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The Laws of Fashion: Dress between Transgression and Compliance
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Introduction: Dress anxiety

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Abstract

Each of the contributions to this issue addresses the interplay between conformity and transgression or resistance involved in fashion and fashion choices. Using a range of disciplinary perspectives and critical frameworks, they each explore particular aspects of how the laws of fashion are established, maintained and negotiated, and the social, psychical or political consequences of such negotiations.

This introductory article examines fashion anxiety, in particular the wedding-dress anxieties reported by women on Internet forums. Although anxiety about dress as self-presentation in relation to the written and unwritten rules that govern our positioning within society is not new, there is evidence that fashion anxiety has increased in recent times, when and where the ideology of choice has become more dominant. An apparently greater freedom from social constraints and authorities has made it more difficult to make the 'right' choice, increasing feelings of guilt, inadequacy and anxiety.

The dilemma of wanting to 'fit in' and at the same time to 'stand out' as an individual is, in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms, a question of how one is positioned within the social symbolic network (the big Other). This is a question that is not just about acceptance by society in general, but how one is perceived by particular others, and about whether one is desired. Such questions have psychic dimensions and consequences – for self-image, self-esteem, even self-punishment. It is perhaps not surprising then, that some brides-to-be, confronted by the seemingly straightforward question of 'what to wear?' turn to forms of ad-hoc therapy from peers and 'professional experts' on the Internet.

The way we cover (or reveal) our bodies has always been highly regulated in society. Various societies establish written and unwritten laws in regard to dress. Transgression of these codes might involve punishment and exclusion from the group. Fashion, which is often defined as prevailing style at a particular time, plays out on the boundaries of established conventions in ways that are explored by contributors to this issue. In a variety of social contexts, fashion has been used as a form of revolt: a way in which a group can start disobeying the law, or in which an individual can protest against the regime through his or her subversive clothing. Yet, as analyses presented in this issue demonstrate, fashion - through its institutions and practices, through the experiences of its consumers and wearers - also sets up its own inclusions and exclusions, rules and laws, and polices these in various ways. As Rebecca Arnold (2001) points out, fashion displays the promise and the threat of the future, tempting the consumer with new identities that shift with the season and express the fragmented moralities of cultural diversity and social uncertainty.

Contributors to this issue, drawing on a body of empirical and theoretical research across a range of disciplines, show that the negotiations involved in engaging with fashion, and in wearing it, are complex and far from trivial.

Subjectivity within the social order is also a complex issue. With regard to fashion, questions of acceptability arise – how far can one go in order to be affirmed or abjected, allowed in or cast out? Fashion, as a social formation, gives rise to fashion anxiety along these lines.

But even if people are not concerned with fashion *per se*, their clothes allow them to play roles, or to signify positions of transgression and compliance. Let us take an example from contemporary politics. To state the obvious, women in politics are judged far more than men, by what they wear and how they look when they take the centre stage. Hillary Clinton's constantly changing hairstyles and choice of clothes were initially a source of derision when she was First Lady. They have now, however, become so emblematic of the former Secretary of State and current Presidential candidate that she spoofs herself in her Twitter profile as a 'hair icon' and 'pantsuit aficionado'. On the one hand, the incessant press coverage of Michelle Obama's wardrobe might be seen as trivializing and demeaning (for example, when she appeared in a cardigan when meeting with Queen Elizabeth II, her dress choice was debated in the United Kingdom more than their conversation). On the other hand, the fashion industry praises her decision to showcase young designers of colour; her

savvy mixing of couture with mass-market fashion is credited with invigorating interest in, and sales of, American fashion. When former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher died, the *New York Times* noted that her carefully curated image, combining strict 'masculine' tailoring with highly 'feminine' details, served as a 'carapace of protection in what was essentially a man's world' (Menkes 2013). Perhaps this is why the Iron Lady claimed that being elected to an international best-dressed list was 'one of the greatest moments of her life' (Menkes 2013).

In the last century, fashion has taken on an explicit political role at the level of social activism as well. For example, in the fifties, in South Africa, The Black Sash movement united white women who protested against apartheid with the help of their clothes. Later, we encounter 'women in black' movements in the 70s in Argentina, in the 80s in Israel, in the 90s in the former Yugoslavia. In these different contexts women opposed violence and injustice with the colour of their dress. Black clothes signified mourning for those who died, however, at the same time they were also a form of protest against future deaths.

Sometimes, appearing naked is used as a form of protest. A surprising gesture of opposition occurred at a meeting of Vladimir Putin and Angela Merkel, when members of the feminist activist group FEMEN removed their clothes and on their bodies one could read messages critical of the Russian president. Other times, political opposition is played out through disobedience of particular dress codes. The Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras and his finance minister Yanis Varoufakis acted in such a way when they refused to wear neckties during meetings with their EU counterparts as a silent opposition to their country's treatment.

As the examples above remind us, the line between compliance and transgression is very thin. This line is perhaps contested most frequently and starkly in reference to religious expectations which are often seen by religious authorities and adherents as having the force of proscriptions. For example, women are required to wear veils in some societies on the grounds of religious observance of modesty, but are prohibited from doing so in others on the grounds of observance of civic codes of visibility and integration.

Subversion of the rules imposed by religion is often played out by women (Tarlo in this volume). Muslim women thus, often in various ways, transgress, or at least test and negotiate, the codes that regulate the way they cover their bodies. Similarly, Orthodox Jewish women find ways to subvert the codes of their religion, at

least to some extent, in order to try to balance the 'laws' of religion with the 'laws' of fashion. High fashion houses regularly tailor their collections to order for their wealthy religious clientele. There are many instances where the wearing of certain items of dress functions as a signal of affiliation, even when such display is not required. For instance, for Catholics, wearing or not wearing a cross can be an important statement with the help of which they are signalling their religious position while they might not be following particular rules.

Cultural changes and individual attitudes have often been researched in respect of people's alteration of various types of ritualistic dress. School uniforms, for example, have been in different historical settings altered, adorned or rejected as a form of individual expression or even as a form of political protest. Graduation attire has played a particular role in these protests, since students have often expressed their opposition to particular political decisions through attaching ribbons or other insignia to this ceremonial dress (Harrison et al 1986).

Dress rules and the big Other

In times when we are questioning the role of authorities in our everyday lives, dress is becoming an important element through which people are channelling their anxieties in a new way. Lacanian psychoanalysis points out that people often question what is their place in the social symbolic network (the so-called big Other), while they are also dealing with the dilemma of how others regard them and whether or not they are desired by others (Lacan 1998). In more traditional societies, authorities (parents, religious or community leaders) play an important role in the transmission of social norms. We might identify with authorities or oppose them. Guessing what authorities expect from us might be quite anxiety provoking. However, in situations when we are presumably free to make our own choices, where it looks as if we are free from authorities imposing their rules, anxiety feelings might get even stronger.

In the domain of Lacanian psychoanalysis, there has been a lot of discussion over the question of whether the social symbolic structure changed in post-industrial society. Some theorists claim that we are experiencing a lack of social prohibitions and that as a result people are experiencing more anxiety as well as suffering from many new psychological symptoms. Some also think that psychosis is on the rise in today's developed world (Lebrun 1997). Others are, however, less pessimistic,

although they also observe that people are going through new types of psychological suffering (Leader 2011).

Since we are living in times when traditional authorities (in the family, as well as in society at large) are losing their power (Lebrun and Melman 2002), the person who is struggling with the problem of what to wear in particular contexts, what clothing choices hit the right balance between conformity and individuality, can feel alone in his or her anxiety. Sometimes, the person hopes that someone might intervene and impose some limits on this choice (Salecl 2010; Schwartz 2004); at other times the person seeks advice from people who might have experienced a similar situation, or might be seen to have superior judgement, taste or insider knowledge.

Women in particular often experience anxiety over choice of dress because their relationship to clothes is very much linked to the dilemma of whether they want to be noticed or not. Many woman are anxious over being 'on display' or of being judged (Tseëlon 2001).

Special social occasions, with formal overtones, like weddings and funerals, are often times when we try to follow established cultural codes about the colour and design of clothing and self-presentation. Such situations can be deeply anxiety-provoking.

When I attended a memorial service for a friend, I was pondering if black was the appropriate colour to wear. After the event, I shared my concerns with a group of friends. To my surprise, almost every one of them – men and women – faced a similar dilemma. Men wondered if suit and tie was the proper attire for such an occasion. Since the deceased was a university professor, some thought that wearing a tie with their university logo might be the way to dress properly for the event. One woman decided to mix her black attire with yellow accessories in memory of the passion for bees that she and the deceased shared. Still another woman decided not to follow the unwritten all-black dress code since she remembered how much the man who had died liked colours. At the memorial itself, people in their speeches often mentioned the man's trademark white suit.

In their daily lives, people are constantly dealing with questions in regard to their attire. While some newspaper articles convince us that we live in times where the 'rules are dead' when it comes to dress codes (Friedman 2016), others are full of advice in regard to what to wear on particular occasions. Some researchers trace the

moment of this confusion with rules to the start of capitalist society. If in the pre-capitalist, court society, there existed a clear definition of style, in capitalism we have the emergence of a multitude of styles. Norbert Elias points out that in industrial society quality of dress starts to get new meaning (Elias 1998; Tseëlon 2012a). At the same time, we also have the emergence of fashion experts.

Wedding dress anxiety

For women, one of the most anxiety-provoking moments with regard to dress choice is before their wedding. Marriage, which is often referred to as 'tying the knot', changes one's symbolic status by untying family knots while legally binding one partner to another. The creation of this new knot in the traditional way involves dressing up. Today, even women who do not identify with ideals of patriarchy often romanticize their wedding. In the stories that women create around the importance of the wedding day and the ideals of beauty they identify with, one can observe a new form of retraditionalization (Broekhuizen and Evans 2014).

If we look at these stories, we can observe that wedding-dress anxiety on the individual level often touches upon the particular relationship the woman has with her mother, while at the same time, it reflects the previously-mentioned dilemmas of wanting to fit in as well as stand out.

Paradoxically, today with the changes in the relationship to authorities, the Internet is becoming a new symbolic space, which often functions as an ad-hoc therapy space. On many online forums devoted to wedding issues, one can thus read about the dilemmas women face when they are choosing the dress for this important event. One woman writes:

> I'm getting married this September, and just bought my dress a couple of days ago. However, since then I've been having major dress anxiety! I don't know if this is normal, if other brides have gone through this, or if anyone has any ideas to help with my jitters! (lostsock 2015)

The woman then explains that she is rather picky. When searching for the perfect dress, she went through 35 different dress fittings before she found the one. The

problem, however, was that her mother could not be with her at the time she made the choice. When she showed the dress to her mother, the latter liked another dress better. The woman regrets that she did not consult her mother before making the purchase and then ponders how to proceed:

> I had an emotional reaction to the dress I ended up choosing, so I made the purchase after I tried the dress on for the second time on the same day (which again, probably a mistake). But now I've made a down payment, and there's no turning back. I'm pretty sure I made the right choice, but can't help feeling there's something wrong with the dress, or should have gone with the one my mom liked. (lostsock 2015)

From the responses this woman received to her anxious post, we can learn that many other brides-to-be have been in a similar situation. They give advice to each other, along the lines of, 'as long as the dress looks and feels good on you, then it is the "right" dress!' Women also urge each other to question whether *they* love the dress, whether *they* feel good in it, whether the dress makes *them* happy and so on.

Many women on the forum complain that they made their choice in light of what others perceived as the right choice. One woman even says: 'I think I chose a beautiful dress, but I'm still wrestling with what-could-have-beens' (lostsock 2015).

From discussions like this, one easily gets the impression that the dress is just a stand-in for all the other anxieties that the bride is going through before her wedding. It might very well be that while pondering whether she has chosen the right dress, she is unconsciously questioning whether she chose the right husband, and that the 'what-could-have-beens' are related to the decision to marry, or to marry this particular man.

The mother's criticism of her daughter's dress can also be understood in the broader context of mother–daughter relationships. It might very well be that the mother's disapproval of the dress is masking her disapproval of the marriage, or that she is envious of her daughter taking centre stage at the wedding, or that she is unwilling to separate from her, or that she is playing out her own past wedding dilemmas.

One woman who tries to appease another's dress anxiety remembers her own indecisiveness in a wedding-dress shop:

> My mom actually started crying when I came out in a big, poufy, shiny, over-the-top dress that made me LOOK like a wedding cake. It was awful. She started crying and I said 'mom, really?!', and we moved on to the next dress. The wedding dress you pick should be what YOU want, not your mom. (lostsock 2015)

If women struggle first with the question of what others (especially their mothers) want, they also struggle with the question of how their choices relate to the fantasy image of how their wedding should look. When choosing the dress, many women have the problem of bringing the reality of their wedding close to the image that they have created in their heads. One woman thus says: 'I went to 14 bridal stores until I finally picked one. I had a vision and couldn't get that out of my head. I wanted to fulfil my wedding dress vision, but still find a dress that was flattering' (lostsock 2015). This woman finally calmed down when others on the forum began saying to her: 'Your wedding look is more than just the dress. It is the hair, make up, veil or no veil, jewellery and you' (lostsock 2015).

However, those women who cannot easily be calmed by the advice they get from other women on the Internet can turn to new authorities that professionally specialize in curing dress anxiety. An institution called Calm Clinic claims that among the many anxiety treatments they offer there is one that specially caters to women who have problems with their wedding dresses. In its online advertisement, the Clinic states that the type of dress one wears affects one's stress levels and that one can actually be 'dressed for stress' (Calm Clinic n.d.). An anxiety test is offered, to help people determine if they are anxious because they dress for others (controlling friends, spouses, parents) or if they are sabotaging their own well-being with 'I don't care couture'. People might also be stressed because they are 'dressing up their own low self-esteem' – they might dress to 'fit in' or get attention from others. And there is also a cure for those who dress uncomfortably:

> It's true that some outfits that make you look nice are uncomfortable. But that perfect pair of 3-inch heels, too-small pair of jeans or old belt that doesn't really fit anymore may be contributing to your anxiety. Looking fashionable

or dressing for convenience at the expense of your physical comfort is to be avoided. After all, it's hard to look great when your feet are screaming or your internal organs can't digest your food properly, and ultimately it's pretty inconvenient. (Calm Clinic n.d.)

From the advice on the Calm Clinic website, we also learn how to dress for success. The idea is that one needs to dress for oneself and no one else, think carefully about what one wears, show off one's positive qualities, and especially avoid dressing in what hurts. The therapist thus says: 'Avoid clothes that pinch, pull, chafe, or otherwise hurt your body' (Calm Clinic n.d.).

The idea that one needs to dress for oneself might appear calming; however, it goes very much against the reality that dress *per se* has a social component. One is never dressing for oneself alone. Everything about dress involves others and society at large. The fabrics we use, the styles we choose always involve a particular symbolic setting in which dress plays a particular role. Even if we were to have produced the fabric by ourselves, sewn the dress at home and chosen the cut of the dress, the very fact that we are going to cover our body in a particular way and that our dressing up will be reflected in the eyes of others shows that dress is essentially a social construct. As Goffman reminds us, even 'back stage' where we are seemingly free from judgemental social gaze does not mean 'off stage' but just another type of stage (Tseëlon 1995). In times of abundance of choice, this social dimension of dress invokes dress anxiety in two ways: on the one hand, we have the old dilemmas related the question of fitting in (i.e. following social codes of particular situations), on the other hand, the pressure to "be yourself" and to take oneself as an object of self-creation. The latter imperative very much contributes to feelings of guilt, anxiety an inadequacy which are the side results of the ideology of choice (Salecl, 2010).

Dress as a form of self-communication

In the history of fashion theory, there has been a long debate over the question of whether dressing up involves a particular form of communication and self-presentation. Roland Barthes states that fashion is essentially a communicative activity and thus has a structure analogous to language (Barthes 2006). As such, fashion is for Barthes understandable through structural linguistics. Other theorists

take a different view. Michael Charter (2013) strongly objects to this claim by pointing out that fashion is much more than communication: fashion and dress exceed the useful and are more than merely communicative, which is why we are studying them also through the disciplines of anthropology, art history and aesthetics. Roger Caillois (2003) adds to this, claiming that pleasure, luxury, exuberance, vertigo and intoxication are the irrational residue of dressing up which goes beyond its utility. Tseëlon (2012b) argues that contemporary fashion is a vehicle of repressed affect providing phantasmic support to trends of de-civilization, repression of anxiety and vulnerability of death.

The extensive studies from the domain of psychology of fashion also focused on the question of what is supposed to be communicated through dressing up and what kind of identities people try to form with the help of dress (Davis 1985, Keiser 2002, Tseëlon 2012c).

The fact that dressing up makes us anxious confirms the fact that the subject, through his or her dress, does not simply want to communicate something to others, but is rather questioning how others regard him or her. Anxiety mostly concerns the question of what kind of an object I am for the Other – both in the sense of the symbolic order and of other human beings (Salecl 2004).

Efrat Tseëlon (2012c) showed that people experience fashion anxiety because, on the one hand, they want to be acceptable and want to 'fit in' a given social situation, while, on the other hand, they want to be recognised as individuals and thus stand out in that situation. For the women involved in Tseëlon's research, it was not primarily anxiety about what they liked – although that was a factor – but above all anxiety about the precariousness of how their choices would be perceived and judged by others that was the basis of their anxiety.

Anthropologists Alison Clarke and Daniel Miller also researched dress anxiety and concluded that when a woman is dealing with the mindboggling question, 'What on earth should I wear?' she is dealing with anxiety over potential social embarrassment (Clarke and Miller 2002). Clarke and Miller questioned whether women who have a lot of knowledge about clothing and are renowned for having great taste, experience less anxiety than women who seem to lack taste and knowledge. They discovered that knowledge does not help with anxiety at all, which

is why even highly fashion-knowledgeable women find the everyday encounters of aesthetic choice highly problematic:

> They might resort to a wide range of mechanisms from accompanying friends during shopping trips to consulting external agencies to reassure themselves about the selection to be made. That is to say, in many, if not most cases, individuals do not really know what they like, or what their taste in clothing is, at least outside of various social and institutional supports that give them the confidence that they do know. (Clarke and Miller 2002: 193)

Although dressing up is very much a social affair, it also involves a particular relationship one forms towards oneself. Umberto Eco wondered how dress (especially dress that requires from us a special posture) influences our subjectivity and social interactions. This question came to him after he lost some weight and was again able to squeeze himself into jeans. Wearing jeans, however, made him sit differently. He said that he suddenly lived in the knowledge that he had jeans on, whereas normally he would forget that he was wearing undershorts or trousers. Eco says:

> I lived for my jeans, and as a result I assumed the exterior behaviour of one who wears jeans. In my case, I assumed a *demeanour*. It's strange that the traditionally most informal and anti-etiquette garment should be the one that so strongly imposes etiquette. As a rule, I am boisterous, I sprawl in a chair, I slump wherever I please, with no claim to elegance: my blue jeans checked these actions, made me more polite and mature. (Eco 2007: 316)

Eco then goes on to question how the demeanour of women might change because of high heels, girdles, brassieres, pantyhose, tight sweaters, etc. He wonders what would have happened to Freud's theory if Vienna had been on the equator and its bourgeoisie had gone around in Bermuda shorts:

> [W]ould Freud have described the same neurotic symptoms, the same Oedipal triangles? And would he have described them in the same way if he, the doctor, had been a Scot, in a kilt (under which, as everyone knows, the rule is to wear nothing)? (Eco 2007: 316)

Eco concludes that armour obliges the wearer to live the exterior life. If people who styled themselves as thinkers were always keen to free themselves from armour in order to live an internal life, this has not been the case with other people, who do not think of themselves, or want to be, sequestered in this way. Women, in particular, seem to live for the exterior. Eco thus points out that:

> Women have been enslaved by fashion not only because, in obliging her to be attractive, to maintain an ethereal demeanour, to be pretty and stimulating, it made her a sex object; she has been enslaved chiefly because the clothing counselled for her forced her psychologically to live for the exterior. (Eco 2007: 317)

These questions which Eco formulates around the influence of fashion on subjectivity were taken on by Efrat Tseëlon (1995) who saw the paradox of female existence in the fact that throughout history they were socially invisible while being physically and psychologically visible, an object of the gaze. In this context, dress becomes part of a psychological makeup or masquerade (Bancroft in this issue).

Throughout the history of fashion, dress has been linked to social stature. As such, it worked to establish social identities, in terms of class and gender functions and divisions. Class, or economic divisions have persisted, and continue to do so. Fast fashion, however, gives the illusion of equality. Buying objects in cheap stores gives everyone the opportunity to participate in consumption.[1] However, the cheap objects that Western consumers can buy in such shops allow us a particular kind of social blindness.[2] When we are fascinated by cheap garments, we usually do not want to see that they were made by hugely underpaid workers in the so-called 'developing' world and that they are sold by equally badly-paid sales people, often to poorly-paid people in the so-called 'developed' world.

In times of disposable fashion, clothes are losing their power to be perceived as sublime objects that we cherish and desire.[3] Overconsumption has rather opened the doors to the passion to purge and discard, which is why one can observe a proliferation of advice on how to de-clutter our wardrobes and how to simplify our lives. The ideology of de-cluttering and simplification is however very much tied to the late-capitalist demand to be endlessly productive, accountable and well-organized.

In this situation, it is not surprising that we are observing the rise of a new type of fashion in the form of wearable technology (Schroeder, in this issue). Various monitoring devices that we wrap around our wrists might look like new, shiny fashionable objects, but in reality they are more and more becoming punitive devices which incite new forms of anxiety and feelings of guilt.

While the majority of wearable technologies track our movements and supposedly help us to achieve particular goals related to self-improvement, a new device called Pavlok also acts as a mechanism of self-punishment. One can programme into the device one's plans for improvement; however, if one behaves in a way that does not bring one closer to one's desired goals, Pavlok gives us an electric shock. With this action, Pavlok is supposed to incite our inner voice of the super-ego, which will say to us: 'Wake up sleepy head… it's time to go to the gym', 'Put down those chips!', 'Stop wasting time on Facebook'. The makers of Pavlok claim that this device helps unlock people's true potential, making them accountable for their behaviour and better able to change it when needed. [4] Pavlok is thus supposed to make people into ideal, productive consumers who are constantly monitoring themselves and whose endless goal is self-improvement. Since the law has always been linked to punishment, Pavlok seems to be an ideal accessory when external prohibitions linked to traditional authorities are on the decline, and when people are more and more imposing prohibitions on themselves and at the same time, more and more testing the boundaries. One, however, doubts that Pavlok will help people alleviate their anxieties. On the contrary, one can expect that such devices will increase it, putting people constantly on the alert in regard to fulfilment of their goals and constantly to guess when the punishment for their failures will come.

This volume looks at how the laws of fashion are formed and upheld, and how fashion variously subverts or cements the social order. With the help of psychoanalytic theory, it also reflects on the way fashion affects individuals, what kind of desires, fantasies, aggression and anxiety it provokes. The authors cover the disciplines of law, sociology, anthropology, theory of religion, cultural theory, gender and queer theory, psychoanalysis, and fashion studies.

In 'Masculinity, masquerade and display: Some thoughts on Rick Owens's *Sphinx* collection and men in fashion', Alison Bancroft notes that not only is fashion

seen as a marker of femininity, but also that sartorial display itself connotes femininity. Jacques Lacan observed that while masculinity may well have its own modes of 'virile display' (as he calls it), this 'virile display' is also inevitably feminine and feminizing. Psychoanalysis then, goes some way to explaining the continued association between femininity and fashion. Since gender is located in the mind rather than in anatomy, it also explains why fashion happily accommodates some men, and also gender-disruptive, queer-identified people too. Does the growing genre of men's fashion represent a shift in cultural understandings of gender, in particular masculinity? Or is this merely the latest iteration of 'traditional' virile display?

In 'The Not-It girl', Geneviève Morel raises issues about the relationships between clothing, display, femininity, and desire using a case study from her psychoanalytic practice. The dilemma of what kind of a secret a woman possess and how she relates to social norms with the help of her dress, was the theme of a 1927 silent movie *It* (Clarence E. Badger, 1927), where Clara Bow embodied the first *It girl*, a concept invented by the writer Elinor Glyn. Another writer, Jean Rhys, in her short story 'Illusion', however, invented the opposite figure of fashion: that of a woman who does not show what she has, a woman who keeps her femininity hidden in the secret of the wardrobe. With the help of examples from her psychoanalytic practice, Morel shows that the *Not It-girl* may well be the one who supports the fashion industry far more than the *It girl*.

In 'Wearables: Tech/Fashion; Masculine/Feminine', Jeanne Schroeder notes the disconnect between the insistence of the financial press and the technology industry that wearable technology is the next big thing, and the consuming public's general indifference to date. She notes that Silicon Valley has both a woman problem and a fashion problem, and that the two are related. In this industry, fashion is frequently denigrated precisely because, as Bancroft notes, it is associated with the feminine and, therefore, by definition is not important. Consequently, wearables tend to be designed first and foremost as tech, with fashion being an afterthought. Relying on Hegelian philosophy as well as Lacanian psychoanalysis, Schroeder argues that fashion is not simply a means of expressing one's pre-existing personality. Rather, being part of the symbolic order it is a means by which a person creates her

subjectivity. As such, fashion shares a vital function with law. Psychoanalysis teaches that subjectivity is always gendered, but not on the basis of anatomy. Accordingly, Schroeder suggests that wearables will not truly take off in the general consumer context until they are first and foremost designed from the feminine position.

In 'Jewish wigs and Islamic sportswear: Negotiating regulations of religion and fashion', Emma Tarlo examines what at first sight seems to be an oxymoron: the idea of religious fashion. Religion is associated with rules, restrictions, limitations, tradition and conformity, while fashion is associated with experimentation, change, freedom and individual self-expression. However, as other authors in this volume point out, there is a striking contrast between fashion's vocabulary of individualism and creativity on the one hand, and the conformity inherent to its practice on the other. Indeed, fashion hinges on a dialectic tension between sameness and difference. Tarlo's study of the practices of wig-wearing by some Orthodox Jewish women, and the recent phenomena of stylish head-coverings and swimwear designed to enable modest Muslim women to participate in sports, reveals a parallel dynamic with respect to religious garb. Faith communities are often not as conservative and conformist as outsiders assume. Both theological experts and the faithful often hotly contest religious clothing prescriptions. This allows for a gamut of responses and differing levels of expression of individualism and conformity.

Fashion is very much linked to narcissism, however, it can also open the doors to aggression. In 'A Typology of Fashion Violence', Otto von Busch and Ylva Bjereld show how people might become victims of bullying because of their dress. This often happens to those who cannot financially afford fashionable clothes. The Internet nowadays opens new avenues for fashion violence, since people often comment on other's clothes on social media. In reference to Galtung's typology of violence, the authors present the differences between cultural, structural and direct fashion violence. The fashion industry, which is embracing the ideals of sustainability, will benefit from understanding the psychological types of aggression that can be related to violence and the nature of aesthetic anxiety that people experience because of their dress.

Gary Watt, in 'Crossing dress and doors and law', expands on the ideas presented in his book *Dress, Law and Naked Truth: A Cultural Study of Fashion and Form* (2013). Watt shows how dress, architecture and law operate in concert by first looking at two historical examples – the Book of Genesis and the Epic of Gilgamesh – and second by analysing international migration from the point of view of religious law and religious

dress. Watt points out that the immigration border of a sovereign state today resembles the gate of the ancient polis where the nature of dress as law was set in place. Watt looks at examples of veiled faces and veiled naked bodies. As an example, he compares the gesture made by the Italian prime minister of covering the nude statues in Rome at the time of the Iranian president's visit, with the transgressive actions of women in Iran who are trading selfies of their uncovered faces.

The collection of these essays also shows how fashion plays a most important role, historically and contemporarily, in subverting dominant gender roles. Throughout history societies have used dress as a means of solidifying or stigmatizing membership of national, cultural and religious groups as well as legitimizing or outlawing expressions of sexual and gender roles. Yet, individual men and women have used clothes to subvert these expectations.

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Notes

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[1] In the era of abundance, clothes are becoming more and more disposable and easily replaceable. When people with sufficient financial means go shopping, they do not even need to make a choice anymore. In stores with inexpensive clothes, one can observe people who cannot decide which colour T-shirt to buy and then simply buy multiple T-shirts in different colours.

[2] Daniel Miller points out that 'an approach to modern society which focuses on the material object always invites the risk of appearing fetishist, that is of ignoring or masking actual social relations through its concern with the object *per se*' (Miller 1987: 18). Both, in times of scarcity and abundance, clothes can acquire such fetishist value.

[3] I remember from growing up in socialist Yugoslavia how fabric and other yarn were constantly reused. Dresses were altered, coats were turned inside out and sewn anew, sweaters were reknitted, leftovers were used for patch-work, old buttons and zips were stored for later use and so on. There was constantly new 'use value' that one could get out of a piece of garment. At that time of scarcity, clothes were taken as an object of constant re-use, while today so-called fast fashion is becoming an object that can easily be replaced.

[4] The advertising for Pavlok claims that 'it is the first device that helps you form good habits, break bad habits, and stick to your commitments, using any means necessary' (http://pavlok.com [accessed 24 May 2016]).