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Editor's Letter

I am not yet prepared to store away my winter wardrobe. The signs of Spring are becoming abundant, but the weather – at least in the north of England – remains bracing. If you are facing a similar quandary, my hope is that the articles and reviews in this issue will help to put a spring in your step. As ever, our articles roam widely. They are linked by at least two themes that seem germane to the (pending) change of season: transition and the human life cycle. I am grateful to Elisabeth Murray, Leslie Anderson, Esther Wilson, Rachel Getz-Salomon for their contributions. Ideas of change and new perspectives underpin the New Research in Dress History Conference that is being held at Manchester Metropolitan University on 21 April. The conference schedule is provided via the Association's website, along with booking details. The event is hybrid, but I hope to see many of you in person. Let's all wish for good weather! We shall aim to publish at least some of the papers from the event in a future issue of the Journal. It would be remiss of me to omit that a visit to Manchester will also enable you to view the 'Dandy Style' exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery, which is reviewed by Ann Gibson on page 79.

Spring encourages us to look forward, but I wanted to look back, briefly, to the Winter 2022 issue and Gillian Davies's article on Welsh costume. To clarify part of the text, Davies refers to the work of Alexandra Palmer and attributes to her a methodology within dress research ('a slow approach to seeing') that has been defined by Ingrid Mida, who is not explicitly cited. In the current issue, Davies's review of Sofi Thanhauser's *Worn: A People's History of Clothing*, which explores similar themes to those discussed in her Winter Journal article, can be read on page 73.

Enjoy the issue.

Benjamin Linley Wild

Tracing Parnell Mackett: A Seventeenth-Century Embroidered Box and Its Maker

Elisabeth Murray

Abstract

In the seventeenth century, embroidered box panels were made in England by young girls of means as part of their needlework education. Festooned with everything from grinning lions and oversized ladybirds to the personification of Justice, these intricately stitched panels were used to decorate the exterior, and sometimes interior, of boxes, cabinets and caskets. This article focuses on one of these boxes, made by Parnell Mackett in 1692. Investigation into Parnell's life as a Quaker woman living in London adds to our understanding of the socio-cultural and economic environment in which these objects were made and used. Comparison with other embroidered boxes from this period will then give context to the unusual design of Parnell's box and demonstrating the variety that can be found in this object type.

Introduction: An Unusual Box

In 1926 the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) purchased a box inlaid with intricate panels of embroidery worked with the initials P. M. and the date 1692 (Figures 1 and 2).[1] The Museum acquired the box from Miss Iris Mary Arnold Forster for £75 and recorded it as the work of Parnell Mackett.[2]

[1] Parnell Mackett, *Embroidered Box*, 1692, V&A Museum, London, England, T.6-1926, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O316507/workbox-mackett-parnell/, Accessed 12 July 2019.

[2] R. Lindstead, *Objects submitted on approval for purchase form, 18 February 1926*, Nominal File, MA/1/A874, V&A Archives, London; I. M. Arnold Forster to A. J. B. Wace, *letter, 21 January 1926,* MA/1/A874, V&A Museum, London, England.

Figure 1: *Embroidered Box*, Parnell Mackett, 1692, Linen Worked with Silk, wood, 43 x 19 x 38.5cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.6-1926.

Figure 2: *Embroidered Box* (detail of embroidered panel on lid), Parnell Mackett, 1692, Linen Worked with Silk, 43 x 19 x 38.5cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.6-1926.

Caskets, cabinets and boxes inlaid with panels of embroidery were made in England between about 1650 and 1695 and examples can be found in many museum collections.[3] The panels were often worked by young girls of means, and functioned as both public and private objects, displaying the skill of the embroiderer whilst also providing a private place to store possessions. While each box is unique, they have become known for a distinct set of characteristics, including external embroidered panels worked with biblical, mythological or pastoral scenes, fitted compartments, trays and hidden drawers to store personal possessions and a very particular salmon-pink interior (Figures 3 and 4).[4] Parnell's box with its simple square shape, floral embroidered panels, wood veneer edging and bold red silk-satin interior contrasts many of these standard features. Its unusual design was noted immediately during its acquisition with textile curator P. G. Trendell commenting, "I do not remember seeing one before like Miss Forster's."[5]

[3] The earliest dated example found in this survey is: *Hannah Smith, embroidered casket, 1654-1656,* The Whitworth Museum, Manchester, England, T.8237.1, http://gallerysearch.ds.man.ac.uk/Detail/18930, Accessed 12 July 2019. The latest dated example is Parnell Mackett's box at the V&A. The terms casket and cabinet are used interchangeably in modern literature although casket is most often used to describe boxes with a domed lid and the term cabinet, from table cabinet, used to describe a box with a flat lid with doors which open and drawers set beneath. The only known written contemporary description is of Hannah Smith's box, which has a domed lid and front facing doors, is described by her as a 'cabbinete', although The Whitworth Museum catalogue records it as a casket. In this paper the term box will be used to describe the various styles including caskets, cabinets and workboxes.

[4] These parameters are repeated across secondary literature, for example see: Andrew Morrall and Melinda Watts, Editors, *English Embroidery in the Metropolitan Museum, 1575-1700: Twixt Art and Nature,* Yale University Press, New Haven and London, United States and England, 2008; Isabella Rosner, "'A Cunning Skill Did Lurk': Susanna Perwich and the Mysteries of a Seventeenth-Century Needlework Cabinet," *Textile History*, Volume 49, Issue 2, 2018, pp. 140–163.

[5] P. G. Trendell, *minute paper, 20 February 1926,* Nominal File, MA/1/A874, V&A Archives, London, England.

Figure 3: *Embroidered Casket,* Martha Edlin, 1671, Silk-Satin Worked with Silk, wood, 31 x 24.5 x 29cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.432-1990.

Figure 4: *Embroidered Casket* (interior)*,* Martha Edlin, 1671, Silk-Satin Worked with Silk, 31 x 24.5 x 29cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.432-1990.

This article will bring Parnell Mackett's box into dialogue with its counterparts, situating it within the narrative of seventeenth-century embroidered boxes and their makers. The first part of the paper will reveal *the* Parnell Mackett who made this box in 1692, a Quaker born in the City of London in 1675.[6] Parnell's work will then be examined alongside boxes by other known embroiderers, expanding our understanding of needlework education in the seventeenth century and the context in which these objects were made, especially within Quaker families. The design of the box will then be interrogated. Upon first glance Parnell's box sits outside the typical parameters of design for this object type, both in terms of its needlework and the style and shape of the box; as a result it is often characterised as unique – a design anomaly. Comparison with other boxes will challenge this idea demonstrating the variety that can be found in this object type and illustrating how the style of Parnell's box is rooted in the principles of seventeenth-century design. In doing so, this paper seeks to add nuance to our understanding of these boxes and their makers, uncovering the often-lost details about who made them and why.

Parnell Mackett (1675-1766)

[6] *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Births (1648-1708),* 1675, TNA RG 6/498, The National Archives, Kew, England, p. 97.

Since its purchase by the V&A in 1926, Parnell Mackett has been recorded as the maker of this box, however very little is known about her or the circumstances in which it was made. The majority of the information currently available comes from the V&A's original acquisition paperwork where Alan Wace, one of the curators writing in support of the acquisition, noted:

> There were four sisters Mackett, Elizabeth whose sampler dated 1696 we have (433-1884), Sarah whose sampler was sold in brilliant condition at Sotheby's some time ago ... Mercy Mackett's sampler dated 1688 ... Parnell Mackett's sampler has just been sold by its owner Mrs Vere O'Brien... This workbox belongs to Mrs O'Brien's niece and so there is little doubt that it was worked by Parnell Mackett.'[7]

No additional information was recorded about Parnell or her family and no explanation was given to explain how the box came into Iris Forster's (Mrs O'Brien's niece) possession. A stamp on the inside cover of the acquisition file notes it was "weeded up to 31st Dec 1935", suggesting correspondence or paperwork may have been destroyed at this time.[8] Additional information about the Mackett family might have been recorded in the older acquisition file for Elizabeth Mackett's sampler but unfortunately this file no longer exists.

Parnell and Mercy Mackett's samplers, referenced by Wace in the acquisition paperwork, have also remained together. Sold at Sotheby's in 1935, they were donated to Art Institute Chicago (AIC) in 1967.[9] The AIC has no extant provenance information to link them to the Mackett's represented in the V&A collection, however V&A documentation for Parnell Mackett's box provides this missing link, recording the sale of Parnell and Mercy's samplers, formerly owned by Iris Forster and Vere O'Brien, at Sotheby's in 1935.[10] Prior to the Sotheby sale, the V&A were offered the opportunity to buy these samplers. These offers were declined but descriptions of the samplers, and crucially their dates, were recorded in the related paperwork and match those now at the AIC.[11]

In the years following the acquisition of Parnell Mackett's box, there have been repeated attempts to identify her and her sisters with varying success.[12] In 1994 a researcher wrote to the V&A Textile department believing to have traced the sisters, having located a will proved in 1766 belonging to a Parnell Mackett of London.[13] However there was no clear link between *this* Parnell Mackett and Iris Forster and so the information was filed away, awaiting future research. Recent digitisation of archives, in particular *The Society of Friends Registers, Notes, and Certificates of*

[7] A. J. B. Wace, *minute paper, 22 February 1926*, Nominal File, MA/1/A874, V&A Archives, London, England.
[8] Miss I. M. Arnold Forster Nominal File, 1926, MA/1/A874, V&A Archives, London, England.
[9] Mercy Mackett, *Sampler,* 1688, Art Institute Chicago, Chicago, IL, United States, 1967.226, https://www.artic.edu/artworks/27284/sampler, Accessed 12 July 2019; Parnell Mackett, *Sampler*, c.1690, Art Institute Chicago, Chicago, IL, United States, 1967.223, https://www.artic.edu/artworks/154915/sampler, Accessed 12 July 2019; E. Warren, Art Institute Chicago, email message to author, March 6, 2019.
[10] An annotated copy of 3 April 1935 'De Zoete' Sotheby's sale catalogue, listing Mercy and Parnell's samplers, has been stuck into the listing for Parnell's box in the V&A Registered Description file. See *Workbox, T.6-1926, 1926*, Registered Descriptions, Textile and Fashion Section, V&A Museum, London, England, p. 165.
[11] Wace, op cit.
[12] Over the years Elizabeth Mackett has been identified as a few different people including one of three sisters from Sussex (Leigh Ashton, *Samplers Selected and Described, Medici Society,* London and Boston, 1926) and the daughter of a Kent builder (F. J. Mackett to P. A. Harrison, *letter, 18 July 1994,* Nominal File, MA/1/A874, V&A Archives, London, England.
[13] Mackett to Harrison, Ibid.

Births, Marriages and Death has now made it possible to conclusively identify the Parnell Mackett historically associated with this box, who was indeed the Parnell Mackett identified in 1994.[14]

Born on 26 January 1675 in the first precinct of Aldersgate Ward, London, Parnell was the daughter of William and Anne Mackett.[15] She was one of nine children, five of whom were girls, and had sisters named Mercy and Elizabeth, matching the information recorded by Wace in 1926.[16] Iris Forster, born 23 November 1879, was Parnell's sixth great niece.[17] Only a handful of embroidered boxes with known provenance exist and these examples have significantly shaped our understanding of embroidered boxes as an object type. By learning about Parnell and her life we add another voice to this group, deepening our understanding of their design, their makers and their function.

The Mackett's were a Quaker family who lived and worked in and around the City of London in the mid-to-late 17th century.[18] Quakers, also known as Friends, are members of the faith group the Religious Society of Friends, which was founded in England during the English Civil War in the 1640s; its leader was George Fox (1624–1691). Fox and his friends believed that the presence of God could be found in all people. They rejected elaborate religious ceremonies and believed in equality between men and women.[19] The Mackett's were part of the Devonshire Meeting in whose records the births, marriages and deaths of their children were noted.

During this period, many London Quakers made their living working in the textile and clothing trades.[20] This was true for the Mackett family. During his early married life William Mackett worked as a coat seller, and he later became a member of the Guild of Merchant Taylors, with his son Zephaniah following in his footsteps.[21] A tax assessment from 1695 records William as having a personal estate of £600 or more, situating the Mackett's within London's middling sort, albeit the lower end.[22] Parnell's box reflects the relative wealth of the family. Lavishly covered in

[14] *General Register Office: Society of Friends' Registers, Notes and Certificates of Births, Marriages and Burials, 1578-1841*, TNA RG 6, The National Archives, Kew, England.
[15] Ibid., TNA RG 6/498, p. 97.
[16] The other children were Zephaniah, William, Adonijah, Anna, John, Mercy, Mary and Elizabeth. In order of birth date, see: *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Births (1648-1708)*, 1667, TNA RG 6/498, pp. 18, 22, 33, 40, 49, 67; *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661–1700)*, 1681, TNA RG 6/499, p. 401; *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Births (1648-1708)*, 1747:, TNA RG 6/673, p. 200. A note in the acquisition file mentions another sister, Sarah, however there is no record of the birth or death of a Sarah Mackett to William and Ann in the *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Births (1646-1708),* where the of the other Mackett children are recorded. It is possible she is a more distant relative.
[17] *Baptisms, Burley-in-Wharfedale, St. Mary*, 1897, BDP33, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford, England, p. 171.
[18] William married Anne at the Quaker meeting place, the Bull and Mouth, on 20 June 1666, only months before the building burned down in the Great Fire of London (*Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Marriages (1658-1690)*, 1666, TNA RG 6/1437, The National Archives, Kew, England, p. 18.
[19] Stephen W. Angell, "God, Christ, and the Light," in *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, Stephen W. Angell and Dandelion Pink, Editors, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 2013, pp. 158–171.
[20] Alan Cole, "The Social Origins of the Early Friends," *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, Volume 47, 1957, pp. 99–118, 114.
[21] For a reference to William Mackett as a coat seller see: TNA RG6/498, op cit., p. 18. For a reference to William Mackett as a Merchant Taylor see *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Marriages (1690-1704)*, 1694, TNA RG 6/497, The National Archives, Kew, England, p. 193. For a reference to Zephaniah Mackett's apprenticeships see London, England, Freedom of the City Admission Papers, 1681–1930, 1682, COL/CHD/FR/02/0059-0064, London Metropolitan Archives, London, England.
[22] London Record Society, "Surnames beginning 'M'," in *London Inhabitants Within the Walls 1695,* London, 1966, British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol2/pp192-211, Accessed 20 May 2020. The assessment of the Mackett's as part of the lower middling sort is based on a survey of middling sort wealth by P. Earle: Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730*, University of California Press, Berkley, CA, United States, 1989, p. 14.

multiple different coloured threads and edged with wood it represents a significant monetary cost, not just in materials but also in terms of Parnell's education.

Parnell was the sixth of the nine Mackett children, the second girl, and received her first name from her maternal grandmother, Parnell Howell.[23] While it has been possible to piece together elements of her family background, Parnell's adult life left little mark in the historical record. Living until the age of eighty-eight, she appears to have spent most of her life within a few miles of her childhood home and, unlike her sisters, never married. In 1727 she was recorded living in the first precinct of Aldgate Ward, only a few miles away from Aldersgate Ward where she was born, and was later recorded in Shoreditch Parish, another few miles away, where she lived until she died.[24] Described as a gentlewoman in her will, at the time of her death on 12 July 1766 she possessed at least £100. She appears to have kept with the Quaker faith of her family and requested to be buried at Bunhill Fields, a Quaker burial ground where her father was also laid to rest.[25] Alongside a bequest to her family she left her books to her landlord Mr Applin "for his evening readings to me and other care" as well as bequests to his wife Lydia, for "her care in nursing me and attendance."[26] Her will gives a small but poignant insight Parnell's life, showing her to be a woman with strong friendships and family ties.

Among the handful of pieces itemised in her will, Parnell bequeaths her "dressing box" to "Mr Osgood Hanbury my nephew in Lower Street."[27] Iris Forster was a descendant from Parnell through Osgood Hanbury, and so for her to come into possession of the box it probable it was given to Osgood. As the "dressing box" in the will was also given to Osgood it is logical they are the same object. The choice of the descriptor of "dressing box" may hint at Parnell's use of the box, but could also simply illustrate the change in language over time, with the term "casket" falling out of favour and "dressing box" an increasingly common term as the seventeenth century turns to the eighteenth. The reference to the box in the will is important as it is only one of half a dozen items directly referenced, indicating it was of significant value to her, kept and cared for, for over 70 years. It is also a reminder that objects are not static, and Parnell's use of the box was not restricted to her childhood when it was made but something she kept and used her entire life.

Needlework Education

In the seventeenth century, proficiency in needlework was an essential skill for women from all backgrounds and formed a crucial part of childhood education. Girls were usually taught needlework in the home but for a family with means it was possible to hire a governess or send their daughters to a school.[28] Teaching started at a young age with simple pieces, often including a band sampler, used to practice and record different types of stitches which would be useful for

[23] TNA RG 6/1437, op cit, p. 18.
[24] *London, England, Land Tax Records, 1692-1932,* 1729, MS 11316/84, London Metropolitan Archives, London, England; *Will of Parnell Mackett, Gentlewoman and Spinster of Shoreditch, Middlesex, 12 July 1766*, TNA PROB 11/920/271, The National Archives, Kew, England.
[25] *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1720-1758),* 1725, TNA RG 6/330, The National Archives, Kew, England, p. 68.
[26] TNA PROB 11/920/271, op cit.
[27] Ibid. While the use of the term dressing box is not commonly found in literature discussing embroidered boxes, caskets and cabinets, Parnell's box does match this description has detailed in: Adam Bowett, "Late 17th Century Lace Boxes," *Antique Collecting*, Volume 40, Issue 8, 2006, pp. 10–13. Bowett's definition and photographs of other extant dressing boxes match the design of Parnell's box.
[28] M. Goggin, "'An 'Essamplaire Essai' on the Rhetoricity of Needlework Sampler-Making: A Contribution to Theorizing and Historicizing Rhetorical Praxis," *Rhetoric Review,* Volume 48, Issue 4, 2002, pp. 309–338, 322.

household tasks.[29] For those with economic means this was followed by work with increasing technical sophistication, sometimes embellished with expensive materials including pearls, coral and mica. The production of embroidered panels to decorate a box or other pieces of furniture, although not exclusive to young girls, appears to have been a project undertaken near the end of one's education, with many examples bearing the initials of their owner and the year, presumably celebrating the date the work was started or finished.

Only a small number of dated examples with a known embroiderer exist and our understanding about the environment in which they were made, and at what age, has been heavily influenced by these.[30] Parnell's box now joins this group as a representative of the work of the lower middling sort. Catherine Richardson and Tara Hamling argue that domestic textile goods "were key to the definition of the emerging 'middling sorts', who invested a substantial percentage of their wealth in textile goods that advertised the sophistication and comfort of their domestic provision."[31] Parnell's box supports this supposition and gives a specific example the type of domestic objects owned by this strata of society living in London. It also illustrates the level of technical accomplishment expected from girls from this group.

As one of the few provenanced examples of Quaker embroidery from the seventeenth century, Parnell's box is particularly important in expanding our understanding of the role of embroidery within Quaker education at this time. For Quakers, religious instruction was at the heart of education and Elizabeth O'Donnell notes, "The blueprint for Quaker education was Fox's idea that education should be 'civil and useful', therefore the curriculum, which emphasised the vernacular, comprised of fundamental subjects everyone needed to know in order to be 'useful'."[32] For girls, music and dancing, while quite common subjects in wider society, were all seen as 'vain customs of the world' and excluded.[33] A small but significant body of extant samplers worked by Quaker girls during this period, including those by Mary Wilmer in 1667 and Hannah Culleup in 1687, indicates needlework, including some decorative needlework, was routinely taught to young Quaker girls.[34] This is supported by the work of Hannah Downes held in the V&A collection. The group includes a sampler made by Hannah in 1684 at Shacklewell school (Figure 5). Established in 1668 by George Fox, Shacklewell was a Quaker girl's school, thus the Downes' sampler provides an illustration of the type of technical and decorative embroidery formally taught to Quaker girls. Downes' work shows at least some Quaker girls in London were learning embroidery techniques far beyond those needed for simple household tasks.[35]

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[29] Kathleen Epstein, *British Embroidery: Curious Works from the Seventeenth Century,* Curious Works Press, Texas, United States, 1998, p.11.

[30] The work of Martha Edlin has been particularly significant in shaping our view of needlework education and is regularly cited by researchers as a model for the process of instruction, for example see: Rozika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, L.B. Tauris & Co, London, England, 1981;2013, p. 66.

[31] Catherine Richardson and Tara Hamling, "Ways of Seeing Early Modern Decorative Textiles," *Textile History*, Volume 47, Issue 1, 2016, pp. 4–26, 8.

[32] Elizabeth Ann O'Donnell, "Quakers and Education," in *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, Stephen W. Angell and Dandelion Pink, Editors, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 2013, pp. 405–419, 407.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Mary Wilmer, *Sampler,* 1667, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England, T.35-1928, http://webapps.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/explorer/index.php?qu=T.35-1928&oid=110581, Accessed 12 July 2019; *Hannah Culleup, sampler, 1687*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 43.276, https://www.mfa.org/collections/object/sampler-116929, Accessed 12 July 2019. These are mentioned in: The Fitzwilliam Museum, "Quaker Girls, Quaker Samplers," *The Fitzwilliam Museum Website,* 2017, https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/sampledlives/quakergirlsquakersamplers, Accessed 20 July 2019.

[35] Hannah Downes, *Sampler*, 1684, V&A Museum, London, England, T.39-1935, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O119998/sampler/, Accessed 12 July 2019.

Figure 5: *Sampler,* Hannah Downes, 1684, Linen Worked with Silk, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.39-1935.

Exploration of the V&A's collection reveals additional pieces worked by Hannah Downes including a less complex sampler dated to 1681 and an embroidered box worked in 1683 (Figure 6).[36] This collection is both valuable in its own right and as a useful comparison to Parnell's work. Alongside sharing Parnell's faith, Hannah was also raised in London, born only a few years before Parnell, between about 1669 and 1671.[37] Together, Hannah and Parnell's work supports the contention that Quaker girls were expected to be proficient at needlework, able to create work of technical sophistication and beauty, much beyond simple, practical sewing skills. The boxes also indicate that Quaker embroidery education continued to use the same process of instruction as education for non-Quakers, with the creation of embroidered box panels one of the projects completed during childhood. Interestingly, Hannah dated her box panels to an earlier date than her second sampler, indicating she made it before. Other extant sets of childhood embroidery typically show samplers to be made before box panels. Hannah's work shows there was room for variation in this system, and perhaps reflects the fact her second sampler was worked at a school; presumably part of a group task, rather than in the home on a personal schedule.

Figure 6: *Embroidered Box,* Hannah Downes, 1683, Canvas Worked with Silk, 37.5 x 13.5 x 18.5 cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.31-1935.

[36] Hannah Downes, *Sampler*, 1681, V&A Museum, London, England, T.34-1935, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O357827/sampler/, Accessed 12 July 2019; Hannah Downes, *Embroidered Box*, 1683, V&A Museum, London, T.31-1936, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O316106/embroidered-work-box/, Accessed 12 July 2019.

[37] For Hannah's birth date, calculated from her age at death, see: *Monthly Meeting of Southwark: Union of Southwark and [St John] Horsleydown (1719-1781),* 1727, TNA RG 6/677, The National Archives, Kew, England, p.66.

Parnell and Hannah's work are also important in deepening our understanding of the age at which box panels were made. Martha Edlin and Hannah Smith's work, as dated examples with a known provenance, have been especially prominent in shaping our view of the typical age these pieces were made. Martha made her box when she was around eleven. Similarly, Hannah started hers when she was eleven and finished it when she was thirteen.[38] Dated to 1683, Hannah Downes would have been around twelve when she worked her box, similar in age to Martha and Hannah Smith. In comparison to this Parnell, aged around seventeen years old when she worked her box panels, was significantly older than the other girls.

Parnell's sampler provides valuable insight into the stages of her personal needlework education. Worked when she was about fifteen years old, it indicates that she may have started her lessons later than normal. A large body of extant needlework samplers indicates girls typically made samplers aged eight to eleven, although recent research by Edwina Ehrman shows samplers were also made later.[39] The works of Parnell's sisters however support the notion that Parnell's education was somewhat delayed, with Mercy and Elizabeth's samplers, of similar complexity to Parnell's, dated to 1688 and 1696, worked about eleven and twelve years old respectively.[40] It is interesting to note, however, that despite Parnell's later age in working her sampler, the gap between this and making the box panels was only two years, the same gap between when Martha Edlin created her whitework and cutwork sampler in 1669 and embroidered her box panels, and also the same gap between Hannah Downes' first sampler and her box panels.[41] This suggests that while Parnell's education started later, she progressed at a normal pace and the timeline for instruction stayed the same.

Combined with the work of Hannah Downes, Parnell Mackett's work shows that needlework was a crucial skill for Quaker girls in London in the seventeenth century and needlework education for Quakers appears to have followed the same steps as wider society. Girls learnt not only basic needlework skills needed for household tasks, but also decorative work, which provided a creative outlet – these were displayed within the home, also giving an insight into the decoration of a Quaker household. This body of work also disrupts the traditional narrative of needlework education. Parnell appears to have started her needlework education unusually late and Hannah Downes worked her intricate box panels before embarking on a simpler second sampler. These examples clearly show that, perhaps unsurprisingly, needlework education was not static in the seventeenth century. While there may have been proscribed systems and stages, the age at which instruction commenced, and the order that it took, varied from person to person, likely dependent on a number of factors, from the family's financial security to religious belief.

The Embroidery

Seventeenth-century embroidered boxes are best known for their distinctive decoration. Pictorial designs showing biblical, pastoral or mythological scenes are rendered in silk thread, worked onto panels of plain linen tabby or silk-satin. The inspiration for these designs was taken from various print sources including Edward Topsell's *History of Four-Footed Beasts* and Gerard de Jode's

[38] Martha Edlin, *Embroidered Casket,* 1671, V&A Museum, London, England, T.432-1990, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O11096/embroidered-casket-edlin-martha/, Accessed 12 July 2019; Hannah Smith, *Embroidered Casket*, op cit.

[39] Epstein, op cit, p.11; Edwina Ehrman, *The Judith Hayle Samplers,* Needleprint, London, England, 2007, p. 41.

[40] Mercy Mackett, *Sampler,* op cit; Parnell Mackett, *Sampler,* op cit.

[41] Martha Edlin, *Sampler,* 1669, V&A Museum, London, England, T.434-1990, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O10094/sampler-edlin-martha/, Accessed 12 July 2019.

Thesaurus Sacrum Historiarum Veteris Testamenti.[42] The enduring use of these sources means that the same features can be seen on English embroidery over several decades. This style of embroidery is not exclusive to embroidered boxes, but also found on other types of domestic needlework, including mirrors, bibles and cushions.[43] Parnell's box breaks with this distinctive pictorial style, decorated almost entirely with flowers worked in a geometric design. This section will explore the design of the panels, revealing their origins and situating them within seventeenth-century embroidery design more broadly.

Despite their unusual pattern, the panels of Parnell's box are made in much the same way as other examples. Made of un-dyed linen woven in a balanced plain weave, each panel is decorated individually in floss silk and mounted onto the box. The panels are worked almost entirely in rococo stitch, also known as queen stitch or renaissance stitch, which entirely covers the ground fabric – representing a quite costly outlay in materials.[44] The pattern has been created by changing the colour of the thread to create shapes and double-running stitch has been used to highlight particular details (Figure 7). The panels are not embellished with any supplementary materials, such as pearls, spangles, mica or metal thread, although these are more commonly found on boxes with silk-satin panels which lends itself better to uncounted embroidery. There is evidence the panels were originally edged with a thin metal braid, similar to that used to decorate the interior, but this has been lost over time and only fragments remain. The decision to use plainer materials could be an aesthetic choice but could also reflect the relative wealth of the Mackett family as members of the lower middling sort as these materials were very expensive. It could also be a reflection of their religious beliefs and commitment to living plainly.

The use of rococo stitch to this degree on box panels is unusual; they are more commonly worked in tent, satin, couching or detached buttonhole stitch, often in combination. However, the use of rococo stitch is not entirely unprecedented. In her essay "A Cunning Stitch Did Lurk", Isabella Rosner identified two cabinets, one in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, dated to circa 1645–1655, and one at the Fitzwilliam Museum dated to circa 1650–1675, worked almost entirely in rococo stitch.[45] However, these cabinets are still both decorated with the pictorial scenes associated with these objects rather than the geometric pattern found on Parnell'sbox.

Each panel on Parnell's box has a unique design but they are all dominated by large detached floral sprigs punctuated with smaller floral and faunal devices. The flowers represented include roses, lilies, irises, hydrangeas and cornflowers.[46] The pattern itself is arranged to focus on the flowers in the centre of each panel and some of the flowers on the edges are incomplete. This style of design, with part-rendered devices, is found in many examples of seventeenth-century needlework and also in published patterns such as the *Needles Excellency* published by James Baler in 1631.[47] The top panel is the largest, measuring 34cm (w) by 21.5cm (d) The front and side panels are smaller, with the front panel measuring 34 cm (w) by 9.5cm (h); the side panels both measuring 30.5cm (w) x 9.5cm (h). The latter have similar compositions and the design is

[42] Helen Brooks, "Embroidery: Sources of Design, Past and Present," *The Vocational Aspects of Secondary and Further Education,* Volume 7, Issue 14, 1955, pp. 7–14, 24; Margaret Swain, "Embroidered Pictures from Engraved Sources," *Apollo,* February 1977, pp. 121–123, 122.
[43] Morrall, and Watts, op cit.
[44] TRC Leiden, "Rococo Stitch," *TRC Leiden,* https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/rococo-stitch, Accessed 12 July 2019.
[45] Rosner, op cit.
[46] John L. Nevinson, *Catalogue of English Domestic Embroidery*, V&A, London, England, 1938; 1950, p. 56.
[47] *John Taylor, The Needles Excellency...,* James Boler, London, England, 1631, http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupid?key=olbp29826, Accessed 12 July 2019.

dominated by large detached floral sprigs with small animals and flowers interspersed between (Figures 8, 9 and 10). The design on the lid is based around a central vase filled with flowers. The vase is surrounded by twelve large floral sprigs, worked in three rows. The depiction of a vase on a box panel is quite unusual, with Averil Colby writing that vases are often "seen as belonging exclusively to samplers."[48] Despite this the panels do appear to have been designed to decorate this box and not cut down from a larger existing piece of embroidery. This is indicated by the edges of the embroidery, which finish deliberately at the edge of the panel and have not been cut down. Given the different measurements of each panel it would have been difficult to achieve such a well-placed design if the pieces had been cut from a larger, re-purposed piece.

Figure 7: *Embroidered Box (lid)*, Parnell Mackett, 1692, Linen Worked with Silk, Wood, 43 x 19x 38.5cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.6-1926.

Figure 8: *Embroidered Box (front)*, Parnell Mackett, 1692, Linen Worked with Silk, Wood, 43 x 19 x 38.5cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.6-1926.

[48] Averil Colby, *Samplers,* Batsford Ltd, London, England, 1964, p. 49

Figure 9: *Embroidered Box (proper left side)*, Parnell Mackett, 1692, Linen Worked with Silk, Wood, 43 x 19 x 38.5cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.6-1926.

Figure 10: *Embroidered Box (proper right side)*, Parnell Mackett, 1692, Linen Worked with Silk, Wood, 43 x 19 x 38.5cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.6-1926.

While its predominance on Parnell's box panels is unusual, the use of fauna and flora devices is typical of seventeenth-century embroidery more broadly. Flowers are common in early modern embroidery and books like *A Book of Flowers, Beasts and Bird*, published by Peter Stent in 1662, provided ample inspiration for embroiderers and pattern drafters alike.[49] John Nevinson notes that in this period flowers can be split into two main pattern designs, "firstly the coiling stems, and secondly the sprigs, branches, or 'slips' as they are variously called."[50] Parnell's box is comprised of the latter although unlike many slips, which are worked individually, sometimes by multiple embroiderers and then applied to a ground fabric, these have all been worked directly onto the ground. The design cleverly combines large slips with smaller devices to create variety within the composition. Comparable examples of slips can be found on other boxes in a smaller scale, incorporated into pictorial designs, including a box in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum

[49] *A book of Flowers, Beasts and Birds, Collections Online,* c.1662. British Museum, London, England, 2AA+,a.67.36. https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3253321&partId=1, Accessed 12 July 2019.

[50] John L. Nevinson, "English Domestic Embroidery Patterns of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *The Volume of the Walpole Society*, Volume 28, 1939–1940, pp. 1–13, 1.

of Art (The Met) dated to about 1670 (Figure 11).[51] In this box large floral slips worked in tent stitch have been applied to the side panels of the box and sit alongside smaller floral and faunal devices. The lid of this box has a traditional pictorial design, showing the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. There is also an unmounted panel in the V&A's collection worked with a floral design in rococo and tent stitch described as a workbox panel.[52] Tantalisingly, in the entry for Parnell's box in a *Catalogue of English Domestic Embroidery* Nevinson wrote, "A work-box with very similar designs signed E I and dated 1693 is recorded."[53] Unfortunately there are no further references to this box and it has not been possible to locate it. Viewed together this small group demonstrates that while the predominance of flowers in the design of Parnell's box was not common, the design of her box is not unique. Flowers were a prominent feature in seventeenth-century embroidery and the style of flower slips used to decorate Parnell's box can be found in other examples of domestic embroidery including on other embroidered boxes and caskets, albeit to a smaller degree.

Figure 11: *Casket* (detail of floral slips on side panel), 1670s, Silk-Satin Worked with Silk and Metal Thread, Seed Pearls, Wood, 40.6 x 20.3 x 36.9cm, © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States, Purchase, Mrs. Thomas J. Watson Gift, 1939, 39.13.4a–rrr.

[51] *Casket with scenes from the Story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba,* 1670s, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States, 39.13.4a-rrr, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/226423, Accessed 12 July 2019.

[52] *Workbox Panel*, 1650-1688, V&A Museum, London, England, T.270-1913 https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O319519/workbox-panel/, Accessed 12 July 2019.

[53] Nevinson, 1938;1950, op cit., p. 56.

Figure 12: *Embroidered Box* (interior), Parnell Mackett, 1692, Linen Worked with Silk, wood, 43 x 19 x 38.5cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.6-1926.

Parnell's decision to use a floral design rather than a pictorial one is worth considering. In a survey of over forty boxes only three were without human figures or pictorial scenes.[54] Two of these were worked by Quaker girls, Hannah Downes and Parnell Mackett, and the third is decorated entirely in flame stitch c.1710, its maker is unknown.[55] The small sample size makes it difficult to do anything but speculate, but it does seem to indicate that the decision to use only floral and faunal devices, while not exclusive to Quakers, may in these instances have been influenced by religious belief. Date is also likely to have played a role, and Parnell and Hannah's work are probably also a response to changes in taste in needlework design. Embroidery style develops throughout the seventeenth century and by its end the use of the pictorial scenes, so typified by seventeenth-century boxes, abruptly disappears.[56] However, a box worked by Elizabeth Nickholls dated to 1686, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, portrays the biblical story of Esther and Ahasuerus.[57] Made three years after Hannah Downes's box, this demonstrates that the evolution of embroidery designs and patterns was not linear. Parnell's box shows the variety of designs and stitches used to decorate box panels in the seventeenth century. It shows that styles of embroidery cannot be firmly categorised to fit certain object types, and their use, whether to decorate a box or any other object, is dependent not just on convention but also on personal preference, access to patterns and education.

A Dressing Box

As seventeenth-century embroidered boxes have typically been acquired on the merit of their embroidery, little extended research has been carried out into them as pieces of furniture. Discussion that has taken place, both within textile and furniture history, centres on two areas; how

[54] The majority of these are in the collection of the V&A Museum, other key collections include: The Art Institute, Chicago, The Colonial Williamsburg Museum, Williamsburg, The Lady Lever Art Gallery and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[55] *Embroidered Box,* c.1710, Colonial Williamsburg Museum, Williamsburg, VA, United States, 1936-204, http://emuseum.history.org/view/objects/asitem/search@/0?t:state:flow=83700334-f150-480a-95f9-d832a54966b7, Accessed 12 July 2019.

[56] Mrs. Head, "English Secular Embroidery of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *The Magazine for Connoisseurs,* Volume 4, Issue 11, 1904, pp. 168–175, 174.

[57] Elizabeth Nickholls, *Embroidered Box,* 1686, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA, United States, 1984-124-1, https://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/76607.html?mulR=805464890|, Accessed 12 July 2019.

the boxes were made, and their place in the history of box design.[58] While the focus of this paper is on textile elements of the object, the shape, construction and interior design of caskets, cabinets and boxes is a crucial part of their overall design and must be examined alongside their embroidery. This is particularly important in the case of Parnell's box, which does not immediately conform to the image of embroidered casket or cabinet we have come to know. As with its needlework, Parnell's box appears to contradict many of the established norms for objects of this type, in particular its shape, use of exterior veneer, and interior lining (Figure 12). Each of these will be addressed in turn to show that when examined as individual elements these can be placed within the narrative and development of seventeenth-century embroidered boxes.

One of the most comprehensive overviews of this object type is found in Talbot Hughes' *The Dictionary of English Furniture,* published in 1924. Talbot Hughes divides seventeenth-century boxes decorated with embroidery into four general groups, although there are many variations:

> (1) The double casket with a domed top in which the lid carries a box with a well beneath. (2) The square casket, having a mirror set in the lid, sometimes with a pin-pad on either side. (3) The square casket with a tray and a deep compartment. (4) The plain shallow box for gloves, lace, etc. [59]

Parnell's box, with its square shape, shallow body and flat-hinged lid, sits within the latter category and there are many other extant examples, including Hannah Downes box at the V&A and Hannah Trapman's at the National Trust.[60] This style of embroidered furniture is under-researched and often marginalized in discussions of embroidered caskets and cabinets, leading Parnell's box to seem more unusual than it is. This is perhaps due to their comparatively simple interiors. They lack the intricacy often found in caskets and cabinets, whose mirrored compartments and myriad of secret drawers have long enchanted researchers with their promise of lost letters and treasures.

Parnell's box, produced in 1692, indicates that square boxes were in use, and perhaps even in vogue, at the end of the seventeenth century. Nevinson supported this argument in *A Catalogue of English Embroidery* writing "towards the end of the century a larger and flatter type is general", citing Parnell's box as an example.[61] Limited research has been done to build on Nevinson's statement and the small number of dated examples make it difficult to be certain how the shape and construction of these boxes evolves with any precision.[62] However, the group that does exist suggests there is a move from caskets, with a domed lid and multiple tiers, and cabinets with doors and drawers, to simpler boxes, as the seventeenth century progresses. This would also mirror

[58] For a reference to the process of making embroidered boxes, see Kathleen Staples, "Embroidered Furnishings: Questions of Production and Usage," in Morall and Watts, *English Embroidery*, pp. 23-28, 23. For a reference to embroidered caskets within the history of boxes, see Percy Macquoid and Ralph Edwards, Editors, *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, Country Life, London, England, 1924, volume 1, pp. 93–94.

[59] Macquoid and Edwards, *op cit,* pp. 93–94.

[60] Downes, *Embroidered Box*, op cit; Hannah Trapman, *Embroidered Box,* 1671, Sudbury Hall, England, The National Trust NT 653275, http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/653275, Accessed 12 July 2019.

[61] Nevinson, 1938;1950, op cit., p. 49.

[62] It has been possible to locate 12 dated examples. In addition to those directly reference in this article there is 43.524, dated 1657, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, United States, 1959.337, dated 1668, at the Art Institute Chicago, IL, United States, 1956-300,A, dated 1674 at the Colonial Williamsburg Museum, Williamsburg, VA, United States; T.43-1954, dated 1678, at the V&A, London, England, and two in private collections.

changes in box design at the same time more broadly.[63] The earliest dated box identified in the research for this paper was Hannah Smith's casket, made up in 1656 this takes the form of a double casket with a domed lid. The latest was Parnell's box, dated to 1692, which is a square box with a lid that hinges open. These examples support the change from casket to box. Nevertheless, the move was not linear. Elizabeth Nickholls box, made in 1686 and the second latest example from this survey, also takes the form of a double casket. Hannah Downes' box, made three years earlier than Elizabeth Nickholls, takes the same shallow square form as Parnell's. This demonstrates that while there appears to have been a move from embroidered caskets and cabinets to boxes, this change did not occur instantly, and caskets, cabinets and boxes were at times being produced and used concurrently. The identification of further dated examples, and the location in which they were made, would help to add to more detail to this chronology.

Alongside its shape, the use of veneer on the exterior of Parnell's box has caused comment. The box itself is made of pine but the edges and back are veneered with a decorative wood.[64] Caskets, cabinets and boxes are typically entirely covered with needlework panels that are often edged with braid or lace: however, a smaller number of examples exist edged with alternative materials. Of the twenty boxes in the V&A's collection, for example, there is one other box edged with wood, and another with imitation tortoiseshell.[65] This variation is also noted by Talbot Hughes, who describes a box "banded with tortoiseshell", and similar examples can be found in other collections.[66] The use of veneer edging also better matches Parnell's description of her box as a "dressing box". Produced between about 1660 and 1720, dressing boxes, fitted with compartments and tills, were often veneered in decorative woods.[67] The use of a veneer to such an extent on Parnell's box, and in particular as an alternative to an embroidered panel on the back, demonstrates that embroidered boxes did not exist in isolation but were influenced by developments in other areas of box design.

Dressing boxes, fitted with compartments and tills, as well as a mirror, had a similar interior layout to other embroidered boxes, and Parnell's box follows this pattern. The interior is dominated by a large central well with two scalloped letter slots fitted behind. The left side is fitted with a variety of compartments including two spaces for bottles and a central padded lid which can be lifted to reveal an open well lined with coloured marbled paper, nestled within which are two secret drawers. The lid has a mirror set into the underside, mounted between two quilted strips. The mirror has been crudely repaired at some point and a decorative gold paint has been added. Despite its conventional fittings, the box is lined with quilted red silk-satin, the dark and bold colour a striking contrast to the soft salmon-pink lining for which these boxes are known. The seemingly unusual colour used in Parnell's box has caused some questioning over the date of the lining. In May 1926, just months after the box was purchased, a specimen from the interior lining was sent

[63] Thomas Crispin, *Bible Boxes: English Oak Table Boxes, Slopes, Desks and Cabinets of the 16th and 17th Centuries: An Exhibition and Guide for the Collector to The Craft of the Boxmaker of Renaissance England,* BADA, Hertfordshire, England, 1978, pp.11–12 and Bowett, op cit.

[64] The veneer is sometimes identified in V&A documentation as kingwood. It appears to have been painted in parts to add more graining, making the cut of the veneer appear more intricate and therefore more expensive. It is unclear whether this is original or was done at a later date. V&A guard book images show the box underwent some form of conservation after it was acquired, and so this may have occurred at this time.

[65] *Embroidered Casket*, 1660-1685, V&A Museum, London, England, T.23-1928, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O136433/embroidered-casket/, Accessed 12 July 2019; *Embroidered Box*, 1660-1690, V&A Museum, London, England, T.186-1960, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O110091/embroidered-workbox-unknown/, Accessed 12 July 2019.

[66] Macquoid and Edwards, op cit., p. 93.

[67] Bowett, op cit.

to be scientifically tested at University College London. The sample was identified as orris root and Wace notes it was "most probably put in the lining by Miss Parnell Mackett who worked the embroidery for her box and very probably lined it as well to keep the moth away". Tellingly he then remarks "the identification confirms the opinion that the lining is the original lining; we are most grateful to them".[68] As with the shape of the boxes, the colour of the lining does vary. While salmon-pink is certainly very prominent in its usage, other colours were also used. Writing about this group of objects in 1938 Kendrick noted, "The drawers and compartments were lined with red, pink, or blue silk or covered with paper of these colours. Occasionally the silk is green or yellow."[69] Acknowledgement of this variety has been absent from many more recent narratives, making boxes like Parnell's appear more unusual than they were. When viewed as a whole, Parnell's box looks remarkably different to most seventeenth-century embroidered caskets and cabinets, however it is clear that, when broken down into individual elements, the features which seem so unusual, are not unusual at all but are grounded within the principles of seventeenth-century box design.

A Workshop?

Figure 13: *Embroidered Box,* c.1710, Linen Worked with Silk, Wood, 49.5 x 40.5 x14.5cm, © The Colonial Williamsburg Museum, Williamsburg, VA, United States, 1936-204.

Crucial in establishing the place of Parnell's box within the context of seventeenth-century embroidered caskets, cabinets and boxes has been the discovery of an almost identical box in the Colonial Williamsburg Museum. Dated to circa 1710, the exterior and interior design are almost identical to Parnell Mackett's (Figure 13).[70] Unfortunately the exact date and maker are unknown and nothing is known of its provenance before 1936, when it was purchased at Gill & Reigate in London.[71] The box itself has wooden veneer mouldings and the back panel is also veneered. As with Parnell's box, the lid, front and sides are decorated with needlework, in this instance panels of linen worked in flame stitch. The interior, lined with quilted pink silk, is also similar to Parnell's and is dominated by a central well behind which are two scalloped letter slots. To the left is a bank of compartments, including two spaces for bottles and a padded lid which when opened reveals a well lined with multi-coloured marbled paper and two hidden drawers.

[68] *Workbox, T.6-1926, 1926*, op cit.
[69] A. F. Kendrick, *English Needlework*, revised by Patricia Wardle, Adam & Charles Black, London, England, 1933; 1967, p. 118.
[70] *Embroidered Box, 1946-204*, op cit.
[71] I. Rosner, Colonial Williamsburg Museum, email message to author, 15 January 2019.

Examined in isolation this box looks like another anomaly but added to Parnell's a pattern begins to emerge. Alongside the Colonial Williamsburg box, it has also been possible to identify four additional boxes with almost identical interiors, but present more traditional pictorial exteriors. These include an undated workbox at The Met, possibly produced in the 1670s (Figure 14), a box dated to 1668 at the Lady Lever Art Gallery, a box signed and dated by Hannah Trapman in 1671 at the National Trust (Figure 15) and Hannah Downes box, dated to 1683, at the V&A.[72] The interior arrangement is almost identical in each design, with each box having a large central well on the right and a narrower set of compartments on the left. Particularly distinctive is the covered compartment concealing a well and secret drawers set into the left bank of compartments in each box. Every box also has a mirror set into the lid, held in place by movable pins. For most of the boxes this sits in the centre of the lid and is flanked by two quilted panels. Only Hannah Trapman's box diverges from this pattern, with the mirror covering almost the entire interior lid, indicating customization was possible.

Figure 14: *Casket* (interior), 1670s, Silk-Satin Worked with Silk and Metal Thread, Seed Pearls, Wood, 40.6 x 20.3 x 36.9cm, © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States, Purchase, Mrs. Thomas J. Watson Gift, 1939, 39.13.4a–rrr.

[72] *Casket with scenes from the Story of Solomon,* op cit; E. P., *Embroidered Box,* 1668, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool, England, LL5262.

Figure 15*: Casket* (interior), Hannah Trapman, 1671, Silk-Satin Worked with Silk and Metal Thread, Wood, 41.5 x 33.5 x 18.5cm, © The National Trust / Ian Buxton & Brian Birch.

All of the boxes also have a quilted silk interior, rather than the silk velvet or coloured paper variations. The majority are a classic salmon-pink shade with the exception of the box at The Met, which is lined with a striking green silk-satin. As with Parnell Mackett's box, this unusual lining colour has garnered some comment with Melinda Watts noting it may date to the nineteenth century.[73] These boxes help to firmly situate Parnell Mackett's box within a narrative of box making, further challenging any querying of its authenticity and provenance.

In addition to these embroidered boxes, there are also two boxes decorated with rolled paperwork with similar interiors. The first, in the V&A's collection, is dated to 1687 and bears the initials M. W. (Figure 16).[74] The authenticity of this box has previously been queried and the exterior does appear to have been repaired or altered at some date. Stored and cared for by different collecting sections this box, until now, has not been compared with Parnell's box. Upon comparison, their similarities are undeniable and their interiors almost identical, including the small, lidded compartment in the left bank of compartments. Another similar box decorated with rolled paperwork is held by the Colonial Williamsburg Museum, dated to 1698 and presenting the same interior design.[75]

[73] Morall and Watts, op cit., p. 162.

[74] M.W., *Rolled Paperwork Box*, 1687, V&A Museum, London, England, W.36-1925, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O167480/box/ Accessed 12 July 2019.

[75] *Rolled Paperwork Box*, 1696, Colonial Williamsburg Museum, Williamsburg, VA, United States, 1984-298, https://emuseum.history.org/objects/48127/rolled-paper-work-box, Accessed 18 June 2020.

Figure 16: *Box,* M.W., 1687, Shell, Rolled Paper, Wood, 45.72 x 36.83 x 14.27cm, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, W.36-1925.

While there are variations in the group of embroidered and paperwork boxes, all of the boxes having a slightly different arrangement of compartments in the left well, there is an overwhelming similarity between these objects and some very precise details can be seen replicated on multiple boxes. For example, in M. W.'s box at the V&A and the box at The Met, the exact same type of metal braid has been used to decorate the mirror frame and the lid of the small compartment. This metal braid has been arranged in the same zig-zag pattern on both. Equally M. W.'s, Parnell's and the box at The Met all have small narrow slots, fitted at the back of their run of drawers, and the box at The Met and at the Lady Lever Art Gallery both feature the second left square compartment subdivided into four smaller compartments. Given the range of designs and layouts in the interiors of caskets, cabinets and boxes, the strong similarities between this group seems more than coincidental. Parnell Mackett and Hannah Downes's boxes, both made in London, support this, linking the boxes together geographically and increasing the probability these were made in the same place. When viewed together, the interiors of these boxes begin to look more like the work of a specific workshop, or connected workshops each producing different elements of the box and its fittings, operating in London between at least 1671 and 1692.

These boxes give fashion and textile scholars cause to expand traditional definitions of seventeenth-century embroidered boxes, demonstrating how dressing boxes, decorated with veneer and inlaid with needlework panels are a part of this narrative, and increasingly common at the end of the seventeenth century. They also remind us to situate embroidered boxes within the larger history of box design, demonstrating clear overlap in design and production of boxes decorated with embroidery and those decorated with rolled paperwork.

Conclusion

Needlework and needlework education was a central part of many women's lives in the seventeenth century. It was a practical skill, but it was also a vehicle for personal enjoyment and expression. Over time the names and lives of these amateur embroiderers have been lost. Much of their work now sits unattributed, a crucial part of the story missing. Through genealogical and object-based research this article has re-discovered one of these voices and enabled us to recognise and celebrate the work and talent of Parnell Mackett. Her box serves as a physical marker of her existence and her skill and a testament to the role needlework and embroidery played in her life. It also sheds

light on the skill and experience of Quaker girls living in London in the seventeenth century, adding to our understanding of their education and role within the home. It demonstrates the need to expand and revise our current understanding of needlework education in this period, showing that there was a range of experiences and in particular, variation in the age at which girls started to learn needlework and the steps which they took to do so.

The identification of Parnell Mackett as the embroiderer of this box also adds to our understanding of seventeenth-century embroidered boxes as an object type. Brought into dialogue with other similar extant boxes, including those in the Colonial Williamsburg Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, it disrupts and confuses our understanding of the "typical" embroidered casket, cabinet or box, showing the variety that can be found in the embroidery, physical construction, shape and interior decoration. Further research will hopefully identify more amateur embroiderers and, crucially, the workshops in which these boxes were made, to give a clearer picture of their evolution and development.

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Cinderella's Glass Slippers and the Court of Louis XIV (1643–1715)

Leslie Anderson

Abstract

This article argues that the Cinderella's glass slipper in Charles Perrault's *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* was inspired by the mule shoe style popular at the seventeenth century court of Louis XIV. Envisioning Cinderella's slipper as a mule, a shoe that easily slips off and onto the foot, in consideration with socio-cultural implications of this type of footwear, permits a fresh understanding of the heroine's dynamic role in matchmaking and draws upon the concept of external dress as a reflection of inner virtue. Bedecked and bedazzled with her glass mules, Cinderella transforms into an agent of her own destiny, covertly expressing her desire in a method that would be clearly understood by contemporary audiences.

Introduction

Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre [Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper] (1697) by French fairy tale author Charles Perrault (1628–1703) is one of the most pervasive and well-known fairy tales. The importance of a pair of glass slippers cannot be ignored when considering the impact this story continues to have generations after its initial publication. Cinderella's glass slipper is the most celebrated shoe in the history of western fashion. This dainty, glass shoe elevated a mistreated heroine to royalty, and earned Cinderella a coveted spot as an historical fashion icon. Reading the clothing, accessories and hair in literary texts, not least popular fairy tales, is key to fully understanding an author's intent and implications as well as uncovering and questioning social norms of a given period. Literature also serves as a textual recordkeeper of historical dress where physical textiles are often lost or ill preserved. Fashion is central to Perrault's *Cendrillon,* from the tattered and ashy dress worn by the heroine at the beginning of the tale, to the ornate attire bestowed by the Fairy Godmother. Fashion historians read the details in the text and visually imagine the gowns worn by Cinderella at the balls based on existing examples and knowledge of seventeenth century styles. Not only is Cinderella's dress a reflection of the period, but her footwear logically should also resemble shoe styles popular at the time *Cendrillon* was written. In light of this, it is reasonable that the heroine's slipper would have a precedent in the real-life court of Louis XIV.[76] Louis XIV is notorious for his proclivity for luxury and fashion: from elaborate curled wigs to rich velvet, lace, and crimson heels (figure 1).[77] During his reign, Louis XIV made heeled shoes de rigueur for both men and women. The centrality of Cinderella's glass footwear in Perrault's narrative reflects Louis XIV's enthusiasm for heeled shoes and the increasing popularity of this style of shoe during the seventeenth century. This analysis proposes a fresh look into the slipper at the fore of Perrault's celebrated tale by contextualizing and reconstructing the *pantoufle* [slipper], beginning with a consideration of the monarch himself and the actual shoes worn by the elite at the time that Perrault's fairy tales were first published in 1697. Situating the historical context of Cinderella's slipper allows for a better understanding of the symbolism behind the heels and provides a more nuanced interpretation, revealing that Cinderella was an agent of her own destiny as indicated by the racy inuendo of her mule-style glass slipper.

[76] Louis XIV, known as *Le Roi soleil* [the Sun King], was King of France from 14 May 1643 until his death on 1 September 1715. He is known for consolidating his power and influence as an absolutist monarch at the Versailles Palace, which he constructed outside of Paris.

Figure 1: Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV,* 1701, Oil on Canvas, 2.77 x 1.94 m, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France, ©Wikipedia Commons.

Perrault's seventeenth century *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* differs significantly from the rags-to-riches animated Disney version that cinema scholar Wilhelm Bartsch called a tale of the "American Dream."[78] In Perrault's original French version, Cinderella's father remains alive and remarries. Her father is submissive to his haughty and callous wife and her cruel daughters. Perrault immediately differentiates Cinderella from her stepfamily, explaining that her kindness is unparalleled: "The husband had a daughter of his own of a goodness and gentleness without equal."[79] Cinderella's good nature is a trait that she inherited from her deceased mother and not from her father, who is virtually absent for the remainder of the tale. Cinderella's stepmother and stepsisters waste no time forcing her to do housework and taking advantage of her kindness. Due to her tendency to "sit in the ashes" while cleaning the fireplace, Cinderella is given the nicknames "Culcendron" (ash-bottom) and "Cendrillon" (ash-maiden) by her stepsisters.[80] Her dirty clothes do not detract from the heroine's beauty. Perrault explains, "however, Cinderella, with her tattered clothes, remained one hundred times more beautiful than her sisters, despite their being magnificently dressed."[81] This is the first example in the text where the author makes a connection between external clothing and inner character. In the beginning of the fairy tale, Cinderella's internal beauty is in opposition to her outer dishevelled clothing. In spite of this, dirty as a cinder maid, Cinderella still manages to be one hundred times more beautiful than her ungracious sisters. The stepsisters on the other hand, are "magnificently dressed," yet they lack the innate beauty that cannot be hidden behind Cinderella's dirty attire. Fashion historian Eleri Lynn asserts that throughout the early modern period outward magnificence was inward virtue made tangible.[82] Initially Perrault's narrative demonstrates a conflict and reversal of this truism. Here, luxurious attire masks inner ugliness while ashen, tattered clothing adorns the virtuous and beautiful heroine. The audience is explicitly made aware of this reversal and anticipates a resolution to the conflict. Perrault employs typical societal functions, balls, as a venue to amend the incongruity.

When the news arrives that the king is giving a ball, and that the two stepsisters have received an invitation, they prey upon Cinderella's kindness and sartorial expertise to help them get dressed and coiffed. Perrault makes a point to indicate that Cendrillon has "good taste" in all things related to style.[83] Regardless of the sisters' refusal to lend Cinderella a dress so that she may accompany them to the ball, the altruistic heroine lends her assistance in order that the stepsisters look their best. Cendrillon's selflessness in this moment evinces what Bartsch describes as a certain *noblesse* [nobility] of character that puts her above her peers and reminds readers that, even before her happily ever after, she comports herself like royalty.[84]

On the evening of the ball, Cinderella's sisters depart while Cinderella weeps in the garden. Alone in her sorrow, the soon-to-be princess is approached by her Fairy Godmother who sympathizes with Cinderella's situation and wishes to bring justice to the maiden. When the Fairy Godmother conjures a carriage, horses and coachmen necessary for travel to the ball, Cendrillon exclaims, "Yes, but will I go dressed like this, with my tattered clothes?" The Fairy Godmother wields her magic and in a snap Cinderella's rags become cloth of gold and silver, garnished with glittering gems, and topped off with a pair of the most beautiful slippers ever seen, made of pure glass. With garments like these, Cinderella is the talk of the ball. Men and women alike rave about her beauty, memorizing her wardrobe so as to replicate its magnificence: "All the ladies were attentively surveying her hair and her clothes in order to have the same style the next day, so long as they could

[78] Wilhelm Bartsch, "Aschenputtel and Cinderella: The Brothers Grimm versus Walt Disney, a Moral and Social Story," *Anuario de cine u literatura en espanol.* 2, 1996, p. 37.
[79] Charles Perrault, *Contes*. Flammarion, Paris, France, 1989, p. 274. All translations from French are by the author.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Eleri Lynn, April Calahan, and Cassidy Zachary, "Dressed: The History of Fashion, 'Tudor Fashion,'" 8-10 December 2020 https://www.iheart.com/podcast/105-dressed-the-history-of-fas-29000690/, Accessed 10 December 2020.
[83] Ibid., p. 275.
[84] Bartsch, op cit., p. 34.

find silks equally fine and workers as skilled."[85] Before the widespread availability of fashion plates and images, a social function such as this would be the best place to observe new styles to then have them quickly replicated by skilled tailors and dressmakers.

Disney's reimagining of Cinderella tells of only one magical ball, but other versions, Perrault's included, tell of a series of balls. In *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre,* Cinderella arrives home before her stepsisters, and cunningly plays ignorant as they gossip about the unknown belle of the ball. The following evening, Cinderella's Godmother again saves the day and transforms the ash-maiden with a glamorous ensemble that leaves her "even more beautifully adorned than the first time."[86] This is the evening where Cendrillon will leave a single glass slipper like a calling card for her charmed prince. As her time at the ball runs out, "She rose and dashed off as light as a doe: the prince followed her but could not catch her; she let one of her slippers fall, which the Prince carefully collected."[87] Not only does this highlight the graceful, doe-like steps of the dashing Cinderella, but it also emphasizes her cunning volition to leave behind a part of her magical costume. Perrault's choice of verb "laisser tomber" [to let fall] demonstrates a conscious action of letting a shoe slip from her foot.[88] This seems like a bizarre thing to do, leaving behind a shoe and running semi-barefoot through the street. Cinderella's initiative demonstrates agency. She intentionally leaves behind evidence that will reveal her to be the mysterious beauty who captivated partygoers. When the Prince's men arrive at her house to try the glass slipper on the feet of the eligible young maidens, Cinderella insists on being included. In asking to try the slipper on, Cinderella is expressing her desire to be found.[89] Of course, like magic, the shoe fits, and Cinderella produces its twin from her pocket and places it gently on her other foot. The Fairy Godmother suddenly appears and with a swish of her wand changes Cinderella's attire one final time and "makes her become even more magnificent than before."[90] Recognizing Cinderella to be the mysterious beauty who captured everyone's attention at the balls, the stepsisters beg forgiveness. Cendrillon, a kind-hearted heroine, entirely forgives the stepsisters for any wrongs they had committed against her. Cinderella and her prince, who "finds her even more beautiful than before", are married and live happily ever after in the company of the newly reformed sisters.[91]

Mules at Versailles

This classic tale, appealing for its timeless theme, was published in 1697, toward the end of the long and influential reign of King Louis XIV. The Sun King has long been credited for bringing his courtiers to heel with his radical political, as well as fashionable changes. One of his most iconic trends brought high-heeled shoes, worn exclusively for equitation, into daily life at court. At a time when high heels were worn exclusively during horseback riding, Louis XIV made his infamous red heel a fashion must. Fashion historian and scholar Joan DeJean explains that a red-heeled shoe was exclusively permitted to, and thus associated with, the aristocracy, leading the red heel to become a flamboyant sign of social status during the seventeenth century.[92] When Louis implemented fashion regulations at court, the red heel became de rigueur. Even today, scarlet-soled shoes remain a luxury item worldwide; the legendary legacy of Louis' red heel lives on in the shoes of French-Egyptian designer Christian Louboutin (1963-), who understands the myth and status that a good pair of shoes can evoke.[93] Dress scholar Elizabeth Semmelhack points out the

[85] Perrault, op cit., p. 276.
[86] Ibid., p. 277.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Christine Jones, "Thoughts on 'Heroism' in French Fairy Tales," *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies,* Volume 27, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 19-20.
[90] Perrault, op cit., p. 278.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Joan DeJean, *The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour,* Free Press, New York, United States, 2005, p. 91.
[93] Louboutin women's shoes are easily recognizable by their scarlet red soles. Many counterfeiters attempt to reproduce this design with fake "Louboutins."

eventual wide-spread influence of this style during the reign of Louis XIV, to the extent that even British nobility adopted the trend to keep up with the latest French fashions. She explains the power behind a red sole:

> The use of red leather or paint to draw the eye to the heel was also a prominent feature of this fashionable footwear. As heeled footwear was adopted by the lower classes, upper-class heels began to soar in height and by the middle of the 17th century the high heel debuted in fashion; some heels reaching seven to eight cm in height. In the court of Louis XIV red high heels would come to be powerful symbols of political privilege by the end of the 17th century.[94]

There is no denying that life at Louis XIV's court was a constant competition to remain on the cutting edge of style. To maintain power at court, one had to follow the example of the courtiers in *Cendrillon* who would immediately reproduce a new style to stay current with the changing trends. Hubert Méthivier touches on the cutthroat environment, likening courtiers to "slaves to fashion." He states, "Court life is enchanting, but it is also gilded slavery creating a contrived, parasitic, egotistical, and hard social milieu."[95] The court envisioned by Louis XIV was built on artifice and luxury, both of which were required to stand out amongst the throngs of courtiers. To return to Eleri Lynn's previously mentioned idea, the luxurious wardrobe of the social elite ideally reflects their "innate virtue."

It is observed that men and women's shoe styles were largely one in the same until the late seventeenth century, when women's heels continued to grow higher and increasingly decorative, while men's heels became smaller and less ornate.[96] DeJean enthusiastically claims that the end of seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries were "widely considered the most glorious era in the history of footwear."[97] Jean Donneau de Vizé, founder of the protype fashion journal *Le Mercure galant,* proclaimed 1677 "the year of the shoe" in honour of the increasing prominence of footwear and likely in reference to the casual and trendy mule, which DeJean identifies as "the sexiest footwear of all time."[98] A mule refers to footwear often decorated with silk brocade fabrics that could be embroidered and decorated to match the patterns and colours of the wearer's dress (Figure 2)[99]. DeJean maintains that:

> The Versailles era created the concept of matching shoes. Thus, in an age when fragility was not a factor, since aristocrats could avoid walking outside their homes and be transported whenever they chose, most men's shoes and nearly all women's were fashioned from brocades and silks and satins.[100]

The reduced risk of soiling the feet during outdoor travel and activities allowed for the increased ornamental footwear for both men and women at court. Brocade slippers were also linked with increased colonial ventures, which introduced luxurious fabrics and designs into fashion. Semmelhack claims that the high heel's Venetian ancestor, the chopine, lost its footing with the

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[94] Elizabeth Semmelhack, *On a Pedestal: From Renaissance Chopines to Baroque Heels*, Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto, Canada, 2009, pp. 92-94.
[95] Hubert Méthivier, *Le siècle de Louis XIV,* Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, France, 1971, p. 36.
[96] DeJean, op cit., p. 85; Valerie Steele, *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power,* Oxford University Press, New York, United States, 1996, p. 98.
[97] DeJean, op cit., p. 85.
[98] Ibid., pp. 95-96.
[99] Pair of mules with pointed toe, high cut and heels covered with red leather. The toe pieces are made with beads worked in a woven technique, in shades of yellow, green, red and blue on a white ground arranged to form a pattern of a basket from which floral sprays grow with two birds flanking the top. The upper is bound with gilt ribbon and lined with white kid, canvas and blue silk. A piece of floral brocade, a white ground on which is yellow, green and beige pattern with white flowers, covers the instep. There is white kid lining to the sides of the leather sole.
[100] DeJean, op cit., p. 90.

increase use of fabrics in shoes imported through expanded trade and colonization.[101] According to her "... the use of expensive materials such as fine suede or velvet for the fabrication of their uppers, and the use of expensive silk rose and ribbons to tie the shoes closed, served to further declare the style as the prerogative of the rich."[102] The practicality of the chopine diminished during the Versailles age as courtiers tended to remain indoors and out of muddy city streets.[103]

Figure 2: *Pair of mules,* Maker Unknown, circa 1730s, Canvas, Kid leather and Beads, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England T.102-1971, photographed 24 June 2009.

As would be expected of any royal household, King Louis XIV had a personal shoemaker, Nicolas Lestage, in his employ to see to the excellency of all his footwear.[104] Interestingly, there are parallels between Perrault's fairy tales and this royal cobbler that suggest that Lestage was an inspiration for the baroque author. Louis XIV originally discovered Lestage in Bordeaux, where the cobbler owned and operated a workshop called "*Le loup botté"* [Wolf in Boots].[105] The name of his shop evokes the title of one of Perrault's well-loved tales, *Le Maître Chat ou le Chat botté* [Sir Cat, or Puss in Boots]. While the similarity could be entirely coincidental, it is nonetheless interesting to see the resemblance between these four-legged animals upright in boots. In his *Loup botté* workshop, Lestage won the king's favour by creating a pair of shoes for Louis, "without even having measured the royal foot," that is described as "Pumps upon which lilies were heaped upon lilies, / burnished by solid gold, / made of honey-coloured Oriental silk / lined with taffeta in the monarch's colour."[106] DeJean describes how the king was so enraptured by this particular pair of shoes that he brought Lestage back to court with him. The artisan eventually made a pair of seamless boots for the king that became so famous that many artisans unsuccessfully tried to

[101] Semmelhack, op cit., p. 80.
[102] Ibid., p. 92.
[103] The chopine is a platform shoe typically made of wood, popular in Italian cities such as Venice from around 1400–1700 A.D. Chopines were a type of patten or clog worn over more delicate fabric or leather shoes to protect the feet and dresses of courtesans and aristocratic women from the dirt and grime of city streets.
[104] The birthyear and deathyear of Nicolas Lestage are unknown.
[105] DeJean, op cit., p. 86.
[106] Ibid., p. 87.

reproduce the same effect.[107] It is within this pair of boots that one finds another curious link between Perrault's *Cendrillon* and this *maître.* Speculation arose over how Lestage could successfully make a pair of seamless boots after so many others had tried and failed. DeJean quotes a contemporaneous source that references the fabrication of these legendary boots. She quotes, "One wit wondered if Lestage hadn't copied the technique of glassblowers and somehow 'created his work of art with one breath.'"[108] This reference provides an example of glass as a material for shoes predating Perrault's tale. While it cannot be known if Perrault was directly inspired from this wit who likened the fabrication of seamless leather boots to glassblowing, it is curious to see the two dissimilar mediums associated together, especially in light of Perrault's choice of material for Cinderella's iconic slipper. It is important to note that Lestage's biography first appeared in 1666, making it possible that Perrault could have heard of the artisan and the comparison of his work to glassblowing. Inspired by the cobbler, Perrault perhaps included the notion of glass footwear into his narrative. Lestage is the equivalent of the Fairy Godmother for Louis XIV, creating an unparalleled pair of shoes to adorn the royal feet. By extension, he would become the Fairy Godmother of Cinderella herself, if he were in fact the inspiration behind the glass mule.

While shoes worn publicly by men and women at the French court would have been close-heeled, baroque buckle shoes, there is little chance that the shoes worn by Cendrillon were of a similar form. Disney's animated depiction of Cinderella cemented the image of a slipper with a close-backed heel, not unlike styles that were worn in the 1950s when Disney's animated version was originally released. Movie versions today still incorrectly depict the shoe as a close-backed shoe with a narrow high heel, instead of the mule style slipper that more accurately reflects fashion trends of the seventeenth century. One can envision Cinderella's slipper as a mule for several reasons; primarily, this style was gaining popularity among women during the late seventeenth century, making it conceivable that Cinderella's slipper would reflect this growing fashion. Secondly, the openness of the mule inherently facilitates accidental or intentional removal as is the case in *Cendrillon.* The very word "slipper" indicates a shoe that is "slipped" onto the foot, like a mule. Originally *pantoufles* were "indoor slippers [that] were mule form...without heel quarters. There were a variety of colours and materials, worn by both sexes."[109] Cinderella's heels were the very height of late seventeenth century fashion and sexuality, but their inherent sexuality is the final reason that supports the mule. DeJean explains how the new shoe trend took the footwear to a surprisingly risqué level:

> Fashion plates make it clear that the mule was the footwear of choice to accompany that revolutionary new way of dressing, the déshabillé, the casual look whose arrival was announced with great fanfare in the January 1678 issue of *Le Mercure gallant*...and just as the déshabillé, originally reserved for the boudoir, soon began to be seen in public, so did the mule.[110]

There is something inherently sexy about the foot that is dressed, but so close to being undressed, that it hints at erotic possibilities. DeJean describes this dichotomy: "Leaving the foot half undressed, half exposed; easily kicked off; ideal for dangling provocatively from the toes...the mule quickly left behind its past as a humble bedroom slipper and became the déshabillé négligé of footwear, the sexiest shoe in town."[111] French artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806) draws on the erotic symbolism of mules in his 1767 painting *The Happy Accidents of the Swing* where

[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid., p. 89.
[109] June Swann, *Shoes,* B.T. Batsford LDT, London, England,1982, p. 22. An ellipsis was added by the author of this article, Leslie Anderson.
[110] DeJean, op cit., p. 97. An ellipsis was added by the author of this article, Leslie Anderson.
[111] Ibid., p. 98. An ellipsis was added by the author of this article, Leslie Anderson.

a male figure takes advantage of a racy view provided by the swing's motion while a female figure's mule flies off her foot (Figure 3).[112]

Figure 3: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *Les Hasards Heureux de l'Escarpolette,* 1767, Oil on Canvas, 81 x 64.2 cm, Wallace Collection, London, England, © Wikipedia Commons.

Cinderella's Glass Slippers

As Cinderella intentionally leaves one of her slippers behind at the ball, she is flirting with her romantic interest. This scene is seductive, and it initiates an amorous chase in which the prince becomes the hunter who must seek out his prey. Cendrillon is thus a skilled coquette, playing hard

to get. Perrault's description of Cinderella as a doe taking flight becomes a clever metaphor for the hide–and–seek game that Cinderella begins as she dashes away from the ball. Her playful side tempts the prince to come and find her and see what other articles of clothing she may take off. If "the mule was the foot fetishist's dream," then it is possible to imagine the level of seduction this suggests in Perrault's fairy tale.[113] As the prince takes care to gently collect Cinderella's slipper, the shoe becomes a synecdoche for the missing heroine. The prince protects the delicate slipper, demonstrating that he would cherish and treat Cinderella with care. The connection between shoes, eroticism, and female sex organs has historical precedent. One of the most well–known examples is found in the foot binding of traditional Chinese culture.[114] It is out of the scope of this article to argue for a close comparison between the three–inch lotus foot and Cinderella's *pantoufle,* but it will suffice to say that many see a similarity in the sexual desire produced by the sight of tiny, tightly bound feet and the enclosed feet of Cinderella. If small feet are an erotic stimulant for foot binding cultures, something can be said for the dainty elegance of Cinderella's little feet. Todd Lyon nostalgically remembers the flawlessness of the princess' feet as she glides through Disney's animated film:

> Ah, but Cinderella– she floated. Her feet were so small that they barely touched the ground. When the love–crazed prince went from door to door with Cinderella's glass slipper...what he was really looking for was the woman with the smallest feet in the kingdom. Those tiny feet were the very definition of refinement.[115]

This depiction of an almost swan–like woman, drifting across the dance floor ties into the erotic fantasy of small feet, and the fetishistic devotion they incite. DeMello points out the cross–cultural emphasis on small, dainty feet in practically all of the known versions of Cinderella and has proven how widespread Cinderella narratives are across Europe and Asia.[116] The prevalence of this particular plot element makes it impossible to deny the cultural value of small feet and the possibility that these feet incite erotic desire.

In addition to the erotic symbolism of the deserted shoe, Cinderella's slipper represents a rite of passage and marriage. Arnold Lebeuf identifies rich historical traditions involving the removal of a shoe. Balls are a symbolic moment rich with potential and expectations. Lebeuf explains, "For a young lady, the first ball is one of life's crucial moments, an essential step, and it is therefore very poignant that Cinderella loses her slipper there."[117] Balls were a socially appropriate setting for matchmaking, husband hunting, and romantic notions of love at first sight. It makes sense then that there is an expectation for romantic attention to lead to a proposal. The fact that the prince is a bachelor makes him the most desired target for single women in attendance. There is an understanding that the stepmother would intentionally exclude the beautiful Cinderella from this event in hopes that her daughters may shine brighter without her present. The Fairy Godmother undermines the stepmother's intentions and gives the heroine the wardrobe she needs to catch the eye of the most eligible bachelor. Since balls were venues for ambitious marital conquests, it is natural to find a symbol of marriage in Perrault's tale. Cinderella's abandoned slipper evokes a very curious French tradition that would take place on the wedding night.
Cinderella's lost slipper initially makes one think of the well–known marriage tradition in France where, at the end of the ceremony, the young bride absconds with her husband, abandoning the guests, but not before leaving them with one of her shoes. It's from drinking from and passing around this shoe that the guests will get drunk. But let's leave the partiers there. The bride, running

[113] Ibid., p. 96.
[114] For more on footbinding and its potential links to Cinderella, see Lebeuf, 1989.
[115] Todd Lyon, "Big Feets; or, How Cinderella's Glass Slippers Got Smashed under the Heel of a Size Ten Doc Marten," *Footnotes: On Shoes,* Edited by Shari Benstock and Suzanne Ferriss, Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, United States, 2001, p. 292. An ellipsis was added by the author of this article, Leslie Anderson.
[116] DeMello, op cit., p. 61
[117] Lebeuf, op cit., p. 167.

away during the night, hides and goes to be with her man. As soon as they arrive at the door, the husband lifts her into his arms and carries her into the bedchamber, one foot shod, one foot naked. Cinderella's abandoned shoe and her escape are a message to the prince, a promise, and a calling card.[118]

In leaving behind her slipper, Cinderella alludes to their future union and evokes the wedding night. The prince's erotic desire for Cinderella is what motivates him to stop at nothing to find her. Figure 4 illustrates an example of a seventeenth century embroidered mule that resembles the general shape of the *pantoufles* that would have been worn by Cinderella. These mules, made of wood and leather instead of glass, are evidence of the style of mule heels were worn in during the time in which Perrault wrote his fairy tales.[119] The fact that mules were typically worn in more private, intimate settings only adds to the risqué aspect of Cinderella wearing this style of footwear in public. In addition to the racy promises that the shoe portends, Margo DeMello explains how Cinderella's *pantoufle* suggests marriage:

> The fact that it is the shoes that are the key to Cinderella's happiness can be explained by the long historical association between weddings and shoes. If the bride's shoes represent the transfer of a woman from her home to her husband's, and her submission to her husband, then it's not surprising that in "Cinderella" the slipper represents her one hope for love and marriage.[120]

A bride would wear a special pair of shoes on the day of her union that were crafted specifically for her wedding. The uniqueness of Cinderella's glass slippers is not only seductive, but it alludes to wedding shoes and the marital union between the heroine and the prince. The shoe is a "promise of a future return," symbolizing that their story is far from over.[121] The prince's hunt for the mysterious woman is an erotic chase to fulfil his sexual desire while complying with societal traditions and expectations of courtship and marriage.

Figure 4: *Pair of Slippers*, circa 1660–1665, Maker Unknown, Wood, Leather and Silk. © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.860&A-1974, Photographed 19 February 2003.

While this article has provided ample evidence that Cinderella's glass slipper was a mule, there remains one incongruous aspect to this argument. Given the nature of slip–on heels as less constricting, it is possible for a person to easily fit into a pair of mules that are slightly too large or too small for their feet. The *pantoufle* left behind by the heroine during her hasty escape could foreseeably fit many feet in the kingdom, although perhaps not as perfectly as it fit Cinderella. Perrault rectifies this dilemma when Cendrillon produces the matching slipper. It is therefore Cinderella's ability to show the shoe's

[118] Ibid., p. 169.
[119] The 'forked toe' of this slipper was the height of fashion during the 1660s and early 1670s. The square toe has been exaggerated to droop over the sole at both corners. Typical of the late 17th century is the white rand, the narrow band of white leather between the sole and the upper.
[120] DeMello, op cit., pp.63–64.
[121] Lebeuf, op cit., p. 169.

twin that proves her identity, in addition to the perfect fit of the delicate slipper. In completing the pair of slippers, Cinderella proves undeniably that she is the woman who won over the prince at the ball and disappeared into the night leaving behind a single glass slipper. With this element in play, Perrault ties up any loose ends that could come of the shoe fitting multiple women. The glass slipper is unmistakably a one-of-a-kind product and the ability for anyone else aside from the original owner to produce a replica is implausible.

The material of Cinderella's wedding-like slippers is deliberate and revealing. Glass, as transparent material, indicates openness and a lack of concealment. On the surface of *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* it seems to be the exact opposite; instead of representing the heroine unconcealed, the slippers and her regalia *are* a disguise, masking her truly miserable situation in life. How is it then that transparency can conceal so effectively that Cinderella is not even recognized by her family at the ball? With the notion of transparency in mind, we can decode the meaning of Perrault's concluding moral. The author states,

> Beauties, this gift is worth more than a good hairdo,
> To promise your heart, to follow through with it,
> Good grace is the true Fairy's gift.
> Without it, one can achieve nothing, with it, everything.[122]

The beautiful garment, accessories and the splendid coif that make up this appearance are secondary to the "true gift of the fairies," grace and nobility of spirit. For Cinderella at the ball there is disguised in the fact that she is unrecognizable to her own family, yet at the same time the elaborate raiment reflects her true nobility and grace. Her ball disguise is less a disguise than a correction of a false identity forced upon her by her family. It is the identity that her stepsisters have thrust upon her, that of "Ash-bottom" and "Ash-maiden" which conceals Cinderella's true self. After all, we must not forget that Cinderella's true identity was stripped from her when her stepsisters christened her *Culcendron* and *Cendrillon* and demoted her status in life to that of servant. The glass slippers, in conjunction with her luxurious clothing, reveal important facets of Cinderella's identity. The heroine is caught in an in-between status, cinder maid and royalty. This dichotomy is apparent as she escapes from the ball: while one foot is richly ornamented by the glass slipper, the other foot reflects her impoverished and mistreated situation as maid to her sisters and stepmother. This conflict of identity ties in with the idea that Cendrillon is "masked" by transparency. While Cinderella begins the tale as an ash-bottomed girl, represented by her bare foot during the escape, Cinderella's gilded foot represents her inner nobility and her future marriage to the prince. Just as glass is shaped by fire, Cinderella rises from the ashes of her former life to become her true self. When Cinderella arrives at the balls dazzling and bejewelled, Cinderella "the ash maiden" is a phoenix transformed.

Conclusion

This article imagines the glass slipper in Perrault's *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* as an open-backed mule slip-on heel, based upon textual circumstances and the rising popularity of mules at the court of Louis XIV. The author's proximity to court life would ensure that he was aware of the latest trends and that he would use his daily experiences as inspiration for his fairy tales. Through the analysis of styles that were worn during the late seventeenth century, we gain a more accurate understanding of Cinderella's footwear and the cultural significance of that particular style as it was relevant to the period. Perrault including the mule in his narrative reflects the cultural importance and influence of these shoes during the late seventeenth century. In addition to drawing upon trends from the French court, Perrault may have also found inspiration in the king's personal cobbler, Nicolas Lestage, who reportedly made a pair of seamless leather boots so fine it was as if they were blown glass. The connection between glass and footwear conceivably served as more

[122] Perrault, op cit., p. 279.

inspiration for the author. Further parallels between the author and cobbler indicate that Perrault may have been aware of his work and history.

Understanding Cinderella's slippers to have been open–backed mules unveils a previously unacknowledged erotic element to the classic fairy tale. The mule slipper came into fashion as a private, intimate house shoe. Women could slip into and out of these shoes without assistance, making them ideal for clandestine romantic trysts. Wearing a slipper like this in public would therefore be a bold, risqué fashion choice that insinuated promiscuity. This article demonstrates that Cinderella wore this new daring shoe style because they *were* the height of fashion, and Cinderella was the most stylish woman at the ball, but also because the open–backed nature of the shoe explains how she could easily slip out of one during her escape. The underlying erotic significance of the mule lends agency to the heroine, who expresses her desire for marriage and romance by setting the prince on a game of hide–and–seek. Cinderella employs her slipper as a message, using a language laced with inuendo and seduction. The conflicting identities of the beloved heroine are best represented during her flight from the ball: one foot ornamented in glass, the other foot dirty and bare. Throughout the fairy tale Cinderella grapples with this dual identity. She is born noble, but she is brought low by her competitive and hostile stepfamily. They strip her of her rightful position and christen her "ash–maiden." The remainder of Perrault's narrative aims to return Cinderella to her rightful status. The audience first encounters Cinderella as tattered and ash–covered, then suddenly she is resplendent in silver and gold. Her escape from the ball highlights this dichotomy. The transparency of Cinderella's slipper reflects the heroine's authenticity, demonstrating that her true character upholds qualities of nobility, honesty, and goodness. Analysis of Cinderella's shoes reveals the extent to which the heroine was proactive in finding her happy ever after. It additionally provides ample insight into seventeenth century fashion regarding popular shoe styles and their socio–cultural relevance that would be lost by a modern audience. The popularity of the Cinderella story speaks to the staying power of this heroine's rags–to–riches tale as well as to the significance of a good pair of shoes.

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A Marriage of Contradictions: The Sartorial Designs of a Regency Yorkshire Wedding Dress

Esther Wilson

Introduction

Through the lens of a wedding gown worn by seventeen-year-old Mary Norcliffe in 1807 (Figure 1), this work explores how Regency provincial gentry may have navigated a complex sartorial realm within one of the period's most symbolically significant, public occasions: the wedding. Negotiating the necessary utility of a marital garment pregnant with appropriate virtue and the desire for making fashionable choices according to international sartorial trends, the study will explore what the complex decision-making process may have been for a provincial regency bride and her family. In order to do so, the study will make use of Wigley's conception of "masking," whereby clothing is conceived as an architecturally constructed "mask" that blurs the boundary between reality and fantasy.[123] By reading against the grain of the weave in order to lift the veil upon the gown's whiteness and ethereality, this study will explore what this masquerade is supposed to represent and reveal what lay within and beyond it, thus examining the very nature of the garment as masquerade.[124] In identifying and prying open the discontinuities embedded within the object, it will be seen that the materiality and visuality of the garment as a product are imbued with complex contradictions that nuance the utility of understanding clothing as a transparent form of masking, thereby materially and socially enriching Wigley's work on gender and clothing.[125]

Figure 1: *Wedding Gown,* circa 1807, Embroidered Muslin with Cotton Threads, Lined with Linen, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.12-2013.

[123] Mark Wigley, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," in Beatriz Colomina and Jennifer Bloomer, Editors, *Sexuality & Space,* Princeton Architectural Press, New York, United States, 1992, pp. 327–389.
[124] Ibid., pp. 329–330, 356, 381.
[125] Ibid., pp. 377–379; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Routledge, Abingdon, England, 2000, p. 9.

With its columnar whiteness, delicate draping and intricate embroidery, the dress is a striking example of Regency bridal fashion; not only in the aesthetic beauty of its fashionable neoclassical design, but in its provincial provenance. Whilst a considerable body of literature considers elite European sartorial trends within the Regency period, this study is unique in demonstrating that the international fashion system was a phenomenon with which the minor gentry were able to participate , and they valued this highly. In doing so, the study contributes to the wider body of literature relating to the female experience of the material, sartorial and nuptial within Regency England as well as the growing body of literature around centre and periphery and how to understand approaches to 'mainstream' fashion. With the garment as an intricately constructed façade that transcends polarities of public and private, fashionability and utility, the study also offers some reflection upon Lacan and Foucauldian thought in considering the view and influence of 'the other' and the significance of the body in dynamics of power and control, the wedding posing an ideal virtue-charged, spiritual occasion through which to explore sartorial decision making.[126]

As this piece centres around sartorial decision-making, it is only appropriate to highlight that there seems to be no surviving documentation which evidences precisely who designed the case study gown. However, we can reasonably assume that, much like the wedding dress boutique experience of today, the bride, her mother and other close female relatives would have had influence over the design; a few years later, contemporary Jane Austen certainly infers a perceived importance of bridal design autonomy in the character of Mrs Elton, while excitable motherly influence is emphasized through Mrs Bennet.[127] However, as this article will demonstrate, it is likely that even genteel wedding dresses were intended for continued use after the wedding day and with this in mind, it would be additionally sensible to assume that Mary herself had at least some influence over the gown's final construction.

Figure 2: *London Dresses for August*, R. Sands, Published by Vernor, Hood & Sharpe, *The Lady's Monthly Museum,* 1 August 1808, Hand-Coloured Etching, 168 x 102 mm,
© National Portrait Gallery, London, England, NPG D47519.

Form

Delving into the materiality of the dress allows initial exploration of the possible intentions of the garment as a mask (Figure 1). The garment would have been carefully

[126] Wigley, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," pp. 367–368; Jane Tynan, "Michel Foucault: fashioning the body politic," in Agnès Rocamora and Anneke Smelik, Editors, *Thinking Through Fashion: A Guide to Key Theorists*, I.B. Tauris, London, London, England, 2015, p. 185; Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytical Experience," In *Écrits*, Translated by Bruce Fink in collaboration with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, United States, 2006, pp. 95–98; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Translated by Richard Nice, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States, 1984, pp. 246–250; Joanne Entwistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and* Culture, Volume 4, Issue 3, 2000, p. 332.
[127] Jane Austen, *Emma*, Penguin Classics, London, England, 2009, p. 453; Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Alma Classics, London, England, 2020, p. 215

curated to construct an image that evoked particular representations and reactions, conveying prudently chosen symbolic properties in order to be understood in particular way by contemporary onlookers, both within and following the marriage ceremony as Mary transitioned into married womanhood. This context of contemporary engagement with the gown encourages consideration of how the final design may have performed within the social expectations of Bourdieu's 'habitus' upon such a significant social moment which will remain pertinent throughout the study.[128]

Fig. 3: *London Dresses for April*, Published by Vernor, Hood & Sharpe, *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, 1 April 1808, Hand-Coloured Etching, 167 x 102 mm, © National Portrait Gallery, London, England, NPG D47517.

Through the use of translucent muslin fabric, one of the garment's most remarkable effects is that of ethereality, covering the wearer in gently billowing cascades of pale, translucent material, pleated beneath the bust and flowing out behind in a small train. Transcending temporal boundaries, the gown represents a popular neoclassical sartorial aesthetic, designed to evoke the elaborate draping found within artistic depictions of the classical era. Rather than seek to camouflage the bride as a free-flowing spirit, the gown draws attention to itself and its wearer in the latest eye-catching visual manner. Freed from the rigid structure of previous eighteenth-century fashions and the undergarments reduced to only short stays and a petticoat at most, the garment becomes a head-turning vector to a mythologised classical realm beyond the present. Though this may appear evident for us in the twenty-first century, this appearance would have been perfectly familiar and recognisable within fashionable Regency neoclassicism. The gown transforms seventeen-year-old Mary into a diaphanous, child-like figment of classical youthfulness and freedom at the very centre of attention within the marriage ceremony.[129]

Figure 4: *London Dresses for June*, Published by Vernor, Hood & Sharpe, *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, 1 June 1808, Hand-Coloured Etching, 168 x 102 mm, © National Portrait Gallery, London, England, NPG D47518.

[128] Agnès Rocamora, "Pierre Bourdeiu: The Field of Fashion," in Agnès Rocamora and Anneke Smelik, Editors, *Thinking Through Fashion: A Guide to Key Theorists*, I.B. Tauris, London, London, England, 2015, pp. 241–244; Entwistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body," pp. 332, 336, 340–341, 344.

[129] Ulrich Lehmann, "Tigersprung: Fashioning History," in Peter McNeil, Editor, *Fashion: Critical and Primary Sources- The Nineteenth Century*, Berg, Oxford, England, 2009, pp. 132–133; Peter Wollen, "The Concept of Fashion in the Arcades Project," *boundary* 2, Volume 30, Issue 1, 2003, pp. 132–133.

However, closer examination of the garment nuances this image of transcendent neoclassical escapism and adds complexity to Mary's composition. Confronted with the gown's brilliant whiteness, we are encouraged to further interrogate its surface and structure.[130] The stark straightness of the square neckline and blunt underlining of the bust disrupt the waterfall of muslin. One's eye is drawn to the placement of the arms far around the back of the structured bodice, responsible for coercing the wearer's posture into that of an upright column.

Figure 5: *Walking Dress and Full Dress*, Probably R. Sands, Published by Vernor, Hood & Sharpe, *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, 1 November 1807, Hand-Coloured Etching, 155 x 96 mm, © National Portrait Gallery, London, England, NPG D47506.

This almost transforms the gently flowing pleats into ridges chiselled from stone. The shocking whiteness created by layers of translucent fabric becomes a polished marble surface, an opaque layer of outer skin between reality and fantasy, a lucent beacon imbuing Miss Norcliffe with the socially expected virtues of purity and wholeness, quite literally set in stone. Ylivuori has emphasised the importance of external appearance and behaviour as a vehicle for Regency gentlewomen to represent themselves to society; with this in mind, the gown can be seen a beautiful, artificial construction which performatively cements Mary as an ideal Regency bride within the ceremony. However, the intensity of this as a masquerade aesthetic seems to demand much more than surface interrogation of clothed characteristics. Paying close attention to the location of the embroidery upon the gown suggests possible deeper significance of the use of bridal masquerade and begins to deepen the juxtapositions therein. If the gown presents Mary as a column, its embroidery is an imprisoning ivy that both enhances and subsumes the wearer; defining the limits of bodily movement around the neck and arm lines, wrapping around the torso and calling the swell of the train to its abrupt embankment. As if an ornamented living statue, the bride is encased by the embroidery, an unchanging sculpture of animated stone. Another popular contemporary sartorial image, some have argued that a woman's choice to appear as if a living statue was one of empowerment.[131] However, within the context of the marital expectations and moral demands of Regency marriage, the decision-making that went into designing the garment could be seen as symbolic of the rigid stone of convention and societal expectation on such a morally supercharged and spiritual occasion; just as Mary lost her rights to property ownership or independent freedom, this imagery perhaps presents a transition from free-spirited youth to the controlled liberties and standards of married life. The expectations of womanliness and "cultural constructions of gender" are not only constructed upon the bride's bodily frame, but the gown can be read to suggest that she is perhaps intended to become these entirely.[132] While this may be a fitting conclusion to draw from examining the function of a sartorial

[130] Wigley, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender, p. 366.
[131] Amelia Rauser, *The Age of Undress: Art, Fashion and the Classical Ideal in the 1790's*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, United States and England, 2020, pp. 71–74.
[132] Caroline Evans, "Masks, Mirrors and Mannequins: Elsa Schiaparelli and the Decentered Subject," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and* Culture, Volume 3, Issue 1, 1999, pp. 4, 7; Wigley, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," pp. 335–336.

masquerade, there is significance in recalling that the 'natural' beauty of the marble neoclassical statues, which so inspired such fashions, is reputed to have been frequently covered, or enhanced, with layers of artificial paint; the ultimate utility of the sartorial as masquerade is much more complex than external appearance alone.[133]

Making Yorkshire Fashionable

Deeper interrogation of the specific sartorial design allows us to further explore the idea of the dress as a mask that not only had utility through robing the bride in appropriate virtues, but which was to also be suitably fashionable in accordance with contemporary trends, in spite of what might be ordinarily expected from its provincial provenance. As many museum fashion collections continue a traditional focus on the presentation of the most elite (and thereby best-preserved and high-fashion) garments, the dress offers a unique sartorial study of those removed from society's uppermost echelons. Closer examination of the gown suggests that, having drawn upon a variety of in vogue sources for the garment's design and construction, the Norcliffe family were those whom portraying a fashionable appearance through masquerade was perhaps equally as significant as signifying moral or personal qualities. Fashionability was not the sole reserve of the court and its crowd.

Aside from the general drawing of inspiration from contemporary sartorial modes already discussed, the specific structure of the dress is the immediate indication of this. Mary Norcliffe's wedding is believed to have taken place in June 1807, meaning that the gown must have been designed and prepared some time beforehand. In light of this, the construction of the gown is impressively current when comparing it to various fashion plates from the *Lady's Monthly Museum* that circulated shortly after the 1807 summer season (Figs. 2-5). The clean-cut square neckline, for example, bears a remarkable resemblance to that of the 1807 November plate for a walking dress, whilst the effect of the pleated fabric emanating from the bust is highly similar to that of a London dress for April 1808 (Figure 3). The structural similarities to a variety of different types of neoclassical dress are striking, particularly for a provincial occasion to which many less-wealthy brides would be expected to simply wear their best ensemble.

Figure 6: Detail, *Wedding Gown,* circa 1807, Lace Embroidery, © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.12-2013.

Perhaps the gown's most arresting comparison to contemporary fashion regards the embroidery. Plates from *The Lady's Monthly Museum* show that the location of the embroidery, which runs asymmetrically across the gown, echoes the design for London dresses for June 1808 (Figure 4). The design of the embroidered foliage (Figure 6) is broadly similar to the dresses for August 1808 and the detailing around the square neckline and hem of the November 1807 walking dress (Figure 5). Such magazines, along with published commentaries and satires on the sartorial tides, were highly popular within Regency society, but this crucially evidences how the Norcliffe's small country seat had easy, rapid access to the latest fashion plate publications; fashionable ideas

[133] Wigley, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," pp. 356, 366.

travelled quickly beyond the metropolis.[134]

The relevance of the gown's embroidery also transports the garment beyond the fashionable British context, providing insight into the functionality of the global fashion trend cycle. The asymmetrical embroidery, for example, is found not only on a French dress from 1805, but a distinctly similar use of embroidery around the train can be seen dress worn by Elizabeth Patterson of Baltimore, USA, in 1804-5 (Figs. 7 and 8 respectively). This connection is particularly exciting because this latter dress was originally thought to have been worn for Patterson's wedding to the brother of Napoleon Bonaparte.[135] Comparing the garments pictured in Figure 1 and Figure 8, one can see clear similarities between the two gowns. Significantly within a broader context, this alludes to an undisclosed mechanism for how the height of fashion for the highest international echelons spread throughout Europe, from international centre to localised margin. That a comparatively socio-economically insignificant Yorkshire gentry teenager and her immediate circle was by whatever means able to access these ideas in advance of her wedding day, alludes to just how interconnected the fashion industry was in the early nineteenth century.

Figure 7: *French Dress*, circa 1805, Cotton, Wool, Metal, © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States, 2012.89.

This suggests an additional insight into the complex function of Miss Norcliffe's wedding masquerade. On the one hand, by selecting designs inspired by the most fashionable of her day, the marriage and its outfit could have been seen as an opportunity to assume a new, individual identity to some extent, which is perhaps best reflected within the precise design of the embroidery. Oak leaves were extraordinarily popular within neoclassical design; not only as a British tree denoting strength, but as a common feature within classical art since antiquity. The presence of the venerated foliage echoes that of elaborate classical wreaths and sculptures, translating these images onto the identity of the person behind the mask.[136]With this in mind, the design could be read as an attempt to attain the fashionable; foliate designs are well reflected within *The Lady's Monthly Museum* fashion plates of November 1807 and August 1808 (see Figs. 2 and 5). However, what is more unusual is the inclusion of daisies and particularly zig-zags within the embroidery; though zig-zag cuts could be occasionally found within the cut and draping of fabric of fashionable ensembles (see Figs. 2

[134] "Wedding Dress," *V&A* 2020, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1261897/wedding-dress-unknown/., Accessed 4 January.

[135] "Evening Dress," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2020, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/81135, Accessed 4 January 2021.

[136] Paul Kendall, "Oak Mythology and folklore," *Tress for Life*, 2020, https://treesforlife.org.uk/into-the-forest/trees-plants-animals/trees/oak/oak-mythology- and-folklore/, Accessed 27 December 2020/; "Gold Wreath," *The British Museum* 2020, https://www.bmimages.com/preview.asp?image=00037618001/, Accessed 27December 2020.

and 4), having this within the embroidery represents ornamentation rarely seen within extant Regency garments. Yet, this revelation is further complicated when considering the provenance of the material itself – an Indian muslin, designed and produced to appeal to the British market on the other side of the world.

Although Miss Norcliffe could have felt some individual freedom within the design of her wedding gown, the embroidery's location upon the gown becomes testament to the limitations set by the control of the sartorial, blending utility and fashionability, individualism and convention. Reaching across and around her body and limbs and their movement, it speaks of an international Regency fashion machine that extended from the international *beau monde* to the depths of her Yorkshire home at Langton Hall. This not only contributes uniquely to the consumption and socio-economic history of Yorkshire but encourages us to understand further how these decisions may have been made by the Norcliffe family. Such steps may be impossible to trace in their entirety, but the pursuit of doing so encourages consideration of what the resulting mask does *not* convey to us.

Figure 8: *French Evening Dress*, 1804–1805, Cotton, Muslin, Lace, © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States, 1983.6.1.

The Imperial Waistline: Appropriation and Acceptance

Although popularised by the highest *beau monde* of western society, the history of the Regency silhouette has a troubled history that deepens the conflicting image and purity of meaning within Mary's gown. As recently explored by Rauser, as much as the 1790s emergence

of the high-waisted *robes á la grecque* can be said to have come from classical art and statuary, both the form and fabric of loosening western sartorial styles from the 1780s also took distinct inspiration from the common dress of enslaved Caribbean communities – their style and culture was fetishized by the ruling masters on the other side of the Atlantic, whose national and material wealth depended significantly upon the power of slavery and imperialism.[137] The term 'empire waistline', describing the silhouette which was to persist well into the 1820's, is itself therefore filled with dark irony; in fashion terms, the fact that Napoleon Bonaparte's own trend-setting wife Josephine de Beauharnais was raised on such a plantation some 6,800km across the ocean from her life as European Empress, is somewhat unremarkable.

Rauser also notes that the visual sartorial similarities to depictions of enslaved persons from the 1770s is morally challenging when comparing the stylisation of elite European children and stylistically "child-like" women from the late-1780s and 1790s. The creation of flowing, loosely-structured white muslin gowns within a picture of European classicism that denotes youthfulness, purity and a classical heritage contrasts sharply with the dark realities of enslaved life and the manufacture process. Complex sartorial appropriation lay at the heart of the international slave trade and industrial revolutions that were still very much in force by 1807, providing clues as to what our case study wedding gown may have been hiding within its own materiality and masquerade identity, whether knowingly or not.

By 1807, the penchant for muslin gowns may have become firmly established within European sartorial design and considerably more structured and columnar in style than their 1780–90s predecessors, but the industrial conditions underpinning the fashion industry's wider manufacture were little better. As part of wider revolutions in British cloth-making technology, muslin had been transformed from an exotic cotton product grown and manufactured abroad to something which could be made on our own home turf. Slave-produced raw cotton was shipped in from North America or Caribbean territories as part of an international cotton trade from which Britain was to benefit enormously in the later nineteenth century. However, just as Haiti saw the first major Caribbean slave revolution, conditions for British employees within our own industrial revolution in some ways represented a socio-economic enslavement of working classes. By 1802, parliament was faced with calls to act against the "stinted growth" and "excessive hours" plaguing child workers, another dart of dark irony within "childlike" fashions.[138] Continued complaints regarding cloth manufacture were presented to parliament as the nineteenth century waned on, with particular focus on the North of England and Yorkshire where many of the 'mill towns' came to be located.[139] Such broader changes in manufacture presented not only major health and safety challenges but political crises. These were perhaps best encapsulated by the Luddite riots that centred on York only six years after Mary Norcliffe became Mrs Charles Best, a third son from a gentry family who practiced as a physician at York's mental health asylum, The Retreat, itself known for controversially moral practices and treatments.[140] The murky realities of the Regency fashion machine into which Mary's gown was born almost steeps the light, translucent fabric in an invisible moral filth.

However, it is important to bear in mind that the materials used to create Mary's gown were largely *not* British manufactured. Close examination of the weave and embroidery has revealed that although the gown was likely pieced locally, the fabric and its ornamentation were

[137] Rauser, *The Age of Undress*, pp. 93–94, 139–152.

[138] *An Act for the Preservation of the Health and Morals of Apprentices and others, employed in Cotton and other* Factories, Parliament, London, England, 22 June 1802.

[139] Randle Jackson Esq, *State of the Woollen* Manufacture, Stockdale, London, England, 1806.

[140] "Real people in Anne's world," *Listeria*, 2020, http://xldev.co.uk/listeria/Default.aspx?page=25#:~:text=The%20Norcliffes%20lived%20at%20Langton%20Hall%2C%20near%20Malton,had%20eight%20children%3A%20three%20boys%20and%20five%20girls, Accessed 2 January 2021*Listeria*, 2020, accessed January 5, 2021, http://xldev.co.uk/listeria/Default.aspx?page=25#:~:text=The%20Norcliffes%20lived%20at%20Langton%20Hall%2C%20near%20Malton,had%20eight%20children%3A%20three%20boys%20and%20five%20girls

manufactured in India.[141] In spite of advances in British industry that resulted in close imitations of Indian-sourced material, Lemire has argued that Indian muslins remained the preserve of the elite, with higher price tags labelling them as status-symbols of quality and sartorial exclusivity.[142] Once again, the provenance of her dress material posits Mary at the crux of the international regency fashion system; a minor member of Yorkshire gentry was not only able to design a gown which sartorially preceded the publication of the latest fashions, but also selected and accessed the very best material, produced tens of thousands of miles away, to form the main component of her wedding masquerade as an evidently necessary mark of subtle, qualitative distinction. Unfortunately, no paper trail exists of quite how the Indian materials made it to Langton Hall, but we do know that material emporiums in London would have likely stocked such goods, that it was common for individuals to shop on behalf of others, and that evidently such products did reach regional levels of diffusion.[143] Many British middle classes were variously engaged with the East India Company, and it could be that this link assisted in such material diffusion. It is perhaps even more remarkable to recall that this Indian-produced muslin closely matched many of the ornamentation details inscribed in the *Lady's Monthly Museum Magazine*, to which Mary gown also displayed significant similarities. The display is fascinating; a provincial British bride, displayed as a classical statue, constructed from an exotic, oriental fabric designed for such a purpose. Such a fashionable, but outwardly strange, concoction draws our attention to the complex workings of the international fashion system in the Regency period and reinforces the concept of international design and outsourced manufacture as a phenomenon not exclusive to the present modern era.

The transformation of the *robes á la grecque* from loose-fitting garments worn by enslaved communities through to the more restrictive, columnar structure of Mary's 1807 gown perhaps represents this cementation, appropriation and acceptance of the dark and international realities within sartorial expectations of the fashionable Europeans. By 1807, the Regency international fashion machine had notable similarities to today's transnational fashion system both in terms of apparent design logistics and manufacturing scandal. Although the style of the gown in terms of its visual symbolism may seem fitting for a marital occasion where notions of female virtue were highly valued, reading against the grain reveals how this imagery of blinding, ornamental whiteness is inextricably subsumed in more complex realities. The deployment of such a gown within a highly symbolic and public marital occasion, which was understood to be before God, only highlights the perceived need for a mask which surpasses the boundaries of internal and external.

Conclusion: A marriage of contradictions

Focusing on a wedding dress from 1807 this study has been able to broaden, deepen and complicate understandings of sartorial decision making for provincial gentry within the Regency period. It highlights the way complex visual, material and moral contradictions can be navigated and problematized through the sartorial due to the levels of symbolism and power bestowed upon clothing as a form of masquerade. The question of how to manage the problematic realities within the literal and immaterial fabric of the finished product remains difficult. Despite the religious and public significance of Regency marriage and the need to present oneself appropriately, the intensity of the outward mask of wholeness and purity apparently required for the teenage bride may seem strange to modern eyes, which would assume reasonable moral innocence for a 17-year-old that would not need to be 'masked' by a cocktail of visual and material imagery. It appears that the

[141] "Wedding dress," *V&A*.

[142] Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain 1660-1800*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1991, p. 78; Hilary Davidson, "Regency Dress and Dressmaking: Material Evolution in Regency dress construction," in Serena Dyer and Chloe Wigston Smith, *Material Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Nation of Makers*, Bloomsbury, New York, United States, 2020, p. 183.

[143] Mary Hafner-Laney, "I was tempted by a pretty coloured muslin': Jane Austen and the Art of Being Fashionable," *Persuasions*, Volume 32, Issue 1, 2010, p. 142; Elisabeth Gernerd, "Fancy feathers: The feather trade in Britain and the Atlantic World," in Serena Dyer and Chloe Wigston Smith, Editors, *Material Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Nation of* Makers, Bloomsbury, New York, United States, 2020, p. 209.

dress functions as masquerade in a complex manner, operating not only in terms of imbuing virtue upon Mary and representing her transition from child to woman, but in standing testament to how this had to be done within a manner deemed distinctively 'fashionable'. Nuancing Wigley's concept of external masquerade, both inward and outward appearances appear to hold considerable significance. In this way, the dress as masquerade both cements and blurs the relationship between the sartorial and the moral, a microcosm which contributes to wider debates on the rights and wrongs of fashion.

For Mary, the complexities of the garment became ironically foundational for her married life to come; whilst it may have appeared ideal in the form of a gown, it was not to be thoroughly stable, pure or whole. Her husband Charles passed away after only ten years, leaving Mary widowed with two children. On top of personal tragedy, by the 1830s Mary's family and siblings had become embroiled in scandal involving the homosexual relationships of Anne Lister, unacceptable within nineteenth-century society and largely covered until the mask of coded diary information was uncovered in the later twentieth century.[144] Meanwhile, the gown became used as any many other 'best dresses' were within the Regency period, with evidence of adaptations and re-use over the years to suit new purposes aside from its original significance and intent.[145] In light of its own original masquerade navigating black and white, the garment ultimately serves as a reminder of the realities of life as grey: there are no truly stable structures.[146]

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[144] "Real people in Anne's world," *Listeria*.
[145] "Wedding dress," *V&A*.
[146] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 6.

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Dressed for War:
The Metamorphosis of the Military Skirt

Rachel Getz-Salomon

Abstract
The skirt, a clothing item associated with hyper-masculinity from the early days of hunting to the late Middle Ages, was worn by fighters across cultures and periods, with a broad, short cut, allowing freedom of movement. It accentuated the masculine leg, highlighting the body's lower part and marking the warrior out as animalistic, natural, a "war material" in the service of his people. In late medieval period, skirts entered the female wardrobe, assuming a movement-restricting, passivity-defining shape, and the item gradually disappeared from male and military wardrobes. With the advent of modern armies, with women in their ranks, the skirt returned to the military uniforms repertoire, but veered from its historical role and came to denote incompetence for battle. The following article employs historical analysis to explore the gender-related reincarnations of the military skirt, while looking into its material metamorphosis from a male object, the ultimate combat wear, to a female item that highlights de-familiarisation and exclusion from combat settings.

Introduction
Scholars of various disciplines and diverse research perspectives have explored the military uniform.[147] In relation to the uniforms' sartorial repertoire, the skirt has been neither researched in itself nor extensively discussed. This article seeks to dwell on the military skirt as a unique clothing item of the military wardrobe, while tracing the military skirt's evolution, from an ancient masculine combat garment, through its casting as an integral part of the warrior's closet through the middle medieval times, to its modern incarnation as a female military clothing item. The present article examines the contexts of the skirt's transformation from a "masculine" combat attire to a "feminine" one, which stands for unfitness for combat and de-familiarisation and exclusion from the combat setup. For this research, I employed a combination of historical and material studies, focusing on the social and cultural norms that attended the skirt's constitution as a "masculine" or "feminine" clothing item.

The analysis examines numerous contexts where the skirt figures as either a masculine or feminine item, a distinction that falls along technical qualities of form and material. The material issues raised by this gendered clothing item, such as pattern, length and size, offer the material basis for historical-cultural research of the relationship between material and form, on the one hand, and socio-cultural definitions on the other. The article charts the skirt's history from the ancient masculine skirt, a key item in a repertoire that allowed optimal combat conditions for the warrior, to the departure from it in favour of uniform trousers. I shall trace this ancient object's evolution to its modern version, a women-only uniform skirt, and discuss the gender issues thrown up by this specific clothing object.

Skirt = Masculinity: The History of the Skirt
The skirt is one of the oldest, most varied and consistent forms of clothing. This is largely down to the fact that it is easy to prepare, as an immediate, simple wear. The first skirts were the mantle skirts: rectangular pieces bound, tied, or tightened (with a belt) around the waist area or above the

[147]James Laver, *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History*, Thames and Hudson, London, England, 1995; 2010, p. 15; Carrie Hertz, "The Uniform: As Material, as Symbol, as Negotiated Object," *Midwestern Folklore*, Volume 32, Issues 1–2, 2007, pp. 43–56; Paul Fussell, *Uniforms: Why We Are What We Wear*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, United States, 2002; Jennifer Craik, *Uniform Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression*, Berg, Oxford, England, 2005; Jennifer Craik, "The Cultural Politics of the Uniform," *Fashion Theory*, 2003, Volume 7, Issue 2, pp. 127–147; Martin Windrow, *Warriors: Fighting Men and Their Uniforms*, Osprey Publishing, Oxford and New York, England and United States, 2015 and others.

loin, designed to hide and protect this part of the body (like the loincloth). Similarly, the sewn skirt is an accessible clothing item that does not require a complicated cut or many stitches. A simple thread of tendon, curled straw, wool, or a leather band between fibres or holes in either piece was enough to utilise it for wearing.

Figure 1:Panel fragment depicting hunting and battle scenes, circa 8th–7th century BC, Iran, © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States, 51.131.9.

Throughout history, skirts were a clothing item associated with the male sphere, an object bound up with masculinity and its manifestation. They revealed the male leg, the body part that stood for male strength and audacity. Accordingly, in ancient Egypt (2130–500 BC), the military system was sophisticated and complex, while clothes in the kingdom, in contrast, were simple in shape.[148] Men would wear short skirts known as *Shendyt*, made of rectangular fabric and waistbands, sometimes folded or gathered at the front and cut above the knees.[149] The skirt was the most widespread exclusively masculine clothing item, represented as a garment worn by gods, pharaohs, warriors, commoners and workingmen alike, distinct by the fabric material (no evidence exists that women wore skirts in ancient Egypt). The attire comprised a long garment, usually hung or tied from the neck and shoulder area. Such a garment was also depicted in some of the frescoes on Pharaoh himself. Ancient Egyptian culture borrowed the skirt from the dress' repertoire of the ancient hunter. For him, it had become the ultimate clothing item for hunting, covering, and protecting the genitals, while ensuring maximum freedom of movement. Foot control was a central practice in the hunting process; the legs were a significant organ for the ancient hunter, a stable base for accomplishing his mission.

Fighting was the consequence of the hunting act, from which warfare techniques and loose physical conduct of full leg mobility ensued. According to Martin Windrow, fighters' clothing choice was generally a practical one, mainly for movement ability and optimal weapons use.[150] Thus, the primary use of the skirt, a masculine wear, has been documented as worn mainly by various

[148] Also according to paintings of the soldiers of Pharaoh Ramesses II (c. 1303 BC – 1213 BC). Windrow, op cit.
[149] It was not until 1420 BC that a long, sleeveless shirt appeared, worn over a pleated skirt that sometimes folded like a pantsuit. This tunic also appeared alongside the skirt as a prevailing male garment on the battlefield. Tom Tierney, *Ancient Egyptian Fashions*, Dover, Mineola, NY, United States, 1999, pp. 3–49.
[150] Windrow, op cit.

warriors.[151] The Kingdom of Sumer in Mesopotamia registered two categories of clothing, the most important of them involving a male ceremonial outfit, with a fur skirt tied to a sheep wool belt.[152] Skirts were also the ultimate male battle wear in ancient Greece and Rome, highlighting the concept of ideal masculinity. In these cultures, the skirt sealed the appearance of youth's ideal, as a form of hyper-masculinity, while showcasing manhood.

The skirt became the ultimate battle clothing item, being easy to put on and take off, thus allowing mobility and exposing the torso and legs. And so, throughout history, the skirt's role had been maintained as an item that validated a potent masculinity. In early medieval Europe, the skirt was an omnipresent, essential clothing item for soldiers of all combat units. Battle skirts made of leather, iron, tin, cotton and linen, were also worn over trousers and tunics, while knights wore short trousers or long metal skirts that covered the straps connecting the iron legs to the chest area.[153]

Figure 2: Limestone statue of a bearded warrior, Early Hellenistic, late 4th–3rd century BC, Cyprus, 27.3 x 15.2 x 8.3 cm, © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States, 74.51.2600

Together with other traditional clothing pieces in this wardrobe, the skirt stood for status and standing in the masculine sartorial repertoire, alongside other daily clothing items. The trousers are one of them, which gradually became the most popular and widely-owned male clothing item in the West. To comprehend the skirt's evolution as an exclusively feminine clothing item, we must consider trousers' development into a male clothing item and a mark of modern masculinity. The first documented trousers from sixth century BC were found on rock carvings in Persepolis.[154] Back then, Scythian, Sarmatian, Sogdian, Bactrian, Armenian men and women, as well as people of other Eastern cultures, wore trousers.[155] In ancient Greece, trousers were seen as a ridiculous, inferior clothing item, associated with those Eastern cultures and therefore shunned by the Greek. The Roman Republic similarly distinguished between East and West, perceiving Greek and Minoan wear as a representation of progress, with trousers consigned to the uncultured East.[156] Trousers, however, entered the Roman sartorial repertoire with the Roman Empire's expansion beyond the

[151] In other cultures, than the Western one, the skirt was also worn by women, but usually as an undergarment, mainly for modesty and warming purposes.

[152] This wool is called "Kaunakes", which became the name of the garment itself, the skirt with the belt. Francois Boucher, *20.000 Years of Fashion: The History of Costume and Personal Adornment*, Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1987.

[153] Phyllis G. Tortora and Sandra J. Keiser, *The Fairchild Books Dictionary of Fashion*, Fairchild Books, New York, United States, 2014, p.11.

[154] The oldest trouser-shaped garment was found on mummies in western China and dates from the 10th-13th century BC. Blanche Payne, *History of Costume*, Harper & Row, New York, United States, 1965, pp. 49–51.

[155] Sarah M Nelson, *Gender in Archaeology: Analyzing Power and Prestige*, AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, CA, United States, 2004, p. 85.

[156] Laver, op cit, p. 15.

Mediterranean Basin, and became a commonly-worn, trendy item, typically under a skirt or tunic, as a legitimate form of male exterior.[157] Their acceptance had to do with the fact that as modernity evolved, towards the late Middle Ages and early into Modern History, animalism as cultural attribute that signalled power and status disappeared from western culture. The earth's cooling, starting in the fourteenth century and culminating in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, as part of the Little Ice Age, further established trousers as an essential clothing item for men and warriors.[158] Despite them wearing different forms of trousers as protection from the cold, the skirt nevertheless remained an overwear, mainly designed to signal gender and position. This form of use set off a process of rendering the item redundant, and by the late Middle Ages, warriors in skirts grew less common, only to become a rarity.

Even after trousers were adopted as men's gender-establishing item, the masculine leg remained key to strutting male prowess. Thanks to the skirt, the leg was exposed and prominent, tightly associated with significant concepts in the shaping of masculinity, like strength, power and athleticism. The skirt as formulating the masculine physique and leg as a focus of reference was also cemented in the new attire mode, which lacked the skirt. Accordingly, it has been found that in the fourteenth century, men would wear very short tunics.[159] As tailoring methods became elaborated in the fourteenth century, close-fitting, precisely-trimmed came to the fore, thus covering the male leg, to be covered with a tight-fitting wear. Men in Europe would wear very short tunics, while super-tight (mostly light-coloured) trousers covered their lower body, highlighting the legs in all their glory.[160]

These two facts were crucial in entrenching the difference between the male and female attires. This distinction grew starker over the following centuries, evident in the fact that men would wear separate clothing items, allowing their legs to stand out, while women wore one-piece items, which covered their lower body.

Skirt ≠ Fighting: Between Soldierly and Feminine

Until middle medieval times, the skirt supported men in battle, with technical features for optimal combat support. The skirt's revealing features proved advantageous, as a garment that facilitated freedom of movement, indicating physical strength and capacity, allowing the full action of the lower body. And so, via the skirt, male exposure was associated with fighting, loading it with increased strength and military notions.

The skirt gradually found its way into women's wardrobes in the late medieval period, becoming a popular, key item with the advancement of in the weaving technology. Simultaneously, trousers became the clothing item associated with progressive masculinity (and later modern masculinity), gradually established as the warrior's underlying clothing item. At the same period, the skirt was transitioning from an ultimate, distinctively masculine combat item that allowed unlimited movement, to an item generally considered across cultural wardrobe systems as movement-restricting. The skirt's gendering as a feminine object resulted in a completely different type of bodily disciplining to the one that marked its masculine instance, with long, fabric-laden, heavy feminine skirts, complete with multiple folds and undercut structures. The newly-emerged

[157] Gradually becoming acceptable, trousers were usually worn as an undergarment under a skirt or tunic. Two types of trousers became common in Rome: *feminalia*, which closes in the mid-calve, and the *braccae*, loose trousers that closing at the ankles.

[158] Rose-Shoshana Marzel, "On the Invention of Fashion in the Fourteenth Century in Italy and the South of France," *Zmanim*, Volume 136, 2016, pp. 94–103; Mann, Michael E., Zhang, Zhihua, Rutherford, Scott, Bradley, Raymond S., Hughes, Malcolm K., Shinell, Drew, Ammann, Caspar, Faluvergi, Greg and Ni, Fenbiao (2009), "Global Signatures and Dynamical Origins of the Little Ice Age and Medieval Climate Anomaly," *Science*, Volume 326, Issue 27, 2009, pp. 1256–1260.

[159] In the 15th century too, the masculine legs is key to demonstrating and asserting masculinity. Andrew Bolton, *Bravehearts: Men in Skirts*, V&A Publications, London, England, 2003.

[160] Contemporary writers went as far as blaming France's 1346 defeat as divine punishment for the too skimpy attire. Tunic became so short that Pope Urban V, tried, in vain, to prohibit it altogether.

feminine incarnation was not just unsuitable for the fight, it also jarred with this type of activity. The skirt, associated with femininity, asserted the gendered association with passivity, embellishment and movement restriction.[161] Its re-gendering as an exclusively-feminine clothing item transformed it from a sartorial masculine tool of war, into an object removed from the battle mode, associated with passivity and femininity. Wearing it marked one as unfit for the combat system. This drew on the notion that the female skirt, in all of its forms, played a cultural role that suppressed a feminine comportment in space, and as Pierre Bourdieu writes: "... the skirt which forbids or suppresses all sorts of activities (running, different types of seating, etc.)" [162]

Women have served in Western countries' armies since 1700, but were only formally recognised as a part of the military in 1940.[163] The vast majority were engaged in female-assigned roles, while only a handful were involved in active battle. Female military personnel (cooks, nurses, sewers, photographers, etc.) were issued female uniforms (including dresses, jumpers, aprons and particularly skirts). At the same time, women who served in combat roles wore male uniforms. Naomi Wolf poses an inherent tension between "professionalism" and "femininity" in society and culture.[164] Consequently, the more feminine a subject's appearance is, the more its level of professionalism is questionable, as a source of doubt and suspicion. Female soldiers' uniforms are governed by the principle that assigns a female combat soldier or "professional" military role holder uniforms with trousers. Female soldiers in the other military professions, on the other hand, will be issued skirts as part of their uniforms, signalling their particular professionalism as an element of their responsibilities.

"Discussing the uniform's design allows to comprehend the structuring of the female body in the military setting," writes Chava Bronfeld-Stein, while posing that the uniform skirt is the most typical indicator of the visual distinction between male and female soldiers.[165] The female uniform skirt, which in all its design variants stretches across the pelvis and narrows the waist, is one way to define a body with contours identified as feminine. Even today, in many armies, the uniform skirt is part of the repertoire provided to female soldiers, including those assigned to battle and officer positions. In most cases, the skirt features in a set of symbolic uniforms worn by female soldiers during ceremonies and various events, when the military ventures to the civic arena.[166] This sartorial repertoire, with the mandatory skirt, fleshes out the conflict at play between the soldierly and the feminine, so that the combat soldier is often forced/required to externalise her gender and be "feminine". Military and security activity is traditionally masculine. The woman's presence in these arenas entails engagement in a traditionally inappropriate pursuit, a fraught action in a public or male arena. Heavily gendered as it is, the skirt is ruled out for combat roles. A female combatant must wear trousers.

Uniforms affect both the behaviour of those who wear them and their viewers' behaviour.[167] Uniform homogeneity reduces visual differences (unifying process) and constructs practices of physical unity. According to Jennifer Craik, uniforms are closely associated with male ideals and

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[161] According to Zakim, this division still stands today. Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the American Republic, 1760–1860*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, United States, 2005, pp. 200–203.

[162] Pierre Bourdieu, *La Domination masculine*, SEUIL, Paris, France, 1998, p. 56.

[163] Helena Carreiras, *Gender and the Military: Women in the Armed Forces of Western Democracies*, Routledge, New York, United States, 2006, p. 42.

[164] Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*, Anchor Books, Doubleday, NY, United States, 1992, pp. 131, 179.

[165] Chava Brownfield-Stein, *Photographs of IDF Female Soldiers and the Eroticization of Civil Militarism in Israel*, Resling, Tel-Aviv, Israel, 2012, p. 60.

[166] In most armies, the trend for comparing women's and men's uniforms is widespread today. This trend gradually leads to the tearing of the military skirt from the uniform repertoire, defining it as a rare-looking festive item, and in part even its extinction.

[167] Rebecca H. Holman, "Apparel as Communication," in Elizabeth C. Hirschman and Morris B. Holbrook, Editors, *SV - Symbolic Consumer Behavior*, Association for Consumer Research, New York, NY, United States, 1991, pp. 7–15.

norms, which means that women in uniform present enigmatic and ambiguous sexuality.[168] This is due to the soldier's body, constituted around the masculinity ideal, while its presence indicates physical, emotional, and cognitive makings, emotion exclusion, impulses, self-control, and sexual restraint. Bronfeld-Stein also states that uniforms employ differentiable techniques that cement the male soldier as a man and the female soldier as a woman.[169] Wearing a skirt is perceived as the polar opposite of this physical ideal. Therefore, female combatants wear a variant of men's uniforms, while accepting the rules of the war setup, a field that excluded them throughout history. Although women have become more integrated into combat zones in recent decades, these arenas remain overwhelmingly masculine, complete with masculine characteristics. It is a clear example of how gender laws follow the male norm. To be perceived and behave as a soldier, a woman must ditch feminine protocols and adopt a masculine appearance, starting with the uniform.

In the Service of Gender: The Skirt and the Body

The skirt, like many attires, defines the body, shaping and marking it out. It involves dividing, cropping, separating and reuniting corporal categories. The skirt splits the body in half, from the lower part of the body from the waist down, while blurring and standardising the legs. According to Tim Ingold, the man in western culture is a divided creature with a civilised, evolved upper body and a lower body that is corporal, raw and primitive.[170] The evolutionary step towards the upright poise marks the waist as an area separating the body into upper and lower parts. The torso carries the human abilities that distinguish man from other creatures in nature. On the other hand, the lower body is synonymous with bestial sides, impulses/instincts and dirt, its genitals, secretions and legs all raw and primordial. This determination essentially refers to the skirt as an object that establishes, defines and secures physical boundaries.

The skirt's top line (belt) is perceived as a separator in its masculine instance, on the warrior's body. It draws the line between the rational and natural, the bestial aspect of the body. The warrior male body is traditionally designed with high endurance, built to withstand hazards and harsh natural environments and prevail over the fear of death.[171]

The warrior skirt was traditionally marked by a relatively broad, short cut (varying in length from the knee line to the loin area line).[172] Thus, the skirt's body division separated the upper parting from th e body line, highlighting the lower area. This shows the skirt as an object of both concealment and revelation. It validates, with its technical properties, a potential penetration and high physical availability. The accessibility of the loin area imparts the man in the warrior's skirt with animalism, naturalism and intuition. Hence, the skirt marks the upper part of the leg, the buttocks and the male genitals as available.

Since the eighteenth century, when trousers had already become the sole lower body wear for men, soldiers' uniforms were designed to highlight the top of the male torso in the soldier's body. The upper part was also employed for conveying one's rank, class and power. It was also the visible part of the mounted warrior; riding became a leading, essential combat practice and a status symbol. The transition to highlighting the upper body indicates a shift from the warrior soldier, figured as a natural, feral creature, to a logical, cohesive, organised being. It conveys self-control and endurance, accentuating these values as the soldier's formative characteristics. According to

[168] Jennifer Craik, *Uniform Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression*, Berg, Oxford, England, 2005, p. 97.

[169] Her book *Fantasy of the State: Photographs of IDF Female Soldiers and the Eroticization of Civil Militarism in Israel* examines the dressed female military body representations in the Israeli military sphere. This is part of the differentiating process, in which the uniforms, details, detachments and units are differentiated, while the uniform becomes a mechanism of sorting and scaling. The body of the "military woman" is positioned hierarchically, through this mechanism, as much lower than the military male body.

[170] Tim Ingold, "Culture On The Ground – The World Perceived Through the Feet," *Journal of Material Culture*, Volume 9, Issue 3, 2004, pp. 315–340.

[171] Colonel Ardant Du Picq, *Battle Studies*, John Greely and Robert C. Cotton, Translators, Macmillan, New York, United States, 2005 [1920].

[172] Saladin and Saracens' warriors were found dressed in narrow buttoned skirts.

George Mosse, in the nineteenth century, the male body image began to draw on the national movement iconography, which relied on a Victorian ideal of bodily concealment, willpower, firmness, self-control and respect.[173] These qualities were nurtured as components of the male individual's self-determination and came to define the combative heterosexual masculinity ideal. According to this image, the fighting male body developed into a depiction of an impenetrable figure that projected human defence. In order to celebrate the top part further, the bottom was also highlighted. During this period, the uniforms trousers became vertical and tight, emphasising the loin area. This emphasis, impossible with a skirt, arranges the sexual and animalistic into a precise shape, thus marking the soldier as the superior master of nature

Trousers are formulated around the Homo Erectus logic, organising the binary and hierarchical division between rational and animalistic, nature and nurture.[174] Unlike the skirt, they cannot swing and shake, stretch or swing, reveal flesh or cause physical vibrations. Pants are a simple, closed and formal item, therefore synonymous with rationality, stability, and efficiency. In his 2002 article "Men in Skirts", Steven Connor argues that from the mid nineteenth century, men's and women's garments became utterly polarised. Trousers came to be a symbol and metonymy of masculinity during that period, as an object that stimulates masculinity in the gender sphere, while sustaining male gender identity with its strength and status.[175] Connor also argues that the historical stage that saw men move to trousers is typical of the cultural scene where clothing defines identity. As a result, women in trousers are seen to gain strength with male characteristics or to as crossing the gender lines.

An intaglio engraving from the second century AD depicts the Roman Diana (Greek Artemis), the hunting and wild animal goddess, in a short skirt and hunter shoes, equipped with a bow, arrows, and pouch, alongside a greyhound or deer.[176] This depiction is a perfect example of a gendered warfare employing the combat attire. At that time, fighters wore skirts; as a fighting woman, it was befitting she should be portrayed in a combat attire, a skirt. As the skirt transitioned to under-trousers in the combatant's wardrobe, images and representations were found of women within the combat system wearing trousers. Nowadays, representations of women wearing skirts are not shown as an obvious part of the fighting, indicating that they are by no means part of the combat units, which validates their fitness for specific and "feminine" roles in the military system.

Therefore, to this day, women combatants shun the skirt, which stands for passivity. The upright man is the master of movement, and the coupling of fighting and skirt is oxymoronic, as also evident in contemporary and popular cultural representations and descriptions of warrior women. Wonder Woman, Cat Woman, Scarlet Witch, Black Widow, Elektra, Jessica Jones and Captain Marvel, to cite but some, all feature combatant females in trousers or underwear, but never in skirts. Their femininity is present, but their identity as warriors is validated through masculine signifiers and they must therefore emphasise their physical capacities and prove their bodies to be equal tools of warfare in the male sphere, where no skirts are allowed.

Conclusion

The skirt was the ancient hunter's garment, the most appropriate clothing item for his pursuit. Following the hunting activity, the skirt was adopted as the go-to, ultimate combat attire. Until the middle medieval period, soldiers would wear different types of trousers underneath skirts of varying widths and lengths. As of the middle medieval period, with the introduction of the skirt into the female wardrobe, the item gradually dropped out of the male closet, until its final disappearance from men's wardrobes in the late Middle Ages. Since then, no descriptions can be found of soldiers

[173] George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI, United States, 1988.

[174] According to MacQueen Douglas, the English attributed cultural backwardness to the Scots due to the Kilt. Loudon MacQueen Douglas, *The Kilt: A Manual of Scottish National Dress*, Andrew Elliot, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1914.

[175] The question "Who wears the trousers?" for example, is a common phrase that expresses this metonymy. Steven Connor, "Men in Skirts," *Women: A Cultural Review*, Volume 13, Issue 3, 2002, pp. 257–271.

[176] The daughter of Zeus and Leto and Apollo's twin sister.

and fighters in skirts. Trousers, a vertical, straightforward clothing item, became identified with efficiency and activism and took over the male and military wardrobe. With the establishment of modern armies and the late integration of women into them, the skirt returned as part of the military uniform set. This turn did not echo the item's historical role in warfare, but rather enforced women's incompetence for battle.

Examining the skirt's symbolic significances as a masculine or feminine clothing item reveals the military skirt's case as a clear illustration of the skirt as part of a cultural sign system that structures and produces the body. Furthermore, it is a discourse tool within the social gender system: as a military masculine clothing item, the skirt never restricted movement, like running or other physical activities. On the contrary: it enhanced them. Its material properties were the ultimate blueprint for action: the riding, running and physical exertion required in warfare. Wide, short and simple to put on and take off, it was the ultimate warrior garment and a mark of active and combative masculinity. It is only in its reincarnation as a feminine clothing item that the skirt was transformed into a movement-restrictive object, prohibiting various activities. Its materiality was cumbersome and movement-limiting, with an unstable, amorphous exterior. Thus, this specific garment structures the specific body that dons it; its material properties steer the body and assimilate cultural rules. Its movement restriction and contradicting denotations associate the female body that wears it with incapacity, exclusion and prohibition, as a static object.

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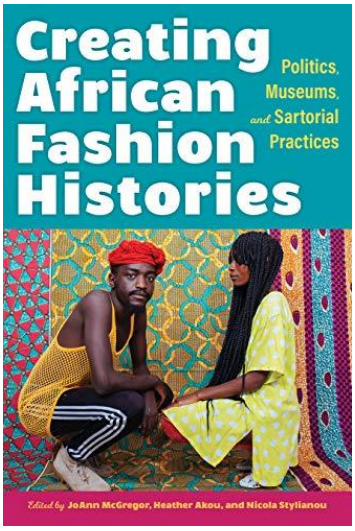

Creating African Fashion Histories: Politics, Museums, and Sartorial Practices, Heather Akou, JoAnn McGregor, Nicola Stylianou, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, United States, 2022, Acknowledgements, Bibliography, Index, 7 Black-and-White Illustrations, 81 Colour Illustrations, 360 pages, Softback, £26.00.

In 2016, Brighton Museum opened *Fashion Cities Africa*, an exhibition dedicated to contemporary African fashion designers. It was the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and showcased the work of creatives from cities at the four compass points of the continent. It united designers from Casablanca, Lagos, Nairobi and Johannesburg and took these dress histories beyond the colonial context. The exhibition programme included a dedicated conference, and its papers were subsequently corralled into a single volume titled *Creating African Fashion Histories: Politics, Museums and Sartorial Practices*.

Creating African Fashion Histories examines the representation of African self-fashioning and contemporary museum practices. For the authors, the focus on contemporary designers offered "a way out of the disciplinary and ethnocentric limitations set by our historic collections, which were largely amassed in a colonial context" (p.1). Much like the exhibition, the book covers a wide range of fashion practices, from street-style to tailoring and couture (p.1).

The three co-editors are well-versed in this academic field. Heather Akou is Associate Professor of Fashion Design at Indiana University, JoAnn McGregor is a Professor of Human Geography at the University of Sussex, and Nicola Stylianou is a Research Fellow at the University of Sussex. The combination of their knowledge makes for an exciting read with an innovative approach to the subject. Together, they critically address the narratives that have often been ignored in the broader study of fashion history and aim to capture the diversity of African sartorial pasts.

Published six years after the Brighton Museum exhibition, the book emerged in a very different context. It has been written with a "renewed pressure for change in academia, museums, and fashion schools" (p.3). In the introductory chapter, McGregor clearly states the parameters of this new publication: "we do not aim to contribute directly to debates over what "decolonising" means, but the chapters are informed by and speak to these discussions" (p.3). The book's publication is timely and coincides with the Victoria & Albert Museum's *Africa Fashion* exhibition. Much like the essays in this volume, the show celebrates the diversity and global impact of the African fashion scene and brings together textiles, photography, music and visual arts. When discussing African fashion, academics have often favoured research centred around colonial narratives and dismissed contemporary clothing from the continent. Both the exhibition and the book are welcome pieces of research that shift the paradigm from widely disseminated studies to new transnational fashion narratives.

The essays in *Creating African Fashion Histories* are compellingly written and brilliantly researched. Whilst the content is weighty and often complex, the various authorial voices alleviate the tone and make each chapter stimulating and accessible to wide audiences. With rich primary resources and illustrations, the work presents a visual treat on the breadth of African fashion design with thorough analysis and pertinent links to impacts on socio-cultural histories.

Exploring fashion from Africa and the African diaspora is a broad topic and as such the book's research project is ambitious. The editors structure the text in a logical and effective way; it is divided into three core sections with thematic essays, each investigating the politics and practices around African fashion histories. The first part focuses on historical case studies between the 1400s to today from regional markets (pp.41-66) to Kente cloth in Ghana (pp.100 -127). The second part takes a transnational approach and looks at the dissemination of ideas around African fashions, analysing how aesthetics and identities have been exported. The final section assembles essays on collecting and curating and proposes models for innovative museum practice. Throughout the

sections, the authors invite readers to rethink the Eurocentric framing of collections and curation. The book questions how researchers can use museum artefacts to reveal traces of self-fashioning that are obscured by racialised forms of knowledge and institutional practice.

The in-depth analysis of Omar Victor Diop's photography is a key essay (pp. 164-186). Beth Buggenhagen dissects the ways in which identity is performed through clothing and discusses how Diop "constructs new fashion histories...through his use of textiles" (p.165). Indeed, photographers have played a key role in disseminating ideas around African fashions through studios set up in newly independent nations in the 1960s. Buggenhagen critically compares the pioneers of African studio photography with contemporary photographers like Diop.

In the final section, the essays unpick how institutional narratives are central to shaping public understandings and attitudes towards clothing. The essays use case studies to delve into museum collecting methods and prompt the reader to question the power dynamics surrounding national collections, curatorial staff and community engagement. Akou offers examples from Indiana University's eclectic collection amassed through various donations (pp.229-251). As the former director of this museum's fashion collection, Akou provides an honest insight into the challenges and opportunities of collecting African fashion, particularly in relation to provenance: "In all cases, however, context matters: the background of the donor, the conditions in which those artifacts were collected, the conditions in which they were made, and the conditions in which they were passed from the maker/user to the collector...[A collection] has also been tainted by colonization, stripped of the names and intentions of the people who created and used these artifact in their daily lives." (p.247)

The last essay of the book focuses on Brighton's acquisition programme *Fashioning Africa* (pp.280-305). Co-written by Edith Ojo, Helen Mears and Nicola Stylianou, it "considers how the kinds of collections found in British museums constitute a material embodiment of the legacies of imperialism and colonialism" (p.280). Whilst the chapter opens with an optimistic note on co-curation and co-production of museum activities, the ending acknowledges the project's limitations and reminds the reader that work is ongoing. They write "any achievements claimed by the *Fashioning Africa* initiative must be partial and provisional" (p.303).

Institutional narratives have frequently failed to address the colonial context in which some collections were acquired and categorised. Their interpretation matters and failure to highlight and problematise their provenance further perpetuates a monolithic understanding of them. As McGregor acutely notes in her introductory chapter, "bringing sartorial practices and museum history into dialogue examines this disjuncture not only as opportunity for academic reflection, but also to discuss how curators have used it as a means to confront colonial persistencies and racialised exclusions" (p.31). The poignant essays in this volume remind museums to dually acknowledge the colonial past of these African countries, but to celebrate the works of the designers separately from this context.

Creating African Fashion Histories is an important study in which the broader complexities of global fashion narratives and curatorial conversations are treated in a single tome. It is a refreshing and comprehensive introduction to new interdisciplinary research in this field and offers both historical and contemporary case studies. It will appeal to the specialist historian and researchers interested in discussions of self-fashioning and global exchange.

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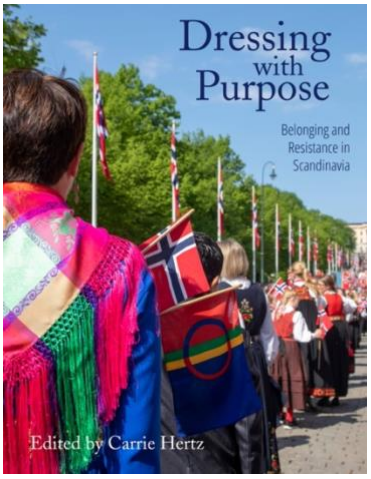
regular contributions to *Selvedge* magazine, the *Royal Photographic Society Journal*, "Yellow" in *The V&A Book of Colour in Design* (2020) and essay contributions for *Another Country: British Documentary Photography Since 1945* (2022).



Dressing with Purpose: Belonging and resistance in Scandinavia, Carrie Hertz, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, USA, 2021, Contents, Foreword, Acknowledgements, Map, Notes, Introduction, Bibliography, List of Contributors, Index. 260 Pages, 142 color illustrations, 11 b&w photos, 1 map, 260 Pages, Hardback. £25.99

In the book *Dressing with Purpose- Belonging and resistance in Scandinavia*, Carrie Hertz re-examines the development of traditional dress in Scandinavia through the refreshing lens of a folklorist. By setting aside a traditional material-based approach to regional folk costume, she invites us to forage into a broader landscape with a focus on contemporary and living dynamics of dressing, the historical context as well as the significance of political changes and colonial influences. As Hertz writes in the introduction "exploring their contemporary uses, aesthetics, and meanings in the light of their histories", (p. 9).

The book is one part of Carrie Hertz's latest research project. An exhibition at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, ran alongside the book, showing between December 12, 2021 and February 19, 2023. Carrie Hertz is the Curator of Textiles and Dress at the Museum of International Folk Art (MOIFA). She gained her PhD from the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology at Indiana University, specializing in material culture, folk arts, and museum studies with a special emphasis on dress and adornment. Hertz has a profound experience with community-based operations and public folk arts programmes and has published in a wide range of journals and anthologies, such as Folklife and Museums: 21st Century Perspectives, Museum Anthropology Review, Midwestern Folklore, Practicing Anthropology, Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore, Selvedge, and Nordic Kultur: The Magazine of the Nordic Heritage Museum.

The introduction bravely opens by questioning the controversial use of the traditional dress of Greenland by the commercial fashion industry. She builds her theoretical framework on well-established folklore studies, material culture and performance theory. Through these she meticulously contextualises and defines terms such as tradition, fashion, dress and traditional dress. An underlaying idea present throughout the book is the peoples' "right to own and control their cultural heritage" (p. 2). The book is divided into three parts, covering Swedish folkdräkt, Norwegian bunad and the gákti in Sápmi. Each part is introduced with a chapter on the history and development of the traditional dress in the specific region, written by Carrie Hertz herself. Following these regional background chapters are essays on different aspects of the use of traditional dress in the 21st century, written by leading scholars in their respective fields.

In the first part on Swedish folkdräkt Hertz has chosen to focus on the traditional dress in region of Dalarna, and specifically the township of Leksand. An area with a strong continuity in the use and production of traditional dress throughout the 20th century. As in all regional chapters, Hertz provides an insightful historic background as well as in depth interviews with contemporary practitioners of the living heritage tradition. The following chapter looks upon collecting as a heritage making process. Lizette Gradén analyses and follows the curatorial processes in the management of a private collection in situ: what happens and what questions arise when the material preservation of a collection needs to work with the preservation of both historical context and living traditional uses. The essence of what makes and keeps a tradition a living tradition.

In contrast to the consolidation of the traditional dress in a predominately male museum context in Sweden, the development of the Norwegian bunad during the 19th century was more of an act towards national independence. Hertz' historical background provides a good analysis on how dynamics of emancipation and liberation influenced the development and uses of traditional dress in Norway. A national dress project mainly led by women did not focus on the consolidation of the past, but aimed to re-design and develop for the future, a mind set which imbues the

continuation and living tradition of bunad in both Norway and in the diaspora. In the following chapters on bunad in multicultural Norway and the use of bunad as an ethnic identity factor in the United States, Camilla Rossing and Laurann Gilbertson explores these uses in their respective areas.

In the third part of the book Hertz discusses the Gákti in Sápmi and the complex heritage of a minority's struggle against cultural imperialism. A consequence of the nation building in Sweden and Norway during the late 19th century and early 20th century, was the suppression of minorities. With both countries striving to create a homogeneous nation, as well as expanding mining and wood industries in the north, there was no place for the indigenous Sámi culture. Racist and paternalistic philosophies have had lasting consequences and have stigmatized the public expression of the Sámi identity to this day. Thus, the revival of wearing the traditional gátki in both an everyday and festive context during the 21st century has been a significant part of re-establishing the Sámi heritage in Scandinavia. Like the Norwegian bunad, the gátki has a strong tradition of re-design and incorporation of contemporary needs, but worked within a firmer heritage frame and expression. The final chapter tells the story of how the heritage of the ládjogahpir, the hat of pride, was taken from the Sámi women, breaking the balance between men and women. Today it has been revitalised, not by repatriation, but by rematriation, through a community-based art and research project, led by the chapter's authors Eeva-Kristiina Harlin and Outi Pieski.

Dressing with purpose is not a sartorial companion on Scandinavian folk costume. Instead, it will appeal to an audience who have an interest in gaining a historic and holistic picture of the collective's uses of traditional dress of Scandinavia. Those who want to study how traditional dress has been used in different communities to meet specific needs and goals, will find it a very rewarding read. The overall message throughout the book is to approach dress, and in particular traditional dress, through the eyes and uses of the living. In the end, it is a book about the act of dressing.
The book is illustrated with an abundance of examples of the traditional dresses in their context, as well as a clarifying map over the Scandinavian regions covered. The notes and bibliography are clear, informative, and easy to follow.

What makes the book especially intriguing is Hertz's purposeful transition of perspectives throughout its pages. The journey from Sweden to Sápmi points out a shift in focus from material to immaterial and from a traditional male perspective to a feminist intersectional and material culture-based approach. The book is a refreshing reminder of why heritage keepers do what they do and why history and heritage needs to be kept alive, not only materially preserved. While it might not have been the author's primary intention, Hertz's reminds us in her conclusion, that traditional dress "can help us call on the memory of our ancestors- their struggles and aesthetics achievements, and the better futures they tried to give us", (p. 216).

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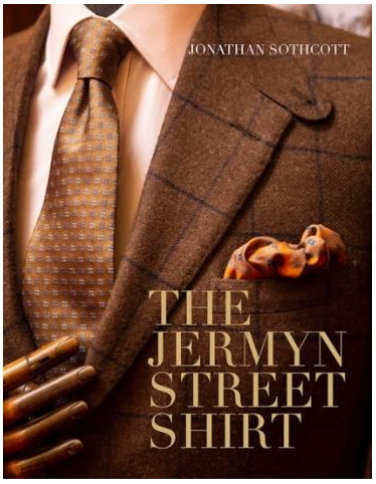
Maria Franzon joined the National Historical Museums, Stockholm, Sweden as a textile conservator in 2020, after having worked more than 20 years as an object conservator at the Nationalmuseum of Fine Arts, Stockholm. She has a background in historical textiles and dressmaking, and profound research interests in collection management and documentation strategies for museums. She holds a MSc in Conservation from the University of Gothenburg, a BA in Culture studies and Art history from Linköping University, as well as Textile studies at the University of Uppsala. She has also been part of the production of the podcast Konserveringspodden, running on its third season exploring research and current questions within the conservation field.



The Jermyn Street Shirt, Jonathan Sothcott, The History Press, Gloucestershire, England, 2021, Acknowledgements, 161 Illustrations, 154 Colour Illustrations, 224 pages, Hardback, £25.00.

British film producer Jonathan Sothcott has created a gem of a fashion history coffee table book with his work *The Jermyn Street Shirt*. *Jermyn Street* is part homage to Sothcott's favorite classic film star muses, part instruction manual to selecting and caring for bespoke shirts, and part history lesson of the tailors and shops along the famous London street known as the "Mecca of fine British shirtmaking for more than a century." The book is a visually beautiful and easy flowing read. Sothcott's admiration for the tailor's craft and their products comes through naturally in each page and image, inspiring the reader to take note of the small details that make up tailored, made-to-order garments.

Sothcott begins his work with a full discussion of the various fabrics of which shirts can be made. From cotton and twill, to voile, silk and seersucker, the author reviews the pros and cons of each, illuminating the reader to the suitability of each type of fabric for a particular style and design of shirt. Collars and cuffs are equally covered in the next two chapters, followed by a chapter on fronts, sleeves and pockets. The next chapter describes how to care for your fine shirts including lessons on folding, laundering, ironing, and travelling.

The remaining chapters beginning with chapter nine pivot to the history of Jermyn Street and its makers, stopping along the way to narrate the process of procuring a bespoke shirt (or several), which are the most fascinating chapters of the book. The author's zeal for the history of menswear and bespoke menswear garments shines through in these chapters. Sothcott's strength as a writer is that he puts his passion to page gracefully, neither assuming too much nor too little knowledge of these subjects. His writing style is conversational, thoughtful, and refreshingly engaging. Particularly enjoyable are his biographies of the tailors working in the shops on Jermyn Street. Any fan of the American television program "Project Runway" will tell you that menswear can be a challenging design and sewing process, requiring significant attention to details and proportions, and this is not lost on Sothcott, who is as much a fan of the makers as he is of their finished work.

The final chapters of the book are part travelogue, providing brief summaries of the other clothing shops along Jermyn Street, and, lastly, some additional shop suggestions not pertaining to clothing that would round out the visitor experience to the area. It is very interesting to note the age and heritage of some of the highlighted stores, showing the reader, again, the sense of tradition that Jermyn Street exhibits.

One does not need already be a connoisseur of fine men's fashion or bespoke tailored dress shirts to enjoy this lovely book. The appealing images, down-to-earth approachable style of the author's writing, and short, easy chapters are a thoroughly enjoying reading experience, and infuse the reader with a surprising amount of knowledge on a variety of aspects of the fine menswear available on Jermyn Street. The only shortcoming of this book is that it is not "academic" by definition. There is no bibliography, and most of the narrative comes from the author's own experiences. For some of the topics covered this makes sense- Sothcott clearly knows how to purchase, launder and fold garments- but for other information, such as the chapter on the history of Jermyn Street, sources would have been a welcome addition. A few historic advertisements for some of the businesses are included in the illustrations but are also not sourced. This is a minor issue as the work does not feel as though it were meant to be an "academic" publication. If the reader is searching for an academic work on any of the topics therein, this could reduce Sothcott's work to only a nice jumping-off resource. However, for pure enjoyment and an overview of a very specific topic it is beyond appropriate.

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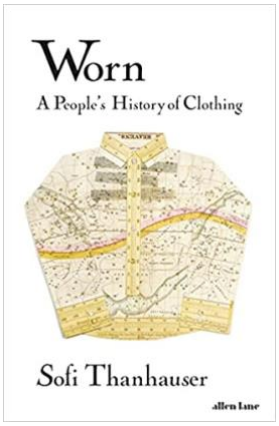
Kelly White is a freelance historian, researcher, and writer with interests in dress history, cultural history, and material culture. She is the Curator of the Brunswick Heritage Museum in Brunswick, Maryland, a museum preserving and interpreting the history of a small railroad town. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in American History from Mary Baldwin University and a Master of Arts in American History from American Military University. Her scholarship focuses on American 19th and 20th century dress history and material culture, particularly how clothing and accessories demonstrate the social customs and economics of a time period. She is currently researching the effects of Victorian mourning customs including dress, sentimental jewelry, and burial practices on the evolution of small local businesses in America.



Worn: A People's History of Clothing, Sofi Thanhauser. Allen Lane (25 Jan. 2022) English. Hardcover : ISBN-13 : 978-0241389539. 16.2 x 3.6 x 24 cm. Notes Bibliography and Index. 400 pages.

Thanhauser's book describes how cloth has been an essential part of political and personal human history. It provides a captivating narrative of personal experiences and historical facts. The author describes how humans went from making fabric for themselves as time-consuming but significant work to the "Complex, inscrutable system that has divorced us from the creative act, from our land and from our rights as consumers and workers." (Introduction xiii). The materials reviewed and the history of their production are connected through a descriptive, anthropological and cultural history of over five hundred years, from early hand production to the factories of the present day.

Thanhauser teaches in the New York Pratt Institute. With a Colombia University U.S. History degree and Creative Writing from Wyoming, a particular focus of the book is about how cloth production has shaped the character and industry of communities throughout history. The author examines how textiles have been created in villages, from early times, reflecting on how this creation produces both the identity of the people and the nation. Through personal research and case studies that form interesting juxtapositions with historical fact, the book illustrates how materials shaped our cultural and political histories. The author manages to contextualise and also philosophise about past and future worn fabrics through such a method. This book adds an oral history dimension of the author's own experiences giving a depth which enhances the meaning of worn textiles.

Thanhauser's book is divided into five sections which are not labelled as chapters but have only the name of a material. Numerical sub-sections each have a different title for various fabrics. This can be confusing if the reader wishes to use this book as an academic reference text. Each section traces the history of materials such as Linen, Cotton, Silk, Synthetics and Wool. In describing each material and its history, the organisation of the book is not chronological but explores how different cultural practices throughout history facilitated an ever-changing balance of international power groups. A useful cross referencing with other periods in history provides a balance between the reasons for various textiles production such as flax and linen and its effects on both the people and their countries. Such referencing can be seen in the comparison of Pliny's observations in the first century AD. with ninth century German flax and commercial linen production in the sixteenth century (p.8).

Studying various early social hierarchies with local, non-profit production methods, it is noted that later dimensions of production have become mainly commercial and are also destroying vast tracts of our environment. Such historical detail is contrasted with informative and sometimes sad personal anecdotes, constructing a deeper understanding of the information discovered. The book uses archival sources that help anyone who has no previous knowledge of the subject.

The early sections describe cloth development through naming plant sources such as linen and cotton and animals such as silkworm and sheep. This is contrasted with synthetic processes that rely on petro-chemicals.In the first section an examination of how stalks of flax are transformed into linen in many homes in eighteenth century New England (p.16) is noted as being an activity that cultivated gender differences, snobbery and hierarchy from the earliest of times. This is contrasted effectively with the rivalry experienced in the formation of professional guilds in medieval Germany (p.9-10).

Section two reveals how thirsty and ecologically devastating a crop like cotton can be with disastrous social and political consequences. This section notes the life of women who earn their dowries in the cotton-spinning factories of South India today with historical attitudes to its production for the British in the nineteenth century. (p.64). The fall of the Soviet Union and the

Uyghur diaspora in central Asia is described as part of the Russian cotton producing catastrophe which effectively colonised this area for cotton production. Xinjiang is also described as a border producing area where the self sufficient military border garrisons under a historical 'Tuntian' system have become cotton producing corporations as disastrous as the British were in India for Western profit. The XPCC, Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, grows cotton an a vast and ecologically damaging scale. Spread deeply into the global supply chain it accounts for twenty per cent of the world's cotton. The genocide of the Uyghur population that was recognised in 2016 fitted a political agenda against Islam and enabled an influx of Chinese nationals to the area. The North Carolina based sportswear Brand Badger was one of many brands exposed as sourcing goods from a factory inside one of the internment camps for 'vocational training on charges of political subversion'. (pp.90-92).

Section three gives a philosophical and practical overview of silk production from the Han dynasty myths (206 BC-AD 220) (p.100) to the Yangste factories of the twenty first century megalopolis. In her visit there (pp.104-105), the author's personal experiences with Mr. Bo and Mr S., (p.106) in the Yangste factories bring home the very real and often disturbing outcomes that cloth production instigates.

In the fourth section on Rayon, Nylon and the 'expert processing zones' (p.202) of third world countries like Honduras the book describes the speed of new materials use and the growth of the first multi-national corporations and strategic global supply chains (p.155). Such cheap labour use by the USA is noted as being "Opportunistic and sometimes actively parasitic" (p.203). Here again some personal anecdotal evidence is depressingly real.

In the last section on woollens the author introduces the ideological need to return to a less harmful way of producing cloth which neither decimates the land nor exploits the people who make or wear it. Quoting Karl Marx on catastrophic Scottish highland clearances of land for wool production in the nineteenth century, the author notes how knitters are turning to the pleasures of the handmade object and maintaining ecological practices that seem hopeful for the future. Woolfest and the Hebridean Sheep Society in Scotland is noted as a collective phenomenon along with the Navajo Indian weavers (pp.286-287) who sustain their personal meanings into patterns as opposed to clothmaking under capitalism which is "Incapable of generating or sustaining ideas of benevolent spiritual or ancestral involvement" (p.271).

In an informative writing style the author notes that "The present day mega-corporations' profits are revealed as four times greater than global arms sales or consumer electronics" (Introduction xii). The author identifies this as toxic and exploitative since global garment producers remain aloof about the international ethics of such trade. The author's insights are articulated in an easily readable style. Phrases such as "The social fabric" or "The community was rent apart" or "An alliance was stitched together" (Introduction xvii) are referenced in order to symbolise the web of meanings to the individuals who linked them closely to their lives from cradle to grave for thousands of years. The author's investigations add a meaningful anthropological level of understanding to the history of textile production. It describes details that are usually not known but which reveal a well researched focus on the history of clothing.

In conclusion, the meticulousness and precise examinations of the cultural, economic, political and environmental impacts show a broad conscientiousness. The book details histories of environmental devastation, colonialism and worker exploitation. For those readers who want to be informed about sustainable clothing this book might be an essential new look at giving hope for the future, addressed through a revival of venerable traditions. This outlook might yet lead us to a viable and worthwhile future as being both relevant ecologically and necessary for our cultural and individual health. Readers who aim for a more ethical future in clothing production can gain an insight into the craft societies that demonstrate a more creative production for the future. The careless purchase of garments and discarding of clothing that has come to damage our planet will be allotted to history. *Worn* is a significant reference for a deeper understanding of the history of textile production and the construction of its historiography. It also provides an insight into how this phenomenon should be manifested in future production.

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Gillian lectured and taught Art and Design in high schools, colleges, and Universities from 1970-2008. Gillian was a Professor of Design History and the Director of Decorative Arts in the School of Architecture and Interior Design, SCAD USA, from 1999 -2006. She won the 'President's Award' for adapting doctorate studies to the MA curriculum, and was asked to become a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, (FRSA) for services to education. (2003.). Gililan sat on various Interior Design educational committees such as IDEC USA and FIDER for college accreditation purposes. She became a director of four major Historical House museums in Savannah GA USA and sat on the board of directors for the Savannah Telfair museum (1999-2006).

Installation with 1830s evening dress in foreground. In *You Choose* Fashion Museum, Bath, 2022. Image credit: Fashion Museum, Bath.

You Choose, co-curated by invited individuals and groups, Fashion Museum, Bath, United Kingdom, 14 May 2022 – 30 October 2022, Adult tickets £10, Child (18 years and under) £7.75.

You Choose took place at the Fashion Museum, Bath, in the underground rooms of the Assembly Rooms, connected to the museum's headline exhibition *A History of Fashion in 100 Objects.* The design of the galleries is wheelchair accessible. This is part of the organisation of the Assembly Rooms, a historical venue in a Grade 1 listed building, completed in 1771; the Assembly Rooms also include a Ballroom and Tearoom on the ground floor. *You Choose* was exhibited in two adjoining rooms with two rows of back-to-back seats in the main room and a few seats in the second, smaller room. The exhibition was in its original iteration.

This exhibition was co-curated by local people called 'Choosers' who were invited to select fashion items from the museum collection. The criteria to choose was based on the opening question: "What does fashion mean to you?" Though serious in nature, the exhibition design incorporated an informal style of attribution; the Choosers were credited by their first name only. The imagery for the publicity of the exhibition, and part of the displays in the introductory room, incorporated almost life-sized photographs and names of people involved, allowing the visitor to develop a sense of familiarity with the characters. To give an example, in the introductory displays, an image of a person labelled 'Louise' (a Chooser) held a placard with a slogan relating to the themes of the exhibition: "A unique exhibition co-curated by local people."

Commentary on text panels relating to each exhibit included reflective quotes from each Chooser and was supplemented by further text written by a Fashion Museum curator, again attributed by the first name of the contributor. The curator text gave information about the chosen artefacts, including the materials used and the cultural and historical context.

Information in the museum programme stated that the museum was looking for a new premises in Bath and would be closed by October 2022. The museum expected that they would reopen in five to eight years; a new location has since been found in Bath. Plans for the relocation of the museum and its collection include a new Collections Study Centre that will be a storage centre incorporating space for public access.[177] The future change of venue was incorporated into the exhibition narrative, introduced by a writing activity for visitors located in a room at the entrance to the exhibition. The activity encouraged visitors to respond to the question "What does fashion mean to you?" prompted by the museum to gather public opinion about what fashion means to individuals: "As we prepare to move, we have been looking towards the future of the Museum... We have had so many great responses, all of which help us to take a fresh look at the museum collections." There was a table with pens and postcards for visitors to contribute to a wall decorated with postcards. The text also invited visitors to step into the exhibition, having introduced a focus on community participation with implication that this will be part of the future of the museum. The panel also encouraged visitors to take photographs and share them on social media.

The exhibition had eleven individual displays, most of which were viewable from the central seats in the main room. Each display engaged with different fashion themes, these included

[177] Bath & North East Somerset Council "Council sets out plans for the future of world-renowned Fashion Museum" 05 October 2022, https://newsroom.bathnes.gov.uk/news/council-sets-out-plans-future-world-renowned-fashion-museum, Accessed 14 September 2022.

Victorian clothing and upcycling, historical Spanish fancy dress, corsets (four corsets were individually dated: 1780s, 1880s, 1900, and 1950s), and the representation of African cultural heritage in UK museums. A diorama of scenes of Bath ran throughout the backgrounds of the displays, including interior scenes with a view to the outdoors and some street-view scenery. This gave a sense of local context. Most of the displays incorporated a storage element, such as mannequins, storage boxes, and clothing rails etc., complementing the main artefacts on display; this was generally behind the artefacts and in some cases alongside. This highlighted the dynamic relationship between fashion, display, and storage, reminding the visitor that the items on display were chosen from the museum collection in storage and that museum displays often change. The exhibition concept was an opportunity for the juxtaposition of displays incorporating items from different eras. This gave a snapshot of the scope of the collections with the text reflecting a broad range of themes.

One notable display was near the exhibition entrance which evoked a domestic interior, incorporating a window with a view to a country scene. There was a mirror on the back wall where the viewer was reflected in relationship to the display. The exhibited dress incorporated neutral fabrics and the top layer of the fabric had embroidered, metallic embellishment. The information on the exhibit text named the Chooser, described the item, and its materials; "Chosen by Louise, 1830s Evening dress, white fine woven cotton muslin embroidered in gold metal thread with 'pancake' sleeves made of cream silk satin." Additional text gave biographical information about the Chooser, including her area of residence, near to the museum in Englishcombe, Bath, and her career, where she works "...in the fashion industry, focussing on sustainability and collaborative action for big brands such as ASOS." Sustainability was a theme in Louise's paragraphs. She explained the reason she chose the evening dress was because she was interested in how the fabric was sourced: the dress "...was perhaps made from an 'upcycled' Indian sari with clever needlework incorporating the original embellishment" and was transformed into an 'English' gown. There was a comment about how clothes were made to last in the past, and therefore we can admire historical clothes in contemporary society. In present times, it's important to acknowledge how clothes were made, who made them, as well as who wore them. It's important to appreciate what is involved in the process of making clothes, since clothing and fabric are taken for granted in contemporary society. This is a reflection on an aspect of fashion history, linking it to a contemporary issue/context: a type of reflection which is a theme throughout the exhibition text. A comment by Fashion Museum curator, Fleur, described how the item is a part of the history of recycling of textiles in dressmaking and the reuse of expensive textiles.

In the second room a silent film was projected onto a wall and played on a loop, incorporating text that contained reflections of the participants. Juxtaposed scenes, each a few seconds long, showed students working in a fashion studio, scenes of exhibition participants walking around Bath streets, panoramic shots of the city architecture, participants reflecting about the history of fashion and its relevance today, and the handling of historical fashion items in a study. The scene of the study of preserved clothing by school students in the spacious historical interior in the Assembly Rooms involved stunning documentation of the atmosphere and architecture.

The curatorial concept of this exhibition was based on community co-curation and was very successful. The display of otherwise unconnected historical items works in this context and gives a voice to individual contributors. It certainly was a contrast to *100 Objects* where garments were displayed in chronological order with visitors traveling through a chronological fashion timeline.

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Lubaina Himid, *Dandy*, 2010. Acrylic on paper, 183x102cm. Manchester Art Gallery (2016.39). © Lubaina Himid Courtesy of the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London. Photograph: Michael Pollard.

Dandy Style – 250 Years of British Men's Fashion, curated by Dr Miles Lambert, Rebecca Milner and Dr Shaun Cole, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, United Kingdom, 7 October 2022 – 1 May 2023, Free admission.

Dandy Style, like so many other exhibitions, events, and performances, was late opening due to Covid-19 and its resulting restrictions; however, it was much anticipated and the preview on 6 October 2022, drew a large and animated audience. Both events coincided with the opening of a new space dedicated to fashion within the City of Manchester's Art Gallery. *Dandy Style* covers 250 years of British men's fashion and includes not only garments but also paintings and photographs to illustrate the male's constant engagement with fashion and image throughout the time span. The majority of the exhibits are from Manchester Art Gallery's own extensive collection. Several items have never been exhibited publicly before whilst others have been loaned from British institutions such as the Fashion Museum Bath, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Westminster Menswear Archive, alongside private lenders. The exhibition was curated by Dr Miles Lambert, Curator of Costume at Manchester Art Gallery, Rebecca Milner, Curator of Fine Art at Manchester Art Gallery and Dr Shaun Cole, Associate Professor in Fashion at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton.

Beau Brummell (1778–1840) is generally regarded as the original Dandy as he characterised a mode of dress which was both fastidious and elegant. He combined the fashion for fine cut and tailoring that emulated English country life with a touch of urban suave, invariably sporting an immaculately tied and laundered cravat. A reproduction of an original watercolour by Robert Dighton from 1805 shows Brummell attired in such apparel whilst a cabinet of curiosities, situated below and alongside portraits of young men emulating the style, includes an early biography, examples of cravats, and two early books on etiquette for men, one titled: *The Art of Tying the Cravat*, by H. Le Blanc, (third edition, 1828). The cabinet also displays a selection of early fashion prints, several satirical.

Whilst acknowledging the less decorative era of the nineteenth century, when the more sombre dress of the Victorian businessman predominated, examples of gentleman's attire including looser-fitting gowns and smoking jackets—some with added embellishment for informal/domestic wear—are also exhibited. The term 'Dandy', though, was to become more associated with well-known aesthetes of the time such as Oscar Wilde (1854–1900); an enlarged photograph of whom overlooks the gallery, elegantly dressed in a smoking jacket with quilted collar. From a similar period is a black, corded silk smoking jacket with hand-painted floral decoration dated 1880–90.

Many interpretations of flowers adorning fashionable menswear are illustrated throughout from an exquisitely embroidered court suit dated 1770–85, to a floral-patterned blue silk damask gown or *banyan* dated 1760–70, and from a floral-printed furnishing cotton lounge jacket dated 1968–70 (labelled Brent & Collins for Take 6), to a Versace embroidered wool and mohair coat dating from 2000, lent from the Fashion Museum Bath. Hung nearby, Thomas Gainsborough's

portrait of Sir Edward Turner, 1762 (lent by Wolverhampton Art Gallery), gives a fine, painterly depiction of a floral-sprigged, French woven silk suit.

Dress dating from the eighteenth century shows the extensive use of embroidered or elaborately worked silk thread buttons. Fashionable coats of the time were rarely fully fastened allowing the elaborate waistcoat beneath to be revealed. A coat's working buttonholes didn't always reflect the number of buttons; others could be stitched and left uncut. These small but telling features can be noted not only on the costume but in corresponding oil paintings of prosperous male figures. A purple woollen frock coat dated 1780–90 features a costly row of mother-of-pearl buttons whilst military braiding and trimmings, known as *brandenburgs*, were also included as decorative detail.

Military uniforms proved a popular mode of dress for portraiture. The uniform appeared to have lent a man a certain cachet as suggested by a small canvas by Thomas Gainsborough of an unknown sitter, assumed to be an officer purely because of his dress. Research has not identified a regiment, but the portrait was painted in Bath around 1760–65 when the town was renowned as a fashionable society meeting place. Military uniform morphs into fashion time and again, exemplified in the gallery by music icons such as Mick Jagger, famously photographed by Colin Jones in 1967, wearing a vintage Grenadier Guards' drummer jacket; popstar Harry Styles, photographed by Alasdair McLellan, aping the Mick Jagger photo for *Another Man Magazine*, Autumn/Winter 2016; and hip hop singer, Bugsey, photographed by Ashley Verse, wearing a jacket not unlike Jagger's from Saint Laurent's Spring/Summer 2020 collection. The adjacent eighteenth-century coat with military style silk braid trimmings has interesting detail in the labelling: "This coat is from the collection of artist Frank Moss Bennett (1874–1952) and would have been used for historical costuming in his paintings." How carefully considered is the attire for a portrait.

There is continuing evidence of the twentieth-century Dandy. Edward, Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII, broke Royal tradition not only by his abdication but also in his relaxed and sometimes colourful sense of dress as captured in the familiar painting by John Saint Hellier Lander from 1925 (loaned from Lotherton Hall, Leeds Museums and Galleries). Versions of the Shetland sweaters he popularised at the time have remained in fashion ever since. A machine-knitted, wool Fair Isle sweater with the Alexander McQueen label, 'McQ', is exhibited below the portrait; McQueen's version adds a Gothic tone with images of goats and skulls appearing in a repeat pattern.

Photographs and paintings capture the renewed importance of tailoring amongst the fashion icons in the world of music, art and theatre, and in the stars of the football pitch. Saville Row tailor and designer, Ozwald Boateng, is photographed wearing one of his own signature suits whilst his bespoke couture purple wool/silk lounge suit is displayed nearby, complimenting the eighteenth-century purple coat with mother-of-pearl buttons mentioned earlier. The exhibition expands on how sport and leisure wear have become embroiled with fashion design and *haute couture,* and how British men's fashion, previously so often inspired by the Grand Tour and exploratory trips to Europe, has now embraced a vastly more global perspective.

The fact that 250 years of British men's fashion demonstrating 'Dandy Style' can be absorbed into one exhibition is due to its excellent assemblage. The detailed research informing the thought-provoking juxtaposition of garments, portraits, photographs and prints staged side by side, thematically rather than chronologically, gives it the appearance of having been choreographed. There is the illusion of a theatre where the older players look benignly at the youth of subsequent generations endeavouring to take centre stage by copying, subverting, reinventing, and reimagining the Dandy.

The exhibition is split over two floors (Gallery 13 and 18) and divides into two sections: 'Tailored Dandy' and 'Decorated Dandy'; both entrances are heralded by spectacular and pertinent images from the artist Lubaina Himid. The content of *Dandy Style* has initiated several events since its opening and offers a range of guided tours from specialists in the wider field it represents, while a supporting programme of lectures has been scheduled for early 2023. Manchester Art Gallery is situated in the heart of the city and provides access and facilities for all visitors, although lighting is

particularly low throughout the two galleries involved to protect its content. *Dandy Style: 250 Years of British Male Fashion*, a well-illustrated and informative book of essays accompanying the exhibition and sharing the same name, is edited by Shaun Cole and Miles Lambert (see Rachel Church's review in *The Journal of Dress History*, Volume 6, Issue 1, Spring 2022, pp 110–113).

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Model Susan Murray wears evening dress by Balenciaga, with a cape looking like a rose. Photo Irving Penn 1967.

Balenciaga: Master in Black, curated by Madelief Hobé (Kunstmuseum Den Haag), Miren Arzalloz and Veronique Belloir (Palais Galliera, Paris), and Gaspard de Massé (Archives Balenciaga, Paris), Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague, Netherlands, 24 September 2022 – 5 March 2023. Adult tickets € 12,50, Student tickets € 7,50.

A visit to the *Balenciaga: Master in Black* exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Den Haag was a dazzling experience. As you enter the gallery, you are immediately swept into a mystical visual ecstasy and a feeling of a kind of intoxication. Everything inside is black: the ceilings, the walls, the floors, everything, except the display cases with the spotlighted black dresses inside.

Balenciaga utilised black often as it was frequently reminiscent to the black the Spanish clergy used to signify the importance of religious imagery in his work. In Spain, black is not only the colour of the clergy, but also that of the court and most of all, the dead as the colour of mourning. His atelier is often compared to a convent. Everyone there worked in complete silence.

Cristobal Balenciaga (1895–1972) was twelve years old when his father died. He was a Basque, and Basques are known for their elaborate mourning attire. Therefore, one can imagine that from the day of his father's death, the young Balenciaga always saw his mother dressed in black.

Balenciaga was not an intellectual, but he learned fast with his hands. He was only eighteen when he became head of the dressmaking department at the Grands Magasins du Louvre in San Sebastian. This was a branch of a Parisian department store targeting the rich and noble families coming to the Basque coast in summer. Here he learned about the French opulence of dress of the time, and due to his position, he made his first trips to Paris, the capital of haute couture. In 1919, he opened his own fashion house in San Sebastian. During the civil war in Spain (1938), he moved to Paris where, in a few years, he became a coveted designer. He never forgot his Spanish roots, and thus, black always played an important role in his designs.

This exhibition in The Hague was a reprise of the exhibition *Balenciaga l' Oeuvre au Noir* from the Musée Bourdelle in Paris in 2017. The layout of the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum was largely directed by the hands of the team from the Musée Bourdelle. They wanted to blacken the ceilings, walls, and floor. But just as in Paris, this was impossible for logistical reasons. The parquet floors in the Kunstmuseum would never be able to recover from a black lacquer treatment, so they remained in their original wood surface. Some of the walls were painted grey, and the ceiling appeared invisible thanks to the professional lighting. Yet, you get the impression that everything in this exhibition was black.

Dress history tells us that around 1968, the time when Balenciaga closed his atelier, the death toll sounded over haute couture. Clothing became 'democratized'. Youth became the ideal, and the fashion industry became limited to ready-to-wear clothing.

Balenciaga liked to work for society ladies who didn't have the right 'body' for the fashion that came into vogue after the 1968 revolution. Maybe he constantly had the vision to clothe his mother, who, just like most elderly Spanish women, was always clothed in black. In the exhibition, you can see this process in many pieces of clothing, especially suits and overcoats that were made

of heavy black fabrics. The cocktail dresses were often so generously cut that there was always room to make adjustments that obscured the client's not-so-youthful forms. That is what Balenciaga made special. He didn't just make dresses: he was able to drape the clothes in such a way that the result resembled a precious sculpture. Thanks to the ingenious cut, the wearer of the dress enjoyed a freedom of movement that would not be possible in the dresses for corseted women of more conventional designers, like Charles Worth and Christian Dior.

It has been said that Balenciaga, being homosexual, hated the female body. For models, he preferred women with small breasts, small hips, and no visible waistline, but he knew how to adapt his designs to female customers who loved him because he understood their bodies. This is also a reason for his preference for black. Black is timeless. It envelops and conceals.

The exhibition at the Kunstmuseum was set up thematically, not chronologically. Therefore, chronological developments in Balenciaga's work remained somewhat invisible. From 1967 dates the black cape looking like a rose that was used for the poster of the exhibition. The cape can be moved in many ways from the top to the middle of the body. It is reminiscent of a toreador's mantilla but is much more sophisticated with its folds and pleats. And then there was the so-called envelope dress, also from 1967, which appears to consist of two panels glued to either side of the body. These are two experiments that Balenciaga did not allow himself to create earlier in his career. Perhaps he felt the hot breath of time. Perhaps he finally dared to let himself go after being the servant of his customers for so long.

One of Balenciaga's important achievements was that he took the female body seriously, instead of forcing it into a straitjacket. He didn't want to push women into the hourglass shape, which restricted their freedom of movement and made them look like a fashion doll that had to adapt to the clothes and not the other way around.

Black plays a role in this method because it can be worn at any time of the day. Before Chanel developed her little black dress in the twenties, high society women had to change clothes several times a day. After Chanel's invention, a lady only had to change jewellery and other accessories a few times.

Balenciaga knew Chanel from the beginning of his career when he met her in a Casino at San Sebastian. He understood what Chanel wanted and amply propagated it. Chanel credited his mastery. She is attributed saying: "Only Balenciaga is a true couturier. The others are just designers."

The exhibition in The Hague runs until 5 March 2023, displaying more than 100 dresses designed by Balenciaga. The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Palais Galliera and the Archives Balenciaga Paris. The catalogue *Balenciaga, Meesterlijk Zwart* is only published in Dutch. The catalogue of the exhibition from the Musée Bourdelle in Paris (2017), *Balenciaga, L'oeuvre au noir*, published in both French and English), is out of print, but may be available via bookfinder.com.

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GOLD by Yves Saint Laurent, *curated by* **Elsa Janssen,** *Musée Yves Saint Laurent, Paris*, **France, 14 October 2022 – 14 May 2023, Tickets €10,00.**

"There is no substitute for gold," wrote British filmmaker, Derek Jarman, in his book, *Chroma: A Book of Colour* (2000 [1994]).[178] Gold is the colour of desire, reverence, and awe and has traditionally been associated with wisdom, prosperity, and good fortune. As a precious metal — resistant to oxidation, unusually dense, and readily malleable — it is central to ideas about identity, power, and status. From King Midas and his golden touch to the gold of the Pharaohs, and from the toxic mines of South Africa to the financial markets in the City of London and the vaults of Fort Knox, gold reflects the universal quest for immortality and status. "The natural counterpoint to our desire for and devotion to gold," however, writes Kassia St Clair, author of *The Secret Lives of Colour* (2016), is "greed, envy, and avarice" concluding that "today, those who binge on gold are looked down on as tacky and tasteless."[179] *GOLD by Yves Saint Laurent*, an exhibition presented by the *Musée Yves Saint Laurent, Paris,* France, challenges this notion, arguing instead that gold, as popularised by Saint Laurent's creations, was "no longer at the service of male, institutional power, whether political or religious, but instead served to invest women with a new force and vitality" and "modern femininity."[180]

Curated by Elsa Janssen, director of the museum, in association with the museum's curatorial advisory team, the artistic collaboration of Anna Klossowski, the set designer *Valérie* Weill, and the sound designer Pierre-Arnaud Alunni, the exhibition marks sixty years since the couturier's first eponymous collection as well as the fifth anniversary of the opening of the museum. Drawing inspiration from the museum's hidden archives, Janssen considers the role gold plays in the collections presented by Yves Saint Laurent between 1962 and 2002. The exhibition is divided into six chrono-thematic sections: *By Day and By Night*, *A Golden Coup*, *Time to Shine*, *The Studio*, *Light Me Up!,* and *In Gold Letters*. It includes some forty haute couture and ready-to-wear garments displayed alongside accessories and pieces of jewellery selected from the more than 10,000 pieces inventoried in the museum's reserves.

"L'or est matière, l'or est couleur, l'or est lumière. L'or est sans nul doute une couleur à part. Et dans les collections du musée Yves Saint Laurent, l'or est cuir, lurex, dentelle ou sequins," ["Gold is matter, gold is colour, gold is light. Gold is undoubtedly a colour apart. And in the collections of the Yves Saint Laurent Museum, gold is leather, lurex, lace, or sequins."] writes Janssen in the exhibition's catalogue introduction.[181] From a navy blue pea coat adorned with gilded buttons and a gold lace sheath dress embroidered with gold sequins and pearls to a metallic jumpsuit worn by singer Sylvie Vartan for her 1972 concert at Olympia, Paris, the exhibition highlights the designer's fascination with gold as a multifaceted element as well as its application in his creative practice. "Il apparaît dans sa mode, il est omniprésent dans son imaginaire et il décore sa vie," ["It appears in his fashion, it is omnipresent in his imagination, and it decorates his life."] asserts Janssen.[182]

Credited with revolutionising women's fashion when he debuted "Le Smoking" in 1966, a menswear-inspired tuxedo tailored for women, the exhibition pays homage to Saint Laurent's belief that women should feel empowered and liberated by their clothes. Examples include embroidered dresses with shorter lengths emphasising movement and flexibility and signature torero jackets and trousers traditionally worn by bullfighters and adapted by Saint Laurent for the female silhouette. "I see women as objects of adoration," said the designer in 1977, "not just in the religious sense of

[178] Derek Jarman, *Chroma: A Book of Colour – June '93*, Vintage, London, England, 2000 [1994], p. 144.
[179] Kassia St Clair, *The Secret Lives of Colour*, John Murray, London, England, 2016, pp. 88–89.
[180] *Musée Yves Saint Laurent, GOLD by Yves Saint Laurent. Exhibition booklet, 2022.*
[181] Elsa Janssen, 'Yves Saint Laurent, hors du commun', in *Gold: Les ors d'Yves Saint Laurent, Musée* Yves Saint Laurent and *É*ditions Gallimard, Paris, France, 2022, p. 11.
[182] Elsa Janssen and Yvane Jacob, 'Gold, plutôt qu'or', in *Gold: Les ors d'Yves Saint Laurent, Musée* Yves Saint Laurent and *É*ditions Gallimard, Paris, France, 2022, p. 15.

the word, but as idols to be adorned with gold — like those statues of the Virgin Mary which the conquistadors used to decorate with their booty — [and] to be covered with gold and offerings."[183]

The exhibition also documents the theatricality, diversity, and extravagance of his jewelery designs including a golden ear of corn brooch, gold letter necklaces, a gold dove brooch, gold rings and bracelets, and a gold leaf tiara from his Spring/Summer haute couture collection from 1995. Selected by Anna Klossowski, daughter of Saint Laurent's longtime collaborator Loulou de la Falaise, the installation of 300 unique pieces captures creations ranging from the exuberant to the colourful, the classical to the abstract, and the graphic to the gilded. Displayed against a canvas backdrop reminiscent of fabric wefts, the pieces evoke an intricate and opulent cabinet of curiosities.

In the final section, *In Gold Letters*, the visitor is invited to reflect on Saint Laurent's deep and abiding interest in art and literature as reflected through his gold creations. A consummate aesthete, he was influenced by the art of Matisse, Picasso, Goya, and Mondrian amongst others, as well as the written works of Proust, Apollinaire, Aragon, and Cocteau. Featured is a topcoat embroidered in gold and sequins from the haute couture Autumn/Winter 1980 collection that pays tribute to a poem written by Louis Aragon in 1942 that he wrote to his wife Elsa Triolet: "Tes yeux sont si profonds qu'en me penchant pour boire / J'ai vu tous les soleils y venir se mirer." ["Your eyes are so deep that when I bent down to drink / I saw all the suns reflected within."][184]

In an acknowledgement of the extensive and eclectic art collection amassed by the designer and his partner Pierre Berg*é*, the museum also invited Belgian born, Paris-based ceramicist Johan Creten to enter into conversation with Saint Laurent's creative practice. Five gilded sculptural works fashioned from clay and gold, and reminiscent of gold buttons, were juxtaposed with outfits by the designer. As the artist explains, these pieces, from a series titled *Zwam*, are connected to the idea of the divine but also to the seductive and dangerous duality behind the glitz and glamour of recognition — "Those are two elements that touch always and were always [present] in his work and life."[185]

While the gallery spaces in the designer's former couture house are somewhat constrained, the elegant and minimalist exhibition design by Jasmin Oezcebi and the use of dark plinths and backgrounds provides for a surprisingly intimate experience and allows the garments and accessories to shine through. The end result is a dazzling and glittering display that pays tribute to the role that gold, that 'magical colour', has played in the couturier's life and work.

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[183] Yves Saint Laurent quoted in *Gold: Les ors d'Yves Saint Laurent*, *Musée* Yves Saint Laurent and *É*ditions Gallimard, Paris, France, 2022, p. 39.
[7] Ibid.*,* p. 66.
[185] Lily Templeton, "All That Glitters and a Lot of Gold at New Musée Yves Saint Laurent Exhibition," *Women's Wear Daily*, 12 October 2022, https://wwd.com/eye/lifestyle/gold-ors-yves-saint-laurent-glitz-glamour-paris-museum-exhibition-1235385657/. Accessed 11 January 2023.

I feel perfectly terrible, Dirk Van Saene (2021). In the background drawings by Yasuyuki Ueno. Photographer: Stany Dederen. © MoMu.

Exploding Fashion: From 2D to 3D to 3D Animation, curated by Alistair O'Neill, Caroline Evans, and Romy Cockx, 8 October 2022 – 5 February 2023, and _Mirror Mirror – Fashion & the Psyche_, curated by Elisa de Wyngaert and Yoon Lee Hamot, 8 October 2022 – 26 February 2023, MoMu Fashion Museum, Antwerp, Belgium, Tickets €12.

In the heart of Antwerp, not far from the medieval cathedral and the sixteenth-century town hall, you will find the MoMu Fashion Museum in (at first sight) an unobtrusive side street. This museum is located in a building that has had many different uses over the years such as a hotel, a department store, and a branch of New England, a famous clothing brand popular throughout western Europe in the early twentieth century. After being housed somewhere in the Flemish countryside as a provincial clothing collection, the Fashion Museum moved into its current housing in 2002, together with the Fashion Academy (the fashion department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp) and the Flanders Fashion Institute (FFI), an institute intended to promote Flemish fashion. This amalgamation turned out to be an extremely fortunate combination due to the mutual cross-pollination of the three institutes.

The MoMu has usually showed one or two exhibitions each year, mostly focusing on a specific designer. However, due to a lack of space, virtually nothing could be shown of its own extensive historic collection of more than 30,000 objects. After the departure of the Flanders Fashion Institute in 2016, which merged into a new Flemish institute for design and fashion, Flanders DC, the Fashion Museum closed its doors in 2018 to undergo a major renovation. This large-scale renovation would take three years to complete. Many original details were retained that already made the building a model of unique architecture in 2002 including the V-shaped staircase, realized on the site of a triangular patio between the two wings of the building.

The renovation was entrusted to the architectural company called *B-architecten,* which has extensive experience with projects within the cultural sector from scenographies and theatre buildings to libraries. This company maintains close contacts with the fashion world, for which various stores, like the store of Walter van Beirendonck, have been developed.

However, after the initial museum opening in September 2021, it turned out that the air conditioning did not fully meet the high-quality requirements that are needed to maintain the right temperature for the preservation of textiles. Thus, the museum closed again and finally reopened on October 7, 2022. The result of the renovation is stunning in aesthetics and in practical utility value. The top (third) floor still houses the Fashion Academy, and there is now a large exhibition space on the second floor with two more on the ground floor, one of which will be used for the exhibition of objects from the MoMu collection. A reading room and a library, with a wide selection of books, magazines and documentation on fashion, clothing, clothing history, and regional costumes, etc. are located on the first floor. On the first floor there is also a study collection, consisting of a large selection of garments, where students and researchers can get in direct contact and familiarize themselves with the materials and techniques of fashion. A new bookshop and café were added on the ground floor as well.

The exhibition on the ground floor shows some of the museum highlights in an annually changing exhibition of avant-garde Belgian and international clothing pieces and archive material from MoMu's permanent collection. In the current presentation one finds designs by Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester, Dirk Van Saene, Walter Van Beirendonck, Dirk Bikkembergs, and Marina Yee: in short, the founders of Belgian fashion. Dubbed the "Antwerp Six", these fashion

designers studied at the Fashion Academy in the 1980s and became famous not only because of their talent, but because they had the luck that fashion was a heavy investment in funding in Belgium in the 1980s. This decade was a period full of creativity and risk-taking. Still influenced by the youth culture of the 1960s and 1970s, anarchy and rebellion were the hallmarks of these fashion designers in the 1980s. Next to this are some thematic presentations, including one of what usually remains underexposed: underwear. On display are also some designs by current students of the Academy. Beside this is a glass case with eighteenth-century dresses from the donation of Dutch collector Jacoba de Jonge that have been in the possession of MoMu since 2012. There is also a display case with designs in black — the black from Antwerp that was already famous in the seventeenth century.

In the second display space on the ground floor is a very special exhibition titled *Exploding Fashion: From 2D to 3D to 3D Animation*. This exhibition has origins from a research project at Central Saint Martins (University of the Arts London) that explores how pattern-cutting in twentieth-century fashion can be understood through the practices of making, unmaking, and remaking. Iconic museum pieces by several well-known couturiers of the twentieth century such as Madeleine Vionnet and Cristóbal Balenciaga have been recreated. Thus, the myth of the fashion designer as an exclusive creative genius is deconstructed by shedding light on the intriguing role of the pattern maker: paper patterns were made from the individual parts of these garments. In this way the production process of groundbreaking fashion designers who were also innovative pattern makers is followed back from the garment to the pattern. MoMu was only involved in this research project at a late stage. The exhibition in Antwerp replaces an initially planned exhibition at Somerset House, London, which was cancelled. A corresponding book titled *Exploding Fashion: Making, Unmaking, and Remaking Twentieth Century Fashion* (Lannoo) by Alistair O'Neill has already been published in 2021. It contains more than 200 illustrations, including crucial designs, photo collages, innovative patterns, pencil drawings, and project documentation.

The second floor of the renovated museum is entirely devoted to the exhibition *Mirror Mirror – Fashion & the Psyche.* This exhibition emphasizes the personal experience of the body in relation to clothing. Clothing is a mediator between man and the world, but this is often a difficult relationship. Some designs on display by Comme des Garçons are distorted by bulging bellies and humps — a deconstruction that puts the vain appearance of the classic mannequin into perspective. Additionally, paintings by artist Geniève Figgis make the visitor question the lavishness of make-up. Another important part of the exhibition is the critical consideration of the function of fashion dolls where artist and fashion designer Ed Tsuwaki stretches his dolls so that they literally touch the ceiling. The contents of the exhibition are best summarized by a puppet in a checkered tweed suit with impeccable white shoes that puts his hands over his eyes to depict the title of the object: *I feel perfectly terrible* by fashion designer Dirk van Saene.

In addition to the exhibition in Antwerp, the Museum Dr. Guirlain in Ghent, originally a mental institution, is exhibiting a parallel exhibition under the same title of *Mirror Mirror*. The exhibition there shows remarkable ways of using clothing as a messenger. On view is a gray asylum jacket from 1938, that has been completely embroidered inside with beautiful patterns by a psychiatric patient. Female patients of a psychiatric institution sometimes turned their uniform-asylum clothing into a unique piece of clothing by adding embroidery or other forms of handicraft. This kind of women's work is already known in classical antiquity: Helen of Troy, from Homer's *Iliad*, also a 'locked up' woman, is described weaving a garment depicting scenes from the Trojan War. Another special item is a headdress in the shape and the size of the papal tiara, made from beige asylum clothing torn into strips. A three-piece suit by Giuseppe Versino (early twentieth century) is solely made from used grey mops which also creates a stunning image.

Another theme in the exhibition is the phenomenon of people using the street as a catwalk. With their homemade showy clothes, they parade through the streets of a city like a living work of art. Exhibited in Ghent are many photographs of people acting this way, for example the Japanese artist Eijiro Miyama who rides his bicycle through the busy streets of Yokohama on weekends dressed in homemade robes and a striking headgear. On his back he carries a text on cardboard with messages about peace and brotherhood. A similar example of this way to communicate with

the outside world is showed in a photo series about Helga Sophia Goetze, who every day in Berlin from 1983-2007 appeared on the street with homemade clothes on which her message was written: "Ficken ist Frieden" [To fuck is peace].

Many aspects of the exhibitions in Antwerp and Ghent are discussed in a book with the same title: *Mirror Mirror – Fashion & the Psyche*. Both exhibitions are only on display until February 26, so this book is an important document for those interested in this interface between clothing and psychiatry. The book contains a broad selection of specialized texts and appropriate images, and, as in the exhibition, the main theme of the book is the unexpected dialogue between visual art and avant-garde fashion. This book, a translation of the Dutch original, is published by Hannibal Books (November 2022).

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THE ASSOCIATION OF DRESS HISTORIANS