



*The Beginner's Mind:  
Asking and Telling About Dress Studies*

Dress & Body Association  
annual conference

November 5-6, 2022

## Our Mission Statement

“Dress” is a highly inclusive concept that includes all varieties of body supplements and body modifications\* found in human cultures around the world. It is not limited to clothing, costume, or fashion or to any particular time, place, or economic structure. The mission of the Dress and Body Association (DBA) is to bring together scholars from diverse disciplines and areas of the world to share academic research about dress and body practices understood broadly, to offer quality opportunities for networking, and to forge links with like-minded individuals and organizations.

The Dress and Body Association is based entirely online, an essential structure for

- 1.Flexibility: In-person conferences are cumbersome and expensive to plan, which makes them difficult to change or adapt to new circumstances.
- 2.Accessibility: Travel is expensive and time-consuming. Many scholars cannot afford to travel. Even scholars with funding may have restrictions due to caretaking responsibilities, health issues, difficulty obtaining a visa, etc.
- 3.Inclusivity: ‘Dress and the body’ is a subject that pertains to all human cultures; the DBA is committed to including scholars from diverse disciplines and areas of the world.
- 4.Sustainability: International travel is not only expensive, but harmful to the planet. Online activities reduce consumption and waste.

\*Joanne B. Eicher (2000), “Dress,” *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women’s Issues and Knowledge*, edited by Cheris Kramarae and Dale Spender, New York, Routledge: 422-423.

The Dress and Body Association is registered as a non-profit organization (501(c)(3)) in the state of Indiana (United States). Donations are tax-deductible.



## 2022 Dress and Body Association Conference

### CALL FOR PAPERS

The Dress and Body Association invites submissions for the organization's third annual conference, **which will be held on November 5-6, 2022**. Consistent with our long-term goals for inclusivity and sustainability, all activities will be 100% online, including keynote speaker(s), research presentations, and opportunities for virtual networking.

Visit the DBA website to learn more about this organization: [dress-body-association.org](https://dress-body-association.org).

### **The Beginner's Mind: Asking and Telling About Dress Studies**

Dress studies is an interdisciplinary field that intersects with many others, including (but definitely not limited to) area studies, gender and sexuality, sociology, art history, media studies, theater, philosophy, design, fashion studies, and anthropology. We welcome presentations about any aspect of dress and/or the body that are drawn from ongoing research, teaching, artistic, and/or activist ventures, however this year we are asking presenters to use a little of their time to reflect on their engagement with dress studies.

If you're new to this field...

- What questions do you have?
- How did you first encounter dress studies?
- How is dress and/or the body viewed within your discipline?
- What/how can your discipline contribute to scholarship on dress and/or the body?

If you're not new to dress studies...

- How did you first get involved?
- Is there anything you wish you had known earlier?
- What have been some of the key texts/theories/methods for you? How have they guided/influenced your work?
- Where would you locate the untapped potentials/opportunities of dress studies as an inherently interdisciplinary field of study?

Submissions will be accepted from any discipline as long as the topic relates to this broad theme. Both beginning and advanced scholars are welcome. Abstracts should be 200-300 words. Presenters do not need to submit a paper before the conference, but should plan to speak for up to 30 minutes with time for discussion at the end of each panel.

# Conference Program

## **Saturday, November 5th**

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 6:15 US (EST)  | Welcome  |
| 6:30 US (EST)  | Panel 1: Masculinities and Femininities  |
| 8:00 US (EST)  | Panel 2: Dress and Fashion in Academic Contexts  |
| 10:00 US (EST) | Keynote Speaker: Einav Rabinovitch-Fox   |
| 11:00 US (EST) | Panel 3: Global Insights on Queer and Transgender Identities                           |
| 13:00 US (EST) | Panel 4: Expanding 'Dress' and 'Fashion'   |
| 15:00 US (EST) | Panel 5: Confronting the Role of Dress in Creating and Maintaining Social Inequalities |

## **Sunday, November 6th**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 7:00 US (EST)  | Panel 6: Identities, Presentation, and Representation |
| 9:00 US (EST)  | Panel 7: Dialoguing with Costumes and Characters      |
| 11:00 US (EST) | Conversation on Publishing                            |
| 12:00 US (EST) | Panel 8: Embodiment Politics                          |
| 13:30 US (EST) | Panel 9: Shocks to the System                         |

# Time zone conversions

Zone1	Zone2	Zone3	Zone4	Zone5	Zone6	Zone7	Zone8	Zone9
3:00	5:00	6:00	7:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	15:30	18:00
4:00	6:00	7:00	8:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	16:30	19:00
5:00	7:00	8:00	9:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	17:30	20:00
6:00	8:00	9:00	10:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	18:30	21:00
7:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	19:30	22:00
8:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	20:30	23:00
10:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	22:30	1:00
12:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	20:00	21:00	22:00	0:30	3:00

Zone 1: California, British Columbia

Zone 2: Texas, St. Louis, Chicago

Zone 3: NY, NH, RI, Delaware, Boston, Baltimore, Ontario

Zone 4: Brazil

Zone 5: United Kingdom

Zone 6: Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Spain, France, Nigeria

Zone 7: Moscow, Turkey

Zone 8: India

Zone 9: China, Malaysia

# Keynote Lecture

## **Bodies of History, Studies of Dress: Writing on Fashion from an Interdisciplinary Perspective**

Despite a growing interest in fashion as an academic topic in recent years, it is still seen as an outlier in many of the established disciplines such as history, sociology, and art history. The interdisciplinary nature of fashion, while allowing for innovative and creative analysis, also poses challenges regarding the framing and understanding of clothing and textiles as a heuristic device. This talk will explore the possibilities and difficulties in writing about fashion from a perspective of a historian of U.S. women and gender, offering thoughts on how we should address the field of fashion, what questions can we ask, and how to create an inclusive and critical scholarship that goes beyond the analysis of clothes. Using her own research on the feminist uses of fashion during the long 20th century, historian Einav Rabinovitch-Fox will discuss her own journey in becoming a scholar of fashion and how she uses her research and writing to challenge historical myths on fashion and its practitioners.

**Einav Rabinovitch-Fox** is a historian and curator with a PhD from New York University, specializing in 20th Century U.S history, with a particular focus on Women's and Gender History. Since 2016, she has been teaching in the Department of History at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Her book, *Dressed for Freedom: The Fashionable Politics of American Feminism* (published in 2021 by the University of Illinois Press), explores women's uses of fashion as a means of negotiating new freedoms and of expressing modern political and gender identities. For more about her work, see: <https://www.einavrabinovitchfox.com/>



# List of Presenters

## **Masculinities and Femininities**

Hao Tian / Hanqiu Cen Liu

Berrak Burçak

\*Kyunghee Pyun

## **Dress and Fashion in Academic Contexts**

\*Ksenia Gusarova

Dagmar Venohr / Linda Schraner

\*Rita Andrade

Sarah Parrish

## **Global Insights on Queer and Transgender Identities**

Anu Kuriakose

Chris Pihlak

\*James Smith

Mark Bieraugel

## **Expanding 'Dress' and 'Fashion'**

Oksana Pertel

Nora Ellen Carleson

Arthur Urbano

Rachel Levy

## **Confronting the Role of Dress in Creating and Maintaining Social Inequalities**

Hayfa Mohdhi

Camille Wise

Kandice Diaz

\*Caroline Lieffers / Sinead O'Neill

## **Identities, Presentation, and Representation**

Aatreyee Ghoshal

\*Premalatha Karupiah

Prateeti Rajjak

Martin Gabriel

Elsa Ball

## **Dialoguing with Costumes and Characters**

Mengying Li

\*Allison Whitney

Bettina Mileta

Xiaohan Hou

Neethi Alexander

## **Conversation on Publishing**

Heather Akou, co-director of the DBA

James Campbell, marketing and acquisitions for Intellect Books & Journals

## **Embodiment Politics**

Adaku Ubelejit-Nte

Janette Clay

\*Oula Miqbel

## **Shocks to the System**

\*Katrin Sippel

Magdalene Klassen

Marta Miquel-Baldellou

\*denotes panel chair

# Abstracts (alphabetical order)

**Neethi Alexander**

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## **“Angela Carter and the sociology of clothes”**

Angela Carter’s long-held fascination with fashion, clothing, and the iconic styles of the ’60s is well attested in her non-fiction pieces from the *New Society*, the most oft-quoted among them being “Notes for a Theory of Sixties Style” (1967). Not surprisingly, the depictions of dress in her fiction too reveal her awareness of the suggestive power of clothing. Previous research has examined how Carter’s fairy-tale wardrobes reveal “the complex tangle of fashion, gender, masochism, and feminine complicity attached to each garment” (K. Lau 302, 2020). Scholars have also discussed how her early fiction breaks with normative gender traditions through its depictions of non-hegemonic masculinity and dandyism (Spooner, 2019), while others have investigated her portrayals of a gothic continuum between clothing, the human body, and architecture (Alexander, 2020).

While Carter’s fairy tales are set mostly within western contexts, a work such as *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972) presents a surrealist narrative set in both western and non-western quasi-real or entirely fantastical geographical spaces. The narrative is also especially distinctive for its unmistakable anthropological tone. The proposed paper hopes to understand how dress in Carter’s novel is portrayed not only as a gender-coded sartorial choice but also as an array of objects that act as a sociological index of colonial politics, morality, and class, among others. The richly allusive tapestry of Carter’s fictional costumes—comprising varying fabrics, jewellery, face-paint, tattoos, and other forms of body-art, to name a few—invites closer examination of the complex politics that undergird them. The proposed paper aims to investigate Carter’s self-avowed enthusiasm for “the sociology of clothes” (Carter c. 1978) and unravel the ways in which Carter’s depictions of dress in the novel conflate the categories of sartorial aesthetics and politics.



**Rita Andrade**

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**“Brazilian dress history in the making: A perspective on a plurinational terrain”**

For those who study clothing and its history, the field of research has undergone quite a significant shift in the last decade. For those entering undergraduate and graduate courses in the last five years, decoloniality appears as an inevitable perspective on fashion and dress studies. My presentation will address this clash of generations and the entry of perspectives that decentralize the Western canon of the history of dress and fashion.

I will talk about my experience as a researcher in the last twenty years, highlighting some completed and in-progress projects, particularly one that involves indigenous dress from Iny Karajá and the contributions it brings to thinking of a plurinational history of dress in Brazil.

Elsa Ball

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### **“Fashioning the self through hair: Intersections and overlaps of body, dress, and identity”**

Hair is a tricky material. It sits on the boundary of body and dress, taking on properties of both. It grows unbidden from our heads and is materially a part of us. However, it can also be cut, curled, coloured, combed and coiffed as an expression of identity. For many women, hair is an important site of sociality, beauty work and body modification. Managing the hair is often navigated with the support of a skilled professional hairdresser. The relationship between hairdresser and client is a unique physically embodied and emplaced interaction where both body and identity are worked upon.

This paper takes a liquid modern perspective on identity formation, using the work of Zygmunt Bauman as a framework. It views identity as a fluid which is transformed through surface adornment and modification of the body. Dressing the hair is a mundane and everyday way to create, curate and maintain the visual self, and an essential element of dress. This paper seeks to explore the intentions and processes, by which, fashionable identities are negotiated and co-created in the salon.

This paper presents the results of a series of semi-structured interviews with hairdressers and their female customers in Nottingham, a small city in the UK. These meandering conversations mirrored those which take place in the salon, interrogating identity through questions about the hair. These interviews make up one element of my ongoing interdisciplinary PhD, a larger patchwork ethnography of how identity is formed through hair and hairdressing practices.

**Mark Bieraugel**

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**“Workplace fashion and the non-binary body: Questioning professionalism and manifesting my gender through hand sewing”**

What does it look like to dress professionally as a non-binary person? Coming out as non-binary in my late 50s and wanting my clothes to reflect my new gender, I realized I didn't know how to dress for work as a non-binary person. My gender expression includes a mixture of traditional men's and women's clothing and accessories. Having been a man for most of my career I knew how to dress for all types of work occasions, from casual to formal, but I realized that commercially made clothes weren't the answer for my gender expression. Hence, I am learning to hand sew my work clothes to manifest my gender in new and exciting ways using commercially available patterns from the big three pattern makers. The intersections between gender expression, workplace professionalism, and fashion involves examining the history of white-collar workplace attire, including Hollander's Sex and Suits, Men in Black by Harvey, Barnard's revolution or revolt ideas in Fashion Communication, and a wide variety of articles from disparate sources. The discussion will also draw from material culture, including modifying commercial patterns to fit my non-binary body, questioning professional attire norms, and what might a more inclusive workplace attire look like.

**Berrak Burçak**

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### **“The question of the corset: Fashion, health, and identity in late Ottoman history”**

This study examines discussions on the corset in the illustrated press, text-books for girls, and medical and advice literature in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909). The main argument is that the corset discussions functioned as a cultural benchmark establishing the terms of urban Ottoman Muslim female sartorial decorum in a larger medicalized public debate on modern indoor dress. Hamidian reformers, both male and female, responded to set of intertwined but rather conflicting requirements placed upon Ottoman Muslim women's bodies, positioned as the central pillars of Muslim community building in the Hamidian era. Hamidian reformers, caught between consumer desires for Western fashion, and a concern for the health of the Muslim population, and stalled by a traditional discourse to regulate Muslim female indoor dress, mobilized a medicalized discourse associating dress, health and patriotism. Debates over the corset insisted on authentic Ottoman Muslim femininity by drawing upon the binaries of fashion against health, foreign against Muslim and beautification against natural beauty.

**Nora Ellen Carleson**

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### **“The fierce and remarkably fashionable first lady, Florence Harding”**

Florence Harding has rarely, if ever, made it to the top of a “most fashionable First Ladies” list. She is neither historically nor popularly remembered for her style. In fact, she is hardly remembered at all. However, as a sixty-year-old woman, when she became the First Lady of the United States in 1920, Florence found herself at the center of a decades-long battle for American sartorial design independence. Splashed on the front pages of newspapers across the country—the nation asked, “who will the First Lady wear?”

This question resonated with the American public as magazines and newspapers pushed for creating a “distinctly American style.” While committing to American-made and designed clothing during her tenure as First Lady, Florence cemented an important precedent her predecessors had only dappled with. She patronized American designers and manufacturers, even befriending New York designer Harry Collins. Her sartorial choices set off crazes for “Harding blue” and the “Flossie cling,” her signature velvet choker, but also helped the burgeoning American fashion industry grow. Recently scholars have argued that Florence is responsible for our definition of the modern First Lady, one who is a partner and political advisee to her husband, the President, and also has her agenda and goals during her time in the White House. I argue that her wardrobe choices and approach to supporting American industry have similarly left their mark on our current expectations of First Ladies.

Though part of my current dissertation work, a Collins gown designed for Florence started me down the path of dress and design history. Over a decade later, I often reflect on the power of objects in our lives.

**Janette Clay**

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### **“Peace bodies: Incarnate precarity and the WPC movement”**

During the final decade of the Cold War, women’s peace camps spread from locations in Europe to the United States and then on to regions as far afield as Japan and Australia. Protesters camped in proximity to specific sites where the military and military-related industries developed, manufactured, tested, stored, transported, or deployed nuclear weapons. Camping women located themselves strategically near nuclear weapons to publicize nuclear sites. They established encampments in rudely public spaces including parks, common lands, and even on highway medians. By placing their vulnerable bodies close to nuclear locations, peace-camping women raised public consciousness of nuclear weapons and the threats they posed, while at the same time, they exercised a gender and sexual freedom uninhibited by heterosexual norms. This approach created a dynamic much like the “combination shot” of competitive pool, where the public viewed the encampments with a combined horror and fascination that then drew their eyes to the nuclear missiles and military outposts nearby. The double-sided public attention that women generated with their camping bodies ultimately represented an important contribution to the greater antinuclear movement, which successfully promoted a widespread demand for the removal of intermediate-range weapons. That collective ultimatum was met in the December 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty which abolished midrange nuclear and conventional ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles and contributed to the conclusion of the Cold War.

**Kandice Diaz**

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### **“The erasure of Latinx identity: Corporate whitewashing and the Frida Kahlo Barbie doll”**

Frida Kahlo paid special attention to the image she fashioned for the outside world to see through everything she wore, from her clothing to her earrings and even the way she wore her hair. Everything that adorned the painter’s body was chosen because it meant something about who Kahlo was and what she was trying to say, so much so that she deliberately included all these elements in her art. As Kahlo wrote in her journal, “la que se pario a si misma” or “the one who gave birth to herself,” which, according to art historian and writer Sarah M. Lowe is “a remark with numerous allusions” because, through her painting, “Kahlo established herself as an artist, and her many self-portraits are manifestations of her need to demonstrate the various aspects of herself” (228). Therefore, any rendition of Kahlo’s image that deviates from the one that she carefully crafted of herself is an affront to everything she stood for and represents as a proud mestiza and Latinx icon because everything that Kahlo put into the construction of her identity is representative of her ethnic identity, which are made visible through “performative acts,” which constitute aspects such as “dress, traditions, behaviors, and language,” and even, to a certain extent, “skin color and other physical features in which agency is not involved” (Christian 31). The importance of these performative acts lies in the fact that they can become “performances of racial excess in relation to the dominant ‘norm’ of whiteness,” and as a result, I argue, become the ethnic identity markers that white America then whitewashes to force conformity according to visible norms related to whiteness and related expectations (Christian 31).

**Martin Gabriel**

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### **“Dressing the social body: Casta paintings in 18th century New Spain”**

Since Spain's American empire was quite obviously stratified along ethnic lines, the so-called casta paintings (most of them produced in 18th century Mexico) have primarily received scientific attention because of contents related to differences in ethnicity and ethnic hierarchization. Casta paintings usually comprised between 12 and 24 smaller images depicting husband and wife along with one of their offspring. The social importance of these paintings resulted from their dealings with mestizaje (ethnocultural mixing) of Spaniards, Amerindians, Africans etc. in a way that created artificial categories that would finally number in the dozens since even fifth- or sixth-degree derivations were assigned specific names and characteristics.

Researchers have focused less on other topics of casta paintings – for example, gender roles, natural environment or clothing. However, it has become clearer that the identification of specific ethnic groups was not only constructed via names, skin color etc., but also through different settings regarding space or clothes. The depiction of a European husband, his African wife, and their mulato child in a kitchen relayed entirely different messages than that of a mestizo boy and his parents wearing expensive clothes and sitting in a beautiful park. Parents as well as children were shown in specific dresses that usually hinted at the social standing of all the characters – it made a huge difference whether the child of an india and a Spaniard was shown wearing Amerindian or European clothing; fashion expressed the inclusion in one sphere of Spanish colonial society (and, of course, at the same time, exclusion from others). Even though the separated ethno-social spaces of casta paintings cannot be equated with the complex realities of Spanish America, the paintings and their content can provide important insights into the ideology of empire – ideology that did not ignore the different meanings of human bodies, clothing, and fashion.



**Aatreyee Ghoshal**

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**“Caste, gender and clothing: How nationalism influenced the politics of self-expression and self-assertion in colonial times”**

The clothes we wear are intricately connected to our socio-political class and privilege, religion and nation. Everything from the cut, quality and design of the clothing, to the textiles and patterns used, are a part of an extremely political repository of visual information on wealth, class, occupation, nationality and so on and so forth. Alexander Maxwell, who has worked extensively on the connection between clothing and nationalism throughout history, opined, in a European context, how social hierarchy and class were legally required to reflect in dress and clothing for hundreds of years. Since the advent of nationalism, followed by processes of globalisation, there has been some amount of increase in choice of clothing and fashion. However, even if the practice of people taking for granted that their place in society would be clearly visible in the clothes they wear has dwindled somewhat, nationalist politics still reflects in fashion and everyday clothing; and essentially as a major component in people’s assertion of their selves and identities. In this paper, I shall attempt to juxtapose this observation with the Indian context, specifically, surrounding colonialism. My paper focuses on the intersection between gender and caste, and their relation with clothing; and how the politics of nationalism was connected to the politics of self-expression and self-assertion of the masses during and after colonial times.

**Ksenia Gusarova**

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## **“Yes, but who was the first?’ Bridging the gap between academic and popular fashion histories”**

In my teaching and public lectures, I constantly encounter questions and assumptions about the origins of particular garments and trends, which are commonly associated with a particular designer. Popular accounts of fashion and dress histories widely disseminated on the Internet as well as in print publications targeting broader readership equally promote this type of knowledge: ‘Poiret abolished corsets’, ‘Chanel was the first woman to don pants’, etc. This name-based version of history, which presupposes a unique, preferably well-known inventor behind each trend, is relatively easy to grasp, while simultaneously feeding into popular culture’s obsession with celebrities and, more broadly, supporting the notion of individuality as central to modern Western understanding of the world.

Academic fashion histories, on the contrary, even without recourse to actor-network theory, nowadays tend to emphasize the complex and entangled nature of the emergence and development of particular dress practices. Wearer’s experience is increasingly centred, and even when celebrity designers make their appearance, their very fame as inventors is exposed as a discursive construct promoted in the media with or without their explicit encouragement. The garments themselves, even the iconic ones, are seen as fluid entities, never taking a ‘final’ shape and likewise without a single point of origin.

In the proposed paper I would like to discuss the possibilities and obstacles in the way of bridging these two approaches to fashion history. The notion of ‘beginner’ will be applied in two ways: on the one hand, to refer to those students and members of the public who want to know about fashion trends’ origins. On the other hand, it is the term I could describe myself with, for despite years of teaching and giving public talks I still do not know how to answer these vexed questions effectively — without either compromising what I believe in as a scholar or antagonizing the audience, who seem almost invariably disappointed to hear that Schiaparelli did not invent the bikini.

**Xiaohan Hou**

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### **“The interface of care: Reading clothing in Xiao Hong’s leftist writing”**

This paper investigates the aesthetic operation of clothing in Xiao Hong’s (萧红, 1911-1942) fiction writing. As a Chinese leftist writer renowned for her stylistic experiments with the traditions of avant-garde and realism, Xiao Hong has been extensively studied under the rubrics of Chinese wartime literature in the 1930s and 40s, women’s writing in 20th-century China, and the writing of internationalism and leftist ideologies. This paper, taking an alternative approach, studies Xiao Hong’s descriptive attention to dress and her sartorial practices at leisure. By analyzing how clothing operates as a mediated apparatus in “The Tutor” (家庭教师), a short story published in 1936, this paper argues that Xiao Hong opens up an affective venue of care through describing clothing as an interface of attachment and detachment. In the story, clothes operate as a mediated site, where the characters channel their intimate feelings and exchange the imperceptible language of love. Zooming in on Xiao Hong’s attention to dress, this paper reads the Chinese wartime literature recuperatively and redeems the affects of playfulness, softness, and slowness that have been overlooked in the leftist tradition.

By investigating the mediated role that clothing plays in literature, this paper experiments with an interdisciplinary inquiry concerning literary studies and dress studies, namely, the nature of style. What is style? How to read and interpret literary style in relation to while also beyond the historical and cultural lenses? Illuminated by the methodologies of design theory and practice, this paper seeks to argue that style should be approached as a curational process replete with accidents of creativity instead of a finalized product ready to be deciphered.

**Premalatha Karupiah**

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### **“Saree in the diaspora: Cultural identity and visibility”**

Saree is a piece of fabric approximately five and a half metres worn mostly by women of in India and the Indian diaspora. It is one of the most visible cultural markers in the Indian diaspora for women. In the diasporic community, not many Indian women wear saree for everyday activities (such as office wear, or clothes worn at home), but the saree is an important attire for religious/cultural festivals, major life events, and formal functions. When I wear a saree in a formal setting, it often gets attention and gives visibility to the wearer in Malaysia. This observation sparked my initial interest in embarking on dress studies. Prior to this, I often focused on dressing in popular media, and this is my first attempt to reflect on my fascination with the saree being a Malaysian Indian i.e., a member of a minority community in Malaysia. When it comes to formal functions, saree has always been my first choice. It not only shows my cultural identity but gives visibility to a minority culture. When I attend a formal function in a saree, it shows the participation of a Malaysian Indian woman in a formal setting. Given the small number of Indian women in the formal setting either in civil service, politics, media, and other public spaces, visibility becomes very important to encourage the participation of minority women in public spaces. My work is influenced by the concept of intersectionality, the interconnected nature of social categories that contributes to the oppression experienced by people with multiple subordinated identities. This not only brings many challenges to minority women but often influences their choices in everyday life e.g., choice of dressing. The control of women’s dressing remains an important way how patriarchy operates in society.

**Magdalene Klassen**

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**“The more modern their dress, the more backward their thinking’: Eastern European fashion in the travelogues of Bertha Pappenheim, 1904-1912”**

Bertha Pappenheim, leader of the German Jüdischer Frauenbund (the Jewish Women’s Association), travelled to the Austrian-Hungarian province of Galicia in 1904 and 1912. For Pappenheim, dress was a key indicator of the troubles facing the women she observed, within a nexus of work and sex. On these journeys, she sought to understand the origins of what she saw as a deep economic and moral degradation in the Jewish communities of the region. In her writings, she commented frequently and bitingly about the clothing and adornment she observed. Her description of their clothes, however, were vague, besides the occasional mention of a pair of silver shoes or a pink silk petticoat. In this paper I lay out my initial answers to an elusive question: what were these women actually wearing? What was fashionable in eastern European cities in the early 20th century? Drawing on newspaper and literary sources to supplement Pappenheim’s descriptions, I seek to reconstruct the apparently garish, even “pornographic” clothing that young Jewish women were wearing. The larger question I hope to engage with at this conference is that of how to read clothing as a set of choices. Reformers such as Pappenheim struggled to articulate the level to which young, fashionable women lived intentionally on the boundaries of respectability. In my work I seek to take dress seriously — through its role in the formation of social capital and the aesthetic commitments it can signify — in order to understand young Jewish women’s motivations and perspectives on the questions of work and sex that reformers like Pappenheim read through their clothes.

**Anu Kuriakose**

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### **“Tailoring gender: Clothing as markers of trans identity in Malayalam cinema”**

This paper critically examines the representation of transgender people's dress as a dominant mode of their identity as a Malayali. 'Malayali' and 'Malayalam' are two distinctive terms, eponymous with the cultural identity of people from Kerala, a state in the southwest of the Indian Subcontinent. Trans representations in Malayalam cinema demarcate their 'Malayali identity' by manifesting regionality. This geographic territorialisation is significant to understand about how their bodies are imagined and contested on-screen through devices like clothing, and makeup. In certain earlier films that questioned the dominant gender codes; cross-dressing has been used for gender crossing. One's clothing could be regarded as a signifier of their gender's performance. Many films in the Malayalam language attempt to tailor gender through its association with clothing specific to the region. Through the visual analysis of a number of films released from 2005- 2020, this paper argues that Malayalam cinema focuses on the clothing of the gender non-conforming characters, it tries to compromise with the cis heteronormative assumptions of gendering in the dress worn by the central characters. It also attempts to de-stereotype trans people from the cultural affiliation of the hijra cult by the excessive focus on manifesting a cosmopolitan identity through clothing.

Keywords: Gender, Hijra, Identity, Malayalam Cinema, Transgender Identity

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### **“A cotton robe burning like fire’: Sartorial rhetoric and enclothed practice in Tibetan Buddhist auto/biography”**

My paper examines clothing in Tibetan Buddhist masters’ auto/biographies, specifically writings by exemplars in the Drukpa Kagyu lineage. These masters are renowned for doing tantric practices while isolated in remote locations. As such, their writings and life stories emphasize direct embodied experiences rather than philosophical principles. Accounts of these experiences consistently present dress as an active participant in tantric practice. They ascribe agency to clothing such that garments possess the power to facilitate or hinder the wearer’s spiritual progress. This interdependent relationship between clothing and wearer in Tibetan Buddhist contexts contributes new perspectives to studies of religious clothing, which often focus on symbolism or the ways that dress conveys identity (ethnicity, religious community, class, gender, etc.). In these texts, clothing does possess symbolism and conveys aspects of identity. Yet, they also posit clothing a necessary and potent component in efficacious tantric practice. This contributes to the study of dress and the body by: 1) bringing attention to clothing’s importance in Tibetan Buddhism, a topic that scholars have rarely discussed 2) complimenting existing scholarship on religious clothing by considering the effects garments have on the wearer, rather than exclusively analyzing the meanings dress conveys to others 3) drawing a connection between Tibetan Buddhist understandings of dress and social psychological studies of non-religious clothing, thereby making such perspectives relevant to a wider audience. I specifically engage the term “enclothed cognition” — coined by Hajo Adam and Adam D. Galinsky in 2011 and defined as “the effects of clothing on people’s psychological processes [which] depend on both a) the symbolic meaning of the clothes and b) whether people are actually wearing the clothes.” As such, my paper adds understudied Tibetan Buddhist sartorial perspectives to the growing field of study on dress and the body.

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### **“Dress and dialogue: Clothing discourse in *The Great Gatsby*”**

In *The Great Gatsby*, clothing implies personality, prestige, and possessions in the context of the Jazz Age. Generally, most critics focus on two fields: symbolism and historicism. To give an example of the former, Yu Min (2021, p.17) argues that clothing not only elucidates the visible body's symbolic meaning but also covers the invisible body to reveal the hidden interior. In an example of a historicist analysis, Thomas Dilworth (2009, p.81) draws on historical sources to link Gatsby to the figure of the “Arrow Collar Man,” showing how he presents himself as belonging to a particular social class. However, in contrast to these approaches, in this paper I argue that Fitzgerald employs what I call “clothing discourse”: clothing is both functionally practical and symbolic, but by the term clothing discourse, I suggest that clothing functions as a dialogic language that shapes relationships and propels the plot.

This paper elaborates on the concept of clothing discourse through a discussion of Gatsby and Daisy. For Gatsby, clothing (such as his pink suit) is a deliberately employed device to distinguish himself from the class he aspires to join. However, while the items such as the suit can be regarded as a form of expression on Gatsby's part, they also function dialogically, with other characters interpreting and responding to these. In contrast to Gatsby's conscious choices of clothing, Daisy is more complex as she exhibits a paradoxical relationship between exterior attire and internal desires, creating a contrast between dressing style and personal initiative. In summary, this paper suggests that clothing is much more than a set of signifiers that the reader of the text interprets either symbolically or historically, but that it functions dialogically within the diegetic world of the novel.



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### **“We were able to find her a very nice dress downtown’: Clothing, identity, and care at Rosehaven Home”**

Disability historians have commonly focused on two specific forms of dress: prosthetic and assistive technologies. This presentation, however, takes a different perspective, examining the clothing and personal items that appear in the patient files of Rosehaven Home, a psychiatric hospital for elderly people that operated in rural Alberta, Canada from 1948 until the early 1990s. Rosehaven’s patients lived with a variety of psychiatric diagnoses, including dementia, schizophrenia, and psychosis; some had been incarcerated in hospitals for decades. This presentation argues that in Rosehaven’s environment of pathologization, “eugenic” marginalization, and transinstitutionalization, focusing on dress offers the historian rare insight into two key elements of the lives of individuals who were aging with psychiatric disability: identity and care. In the first part of the presentation, I note that while some patients seem to have given little attention to dress, others were fastidious, requesting to wear their own jewellery on the hospital wards, for example, or refusing to wear clothing provided by the institution. Dress was an important statement of identity and autonomy, even as people were experiencing conditions that are often associated with the loss of both. The second part of this presentation weaves together insights from disability studies, dress studies, and care studies, arguing that dress was also a central site for the politics of care and relationality. Some family members made gifts of clothing, for example, and staff would shop for patients. Yet dress also reveals the “eugenic” marginalization that many disabled residents experienced: items were frequently lost, and the public trustee cared only about valuables. Disability history has focused extensively on the politics of the body, but this presentation demonstrates how a dress studies approach can further deepen our understanding of the histories of aging, disability, psychiatric diagnosis, and institutionalization.

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### **“Shifting the body: Movement motivated by costume”**

The contemporary dance scene in Berlin undoubtedly belongs to the avant-garde. It's intersection with contemporary art is prominently displayed in diverse galleries among the city and the pieces reflect upon diverse questions of gender, society and politics in various delicate conceptual approaches. In my field of costume design, I encounter the challenge of an equivalent in the department of the costume that resonates this approach: It is of no interest to see something merely decorative on stage. What I would be looking for is the opportunity to see the body and the dress/the costume in exchange with one another. My mere goal is to move the body through the costume or, in other words, to motivate the movement of the body through the material that surrounds the body. I would like to invite the audience to explore this intersection – the performative body in resonance with the costume. What are examples for a successful display of a costume that is not a decorative but one that „sets in motion“ ? How do the examples reflect on methods of modification and/or restriction of the human body in fashion history and thus it's expression in movement? What are the questions that emerge in this context and what do we learn if we take a close look at this interface?

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### **“Woven on the sleeves of history: Palestinian diaspora and narrative weaving through tatreez embroidery”**

Historical and biographical approaches to narrative illuminations in Palestinian society have been woven through the fashionable illustrations of tatreez embroidery. When it comes to matters relating to the political or historiography of Palestine, the Palestinian people have relied on the garments embroidered with the colorful cross-stitch patterns of tatreez to embrace their history and identity. Each design describes and illustrates a world of antiquity, botany, geography, and faunistics. Each hand-embroidered garment serves as an artifact of indirect communication, meant to share the experiences of each artist—like a private experience told to divulge the personal particulars of each seamstress. Every story is tethered to each piece of fabric through the various colored threads, woven to resemble geometric figures sewn immaculately across each design, which tells a story of resilience, self-identity, and self-determination. As an art form, tatreez is seen as a method of identification that can communicate which region of Palestine a person lived in based on the stitches, colors, and designs woven. In its efflorescent phase tatreez served as a fashion statement, however throughout history, geopolitical intervention, and colonization the stitches became symbols of resistance and resilience. Presently, tatreez remains synonymous with Palestine, and as a new generation of artists, designers and scholars emerge the Palestinian tatreez, remains a reminder of the historical and symbolic gesture it illustrates. Through its legitimacy as an artistic protest, each stitch serves as a double-bonded link between existence and resistance, reminding all who see it, that history can be worn on one's sleeves. From clothing and costumes, scholars can chronologize a society and its people using these artifacts, to map out the histories of several existing and nonexistent civilizations—whose stories survive to serve as a reminder of the world of antiquity and the lessons they provide.

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**“Unmasking the mask: Revisiting Victorian aesthetic dynamics from ‘masked self’ to ‘mask as self’”**

During the past two years of pandemic, masks became an alien, but unavoidable, addendum to our daily outfit. At first, the strange circumstance of having to wear a mask to go out in the street was indicative of the unusualness of the situation. At first, we felt detached and even estranged from such an unusual accessory, which most of us associated with disguise and pretence. Gradually, as we acquired the habit of wearing our mask day after day, we developed a sort of symbiosis with it, as we grew used to looking at our masked selves in the mirror and to identifying our acquaintances, friends, and relatives behind a mask. When we were finally allowed to take off our masks in the street, it was reported that some people felt afraid of removing their mask, not only for fear of infection, but also, ironically enough, for having to expose themselves once again as unmasked.

The interaction between mask and self which appeared to take shape during the pandemic called to mind the aesthetic dynamics reflected in Victorian times, particularly, in fantasy and gothic narratives. Masks are used to conceal the alien self in Gaston Leroux’s *The Phantom of the Opera*, masks and selves gradually become blurred in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and, finally, masks began to be taken as substitutes of real selves in Poe’s “*The Masque of the Red Death*” and H.G.Wells’s *The Invisible Man*. Frames and scenes from André de Toth’s Neo-Victorian classic film *House of Wax*, released in 1953, will be taken as a point of reference in order to examine Victorian aesthetic dynamics of mask and self, and their prevalence in contemporary aesthetics about the posthuman and virtual world.

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**“Masquerade identity under the scrutiny of the disabling gaze: Tailoring whiteness in *God Help the Child*”**

Traumatizing as it may be, the perception of the Other is a foundational prerequisite for identity formation. The dichotomies of white/black, male/female, able/disabled are constructed under the gaze of the dominant hegemony. Gender, race and ability are hence somatic facts shaped by the social effects. Within this frame, disability is not determined by bodily construct, it is rather the disabling/enabling gaze that classifies the body as powerful or frail according to how “black” it is figured or how “white” it is dressed. The fashioned and re-fashioned, disempowered and then empowered “black” is the emblem of alterity in Toni Morrison’s *God Help the Child*. This paper examines, thus, in the first place, the way gender and race become somatic figuration through the representation of Bride the black woman with a white dress. The second part tries to prove that disability is not a fixed construct. It is variably deployed or withdrawn depending on how “blacker” Bride becomes: the more colored the dress is, the more disabled Bride grows.

Key words: Dress, disability, body, race, hegemony

**Sarah Parrish**

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## **“Tailoring art history: Dress studies as survival strategy in the neoliberal university”**

In today’s image-saturated world, both dress studies and art history equip citizens with vital skills. Visual literacy, cultural awareness, and historical perspective are cornerstones of both disciplines. Yet despite this epistemological overlap, the two fields are often perceived very differently by students, academic administrators, and the media. Misperceptions about art history’s relevance to the contemporary workforce have led to declining enrollments. The art history major, minor, and faculty lines are also among the first cuts institutions are making in response to financial precarity wrought by a global pandemic, a decline in college-aged youth, and the rising cost of university matriculation. In response to the changing landscape of higher education, I propose that dress studies offers an avenue for art historians to adapt their training to address new demands from multiple constituencies.

Given the corresponding skills and expertise at the core of both disciplines, art historians are well prepared to enter the field of dress studies. This presentation will map out the myriad points of intersection between the two disciplines, including their common historical periodization and context; shared theoretical lenses; dual emphasis on class and gender; similar epistemological debates between high and low; parallel market conditions; and mutual emphasis on learning from objects, images, and collections. Using my own trajectory as a case study, I chart how I am repurposing my PhD in art history to develop two fashion studies general education courses that will contribute to an interdisciplinary minor. As the humanities are hemmed in across the United States, dexterous humanists can reimagine their expertise through fashion history courses that have immediate applications for industry-minded learners.

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## **“‘Imagined couture’ as the reality of the bodiless body”**

Digital fashion is becoming the new norm of the fashion industry. Digital fashion articulates new arguments for its integrity and value. It is important for fashion researchers to understand the following issues: What is fundamentally changing in the notion of the human body and human identity through the representation in virtual images. Will digital fashion widen the gap between the physical body and its virtual image? Is the body lost in virtual images or, on the contrary, becomes grotesque and expands along with the infinite expansion of the identity of the self?

The report will compare different models of corporality represented in physical and virtual fashion. Physical Fashion for the real body as a model of ‘Thinking with the Body’, which includes the kinesthetic dimension. This part draws on the concepts of body phenomenology developed by researchers Merleau-Ponty, Nancy, Bakhtin. And Digital Fashion for the virtual body as a model of the ‘Imaginary Body’ with reliance on the visual and abstract component. The second part is related to discourses on ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding’ the body based on Bergson's philosophy through Foucault to Deleuze. We will look at the images of digital fashion and show that quite often it comes to not just clothing items, but to entire metaphors, myths, and metamorphoses. The body in digital fashion is deprived of spatial and temporal limitations; it extends to the whole world and all times. Mythological images contribute to reinterpreting the body and acquiring new configurations for it. As a result, virtual fashion, through its work with ‘the body, without organs,’ becomes a reflection of modernity and the people who make sense of their bodies in modernity.

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## **“The best of both worlds: The benefits of an interlinked trans and dress studies”**

Transfeminine periodicals are overflowing with discussions on the convergence between gender and sartorial embodiment. Yet, these linkages are understudied within both dress and trans studies. My talk will help rectify this gap through three main topics. First, I will speak on my ongoing thesis research on mid 20th century, transfeminine periodicals like *En Femme*, *TV/TS Tapestry*, and *Lady-Like*. Detached from geographical anchors, given their discrete subscription-based existence, the editors and contributors of these works engaged in sub-cultural discourse over how to ‘properly’ embody femininity. I will present four key connections between sartorial and gender embodiment found in these works. First, the bodily importance of passing and its entanglement with the oft-maligned feminine normativity advocated within many articles. Conversely, inter-community contestation of the importance placed upon the transfeminine ‘need’ to embody normative femininity. Thirdly, given some members could rarely femininely dress, the impact of temporality on preferred styles. Finally, the material intricacies of specifically transfeminine clothing.

Interspersed with my archival findings from the Trans Archives of the University of Victoria, will be the dress studies concepts that underpin my research. For one example, Lucia Ruggerone’s work on the symbiosis between the sartorial and internal self. I hope this interweaving of archival material with theory demonstrates the scholastic richness of connecting dress with trans studies.

Finally, I would bookend the talk with my history of engagement with dress studies. I would open with my discovery of the utility of dress studies to my primary focus of trans studies. I would end with the benefits to both fields in pursuing closer collaboration. I hope my talk contributes to sparking this greater cooperation!



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### **“Body types and dress types: Ethnic cross-dressing in early modern Asia”**

In East Asian history, gendered cross-dressing is sometimes tolerated. Numerous anecdotes tell us how women wore a male dress for travel and battle fields as manifested by, for example, Mulan in the Ballad of Mulan of the fifth century CE: “The male hare has heavy front paws. The female hare tends to squint. But when they are running side-by-side close to the ground, who can tell me which is male or female?” The ballad became a play by Xu Wei (1521-1593) in the Ming dynasty. This paper concentrates on another genre of cross-dressing called ethnic cross dressing or cultural cross dressing: a person of one ethnic/cultural group is dressed in another group’s dress. Intersectionality of dress history and masculinity is to position “masculinity” with the cultural hegemony of a community. Masculinity and femininity are relative concepts in different locations and different periods. One might call this process of cross-dressing “survival of the fittest” and “prerogatives of patriarchy.” The social elite as well as ordinary citizens strive to be fit or to nurture a sense of belonging and to conform to gender identity. This sense of belonging, either forced or voluntary, is called cultural identity or ethnic identity in contemporary sociology. This paper will focus on the process of ethnic cross-dressing due to invasion, loss of territories, or diplomatic protocol. The dress protocol imposed by Manchus after the collapse of Ming brought much humiliation to court officials and intellectuals in the seventeenth century. The forced removal of traditional marks of status and masculinity such as broad panels of court dresses and the long hair met with vehement oppositions—some refused to work for the government. The paper will pose questions of acculturation, adaptability, construction of selfhood, and symbolic capital for masculinity versus indigenous emasculation in economic history of gendered labor and consumption. Cultural authentication is applied to expand implications of dress as vehicles of private and public pride.

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## **“Unpacking the 2022 Karnataka hijab controversy: Minority empowerment or appeasement?”**

“Dress is a common aspect of identity performance and, for the most part, theories of freedom from discrimination promote government intrusion into private realms to combat discrimination” (Ramachandran 2007, 21). In this paper I will try to address the Hijab Ban controversy in Karnataka in schools and colleges beginning in December '21. In a recent hearing, Advocate General Prabhuling Navadgi said, "Institutional discipline must prevail over individual choices. Otherwise, it will result in chaos". Now as we are aware, Muslim women are doubly oppressed. Then why does it become an imposition on women to defend her fundamental rights and freedom of choice? While women covering head is a social practice irrespective of religion in India, I seek to ask the recent upheaval which chooses to question simple uniformity in schools while leaving aside the injustice outside the classroom? One must not forget the context in which we see the present circumstances – the supporters of the saffronized Hindutva government. While the court upholds that hijab is not a mandatory wear in Islam, can we turn a blind eye to social practices and other intricacies? While there have been studies on how hijab is not a source of empowerment for Muslim women, in this article I seek to complicate the issue with respect to the verdict on uniforms in Karnataka schools and colleges. With the impact of COVID-19 and the slow reopening of schools now, there have been rising inequalities in learning outcomes. I will be looking at the incidents, Hindutva mobs and the courts' verdict through Snyder-Hall (2010) 'choice feminism' theory.

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## **“Short skirts, bare legs and bikinis avant la lettre: The influence of refugees on their transit country Portugal during WWII”**

The paper will ask about the importance of dress and body as far as the cohabitation of refugees and locals in Portugal is concerned.

Portugal, during WWII, was neutral and followed a seesaw politics between the Allies and the Axis powers. It became an important hub for refugees after the fall of France in the early summer of 1940. When tens of thousands of refugees flocked into Portugal they changed the faces of the capital, the towns and the seaside and spa resorts they were placed in.

While no bourgeois Portuguese woman would have gone out on the street without hat, gloves and stockings, the foreign women wore neither. They dressed in brighter colours, their skirts were shorter, they wore, for example, sleeveless blouses, or even slacks. On their heads: Ponytails, pinned-up hairdos, turbans. A special ‘problem’ was the two-part bathing suit that some refugee women wore at the Portuguese beaches. The refugees also brought to Portugal new habits in body care and cosmetics and popularized sports as tennis. The habit to take walks and the love for nature were also introduced by them.

Some locals, the church and the regime reacted with shock and criticism; others adopted the new habits and ways to dress. The example of Portugal before, during, and after the Second World War shows that the relationship between refugees and their host society is not necessarily a one-way street to ‘assimilation’.

James Smith

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## **“Girls, boys, dresses, and drag queens: On (not) understanding dress(es) in contemporary queer-themed picturebooks”**

During this talk, I detail an initial typology of queer picturebooks about dresses before arguing this subgenre’s texts’ ultimate legibility limits their potential to truly queer dress itself.

In American, queer-themed picturebooks, a set of trends is emerging regarding dresses. In some texts, dresses are used to signify transgender identity (10,000 Dresses by Marcus Ewert and I Am Jazz by Jazz Jennings and Jessica Herthel, for instance). Others highlight dresses’ explicit performative potential in both the traditional and the critical sense. Books such as Ellie Royce’s Auntie Uncle and Helga Bansch’s Odd Bird Out, for instance, show male characters temporarily performing femininity (or camp or flamboyance) by, in part, wearing a dress. Still other picturebooks about dresses—especially those being published in the United States— have begun carving a third category: “boys-in-dresses.” In these texts, the young, male protagonists challenge binary and gendered definitions of dresses by insisting on their right and desire to wear them, not because of an identity as (transgender) girls or as part of a drag performance, but rather as part of their version of boyhood. Although these trends are developing parallel to one another and have generally been treated broadly and together (with the notable exception of recent work by Jennifer Miller), there are nevertheless important differences between constructions of dress(es) in each subcategory.

After outlining these trends, I show how this typology can help parse, although not resolve, the complex lack of narrative closure in an understudied Spanish picturebook of this type (El niño perfecto by Àlex González and Bernat Cormand). While the American works provide context for El niño perfecto, this Spanish text suggests a problem with the American strategies: when dresses’ functions are easily legible, dress itself is left underqueered by these nominally queer-themed picturebooks.

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**“Exploring fashion and gender construction from the perspective of semiotics: Taking Alexander McQueen’s designs as examples”**

Fashion plays a significant role in the construction of social norms. Gender temperament, as one of the important representations of social norms and human bodies, is also affected by fashion trends and fashion designs. In the fashion designer Alexander McQueen’s series, he had constructed female and male images which are different from the traditional gender temperament in fashion, to endow female bodies with their subjectivity, and show the subordinated masculinity in the society. From the perspective of semiotics, this study attempts to analyze female looks in his early runway and 395 male looks during his lifetime and explore the relationship between fashion designs and gender construction.

Through studying the symbols of Alexander McQueen's female clothing designs, it can be concluded that the female images created by Alexander McQueen are full of hurts, but they have incomparable power in depth. As for the menswear design, Alexander McQueen tried to use non-traditional masculine design elements, such as silk materials and various sexy cutting methods, to reshape the male images. Furthermore, the case study of Alexander McQueen's fashion design shows that the symbols of fashion design can construct different genders, and the anti-traditional design elements can expand the imaginary space of variable genders’ bodies.

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### **“Clothing norms in tertiary institutions: Negotiating fashion towards social hegemony”**

Public discourse and scholarship espouse the subjective influence of clothing norms over the natural body as visual markers of the social boundaries of fashion. As a backlash to students fashion on campus with growing incidences of inmodest dressing, most tertiary institutions particularly in Nigeria introduced dress standards. Scholars have elaborated on how fashion have been used to negotiate social boundaries of power, identity, status, gender, etc. They differed on the approval/acceptability and disapproval/unacceptability of institutional control over clothing behaviour of adults. This article underscores the role fashion plays as an effective driver of social control and hegemony by underpinning sartorial practices in conformity to established institutional expectations and standards of appropriate nuances of formal dressing in institutions of higher learning. From an ethnographic standpoint, the study analysed the institutional standards of formal dressing or dress codes of different tertiary institutions in Nigeria as posted on their websites in addition to the participant observation method. These information are equally published in the students’ handbook of these institutions. The post structural Foucauldian approach of Discipline and Punishment is applied as a framework that explains disciplinary power as a mechanism of social control of the body in contemporary society through conformity to approved dress standards in a formal environment like the university. It is argued that the framework provides an understanding of the significance of social control which may be hampered by misconceptions about what other people think of clothing norms.

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## **“#SartorialTheology: An interdisciplinary approach to religion and dress in ancient and modern Christianity”**

In this paper, I discuss and explore the different ways in which theology, dress, and embodiment intersect in what I call “sartorial theology.” Sartorial theology comprises verbal, textual, and visual expressions of religious meaning in which the verbalization and/or display of clothing is the principal mode through which meaning is conveyed. The concept is developed from Roland Barthes’ categories of “written clothing” and “image clothing,” as outlined in his *Systeme de la mode* (1967). While Christianity is a religion ultimately concerned with the salvation of the soul, embodiment and dress serve as crucial vehicles of salvation and important cultural manifestations. My presentation will be an outline of two primary directions in my research that are driven by dress studies. The first applies Barthes’ categories to early Christian texts and art bringing theology and art history together with dress studies. Focusing on the simple, but distinctive, robe of the ancient philosopher (the primary garment used to depict Christ) I develop an understanding of the early theology of Christ in relation to the early Christian engagement with ancient philosophy and education. This interest in the ancient Christian focus on dress has led to a second avenue of interest, still in the early stages of research and development: the role dress has played in the papacy of Pope Francis. From his very first appearance on the balcony after his election when he eschewed the customary vestments to his donning of an Indigenous headdress in his recent visit to Canada, dress has been an important expression of the direction of the papacy. I will also share some relevant social media material I have collected on Twitter under the hashtag #SartorialTheology.

## Dagmar Venohr / Linda Schraner

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### **“Where body and dress meet”**

Dagmar Venohr: Searching for an appropriate way to teach fashion, constantly more and more question marks appear. To me, asking already begins with questioning terms, that increasingly have no more adequate equivalent in the contemporary practice of fashion design. As a dressmaker and fashion scientist I never separated practice and theory. However, I now realize that the critical and analytical language of fashion theory completely fails to capture the essence of dress at all. So how can I teach, research or write fashion now?

Linda Schraner: Out of a frustration about the fashion system, which defines the good in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, I refused working on a standardised dress form for my bachelor thesis in fashion design. I was searching for a design method which seeks to embrace the individual, sensual and intimate more. The starting point of each piece was a body print of the intended wearer, which allowed me to let the traces of the body directly flow into the pattern making. From this point of view, dress becomes a prophetic extension of the body, a kind of incorporation.

On the concrete example of Lindas creative research into the design process, Dagmar will illustrate her theoretical point of view, why the term ‚fashion‘ is not fitting any longer. Dagmar’s arguments against ‚fashion‘ as we currently know it seem to be embodied in Linda’s design process and pieces.

By using quotes, photos, film sequences and some materials and designs, we would like to exchange ideas, share doubts and raise even more questions around our way of thinking body and dress as an indissoluble interaction.



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### **“Star Wars costume design in the film and media studies classroom”**

In this presentation I will discuss incorporating dress studies into my Film and Media Studies pedagogy, offering examples from a course organized around the Star Wars franchise. In addition to demonstrating how costume design supports the films’ thematic and metaphorical structures, I also use dress as a means of bridging and comparing periods in film history while also informing units on acting style, fight choreography, political allegory, and the importance of dress in the expansive Star Wars fan culture. To illustrate my approach, I will offer a reading of two characters in recent Star Wars films, Finn (John Boyega) and Captain Phasma (Gwendoline Christie), exploring how their respective costumes evolve through *The Force Awakens* and *The Last Jedi* to not only reflect character development, but specifically to illustrate dynamics of race and gender within, and in resistance to, fascist aesthetics.

In keeping with the conference theme, and as a scholar who is new to the field, I will introduce my own engagement with Dress and Body Studies as emerging from interests in the history of film technology and in genre studies, with a particular focus on gender, race, and class. In my courses my film technology, I will often use costume to illustrate how creative uses of fabrics, colors, and construction techniques developed in concert with technologies of lighting, the properties of film stock, and the choreography of movement. I also draw upon these histories in my courses on science fiction, horror, and crime cinema to complicate the signifying power of costume in those genres. By participating in this conference my hope is to find more ways to bridge these areas of inquiry in both my teaching and my research.

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### **“From minstrel shows to Instagram: The power of blackface make-up in performative spaces”**

In a 2018 interview, Aga Brzostowska, a White woman, defended her practice of blackfishing, making the following statement, “I’m not ‘white’ white ok?...I really appreciate the culture and I really just love the look - that was literally it.”

Blackfishing, a practice where (mostly) White women mimic Black aesthetics and culture through make-up and other accessories for capital gain, has become a growing phenomenon in digital spaces and has been regarded as a contemporary form of blackface. Unknowingly, Brzostowska shares the same sense of ‘appreciation’ of Black culture as White, blackface performers during the nineteenth century. The “father” of American blackface minstrelsy, Thomas D. Rice was also fascinated by Black people and their culture, so much so that he observed and mimicked them on stage. To ‘appreciate’ and share this culture, both Rice and Brzostowska used make-up and other aesthetics to emulate and perform Blackness. Although the two performers are from different time periods and spaces, they both gained capital for the usage of blackface make-up.

This paper seeks to illustrate the power of blackface make-up within historical and contemporary performative spaces. Through dramatic theory and archival research of minstrel show guides, I analyze how the power of blackface make-up in relieving and supporting its users in traditional theatrical spaces has traveled into contemporary spaces. I argue that the make-up of blackface played a critical role in traditional blackface minstrel shows as it assisted in perpetuating White supremacy, gender roles, and racism. The success of this practice has allowed blackface and its variants to continue in twenty-first century public (including digital) spaces. Altogether, the study fits into the larger discourses of beauty politics, dress studies, social media and the protection and preservation of White supremacy in physical and digital spaces.



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