Edited by Jessica Wolfendale and Jeanette Kennett

FASHION
PHILOSOPHY FOR EVERYONE

Thinking with Style
Foreword by Jennifer Baumgardner

Series Editor: Fritz Allhoff
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FASHION
PHILOSOPHY FOR EVERYONE
Thinking with Style

Foreword by Jennifer Baumgardner
I'd like to dedicate this book to my mother for letting me wear whatever I wanted when I was growing up, no matter how outrageous; to my late grandmother for her amazing dress-up box that included a fabulously chic leopard print hat, and to my sister for her sometimes too honest but always helpful critiques of my outfits!

– Jessica Wolfendale

I dedicate this book to the 1960s and the people in it who shaped my interest in fashion: my mother whose wardrobe was a treasure trove of hats for a small girl to try on when she was out, my father whose collection of early 1960s shirts and shoes would make a vintage shopper weep for joy, and my then teenage sisters, whose dresses, make up and hairstyles are indelibly imprinted on my memory.

– Jeanette Kennett
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For the past couple of years, I have nursed a persistent sense that I’m not trying hard enough. No one is saying this to me; I simply feel it instinctively. The source of this inadequacy, you ask? While I could definitely point to my writing (Does this read as if I’m a fifth grader?) or my parenting (Always attempting to avoid tedious nurturing!) or my finances (Sacré Bleu!), the realm in which I’m slacking is fashion. As I step into my navy blue, heavily scuffed Sven clogs each day, perhaps matched with jeans and a t-shirt and cardigan or complementing a shapeless summer sundress, I wonder: am I too comfortable? Cutting too many corners regarding my public armor?

My chronic clog wearing feels akin to eating Honeynut Cheerios for dinner every night – a far cry from psychic annihilation, but not really living a full life, either. Socrates might see my lack of style as a good thing. As quoted in “Slaves to Fashion,” one essay in the surprising, provocative collection you hold in your hands, Socrates says that “the genuine philosopher disdains” fashion and, in doing so, the authors of that essay conclude, “he practices dying.”

Disdain of worldliness works for Socrates, but my philosophy, feminism, is devoted to what it means to live. Feminism is deeply entwined with creating life – both procreation and self-creation. Sartorially, my issue is this: I, a feminist writer of 40 and mother of two, do not want to dress “like a feminist” (or a mother, for that matter. Mom jeans. Blech). In short, I don’t want to be reduced to the clichés or stereotypes of the identity that has liberated me. One of my closest colleagues calls it the fear of “becoming a purple feminist” – purple sneakers, purple over-sized...
“This is what a feminist looks like” t-shirts, “ethnic” (though not your own ethnicity) tops, big jewelry, and “natural” hair. Perhaps a hemp pantsuit in Grimace grape for a special meeting?

Let’s contrast that look with fashionable dress: heels, lustrous or chicly shorn hair, clothing made to flatter and shape rather than obscure the body, and accessories that charm or are beautiful objects. Nearly 160 years ago, first wave feminists called for dress reform, creating a harem pants ensemble that was practical and comfortable, and shockingly controversial because it enabled movement and freedom). Then, 40 or so years ago, feminists critiqued the beauty standards applied to women (These critiques contained at least the following elements: first, women’s fashions are designed to not just symbolize but maintain women’s weakness via straight skirts (only small steps, please Ma’am), shoes that prohibit running, and necklines cut in a way that require poise to keep in place. Second, fashion colludes to reduce women to objects, rather than enabling their full humanity. And third, the constant change of fashions aimed at women means that we bankrupt our finances and energy keeping up with this trivial pursuit.

I have grown up with these critiques alongside enduring beauty standards and fashion ideals. Having access to both critique and commodity means that my view of fashion might be different in 2011 than a sister feminist’s view in 1970. To wit, the high heel can be seen as, like the corset, a symbol of women’s oppression, but I actually feel equally oppressed by my clogs – tamped down by my own cowardice to break out of them. Recently, at a birthday party for a friend, I donned a silk georgette jewel-toned swing dress and, in a crisis of confidence, opted to wear blue ballet flats rather than my sparkly pewter heels. The minute I got to the event, I regretted my decision. All of the women looked amazing, and they all wore heels. It was as if I had left the house with my hair in rollers. And I wore the flats not because I thought they looked better or even out of a real commitment to anti-fashion à la Andrea Dworkin, but because standing that tall in the world required grace and confidence I wasn’t sure I could muster (but I could have, and I should have).

Fashion can constrain, and certainly those constraints mirror other ways that women are hobbled (or asked to self-fetter), but a beautifully shod pair of feet is also an example of finesse and effort. When you wear sweatpants, you say, “I don’t have a body, I’m basically shapeless underneath this stretchy shroud.” But you do have a body under there, and feminism is devoted to respecting one’s body. Feminism also encourages women to push beyond comfort, recognizing the link between
risk and accomplishment. A woman might be more comfortable living under patriarchy, for example: not paying bills, barred from serious endeavor. But effort and achievement is so much sweeter than mere ease.

So, can you be a serious person and be ... fashionable? The answer has to be yes. At the end of the day, it’s just as oppressive to be told you can’t wear Miucci Prada as it is to be told you must. To return to my initial conceit – my creeping sense of laziness and inadequacy – the malaise is deeply connected to how I’m currently dressed (taupe hoodie, white jeans, and blue clogs, for the record). How each of us handles the barrier between public and pubic conveys much about our own values and self-image. I believe that being “above” fashion can be a principled stance, or it can be a mask for someone who is afraid to harness the power of self-presentation. For me, sliding into generic and unconscious comfort is dying a little, but not in that good way that Socrates liked.

I strongly self-identify with a marginalized and stereotyped political philosophy and I desire not to be trapped by the narrow images associated with my calling. Fashion aids and abets my self-creation. (I have evidence that having flair invites younger people into feminism, too. Courtney Martin, a writer 10 years my junior, has written that her feminist click was seeing me speak at her school wearing fishnet stockings and realizing that she could manifest a personal style and still be a feminist.) Some feminists critique fashion as accessing a privilege by buying clothing, which requires money, and cashing in on the unequally distributed advantage of beauty. But it has always rankled me that it’s only feminists whom we require to be so pure and opt out of pastimes like shopping.

Samantha Brennan writes in this book, “not worrying about fashion, or claiming to, is itself a sign of privilege.” So true. As an older single feminist friend of mine has remarked, the older she gets, the more carefully she has to dress so that she doesn’t look like a bag lady. It’s a privilege of the young, the thin, the married, and the clearly WASPy to not have to dress with an eye toward ameliorating people’s negative assumptions.

Even as I consider the conditions under which clothing is made, deplore racist-sexist-homophobic-ableist beauty standards and resist a capitalism that encourages me to buy things I don’t need, getting myself dressed is a big part of life. Sometimes a clog is just a clog. But sometimes a clog means I’m practicing dying.

– Jennifer Baumgardner, New York City, April 2011
NOTES

1 Plato, *Phaedo*, 64a–67-e.
2 Lauren Ashwell and Rae Langton, “Slaves to Fashion,” this volume.
3 Purple being a traditional color of the suffrage movement in England and later in the US.
4 Courtney E. Martin, “Not My Mother’s Hose,” in *Click: When We Knew We Were Feminists* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2010), pp. 89–93.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For both of us, fashion is important and always has been. One of us began wearing vintage clothes at age 15 (and still misses the fabulous 1960s cocktail dress she wore to her High School prom) and has never stopped; the other has long been fascinated by icons of style, and rates a visit to a Vivienne Westwood or haute couture fashion exhibition well above a gallery of Constables. We both love to browse vintage clothing shops, watch Project Runway and experiment with different styles, colors, patterns, textures, and decades. Yet we work in a field in which fashion is largely ignored, if not outright dismissed as vain and trivial, and so at times we have each struggled with the fear that our interest in fashion is incompatible with being serious philosophers. But one afternoon in 2008, over perhaps one too many gin and tonics, we began talking about what fashion means to us, and discovered that far from being a silly or trivial topic, fashion raises many different and important questions. Our own experiences with fashion and shopping led us to think more carefully about how fashion shapes, liberates, and yet sometimes constrains identity, and how fashion can make us feel creative and artistic, yet can at times also seem conformist, limiting, and burdensome. We realized that, far from being a subject rightly ignored by serious philosophers, fashion touches on and has implications for many important areas of philosophy, including ethics, aesthetics, identity, and social and political philosophy.

Inspired by our afternoon of (restrained) drinking and chatting, we decided that it was time for philosophy to take fashion seriously. We wrote to philosophers working in diverse areas of philosophy to ask if they would contribute to a collection on fashion and, somewhat to our surprise,
discovered that there were many who agreed with us that fashion was important to philosophy – and not only because so many philosophers could use some fashion advice! It turned out that, particularly for women philosophers, the worry that fashion and serious philosophy were incompatible was a common one, and so it was reassuring to see how quickly it became apparent that fashion is something that philosophy should pay attention to. We were excited and inspired by the variety of topics suggested by our contributors – and we quickly realized how valuable this book could be both to philosophers and for anyone interested in fashion.

The journey from our afternoon chat in 2008 to the book that you hold in your hands has been fascinating and thought provoking for both of us. We would like to express our deep gratitude to our contributors for the interesting, challenging, and insightful chapters they have written. Their willingness to engage wholeheartedly with exploring the philosophical side of fashion (and responding to our feedback and comments) from many different angles is inspiring, and we are extremely impressed with the quality of the contributions to this book, and with the depth and thought they display.

This book would not have been possible without the support of the Philosophy for Everyone series editor Fritz Allhoff, who encouraged us to see the wide appeal of this topic for everyone, not just philosophers. We also wish to thank Jeff Dean and Tiffany Mok from Wiley-Blackwell for their continued interest and encouragement during the book’s production and Jennifer Baumgardner for her engaging and reflective foreword. Of course this book would not have been completed without the continuing inspiration we both find in fashion – from browsing fashion blogs to visiting Graceland in Memphis, vintage clothing fairs in Canberra, and fashion runways in Melbourne, to encouraging each other to explore new styles, fashion remains for us a source of creativity and delight, and an exciting and challenging way of bringing together the joy of dressing up with the world of ideas.

Finally, to the readers of this volume – we hope this book shows you new and exciting ways to think about fashion. And remember, in the words of Coco Chanel, “Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street, fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening.”

Jessica Wolfendale,
West Virginia University

Jeanette Kennett
Macquarie University, Sydney
INTRODUCTION

Who Cares about Fashion?

Why should philosophy pay attention to fashion? Not only are many philosophers conspicuous for their lack of personal style and taste (as a quick survey of any gathering of philosophers will confirm) but fashion also seems to be a topic about which philosophy has had little to say. As Marguerite La Caze points out, philosophers have tended to hold fashion in contempt – to view it as a topic unworthy of serious analysis. What we wear and how we adorn ourselves are seen as matters of taste and personal preference – of mere vanity and social conformity. It seems a waste of valuable time to think about fashion. If anything, we should think about fashion less! When there are so many serious issues (the environment, global poverty, war, and so on) that require urgent attention, worrying about what to wear, what’s trendy, how much to spend, and where to shop seems like a moral failing. After all, we rarely praise people for being vain! Surely, as the philosopher Peter Singer argues, we should spend our spare money and
time on programs that aim to alleviate poverty, starvation, and disease in
the developing world, rather than wasting it on items that serve no
important needs. Can we justify spending time and money on something
as ephemeral as fashion?

This attitude toward fashion may be common among philosophers
but it is not well founded. As this volume makes clear, fashion raises
numerous important and interesting philosophical issues, many of which
have not been well recognized or addressed in philosophy. In thinking
about fashion we encounter questions in art and aesthetics, ethics,
personal and social identity, political visibility and recognition, freedom
and oppression, and the intersection between our bodies, our clothes,
and science and technology. To dismiss fashion as philosophically uninter-
"eting is therefore to ignore the rich and diverse set of questions raised
by our interest in and practices surrounding, dress, adornment, and style.
Fashion does matter. Fashion matters to people, and fashion should
matter to philosophy.

Being Fashionable and Being Cool

Just what is it that makes an item of clothing fashionable? What is the
property of being fashionable? We have an intuitive sense of what is and
is not fashionable at any given time, but it is remarkably difficult to
explain how we know this, and what it is we mean when we describe
something as fashionable, particularly since fashion (and the fashion
industry) is notoriously changeable and fickle – as Heidi Klum says in
Project Runway, “one day you’re in, the next day you’re out.” In their
contribution, Jesse Prinz and Anya Farenikova argue that describing
an item (be it clothes, music, furniture, or even ideas) as fashionable is
to make a claim that involves appealing both to “the masses” and to a
set of acknowledged experts (such as celebrities, fashion editors, and
designers). The fact that an item appears on the runway is not sufficient
to make it fashionable, unless enough consumers adopt that item –
even if in a modified form. Likewise, the fact that an item is popular
does not make that item fashionable unless and until fashion experts
endorse it. Ugg boots were not fashionable for many years, despite their
popularity. It was only when celebrities began to be photographed
wearing them that they became a fashionable item and not merely a
cozy pair of slippers.
Yet “fashionable” is not just a description of an item’s status in relation to expert opinion and popularity. The concept of fashion contains two seemingly contradictory elements. On the one hand, we directly experience an item as fashionable – we just perceive that this dress is fashionable and that dress is not. On the other hand, we also adopt an objective standpoint and recognize that an item’s status as fashionable depends upon a number of social factors such as expert opinion, as well as being relative to a time, a place, and a particular group of people – so we also know that this dress won’t be fashionable in a year’s time and won’t be fashionable among, say, the punk subculture. As Nick Zangwill points out, this suggests that fashion involves two incompatible perspectives that create a sense of alienation – the first-person experience (we experience items as genuinely having the property of being fashionable), and the third-person objective standpoint from which we realize that fashionability is an ever-changing attribute that depends on social arrangements. We can’t experience both these perspectives simultaneously, and so we are forced into an uneasy, and perhaps alienating, vacillation between the two.

This tension in fashion is something we are all too familiar with. Who among us has not had the experience of pulling out last season’s favorite item of clothing – one that we thought was the height of cool – and realizing, to our horror, that it has entirely lost its allure. How could I have ever thought this dress was cool, we think? Or that I looked good in it? What was I thinking? Who hasn’t cringed at those old photos where we (or our parents) proudly sport the latest 1980s hairstyles and power suits? The perception of fashionability that these items had then seems to be a kind of illusion from our perspective now. It seems impossible to reconcile these two aspects of fashion, and the tension that results, according to Zangwill, makes fashion an alienating concept.

On the other hand, we think that there are some people who are always cool, even when (or perhaps because) they do not dress in the fashions of the day, and who do not seem to be bound by the relativity of fashion to time, groups, and expert opinions. Being cool appears therefore to be a different attribute from being merely fashionable. Luke Russell argues that the property of being cool is an “aesthetic virtue,” a virtue that he characterizes as involving caring about style and aesthetics for their own sake, rather than for the sake of appearing fashionable and trendy. The effortlessly cool person, unlike the rest of us, doesn’t cringe when she contemplates her past fashion choices. The idea of “timeless” fashion, while appearing to involve a contradiction in terms, can make sense in
relation to such a person. Icons of cool such as Jane Birkin, Miles Davis, Humphrey Bogart, Kate Moss, and Audrey Hepburn have in common the ability to appear chic and stylish even as we recognize that their clothes are not or are no longer in fashion today.

Of course there are limits to the idea of “timeless” fashion. Fashions from the Victorian era or from Elizabethan times do not appear cool or fashionable now, no matter who wears them. Indeed, it is interesting to consider whether the concept of “cool” can be applied to historical eras in which fashion is constrained by social and gender conventions to a far greater degree than is the case in most modern liberal societies. It’s hard to imagine a woman dressed in Jane Austen-era clothes as “cool,” even though she might be fashionable given the standards of the time. Historical figures who might qualify as “cool,” such as Lord Byron, are individuals who had a degree of financial and/or social freedom (usually arising from wealth and leisure) that allowed them to exercise their aesthetic choices in a way that was not possible for individuals who were more constrained by convention and circumstance. Perhaps, then, being cool is also a matter of having freedom to exercise one’s tastes, and the resources to be able to do this.

Fashion, Style, and Design

Fashion is also closely connected to style and design more broadly. Andy Hamilton addresses the debate between those who believe that design (whether of furniture, clothes, buildings, and household appliances) should primarily be driven by considerations of function, and those who believe that design must also be guided by aesthetic considerations. The close connection between fashion and other areas of design is evident from the numerous collaborations between fashion designers and the design of household furniture and appliances. Calvin Klein and Laura Ashley are just two designers who have also produced designs in furnishings, bed linen, and homewares as well as clothing, and the fashion house Versace has collaborated on not only the architecture of a hotel (The Palazzo Versace hotel chain) but also on the design of every aspect of the hotel rooms and lobby. Even without explicit collaborations between fashion designers and architects and industrial design, there is a strong interconnection between fashion and the aesthetic of an era. This can be hard to see in relation to our own time, when developments in
contemporary fashion can seem isolated from developments in technology, science, and design more broadly. But when we see TV shows such as *Mad Men* (set in 1960s New York City) and HBO's *Boardwalk Empire* (set in Atlantic City in the 1920s) it is clear that part of the recreation of the eras in those shows involves recreating a total aesthetic – not just the clothes that people wore, but every aspect of their lives and the world they inhabit. In these shows, as well as in movies such as *LA Confidential* (1950s) and *The Ice Storm* (1970s), we clearly see the interconnection between fashion and almost every aspect of everyday life – office design, car design, architecture, household items, appliances, and furnishings. This helps us to see how fashion integrates with design, and to understand how fashion can qualify as having an aesthetic status equal to that of architecture and industrial and household design. We can’t isolate fashion in dress from fashion in other areas of design, and since many see architecture and industrial design as topics worthy of serious aesthetic consideration, it becomes apparent that fashion in dress is equally important as a subject.

The idea of fashion as a part of the total aesthetic of a particular time and culture also explains why there is such a strong connection between fashion and fantasy. Fashion and fashion design present us with not only choices in what we can wear and how we present ourselves to others, but can represent whole lifestyles. The connection between fashion and fantasy is obvious in fashion advertising – where fashions are depicted in such a way as to evoke particular values, ways of life, even kinds of employment. Michael Kors’ recent advertising campaigns, for example, depict an elegant woman being photographed on the red carpet, exiting a luxurious car, and walking with an equally elegant man through the snow. These images create the illusion of a life of wealth, fame, and privilege – the details of the clothes themselves are almost secondary to this aura. The connection between fashion and fantasy is particularly evident in the collaborations between fashion designers and the perfume industry. Cynthia Freeland explores this connection in her chapter, highlighting the seductive nature of much perfume advertising. The long, intricate stories told in Chanel’s recent perfume ads are almost mini-movies, involving distinct characters, intricate plots, mystery, and romance. Since the viewer is unable to experience the perfume directly, these ads convey the *idea* of the perfume – the idea of the kind of woman who wears it, rather than attempting to describe the scent itself.

Ada Brunstein reveals another side to the relationship between fashion and design. She explores the integration of technology and fashion, and
demonstrates how wider social changes in communication technology are incorporated into what we wear in new and exciting ways. Our clothes might, in the not too distant future, be able to receive and send messages to other people, depict changing images, and impart sensations (such as the sensation of being hugged). This has the potential to alter our expectations of how, when, and in what manner we communicate with each other. Our clothes might literally, rather than just symbolically, express who we are and how we feel. This possibility, in common with other advances in technology, challenges traditional conceptions of what it means to be a person, and of how we draw the boundaries between the body, brain, and the external world, as well as highlighting and making explicit the intimate connection between fashion and identity.

Fashion, Identity, and Freedom

Clothing ourselves is clearly not simply a matter of what is convenient or comfortable. It is also not just a matter of what is fashionable this year (since a wide variety of styles may meet that criterion) or of what looks good on us. What we wear communicates many different messages to those around us. Fashion can be important as a way of expressing our personal style, our preferences, and even our moods. As Daniel Yim explains, fashion is one of the primary ways we have of exercising our autonomy and freedom of expression. Indeed, he explains, freedom of expression is seen as a central value of liberal societies such as the United States, so much so that in some cases courts have ruled that it is a violation of students’ rights to freedom of expression to require them to wear school uniforms.

Of course fashion is not always or even primarily about individuality. As Yim points out, it is also a powerful means of communicating group membership and social roles. The clothes we wear, along with hairstyles and other items of adornment, can and often do, whether we are aware of it or not, communicate our social and professional roles and status – think power dressing, fitness freaks, ladies who lunch. They may also communicate our gender, our sexuality, our political commitments, our religious and moral beliefs, and our aesthetic judgments. If you are unconvinced, consider the fact that people who hold conservative religious views tend also to dress very conservatively – modest clothing that is conventional can therefore reveal important information about
certain of the wearer’s moral and religious commitments, as well as their attitude toward sexual modesty and behavior and gender roles.

We think uniforms provide further insight into the connection between clothing, style and social identity. Military and police uniforms are designed explicitly to generate solidarity among military and police personnel, and to communicate to outsiders the status and authority of those who wear those uniforms. When we see a police uniform, we immediately recognize that the person wearing it fulfills a certain role, has undergone certain training, and warrants certain forms of treatment (respect, for instance, or even fear). Other kinds of uniforms have become associated with sexual fetishes and fantasies and have reinforced traditional gender roles. This is particularly true of women’s uniforms, such as those of nurses, maids, and flight attendants. Indeed, it’s difficult to think a traditional women’s uniform that hasn’t been sexualized and fetishized. Unlike most men’s uniforms, which typically signal authority and power, many traditional women’s uniforms signify a sexually potent blend of authority and servitude. Nurses traditionally were submissive to doctors, but were in positions of authority regarding patients. Many female uniforms also signify what were believed to be ideal natural feminine traits, such as nurturing, maternal discipline (for example, nannies), and sexual status, submission, and a desire to please. This is particularly true of traditional nurses’ uniforms and flight attendants’ uniforms. Indeed, a number of advertising campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s explicitly invited viewers to associate flight attendants with sexual availability in line with the so-called sexual revolution. The National Airlines 1971 television campaign depicted a beautiful smiling female flight attendant announcing, “I’m Maggie (or another female name). Fly me.” As part of this campaign, National Airlines requested flight attendants to wear “Fly me” buttons on their uniforms. Even at the time, a number of female flight attendants complained that the campaign was nothing more than a “blatant sexual pitch.”

Uniforms are also responsive to the aesthetic or cultural aspects of fashion. Female flight attendant uniforms in the 1960s and 1970s reflected the fashions of time, including mini skirts and psychedelic patterns and colors, and there were and still are a number of collaborations between fashion designers and airlines. However the advent of mass air travel, and changes to employment practices which ensure that a career as a flight attendant is no longer restricted to young, attractive, and unmarried women, has dampened the previously alluring mix of fashion, flying, and sex.

This mix of fashion, function and allure is also (perhaps surprisingly) found in military uniforms. Military uniforms have influenced consumer
and runway fashion to a significant degree – trends such as khaki, epaulettes, braids, aviator sunglasses, and military jackets have been in and out of fashion for decades, and “military” is touted to be one of the top trends this year. Nor are military personnel immune from the influences of consumer fashion and from aesthetic influences. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the British Royal Marine Corps wore beautifully tailored red jackets that, while certainly aesthetically striking, were hardly practical from a military point of view since they could be seen from miles away. Today, the Italian military police (the Carabinieri) are known for the intricate and ornate gold braiding on their jackets. In the United States, the Navy recently introduced its new Navy Working Uniform, which comes in a digital camouflage print in shades of navy and blue (there were already desert and woodland camouflage uniforms). Why? The Navy does not require blue camouflage – and so it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the pattern was chosen at least partly for its aesthetic properties, and not for military purposes. As this and the earlier examples indicate, fashion cannot be separated from the broader socio-cultural context. Fashion reveals and expresses the zeitgeist of the time, a theme taken up by a number of our contributors.

It is precisely because fashion can exemplify prevailing cultural, moral, and political norms that those who reject conventional norms typically express their rejection through their clothes and adornments, among other means. Sub-cultures such as hippies, emos, Goths, and punks are identified not just by their dress but also by the set of moral and political beliefs those clothes are taken to represent. In addition, fashion can play an extremely important role in political and social recognition of marginalized groups. Samantha Brennan explores how important it is that ways of dressing that communicate sexual preference to others be both recognized and accepted by the community in order for homosexual and bisexual men and women to be recognized as such by their communities (and thus for them to achieve equal visibility). Daniel Yim argues that fashion can be an extremely powerful political statement, raising complex ideas about justice, solidarity, and morality. The image of Tommie Smith and John Carlos raising black-gloved hands in the air at the 1968 Summer Olympics remains one of the central images symbolizing solidarity and political activism among members of an oppressed community. And both Brennan and Yim highlight the role that fashion can have as an important means of self-expression and assertion of sexual status and identity for people with a disability.

Fashion is therefore a central part of not only how we self-identify, but also how we identify ourselves to others in our community and how...