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# THE LEXICON OF FASHION

*There is a rage of fashion which prevails here with dispotick Sway, the colour and kind of silk must be attended to; and the day for putting it on and off, no fancy to be exercised, but it is the fashion, and that is argument sufficient to put one in, or out of countenance.*

ABIGAIL ADAMS ON FASHIONABLE  
DRESS IN LONDON

When Abigail Adams, the future First Lady of the United States, joined her husband, John, in London, she made the above observations in a letter dated July 26, 1784, to her sister Mary Cranch back home in Massachusetts (Ryerson 1993: 379). Her comments elucidate key features of the nature of fashion in the West in the late eighteenth century. She saw fashion as a powerful force in society, almost a dictatorial one. She implied that a time element was involved and that styles were occasion specific. In other letters, she compared French styles to those of England and America, revealing that fashion in the West varied from place to place (Winner 2001). Surely prevailing dress practices outside the West shared these same qualities: changing styles of dress accepted by a group of people, at a specific time, and in a specific place.

Fashion means different things to different people. While this book considers fashion related to dress and appearance, the word also encompasses other cultural expressions such as furniture, interior design, the food we eat, even the novels we read. Regardless, the one feature that everyone agrees on is that fashion involves currency, implying change over time.

To consider the argument that fashion historically existed beyond the West and in premodern times, we must elucidate the terminology. This chapter explores fashion's various meanings. We consider the range of its meanings as well as its synonyms and antonyms. Not all scholars interpret the terms in the same way; these varied interpretations are presented in the following sections.

## Etymology of fashion terms

In this section, we dissect common fashion terms, going back to their first appearance in the English language and their changing meaning over time. This investigation of fashion terms in English is appropriate, although limiting, considering our discussion of terms in other languages below. We note that English is the most widely spoken language in the world after Hindi and the various languages spoken by the ethnic groups living in the People's Republic of China. For this dissection of terms, we rely on the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), which differs from a typical dictionary in that its objective is to trace changes in a word's usage over time in addition to providing detailed definitions. Dictionaries such as *Webster's Dictionary* or the *Oxford Dictionary of English* simply define commonly used words with short notes about origins. In the days before the internet, dictionaries generally consisted of a single volume. By comparison, the most recent printed version of the OED, which was published in 1989, numbers twenty volumes. The OED is available online (OED Online) and is free to patrons of any library with a subscription, including many public libraries.

Words equated with the term "fashion," or used as descriptors for fashion, include "mode," "dress," "clothing," "costume," "toilette," "apparel," and "habit." Additional words related to fashion, a term with broad meanings, include the more specific descriptors "taste," "style," "fad," "classic," and "trend." Each of these terms is discussed below, along with some others. We include current debates on usage, noting that the terms themselves are subject to change over time.

## Fashion and related terms

### Fashion

Fashion is both a verb, as in "to fashion something," and a noun, as in "to wear the latest fashion." In the OED, fashion carries no fewer than fourteen different meanings. Relevant for the current discussion are the following: "manner, mode, way" and "a prevailing custom, a current usage, especially one characteristic of a particular place or period of time," and "conventional usage in dress, mode of life, etc., esp. as observed in the upper circles of society; conformity to this usage." And finally, "the mode of dress, etiquette, furniture, style of speech, etc., adopted in society for the time being . . . to be in the fashion; to adopt the accepted style" (OED 1989 s.v. "fashion").

The word "fashion" derives from the Latin words *factio*, the act of making, and the verb *facere*, to make. This meaning correlates to one of the earliest definitions of fashion, to make something, to "fashion" something. By the late

Middle Ages, fashion came to mean a "style, fashion, manner (of make, dress, embellishment)" as well as a "way or mode (of behavior)" (Kurath 1952: 358). The word in Middle English had various spellings (*fassioun*, *faschyoune*, *faccioun*, etc.). An early example of its use as a noun is dated 1475, when the peascod belly, the padded front of a doublet, appeared in Western fashion for men: someone was being advised to stuff his doublet with wool if he desired the "newe *faccion*" (Kurath 1952: 358).

These definitions show that fashion involves styles and ways of dressing confined to a moment in time and space. Fashion is both temporal and geographical. Fashion is often associated with modernity, as we shall see in later discussions. It is a sign that a people, a place is current, of the moment, up with the times, and thus it is a social expression. The OED illustrates the temporal nature of fashion with a 1739 example: "Taste and fashion with us have always had wings."

One of the OED's definitions associates fashion with "the upper circles of society," which sheds light on interpretations of fashion among some academics. Several scholars view fashion as an expression of social hierarchy in the industrial era, a sartorial signal that separates the cognoscenti from the masses (Benjamin 1999; Lipovetsky 1994; Simmel [1904] 1954). It is true that most fashion histories focus on the dress of the elite, especially prior to 1800, simply because ample evidence of dress practices does not survive for those of lower social status. Sociologist George Sproles provides a more relevant explanation of fashion diffusion for contemporary society in that he views fashion as no longer simply emulation of the elite. New styles can be introduced at all levels of society, rendering fashion leadership more inclusive (Sproles 1974).

Note that none of the meanings of fashion in the OED exclude dress outside the West. The geographical designation of applying the term "fashion" in history only to the West possibly originates in the word's Latin roots. However, this is not the only possible reason. Additional reasons for the widespread acceptance that fashion began in the West are discussed elsewhere and include its ties to the rise of capitalism, market economies, and socially mobile societies.

The temporal component—the underlying concept that fashion developed in modern times—evolved presumably because the word "fashion" did not exist before the late Middle Ages, precisely when current scholarship has determined that "fashion" as a social phenomenon began. One problem with this interpretation is that the word's usage is examined only in English. Other languages not derived from Latin, both ancient and modern, have words that imply changing forms in dress adopted at a given time and place. Take, for example, the Chinese words *shiyang* and *shishizhuang*, which appeared before 1100; the words meant "the prevalent style fit for the time" (Tsui 2016: 52–53). Even in Latin, there is a word implying something "of the moment." That Latin word is *modo*, meaning "right now, present." It evolved into the French and

German *mode*, and the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese *moda* (Paulicelli 2014: 5). In English, "mode" is a synonym for fashion.

Phyllis Tortora delves into the issue of temporality in her essay "History and Development of Fashion" (Tortora 2010). She explains fashion as acceptance of something by a large number of people, which implies a relatively short duration. The key element, she explains, is change. She does not specify the precise length of time meant by "short duration." In other work, Tortora has suggested that fashion prevailed when styles "lasted less than a century" (Tortora and Marcketti 2015: 104).

For the purposes of this book, we employ the definition of fashion advanced in our previous work: "Changing styles of dress and appearance that are adopted by a group of people at any given time and place" (Welters and Lillethun 2011: xxvii). As applied to dress, fashion is then the dominant adoption pattern by a group of people in a particular geographic location. To be called fashion, a mode of dress need not be adopted by all of a society or even its majority; depending on its size a society may include subgroups that develop distinct fashions. Further, we do not put a specific time limit on the duration of a particular style; thus, change is not restricted to clothing or other styles that pass out of fashion in less than 100 years. If that were the case, the common business suit could not be considered fashion because it has been in use since the mid-nineteenth century.

## Dress

Dress, like fashion, is both a verb and a noun. The OED presents a much narrower definition of the noun dress, a meaning that most people outside the academy would understand. Dress is defined as "a suit of garments or a single external garment appropriate to some occasion when adornment is required—a lady's robe or gown made not entirely to clothe, but also to adorn." The "Walking Dresses" seen in Figure 2.1 exemplify this definition; the fashion plate illustrates two women's gowns inspired by neoclassicism, a major influence on the arts in the 1790s and early 1800s.

The OED also gives "dress" a more general meaning of "personal attire or apparel." The period example of this definition, seemingly a critique on excessive interest in fashion, comes from 1638: "Your dresses blab your vanities." Inclusion of "personal" in the definition suggests individual choice in creating an identity.

The word "dress" has been proffered as a more inclusive term than fashion in scholarly circles, a word that is distinct from fashion. Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne Eicher suggested that the word "was broadly interchangeable with several other terms used by social scientists" such as clothing, adornment, and costume (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1992: 1). They defined dress as "an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body,"



**Figure 2.1** "Walking Dresses." *The Fashions of London & Paris During the Years 1804, 1805 & 1806*. Richard Phillips: London. Historic Textile and Costume Collection, University of Rhode Island. The word "dress" appears more frequently than "costume" to label outfits in this book of fashion plates.

arguing that modifications of the body include those both permanent and temporary such as scarification and makeup and that supplements to the body include such items as clothing, accessories, and handheld objects. They claimed that this definition of dress "is unambiguous, free of personal or social valuing or bias, usable in descriptions across national and cultural boundaries, and inclusive of all phenomena that can accurately be identified as dress."

In 1995, Joanne Eicher along with Barbara Sumberg extended the discussion of the term "dress" by critiquing the phrase "western dress." They claimed that "designating items as western for people who wear them in other areas of the world, such as Asia or Africa, is inaccurate" (296). Labeling it "western" privileges the West, they concluded. In an attempt to encompass the entire globe in the academic discourse on dress, they proposed "world fashion" or "cosmopolitan fashion" to describe Western fashion worn in non-Western countries (296).



"Dress" as the overall preferred term has received widespread acceptance among scholars from multiple disciplines. Titles of key scholarly works now specify dress *and* fashion, such as the Berg *Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, a ten-volume set edited by Joanne Eicher and published by Oxford University Press. This specification implies a difference between dress and fashion. The usage of the dual terms "dress" and "fashion" may be a function of the changing meanings of the words as the field develops. For some, fashion is a subset of the dominant category of dress. Yet, for cultural theorists, fashion has emerged as the preferred term. For example, the publisher (originally Berg, now Taylor & Francis) chose the name *Fashion Theory* rather than *Dress Theory* or *Costume Theory* for its new journal in 1997.

### Clothing

Literally speaking, clothing is a body covering made from cloth. It is limiting to use "clothing" as a synonym for fashion in two ways. First, cloth is made from fibers, natural or manufactured, through a variety of processes, most commonly weaving or knitting. Body coverings made from skins or furs or other non-cloth material are thus (potentially) excluded in this definition of clothing. Secondly, clothing does not incorporate other body supplements such as attachments and handheld objects, or body modifications such as tattoos, or hair color and styling.

In her book *Fashion-ology*, Yuniya Kawamura distinguishes between clothing and fashion. Her position is that all clothing is not fashion. An item of clothing can become fashion, but not until it gains symbolic value. She argues that fashion has invisible elements: it is "a system of institutions, organizations, groups, producers, events and practices, all of which contribute to the making of fashion, which is different than dress or clothing" (Kawamura 2005: 43). She goes on to say that

clothing is material production while fashion is symbolic production. Clothing is tangible while fashion is intangible. Clothing is a necessity while fashion is an excess. Clothing has a utility function while fashion has a status function. Clothing is found in any society or culture where people clothe themselves while fashion must be institutionally constructed and culturally diffused. A fashion system operates to convert clothing into fashion that has a symbolic value and is manifested through clothing. (Kawamura 2005: 44)

Fashion historian Ingrid Loschek further illuminates this perspective, arguing that adoption transforms clothes into fashion. Clothes are produced via a design and manufacturing process. Society, or a group of people, determines which clothes are accepted and thus become fashion. Her example of this

transformation is the bumster pant with a bare midriff top, a look for women introduced in 1996 by Alexander McQueen. At that point, the products were clothes. She posits that the look became fashion in 2001, when young people in large cities made it visible (Loschek 2009: 133–34).

Roach-Higgins and Eicher say clothing does not include body modification, which is why they prefer their term "dress." Indeed, "clothing" has fallen out of favor as a term used in American universities as a disciplinary descriptor: former departments of "textiles and clothing" have changed their names to variants of "textiles and fashion." In 1991, the former Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing voted to change its name to International Textile and Apparel Association. However, its scholarly journal, first published in 1982, retained "clothing" in its title: *Clothing and Textile Research Journal*. Such changes demonstrate a disciplinary shift in the United States away from the confines of the design, manufacturing, and sale of "clothing" to more comprehensive topics. We concur that clothing is too limiting a term.

### Costume

One of the most puzzling words associated with fashion is "costume." For many years, costume has been widely used to describe historic dress, or dress worn for performance, for Halloween, or other masquerade events. However, this was not always the case. Interestingly, the word "costume" in reference to everyday dress was not in general use until the nineteenth century. According to the OED, it originated among Italian artists to describe a "guise or habit in artistic representation." It was then picked up by the French and English in the early eighteenth century to mean a "manner of dressing, wearing the hair, etc., and in later times to dress." A further definition in the OED is: "the mode or fashion of personal attire and dress (including the way of wearing the hair, style of clothing, and personal adornment) belonging to a particular nation, class or period." This definition sounds much like the one Roach-Higgins and Eicher give for their preferred term "dress," except that they don't refer to mode or fashion, or thus to temporality. Roach-Higgins and Eicher opposed the use of the term "costume" as an all-encompassing and neutral term because by the late twentieth century, it referred to dress for special activities or role-play, such as performance, folk festivals, ceremonies, and rituals. They called this dress for "out-of-everyday" activities.

In surveying nineteenth-century fashion images, "costume" appears with regularity in reference to a total ensemble. The OED recognized this usage in a third definition for "costume": "fashion or styles of dress appropriate to any occasion or season; hence, dress considered with regard to its fashion or style." An example of period usage is provided: *La Belle Assemblée*, an English lady's magazine, included an "outdoor costume" in its May 1818 issue. The term

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**Figure 2.4** "The Witch," "The Hornet," and "Watteau." *Fancy Dresses Described; or What to Wear at Fancy Balls*, Arden Holt, 1887. London: Debenham and Freebody. Collection of Linda Walters. Reprinted with permission. Victorians used "fancy dress" instead of "costume" to describe outfits worn to costume parties, known at the time as fancy balls.

"Watteau costume," shown in Figure 2.4. It appears that "fancy dress" was the more common term for "dress up" clothes than "costume" in the nineteenth century, a reversal of usage in the early twenty-first century.

Costume had been the word of choice when the study of historic dress began as a subject of academic interest. Early books on dress history, like Auguste Racinet's *Le Costume Historique* (1876–88), employed "costume" in the title. American universities also adopted the word "costume" for course titles; major museums with dress and textile collections also titled their departments with the term "costume" instead of "dress" or "fashion." Further, professional organizations that focus on dress history are still called "Costume Society" (of America, of Great Britain, of Nova Scotia, and of Ontario). The British Costume Society's journal is called *Costume*. To avoid confusion, the Costume Society of America, which modeled itself after the British society, named its journal *Dress*.

Only in recent decades has "costume" become an unfashionable word. Course titles are slowly changing to either "dress" or "fashion," as are names of museum collections. To wit: the Department of Textiles and Costumes at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston changed its name to Textile and Fashion Arts in 2004 upon reception of a bequest from David and Roberta Logie. The Victoria and Albert Museum no longer calls its dress gallery "the costume court"; its vast collection is now "Fashion and Textiles" instead of the former "Dress and Textiles."

The Costume Society of America debated changing its name for several years, but decided to stay with "costume." This debate affirms that language is a living thing, words go in and out of use, and meanings change over time.

Costume is no longer a synonym for fashion. We agree with Roach-Higgins, Eicher, and Shukla that costume refers to dress worn to present an identity other than that projected on a day-to-day basis.

### Toilette

Another word once synonymous with fashion that has changed meaning over time is "toilette" and, as a result, has gone out of normal use. The French term appeared in the English language in the late seventeenth century, referring to the "manner or style of dressing; dress, costume," as in this 1752 observation: "Tis so long (tell Lady Caroline) since I have seen so spruce a Toylet as hers" (OED Online s.v. "Toilette"). Its use peaked in the 1860s. Toilette emphasized grooming behaviors, especially ones that required assistance from others or that were complex.

### Apparel

Apparel is a synonym for fashion that emerged early in the English language, toward the end of the Middle Ages. The OED defines apparel as "personal outfit or attire; clothing generally, raiment, dress." It derives from the French *apparel*, also *appareil*. In 1330, the following description appeared: "fourscore armed knights, in silk appareled," which must have been quite a sight. Apparel has also been used as a verb, as in "to apparel." Today, one rarely hears someone ask, "What apparel are you wearing?" Rather, the term references the production of fashion, for example, the apparel industry.

### Habit

"Habit" is one of the oldest terms in English for dress, and it derives from Latin. Not surprisingly, it is the term Cesare Vecellio used for the most famous of the sixteenth-century costume books, his *Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, originally published in Italian.

It is defined as "fashion or mode of apparel, dress." The word refers to a set of clothes or a specific garment. "Habit" has other closely related meanings such as the dress of religious orders (e.g., nun's habit) and the dress worn by ladies on horseback (e.g., riding habit).

### Descriptors of fashion

Several terms associated with fashion can be considered a related group that define or name aspects of fashion. Such terms include taste, style, fad, classic, and trend.



## Taste

Displaying good “taste” featured prominently in eighteenth-century discourse. The OED explains taste as “the sense of what is appropriate, harmonious, or beautiful, esp. discernment and appreciation of the beautiful in nature and/or art.” Sir Joshua Reynolds, the painter, writing about taste in 1776, reflected that “taste in dress . . . is certainly of the lowest subjects to which this word is applied” ([1776] 1831: 66). The period’s discourse concerning taste included philosophical examination of aesthetic value, such as Immanuel Kant’s examination of taste in *Critique of Judgment* ([1790] 2007) that employs fashion as a foil for commentary on taste. Reynolds disparaged taste in relationship to dress because for him, taste was a component of creating beauty, using well-honed skills, and carefully nurtured preferences (taste) to create beauty, such as in art and architecture. Fashion, subject to change, was thus not a matter of taste in his view. William Hogarth shared this view. In 1742, he painted *Taste in High Life*, a satirical comment on the British aristocracy’s obsession with fashion. It was later engraved and printed for wide distribution (Figure 2.5).



**Figure 2.5** “Taste in High Life.” William Hogarth, 1746. Engraving and aquatint, 1798. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1932. Licensed by Creative Commons. License available online: <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/legalcode>. Hogarth satirized British aristocracy and their obsession with fashion in this image, which was first created as a painting and later reproduced as an engraving.

## Style

The OED defines “style” as “manner, fashion,” that is, “a particular mode or fashion of costume.” For those who study fashion and work in the fashion industry, the word incorporates both silhouettes and details. The OED provided an example from 1860: “The dress is of the style called in Paris, the *robe Impératrice*” (meaning Empress gown), after Empress Eugenie. Another example is from 1891: “The front was all white satin, made in Empire style.” Empire style specifically refers to the presence of an elevated waistline on a garment, which is placed just below the bosom and thus gives no visual emphasis to the natural waist.

However, style has come to mean something else. Coco Chanel famously said “fashion passes, style remains.” Actually, she made this statement in French and used the term “mode.” *La mode se démode, le style jamais* (Chanel, Chanel 1986). Subsequent translations substitute “fashion” for “mode.” This meaning has to do with an individual dressing well in clothes, accessories, and grooming that suits their looks and personality, their age, and the occasion. In this meaning style is a personal attribute related to aesthetic skills and not to the specific attributes of a garment.

## Fad

The OED does not have much to say about “fad,” a relatively recent arrival to the English language. Its etymology is unknown, and it is defined simply as a “craze.” It appears in the mid-nineteenth century in reference to being concerned with trifles as evidenced in this 1867 example from *The Trollope*: “She may take up some other fad now.” Current usage of the word “fad” as related to dress implies a short-lived fashion adopted by a subset of a larger culture, such as the hot pants worn by young women in the early 1970s.

## Classic

A classic, on the other hand, is a recurring style. It is long lived and goes through only minor modifications to reflect fashion’s changes. The OED defines classic clothing as “made in simple, conventional styles that are almost unaffected by changes in fashion.” An example from 1937 is provided: a company adheres “to what they call their classic blouse because it’s always in demand.” A contemporary example is the trench coat, a style developed for British officers during the First World War and worn since by both men and women.

## Trend

OED defines “trend” as both a verb and a noun. The verb “to trend” means “to turn in some direction, to have a general tendency.” The noun “trend” means “the general course, tendency, or drift.” The OED’s examples are from the 1960s; for

example, the *Guardian* described two people as “a trendily dressed couple” in 1967. Interestingly, the rise in the usage of the word “trend” corresponds with disruptions to the mid-twentieth-century fashion hierarchy through which the fashion industries of a few European cities dictated the direction of fashion for the West. Since the decline of their dominance in the late 1960s, multiple fashion directions have appeared in cities around the globe, many created by youth who dressed in so-called street style in response to an ever-increasing network of cultural shifts.

## Antonyms of fashion

The opposite of being fashionable is being unfashionable. Many in the fashion field think that the way most people dress has nothing to do with “fashion.” Teri Agins, a former reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, declared that fashion was finished in *The End of Fashion* (1999). She argued that women were dressing more like men and that they were more inspired by the street than by designers in choosing what to wear. She also observed the increasing casualization of the American wardrobe, the rise of stylish clothes available through chain stores, and the lack of risk-taking by designers in an era in which publicly owned fashion labels run the show. Yet, fashion as Agins understands it influences the way people dress: inexpensive clothing reflective of fashion trends is available through mass merchants like Target and Tesco. While Agins correctly diagnosed causes of infrastructure changes in the fashion business brought about by shifts in the dissemination and adoption of styles and trends among the public, her perspective gives little note to the desire to participate in fashion, to wear clothes that reflect the preferences of one’s group or community. This is evidence of the fashion impulse at work.

Some writers view fashion strictly as the product of designers. This perspective reifies designers as creators and also attempts to secure fashion as an ideal with privileged access (Grumbach 2014). In this scenario, the doors to fashion open only to those with funds to purchase designer products. The intrusion of the masses into the practice of fashionability threatens the aura of exclusivity associated with designer-centric fashion. Would the clothing practices of the middle- and lower-income populace be called “fashion” or merely “dress”? We, the authors, observe that dress of non-elites intersects with fashion, as demonstrated in the hip-hop fashions of the 1990s. Malcolm Barnard articulates our position when he argues that “even the most ‘basic’ ‘anthropological’ or biological functions of keeping a body warm and dry cannot be immune to style, they must take some form or other. . . . Variation and cultural location are at the heart of what fashion is and therefore we must say that fashion is always with us, and that it has always been with us” (Barnard 2014: 5).

Terms that are considered to be the opposite of fashion include categories such as ecclesiastical and ritual dress as well as uniforms. Ecclesiastical dress evolved from late Roman and Byzantine forms, and has persisted into the present with little change. The Armenian priests observed by Joseph Pitton de Tournefort on his tour of the Levant ca. 1700 wore liturgical vestments still in use today (Figure 2.6). Ritual dress, such as the forms of *tallit* worn by Jews during prayer and rites of passage, stay the same from generation to generation although the materials from which they are made may change. Other types of ritual attire, like baby’s christening gowns, reflect changes in fashion.

Uniforms are meant to reduce individuality in dress among a group of individuals, such as schoolchildren or flight attendants, but these too reflect shifts in fashion as seen in the nurse’s uniforms in Figure 2.7. The large sleeves of the uniforms worn by these young nurses mirror fashionable daytime dresses of the mid-1890s.



**Figure 2.6** “Armenian Priests.” Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, 1717. Courtesy of *Travelogues*, Alkaterini Laskaridis Foundation, Athens, Greece. Available online: <http://www.eng.travelogues.gr/item.php?view=43567>. Ecclesiastical dress, such as the liturgical vestments of Armenian priests, remained unchanged for centuries. Thus, it has not been considered “fashion.”





**Figure 2.7** Studio portrait of nursing students, John H. Stratford Hospital Training School for Nurses, Brantford, Ontario, Canada, 1897. Canadian Nurses Association/Library and Archives Canada (e002414893). The students' uniforms reflect 1890s fashionable silhouettes with their leg-of-mutton sleeves.

## Recommended terminology

The common element in everybody's definition of fashion is change. A central question for us is, "How rapid must the pace of change be for fashion to come into play?" Eicher and Sumberg (1995: 299), citing Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, argue that people need to be aware of a change in dress patterns within their own lifetimes in order for that change to be considered fashion. Thus, a second question is, "Do individuals need to be aware of changing dress habits in order for that change to be considered 'fashion' rather than simply 'dress'?" George

Sproles, in a review of fashion theory, explained the fashion cycle as the secular evolution of one style to the next. He differentiated between long-run cycles, which could occur only once in an age or once per century, and short-run cycles, which might be as short as a single season (Sproles 1981: 117). For Sproles the overriding principle was not the length of time that a style was accepted, but the historical continuity of style changes. We support Sproles's position and prefer not to put a time limit on the duration of a fashion.

In the textbook *Survey of Historic Costume*, now in its sixth edition, Phyllis Tortora and Sara Marcketti provide the example of ancient Egypt as a society without fashion, observing the static nature of dress, ultimately concluding that its dress was not fashion (Tortora and Marcketti 2015: 104). However, Egyptian dress and adornment did change over time with each political and technological shift. Although the pace of change was slow, change still occurred. For example, earrings constituted a "late addition to Egyptian jewelry" (Tortora and Marcketti 2015: 44). They also attained "popularity" in the New Kingdom (Gilbert, Holt, and Hudson 1976: 140). Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood carefully documented the changes in Pharonic Egyptian clothing, noting that styles of dress attained increased layers and complexity over time (Vogelsang-Eastwood 1993). History of costume texts conflate changes in Egyptian dress by necessity of concision, perhaps because of giving more coverage to Western dress and to more recent fashion history. However, the apparent stasis of dress forms is an inadequate basis to conclude fashion's absence. Tortora and Marcketti continue the position held in earlier editions of this best-selling textbook, that fashion is a characteristic of Western dress, which appeared in Europe in the Middle Ages (2015: 9). Further, they exclude the "peasant" dress of Western Europe as being too divergent to include in a general survey of Western dress (2015: 10).

We argue that dress worn prior to the advance of capitalistic economies in Europe should also be considered as fashion. We propose that fashion is the preferential term for changing styles of dress, whether that change is slow or fast, in the shapes of clothes or the patterns on the fabrics, in hairstyles and colors, in cosmetic and body markings, or in permanent body modifications.

Further, if fashion is defined as changing styles of dress adopted by people at any given time and place, then the West cannot be privileged. It is more truthful to understand that the desire to embellish the human body—the fashion impulse—is the dominant reason for dress and that humans seek novelty or change; thus, fashion is endemic to human nature and is the term that we prefer over dress, clothing, costume, toilette, and apparel.