Critical Studies in Global Fashion

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Introduction

An issue on Global Fashion is very much needed given the crucial transition facing the disciplines of fashion in recent times, in the attempt to give an account of the increasing complexity of the material and symbolic flows of fashion. No other form of commerce, arguably, can claim to be more pervasive throughout the globe than the textile and apparel business,[1] and no other visual culture is more pervasive than fashion. But *global* fashion is not simply about the global dissemination of dress and fashion. For most fashion theorists, global fashion should not be defined merely as brand circulation or the international expansion of Western fashion. What is more, the interchanges of fashion imply an understanding of the circulation of technologies, objects, and ideas around fashion.[2]

Historicizing the Framework of Fashion

The debate about the global dimension of fashion is not at all new. It began with the dismantling of Western-centered theories about the Western origin of fashion and the (non) existence of fashion outside the Western world. In conjunction with the so-called "global turn" which has been unfolding since about 2000 in the wake of the rapid spread of connections across the world,[3] a revision of the "favorite child of capitalism," as fashion was defined by economist and sociologist Werner Sombart in mid-nineteenth century,[4] is already underway within the many disciplines concerned with fashion, including history, sociology, anthropology, and linguistics.

Reframing the cultural context of the fashion system, assumptions about which were formulated in an era that consolidated the myth of Western superiority, means going back in time to the rise of modern fashion, directly discussing the main ideas expressed by the great 19th-century sociologists in the light of evolutionary theories.[5] For these so-called classical sociologists, who first problematized the status of fashion, and especially for the theorist most influenced by Positivism, Herbert Spencer, fashion as a social system was the visual evidence, so to speak, of a European cultural superiority. This belief was reinforced by the economic superiority of Europe, an advantage that started to become apparent in the 18th century and that was consolidated with the Industrial Revolution. Europe then surpassed Asia, which up to that point held economic strength or at least at the same economic level as Europe. In particular, China and India, producers of luxury items that contributed to the value of European products, were overtaken by the modern European economy. Textiles and garments are at the core of this matter. A study by Giorgio Riello has highlighted how the birth of a European fashion industry that began to move toward the forefront of the textile field between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries involved an expropriation of dyeing and styling techniques from India and from the Middle East.[6] The so-called "great divergence"[7] in the economy of Europe and Asia definitely brought fashion into relation with

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1. See Grace I. Kunz and Myrna B. Garner, *Going Global: The Textile and Apparel Industry* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2007).

2. For more on these issues, see Glenn Adamson, Giorgio Riello and Sarah Teasley, eds., *Global Design History* (London: Routledge, 2011); Jennifer Craik, *Fashion: The Key Concepts* (Oxford: Berg, 2009); Diane Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Kunz and Garner, *Going Global*; Margaret Maynard, *Dress and Globalization* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil, eds., *The Fashion History Reader* (London: Routledge 2010).

3. Roy Tirthankar and Giorgio Riello, *Global Economic History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).

4. See Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

5. See Giovanni Matteucci and Stefano Marino, eds., *Philosophical Perspectives on Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

6. See Giorgio Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Global History*, vol. 5, no. 1 (March 2019): 1–28.

7. The term "great divergence" was coined by Samuel Huntington in 1996—although the debate about the reasons why parts of Europe surged ahead economically from the 18th century onwards, while much of Asia lagged behind, started earlier with Karl Marx and Max Weber. Kenneth Pomeranz influentially used the term in his discussion of the reasons behind Europe's economic surge. See Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence. China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

European modernity and colonial expansion.[8] The thesis is that the coercion exercised by Europeans on other areas of the world helps explain the different paths followed by Europe and by other areas of Eurasia, especially China and Japan.

The invention of haute couture in mid-19th-century Paris established the template of the modern woman, *la Parisienne*,[9] and her male counterpart on the other side of the Channel, the bespoke British gentleman "*dyed-in-the-wool.*"[10]   These two sartorial icons, the British gentleman and the Parisian woman, despite the ethnic ambivalence inherent in the status of fashion,[11] reinforced Eurocentric ideologies, the patriarchal code, and narratives suggesting that the two main capitals, London and Paris (New York would soon join them), as the height of civilization. Modernity being associated with fashion, and tradition being associated with costume, revealed a profound Orientalist bias in the conception of Western fashion—and not merely a distinction in the style and pace of change of the garments' shape. These associations expressed the alleged cultural superiority of the West vis-à-vis the rest of the world, and thus also indirectly helped promote and justify colonialism.[12] As fashion theorist Djurdja Bartlett maintains, "[f]ashionable dress universally signaled the arrival of modernity—and thus capitalism itself—from the mid-nineteenth century onward, yet its progress took place within the geographically uneven processes of industrial modernization, colonial conquests, nation building, and media and market development ."[13]

The great divergence also affected the construction of authorship in fashion, even as it regulated and entitled "inspirations." From Paul Poiret's Belle Epoque kimonos to hippy Afghan coats in the 1970s, the underlying idea was the same: the privileges of authorship were granted solely to Western designers, with recognized creativity and capacity for innovation being claimed in opposition to the merely executing, imitative, and fixed quality of the sartorial system outside the West. The rest of the world—or, in short, "the Rest"—could only be an inspirational source, or a source of good artisans (and later, with production outsourcing, fine executors of Western ideas, a postmodern version of the original Orientalist bias), but not a place for Authors. These other places became something to be admired at a distance and from a position of control, as conceptualized by the design of the Great Exhibitions that became popular in the 19th century.

By the end of the 20th century, when designers from outside the Western world became visible and legible as a result of a broader circulation of ideas—through the network of fashion schools—and in the areas of production, distribution, and exhibition—through the increasing outsourcing of the production of garments—the narratives of modernity vs. tradition and fashion vs. costume started to blur. The non-Western world ceased to resemble a catalogue of inspirations available to Western authors, instead becoming a cultural, political, and geographical site where designers could express new flows of creativity and new practices of production and consumption. We could mention, among other examples, the pioneering work of Lamine Kouyaté, born in Mali, designer of the brand Xuly Bët, as well as the work of Hussein Chalayan, born in Northern Cyprus.[14] These and other innovators can be considered

8.   For a discussion of fashion and modernity, see Christopher Breward and Carolina Evans, eds., *Fashion and Modernity* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2005). On colonial expansion, see Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2014).

9.   Agnes Rocamora, "Paris Capitale de la Mode: Representing Fashion in the Media," in *Fashion's World Cities*, eds. Christopher Breward and David Gilbert (Oxford: Berg, 2006).

10. Christopher Breward and Becky Conekin, eds., *The Englishness of English Dress* (Oxford: Berg 2002), 2.

11. Simona Segre Reinach, "Ethnicity," in *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in the Modern Age*, ed. Alexandra Palmer (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

12. Sheila Cliffe, *The Social Life of Kimono: Japanese Fashion Past and Present* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, *Fashion History: A Global View* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

13. Bartlett, Djurdja, "Can Fashion Be Defended?" in *Fashion and Politics*, ed. Djurdja Bartlett (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 21.

14. On Kouyaté, see Victoria L. Rovine, *African Fashion, Global Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015). On Chalayan, see Lianne Toussainte and Anneke Smelik, "Memory and Materiality in Hussein Chalayan's Techno-Fashion," in *Materializing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*, eds. Lázló Munteàn and Anneke Smelik (London: Routledge, 2017), 89–105.

among the initiators of a new way of thinking and designing in the relation of modernity vs. tradition, costume vs. fashion, the West vs. the Rest. In 1981, the "Japanese revolution" in fashion anticipated the new, emergent paradigm. Three designers in particular—Yohji Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo and Issey Miyake—deconstructed both the European and the Japanese sartorial systems, presenting a completely new aesthetics later described as Radical Fashion.[15] The acceptance of Asian designers as outsiders was interpreted as the breakdown of the racial boundaries among designers who were predominantly white.[16] The Western fashion establishment and gatekeepers expected from Japan an Orientalist aesthetics based upon flowered fans, multicolored butterflies, and multilayered kimono. These three designers offered instead vanguard aesthetics, disrupting both Western and Japanese traditions in fashion.[17] Indeed, their marginality vis-à-vis Japanese culture, at the time, was an asset. As Yuniya Kawamura puts it, "[w]hat made these Japanese designers unique was not merely the clothes they designed but their position and status as non-Western outsiders."[18]

Nevertheless it should be taken into account that a) Miyake, Kawakubo, and Yamamoto had to go to Paris in order to be heard and seen, despite the fact they were already well-known in Japan, and b) Japan itself was at the time still considered as an outpost of the West in Asia.[19] The fascination of Japanese aesthetics that these fashion pioneers helped intensify has since been registered in the fashion book of style. When the avant-garde Antwerp Six[20] incorporated their aesthetics into a Flemish and more broadly European stylistic approach,[21] the perceived Japanese style has already evolved through time, space, actors, and agencies to become part of the language of fashion. Conversely, the dynamic by which the international language of fashion finds its way back to an East Asian sensibility is exemplified by the recent popularity of K-fashion. Praised for its ability to interpret fashionability,[22] in this case trendy styles from key international fashion cities, Korean fashion has captured a new genre of tech-savvy fashion followers. Unlike the European fashion model, in which household names are taken as legacy brands, Korean fashion designers have neither attained international recognition nor been promoted as fashion geniuses. Instead, the aesthetics and stylistic forms of K-fashion raise perplexing questions about Korean-ness, transculturality, and the construction of fashion identity.[23] The question of whether K-fashion generates interest as an outpost of Euro-America fashion, or merely translates international fashion into an accessible style propagated by the media and popular-culture formats typified by the Korean wave, deserves further consideration. In any case, what is apparent here is the fluidity of style and aesthetics in multiple directions,[24] from the West to the Rest and vice versa. Transculturality and hybridity are deep, strong currents within the streams of fashion.

15. Claire Wilcox, *Radical Fashion* (London: V&A Publications, 2003).

16. Yuniya Kawamura, *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

17. Lise Skov, "Fashion Trends, Japonism and Postmodernism," *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 13, no. 3 (1996): 129–51.

18. Yuniya Kawamura, *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), 95.

19. See Dorinne Kondo, *About Face* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Kawamura, *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004); and Kyoko Koma, *Mode et stéréotypes interculturels. Le cas des articles consacrés aux couturiers japonais dans Le Figaro et Libération (1981-1992)* (Saarbrücken: Südwestdeutscher Verlag für Hochschulschriften [Éditions universitaires européennes], 2012).

20. Antwerp Six refers to a group of fashion designers graduated from Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp in 1980 and 1981. They include Walter Van Beirendonck, Ann Demeuleester, Dries Van Noten, Dirk Van Saene, Dirk Bkikkembergs and Marina Yee. Together, they took their collections to present in London British Designers shows in 1986 from which a distinct and radical vision for fashion, resonating with the new Japanese aesthetics, has since been cultivated for Antwerp which has subsequently put the city on the fashion map. Also see Javier Gimeno Martinez, "Selling Avant-Garde: How Antwerp Became a Fashion Capital (1990-2002)," *Urban Studies*, vol. 44, no. 12 (2007): 2449–64.

21. Javier Gimeno Martinez, "Selling Avant-Garde: How Antwerp Became a Fashion Capital (1990-2002)," *Urban Studies*, vol. 44, no. 12 (2007): 2449–64.

22. Hong Ki Kim, *K-Fashion: Wearing a New Future* (South Korea: Gil-Job-le-Media, 2016).

23. Wessie Ling, "Korea Vs. Paris: There Is No Fashion, Only Image; or How to Make Fashion Identity," in *Cultures, Fashion and Society's Notebook*, ed. Roy Menarini (Milan: Pearson Italia Spa, 2016), 1–14.

24. Sarah Cheang and Elizabeth Kramer, "Fashion in East Asia: Cultural Translations and East Asian Perspectives," *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2017): 145–55.

Scaling Down the Eurocentric Perspective on Fashion

In academia, the Eurocentric perspective on fashion has been discussed at least since the publication of such groundbreaking studies as *Re-orienting Fashion* and *Global Fashion / Local Tradition*.[25] Other relevant contributions, including *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives*, have re-framed the basic assumptions about the creation and dissemination of fashion.[26] The elements to be looked at were basically the two sides of the same coin: Eurocentrism and Orientalism, one reinforcing the other. In the words of Angela Jansen, founder of the Decolonizing Fashion Movement[27]:

> Due to a dominant Eurocentric fashion discourse, the idea prevails in many so-called non-western countries that fashion is a recent phenomenon, that there was no fashion "before" (European fashion was introduced through trade, colonization and cultural globalization). Simultaneously, local *dress* is often argued to be "traditional" (e.g. static), "ancestral" (e.g. old) and "authentic" (e.g. pure), whereby changes are believed to be "modern" (European) and therefore not "local." Under (European) colonial rule, colonized societies and cultures were characterized as traditional/ancestral/authentic to emphasize difference with the colonizing society and culture, defined as modern and cosmopolite, and as such, to justify its oppressive and destructive colonial politics.[28]

The rethinking of the history of fashion from a global perspective dismantled, among other key assumptions, the opposition of fashion and costume, highlighting the necessity to rewrite the vocabulary altogether. As Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil put it, "The words 'fashion,' 'dress,' 'clothing' and 'costume' are often used interchangeably. However, they have rather different meanings within discipline-specific contexts and suggest different things to different scholars."[29]

Since the 1990s we could say that Eurocentrism has been revised and scaled down by anthropologists, costume historians, fashion theorists, and designers themselves. On the one hand, dress is now defined as the set of modifications and body supplements, thus widening the Western notion of fashion.[30] On the other hand, specific studies based on historical and iconographic sources have demonstrated that there has been fashion in places outside Europe[31] and also in pre-Renaissance Europe. Even the global distribution of jeans and T-shirts, as Margaret Maynard has demonstrated, is far from being as uniform, as widespread as it may seem.[32] Each choice of item from the wardrobe of the West by people in places around the world "speaking" different sartorial grammars is embedded in a local context and frame of reference. The concept of "cultural authentication," the process whereby the members of a cultural group

25. Sandra Niessen, Annemarie Leshkowich and Carla Jones, eds., *Re-Orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Jan Brands and José Teunissen, eds., *Global Fashion/Local Tradition: On the Globalisation of Fashion* (Utrecht: Terra Central Museum Utrecht, 2005).

26. Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil, eds., *The Fashion History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010).

27. Decolonizing Fashion (RCDF, Research Collective for Decolonizing Fashion) was established in 2012 by a group of fashion scholars working to deconstruct assumptions upon which European fashion was based: "The Collective critiques the discrimination and exclusion of Other fashion systems, unequal global power relations based on modern-colonial order, the Euro-American canon of normativity in regard to fashion and the exploitation and abuse of (Other) natural resources, human beings and cultural heritages by the dominant fashion industry." RCDF Website, accessed November 26, 2019, http://www.rcdfashion.com.

28. "A Manifest to Contest: There Was No Fashion Before," RCDF Website, (accessed November 26, 2019), https://rcdfashion.wordpress.com/2018/10/22/a-manifest-to-contest-there-was-no-fashion-before-by-angela-jansen/.

29. Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil, "Introduction," in *The Fashion History Reader*, eds. Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil (London: Routledge, 2010), 5.

30. Joanne Eicher and Sandra Lee Evenson, *The Visible Self: Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2008).

31. Margaret Maynard, *Dress and Globalization* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Sandra Niessen, Leshkowich Annemarie and Carla Jones, eds., *Re-Orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

32. Margaret Maynard, *Dress and Globalization* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

incorporate and appropriate foreign cultural elements,[33] captures some of the complexity surrounding the introduction and absorption of garments previously extraneous to local tradition.

The Realities of Fashion in the 21st Century

The present-day debate on cultural appropriation in fashion, fraught with difficulties concerning the regulation of sources or inspirations, and the formulation of a list of who is granted protection and who is not (yet) when it comes to ownership and attribution,[34] only proves that fashion discourse is still based on a system of differences,[35] an interplay between inclusion and exclusion, and that it is not possible to have absolute rules. It is, however, possible to be aware of the issues at stake. Fashion lawyer and scholar Susan Scafidi, for her part, argues that cultural appropriation is not necessarily a negative thing; in her view, it can be positive, a borrowing that leads to interesting and inoffensive fusions. Cultural appropriation comes from a place of too much love as opposed to racism, which comes from a place of hate and fear, and that infects fashion with terrible mistakes.[36]

Having said this, the problem is only stated, not resolved. Dealing with global fashion means both dismantling the Eurocentric prejudice on fashion and, in parallel, giving up a too-radical approach based on the binary opposition West/Rest, by recognizing multiple voices and multiple aims within a global landscape.[37] It is relevant to underline that the "rest" in fashion is highly hierarchical and not an undifferentiated place, as theorized by Edward Said.[38] As Adam Geczy puts it, "The dichotomy of East-West is simplistic and to many objectionable, as changes, exchanges, re-namings and re-acculturations in this field are so diverse and paradoxical that they can scarcely fit within a Saidian framework."[39]

Anthropologists and fashion scholars working in different areas of the world have found that each nation, culture, and ethnic group is a case in itself, and every designer has a different sensibility toward the center-periphery relation, in terms of costumes, habits, and technologies of production.[40] Fashion, like consumer patterns and advertising, *goes global* through multilocal processes and situated practices. As anthropologist William Mazzarella has argued, the globalization of markets occurs "in a piecemeal, contested and multifocal manner."[41] Global fashion refers to a multiplicity of situated practices and values connected by often asymmetrical networks and exchanges around the globe.

The case of Muslim fashion is a significant one in this respect. According to Emma Tarlo, the stereotype of a "mythical opposition between Islam and the West, religion and secularism or tradition and moder-

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33.   See Joanne Eicher and Sandra Lee Evenson, *The Visible Self: Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2008).

34.   Susan Scafidi, *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

35.   See critical reading in Elke Gaugele and Monica Titton, eds., *Fashion and Postcolonial Critique* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019).

36.   Susan Scafidi interviewed by Mariella Lorusso, New York, September 30, 2019.

37.   Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993).

38.   Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Representations of the Orient* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

39.   Adam Geczy, *Fashion and Orientalism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 4.

40.   Sheila Cliffe, *The Social Life of Kimono: Japanese Fashion Past and Present* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Angela Jansen, *Moroccan Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Wessie Ling and Simona Segre Reinach, eds., *Fashion in Multiple Chinas: Chinese Styles in the Transglobal Landscape* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018); Leslie Rabine, *The Global Circulation of African Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Victoria L. Rovine, *African Fashion, Global Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2015); Emma Tarlo, *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith* (Oxford: Berg, 2010); Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, *The Beautiful Generation: Asian Americans and the Cultural Economy of Fashion* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Carol Tulloch, *The Birth of Cool: Style Narratives of the African Diaspora* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Jianhua Zhao, *The Chinese Fashion Industry: An Ethnographic Approach* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

41.   William Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 12.

nity"[42] has led to an underestimation of the richness and diversity of this sector of global fashion. The only "truth" about Muslim fashion is that there is no one Muslim fashion; nor do consumers of modest fashion share the same reasons for adopting it.[43] Another example is the rise of "African fashion," both in Africa and in the Western media.[44] It is not an easy task to formulate a description of what African fashion is about, as Africa is both a continent made of diversities and a homogeneous place of exploitation for the textile and fashion industries, from the history of slavery in cotton production, to the fashion cult of Sapeurs,[45] to the massive use of wax-printed fabrics in recent fashion collections.[46] Also, the very active response of African designers to European fashion is part of the success of "African" fashion.[47] As French anthropologist Anne Grosfilley stated, "The African genius is not limited to the textile productions of its first artisans but is also expressed in its successors, who take possession of the Western contribution to revisit the craft skills and make them more complex."[48]

Fashion in modern China is another case in point. The emergence of various examples of post- reform Chinese fashion highlights the borderless entanglement of manufacturing with circulation, retailing, and branding.[49] The China case in global fashion offers a clue not only about how to dismantle Eurocentric bias vis-à-vis creativity, but also about how to comprehend the complexity of the global flows. In this case, however, postcolonial theories of fashion are of little use. In the first place, China has never been a European colony, although it was influenced by the legacy of 19th-century colonial rule. Secondly, China is the place where both Western fashions are manufactured and most Western brands are sold. In the words of Jianhua Zhao,

> For the Chinese it is not a problem, at least not ideologically, that they have to learn from the West for the purpose of modernizing China … To the Chinese leaders, modernization, specifically the Four Modernizations is merely a means to achieve a Chinese modernity, not the Westernization of China.[50]

Scrutinizing global fashion necessitates going beyond the approach to assume that fashion has a stable core, and focusing instead on the dynamics of fashion that are key to its transformation. The creation of hybrid forms, fruit of a mixture of different ideas and traditions, represents the most interesting product of cross-cultural encounters.[51] Although the old division in anthropology between "primitive" small-scale societies and advanced capitalist economies has been revised, and although this revision has

42.   Emma Tarlo, *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 2.

43.   Reina Lewis, "Modest Body Politics: The Commercial and Ideological Intersect of Fat, Black, and Muslim in the Modest Fashion Market and Media," *Fashion Theory*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2019): 243–74. A recent (2018) exhibition on "Contemporary Muslim Fashion" was held at the de Young Museum in San Francisco precisely to give an account of the richness and diversity of Muslim dress codes worldwide.

44.   "Black empowerment stirs the rise of African fashion," *Fashion Network Website*, (accessed November 21, 2019), https://uk.fashionnetwork.com/news/Black-empowerment-stirs-the-rise-of-african-fashion,1090062.html.

45.   Justin-Daniel Gandoulou, *Au Cœur de La Sape. Moeurs et aventures de Congolais à Paris* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989).

46.   Maria Grazia Chiuri, the Italian designer of Christian Dior brand, asked Anne Grosfilley, an anthropologist who is an expert on African textiles, to work as a consultant for Dior's Marrakech cruise collection, which was based on the innovative use of wax-printed fabrics. Although Chiuri's request seems to resonate with the idea that cultural anthropology as a discipline was forged by the need of colonialists to handle their colonies, Chiuri's decision also expresses a sincere desire to be fair toward her sources of inspiration. The designer declared that she sought out an anthropologist expert on African textiles precisely to avoid any possible form of cultural appropriation.

47.   See Victoria L. Rovine, *African Fashion, Global Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2015).

48.   Anne Grosfilley, *Wax & Co. Antologia dei tessuti stampati d'Africa* (Milano: L'ippocampo, 2018), 9.

49.   Wessie Ling and Simona Segre Reinach, "Fashion in Multiple Chinas," in *Fashion in Multiple Chinas: Chinese Styles in the Transglobal Landscape*, eds. Wessie Ling and Simona Segre Reinach (London, Oxford: IB Tauris/Bloomsbury), 1–12; Simona Segre Reinach, "One Fashion, Two Nations: Italian Chinese Collaborations," in *Fabricating Trasnational Capitalism: A Collaborative Ethnography of Italian-Chinese Global Fashion*, eds. Lisa Rofel and Sylvia Yanagisako (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 190–216.

50.   Jianhua Zhao, *The Chinese Fashion Industry: An Ethnographic Approach* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 11.

51.   Wessie Ling, "From *Made in Hong Kong* to *Designed in Hong Kong*: Searching for an Identity in Fashion," *Visual Anthropology*, vol. 24, nn. 1–2 (2010): 106–23.

affected narratives about fashion, a situated, postcolonial modernity needs to be addressed in order to understand global fashion and not just to renew and harden stereotypes.[52]

This is particularly pertinent to today's fashion industry for it is marked by ambiguity and ambivalence. For instance, the attempt to embrace concepts such as inclusivity and sustainability complicates more the matter of fashion. Can the search for artisanal sustainable fashion in the non-Western world in some cases be considered a new form of Orientalism when the individuality and creativity of the artisan are often kept out of visibility?[53] Hundreds of thousand of craftspeople and artisan have direct link to the transnational luxury fashion industries in that "Indian fashion designers systematically portray themselves as craft revivalists, and benevolent patrons of diverse craft traditions, is willfully ignored."[54] And for that matter, what is local in fashion, and what is global?[55] Nevertheless, issues concerning the much-debated relationship between feminism and fashion have raised more ambiguities in feminist core values. Present-day feminism implies more inclusive concepts of beauty and gender yet coated in sedative consumerism.[56] This is evident in contexts ranging from the fashion pictures of photographer Nadine Ijewere, who questions the stereotypes of the representation of non-Western cultures in fashion photography, to the Kardashian family being discussed as an example of women's empowerment beyond orthodox (Western) feminism.[57] It is unclear to what extent the core values of feminism have been retained when feminism is appropriated through media consumption. Then the Ted talk of Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie inspired the slogan on Chiuri-Dior's t-shirt: "We should all be feminists." Beyoncé, who was then granted permission to sample the Ted text, further commodified it in her 2013 single "Flawless."[58] From fashion image to clothing to popular music, is feminism merely the newest tool to sell products giving a perfunctory nod to its clause? And/or are fashion and beauty the new form of activism?

Blatantly at play here is the politics of fashion. It is facilitated by the new era of cosmopolitanism that exacerbated the extremes of wealth and poverty, not only in the economies once referred to as third-world countries, but now everywhere. This is reflected in many aspects of narratives about fashion. To put it simply, the global turn has made fashion more political than it has ever been. The politicization of fashion leads us to recognize even more clearly its relevance as an aesthetic medium for expressing ideas, desires, and beliefs circulating in society, as stated by Elizabeth Wilson[59] and underscored by Djurdja Bartlett:

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52. See Koma, *Mode et stéréotypes interculturels*; Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*. This widened perspective, however, has not really changed the unspoken hierarchies of fashion. The overcoming of Eurocentrism doesn't necessarily imply the overcoming of Orientalism. The editors' description of the 2019 *Vogue* publication *Vogue on Location: People, Places, Portraits* is a self-explanatory example: "With historic reportage and landmark fashion shoots in far-flung locales like India, Iran, Morocco, Bali, *Vogue on Location* captures important moments in both travel and fashion history. An essential addition to any *Vogue* lover's shelf, *Vogue on Location* is sure to inspire a sense of fantasy and flight." There's no need to resort to Appadurai's insightful distinction between imagination and fantasy—the first being proactive, the second escapist—to uncover the Orientalist biases which inform the *Vogue on Location* project and narrative. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

53. Simona Segre Reinach, "Italian and Chinese Agendas in the Global Fashion Industry," in *The Fashion History Reader*, eds. Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil (London: Routledge, 2010), 533–42; Simona Segre Reinach, "Ethnicity," in *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in the Modern Age*, ed. Alexandra Palmer (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 151–70.

54. Tereza Kuldova, "Introduction," in *Luxury Indian Fashion. A Social Critique* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 6.

55. José Teunissen, "Global Fashion/Local Tradition: On the Globalisation of Fashion," in *Global Fashion/Local Tradition: On the Globalisation of Fashion*, eds. Jan Brands and José Teunissen (Utrecht: Terra Central Museum Utrecht, 2005), 8–23; Malcom Barnard, *Fashion Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2014).

56. Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young, "Marie Antoinette: Fashion, Third-Wave Feminism, and Chick Culture," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 2 (2010): 98–116; Venera Dimulescu, "Contemporary Representations of the Female Body: Consumerism and the Normative Discourse of Beauty," *Symposion*, vol. 2, no. 4 (2015): 505–14.

57. Meredith Jones, "Je Suis Kim," *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2016): 129–40.

58. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who at first welcomed Beyoncé's popularity as a way of promoting the feminist agenda, then declared she did not really consider Beyoncé's "Flawless" to be feminist. Jamaican-American artist René Cox also criticized Beyoncé on the occasion of her show at the 2016 Super Bowl. She thought the show underlined only the most sensational and "fashionable" side of the Black Panthers.

59. Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

Its complicity with the global dispersion of commodity culture should not prevent us from investigating, and living, fashion as a site of shared pleasure which in contrast to the divisive politics of the day, does not divide us along the lines of nation, race, sex and gender. Historically and today, fashion can be defended if we are to escape the interpretations that exclusively embed it in the framework of the commodification culture, as well as those that dismiss it as an ephemeral phenomenon.[60]

Inside ZMJ 9.2 Global Fashion

The present issue of Global Fashion aims to give an account of the complexity of the global flow of fashion products and ideas. In full awareness, however, it is not tasked to characterize that complexity in any complete or exhaustive way. As Rocamora and Smelik maintain in their insightful book *Thinking Through Fashion*, the field of fashion has become a major topic of research in social and cultural theory, bringing into view a whole arena of new cultural issues.[61] This is especially true for the complex dynamics of global fashion. Global thinking requires the disciplines of fashion to challenge once again the hierarchy and presumed purity of styles and movements. Existing narratives of fashion production and creation have shifted in the wake of transnational realities toward a more complex picture of global interconnections. Not only is the Rest a diverse composition of many voices; it is also a source of many different ways of responding to a ubiquitous desire and need to participate in global fashion. In general, globalization is not the reception of a dominant meaning by a subordinate culture, but rather the construction of meaning in the interaction between cultural values and the objects circulating in cultures.[62] Global fashion under the rubric of globalization, likewise, is not a stagnant or stationary topic, but rather a methodology for analyzing the new facades of fashion in the 21st century.

All the articles included in this issue show that fashion is a social force, constitutive of cultural meanings—although in different ways, not least because of the many ambivalences surrounding the display of fashion practices around the globe. In the article "Not African Enough," Karen Tranberg Hansen, a pioneer in the study of secondhand fashion in Africa,[63] discusses the difficulties of identifying as African the inventive autonomy in today's outpouring of dress and fashion creations in one African nation. By examining the changing place of African print fabric in fashion design and everyday dress practice involving imported secondhand clothing, Tranberg Hansen explores how changing historical connections, political and economic forces, and global interconnections are shaping the way women dress in Zambia.

If global connectivity is one of key ingredients to the making of fashion, it is not unreasonable to accept an inexplicit national fashion in some regions. Through the investigation of Dutch fashion, Anneke Smelik unveils the difficulties of defining a national fashion, arguing that it probably doesn't exist as such, i.e., in the form of an abstract entity, but rather only in the form of local or regional dress. Based on a new-materialist approach, Smelik refocuses on matter and materiality to highlight and understand the hybrid mix of both local and global influences in fashion. This "material turn" enables an understanding of "glocal" fashion as both a material reuse of local crafts and an immaterial phenomenon of globalized identities.

Identities in the plural are further unpacked in ex-colonies like Brazil and Papua New Guinea. Cultural anthropologists Elisabeth Kutesko and Elisabetta Gnecchi Ruscone deal with the new challenges faced by former colonies, as well as opportunities arising from the global circulation of fashion. Kutesko reflects upon the critical framework used in her recent book *Fashioning Brazil: Globalization and the Rep-*

60. Djurdja Bartlett, "Can Fashion Be Defended?," in *Fashion and Politics*, ed. Djurdja Bartlett (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 17–8.

61. Agnes Rocamora and Anneke Smelik, eds., *Thinking Through Fashion* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016).

62. Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2014), 168.

63. Karen Tranberg Hansen, *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

resentation of Brazilian Dress in National Geographic (2018) to examine Brazilian fashion as a transnational form of modernity. Although a sizable amount has been written on Brazilian fashion in the Portuguese language by academics based in Brazil, far less research has been conducted by scholars outside of Latin America. As a scholar based in the "Global North," Kutesko scrutinizes scholarly works in the region to offer a critical perspective from which to decentralize the discipline of fashion studies.

With Gnecchi Ruscone's analysis of Papua New Guinea (PNG) *bilumwear*, a practice that emerged from a new use of traditional string bags (*bilums*), we are taken to the heart of colonial and postcolonial legacies influencing the present-day identities, aspirations, and conflicts of many women. Focusing on the transformations in bodily attire that result from missionary and colonial influence, Ruscone discusses the desires and intentions of contemporary PNG women to wear clothes reflecting their current identity as citizens of a global world, with that world's manifold implications for issues of modernity, development, and gender.

These new perspectives opened up by global circulation and its consequences in both personal and collective identities could not fail to influence the ways in which ethnic objects are classified and ethnographic practices are presented in museums. This is precisely the subject of Wessie Ling and Daan Van Dartel's article. Ling and Van Dartel take global fashion as a tool for the conceptual and everyday handling of ethnographic artifacts. In their account, fashion, rather than referring to a stylistic form or a registered aesthetic in a given locality, can be considered as a site for multiple layers of cross-cultural encounter. Such encounter accommodates intriguing cultural dynamics, which affect how museums operate vis-à-vis particular ethnographic settings. Ling and Van Dartel's contribution, showing how archival research findings are central to the study of global histories, explores global fashion as a conceptual framework for museum practice.

From museum to language: How is fashion language also influenced by global circulation? Is there a new language for global fashion? And to what extent is authenticity a relevant question not only for objects and brands, but also for language and words? To these crucial questions this issue devotes two articles, one by linguistic and fashion theorist Mariella Lorusso—"The Global 'Wordrobe': Ethnic Counter-Conquest in the Language of Fashion,"—and the other by linguist Cristiano Furiassi— "Chronicling a Global Fetish: A Linguistic Analysis of the Pseudo-Italian Internationalism *Stiletto*."

The aim of Lorusso's article is to explore the linguistic influence of English on the lexicon of global fashion and to show language globalization in a positive light, as a breakthrough, at once open and inclusive. Some words belonging to the Native populations of America are also analyzed as part of a globalized heritage of native fashion language, and as a sign of "counter-conquest" or "counter-colonization." Meanwhile, by emphasizing the intercultural dimension of fashion lexis, Furiassi's research demonstrates that the global success of the iconic stiletto heels turned *stiletto* from a specialized term employed by fashion professionals and enthusiasts into an internationalism currently known and used also by non-connoisseurs, not only in American English, perhaps its birthplace, but in other languages as well, thus allowing this false Italianism to propagate and cross cultural boundaries.

This leads us to the theme of cultural appropriation, one of the conundrums of global fashion and a phenomenon with many ambivalent manifestations. Cultural appropriation in the relation between China and Italy is scrutinized through a fashion incident that occurred after the West ceased to have complete mastery over the narrative of fashion. The article by Qian Huang and Alice Janssens underlines the necessity of a better understanding of cultural translation by fashion marketers. Through the case of Dolce & Gabbana's controversial advertisement in China, Huang and Janssens demonstrated how the contested site of cultural translation has hideously turned on the politicization of fashion.

Lastly, Valeria Iannilli and Vittorio Linfante, scholars and architects in the field of fashion and design, conclude this issue with their article that evidences the process of fashion turning global. Their starting point is that, like other creative economies, fashion faces the new landscapes of the contemporary by activating non-linear paths characterized by actions of adaptation and reactivity and by a succession of quasi-equilibrium states in an increasingly dynamic environment. The article, starting from historical geography of fashion, investigates the dialogue between local and global, moving from where fashion

emerged and developed to the point where it becomes possible to show the excellences that have developed within a specific geographical, historical, social, productive, and cultural context.

Conclusion

Global fashion, as demonstrated in this issue, is the result of multiple branches of sociocultural diversion. By situating it in the spectrum of global histories, our authors have unveiled its fluidity both as a subject of inquiry and as a substance in the sartorial system. Through rigorous interrogation into a variety of geographic zones, cultural establishments, linguistic sites, and social-media exchanges, the issue maps the inquiry into global fashion, showing how the study of material culture and methodologies can be leveraged for the study of fashion in the 21st century. Transculturality propagated by intra-regional and territorial interactions is the common theme across the studies in this issue. The process to which has been underscored by unresolved conflicts, ambivalence and contradictions through the politicization of time and space along global histories. Taken as a whole as well as through the findings reported in individual articles, our issue proposes a new wave of global fashion studies that encapsulates glocal, historical, linguistic, sociocultural, anthropological, and postcolonial and de-colonizing discourses in the increasingly multifaceted agendas of fashion studies.

As editors with different approaches and backgrounds in the field of fashion, we have enjoyed collaborating on the making of this issue, and are eager to share with others the richness and diversity of the contributions we received. We would like to thank all the authors and reviewers for their generosity and openness in giving and receiving comments and suggestions. They have all worked together to make this issue pertinent and transdisciplinary, as fashion studies should be.

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