

# Summary

Dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of fashion from an academic perspective, the quarterly journal *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* views fashion as a cultural phenomenon, offering the reader a wide range of articles by leading Western and Russian specialists, as well as classical texts on fashion theory. From the history of dress and design to body practices; from the work of well-known designers to issues around consumption in fashion; from beauty and the fashionable figure through the ages to fashion journalism, fashion and PR, fashion and city life, art and fashion, fashion and photography — *Fashion Theory* covers it all.

In this issue we look at the plethora of interconnections between fashion and literature, and the ways in which actual costume and the dress of literary and film characters influence each other.

**Alicia Kerfoot's** *Catherine Morland's "Plain Black Shoes": Practical Fashions and Buried Convents in Northanger Abbey* considers Catherine Morland's "plain black shoes" and the obscure history of the Abbey estate in *Northanger Abbey* (1818), as they each contain surfaces that, if not read with the language of fashion in mind, appear to be unassumingly "plain" and without any material depth. I focus on narratives of ornamentation and practicality as they appear in both the material history of fashionable footwear and in the depiction of the ruined and suppressed nunnery in order to argue that Austen's novel uses both sites to complicate a single reading of women's histories and identities and to comment on how the language of fashion constructs femininity.

**Clair Hughes** contributes her paper on *Novel Hats*.

Hats, a historian has said, "are stressed words in the grammar of costume", but in the 1960s when we rejected hats we began to forget their meanings — we lost 'hat literacy'. But for the bourgeoisie of 19th and 20th Europe, whose fortunes are followed in the novels of this article, hats were signs of social and economic status — key concerns of the novel. Hats in novels are hats in action, hats experienced and hats observed; looking at the roles they have played in fiction we rediscover their significance.

Women's hats were considered frivolities and fashionably-hatted women in 19th century popular fiction were often shown as 'bad' in contrast with more modestly dressed girls; stereotypes of womanhood we see challenged by George Eliot and Turgenev. If women's hats were about fashion and taste, men's hats were concerned with power and status. Mistakes in the type of hat, where or how it was worn might humiliate or ruin a man socially. Anna Karenina looks her husband's ears protruding under his top hat with mockery, not affection.

Hats as markers of social advancement could be threatening: the Prince in Henry James's *Princess Casamassima*, is worried by a young plebeian, invited into the house by his wife. Does the socially correct hat in his hand represent respect or dissent? Revolutionaries also need hats after all. When Vronsky grows bored with his adulterous exile in Italy with Anna, for example, he takes up art and sports a 'slouch' hat, favourite headgear of rebels, outsiders and artists. The sisters in D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* of 1925 consider as compliments the jeers that greet their unconventional cloche hats — millinery's last great style change.

Hats, a milliner has said, have lives of their own. In Antoine Laurain's novel of 2013, *The President's Hat*, President Mitterand's fedora enters and changes the lives of four people — but as a hero or a villain? Hats

spin ordinary materials — straw, felt or feathers — into romance, fantasy or shock. To paraphrase Honoré de Balzac: hats, like novels ‘make poetry out of everyday things’.

**Susan L. Siegfried & John Finkelberg’s** *Fashion in the Life of George Sand* explores George Sand’s (1804–1876) complicated relationship to clothing. The mythology surrounding her notorious cross-dressing has, we argue, occluded her real engagement with the culture of clothing of her time. While Sand was skeptical of fashion’s tendency to occupy women at the expense of other pursuits, she was nevertheless fluent in the language of fashion and strategically observed its rules of decorum. Drawing on Sand’s rich but unexploited correspondence (1812–1876) and other personal writings, this article contributes a rare first-person voice to the relatively sparse literature on women’s lived experience of clothing in the past. Contemporary fashion journals, to which Sand subscribed, and portraits of her en homme and en femme are also considered. Emphasizing the collaborative and communal aspects of the culture of clothing in nineteenth-century France this study challenges the equation between consumerism and individuality that attended celebratory accounts of the history of consumer society. We examine Sand’s central role in a “community of dress,” an extensive network of people she called upon to help clothe herself and her family. Her fraught relationship to her daughter Solange (1828–1899), who was obsessed with fashionable dress, brings into focus the critical distance she maintained from the prevailing fashion culture.

**Elodie Neuville** contributes *Women, Cloth, Fluff and Dust in Elizabeth Gaskell’s North and South*.

From Penelope’s tapestry to Hester’s Scarlet Letter, women and cloth have a long and intimate narrative history together. Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South* (1854–1855) holds a place of its own in that history. The novel is full of the things and stuff that have come to be regarded as typical of the genre that flourished in an era that inaugurated new ways to enjoy and celebrate materiality. The author argues that the novel seeks to make patent the relationship between the fabric of history and the fabric of intimacy, showing the traditional boundaries between them to be inadequate. In the face of an increasingly pervasive and volatile modernity, as embodied in cotton dust, *North and South* stresses the need for women not to withdraw inside a private space others delineated for them but rather to engage in and interact with the world at large.

**Olga Vainshtein's** *Curioser and Curioser: The Fashion History of Alice's Dress* tells the story of the outfit worn by the main character in Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland'. Looking at the emergence and subsequent evolution of Alice's costume, Vainshtein recounts how it was first drawn by the author himself, before John Tenniel created his legendary illustrations for the first edition of the work in 1865. Alice's dress with its full skirt and puff sleeves, the white apron, headband, and buckled shoes — all the elements of his image have gone down in the history of costume. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, Alice's outfit became very fashionable for girls. Later, it underwent a number of changes. Tenniel's black-and-white illustrations were replaced with colour images, and finally, following Walt Disney's cartoon, the light blue dress with white apron became a firm favourite in mass culture. In recent years, the Alice costume has become popular in Japan for cosplay, and more generally as part of the kawaii culture.

With cinema added to the equation, the study of the interaction of fashion and literature becomes even more fascinating. In *The Cornish Dress Code: Costume in Early Daphne du Maurier Films*, **Tatiana Bakina** takes a closer look at the costumes in the first films based on the works of Daphne du Maurier. Although labelled a romantic novelist, the English writer is also known as the author of historical novels and thrillers with mystical overtones. In her article, Bakina pays particular attention to the ways in which du Maurier's characters' costumes are portrayed onscreen, and how the cinematographic medium takes forward and enhances the writer's descriptions of dress. Bakina also looks at the ways in which particular traits of du Maurier's characters are reflected in, and expressed through, their attire. The paper analyses four du Maurier films made in the UK and the US in the 1930s–1950s: 'Jamaica Inn', 'Rebecca', 'Frenchman's Creek', and 'My cousin Rachel'. Bakina's main focus is on the very earliest du Maurier films, in which the writer's literary world was first given visual expression. The action in these films takes place in different periods, yet they are all set in the same location: the rugged and marshy land of Cornwall, which features heavily in du Maurier's books. Bakina traces the 'dress code' of du Maurier's characters, as their stories unfold over the years in her novels and subsequent films against the backdrop of the Cornish landscapes.

**Elizabeth Way** contributes her article *Dressing to Pass during the Harlem Renaissance: Fashion in the Novels of Jessie Redmon Fauset and Nella Larsen*.

The 1928 novels, *Plum Bun* by Jessie Redmon Fauset and *Quicksand* by Nella Larsen each center on an educated, middle-class black woman navigating her fluctuating identity within American society. Both authors illuminate their heroines' desires and frustrations within evolving, liminal urban spaces where traditional discriminatory restrictions could be tested and subverted through passing — not just through race, but also through class and gender norms. Fauset and Larsen continually highlight fashion as an essential tool for passing, as well as being the embodiment of their characters' elusive new identities. Fauset's Angela is a fair-complexioned Philadelphia woman whose elegant style is steeped in nineteenth-century ideals of ladylike bourgeois whiteness. It is also key in allowing her to pass as white and gain access to higher education and society. Larsen's Helga is a biracial teacher whose interest in fashion and rejection of respectability politics alienates her from her college's southern black bourgeoisie. She flees north in search of freer expression, yet eventually runs into the opposite extreme, manipulated and stereotyped through fashionable clothing. Fauset's and Larsen's narratives complicate the idea of passing as taboo and demonstrate black women's understanding of fashion as agency to unlock new, and often uneasy, opportunities and identities.

**Oleg Lekmanov** contributes *Once Upon a Time, Mandelstam Dressed Up as... Whom?* In this essay, Lekmanov turns to a curious incident in the poet's vestimentary biography.

**Maria Terekhova's** *The Clothing of Socialist Realism: The Vestimentary Discourse in Books and Periodicals of High and Late Stalinism* looks at two of the least studied periods in the history of Soviet dress and 'fashion', High Stalinism (1935–1945) and, in particular, late Stalinism (1946–1953). The author examines the main positions of the official vestimentary discourse, as reflected in literature, essays and periodicals of the time. Terekhova's analysis of these texts shows that the vestimentary discourse, and shifts in it, were closely linked with the current political agenda. Well-dressed, tastefully attired, impeccably apparelled Soviet people were walking advertisements for the success of the socialist endeavour during the second and third five-year plans. In the post-war years, the official vestimentary discourse completely reflected and transmitted the main points of the late Stalinist political and cultural agenda. The campaign against adulation of the West, the growth of conservative and nationalist ('popular' and patriotic) rhetoric, the glorification of the regime through 'conflict-free' art, and other Zhdanov-era dogmas all possessed their vestimentary

projections. To demonstrate this in greater detail, the author turns to works by members of the Soviet literary establishment, Stalin Prize laureates such as Anatoly Sofronov, Boris Romashov, Anatoly Surov, Sergei Mikhalkov, and others. All but forgotten, these texts, although strikingly bad from a literary point of view (and, indeed, from all others also), offer invaluable material for study. Bad literature, in short, makes for good research into the discourse it represents. In the years of High and late Stalinism, the author concludes, at the level of official discourse, dress functioned in accordance with the principles of Socialist Realism and could, indeed, be seen as one of its genres. Formulated in 1934, the key principles of Socialist Realism, closeness to the people, ideology, and Party-mindedness (*narodnost', ideynost', partiynost'*) applied to dress, also. Indeed, *the very institution of 'socialist fashion' became a machine for the production of vestimentary images of Socialist Realism.*

**Natalia Lebina's** *Objects as Signs in the Stalinist Era in Vera Panova's Novel 'Seasons of the Year. From the Chronicles of the Town of Ensk'* forms part of a series of works on the representativeness of fiction as a historical source for the study of fashion and fashionable behaviour. In her paper, the author focuses on works of the so-called Stalinist Style period, in particular, Vera Panova's novel 'Seasons of the Year' (1953). Even before official criticism of the cult of personality and the appearance in 1954 of Ehrenburg's 'The Thaw', three-times Stalin Literature Prize laureate and well-known Socialist Realist writer Panova wrote about the moral degradation of Stalin's nomenklatura. With her keen observations and engaging style, Panova succeeds in creating an image of Stalinist-era officialdom out of small details and indicator objects. Having lived through this period herself, the writer can provide faithful accounts of 'Stalinist glamour' and the everyday vestimentary canons of the Soviet elite. The accuracy of Panova's descriptions of fashionable and prestigious items in 'Seasons of the Year' has been supported by academic research into Soviet lifestyles in the 1940s and 50s.

**Alison Criddle's** *Narrative Twists: Spiraling Time and Projected Identities in the Hair of Vertigo's Madeleine* explores the ways in which hair entwines memory, identity and character to establish multiple modes of consuming Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958). As the female protagonist of *Vertigo*, the character of Madeleine Elster, with her recognizable, oft-cited icy white-blonde chignon, is a projected identity staged as fantasy. Threaded across a dizzying narrative, the twisted spiral of hair forms a lens for viewing and reading multiple identities, configurations, actions and end- less

interpretation. From Hitchcock's misty, dreamy San Francisco to Vertigo's origins as a Parisian detective novel, to Marcel Proust's madeleine cake via the biblical Mary Magdalene by way of Kristevan literary analysis, and Chris Marker's movie-homage, Madeleine's hair is both portal and projection through which to fall into a complex sensory encounter that traces the moving image as transposed into written word.

**Natalia Povaliyeva** offers *Literature and Fashion: The Nobel Trilogy of Sara Danius*. In the writings and sartorial practices of Sara Danius, literature and fashion were inseparable. The first female permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, literary critic, philosopher and professor of aesthetics Danius (1962-2019) was a leading figure in contemporary Swedish cultural life. In 'The Blue Soap. The Novel and the Art of Making Things Visible' (2013), and in essays from 'The Death of the Housewife and Other Texts' (2014) and 'The Silk Cathedral' (2020), Danius demonstrates that dress and fashion play a crucial role in the work of four eminent French writers: Stendhal, Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, and Marcel Proust. For Stendhal, dress is a key indicator of social status. For Balzac, who took a keen interest in fashion, it represented the expression of new ideas, and for Flaubert, items of clothing were often animated, acting as symbols of temptation, seduction, and desire. Marcel Proust saw fashion as an art. The attributes of fashionable dress to which Sara Danius paid particular attention in her literary works, such as performativity, communicative potential, and provocativeness, were fully present in the writer's own sartorial practice. Together with the Swedish designer Pär Engsheden, for instance, Danius designed the 'Nobel Trilogy', three dresses which she wore to the Nobel Prize Award Ceremonies of 2015, 2016, and 2017. A postmodern work of art, the trilogy clearly exhibits attributes such as intertextuality, deconstructivist play, and irony. The dress of 2015 contained references to the work of Marcel Proust, as well as to the outfit in which Selma Lagerlöf received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1909, and to the sculptural forms of Cristobal Balenciaga. Danius's 2016 outfit was inspired by the writing of Balzac, while the dress of 2017 contained references to Virginia Woolf. The process of creating the dresses was described by the writer in a number of essays, which offer important material for contemporary research into fashion as an interdisciplinary phenomenon. In the final years of her life, as visiting professor at Beckmans College of Design, Danius gave open lectures on fashion and literature, and took part in creating the Nobel Course, for which students had to design outfits representing Nobel Prizes of different years.

In Events **Asya Aladjalova** offers *What is Hidden behind the Court Costume*, a review of “Court Costume of the mid-19th — early 20th century from the State Hermitage Collection” at the State Historical Museum (March 16 — July 16, 2021).

**Ksenia Khomiakova** contributes *Fashion Manifesto of Gabrielle Chanel*, a review of Gabrielle Chanel. Manifeste de mode at the Musée de la Mode de la Ville de Paris (October 01, 2020 — July 18, 2021)

In Books **Ekaterina Vasilieva** reviews *Thinking Through Fashion: A Guide to Key Theorists* edited by Agnès Rocamora and Anneke Smelik. London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016 while Alexandra Sherlock reviews Ellen Sampson’s *Worn: Footwear, Attachment and the Affects of Wear*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020.