longer considered a fashion. Fashion is the here and now, what is 'in' today. The following centuries-old excerpt from an English play titled *Rhodon and Iris* (1631) describes the time-tested human preoccupation with desiring the most current and popular styles. The author refers to seemingly fickle changes in headwear fashions: from coronets to plumed hats to coiffed hair.

Dress of a lady of fashion in the seventeenth century:
Wear a flowing coronet to-day, the symbol of her beauty's sad decay;
To-morrow she a waving plume will try, the emblem of all female levity,
Now in her hat, now in her hair is drest;
Now, of all fashions, she thinks change the best.
(Reprinted in Chambers 1832: 42)

Victim of fashion, or fashionista? Fanciful or functional? What makes men and women adopt ridiculous styles in the name of fashion? Have people always been free to choose what they wear? Are the wearers themselves at fault for adopting these fashions? Do *victims of fashion* really exist?

We cannot ignore the social pressures that demand and dictate conformity in clothing, and we cannot simply blame followers of fashion for making foolish clothing choices. Fashion conformity is especially noticeable in secondary schools filled with teenage students. Adolescents shop at select stores and wear certain brands because these styles project a desired image. Dozens of students may own similar T-shirts or pairs of jeans because it reinforces their identity and reaffirms group acceptance. Teens may avoid looking different from their peer group because it can be a fateful sentence of isolation.

Some people wear luxurious and expensive apparel and accessories so others might be impressed with their show of money. Conspicuous consumption is the term describing the deliberate, outward expression or display of one's wealth. The economist Thorstein Veblen coined the phrase in the early twentieth century, although the desire to flaunt one's wealth has always been a part of the fabric of civilization. The author Diana Crane explained the appeal of fashion as follows:

The seductiveness of fashion, then as now, lay in the fact that it seemed to offer a person the possibility of becoming in some way different, more attractive, or more powerful.
(2000: 67)

In some societies, the ultimate show of prosperity is for an affluent person to have so much money that he or she appears to be incapable of engaging in physical labour. By the nineteenth century, the appearance of aristocratic idleness or conspicuous leisure lacked practicality for the male head of the household, as the primary breadwinner, so the wife became the home's chief ornament. The unofficial ruler of English fashion, George Bryan 'Beau' Brummel identified the trend toward male conservatism when he stated, 'The less a gentleman is noticeable, the more he is elegant' (Miller 1999: 28).

Although the popularity of men dressing like dandies waned during the nineteenth century, constrictive clothing for women continued to symbolize the leisure class. Wealthy families could pay for every imaginable service – a servant to choose clothes, a servant to button dresses and coif hair, and even a servant to aid with walking.

Historically, extreme fashions may have been uncomfortable or difficult to wear, and in some instances, the fashions were forced on the wearer. In some cases parents subjected their children to deforming and painful styles in the name of fashion. Wealthy or elite citizens often advocated physical disfigurement in the name of beauty, fashion or social status. By contrast, working class and poor people needed their children to work to help pay for basic necessities. These people required functional clothing for performing routine activities; cumbersome clothing was simply not practical.

Carefully crafted laws officially regulated the wearing of certain fashions, while simple economics often determined who wore other types of clothing. The time and money restrictions on the lower-class citizens prevented them from investing excessively in fashion frivolities. They needed comfortable and easy-to-wear clothing that allowed them the freedom of movement to earn a living. In spite of these limitations, people from lower socio-economic classes often imitated fashions or popular styles. As students of fashion read through the historic styles discussed in my book, they should bear in mind that only a limited number of men and women adopted the most extreme fashions – and usually, they were of the leisure class.

Clothing symbolizes power in most societies. The more extensive (larger, wider, taller or longer) or expensive the fashion, the more status and power bestowed upon the wearer. Thus, extremely tall hats, wide skirts, costly and excessive fabrics and precious jewellery create a feeling of power, but when the fashion becomes so cumbersome that it prevents freedom of movement, the wearer's physical or perceived power declines. Instead, the person becomes a victim of the very fashion he or she freely chose to wear.

In spite of all the theories and perspectives of fashion adoption, there is an important underlying reason why extreme fashions are worn – for adornment or to attract attention. People simply

want to adorn themselves so they will be attractive to others.

My book explores historic fashion extremes across time and place, and literally from head to toe, by beginning with headwear fashions and concluding with footwear fashions. Students of fashion will find that while a few extreme fashions offered benefits to the wearer, many others ranged from uncomfortable to downright dangerous or deadly.

Powdering

When artists portray the first president of the United States, George Washington, he is often featured wearing a powdered wig. Hair powdering was an acceptable fashion for both genders and a powerful symbol of an elite group. Women of leisure spent hours at the hairdresser, while artisans created incredible hair updos with false hair, Spanish moss and flour paste (the consistency of a *papier mâché* solution). Current events or the latest gossip inspired the bizarre creations for fashionable hairstyles. Whether real or caricatures of the time, artwork from the century shows an upswept hairdo featuring a miniature sailing ship riding the crest of hair waves, and a hairdo that incorporates a miniature carriage and formal garden.

With so much time and expense invested in these *coiffures* or hairdos, it was desirable to maintain them for many days or even weeks. Some leisure-class citizens of the eighteenth century endorsed low hygiene standards and enterprising hairdressers devised long scratching sticks, so women could satisfy itches without musing their hair.

The Scottish poet Robert Burns, sitting in the church pew behind a hatted woman with a coiffed hairdo, composed a poem titled 'To a Louse' in 1786. Burns watched a louse scuttle on her head, disappearing in and out of her hairdo, while he wrote of his outrage at the audacity of the louse to crawl on such a well-dressed lady. An excerpt follows:

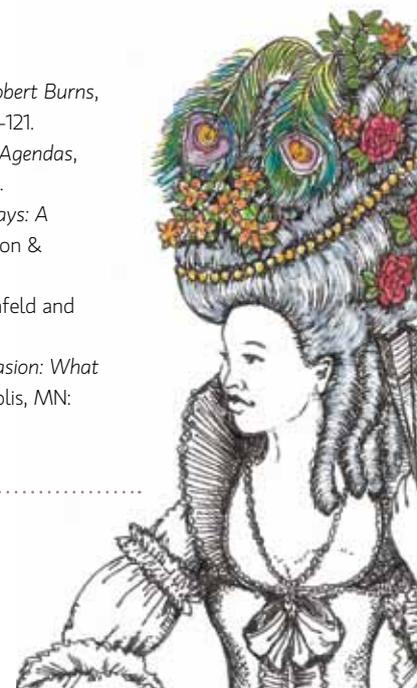
Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunned by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner,
On some poor body.
(Burns 1873: 120–121)

References

- Burns, R. (1873), *The poetical works of Robert Burns*, Boston, MA: Lee and Shepard, pp. 120–121.
- Crane, D. (2000), *Fashion and Its Social Agendas*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Chambers, R. (ed.) (1832), *The Book of Days: A Miscellany of Popular Antiquities*, London & Edinburgh: W & R Chambers.
- Laver, J. (1968), *Dandies*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Miller, B. M. (1999), *Dressed for the Occasion: What Americans Wore, 1620–1970*, Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Co.

Read on

Celia E. Stall-Meadows | Community Care College, Tulsa
Author: *Why Would Anyone Wear That? Fascinating Fashion Facts*, ISBN 9781841507279



FACE VALUE



Subversive beauty ideals in contemporary fashion marketing

.....

Maria Mackinney-Valentin, Contributor,
Fashion, Style & Popular Culture

While beauty might be in the eye of the beholder on a personal level, the definition of beauty in fashion is generally more normative in the sense of 'fashion's tenets of "perfection"' (Arnold 2001: 22). This is true of beauty in sartorial aesthetics but also in corporeal beauty in fashion mediation, in which fashion models are seen to embody 'perfect forms' (Diamond and Diamond 1996: 300). Reviews of fashion advertising since the late nineteenth century confirm a certain variety in beauty ideals without, however, representing any radical departures such as plus-sized or older fashion models (Hill 2004). At the same time, beauty in fashion is subject to constant change, which is reflective of fashion as a medium for negotiating social status representation. In that sense, the perception of beauty, particularly regarding fashion models, can be deceptive; as William Shakespeare acknowledged more than four centuries ago, 'Fair is foul, and Foul is fair' (2003: 1.1.11–12).

While a great deal of research has looked at the role of fashion models from a historical, social psychological and industry perspective (Evans 2005; Mears 2011; Entwistle and Wissinger 2012), this article looks more specifically at the representation of *faces*, understood here as human faces – of both men and women – representing fashion brands in campaigns, commercials, ads, runway shows and fashion spreads in magazines. The focus is on faces that appear to be *foul* in the sense that they digress radically from conventional conceptions of beauty in fashion. The purpose of this article is to determine whether these digressions reflect a greater tolerance of diversity concerning appearance on a general level or whether this tendency for foul to be fair in fashion marketing reflects a current strategy for creating social distinction on a more specific level. Much scholarship on modelling has been concerned with the conditions of models in regard to body and gender ideals and the effect this has on self-perception among both fashion models and female viewers (Entwistle and Wissinger 2012; Mears and Finlay 2005; Bordo 2003; Gross 1994). This article takes a slightly different approach by framing the

topic of faces as a reflection of consumer behaviour. If customers are a brand's biggest asset (Jackson and Shaw 2008: 20) then absorbing consumer strategies concerning status representation into fashion marketing might offer an advantage, even if a campaign at a visual level might initially repel rather than attract consumers. The focus here is on the use of subversive beauty ideals in models – fashion models, celebrities or others – in fashion campaigns and runway shows for both menswear and womenswear in mainly the high-end, Euro-American fashion industry, including the beauty industry. The empirical data draw on mainstream UK and US fashion magazines and newspapers during the period 2009–2012.

The role of subversive beauty in fashion marketing will be explored through five case studies:

1. Freak chic: physically impaired models.
2. Gender bending: models that are androgynous or transgendered.
3. Granny chic: models 60 years or older or grey-haired younger models.
4. Geek chic: models who appear intentionally quirky, nerdy or *uncool*.
5. Slumming: models that resemble (or are) outcasts, derelicts and vagrants.

All cases represent a play on something that appears *foul* or *wrong* as an incorporation of contemporary social strategies in status representation. Among the brands studied are Givenchy, Chanel (see Figure 1), Vivienne Westwood, Jean Paul Gaultier, Missoni, G-Star, Hema, Mugler, L'Oréal, Rolex, Giles, Debenhams, Tommy Hilfiger and Dolce & Gabbana.

Fashion models

The perception of beauty in visual culture has been subject to constant negotiation, as argued by Umberto Eco in *History of Beauty* (2004), informed as it is by the cultural norms of a given spatial and temporal context. However, at least since the 1920s, fashion communication with regard to the faces of fashion has been dominated by the current beauty



Figure 1: Chanel No. 5, 2012, ad visual featuring actor Brad Pitt as the first male face of the iconic Chanel fragrance. Photographer Steven Klein. Copyright: Chanel.

standards, e.g. 'contemporary seductiveness' (Laver 1946: 203). Faces are considered here to be the personification of a specific brand. The question is what subversive beauty ideals really communicate in fashion marketing. If fashion marketing is understood as 'the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships, in order to capture value from customers in return' (Kotler and Armstrong 2010: 29), the cases will show how the exchange of values between companies and consumers seems at first glance to differ radically not only from conventional beauty ideals, but also from the general norms for status representation within Euro-American markets.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, fashion has been formally organized as cycles of sartorial expressions, and thereby fashion has also contributed to regulating the changing perceptions of corporeal beauty as personified by the fashion model. The history of the fashion model as a tool in marketing – a 'walking advertisement' (Craik 1994: 77) – can be traced back to fashion designer Charles Frederick Worth and The House of Worth in the 1860s, when the wife of the designer, Marie Vernet, was sent out in public to parade her husband's designs. She is now widely considered to be the 'blueprint fashion model' (Quick 1997: 24).

Showing the latest designs on attractive house models that mirrored contemporary beauty ideals was seen to increase the attractiveness of the looks to potential customers. In the late 1920s, designer Paul Poiret began bringing his models on tour and used models rather than aristocrats for a different effect. With the establishment of Lucy Clayton's model agency in 1928, modelling as an occupation gained a higher social standing (Craik 1994: 77). Since then, models have experienced a rise in status and are an important part of the contemporary fashion system (Quick 1997; Kawamura 2005).

While celebrity icons are seen in the early Hollywood days (e.g. Clara Bow in the 1920s), the symbiotic relationship between fashion designers and celebrities may be traced back to the 1950s with Audrey Hepburn and Hubert de Givenchy

(Agins 1999: 137). This strategy of *gilt by association* between celebrities and fashion has increased, making the face of a brand more three-dimensional. Especially since the rise of the supermodel in the 1990s, the distinction between model and celebrity has become less clear.

Face value

Fashion is organized according to a cadence of change seen in recurring seasonal collections and fashion weeks. This institutionalization of change apparently for its own sake has invited satire: 'Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months' (Wilde [1887] 2004: 39). Fashion, including the faces in fashion, is to a certain extent driven by a level of what might be considered *ugly* as a means to break with current standards and thereby live up to the dogma of *newness* that characterizes fashion; 'the intoxication of sensation and novelty' (Lipovetsky 1994: 146). This notion of *ugly* is not the equivalent of beauty as a relative construction, but is rather an elusive aesthetic value that is collectively agreed upon as fashionable at a given time and place, as well as within a specific brand identity. The function of this ugliness is to express both social individualization and brand distinction. In that sense, *ugly* is an ambiguous quality, which is not limited to contemporary fashion ideals. In the exhibition 'Schiaparelli and Prada: Impossible Conversations' (2012) at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, one of the themes was 'Ugly Chic'. In their own way, the two featured designers challenged categories of good and bad taste. Elsa Schiaparelli achieved *ugly chic* by elevating objects such as insects, tree bark, cellophane and lobsters to high fashion (2007: 61) and Miuccia Prada challenged standards of beauty through unusual combinations of colour, print and materials.

Definitions of good and bad taste, what is beautiful or ugly, have, historically speaking, been determined by social, cultural and historical context (Eco 2007: 391). However, the rise of postmodernism in the 1980s entailed an increase in the sense of relativity concerning aesthetic values (Jameson

[1981] 1998). The postmodern condition lacks any controlling idea that is also within the aesthetic domain, which in turn gives rise to the dogma that 'everything is equivalent and is mixed indiscriminately in the same morose and funeral exaltation' (Baudrillard [1981] 2000: 44). This understanding of relativity offers the potential 'to transform something ugly into an object of pleasure' (Eco 2007: 436). Recent developments in fashion campaigns and runway shows seem to confirm this tendency towards greater volatility in the representation of physical standards of beauty. The case studies are

constitutes a language and means of communication has been central to the proliferation of the fashion industry and its promotion through women's magazines and by sanctioning role models' (Craik 1994: 65). These role models (e.g. TV personalities, movie stars, singers, royalty) come to represent a standard of beauty for ordinary women (Craik 1994: 62), implicated as they are in the dissemination of body aesthetics (Entwistle 2009: 16). The world of fashion modelling is often noted for its celebration of youth, 'beauty' and the 'thin' body (Entwistle 2009: 8). This perception has prevailed in the

Is this celebration of anomaly still just a two-dimensional image designed to create social distinction?

analysed within the framework of this transformative understanding of beauty in mainstream Euro-American fashion magazines that contain campaign ads, runway images, fashion spreads and editorial content referring to faces of fashion.

The fashion industry in general and the use of models in particular has been criticized for distorting perceptions of beauty by creating impossible ideals. Misshapen bodies are to be regarded as problems to be rectified or disguised within these constricted views of beauty. When a female celebrity endorses a cosmetic brand, her role is to be an ideal for the consumers, implying that the product being promoted might enable the user to become a better version of herself. Any mistakes or flaws appear to be included in mainstream fashion magazines only for the sake of having them fixed in order to return to the realm of perfection that the traditional magazine may be seen to represent. This process may be described as 'body management as a means of "normalizing" the body' (Craik 1994: 66).

The fashion system in general and the model industry in particular is criticized for being concerned only with surfaces, and models being viewed according to the 'perfection' of their bodies. This tendency has been prevalent in modelling since the beginning of the twentieth century; 'Models sell commodities by using their bodies to produce commercialized affect in relationship to specific goods: glamour, elegance, cool' (Brown 2012: 37). This effect was often ensured contractually. An example is an exclusive contract between model Jose Borain and Calvin Klein from the late 1980s, according to which the model was required to maintain her weight, hairstyle and all other features of physiognomy and physical appearance. That is to say, if she became disfigured, disabled, suffered illness or mental impairment, the contract could be annulled (Craik 1994: 90).

Though the fashion film is gaining in popularity, print advertisements in public spaces and in women's magazines have traditionally been the prime sites for promoting and playing with standards of beauty at a given time. Since the first women's magazines appeared in the early seventeenth century they have played a prescriptive role in guiding women in how to look, feel and behave through style guides, advice on life and love, and fashion spreads, but also indirectly with fashion ads; 'The idea that clothes

fashion industry through most of the twentieth century, and it is the departure from this practice specifically in regard to faces that is the objective when analysing the case studies.

Face value: Case studies

The question is whether this celebration of anomaly – the older, handicapped, gender-bent, awkward or derelict model – is symptomatic of a move away from fashion's dictatorship of perfection towards a greater relativity in the perception and representation of beauty, or whether this recent visual turn in the faces of fashion is still just a two-dimensional image designed to create social distinction (Simmel 1971; McCracken 1990; Bourdieu 1999; Aldridge 2003; Rogers 2003). If the latter is the case, does the scrambled social message represent a return to the sentiments expressed by fashion model Naomi Campbell: 'People only take models at face value?' (Craik 1994: 87). The following case studies will explore the apparent rise of *imperfect* models that challenge perceptions of gender, class, age, body and sexuality as traditional parameters defining the faces in fashion. The aim is to explore how these cases produce subversive commercialized effect and alternative glamour and elegance.

Case 1: *Freak chic*

As we have seen, fashion models are traditionally celebrated as ideals of physical perfection. However, in recent years there have been a number of models where the imperfect has played an ambiguous role. One example is seen with the performance artist Rick Genest, also known as Zombie Boy, who is famous for being tattooed with a skeleton over his entire body and face. After visiting Genest's Facebook page, Nicola Formichetti, creative director of Mugler, used Genest as the face of the Mugler Autumn/Winter (AW) 2011 'Anatomy of Change' collection, both on the runway and in the advertising campaigns. Genest was also featured in Lady Gaga's video for 'Born This Way'. In an online interview, Genest refers to himself as a 'sideshow freak' (cranetv.com). A similar example from fashion is seen with the hit 'I Fink You Frecky' by the South African band Die Antwoord. The video for the song, which features a series of characters that might be considered freakish, reached more



Figure 2: Oscar Pistorius for the AMen fragrance campaign for Mugler in 2011. Photographer Ali Mahdavi.

than 20 million hits in 2012 (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Uee_mcxvrvw). This promotion of *freak chic* both by Genest himself and by Mugler and Die Antwoord indicates a social appetite for the irregular, abnormal or even monstrous.

Historically speaking, the sideshow freak is specific to the circus or fairs where people who were unusual (e.g. in size or appearance) were exhibited. In that sense, Genest represents a departure from the celebration of the perfect towards a more ambiguous aesthetic where what is generally considered wrong or ugly is rendered desirable at least within a specific context.

Another example of physical imperfection is seen with the use of models with genetic defects. In the Spring/Summer (SS) 2011 Givenchy campaign, creative director Riccardo Tisci chose albino model Stephen Thompson as the face. In addition to the physical condition, albinism is also a social and cultural taboo in certain cultures, where albinos are even considered social outcasts (Brown 2008). The fact that Thompson is albino was not concealed in the campaign. On the contrary, the use of over-lighting of the images served to emphasize his whiteness, suggesting that his condition be a potential within the context of the campaign. So, in the case of Thompson, rather than being a self-proclaimed freak as in the example of Genest, the notion of physical imperfection became not a choice but a condition.

A third example of physical imperfection is impairment, which is used to communicate messages of empowerment. This was seen when Bethany Hamilton, a professional surfer who survived a shark attack but lost an arm, took part in Volvo's 'Life on Board' campaign (2004). Another example is Shannon Murray, who was featured in a window campaign for Debenhams in her wheelchair (2010). There are a number of examples of models with prosthetic legs. One is Aimee Mullins, who is an accomplished athlete in track and field despite having had both her legs amputated. She walked for Alexander McQueen in carved prosthetic legs

in 1999. She is currently an ambassador of beauty brand L'Oréal. Oscar Pistorius, the triple world record holder and triple Paralympic Champion in the 100-, 200- and 400-metre races, was the face of AMen, a scent by Mugler in 2011 (see Figure 2). In addition, German model Mario Galla walked the Michalsky show at the Berlin fashion week in 2011 (michalsky.com) with an exposed prosthetic leg.

While this tendency to use disabled models may appear to be a move towards greater tolerance, there might also be an element of taking subversive images and using them in marketing on a more symbolic level, where what is *foul* becomes fair because of the potential for distinction, regardless of the social reality of the images.

Case 2: Gender bending

From Marlene Dietrich and Diane Keaton to David Bowie and Boy George, gender bending in and through fashion within the framework of popular culture has taken place since at least the turn of the twentieth century. However, the recent development in fashion indicates a move beyond the play and negotiation of gender identities in fashion. Actress Tilda Swinton was the face of the Pringle of Scotland menswear line AW 2010. Andrej Pejčić is a highly androgynous male model embracing his feminine side by walking runway shows for both men's and women's lines. Pushing the boundaries of gender conventions in fashion, he wore the symbolic wedding dress for the Jean Paul Gaultier SS 2011 show. In 2011, he was the face of Dutch company Hema's women's lingerie campaign for the Mega Push-Up Bra (hema.nl).

While the examples of Tilda Swinton and Andrej Pejčić operate within the realm of cross-dressing, Brazilian model Leandro Cerezo, or Lea T, takes gender bending a physical step further. Lea is a transgendered fashion model, male-to-female, who started her sexual reassignment process in 2008. She has been the face of Givenchy in 2010 and has been featured in magazines such as *Love*, *Interview* and *French Vogue*. Finally, the choice of actor Brad



Figure 3: Norwegian Chess Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen champions the geek chic look for a G-Star Raw campaign in 2010. Photographer Anton Corbijn.

Pitt as the face for the iconic perfume Chanel No. 5 for the Fall 2012 (see Figure 1) campaign marks a gendered departure from the brand's previous faces that have included actresses Catherine Deneuve and Nicole Kidman.

These examples might challenge social and cultural restrictions regarding gender and sexuality as a positive side effect, but as a marketing strategy they appear to adopt contemporary consumer behaviour of communicating a confusing message as a deliberate strategy in status representation.

This is an extract. To read the full article, pick up a copy of the new *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* journal (available in November 2013).

References

- Agins, Teri (1999), *The End of Fashion: The Mass Marketing of the Clothing Business*, New York: William Morrow.
- Aldridge, Alan (2003), *Consumption*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Arnold, Rebekka (2001), *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety: Image and Morality in the 20th Century*, London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.
- Baudrillard, Jean ([1981] 2000), *Simulacra and Simulation*, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- ____ (1998), *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, London: Sage.
- Bordo, Susan (2003), *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and Female Body*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1999), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, London: Routledge.
- Brown, Elspeth (2012), 'From artist's model to the "Natural Girl": Containing sexuality in early-twentieth-century modelling', in J. Entwistle and E. Wissinger (eds), *Fashioning Models: Image, Text and Industry*, London: Berg, pp. 37–55.
- Brown, Matt (2008), 'Albinos are hunted for body parts in Tanzania', *The National*, 8 November, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/africa/albinos-are-hunted-for-body-parts-in-tanzania>. Accessed 12 January 2013.
- Craik, Jennifer (1994), *The Face of Fashion*, New York: Routledge.
- Crane.tv (2011), 'A Powerful and Intimate Interview with Rico Zombie', 28 July, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmeELC5EGv4>. Accessed 16 January 2013.
- Diamond, Jay and Diamond, Ellen (1996), *Fashion Advertising and Promotion*, New York: Delmar Publishers.
- Eco, Umberto (2004), *History of Beauty*, New York: Rizzoli.
- ____ (2007), *On Ugliness*, New York: Rizzoli.
- Entwistle, Joanne (2009), *The Aesthetic Economy of Fashion: Markets and Value in Clothing and Modelling*, London: Berg.
- Entwistle, Joanne and Wissinger, Elizabeth (eds) (2012), *Fashioning Models: Image, Text and Industry*, London: Berg.
- Evans, Caroline (2005), 'Multiple, movements, model, mode: The mannequin parade 1900–1929', in C. Breward and C. Evans (eds), *Fashion and Modernity*, London: Berg, pp. 125–45.
- Gross, Michael (1994), *Model: The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women*, New York: W. Morrow.
- Hill, Daniel Delis (2004), *As Seen in Vogue: A Century of American Fashion Advertising*, Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press.
- Jackson, Tim and Shaw, David (2008), *Mastering Fashion Marketing*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jameson, Fredric ([1981] 1998), 'Postmodernism and consumer society', in Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, New York: The New Press, pp. 111–125.
- Kawamura, Yuniya (2005), *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*, London: Berg.
- Kotler, Philip and Armstrong, Gary (2010), *Principles of Marketing*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Laver, James (1946), *Taste and Fashion: From the French Revolution to the Present Day*, London: George G. Harrap and Co.
- Lipovetsky, Gilles (1994), *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- McCracken, Grant (1990), *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Mears, Ashley (2011), *Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Mears, Ashley and Finlay, William (2005), 'Not just a paper doll: How models manage bodily capital and why they perform emotional labour', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 34:3, pp. 317–343.
- Quick, Harriet (1997), *Catwalking: A History of the Fashion Model*, London: Hamlyn.
- Rogers, Everett (2003), *Diffusion of Innovations*, Cambridge: Free Press.
- Schiaparelli, Elsa (2007), *Shocking Life: The Autobiography of Elsa Schiaparelli*, London: V&A Publications.
- Shakespeare, William (2003), *Macbeth*, London: Methuen.
- Simmel, Georg (1971), *On Individuality and Social Forms*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Steele, Valerie (1997), 'Anti-fashion: The 1970s', *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 1:3, pp. 279–296.
- Veblen, Thorstein (1970), *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, London: Unwin Books.
- Wilde, Oscar ([1887] 2004), 'Literary and other notes', in R. Ross (ed.), *Reviews*, Gutenberg: eBook, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14240/14240.txt>.

Read on

Maria Mackinney-Valentin | Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts
Contributor: *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture*, ISSN 20500726

GENERATING STYLE

Exploring Shanghai

.....
Toni Johnson-Woods and Vicki Karaminas,
Authors, *Shanghai Street Style*



No other word or concept is as critical to fashion as the term 'style'. The birth of contemporary fashion is also wrapped around the self-consciousness of appearance. To have style is to possess a differentiating and enviable presence, that is, a certain quality that makes a statement about who we are, or who we aspire to be. Style is a superadded, rare, desired quantity that assists in something's coming to appearance. We wear clothes, cover ourselves with an outer skin of codes and creations, in order for us to be seen as we truly are.

Street style is about being noticed in what you're wearing, it is about 'the look', whether it is

a classic timeless style, mix-matched vintage with a touch of elegance or urban chic with Adidas or Reebok trainers. The concept of style is a familiar one because it is associated with dress styles and designer styles; it is a term that has come to be associated with praise and used to reinforce the idea of elegance. What holds currency on the street is looking 'cool', or possessing the look of cool, which is an admired aesthetic of attitude, behaviour, comportment, appearance and style that finds its expression in a particular historical moment, the zeitgeist of the time.

The first rule of cool: the quicker the chase, the quicker the flight. The act of discovering what's



Laid-back chic.
Smacks of
effortlessness
and washed-
back cool.





Vintage inspiration
with an urban edge.



Rock boy meets retro-motorbike panache.



Snake-skin loafers in two-tone black and white. Exotic and chic.



Teddy boy postmodern
mixed with badass
sophistication.



Casual laid-back paired with ivy-league preppy.

cool is what causes cool to move on, which explains the circularity of street styling. But who decides what's cool, and how do we know what cool is? The aesthetics of cool is being in control, being composed, collected, unruffled and nonchalant. Cool is what everybody wants, which is the window to the street. Street fashion is fashion that is considered to have emerged not from major couture houses, but from the grassroots, and is generally associated with youth culture. Shanghai street fashion sustains multiple, simultaneous, highly diverse fashion movements at any given time. Shanghai street style can best be described as casual chic that mashes unisex, rock and vintage styles to create stylish urban fashion, what Ted Polhemus (1994) calls a 'supermarket of styles'. These styles contain androgynous touches with a splash of the surreal; there is also a heavy Japanese influence. Major couture houses once dominated fashion and trends 'trickled down' to the street as young people imitated consumers who could afford high-luxury brands. Now mainstream fashion often appropriates street trends as influences and 'bubbles up' instead of 'trickling down'.

Street fashion was born out of necessity, mixing high-fashion labels with low and fast fashion to create a stylish look. This mixing and reassembling of labels and garments is known as *bricolage*, and the style master (*bricoleur*) generates a style by reordering and recontextualizing garments to produce and communicate new meanings. The generation of a style, then, involves selecting from within the matrix of what already exists. What happens is not the creation of garments and meanings from nothing, but rather the transformation and rearrangement of what is 'borrowed' or 'chosen' into a sequence, which carries new meaning. For example, the leather jacket as an object has no meaning; however, when placed in an arrangement with blue jeans, white T-shirt and black leather boots you create a rock style usually associated with motorbike boys or rock chic. That same leather jacket when placed alongside a T-shirt, safety pins, stovepipe pants and bowler boots is transformed into a punk style.

Having said this about the creation of a style, why do the people who create street styles – and, in particular, youth – adopt a set of specific objects and not others? In the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, young, disenfranchised African Americans involved in the hip-hop scene adopted established sportswear and fashion brands such as Adidas, le coq sportif, Nike and Tommy Hilfiger, although Polo Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Nautica and DKNY were also popular. Brightly coloured Adidas tracksuits were teamed up with large Prada sunglasses, Polo shirts, Kangol bucket hats and heavy gold jewellery. By adopting fashion labels that were popular with white, upper-class American collegiate youth known as 'preppies', the look became suggestive of prestige and wealth and the fight for equality. As a prime example where street fashion bubbles up

and influences high fashion, Isaac Mizrahi's 1980s winter collection displayed catwalk models wearing black bomber jackets with fur-trimmed hoods, gold chains and big nameplate-inspired belts. This style became known as 'Homeboy Chic'. Later, the reassembling of luxury brands would include fashion labels Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Prada. A similar process took place among young men who belonged to the 1950s British subcultural group the Teddy boys. This group appropriated the Edwardian suits and clothes originally worn by upper-class dandies in an attempt to gain status. The important point is that a particular style is adopted by a person to identify themselves as belonging to a community with shared values. In short, the adaptation of a style communicates identity, whether as part of the self-confirmation of membership in a social group typical of subcultures and youth styles or as an ephemeral look that determines one's own individual appearance. Style makes our bodies speak; it invests garments with reputations. The leather jacket, the pinstriped suit, a Gucci wristwatch, lipstick and blue jeans all speak. Style is about a process of managing appearances in everyday life and characterizes identity structures and formation. It is a means of visually communicating becoming or being in the world and staking our place in it. In short, a look or style is a statement about who we are and how we wish to be defined by others.

When we talk of style we allude to taste and the ability to make discriminating judgements about aesthetic and creative matters. Good taste and the deliberate pursuit of the 'tasteful' is at the centre of appearances. Taste is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning about their social world, classifying people, practices and things into categories of equal value. It is displayed in conversation, habits, manners, fashion and the possession of objects, which signal co-membership into communities of wealth or knowledge. Having 'taste' bolsters one's identity and displaying 'taste' serves as an identity marker. Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Taste is a deliberate formation, a guiding principle of style, which reflects moral choices bearing on how an individual decides to dress. Taste is expressed in a particular look and indicates a preoccupation with abstractions, yet it is a particular style that displays differences, whether it is classic style, hippy style or hip-hop style. Meanwhile, there is always something left hanging out there, the tantalizing ineffability of having style; the exceptional, if mythic, quality of existing outside of time. A classical style is expected to transcend the lineaments of its historically circumscribed position and speak to other generations in various ways, while for someone to have style is to have a *je ne sais quoi* that is irreducible to the material elements worn on the body. *

References

Polhemus, T. (1994), *Streetstyle: From Sidewalk to Catwalk*, London: Thames & Hudson.

Read on

Toni Johnson-Woods and Vicki Karaminas | University of Queensland and University of Technology, Sydney
 Authors: *Shanghai Street Style*, ISBN 9781841505381, Photography by Fung Chan | www.fungchanfoto.com





PUBLISH WITH US

Intellect is an independent academic publisher in the fields of creative practice and popular culture, publishing scholarly books and journals that exemplify our mission as publishers of original thinking. We aim to provide a vital space for widening critical debate in new and emerging subjects, and in this way we differ from other publishers by campaigning for the author rather than producing a book or journal to fill a gap in the market.

We pride ourselves on the excellent service that we offer our authors. We are passionate, honest and energetic, and we utilize a range of cutting-edge resources and expertise in order to create the best possible end product. For more information visit us online:

www.intellectbooks.com

NAVIGATING CULTURAL ANXIETY

Strategic ambiguity in Lisbeth Salander's
style-fashion-dress

.....

Susan B. Kaiser, Contributor, *Fashion in Popular Culture: Literature, Media and Contemporary Studies*

'It's a long, dark story', Henrik Vanger – the wealthy, elderly Swedish industrialist – tells Mikael Blomkvist, an investigative reporter, in Stieg Larsson's acclaimed best-selling novel *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2009). Vanger is talking about his own family, which obtained its wealth by industrializing Sweden through products ranging from steel and iron to textiles. During the Second World War, the Vanger Corporation sold fabric to the Nazis for their uniforms. In addition to some family members' histories of fascism, racism and sexism, the Vangers have another skeleton in the closet: an unsolved, presumed murder. In the 1960s, Vanger's beloved teenage niece disappeared mysteriously from the family's northern Swedish island of Hedeby. Vanger – now in his eighties – is in the process of recruiting Blomkvist (recently disgraced in a legal scandal involving a different high-powered industrialist) to investigate the 40-year-old cold case.

Six months after moving to Hedeby, Blomkvist realizes that he needs a research assistant to track down leads he has uncovered. Vanger's lawyer recommends Lisbeth Salander: arguably the most enigmatic, troubled and yet compelling female fictional character of the twenty-first century. Larsson's Lisbeth is a world-class computer hacker and scary-smart researcher with a tragic personal and family history of her own. As a child, she had to learn how to take care of herself, and she has fashioned herself into a *sui generis* character as a young adult.¹ Lisbeth is special or unique in many ways. She fights, morally and physically, for her own and others' rights. And yet socially she puts off many other characters, we learn as readers, by the way she dresses and communicates non-verbally. She is not a talker, either. Her vigilance, intellectual curiosity and problem-solving skills, however, serve her (and select others) well.

An important part of Lisbeth's mystique is the way Larsson describes her looks. She becomes a fascinating, revealing case study of Carol Tulloch's concept of 'style-fashion-dress' (2010). Combining

style, fashion and dress into a hyphenated complex, Tulloch notes, fosters attention to relations among ontological parts and wholes. Often, she suggests, the selection of one term or another can be somewhat arbitrary, if not uncritical. Thinking with the three as a whole sharpens an analysis of each as a part. The concept of 'style' draws our attention to visual, appearance-related statements, including those that are highly individualized and those that connect individuals with looks derived from the street and from one's own wardrobe – within and across time. As a social process, the term 'fashion' highlights themes of negotiation, norm-building and norm-deconstructing, and ongoing change as individuals collectively choose styles that resonate within an emerging present. In some ways, the term 'dress' is a bit more clinical and, simultaneously, inclusive in its reach. Helpfully, it brings us back to the body as a focal point (see Entwistle 2000). As Eicher defines 'dress', it begins with the body and then proceeds to consider modifications and additions to the body (2010: xiii). Together, all three of these terms – individually and collectively – shed light on Larsson's portrayal of Lisbeth's looks throughout *The Millennium Trilogy*. The term 'dress' draws attention to Lisbeth's body and what she does to modify its appearance and to articulate her subjectivity in an embodied way. The concept of style focuses upon how she mixes and (un)matches, drawing upon her own wardrobe and street-cultural references in her milieu. Fashion, as a concept and process, highlights social processes, including those of appropriation of individual/group style, as well as individualized 'fashion statements' that contribute to a larger collective endeavour. In turn, these statements become appropriated through processes of commodity capitalism. That is, looks can be cut and spliced back into the very pieces that everyday stylists and dressers combine to create their appearances.

Lisbeth's style draws on various subcultural looks and yet defies categorization. The commodification of her style by H&M and others



Figure 1: Noomi Rapace as Lisbeth Salander.

(discussed later in this article) recalls ongoing debates regarding fashion's appropriation of street style. Lisbeth's dressing of her body's diminutive frame (4' 11" and 90 lbs) includes multiple tattoos and piercings. Her hair and make-up change continually and – along with her ongoing body modifications and primarily black, eclectically personalized clothing ensembles – propel the plots throughout Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy. Although in this article I focus primarily on the first novel in the trilogy (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*), I also make references to changes in Lisbeth's style-fashion-dress in Larsson's second (*The Girl Who Played with Fire*) and third (*The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*) novels (2010a, b).

To date, over 65 million copies of books in The Millennium Trilogy have been sold worldwide in dozens of languages. In this article, I argue that much of the transnational (cultural) resonance of the books can be attributed to Larsson's employment of Lisbeth Salander as an unlikely, *sui generis* teacher of possibility. The cultural themes in the trilogy are dark and provoke anxiety. Yet, as Lisbeth demonstrates through her daily actions and her style-fashion-dress, individuals can take the initiative to grapple directly with cultural anxiety and to explore its positive, open side to shape a better future. Fashion, too, has this anticipatory quality. Using her style-fashion-dress strategically and ambiguously, Lisbeth gestures toward the ethical challenges associated with taking personal responsibility. She is a character who manages to navigate cultural anxieties with 'contextual flexibility'; the situational adaptability of her style-fashion-dress becomes a metaphor for her subjectivity (Kaiser et al. 1993; Kaiser 1997).

Throughout the trilogy, Lisbeth Salander is an introverted avenger with unusual abilities to fight multiple injustices. As a chameleon, she uses style-fashion-dress simultaneously to allude to her own difficult personal and family history, to convince us of the multi-layered nature of her character and her (very few) social relations, and to open our eyes to the need to grapple openly with deep cultural problems (e.g. sexual violence, racism, corporate/state corruption) that Larsson exposes and Lisbeth tackles.

Ambiguities abound. Despite her small size, Lisbeth is strong – in an almost superheroic sort of way. Her mind, too, is almost magical. Larsson describes her as having powerful analytical and research skills, especially with computers, and a 'photographic memory'. In an essay on Lisbeth Salander as a superhero, psychologist Robin Rosenberg discusses how the more accurate technical term is 'eidetic imagery': 'the experience of, after looking at a scene or object, being able to conjure up accurately and vividly in the mind's eye an image of what was previously seen'. No memory, she argues, is truly photographic (Rosenberg 2011: 262). Lisbeth's style-fashion-dress is ambiguous; it resists subcultural or other labels, just as her character does. It cuts across, for example, clothes and looks associated with punk, goth, emo, cyberpunk, rocker and other groups. Lisbeth refuses to be associated with any particular group; she is on her own. Similarly, her gender, sexuality, age and



Figure 2: Lisbeth at a business meeting.



Figure 3: Rooney Mara as Lisbeth.

ethnicity are ambiguous and elude classification. Cultural discourse (e.g. book and film reviews, blogs, essays) has explored various themes, nuances and interpretations of Lisbeth's character. Questions emerge from this discourse: is Lisbeth a feminist? Is she genderqueer? How would she feel about becoming a commodity? She commits some illegal acts (e.g. hacking, stealing), but is she an ethical character? Why is she so compelling to readers and viewers around the world?

Complicating matters further is the fact that there are multiple Lisbeths: first, there are the various Lisbeth personae in Larsson's trilogy – the images readers conjure and re-conjure (as her looks change) in their minds. Second, there is the Lisbeth played so poignantly by Noomi Rapace (see Figure 1) in the 2009 Swedish adaptation of the trilogy, directed by Niels Arden Oplev.

I actually saw the first of the three Swedish films before I delved into the books, so I tended to have Rapace's image in my head as I read. The screenshot in Figure 2 depicts Rapace's Lisbeth in the first Swedish film, in the context of a security firm business meeting with a client (Vanger's lawyer, on the left) and her boss (Dragan Armansky, on the right), Rapace's Lisbeth is dressed in black; the spikes around her neck seem to say, 'Don't mess with me'. Her hair is short and also spiky around the edges; facial piercings are visible. Her black eyeliner is sharp and unrelenting, as is her expression. Later in the film, when she leaves Stockholm and joins (and begins to trust) Blomkvist in the more rural setting of Hedeby, her eye make-up softens and her hair gets longer.

Most recently, there is a third Lisbeth, played by Rooney Mara – and directed by David Fincher – in the Hollywood adaptation of Larsson's first novel



Figure 4: Noomi Rapace sporting Lisbeth's nose piercings.

(see Figure 3). Premiering on 20 December 2011, the film had been heavily marketed as 'the feel-bad movie of Christmas' (or, variously, of 'the holidays' or 'the year'). Months before, Mara was on the covers of magazines such as *Vogue* and *W*.

For the cover of *W*, Trish Summerville, the fashion designer for the film, styled Mara as Lisbeth with her last name temporarily tattooed on her chest and blood dripping from her hands. Summerville explains the tattoo, which does not exist in the book: 'I just wanted to have a bold statement piece. This was our first chance to show the world our Salander. So with the blood dripping and the jacket being pulled open, it's just kind of that really big statement of "Here I am"' (VanZanten 2011). Summerville also collaborated with H&M, the Swedish apparel company, on a 30-item clothing line inspired by Lisbeth's wardrobe in the Hollywood film. H&M introduced the line a week before the film's debut, and it sold out almost immediately. Clothes from the line – for example, black faux-leather leggings, a T-shirt with the slogan 'What is hidden in the snow comes forth in the thaw', a black zipper hoodie and grey slouchy harem pants – have circulated for sale on the Internet through eBay and other sites. The early January 2011 version of *Entertainment Weekly* also sports Mara – this time without a visible top.

Nominated for Golden Globe and Academy Awards, Mara renders a compelling performance that is somewhat more vulnerable than Rapace's. Mara has more facial piercings and bleached eyebrows, which give her an almost ethereal quality. Her hair is layered in such a way that it – like her wardrobe – has maximum contextual flexibility, as is evident in Figure 3 from the Hollywood film; note the adaptability of her hair, which somehow looks different in virtually every scene.

There is no shortage of controversy about the publicity for the Hollywood adaptation. From the film's *raison d'être* (why it was made

at all so soon after the Swedish adaptations) to Hollywood's tendencies toward commercialization and appropriation, to the clothing line's potential glamorization of rape (Little 2011), to the somewhat disappointing initial box-office numbers (the 'feel bad' theme seems to have backfired in the holiday season, coupled with the serious R rating that limited the audience). However, David Fincher's version of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, like its Swedish predecessor, has received mostly positive critical reviews.

In the remainder of this article I interpret Lisbeth Salander and her style-fashion-dress as offering a 'pedagogy of possibility' (McLaren 2000: 1). McLaren uses this to characterize and expand on the ideas of Paulo Freire (1921–1997), the Brazilian educator and theorist of critical pedagogy (1). Such a pedagogy enables a philosophy and politics of liberation through resistance to oppression in everyday life (5). I begin with a discussion of Stieg Larsson's background, his development of Lisbeth Salander as a character and unlikely style-fashion-dress icon, and his critique of Sweden (and other 'euromodern'³ nations). Then I turn to a discussion of anxiety as a theme in fashion theory, as well as Larsson's Millennium Trilogy. Next I consider how and why Lisbeth's style-fashion-dress articulates strategic ambiguity, through which she negotiates cultural and personal anxieties by mixing and matching, concealing and revealing and going on both the offence and the defence. In short, she masters the art of contextual flexibility, using articles of clothing, eyeliner, hairspray and various accessories (along with her keen mind and strong body) to anticipate and combat evil, as well as to challenge readers'/viewers' stereotypes in an ongoing manner. Finally, I interpret Lisbeth Salander through the lens of feminist theorist Simone de Beauvoir's 'ethics of ambiguity' (1947), and consider how Lisbeth – like fashion and cultural anxiety – can offer a pedagogy



Figure 5. Rooney Mara as Lisbeth.

There are a few compelling similarities between Pippi Longstocking and Lisbeth Salander

of possibility, or a way to foster social change, albeit in unexpected ways.

Novelist Stieg Larsson (feminist and anti-racist) and Eva Gabriellsson (life partner)

Stieg Larsson (1954–2004) died suddenly and tragically from a heart attack, just a few months after his trilogy had been contracted for publication (Gabriellsson 2011). Like Mikael Blomkvist, the leading male character in the trilogy, Larsson was the editor of a progressive magazine. Larsson spent his career investigating, exposing and fighting racism (e.g. neo-Nazi groups), state/corporate corruption, and sexism. At the age of 15 Larsson had witnessed a gang rape and, for 35 years, he felt deep regret for not having intervened; he dedicated himself to the cause of exposing and fighting sexual violence and gender inequality (Gabriellsson 2011). To highlight the institutionalized nature of gender inequality and sexual violence, Larsson called the first novel *Män Som Hatar Kvinnor* (*Men Who Hate Women*) in his native Swedish language. His publisher tried to talk him into a different title, but Larsson was insistent, and his original title prevailed in the Swedish novel, published in 2004.

As the title became 'toned down' and rebranded in the English translation to *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, so too – ironically – did the size of the tattoo on Lisbeth's back. In the Swedish version, the dragon covers her entire back (as seen, for example, on Noomi Rapace's back in the sex scene

with Mikael Blomkvist). In the English translation, the tattoo is much smaller and on her left shoulder. Why the change? Possible explanations include the publisher's desire to curb Larsson or Lisbeth. Or, perhaps the publisher had already commissioned the cover art and needed to make the author's text fit the covers. Swedish writer and friend of Larsson John-Henri Holmberg speculates that the latter explanation may sadly be the case and argues that 'Lisbeth Salander is not the same person in Swedish and English. The dragon tattoo is both important to her self-image and a feature striking to those she allows to get close to her' (Holmberg 2011: 37). In the Hollywood version, the tattoo grows in size but is still on Lisbeth's left shoulder blade. Larsson did not have the opportunity to explicate the significance of the dragon tattoo (or other tattoos) to Lisbeth. (Apparently he intended to do so in later novels.) *Dragon Tattoo* keeps readers wondering, and the English title adds to the ambiguity. What is very clear, however, is Lisbeth's personal history with gender/sexual violence and her commitment to help others who have been violated or abused by men who hate women.

Upon Larsson's death, his estate (which has grown to tens of millions of dollars) went to his father and brother, rather than to Eva Gabriellsson (2011), his partner of 30-plus years. They had never officially married, in part due to the fact that they would have had to record their home address upon doing so, and neo-Nazi groups whom Larsson had

exposed had threatened Larsson's life. Swedish law does not recognize common-law marriages. Gabrielsson has continued to seek intellectual, editorial and managerial control of the published works and, at the time of this writing, the legal battle is still unresolved as the estate continues to grow. In 2011, Gabrielsson published her autobiography/biography, *'There are Things I Want You to Know' about Stieg Larsson and Me*.

Gabrielsson (2011: 95) believes that the greatest single influence for the development of Lisbeth as a character came from the famous Swedish fictional girl Pippi Longstocking, created by Astrid Lindgren ([1945] 2007). Years earlier, Blomkvist and colleagues had begun to speculate about what Pippi would be like as a contemporary adult character. Famously, Pippi has her own unique moral code; she does things her way and as a result does not fit in too well in social circumstances (e.g. a classroom) that demand institutionally condoned, normative behaviour. Like Lisbeth, Pippi is a *sui generis* character; she lives on her own, without parents. Pippi is very small, but incredibly strong; she can lift a horse. Her appearance is rather quirky. She has bright red hair and wears braids that stick straight out sideways. She makes her own dresses from scraps, and wears striped knee socks that do not match (one black and one brown).

There are a few compelling similarities between Pippi Longstocking and Lisbeth Salander. They both

never consulted any catalogues or peered into any shop windows. All he did was study fashion in the street. And he loved that. Stieg had a very personal way of dressing. Unlike most people in his milieu, who generally favored sporty casual dress for every occasion, he wore tweed jackets, elegant but inexpensive, and he adapted his style to the people and situations he encountered. He had class, without ever coming across as a dandy or a snob. (Gabrielsson 2011: 63)

When asked if Lisbeth Salander was designed to be a feminine double for Larsson, Gabrielsson replied that the two shared junk-food eating habits (e.g. frozen pizzas and fast-food sandwiches), incredible memories, intellectual curiosities and strong tendencies towards secrecy and wariness, which can be explained by their personal histories and awareness of social, cultural, and political threats. There is one other characteristic they had in common: a drive for a higher morality.

For Stieg, Lisbeth was the ideal incarnation of the code of ethics that requires us to act according to our convictions. She is a kind of biblical archangel... This dilemma between morality and action is in fact what drives the plot of the 'Millennium' trilogy. Individuals change the world and their fellow human beings for better or for worse, but each of us acts according to his or her

Larsson would have been disgusted by the commercialization of Lisbeth Salander

have their own moral codes, have some asocial tendencies, are very smart and are extremely strong despite their small size. We learn on page 38 of *Dragon Tattoo* that Lisbeth's hair, like Pippi's, is naturally red, but Lisbeth dyes it to a raven black. On page 48, she shows up for a meeting with her boss, Dragan Armansky, and a client wearing striped (matching) green and red striped knee socks, which undoubtedly add a Pippi-spunky spark of colour to her otherwise stark, dark outfit: a black T-shirt printed with a fanged E.T. and the words 'I am also an alien', a black skirt with a frayed hem, a worn black leather jacket, a rivet belt, and heavy Dr Martens boots. (The Swedish film adaptation shows Lisbeth in the outfit; there were no striped socks in either film adaptations.) A few pages later, she says that she would give anyone a fat lip if they ever compared her to Pippi Longstocking. Armansky swallows hard, because he has often compared the two in his head. Later in the trilogy, Lisbeth, like Pippi, acquires a 'pot of gold', and she names her apartment V. Kulla (like Pippi's Villa Villekulla).

Most likely, however, Lisbeth Salander is a synthesis of Pippi and other influences. Gabrielsson notes that Larsson himself shared an acute ability to process information:

Stieg was like a sponge, absorbing everything and without ever taking notes! For example, to come up with the clothes his characters wore, which were always described in great detail, he

own sense of morality, which is why in the end everything comes down to personal responsibility. (Gabrielsson 2011: 82)

Following months of aggressive marketing by Sony Pictures, in advance of the Hollywood release of the film, Gabrielsson indicates that Larsson would have been disgusted by the commercialization of Lisbeth Salander, especially by the 'branding' of her to sell products (e.g. the H&M clothing line). She says that Stieg and she would never have sold the rights for such commodification. Rather, he (and she) would have wanted to use the pre-debut film buzz to steer the publicity toward cultural discourse regarding gender discrimination and sexual violence (Rising 2011).

Part of the pre-debut blitz was a promotional Hollywood film poster in which Lisbeth (Rooney Mara) is topless; both of her nipples are pierced in such a way, according to director David Fincher, that they 'catch the light'. Blomkvist's (Daniel Craig's) arm is around the top of her chest, as if to protect her from the world. He is fully clothed. Feminist blog sites question the motivation and need for such imagery (Silverstein 2011). Adding to the feminist disappointment of the publicity surrounding the film, but not Mara's performance per se (which – like Rapace's – has been widely praised), is an interview by Mara, in which she interprets Lisbeth as not being a feminist, as though that would be too 'easy' for such a complex character: 'I don't think she would

characterize herself as that either, you know? I don't think she really acts or does the things she does in the name of any group or person' (Cranz 2011).

Mara goes on to say that she does not necessarily regard herself as a feminist – that she is not really sure what that means – because she, like Lisbeth, does not identify with any single group or person. Blogger Alex Cranz analyses this interview and says, 'All I can do is be disappointed. Really really disappointed' (2011). Perhaps, Cranz speculates, a publicist supplied Mara with these lines, or maybe she and the film publicists think that being feminist means that you 'have to get hung up on the hypersexual portrayal of women in the media'. Perhaps they felt it would have been too much of a contradiction to endorse feminist values, in light of the sexualization of Lisbeth in the promotional materials. Or, perhaps they believed embracing such values openly would limit their market. Or, as Cranz notes, maybe their remarks represent a failure of feminist education. At any rate, Cranz argues that Larsson created Lisbeth 'specifically to represent women and feminist ideals',

as pedagogical inasmuch as it gestures towards freedom's possibilities: anxiety is the 'dizziness of freedom' (61).

However, Kierkegaard goes on to suggest that anxiety is like innocence; it is like *not* knowing what will happen next (41). Writing about a hundred years later, Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) indicates that fashion is a compelling philosophical area of inquiry because of its 'extraordinary anticipations' (1999: 63). It is evident from notes in Benjamin's uncompleted book, *The Arcades Project*, that he read Kierkegaard's work. Because Benjamin died before he was able to finish his project, it is impossible to know if Kierkegaard's writing on anxiety influenced Benjamin's thinking about fashion. There are some intriguing parallels, however. Colleagues of Benjamin compiled and edited his notes into the published volume that continues to fascinate and itself serves as a pedagogy of possibility. That is, Benjamin seems to suggest that fashion fosters some vague inkling of what is to come. Perhaps we can surmise here a useful but subtle distinction between anxiety and fashion: anxiety involves anticipating without

Salander's style-fashion-dress bears traces of punk, goth and other subcultural influences

which revolve around gender equality (Cranz 2011). Gabriellsson (2011), too, responds to the interview with Mara by remarking that feminism is not about a label; it is about a social movement (in Rising 2011). This movement is ongoing and involves a process of deciphering how and why the personal – and the cultural – is political.

Cultural and personal anxieties and politics

Build-up disappointments aside, I was impressed with Rooney Mara's performance and with the film in general. I came away thinking that it is possible for there to be multiple Lisbeths, in different cultural contexts. I am not as interested in comparing Lisbeths as I am in multiplying them (or if not Lisbeths per se, then other similarly strong and fascinating female characters).

In *The Millennium Trilogy*, Larsson graphically (but not gratuitously, in my view) jolts readers to grapple with Salander's tragic, troubled personal story within the context of cultural anxieties associated with Sweden's past and present. Larsson wanted to let readers know that even one of the most egalitarian nations in the world has problems of neo-Nazism, gender discrimination, sexual violence and state/corporate corruption. Typically, as the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) and so-called father of existentialism claimed, anxiety is a future-oriented concept; metaphorically, it can be compared to a feeling 'in one's bones that a storm is approaching' (Kierkegaard [1844] 1981: 115). Although he primarily spoke of individual or psychological experiences of anxiety, Kierkegaard did leave the door open, as I read him, to think about cultural anxiety as a concept with multiple layers: dread and fear, on the one hand, and anticipation or even hope on the other. He also ponders what one might learn by using the concept of anxiety to analyse one's cultural past. He describes anxiety

knowing what is to come, whereas fashion provides some visual, albeit ambiguous, hints about the future. We might say that fashion and anxiety are joined at the hip. Fashion does not reduce anxiety, but rather 'points to it with its finger' (to use Roland Barthes's phrase about fashion and meaning [1983: 303]).

Both Benjamin and Kierkegaard address the relation of the future to the past: Benjamin through fashion and Kierkegaard through anxiety. Benjamin also uses the 'tiger's leap' metaphor to articulate how fashion moves back in time to grab influences and to reinterpret them as fresh (see Evans 2003). Evidence of this leap emerges in the form of Lisbeth Salander's style-fashion-dress. It is not so much that it is new; it bears traces of punk, goth and other subcultural influences from the decades since the 1970s. And yet her style-fashion-dress feels fresh in each incarnation. Kierkegaard might have described this in terms of anxiety's dreaming of the spirit, with a re-imagining of traces from the past ([1884] 1981: 41).

Fashion studies scholars Rebecca Arnold (2001) and Caroline Evans (2003) have written about fashion's expressions of anxiety, dread and death at the end of the twentieth century. In her book *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety*, Arnold (2001) analyses runway fashion (influenced by street style) and its articulation of desires and anxieties. She describes (now deceased) designer Alexander McQueen's dressing of models' bodies with animal skulls, layers and torn leathers that reference themes of death and threat. Fashion photographers, too, introduced themes of brutality; for example, Sean Ellis featured gothic and other 'dark' fetish themes. Similarly, Caroline Evans (2003) discusses the edgy runway fashion of the 1990s as follows in her book *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness*:



Figure 6: Rooney Mara as Lisbeth.

Often permeated by death, disease and dereliction, [fashion's] imagery articulated the anxieties as well as the pleasures of identity, alienation and loss against the unstable backdrop of rapid social, economic and technological change at the end of the twentieth century. (Evans 2003: 4)

Emerging as a character in the early twenty-first century, Lisbeth Salander – computer hacker extraordinaire, alienated but not victimized ward of the state, gender outlaw (Hook 2011), avenging superheroine (Rosenberg 2011), and rape survivor – literally embodies and/or combats a complex nexus of anxiety-producing themes with transnational relevance:

- gendered power relations and violence (including rape, torture, sex trafficking)
- sexual difference(s) and body image issues
- unresolved cultural histories and governmental secrecy
- corporate and state corruption
- immigration and racism
- technology's potential to invade personal (or corporate) space.

In an interview in 2007, Noomi Rapace was reported as saying (translated) that playing the role of Lisbeth was especially meaningful to her because, 'I'm interested in the darker aspects of humankind, that which is not easy or well balanced. The cracks' (Anon. n.d.). In many ways, *The Millennium Trilogy* offers a kind of post-9/11 wake-up call: threats to society are not only from outside others (e.g. transnational terrorists); very real threats emerge within our own institutionalized, cultural spaces, even in progressive, contemporary Sweden, as well as many other nations.

Let's turn to a consideration of Lisbeth's embodiment of cultural and personal anxieties. As noted earlier, she is tiny yet strong. Larsson describes her as easily passing for a 14-year-old boy, based on her height, breast size and clothing choices. Her style-fashion-dress goes on the visual offence and provides others with a fair warning not to mess

with her. If they do, she always seeks revenge. (Larsson also had this quality, according to his life partner, Eva Gabrielsson [2011].) She typically does so behind the scenes. As a world-class computer hacker, Lisbeth investigates and learns others' secrets, exposes corruption and violence, and moves money around the world. Lisbeth can also defend herself physically with her impressive boxing and martial art skills, combined effectively with tasers.

Critics, bloggers and others have debated the meaning of Lisbeth's tattoos and piercings, her make-up, spiky accessories, black wardrobe, and her combat boots. Her T-shirts with slogans, in particular, say a lot about her feelings about herself and her relation to the world:

'I am also an alien' (a black T-shirt with picture of E.T. with fangs). (Larsson 2009: 48)

'Armageddon was yesterday – Today we have a serious problem'. (2009: 330)

'I can be a regular bitch. Just try me'. (2009: 505)

'Kill them all and let God sort them out' (a washed-out camouflage shirt advertising *Soldier of Fortune* magazine). (2009: 550)

'Consider this a fair warning' (black T-shirt worn with jeans, sandals, sun hat, and black bag). (Larsson 2010a: 20)

'You have the right to remain silent'. (2010a: 138)

'I am annoyed'. (2010b: 463)

Her anarchic and anxiety-inducing verbal messages clearly indicate: 'Don't mess with me. You'll regret it if you do.' Psychologists, psychiatrists and various critics have described her clothes as self-protective armour (e.g. Rosenberg and O'Neill 2011: 3). If so, it seems to be an urban armour that she frequently dons in Stockholm. (Her appearance softens when on the rural island of Hedeby and – especially – in the Cayman Islands in *The Girl Who Played with*

Fire.) I believe her style-fashion-dress is partially self-protective, but further would argue that it articulates and generates cultural anxieties; it makes people think twice about the stability of the social order. It questions the authority, for example, of gender and sexual categories (Hook 2011; Surkan 2012).

Lisbeth marks herself; she highlights her difference, especially on Stockholm streets and in certain situations to create social distance. Kierkegaard described anxiety as the *discrimen* of subjectivity ([1944] 1981: 197). The Latin *discrimen* translates to 'that which parts', 'intervening space', 'interval', 'distance', or 'separation' (Perseus Digital Library n.d.). Some versions of Kierkegaard translate anxiety as the 'ambiguity of subjectivity' (197). In this sense, ambiguity may be analogous to an indeterminate space in between – like a blurry gap. Perhaps Lisbeth's strong yet ambiguous T-shirt statements can be interpreted as creating a gap or distance between her and others. Yet overall her appearance is ambiguous and, if anything, invites questioning – critical and creative thinking.

Lisbeth's tattoos, while more personal and permanent than her T-shirts, also mark her body in a way that may represent the space or distance associated with anxiety: the *discrimen* or ambiguity of subjectivity. We learn about all of her tattoos from Blomkvist's perspective when he is having sex with her. He counts them; in addition to the dragon on her back (in the Swedish version) or her left shoulder (in the English version), there is the wasp on her neck, a loop around one ankle, another loop around the biceps of her left arm, a Chinese symbol on her hip and a rose on one calf (Larsson 2009: 420).

We never learn from *The Millennium Trilogy* what each of the tattoos means to Lisbeth, but we do get the impression that they function to mark (often violent) events – much like mnemonic devices – so that she will not forget what others have done to her. In *Dragon Tattoo*, after Lisbeth's guardian, appointed by the state, rapes her in a horrendously painful scene, she gets the loop tattoo around her ankle. The tattooist warns her that the tissue in that area is thin, and that it will hurt. She tells the tattooist to proceed and observes the process carefully. It appears that there are two reasons for this tattoo: (a) to mark the violent event and (b) to remind herself of the tattoo process. She manages to get some revenge and regain control over her own finances when she tases her guardian unexpectedly in a later scene; she then sodomizes him with a large dildo and, so as to hinder him from sexual relations in the future, she inflicts a tattoo across his abdomen: 'I am a sadistic pig, a pervert, and a rapist.' She marks him; she creates a permanent *discrimen*.

Had Larsson had the opportunity to complete his fourth novel (apparently he had ten planned in the series), the personal meanings of her tattoos would probably have been revealed. Gabrielsson writes that in the fourth novel:

Lisbeth gradually breaks free of all of her ghosts and enemies. Every time she manages to take revenge on someone who has harmed her,

physically or psychologically, she has the tattoo symbolizing that person removed. Lisbeth's piercings are her way of following the fashion of others her age, but those tattoos are her war paint. To some extent, the young woman behaves like a native in an urban jungle, acting like an animal, relying on instinct, of course, but always on the alert as well for what may lie ahead, sniffing out danger. (2011: 206)

We do know from *Fire* that Lisbeth, whose online code name is Wasp, has a laser procedure to remove the wasp tattoo from the right side of her neck (Larsson 2010a). The stated reason was that it was conspicuous and marked her identity clearly. She did not want to be identified or remembered (Larsson 2010a: 19). In an essay on the psychology of Lisbeth's body dressing, Rodgers and Bui attribute the removal of the tattoo (described by them as a form of 'self-mutilation'), along with Lisbeth's surprising breast augmentation surgery (described by them as 'self-care'), to her movement away from harmful practices towards those that they see as more therapeutic or indicative of her more positive, healthy relationship with herself and with the world (2011: 43). I am afraid I cannot completely buy this argument, although it does seem to bear some resemblance to Gabrielsson's description of the fourth novel.

Somehow I feel more comfortable with the idea that Larsson uses Lisbeth's removal of her wasp tattoo strategically; it meshes with the plot and her need to go unnoticed or unmarked in *Fire*. I do think, however, that Larsson presents Lisbeth as having anxieties about her body. The reader becomes aware of this through her thoughts while looking in the mirror and through her conversations with others before or while having sex. Male characters, such as her boss Armansky and her research partner Blomkvist, seem to share her perception (or Larsson's?) that she is too skinny and too flat-chested.

Early in *Dragon Tattoo*, Armansky looks at Lisbeth and reflects on his strange, ambivalent attraction to her. He thinks that she could almost be described as attractive, if she would wear the 'right make-up' (minus the black lipstick, tattoos, pierced nose and eyebrows). He thinks that she could have been a fashion model, except for her 'extreme slenderness'. Apparently Armansky (or rather, Larsson) is not very familiar with fashion industry standards for models. Granted, she would be excluded from the fashion modelling industry, not because of her 'extreme slenderness' but because of her height (4' 11"). This discrepancy between Lisbeth's height and that of fashion models becomes especially evident when considering an image of H&M models wearing Lisbeth-inspired clothing prior to the release of the Hollywood film. The models surround, and tower over, Trish Summerville, fashion designer/stylist of the *Dragon Tattoo* clothing line for H&M (Lo 2011), Armansky (or Larsson) describes Lisbeth as having small, 'childlike breasts' and a wide mouth, small nose, and high cheekbones – with 'an almost Asian look'. Armansky thinks that she looks like she had 'just emerged from a week-long orgy with a gang of hard rockers' (Larsson 2009: 38).

In the cottage on the island of Hedeby, Lisbeth goes into Blomkvist's bedroom and makes it clear that she wants to have sex with him. He thinks to himself: 'Her skinny body was repulsive. Her breasts were pathetic. She had no hips to speak of' (Larsson 2009: 396). She asks him, 'Aren't I sexy enough?' (397). He counts her tattoos as he gives in to her advances. (As it turns out, this is not a new experience for Blomkvist. Women come on to him repeatedly throughout the trilogy.)

The reader learns more about Lisbeth's body image at the end of *Dragon Tattoo*, when she disguises herself as a wealthy woman named Monica Sholes in order to make a 'bank transfer'. She unmarks her own appearance by covering the wasp tattoo on her neck with a thick layer of make-up and powder. She puts on a page-boy blonde wig, false eyelashes, rouge, lipstick, pink nail polish on her fingers, and wears a sand-coloured skirt with a matching blouse, black tights, waist-length jacket and beret (from Camille's House of Fashion) and black boots. She also changes her silhouette:

For the first time in her life Salander had a bustline that made her – when she glanced at herself in the full-length mirror – catch her breath. The breasts were as fake as Monica Sholes' identity. They were made of latex and had been bought in Copenhagen where the transvestites shopped... [She spent] five minutes examining herself in the mirror. She saw a total stranger. Big-busted Monica Sholes in a blonde page-boy wig, wearing more make-up than Lisbeth Salander dreamed of using in a whole month. She looked...different. (Larsson 2009: 560–61)

She later discards Sholes' identity, literally, in a bin, and flushes the (traceable) designer jewellery down the drain. But after 'a moment of anxious hesitation', she decides to keep the latex breasts.

At the beginning of the second novel, Lisbeth is in the Cayman Islands. Having come into some wealth, she has been travelling for a year. She has let her hair grow out, and she is very tanned. She is wearing khaki shorts and a black top. She's still 4' 11" and weighs 90 lbs. But now her breasts are different; she has had breast enlargement surgery in one of Europe's best plastic surgery centres in Genoa, Italy. Her new breasts are moderate in size. She studies herself in the mirror and notes how dramatic the difference is, 'both for her looks and for her self-confidence' (Larsson 2010a: 19). When she left the clinic she had felt panicked – as though everyone was staring at her new breasts. It took her a while to realize that this was not the case. She had not marked herself as different with this newest modification to her body; rather, she realized that she could blend in (Larsson 2010a: 32).

In *Fire*, Lisbeth also goes to a store called Twilfit for knickers and bras, and buys a drawerful of lingerie. After 30 minutes of 'embarrassed searching' (pointing again to her anxiety), she selects a sexy set that she would have 'never dreamed of buying before'. However, when she tried it on that night and looked in the mirror, she saw a 'thin, tattooed girl in grotesque underwear. She took them off and threw them in the trash' (Larsson 2010a: 95).

Several pages later, she analyses her image again in the mirror. She has downsized her piercings. She had had the ring in her nipple removed during the breast surgery. She had also taken out the ring in her lower lip and had unscrewed the stud in her tongue. She still had rings in her earlobes, a ring in her left eyebrow, and a jewel in her navel (Larsson 2010a: 103–04).

She shares her new breasts with her girlfriend and lover, Miriam Wu (Mimmi), who says:

They'll do...look fantastic. You're so hung up about your body... Apart from the fact that you're not really a dyke. You're probably bisexual. But most of all you're sexual – you like sex and you don't care about what gender. You're an entropic chaos factor... Your breasts are luscious. They fit you. Not too big and not too small... And they feel real. (Larsson 2010a: 120–22)

The Swedish film trilogy leaves out the breast augmentation, and it still remains to be seen if or how the second and third Hollywood Sony Pictures film adaptations will deal with this part of the plot. However, advertising for the Hollywood *Dragon Tattoo* has certainly highlighted Mara's breasts, which she had pierced for the role. In the promotional poster described earlier (with Blomkvist's arm around the top of her chest) her two nipple piercings are visible, and Lisbeth gazes into the camera, expressionless (Franich 2011). In this instance, the ambiguity of Lisbeth's sexuality slips away; a heteronormatively sexualized and commercialized version of Lisbeth moves into this promo for the film.

The following section moves the conversation back to issues of contextual flexibility associated with Lisbeth's sexual and other subject positions, as well as her style-fashion-dress.

Strategic ambiguity through contextual flexibility

As the *discrimen* or ambiguity – the uncertain space in between – of subjectivity, anxiety plays out through Lisbeth's styling-fashioning-dressing of her body. She is a character who articulates her agency, or – in psychological terms – her self-efficacy and resilience (Rutledge 2011: 218) as she moves across and within gender, sexual, ethnic, class, generational and other subject positions. Each of her subject positions is ambiguous and shifting, and taken together, their intersectionalities – in feminist theoretical terms – reveal how Lisbeth not only navigates but also fosters ambiguity: strategically, contextually, flexibly. It is hard to place her in any one subject position, any single group or subculture, or any essence of any sort. She may seem at times to care little about her appearance, but she certainly manages it with critical and creative dexterity.

A typical outfit for Lisbeth in *Dragon Tattoo* is one that she dons again upon her return to Stockholm in *Fire*. She wears old black ripped jeans (with blue knickers showing through underneath) with boots, and she reunites with her black leather jacket, which is scuffed and has rivets on the shoulder (Larsson 2010a: 81).

Also in *Fire*, Lisbeth manipulates her facial piercings with considerable flexibility. She takes

them off and puts them on according to the context. When she wants to pass as a more conventional woman, she slips them out. When she assumes the identity of a woman named Irene Nesser, for example, she removes the ring in her eyebrow and puts on make-up and a long blonde wig. In one scene as Nesser, she wears dark jeans with a warm brown sweater with yellow trim and walking boots with heels (Larsson 2010a: 413).

Lisbeth's body, even after her cosmetic surgery in *Fire*, could easily pass for that of a 14-year-old boy (representing ambiguous intersectionalities between gender and generation). Lisbeth knows when and how to use this ambiguity strategically to pass as a boy, using her style-fashion-dress (wearing gender-neutral attire – hoodies and jeans and such). Mara indicates, 'Before [this role], I dressed much girlier. A lot of blush-colored things. Now I literally roll out of bed and put on whatever is there. I have really enjoyed being a boy this last year' (Van Meter 2011).

Lisbeth's sexuality is also ambiguous; it intersects with her ambiguous class and gender subject positions in a complex way. At the end of *Dragon Tattoo*, when her class status increases dramatically, she experiments – primarily for undercover reasons – with more heteronormative, or conventionally mainstream, modes of femininity. In *Fire*, she goes on a shopping spree at H&M, buying separates that she can mix and match with her darker urban wardrobe. Even more surprising, though, is Lisbeth's breast augmentation surgery. Kim Surkan (2012) offers a very interesting analysis of Lisbeth's gender and sexual subject positions, and invites us to consider their intersectionalities through a queer lens. She argues convincingly, in my view, that the concept of genderqueer helps to explain these intersectionalities; this concept complicates rather than pinpoints gender and sexual identities, and opens up – rather than closes down – subjectivity. Thinking about Lisbeth's subjectivity through the lens of genderqueer enables a reading of her not only as bisexual, but also as fluid in her gender identity. Rather than debating, for example, whether Lisbeth can be a feminist if she has breast augmentation surgery (as some bloggers have done), the conversation shifts to one of considering Lisbeth's desire for her body to match her self-conceptions of gender. Of course, this only becomes possible when she has the money to afford the surgery, so gender, sexual and class intersectionalities become compelling.

We learn in *Dragon Tattoo* that Lisbeth is sexually active. She has had more than 50 sexual partners since the age of fifteen, almost always at her initiative, and often with older men. Miriam Wu (Mimmi) is the only female sexual partner we get to know in the trilogy; she is introduced briefly in *Dragon Tattoo* and then assumes a more prominent role in *Fire*. The following passage in *Dragon Tattoo* provides a clue to Lisbeth's sexual flexibility:

Salander – unlike Mimmi – had never thought of herself as a lesbian. She had never brooded over whether she was straight, gay, or even bisexual. She did not give a damn about labels, did not see it was anyone else's business whom she spent her

nights with. If she had to choose, she preferred guys – and they were in the lead, statistically speaking. The only problem was finding a guy who was not a jerk and one who was also good in bed; Mimmi was a sweet compromise, and she turned Salander on. (Larsson 2009: 327)

Lisbeth's style-fashion-dress is similarly ambiguous and, as we have seen, strategic. She mixes and matches old, worn pieces (e.g. black leather jacket, distressed denim, torn T-shirts) with new articles of clothing, especially after she becomes wealthy. She styles herself in a mode that can alternately be labelled as punk, hard rocker, goth, cyberpunk, or other groups, yet she defies and resists labels of any sort. She fights against the kind of categorization that Caroline Evans (1997) has called the futile 'butterfly' effect of pinning down subcultures that are actually more fluid.

In *Fire*, when Lisbeth goes on a shopping spree at H&M, she buys pants, jeans, tops and socks: items that are contextually flexible. They can be mixed and matched for a range of personae and situations. Perhaps it was this mention of H&M that inspired the Swedish retailer to team up with Trish Summerville to create a 'capsule collection inspired by anti-heroine Lisbeth Salander' (Bergin 2011). Summerville explains this Hollywood 'tie-in' as follows: 'She took basic pieces of Lisbeth's wardrobe used throughout the film and made them a little more fashionable for H&M. Summerville's goal was for women to find pieces that they could then mix with items in their own wardrobes to "create their own personal style"' (Casadei 2011). In this way, women could incorporate 'little pieces of Salander' and her 'essence', 'strength', and 'moral code' into their lives (Creeden 2011). Summerville had found some of the pieces for Lisbeth's wardrobe in 'the insane resale shops in Sweden', including ML Resale and Mix Mix Mix, which are among her favourites. Summerville also had two leather jackets custom made for Mara from a company named Cerre and by a designer named Agatha Blois, who has made clothing for rockers for over 20 years. Summerville regarded these jackets as old, comfortable shields for Lisbeth (VanZanten 2011).

Fashion bloggers reacted to the news on *Glamour's* fashion site in advance of the line's debut in selected stores and online (Lo 2011):

WHY IS THERE NOT AN H&M NEAR ME?! I just about DIED from envy when I saw her wardrobe from the movie! She's one of my favorite characters. Although I'm not super happy about the American adaption of the movie... the Swedish version is amazing! (evelinestays)

love black everything can't wait for this line!
(emmanuelson96)

Here's to hoping that the leather pants don't look cheap! I'd love a pair of leather leggings, but I can't afford a proper pair. (daydream11)

Responses to a YouTube posting in late 2011 about the collection, however, yields a wider range of



Figure 7: Lisbeth's uneven haircut.

responses: pro, anti, and ambivalent (YouTube Commentators 2011):

I think h&m is cool and I lovveeee The millennium trilogy...but i personally don't think a character like lisbeth salander should be put in the spotlight for fashion...because that's just not what her character is about...she should be put in the spotlight based on the things her character actually goes through and her abilities (joaniecheriezz)

Omg, do they have to squeeze money out of everything?! Stieg Larsson is probably turning in his grave right now. (luiza089)

I WANT EVERYTHING I SAW !!! (Technocrazify)

I'm such a huge fan of Trish Summerville!! The collections looks awesome! (SuckAFuckUToob)

Indeed, despite some obvious ambivalence about the commodification of Lisbeth, the success of the line (it quickly sold out) likely stems in part from the clothes' contextual flexibility. When Trish Summerville poses with models wearing the line, this movement from Lisbeth's wardrobe to the world of fashion reminds us just how tall fashion models are, and how different clothes look on their bodies than they do on most of ours. As various pieces (faux-leather leggings, T-shirts, slouchy grey harem pants) still circulate on eBay, the possibilities for lots of looks on various bodies multiply. So too does the potential for strategic uses of ambiguity, as individuals mix and match pieces in ways not anticipated by Summerville (or Larsson).

Speaking of unanticipated style possibilities, Lisbeth does not appear wearing red and green horizontal-striped socks in either film adaptation, as she does on page 48 in Larsson's first novel, along with edgy black pieces from her wardrobe. There are no Pippi-like stripes. There is, however, what I believe to be a small nod to Pippi Longstocking in the Hollywood film. Beginning on the island of Hedeby, Lisbeth starts to fashion part of her hair (in the back) into tiny pigtails. Later in the film, they even stick out a bit, like Pippi's, but in a more punkish way. Throughout the film, Mara's hair is

the epitome of contextual flexibility. It is styled differently in every scene. Cut strategically with a series of jagged points, her hair looks like Lisbeth chopped it herself in a random moment of self-fashioning with a razor. In fact, her hair has been strategically styled into a kind of uneven extended shag, except for her fringe, which is cropped very short into a straight edge. The result is the potential for many different looks: on some occasions it is spiked into a Mohawk. At other times it looks like Lisbeth just stumbled out of bed. And then there are the tiny random pigtails and, on some occasions, a smoother look. Like her character, Lisbeth's hair is multi-layered.

Toward a pedagogy of possibility

Lisbeth can be interpreted as an introverted avenger with unusual abilities to fight multiple injustices; she fashions herself – and others fashion her – as an unlikely, and yet effective, teacher of possibility. By this I mean she does not give up; she has a sense of personal responsibility and she pursues what French feminist Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986) called an 'ethics of ambiguity'. She was inspired not only by European existential philosophy but also by a passion to understand what allowed Nazism to rise in the 1930s. She questioned why individuals did not take more personal responsibility to resist fascism (de Beauvoir 1947). In developing her 'ethics of ambiguity', de Beauvoir contemplated how and why individuals need to step up to circumvent oppressive uncertainties – to question and to act accordingly and responsibly for oneself and others alike. To do so, according to de Beauvoir, requires being aware of injustices, working through ambiguity (and, presumably, anxiety), and choosing and acting accordingly on a daily basis: 'Ethics does not furnish recipes any more than do science and art. One can merely propose methods' (134).

What methods can one employ? Among the necessary everyday decisions individuals make are acts of style-fashion-dress (resources permitting and limiting). I would like to close this article with a brief discussion of the pedagogical possibilities of Lisbeth Salander's style-fashion-dress. That is, I am suggesting that Larsson employs her style-fashion-dress as a kind of method of inquiry. Elsewhere, I have written about 'minding appearances' as a

process of embodied knowing in ways that are at once critical and creative; that include attention to issues of production as well as consumption; and that entail self-reflexivity in the interplay among style, subjectivity and the negotiation of meaning with others (Kaiser 2001). A pedagogy of possibility takes the process of minding appearances a step further by embedding style-fashion-dress in the context of entangled cultural anxieties in a transnational world. As a case study and unlikely teacher of possibility, Lisbeth Salander – as a character in the book trilogy, the Swedish films, and the Hollywood film – keeps us on our toes. She reminds us that it does not make sense to judge by appearances or to stereotype. She challenges us to think beyond labels or essences of any kind. She fosters ethics of ambiguity that enable her to disrupt conventional expectations and to grapple with – indeed to embody – cultural and personal anxieties. Lisbeth's style-fashion-dress and its appropriation by Hollywood and H&M challenge us to embrace the possibilities, as well as the limits, of subversion in the context of capitalism.

One of the final scenes in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* (Larsson 2010b) gestures artfully and strategically towards Lisbeth's pedagogy of possibility. As she hopes to 'take down' state corruption along with gender violence and other sources of cultural anxiety that have been surreptitiously stifled through acts of secrecy and denial, Lisbeth enters the courtroom as the defendant. Blomkvist gasps when he sees her. What was his sister (Lisbeth's attorney) thinking? Lisbeth wears a black leather miniskirt with frayed seams. Her black T-shirt says 'I am annoyed' and barely covers her tattoos. She has a ring through her left eyebrow and ten piercings in her ears. She is wearing grey lipstick and the heaviest and darkest eye make-up he has ever seen her wear. In the Swedish film adaptation, her hair is spiked into the most striking Mohawk imaginable. It is sticking straight up.

Then Blomkvist realizes that her look is a strategic parody of the decadent way in which the media had been labelling her throughout the last two novels. If she had appeared in the courtroom 'with her hair smoothed down and wearing a twin-set and pearls and sensible shoes', she would have been interpreted as 'a con artist trying to sell a story to the court'. Rather than stifling anxiety, she articulates it through exaggerated self-fashioning that is both ambiguous and 'way over the top – for clarity' (Larsson 2010b: 463).

I believe that Simone de Beauvoir would have liked Lisbeth as an existential teacher of possibility. In the spirit of strategic ambiguity, however, I just have one minor regret: I would have liked to have seen some striped socks in the film adaptations. Maybe in black and grey? *

Endnotes

1 I am very grateful to Elizabeth (Liz) Constable, my friend and colleague in Women and Gender Studies, for suggesting the *sui generis* terminology to capture Lisbeth Salander's one-of-a-kind quality. Liz made many other insightful and constructive comments on an earlier draft of this article. I am also indebted to my

friend and colleague, Anna Kuhn, for introducing me to Stieg Larsson's novels and the Swedish adaptations, and for many helpful conversations and suggestions throughout this project.

2 Many thanks go to Linda Matheson for all of the conversations we have had about clothing's 'plot-propelling' role as she was working on her dissertation (Matheson 2011).

3 I use 'euromodern' here in the cultural studies sense, as articulated by Lawrence Grossberg. He uses the term to include 'western' European nations and other 'western' nations with European colonial roots (e.g. the United States, Australia, Canada) and share entangled cultural histories and processes of modernization and industrialization. By this usage, he acknowledges that euromodernity is only one of many forms of modernity around the world (Grossberg 2010: 264–65).

References

- Anon. (n.d.), 'Noomi Rapace as Lisbeth Salander', *The Literary Magazine of Swedish Books and Writers/ Stieg Larsson*, <http://www.stieglarsson.com/noomi-rapace?page=40>. Accessed 10 October 2012.
- Arnold, R. (2001), *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety: Image and Morality in the Twentieth Century*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Barthes, R. (1983), *The Fashion System* (trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard), New York: Hill and Wang.
- Beauvoir, S. de (1947), *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (trans. Bernhard Frechtman), Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1999), *The Arcades Project* (trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin), Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Bergin, O. (2011), 'H&M Brings "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" Look to the High Street', *The Telegraph*, 26 October, <http://fashion.telegraph.co.uk/article/TMG8849972/HandM-brings-The-Girl-With-The-Dragon-Tattoo-look-to-the-high-street.html>. Accessed 29 December 2011.
- Casadei, M. (2011), 'Trish Summerville for H&M', *Vogue*, 14 December, <http://www.vogue.it/en/magazine/daily-news/2011/12/trish-summerville-lisbeth-salander-for-hem>. Accessed 29 December 2011.
- Cranz, A. (2011), 'Rooney Mara Wouldn't Call Herself a Feminist', *Fempop*, 21 December, <http://www.fempop.com/2011/12/21/rooney-mara-wouldnt-call-herself-a-feminist/>. Accessed 21 December 2011.
- Creeden, M. (2011), 'Breaking Out: Trish Summerville on Her New Collection at H&M – and Dressing *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*', *Vogue*, 13 December, <http://www.vogue.com/culture/article/breaking-out-trish-summerville-on-her-new-collection-at-hmand-dressing-the-girl-with-the-dragon-tattoo/>. Accessed 29 December.
- Eicher, J.B. (2010), 'Encyclopedia Preface', in J.B. Eicher (ed.), *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion: Global Perspectives*, Oxford: Berg, pp. xiii–xiv.
- Entwistle, J. (2000), *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Evans, C. (1997), 'Dreams That Only Money Can Buy... or, the Shy Tribe in Flight from Discourse', *Fashion Theory*, 1:2, pp. 169–188.
- Evans, C. (2003), *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Franich, D. (2011), "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" Poster Features Nude Rooney Mara, Curiously Upset Daniel Craig (NSFW)', *Entertainment Weekly*, 8 June, <http://insidemovies.ew.com/2011/06/08/girl-dragon-tattoo-nude-poster/>. Accessed 25 February 2011.
- Gabrielsson, E. (2011), *There Are Things I Want You to Know' about Stieg Larsson and Me* (trans. L. Coverdale), New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Grossberg, L. (2010), *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Holmberg, J.-H. (2011), 'The Novels You Read Are Not Necessarily the Novels Stieg Larsson Wrote', in D. Burstein, A. de Keijzer and J.-H. Holmberg (eds), *The Tattooed Girl: The Enigma of Stieg Larsson & the Secrets Behind the Most Compelling Thrillers of Our Time*, New York: St. Martin's Griffin, pp. 29–41.
- Hook, M.K. (2011), 'Lisbeth Salander as a Gender Outlaw', in R.S. Rosenberg and S. O'Neill (eds), *The Psychology of the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo: Understanding Lisbeth Salander and Stieg Larsson's Trilogy*, Dallas, TX: Smart Pop, pp. 47–64.
- Kaiser, S.B. (1997), *The Social Psychology of Clothing: Symbolic Appearances*, New York: Fairchild Publications.
- Kaiser, S.B. (2001), 'Minding Appearances: Style, Truth, and Subjectivity', in J. Entwistle and E. Wilson (eds), *Body Dressing*, Oxford: Berg, pp. 79–102.
- Kaiser, S.B., Freeman, C.M. and Chandler, J.L. (1993), 'Favorite Clothes and Gendered Subjectivities: Multiple Readings', *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, 15, pp. 27–50.
- Kierkegaard, S. ([1844] 1981), *The Concept of Anxiety* (trans. Reidar Thomte), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Larsson, S. (2009), *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (trans. Reg Keeland), New York: Vintage Crime/Black Lizard.
- Larsson, S. (2010a), *The Girl Who Played with Fire* (trans. Reg Keeland), New York: Vintage Crime/Black Lizard.
- Larsson, S. (2010b), *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* (trans. Reg Keeland), New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Lindgren, A. ([1945] 2007), *Pippi Longstocking* (trans. Tiina Nunnally), London: Viking.
- Little, L. (2011), "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" H&M Clothing Line Under Attack', ABC News, 16 December, <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/girl-dragon-tattoo-clothing-line-launches-criticism/story?id=15165315#.TwnoY5jBUQ>. Accessed 20 December 2011.
- Lo, D. (2011), 'The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo's Lisbeth Salander-Inspired H&M Collection Will Launch December 14th', *Glamour*, 26 October, <http://www.glamour.com/fashion/blogs/slaves-to-fashion/2011/10/the-girl-with-the-dragon-tatto.html>. Accessed 20 December 2011.
- Matheson, L. (2011), 'Divinely Attired', Ph.D., University of California, Davis.
- McLaren, P. (2000). 'Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Possibility', in S.F. Steiner, H.M. Krank, P. McLaren and R. E. Bahruth (eds), *Freirean Pedagogy, Praxis, and Possibilities: Projects for the New Millennium*, New York, NY: Falmer Press, pp. 1–22.
- Perseus Digital Library (n.d.), www.perseus.tufts.edu/http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/resolveform?redirect=true&lang=Latin. Accessed 21 February 2013.
- Rising, M. (2011), 'Larsson's Partner: "Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" Merchandise Masks Novel's Points', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 December, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Latest-News-Wires/2011/1221/Larsson-s-partner-Girl-with-the-Dragon-Tattoo-merchandise-masks-novel-s-point>. Accessed 21 December 2011.
- Rodgers, R. and Bui, E. (2011), 'The Body Speaks Louder Than Words: What Is Lisbeth Salander Saying?', in R.S. Rosenberg and S. O'Neill (eds), *The Psychology of the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo: Understanding Lisbeth Salander and Stieg Larsson's Trilogy*, Dallas, TX: Smart Pop, pp. 29–44.
- Rosenberg, R.S. (2011), 'Salander as Superhero', in R.S. Rosenberg and S. O'Neill (eds), *The Psychology of the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo: Understanding Lisbeth Salander and Stieg Larsson's Trilogy*, Dallas, TX: Smart Pop, pp. 253–270.
- Rosenberg, R.S. and O'Neill, S. (2011), 'Introduction', in R.S. Rosenberg and S. O'Neill (eds), *The Psychology of the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo: Understanding Lisbeth Salander and Stieg Larsson's Trilogy*, Dallas, TX: Smart Pop, pp. 1–5.
- Rutledge, P. (2011), 'Resilience with a Dragon Tattoo', in R.S. Rosenberg and S. O'Neill (eds), *The Psychology of the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo: Understanding Lisbeth Salander and Stieg Larsson's Trilogy*, Dallas, TX: Smart Pop, pp. 214–231.
- Silverstein, M. (2011), 'The Pornification of Lisbeth Salander', *Indiewire*, 8 June, http://blogs.indiewire.com/womenandhollywood/the_pornification_of_lisbeth_salander#. Accessed 20 December 2011.
- Surkan, K. (2012), 'The Girl Who Turned the Tables: A Queer Reading of Lisbeth Salander', in Eric Bronson (ed), *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo and Philosophy: Everything Is Fire*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 33–46.
- Tulloch, C. (2010), 'Style-Fashion-Dress: From Black to Post-Black', *Fashion Theory*, 14:3, pp. 361–386.
- Van Meter, J. (2011), 'Rooney Mara: Playing with Fire', *Vogue*, 17 October, <http://www.vogue.com/magazine/article/rooney-mara-playing-with-fire/>. Accessed 20 December 2011.
- VanZanten, V. (2011), 'Creating Lisbeth: Five Minutes with Costume Designer Trish Summerville', *W Magazine*, 14 February, www.wmagazine.com/w/blogs/editorsblog/2011/02/14/creating-lisbeth-five-minutes.html. Accessed 20 December 2011.
- YouTube Commentators (2011), Comments posted in response to Stateofstylechannel (2011), 'ENGLISH: H&M Dragon Tattoo Collection by Trish Summerville', November, www.youtube.com/all_comments?threaded=1&v=1e30fLUV-Kc. Accessed 10 October 2012.

Read on

Susan B. Kaiser | University of California at Davis Contributor, *Fashion in Popular Culture: Literature, Media and Contemporary Studies*, ISBN 9781841507163

INTERVIEW

Socks and sustainability

Andrew Reilly, Editor,
Critical Studies in Men's Fashion



What first attracted you to fashion and retail?
I've been interested in clothing as long as I can remember. I recall making clothes out of scraps of fabric and paper towels for my mother and grandmother and my teddy bears as a child. I was always drawing clothing, mostly women's, which is funny because I now devote myself to studying menswear. I thought menswear was boring, until I took a Psychology of Clothing course in college. I realized two things: menswear was interesting, and it was discussed little relative to women's clothing.

Do you have any advice for junior scholars working in the field who are looking to get their first position, or have their first article or book published?
Don't give up. It's hard to establish yourself at first. You need to find a niche – mine was menswear. I chose the area because few other people were studying it. But you also have to love the subject

– you'll be living with it day, night and on weekends for the next 30 to 40 years.

Find a mentor who knows the field and can guide you. If you cannot find a mentor, become your own mentor and ask yourself, 'What would I tell myself if I asked myself this question?' Intuitively, you'll know the answer.

Publish! Publish! Publish! You will get rejected – that's the nature of the business. Some reviews of your papers can be harsh (but helpful) and some can be downright cruel. This doesn't mean your work isn't valid – it just means someone didn't understand it. See if what they write about your work is legitimate – we can often get sidetracked about the way someone said something and misinterpret what they were trying to convey. If what someone said was applicable, then use it to make your manuscript better; if what they said wasn't true, then chuck it and vow never to be a nasty reviewer.

Fashion has been thought of as the domain of women, and (incorrectly) viewed as frivolous and vain

Do you believe fashion studies will ever gain the respect of the Academy and be treated as an equal to science, medicine, and technology, or even gain the respect that other more established areas within the humanities have attained?

It is respected in some arenas, and as a whole fashion is starting to become a respected discipline, especially as it becomes inter- and cross-disciplinary and people are studying it from different perspectives (e.g. anthropology, sociology, psychology, marketing, etc.) It hasn't been respected for decades because fashion has been thought of as the domain of women, and (incorrectly) viewed as frivolous and vain. The sciences were often the areas dominated by men. But if you look at history, fashion and stylish dress were part of the male repertoire for centuries. Louis XIV was so infatuated with clothing that not only did he establish trends in France, he also brought the industry to Paris.

I think menswear has been neglected in the study of fashion because people erroneously believed men weren't interested in fashion. That is what prompted me to do my first book, *Men's Fashion Reader* – I wanted to challenge people's assumptions and give legitimacy to this area of study.

You are an integral member of the International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA). Can you tell us a bit about the association and its mission?

The International Textile and Apparel Association is an organization of scholars, instructors and practitioners dedicated to promoting fashion studies, supporting its members, and exchanging ideas about the meanings and possibilities of fashion and dress. They have meetings, annuals and publish the quarterly *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*. In November 2012 I hosted the organization in Waikiki. It was a conference three years in the making; a lot of work, but definitely worth it.

Could you tell us a little bit about your forthcoming projects and what we can expect from them?

I am currently editing *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion*. The first issue will be out in autumn 2013. My goal is to provide a space for scholars and people interested in men's fashion and dress to have a place where they can publish and find other informative, peer-reviewed manuscripts. I want the

broad range of disciplines to be represented – art and anthropology to business and marketing. We produce three issues a year and plan on having special focus issues.

My other project is with two of my colleagues in Hawaii. We are writing *Honolulu Street Style*, a book that will examine – visually and analytically – the types and meaning of local fashion. Not the typical Aloha shirt – though that will be mentioned – but the other styles that Hawaii does well, like beachwear and ethnically inspired dress. Hawaii has been the birthplace of board shorts, flip flops ('rubber slippers'), Casual Friday, and the launching point for Asian-style tattoos to the West. It is more than just brightly coloured shirts.

What do you perceive to be the hot topics in fashion and popular culture, and what do you think will be important over the coming years?

Right now sustainability is the big issue and I hope (and think) it will continue to be a big issue. Our earth is so damaged that we need to really examine how we can change our ways of behaving. Disposable fashion is one way to do this. As theorists, professionals and consumers, we need to find ways to change our wasteful consumption patterns and find balance.

The other big issue is health and fashion. Fashion and our concerns for our appearance affect our mental and physical health. Just look at the modelling industry and how the desire to be thin and desired affects not only professional models but young (and middle-aged and older) people to either feel poorly about themselves or try potentially harmful, quick-fix solutions.

Do you have any favourite looks or preferred designers?

I like things that are a surprise; something typical but with a twist. I like to wear shirts by a local firm Tori Richard. They design beautiful silk tops with embroidered backs. From the front they look conservative, but once you turn around, pow! They are works of art. They sometimes have hidden details in the pockets – and I like that because it's a surprise. I also like colourful, creative socks, for that matter. You can dress conservatively, but a fun sock can be your bit of whimsy. And then, well, let's just say they know my name at Prada...

Read on

Andrew Reilly | University of Hawaii, Mānoa
Editor: *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion*, ISSN 2050070X

AUCTION PRICES OF FASHION COLLECTIBLES

What do they mean?

.....

Diana Crane, Contributor,
Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty

When studying fashion, it is important to distinguish between fashionable clothing, which is currently on the market and therefore 'in fashion', and fashion collectibles, which were formerly but are no longer in fashion.¹ In this article I interrogate the importance of fashion creations as material culture by using the auction prices of fashion items as an indication of the cultural value of fashion artefacts.

The value of fashion artefacts as a form of cultural heritage began to be recognized in the 1970s with the creation of fashion museums in France, Japan and the United States.² Today there are fashion museums all over the world, including in other countries in Europe and in Asia. Beginning in 1983 with an exhibition of the couture designs of Yves Saint Laurent at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, art museums have occasionally organized retrospectives of the work of fashion designers, alive or deceased (Steele 2008).

Aesthetic criteria for evaluating fashionable collectibles and fashionable clothing in general are underdeveloped, as indicated in a recent review of scholarly works on fashion (Gonzalez 2010). Most scholarly discussions of fashion theorize the characteristics and effects of fashion that is *in fashion*, rather than the aesthetic criteria of fashion collectibles. In fact, most of these kinds of discussions ignore the possibility and implications of fashion collectibles. Analysing fashion collectibles is different from recounting fashion history. The latter tends to be a description of a succession of creators and styles.

The similarities and differences between fashion and art have been the subject of a sizable literature (for the latest contribution, see Geczy and Karaminis 2012). Tseëlon (2012) argues that while fashion is generally classified as a craft rather than as an art, the differences between couture and the old masters have been exaggerated.

An indication that fashion collectibles have become a form of cultural heritage is the fact

that designer clothes are sold in auction markets. For example, fashion entered the French auction market in 1987 (Bénaïm 1992: 22). In France, the major buyers appear to be fashion museums, private collectors, couture houses (which buy back their own creations) and occasionally the French government on behalf of a fashion museum.

Auction prices of designer clothes are an important indicator of the relative value of fashion collectibles in comparison with other types of collectibles, particularly contemporary artworks. How do the prices attained by major fashion designers compare with the prices attained by major contemporary artists during the post-war period? What do these prices signify about the importance of fashion in contemporary society in comparison with art collectibles?

Prices of fashion collectibles in the auction market suggest that fashion collectibles are perceived by art collectors, art dealers, museums and auction houses as having relatively little economic value in comparison with contemporary artworks. It is not unusual for auction prices of artworks by leading post-war artists to attain over one million dollars (approximately 770,000 euros) (Azimi 2008). For example, paintings by post-war American and British artists, Andy Warhol and Francis Bacon, have been auctioned for over \$70 million in the past decade (Bellet and de Roux 2007; Sabbah 2008). By contrast, fashion collectibles created by leading post-war fashion designers are seldom sold for over 10,000 euros.

Two auctions in 2011 support this conclusion: (1) an auction in Paris in June 2011 of 485 items designed by major twentieth-century designers, mainly in the last 60 years (Artcurial 2011); and (2) an auction in London in December 2011 of 82 items, many of them designed by major twentieth-century designers (Christie's 2011a). In the Paris auction, the average price obtained by these items was 391 euros. Only 6 per cent of the items sold for over

1000 euros. Four items sold for more than 5000 euros. Only one item sold for over 10,000 euros.

The London auction was more successful, but again very few items obtained high prices (Christie's 2011b). The average price of the items was 4053 euros. Approximately 48 per cent of the items sold for over 1000 euros, but only the highest price in the Paris auction, 13,631 euros, was paid for a dress designed by Yves Saint Laurent – one of the most important French, post-war designers – at the beginning of his career when he was employed by Dior. The highest price in the London auction (73,961 euros) was attained by a dress designed by Dior in 1948. By contrast, paintings by abstract expressionists created in the 1940s were virtually worthless then but are now worth millions (Crane 1987).

A major factor, which influences the price of fashion collectibles, is celebrity validation. Dresses worn by former movie stars may be auctioned for prices as high as important artworks. In 1999, a dress made to order by an unknown designer for Marilyn Monroe was auctioned for 1.78 million euros (Le

collectibles is an association with the fine arts. Working in the 1930s when the surrealist movement was at its height, Schiaparelli collaborated with surrealist artists and attempted to apply the principles of surrealism to fashion design (Martin 1987). The jacket that obtained the record price was decorated with embroidery designed by Jean Cocteau, a leading surrealist artist, and carried his signature embroidered in pink thread.

The second highest price (34,689 euros) in the London auction was obtained by a dress designed by Yves Saint Laurent in 1966. The auction price of the Yves Saint Laurent dress benefited from the way in which the dress alluded to the arts, specifically Saint Laurent's use of a familiar motif from the work of the Dutch abstract artist Piet Mondrian. Saint Laurent did not collaborate with artists, but he incorporated themes from the works of major artists, such as Matisse and Picasso, in his couture designs. Nevertheless, the auction prices of his designs are nowhere near the auction prices of post-war creators of comparable stature in the fine arts.

Significantly, designs created by Paco Rabanne,

A major factor that influences the price of fashion collectibles is celebrity validation

Monde2 2007). In July 2011, the white dress that Marilyn Monroe wore in the famous scene in *The Seven Year Itch* was auctioned for 3.54 million euros in the United States (Le Monde 2011).

Other examples of celebrity validation include: (a) a dress designed by the French couturier Givenchy and worn by Audrey Hepburn in the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's* was auctioned for approximately 681,000 euros in 2006 (Reier 2007); (b) a dress worn by Princess Diana shortly before her marriage to Prince Charles was auctioned in London for £192,000 in 2010 (*International Herald Tribune* 2010); and (c) a dress owned by Elizabeth Taylor was auctioned in New York for \$362,500 in 2011 (Anon. 2011).

Why is celebrity validation so important in auction sales of fashion collectibles? One hypothesis is that celebrity validation is important when many buyers are not familiar with the aesthetic criteria for evaluating collectibles. As a result, items with high aesthetic value may be ignored in favour of items with similar or lesser aesthetic value, which have been associated with celebrities. Comparable behaviour sometimes occurs in antique markets. For example, newly wealthy Chinese buying antique Chinese vases at auction prefer items that have formerly been owned by famous collectors (Melikian 2011).

To date, the highest auction prices for fashion collectibles without celebrity validation have been attained by pieces designed by well-known, pre-war French couturiers. The highest price for a pre-war fashion collectible (175,000 euros) was obtained in 2009 for a jacket designed by Elsa Schiaparelli (*Druout-Richelieu* 2009).

The Schiaparelli sale indicates that a second explanation for high auction prices of fashion

who is considered to be one of the most innovative designers of the post-war period (Kamitsis 1996), have been much less successful in the auction market. Rabanne's creations are avant-garde in the context of fashion design, but they do not incorporate themes or motifs from the fine arts. In a recent auction (Artcurial 2012a) of fashion collectibles created by Paco Rabanne, only two out of 73 dresses attained a price over 5000 euros (Artcurial 2012b). They sold for 6880 euros and 10,000 euros, respectively. According to Christie's director of costumes and textiles, an exceptionally expensive fashion collectible 'ties the object into popular culture and historical movements' (Menkes 2011).

These statistics raise the question why the prices of contemporary art are so high, while the prices of fashion collectibles are so low. In the post-war period, the art world has built an increasingly elaborate set of institutions for selling art. The number of art collectors has soared. In major art centres, such as New York, Paris, London and Berlin, the numbers of art galleries have steadily increased. The art world is now global; an increasing number of galleries have offices in several countries and successful or would-be successful artists exhibit in galleries on three continents. International art fairs, such as ArtBasel and ArtBasel Miami Beach, bring together artists, collectors and dealers for short periods where many major sales take place.

By contrast, the infrastructure for selling fashion collectibles is relatively underdeveloped. Few art galleries handle fashion collectibles. Auctions of fashion collectibles are relatively rare. It is difficult to estimate the numbers of private collectors, but collectors whose collections consist of clothing that was not acquired for their own use are unlikely

to be numerous. Christie's, which names owners of objects auctioned in its sales, mentioned only five collectors for 82 objects in its December 2011 fashion auction. Museums are the main market for fashion collectibles, but their funds are limited.

Another less obvious but important factor that influences the prices for fashion collectibles is gender. Fashion is a medium that primarily serves to enhance the attributes of women. This may explain the apparent dearth of private collectors who tend to be male. For example, most art collectors are male, or the male member of a heterosexual couple, who actually pays for the collectibles and presumably makes the final decisions concerning what will or will not be purchased (Esterow 2008).³ It is also significant that, in the contemporary art world, paintings by women sell for much less than those by men, both in art galleries and in the auction market. In a list, compiled by the author in 2008, of 52 post-war artists whose work had been auctioned for over one million dollars, only four were women.

Will fashion collectibles increase in value in the future? Should they be considered a promising investment that will be profitable for collectors in the long run? The answer will probably depend in part on the extent to which the aura of femininity that surrounds them can be transformed from a liability into an asset. The value of fashion collectibles will also depend on recognition of the aesthetic qualities of fashion collectibles, apart from their associations with the fine arts. This would entail a transformation in the status of collectibles that have a useful purpose to one in which crafts are on an equal footing with the arts.

Endnotes

1 Both fashionable clothing and fashion collectibles need to be distinguished from 'clothes art', pieces of clothing that are deliberately created so as not to be worn (Wollen et al. 1998). They are intended for exhibition in art galleries.

2 Previously, fashion collectibles were included in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London as early as 1852 and in The Costume Institute, which was created in 1944 in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

3 In a list of the world's top 200 collectors published by Artnews, less than 10 per cent were single women.

References

- Anon. (2011), 'Buying frenzy greets Liz Taylor dresses auction', 12 December, www.gg2.net. Accessed 6 February 2012.
- Artcurial (2011), 'Results for sale 1967, haute-couture – Alaïa', <http://www.artcurial.com>. Accessed 10 July 2011.
- ____ (2012a), 'Paco Rabanne: Fashion materials', Vente no. 2075 (catalogue), Paris: Artcurial.
- ____ (2012b), 'Results for sale 2075, Paco Rabanne "Fashion Materials"', <http://www.artcurial.com>. Accessed 4 February 2012.
- Azimi, R. (2008), 'L'insatiable appétit des collectionneurs des pays émergents', *Le Monde argent!*, 20–21 January, p. 2.
- Bellet, H. and de Roux, E. (2007), 'Les nouveaux collectionneurs', *Le Monde*, 17 July, p. 2.
- Bénaïm, Laurence (1992), 'Des griffes sous le marteau', *Le Monde*, 7 April, p. 22.
- Christie's (2011a), 'Sale 3139 fashion', South Kensington, London, 1 December, www.christies.com. Accessed 6 February 2012.
- ____ (2011b), 'Results for sale 3139, fashion', www.christies.com. Accessed 6 February 2012.
- Crane, Diana (1987), *The Transformation of the Avant-Garde: The New York Art World, 1940–1985*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Druout-Richelieu (2009), 'SVV Million Cornette de Saint Cyr', 3 July, <http://www.druout.com>. Accessed 4 February 2012.
- Esterow, M. (2008), 'The ARTnews 200 top collectors: The ship sails on', *ARTnews*, summer, pp. 121–135.
- Geczy, Adam and Karaminis, Vicki (eds) (2012), *Fashion and Art*, Oxford: Berg.
- Gonzalez, Ana Marta (2010), 'On fashion and fashion discourses', *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty*, 1:1, pp. 65–85.
- International Herald Tribune* (2010), 'People', 10 June, p. 14.
- Kamitsis, Lydia (1996), *Paco Rabanne: Le sens de la recherche/A Feeling for Research*, Paris: Editions Michel Lafon, pp. 7, 50.
- Martin, Richard (1987), *Fashion and Surrealism*, New York: Rizzoli.
- Melikian, Souren (2011), 'Scooping up the trophies', *International Herald Tribune*, 16–17 July, p. 16.
- Menkes, Suzy (2011), 'Vintage fashion on the auction block', www.nytimes.com/2011/11/29/fashion. Accessed 6 February 2012.
- Le Monde* (2011), '4.6 million de dollars pour la robe de Marilyn dans "Sept ans de réflexion"', 21 June, p. 23.
- Le Monde* (2007), 'Marilyn and "Mister President"', May, p. 61.
- Reier, S. (2007), 'Collecting fuelled by personal passions', *International Herald Tribune*, 19–20 May, pp. 18–19.
- Sabbah, C. (2008), 'Une pause salutaire?', *Le Monde*, 20–21 January, p. 2.
- Steele, Valerie (2008), 'Museum quality: The rise of the fashion exhibition', *Fashion Theory*, 12, pp. 7–30.
- Tseëlon, Efrat (2012), 'Authenticity', in A. Geczy and V. Karaminis (eds), *Fashion and Art*, Oxford: Berg, pp. 111–122.
- Wollen, Peter and Hayward Gallery (1998), *Addressing the Century: 100 Years of Art and Fashion*, London: Hayward Gallery Publishing.

Read on

Diana Crane | University of Pennsylvania
Co-editor of *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty* ISSN 20404417
Contributor: *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty*, Volume 1, ISBN 9781841506487