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Notes on contributor:

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The dress issue: introduction

Encouragingly, the response to my original call for papers for this special issue surpassed all my expectations. So much so, the final published product is formed of two parts (with this issue being the first instalment). This appetite and enthusiasm is instructive and suggests there is a critical mass of scholars ‘out there’ thinking about, and working on, the relationship between dress and leisure. Moreover, there appears to be a need and desire for scholarly venues where this dress-related research may be aired and shared. The purpose of *The Dress Issue* is to bring together these voices to exhibit the richness and relevance of dress research to, and for, leisure studies (and vice versa). The contributors and articles showcased here map the potential and scope proffered through the study of dress, presenting a mix of different global contexts, scholarly traditions and research practices. My hope and intention is that, together, the two issues make a substantial, fresh, contribution to leisure research, laying out a trajectory for its future development and identifying an emerging field of excellence.

I open by showcasing two short examples here, which show off the affinity and connections between leisure and dress, manifested, in these particular cases, through the quirks of colloquial language. Dress terminology, and specific items of dress have, over time, formed leisure-related shibboleths and are widely accepted in popular culture as referring to persons or personalities – perhaps even personifications – within the leisure tenor. My first example is that of the anorak, a hooded, hip-length, often waterproof, item of outerwear with a zip or button fastening running its front length. The design is derived from, or inspired by, traditional Inuit dress with the fur-lined hood offering protection from freezing temperatures. The anorak emerged as a fashionable item (in Britain) during the mid-twentieth century. However, the term ‘Anorak’ (again in Britain) is applied sometimes somewhat derogatorily, not to an artefact of dress but to members of hobbyist interest groups (often middle-aged men)

who follow niche pursuits and have an encyclopaedic knowledge of them. Train-spotters may be regarded as Anoraks, and are most associated with the term, as they are imagined as standing at the end of railway platforms for many hours, pursuing their leisurely pastime noting serial numbers and sightings' details, whilst dressed in serviceable but dated clothes (the anorak among them). My second example is that of the 'Green Welly Brigade', a pejorative term, applied collectively to members of a distinctive niche of the well-heeled British upper classes during the 1980s. Privileged and wealthy, this group were part of, or aspiring to, the landed aristocracy, who enjoyed a lifestyle of weekends in the British countryside and participation in traditional field sports such as horse_riding, fishing and shooting. The unofficial 'uniform' of the Green Welly Brigade reflected both their chosen, outdoorsy, pastimes and their high class status, among which the expensively priced, branded, knee-high rubber Wellington boot (a form of gum boot) in muted, green, earth tones became eponymous.

I use my unfolding discussion to highlight further touch-points and commonalities between dress and leisure, and present these as a framework that supplies a ready agenda for further study. And I offer a note, too, to be mindful not to forget, or overlook, the creative potential to be found in *dis*similarity. In fashion education, creativity is fostered through experimentation, risk-taking and exposure to alternative ways of doing and thinking found outside of the expected or usual field of practice. Innovation, then, is regarded as being found, or as happening, at intersections and at the points where different worlds – or disciplines – collide: where dress studies collides with leisure studies, perhaps? Copley (2001, 4) tells us that creativity in learning is about imaginative, divergent, thinking and disruptive strategy: 'flexibility, openness for the new, the ability to adapt or to see new ways of doing things and the courage to face the unexpected.' *The Dress Issue* is presented in this

innovative spirit of interdisciplinarity. I continue with a four-part discussion organized around the following broad themes: firstly, I examine the importance of the body to both dress and leisure, showing how embodiment is a useful and dynamic way of framing the practices of dress for, and as, leisure. Secondly, my discussion lingers on the particular sub-category of dress that is fashion. I critically consider definitions of fashion past and present and discuss how its characterization as an economic system built on change has motivated moral and scholarly anxieties, which may go some way in explaining its marginal position in academic studies (of leisure). Thirdly, I go on to look at some of the different approaches that have been taken to the study of dress in the development of the disciplines of dress history and fashion theory. I propose that these disciplines are at a point in their maturity where interdisciplinary engagement offers fruitful opportunities and where the sensorial and experiential dimensions of leisure may be explored, and understood, through the ‘evocative object’ of dress. Fourthly, and finally, I turn to industry as another common denominator, using the case of the current athleisure trend to illustrate what is a profitable alignment between fashion products and leisure activities.

Dress and leisure: embodied practices

The naming of this special issue, and my careful use and application of the term ‘dress’, is worth unpacking, since it opens up some of the contested terrain that characterises its study. Academics who study dress have expended a good deal of time and angst in creating a fit and accurate taxonomy of terms and definitions. In everyday life and language ‘dress’, ‘clothing’, ‘fashion’, ‘garment’, ‘attire’, ‘apparel’, ‘style’, ‘adornment’ and ‘costume’ are often employed interchangeably and as synonyms. However, academic custom and practice is – and should be - more nuanced. Writing forty years ago, and in the discipline of anthropology, Polhemus and Procter (1978, 9) noted the requirement of a suitable term to describe ‘all the things

people do to or put on to their bodies.’ This invokes a broad view of a body modified (the doing) and/or covered (the putting). As Entwistle (2000, 6) reminds us: ‘no culture leaves the body unadorned but adds to, enhances or decorates the body.’ The working definition adopted here, for this special issue, is in this expansive spirit and encapsulates cloth, clothes, jewellery, piercings, scarring, cosmetics, forms of body painting, tattoos, perfume, and extends through to hair styling, dyeing, plucking and grooming, body maintenance, dieting and cosmetic surgery. Roach and Eicher (1965, 1) developed the case for the use of dress as a preferred term among scholars. They suggested that dress alluded to ‘an act...the process of covering.’ The emphasis on process – the act of getting dressed or of dressing up - captured an academic concern to study not only the artefacts or markings imposed on the body but, crucially, to understand the practices and meanings surrounding them, as such shedding light on the human condition, on ways of being in the world and of everyday rituals and actions. Foster and Johnson (2007, 2) have championed this practice-led framing of, and approach to, dress as ‘a more formidable way of looking at the human body.’ For Wilson (1985), in her seminal text on fashion and modernity, the divorcing of body and dress (by academics and museum curators) is problematic and unsettling. For her, dress is very much about an embodied process and practice and is best conceptualized as an extension of the biological body manifested in material and cultural ways. Without a consideration of the body, understandings of dress are partial and compromised. Dress is intended to be worn on the moving, active, living body and this Wilson (1985, 1-2) expresses, poetically, as follows:

There is something eerie about a museum of costume. A dusty silence holds still the old gowns in glass cabinets. In the aquatic half light (to preserve the fragile stuffs) the deserted gallery seems haunted...For clothes are so much part of our living, moving selves that, frozen on display in the mausoleums of culture, they hint at something

only half understood, sinister, threatening; the atrophy of the body, and the evanescence of life...Clothes without a wearer, whether on a secondhand stall, in a glass case, or merely a lover's garments strewn on the floor, can affect us unpleasantly, as if a snake had shed its skin.

It is in the embodied practice of dress, and of dress practices, that the intersection with leisure is, perhaps, most apparent. Breward (2008, 17), although writing about the more specialized cases of fashion and sport (rather than dress and leisure *per se*), makes the claim that 'a reification of the body binds the two fields together, positioning them as twin motors of consumer culture.'

Preparing the body *for* leisure and its participation *in* leisure almost inevitably involves its management, in some way, through dress and dressing. Examples to illustrate this are near limitless and range from small acts to spectacular performances: putting on eye-glasses to assist with the close work entailed with needlepoint or embroidery hobbies; spritzing underarm deodorant and splashing on aftershave before a romantic date; displaying affiliation to, and support of, a national rugby team with face paints and novelty hats in emblematic colors; kitting out in crampons, thermals and protective gear for an extreme expedition. If leisure is an embodied practice, so, too, is dress. Moreover, the leisure body is, almost without exception, a dressed, or partially-dressed, body. This shared terrain of embodiment is, perhaps, most sharply apparent in examples drawn from materials science and textile technology. Fabric innovations – breathability, sweat-absorption, aero-dynamism, temperature regulation, anti-chafing, UV-protection – are created to mitigate or control the biological, corporeal, fleshy body during the pursuit of active leisure (as we climb, dance, cycle, workout, run and move) or even, perhaps, during forms of fashionable inactivity (as we

sunbathe, do some knitting, loaf about in our loungewear or lie on the couch using digital consoles).

As well as dress *for* leisure, dress may be explored through its practice *as* leisure. This may take a number of forms from relaxing with a fashion magazine to attending a fashion-themed museum exhibition. Perhaps most obvious, though, is the idea that shopping may be a leisure activity and part of a social lifestyle whereby retail sites and spaces (virtual and geographical) may provide opportunities for playfulness and the pleasurable engagement with, and acquisition of, fashion products and consumer goods (note 1). A shopping trip can be part of a day out, perhaps as an activity within a friendship group, where the trying on, browsing and seeking out of garments is a fun experience and may be as much about shared leisure time as the actual purchase of clothing. The London-based market research and intelligence agency, Mintel, reported on an emerging ‘Experience Is All’ trend in August 2015 describing ‘an appetite among consumers for combined retail and leisure experiences.’ The fast-fashion retailer, H&M, was cited by Mintel as a market leader in tapping in to this consumer desire for a more sociable retail experience. *Vice* magazine collaborated with H&M (in August 2015) to host free weekly parties in its temporary pop-up store on London’s Brick Lane: ‘with DJ sets and a free bar to draw in the crowds and compliment the brand’s upbeat and fun image’ (Mintel 2015a). The practice of shopping has altered radically over the past few decades with online shopping, internet auction sites and TV shopping channels disrupting traditional patterns of consumption and the consumer experience. For some, identified by marketers as ‘avid consumers’, the urge to buy is an all-consuming, pleasure inducing, activity. This practice may be part of a culture of collecting as consumers acquire and add to personal – and personally curated - collections of, say, handbags, neckties or shoes. Stebbins’ (1992, 2007) ‘serious leisure’ concept is applicable here, as participants in the avid

consumption of dress as a leisure activity exhibit skill, expertise, perseverance and fulfilment (note 2) in a life dedicated to its pursuit.

Alternative and informal consumption practices such as the car boot sale, thrift store, vintage boutique, flea market and swap shop are also interesting, adding to, and extending, insights on contemporary consumer culture. These informal, often festive or festival-like, spaces move the consumption of dress from organized retail industry into the realm of entertainment. The resurgence of interest in traditional handicrafts and the amateur making and hobbyist production of wearable artefacts (badges, junk jewellery, recycled, customized and repurposed dress objects) adds a further spin on considerations of dress as leisure. The domestic production of dress as a leisure activity is a popular, and increasingly fashionable, pursuit with enthusiasts of dress-making, handcraft and knitting forming a vibrant and eclectic community of practice who find enjoyment and sociality in making. The UK Hand Knitting Association (UKHKA) boasts a growing membership and estimates the number of knitters and crocheters in the UK (at April 2015) to be 7.5million (UKHKA online). The BBC television show and competitive dressmaking series, *The Great British Sewing Bee* (first aired in April 2013), attracted consistently high ratings of around 2.6million viewers per weekly episode, and, by turns, made sewing a successful and high profile ‘spectator sport’ (Plunkett 2013). ‘Loom band’ jewellery was a playground craze in Britain during the summer of 2014. A craft requiring just pocket-money pennies to pursue and easily ‘picked up’, it used intricately-braided rubber bands to form colorful, handmade, bracelets that could be worn and exchanged as friendship tokens or gifts among elementary school-age children and their kinship networks. Parkinson (2014) reported in June 2014 that all 30 of the top selling toys on the AmazonUK website were loom-related. In this instance, the making of fashion

accessories may be cast as play, bringing together a triangulated relationship between leisure, creative practice and sociability.

In line with these trends, the academic literature on the domestic production of dress, and allied design practices, is burgeoning. This reflects the popularity of crafting as an activity but also the richness of the topic as a promising area for research on making as leisure (see Burman 1999, Parkins 2004, Turney 2009, Turney 2012a, Twigger Holroyd 2014).

The F-word: has fashion been the issue?

What of the term ‘fashion’? Fashion is a sub-category of dress and, according to Entwistle (2000, 43), is ‘a special system of dress, one that is historically and geographically specific to western modernity.’ The rise of mercantile capitalism during the fourteenth century in Europe, and the related emergence of a bourgeois class and of increased social mobility, led to the development of a fashion system – a particular and unique industry for the production and consumption of fashion - and to fashion being used as a tool in the struggle for social status. High class emulation was a motivating factor that drove the fashion system. The new capitalist class aggressively adopted, and attempted to keep pace with, courtly fashion in their pursuit of distinction. This, in turn, led to a ‘chase and flight’ model, ‘a continual and arbitrary succession of fashions, each of which marche[d] inexorably to its doom’ (Braham 1997, 135). As Wilson elaborates (1985, 49): ‘as soon as fashion percolated down to the bourgeoisie, it became disgusting to the rich...the rich moved on to something new which in turn was copied.’ This discussion of the historical gestation of fashion as a system is useful in that it shows how the association between, and characterisation of, fashion with change came into being. The association of fashion with an internal logic of systematic and regular change (in part) remains to this day, although the neatness of fashion as a singular, class-based,

system organized around a cyclical progression of seasonal styles is now dismissed as an oversimplification, having little purchase in, and for, understandings of postmodern identity practices or the complexities of the contemporary, global, fashion industry. Subcultural styles, the vernacular making and production of garments, the cult status of celebrities and sports stars as fashion innovators, and ironic acts of identity transgression do not fit – indeed, they challenge and disrupt - the traditional, simple, model of fashion as a status-based, ‘trickle-down’, system. Writing in 1930, Flügel attempted to define and analyze the system of fashion. He made the distinction between ‘fixed’ and ‘modish’ dress and attached these terms to degrees of (perceived) societal development and advanced capitalism. For him, modish dress – that is, fashion – was ‘a fact that must be regarded as one of the most characteristic features of modern European civilization’ (Flügel 1930 quoted in Rouse 1989, 73). Fashion, he felt, was a symptom of, and supported by, modern structures and hierarchies, and therefore ‘of’ the West. In Flügel’s view, fashion was a marker of civilization. Fixed dress, on the other hand, sat outside of a cyclical model of change, and therefore sat (largely) outside of Europe, too. Fixed dress – that is, non-fashion or anti-fashion – applied to strange and exotic non-Western cultures and reflected and reproduced their ‘pre-civilized’ behaviours. The dress of non-Western cultures was, as the revisionist Craik (1994, xi) puts it, ‘relegated to the realm of costume’ and perceived to be unchanging, static and an anthropological curiosity. Flügel was one of a number of thinkers to take on the subject of fashion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and to consider the phenomenon from a moralistic standpoint and as objectionable. The cycle of fashion was deemed by this cohort of ideological thinkers to be utterly futile and irrational. For example, the sociologist, Simmel (1973 [1904], 176), observed how, in modern society, ‘whatever is exceptional, bizarre or conspicuous, or whatever departs from the customary norm, exercises a peculiar charm upon the man of culture.’ Writing around the same time as Simmel, Veblen

(1970 [1899]) put forward his highly influential *Theory of the Leisure Class*. The theory was based on an extreme utilitarianism, one that condemned the follies of intensifying consumerism and found the excesses of the fashion system, in their very absurdity, to be completely unjustifiable. Along with ‘conspicuous consumption’ and ‘conspicuous waste’, Veblen offered the concept of ‘conspicuous leisure’ as a means of interpreting the ‘abhorrent futility’ of fashion. A person’s social worth was enhanced if they could visibly, and bodily, demonstrate that they had no obligation to labour or earn money, thereby in turn showing off their membership of the wealthy leisured classes. For women in particular, the fashions of the period (that is, those of the late nineteenth century in Europe) were especially effective in marking out the unproductive status of the wearer since the physically restrictive and extremely cumbersome corseted ‘S-bend’ bustle (which gave the wearer a ‘wasp waist’), was the height of *fin de siècle* fashion. This mode of dress embodied the very concept of Veblen’s conspicuous leisure: rigid bodices, heavily draped layers of skirts and light-colored fabrics inhibited activity and reinforced a non-labouring lifestyle both physically and symbolically. At first glance, these century-old models and views of the fashion system may seem to be relics of a different age. Yet, moral reactions to fashion have, in some ways, never held so much currency as in 2016. Ethical concerns remain over wastefulness but are considered these days through the prism of sustainability (a pressing and complex ‘grand challenge’ shared across the dress and leisure domains) in design, production and consumption practices. Other ethical issues and challenges are also present such as: the environmental impact of the fashion industry; the inequalities of the division of labour in the global supply chain, and the cultural constructions of ‘normal’ beauty in, and by an industry that is (too) often unconscionable in its image-making.

The foregoing discussion of Euro- and ethno-centric accounts, and ideological critiques, of the fashion system segues here into a brief historiography of the study of dress. Entwistle and Wilson (2001, 1) have declared that since the mid-1980s ‘the study of fashion and dress has been transformed’ and, more recently, Tseelon (2010, 3) expressed her ‘genuine delight...observing the field coming in to its own.’ *The Dress Issue* marks one more milestone in a coming of age and respectability for the topic and a gaining of credence, in part buoyed up by cross-fertilizations with other disciplines - leisure studies among them. For sure, leisure studies, and its allied disciplines of tourism and sport have not been, and are far from being, bereft of research on dress. The tendency, though, has been for this research to be swallowed up (and perhaps even concealed) within the wider pantheon of identity, appearance and body politics. Recent exceptions to this are Williams’s (2015) volume on kit for *Sport in History* and Williams, Laing and Frost’s (2014) edited collection on fashion, sporting and social events. The sparsity of results from a keyword search of *Annals of Leisure Research* (established in 1998) grounds this point empirically: only one ‘exact match’ hit was returned for ‘dress’ and ‘fashion’ in a publishing history of almost twenty years (Winter and Young, 2014). Keyword searches of other leisure journals fared similarly: *Leisure Studies* returned one hit (Jaimangal-Jones, Pritchard and Morgan 2015) whilst *Leisure/Loisir* and *Leisure Sciences* did not register any returns. Rather than forming the appendices to larger research projects, interesting and informative as they may be, the time is ripe for focused and sustained studies on dress and fashion that seek to extend, and add to, what we know already. A rough roadmap, outlining and critiquing the evolution of dress (or, as it is sometimes known, fashion) studies, is valuable because it illustrates, and goes some way in explaining, the uneasy relationship and marginal status it has held, until fairly recently, with(in) academic scholarship. Dress studies has a long and fraught back story. As the titling of this Special intimates, the issue of dress is, or until lately has been, a thorny one.

Writing in 2010 the social psychologist, Tseñlon (2010, 3) claimed that two decades earlier ‘the field of “fashion studies” was non-existent as an independent academic enterprise, but inhabited the margins of scholarly pursuits...and the frivolous end of the social sciences.’ Contemporaneously, (that is, at the beginning of the 1990s) the dress historian, Steele (1991) wrote an article for *Lingua Franca*, provocatively titled ‘The F-word’ on the reception of, and response to, fashion in academia and by academics. ‘The F-word’ wrote Steele (1991, 42) ‘still has the power to reduce many academics to embarrassed or indignant silence.’ Citing an interviewee from her study – a professor at UCLA – the article continued:

To dress fashionably is to be labelled frivolous, to seem to care about the body and, therefore, by implication to downplay the life of the mind. Most colleagues view sartorial interest and especially sartorial ‘play’ or facetiousness with a mixture of amusement, condescension, and fear. Dowdy is safe and serious; bad dressing, one of the last ways in which academics can project the illusion of other-worldliness.

The question of fashion as a serious subject worthy of academic study is by no means new. Taylor (2002, 2) provides an example from 1821 when: ‘Dr Samuel Rush Meyrick and Charles Hamilton-Smith wrote that costume history was burdened with “the intemperate and hasty charge of carrying with it the inferiority of not being worthy of consideration of a man of letters.”’ This aversion may be explained through a variety of converging factors. The Cartesian fracture between body and mind renders matters of dress (defined, as above, in terms of a covered or modified body), literally, unthinkable as an occupation for the intellectual mind. The fashion industry is an image-making industry and can easily and conveniently be cast aside as vacuous, banal and obsessed with surface façade. For purists,

and leftists, too, the commercial drivers and profiteering of fashion-as-industry is difficult to reconcile particularly when posited in the refined and edifying context of intellectualism and the university. Another factor is the feminization of dress in terms both of its production and consumption. This, of course, is a narrow and problematic characterization but a powerful, still recent, mythology appointed shopping and sewing as women's work (and play).

Historically, the feminine has been trivialized and marginalized in, and by, scholarship and, indeed, society at large. This bias permeated the education and training sector for a long time, whereby fashion design and dress history were subjects in the university, museum and art school regarded as female, or feminine, interests and activities. McRobbie (1998, 33) writes of the gender divide in British art schools during the 1960s, presenting the split between 'the fashion girls and the painting boys.' Meanwhile Harte (1991, 150) described the field of dress history as having once been 'a prolonged picnic attended by hordes of schoolchildren and enthusiastic girls on textile or design courses undertaking "projects."' Here, the immaturity and whimsy attached to the study of dress history is starkly evident.

Doing 'things' differently: Objects, symbols, experiences

The study of historic dress (erstwhile 'costume') has roots in the museum sector and art history and is built on object-based enquiry. Specialist knowledge of historic construction techniques, design details and materials assisted curators and archivists in the identification, dating and accurate conservation of garments held in museum collections. Similarly, fine art paintings and portraiture proved valuable source material for the study of the symbolism and meanings of dress, accessories, jewellery and styling. Yet, this approach to study – of costume history based on contemplative micro-studies of particular museum artefacts – has endured more than its fair share of criticism in academic circles. At worst (and in the past), costume history has been mocked as (mere) 'hemline history' and dismissed as a-theoretical

and descriptive, a bourgeois, rarefied, pursuit, detached from broader discursive frameworks and philosophical concepts. Fine and Leopold (1993, 112), describing a series of costume studies dating from the 1950s through to the 1980s, argued that they were in ‘the wholly descriptive “catalogue” tradition of costume history, which typically charts in every detail over the course of several centuries the addition or deletion of every flounce, pleat, button and bow, worn by every class on every occasion.’

Costume historians have been labelled by Tseñlon (2010, 4-5) as ‘fashion natives’ and are said to ‘see themselves as guardians of the original and true spirit of the field.’ They are, in her schematic, placed in opposition to ‘fashion migrants’, those from the social sciences ‘who are interested in fashion and appearance as instances of social activity, and as a vehicle for exploring and understanding processes and meanings.’ At times, the schism between the two factions and their differing approaches to the study of dress has run deep, in a sort of turf war, with both sides laying claim to ontological and epistemological supremacy and ownership. Costume historians (natives) have accused fashion theorists (migrants) of losing sight of, or overlooking, what they feel is the essence of dress study: the actual product and/or object itself. In the recent past, some celebrated names, particularly from semiology, drifted into fashion territory and developed an approach to its understanding based on the language of clothes and a prioritizing of the immaterial signs, symbols and representation of dress. Eco (1979), Hebdige (1979) and Barthes (1985) noted the language-like nature of fashion and dress as forms of non-verbal communication. Lurie (1981) forced the linguistic metaphor further by developing and applying grammatical rules for the explanation of fashion, a project ultimately seen to be ‘riddled with problems, not least of which is the problem of communication itself which is far less clear in the realm of clothing than it is with spoken

language' (Entwistle and Wilson 2001, 3). For these disciplinary migrants, fashion and dress were studied in the abstract.

Moving forward, a fertile path to pursue is one that considers the social dimensions of dress, going some way to bridging the divisions outlined above. Firm groundwork has been laid for this, with some recent thoughtful and thought-provoking studies that successfully open up the terrain around sensory and experiential elements of dress - and, indeed of leisure - practices. Woodward (2007), for example, transports us to a domestic, mundane, backstage space of dress: the bedroom. In her ethnographic account of the act of choosing and putting on clothes (of the 'wardrobe moment' as she terms it), she supplies a richly detailed, grounded - and intimate - study, which captures not only how women look but, importantly, how they feel and what they actually do when dressing. Woodward (2007, 1) introduces her work with a pen portrait of Sadie, a participant in the study, as she goes through the throes of selecting an outfit to wear for a friend's party:

...nothing seems appropriate. She clutches a pile of potentials in her arms, and holds each one in front of her body as she considers it: her cream top is too pale, making the top and skirt blend into one, and all her black, colourful or patterned tops are too dark for the outfit, drawing attention away from the shoes. In her frustration, she flings the clothes on the floor. She stands looking at the shoes again in the mirror...

This snapshot illustrates how the processes of self-presentation and identity construction are mediated both as material and emotional experiences. As Sadie struggles to overcome the perceived shortcomings of her wardrobe, the complexities of taste, ideal self, the social gaze,

peer expectations and the performance of leisure are writ large: just what to wear for a party in order to project suitable and desired messages, to be acceptable and accepted?

Social dress and social dressing of a contrasting form comes in the example of a longitudinal study by Welters (2007) of traditional festival outfits from the province of Attica, Greece, during the 1980s and 1990s. In Welters' study, the sensory and sentimental elements imbued in particular dress artefacts were fore-grounded as key elements in a ritualized and spectacular act of leisure practice. A complex set of customs existed around young women's heavily embroidered and elaborately embellished festival dresses. These dresses were based on local folk designs and had gilded coins strung horizontally across the chest and torso, decorating the bodice. The sound made by these coins came, in turn, to be an evocative component of the festival experience, as Welters (2007, 13) elaborates:

The coins, in particular, made clinking noises when worn. Brides, for instance, when dressed in their finery, left their natal homes mounted on a horse or donkey and were led to the home of the groom, every move of the hoof echoed by the jangling jewellery. One person recalled that the villagers could hear a young bride coming down the village path before she could be seen. Likewise the noise made by women dancing reinforced the festival dress as something special for the community.

So often dress is considered first and foremost by 'the more usual sense of sight' (Foster and Johnson 2007, 2) however Welters' compelling description of the sound of dress makes a case for a more dynamic interpretation of the sensorial: of dress and its articulation to sound as well as smell, touch, hearing and taste. What is interesting is the way in which the tinkling noise made by these particular festival dresses inculcates a sense of shared belonging and of

occasion through the aural. The noise is expressive, summoning up a heritage of social leisure and shared celebration. The study also found that the wedding dresses were, often times, imbued with enchanted and mystical powers, so that:

A newly married woman could wear the ‘good’ dress on festive occasions, including other women’s weddings, until the birth of one or two children. Having proved its success as a good luck charm to render the married woman fecund, the dress was packed away for future use by daughters or future daughters-in-law. The customs were quite rigid on this issue.

The magical and emotional meanings of dress and of dress as ‘evocative objects’, to use Turkle’s (2007) terminology, supplies a rich seam for researchers to mine in the future. The topic lends itself to all sorts of interpretations for leisure studies, ranging from lucky sports vests through to holiday memories infused in souvenir tourist artefacts. Turkle’s (2007, 5) treatise on material culture sets out a powerful case for objects ‘as provocations to thought’, advocating the study of objects by academics as a way of reconciling thinking and feeling and of bringing together the emotional and the intellectual. Turkle (2007, 5) argues that there is an ‘inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things. We think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with.’

Athleisure: an industry case study

There is a fashion industry and there is a leisure industry, both of which have a system of provision and a commodity pipeline that stretches globally. At times, these two industries meet, operate together and service each other. Indeed, the interrelationship between fashion and leisure has rarely been so apparent, for, at the time of writing (February 2016) the trend

for ‘athleisure’ is (seemingly) all pervasive. The term athleisure, increasingly part of common parlance, is an industry-derived conceit propagated by fashion prediction agencies, trend trackers and style journalists. In its consumer report on *Sports Fashion* of June 2015, Mintel identified athleisure products as being most popular among consumers aged between 16 and 34 years (Generation Y). Asserting that ‘over half buy sportswear as leisurewear’, the report noted that ‘the sporty look has become fashionable and the athleisure trend has seen sports clothing and footwear being worn as everyday clothing as well as for participating in sport’ (Mintel 2015b). In January 2015, the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, also reported the gathering momentum of the athleisure fashion trend, proclaiming it to be ‘era-defining’ due to the extent of its adoption and popularity among a broad, collective, consumer base: ‘you will soon be wearing gym-ready gear even if you don’t want to work out...athleisure is the buzzword of the fashion industry – a hybrid of sportswear and the rest of your wardrobe’ (Cochrane 2015).

Particular items of clothing are considered to typify athleisure and are closely associated with the phenomenon, notably: close-fitting, stretchy, yoga pants; the hooded, zip front, sweatshirt; and the technologically-advanced running shoe. These are functional and facilitative garments that are performance-enhancing, enabling the wearer (often young, attractive, physically fit, well-groomed females) to ‘perform’ their everyday routines. Athleisure outfits are versatile and suited to movement across, and between, the various social roles and activities contained within a modern, multi-dimensional, lifestyle – from work to play, and back again, literally without the change of an outfit. For example, Lululemon Athletica, a Canadian based retailer specialising in high-end yoga and workout clothing promoted its women’s ‘high rise’ leggings as ‘designed to take you from Hatha (note 3) to happy hour’ (Lululemon online 2016). Written and unwritten dress codes and expectations of bodily

appearance have never been more relaxed or open to interpretative possibilities, allowing the casual ethic *and* casual aesthetic of athleisure to flourish. Athleisure is, then, underscored by – and perhaps best understood through – a framework of adaptability (be it material, symbolic or social). Drawing on Turney’s (2012b, 2014) work on the tracksuit (albeit in relation to youth delinquency and sporting hooliganism), athleisure is very much in the spirit of being ‘ready for anything’. In the athleisure case, wearers are dressed for a (moderate and metaphorical) form of urban combat, a tackling of the challenges of modern life. Stretchy, comfortable, responsive fabrics, ‘smart’ textiles, hi-tech finishes and wearable technology are designed into outfits that are able to be layered up or down, zipped on or off, according to climate or context. Scientific advancements are embraced by product designers and consumers alike in order to provide technologically-rich solutions to the challenges of modern living. These innovations are celebrated in the promotional rhetoric for athleisure products: the same Lululemon yoga pants (above) were marketed on the company’s webpages as having ‘four-way stretch Full-On Luxtreme fabric [which] is sweat-wicking and offers great support and coverage with a cool, smooth feel’ (Lululemon online 2016).

There are further degrees of granulation here, since certain brands, styles and design cues are favoured among the athleisure ‘style tribe’, as Polhemus (1994) would term its collective members: not just *any* pants, hoodie or trainers will suffice. Athleisure clothing requires careful curation from, and by, the wearer, ensuring correctness in the brands worn on the body, correctness in the *way* that they are worn, as well as ‘correctness’, if you will, of the body of the wearer: toned, firm, able, pert, unblemished, smooth, clean (and so on). In this rendering, the athleisure body, albeit clothed for comfort and ease, is studied, worked at and a project never to be fully completed. Belonging to the athleisure style tribe is about knowing, understanding and conforming to its collectively selected and collectively supported forms of

body presentation. The metaphor of tribalism is, again, pertinent here, since athleisure has its high profile style leaders, who act as figureheads to aspire to and take direction from. As with any social phenomena, the creation of athleisure is not traceable to an exact moment, place or time. However, athleisure does possess (or the industry has created for itself and others) founding narratives around which the influence and kudos of favored style leaders and cultural intermediaries are marshalled. For example, the British fashion designer and Creative Director at Céline, Phoebe Philo, took to the runway during the finale of the Autumn/Winter 2011 collections in Paris wearing white ‘Stan Smith’ Adidas sneakers. The incident is fabled in the fashion press as a key moment in the history of athleisure and is an example of the power and reach of celebrity endorsement in the making of fashion trends (Marriott 2015). With Philo’s affirmation, Stan Smith’s shifted in meaning and became Goffmanian ‘tie-signs’, signalling attachment to a stylish tribe of athleisure devotees.

No discussion of athleisure would be complete without reference to its longer dress history. Commercial and populist claims to athleisure as emerging, and as a novel, unusual, phenomenon require tempering since examples of leisure, sport and crossovers with fashion litter an academic timeline stretching back several centuries. The celebrated costume historians, Dr Phillis Cunnington and Major Alan Mansfield, authored the 400-page, richly illustrated tome, *English Costume For Sports and Outdoor Recreation: From the 16th to the 19th Centuries* (1969). Chapters in the book cover every conceivable form of leisure activity and its specialist (or specially adapted) dress, including women cricketers, archery, angling, motoring and flying, climbing and even picnics. In dress history, however, the decade synonymous with a sporting connection is without contest the 1930s, and the geographical place on which it is centred is the United States of America.

‘If sport captured the imagination of America in the nineteenth century’, wrote Campbell Warner (2006, 242), ‘it caught fire in the twentieth.’ The 1930s, in particular, was a time, as no other before, when sport, sportswear and fashion overlapped. Martin (1985, 8) goes so far as to term the relationship ‘an incontrovertible truth’, claiming sportswear to be ‘an American invention, an American industry and an American expression of style.’ The term ‘American sportswear’ is ambiguous and, on occasion, ‘passive sports-’, ‘semi sports-’ or ‘spectator sports-wear’ were used to give a sense that the dress was more about fashion and less about vigorous athletic activity. The comfort and utility afforded by sporting attire on the field of competitive play came to have a more general relevance in the 1930s. Sporting attire, or adaptations of it, was integrated into the everyday wardrobe as casual wear, befitting an increasingly informal American lifestyle that was modern, busy and active (Arnold 2009, Campbell Warner 2005). Newspaper editorials and fashion features enjoyed the apparent contradiction of fashion consumers dressed in so-called sportswear. The discourse of inaction and sporting removal was a wry theme in American print media of the day and was used with knowing effect in promotional pieces that acknowledged smart women as glamorously phlegmatic non-athletes, addressing them as such. For example, the female sportswear consumer and her disinterest (imagined or otherwise) in sport were used as marketing ploys by the Harry S. Manchester department store in Madison, Wisconsin. A print advertisement in *The Capital Times* of September 17, 1933, presented outfits for cycling, roller-skating and going to a football game, selling them under the tongue-in-cheek headline: ‘Becoming New Sports Things That Will Make You Go (Mildly) Athletic!’ The copy continued: ‘You may be the most feminine un-athletic woman in the world up to date but you’ll go a bit “sporty” the very day you see these positively bewitching sports things, just made to induce you out in the open!’ (Goodrum 2015).

American sportswear of the 1930s was based on co-ordinating items of clothing that lent themselves to mixing and matching in a variety of ways. As Campbell Warner (2013, 50) writes ‘separates are the foundation of sportswear. Fashion and sport combined.’ American sportswear also embraced modern design techniques, production methods and scientific materials such as rayon, Lastex and Matletex which were pioneered during the Thirties. America excelled in mass-manufacturing at this time and led the way in clothes that were produced in simple-pattern pieces, as part of large runs, in standard sizes, so that: ‘an American dress can be considered less a work of art than a solution to a design problem’ (Reynolds Milbank 1989, 100). And American sportswear was shaped around a celebrity cult of the designer, which saw young, female, designers cultivated as personalities. Elizabeth Hawes, Hattie Carnegie, Edith Reuss, Muriel King, and Nettie Rosenstein formed part of a raft of creative women who worked in New York’s Garment District and helped to pioneer and define sportswear and *The American Look* associated with it. These women came to be figureheads, representative of American womanhood incarnate: casual, confident, modern, sporty, successful and well-dressed. Underpinned by versatility, technological innovation and celebrity endorsement, then, American sportswear of yesteryear and athleisure of today seem to share a good deal in common. Perhaps this only goes to strengthen the adage that all fashion is cyclical and that the industry-based relationship between dress and leisure is perennially popular?

As I come to the end of my extended introductory discussion, I do not claim the roadmap I have laid out here as a definitive charting of the academic landscape of dress and leisure: as a plan for a potential ‘land grab’ showing territory explored or as yet to be discovered for either field. There is only so much direction I am willing, or able, to offer in that regard. Rather my intentions are simpler, and are about the ignition of excitement for, and recognition of the

vibrancy around, a leisure studies of dress. *The Dress Issue* evidences it as a thriving and stimulating specialism, deserving of further, sustained, attention.

My discussion wraps up here by presenting an overview of the five articles that form the body of the first part of this special issue_(with part two to follow in due course). The articles here are all themed around *sporting* leisure and dress, and collectively are nothing short of panoramic in their reach. It has been a pleasure to follow these articles in development and, finally, to see them come to fruition. Each contributor drills down into one, or several, of the themes painted with broad brushstrokes in my foregoing discussion. Dave Day kicks off with a thoughtful and detailed account of professional ‘natationists’ in the Long Victorian period. Using archive sources such as newspapers and journals, he pieces together the lives of working class women who made an income as both swimming teachers and performers. These women required a form of professional dress that bridged functionality and fashionability, assisting both sporting and spectacular performances in the pool, river or water-tank, whilst maintaining contemporary moral standards and expectations of public decency. Day posits the female professional natationist as something of a sporting innovator. The dress she wore whilst performing stunts or racing was extraordinary but so, too, were the gender and social roles she inhabited as a result, which transcended the norms of working-class womanhood and posed challenges to the neatly delimited ‘separate spheres’ of the Victorian era.

Katherine Horton, Tiziana Ferrero-Regis and Alice Payne bring us up-to-date as they transport us in their article to Australia and the leisure practices of the women’s activewear label, Lorna Jane. They pick up on, and elaborate, the current trend for activewear – a fashion for fitness – through a colorful case study of this lifestyle brand, explaining through their

discussion the complexities and interconnectedness of consumer culture, market forces and the embodied self. Importantly, they contextualize their analysis of a contemporary case by looking to the history of dress, sportswear and leisure. They show how today's industry and consumer practices are explained most effectively by an historicized understanding, one that places activewear (and labels such as Laura Jane) in a broader discussion of twentieth-century modernity and the ambiguities to which it gave rise around the body as a project both of labor and leisure.

Hamish Crocket introduces us to the world of Ultimate Frisbee. In his lively and insightful account of the Ultimate lifestyle, Crocket reveals the differing dress factions inhabiting the subculture and the respective, competing, ways of dressing the body for participation in the sport. These dress codes reflect and reproduce varying ideas and ideologies over the very meaning of Ultimate and its future direction. Some players dress in highly vernacular, experimental, styles, fusing hedonistic consumption with hedonistic leisure. Other players choose to dress in high performance gear, as mainstream advocates of the sport, championing its organization and professionalization. Crocket is careful not to set up a straightforward and neat binary between the two but instead illustrates the cross-fertilization and inter-mixing of players, dress influences and ideologies. As such the article speaks to broader debates on dress and identity construction, authenticity, belonging and transgressive acts of embodied leisure practice.

Another lifestyle sport, surfing, forms the focus of the article by Jon Anderson. He examines the narratives produced for surfwear consumers by, and through, the marketing of active surf dress. Interestingly, his study is built on a definition of dress that is, truly, expansive as he includes the surfboard itself as a form of dress, regarding it to be an extension of the surfing

body that is an important material artefact in the construction of individual, tribal and corporate surfing identities. Anderson's study is based on an exacting content and visual analysis of recent advertisements by surfwear manufacturers and brands as featured in the specialist surf media. He proposes these advertisers as cultural intermediaries, constructing and commodifying desirable identities for surfers to buy in to based on four thematic, and value-adding, properties of dress that appear across the sample. What is fascinating is that Anderson's themes – of surf dress as having performance-enhancing functionality ('unique surfing performance'), as associated with place-based authenticity ('cultural authenticity'), as assisting a countercultural enjoyment of the waves ('transient engagements'), and as being scientifically advanced ('cyborgian skin') – echo many of the values infused and contested across Ultimate Frisbee's material field of play, as discussed in Crocket's article (refer above).

In the final article of this first instalment of *The Dress Issue*, Katherine Dashper and Michael St John present a study of the intriguing sporting dress worn for formal equestrian competitions. With a long heritage, and infused with tradition and symbolism, they argue that competition 'turn out' is unusual in that it is based on formal, often physically challenging, male, tailoring and on rules concerning body management that have remained largely unchanged for a century. In certain equestrian disciplines, such as dressage, the appearance of both horse and rider is judged, and scored, as part of the competitive process and participants are held to strict codes that detail how items of dress should 'look' in the show ring. Dashper and St John draw on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with a large selection of participants in British equestrian sports. Their findings are based on first-hand accounts of the rituals and practices surrounding dress, and dressing, for competition, showing how judgements are made not only by those assigned to the role of official adjudicator but also by members of the

extended equestrian community. While some attempts have been made to update the archaic codes of dress that govern formal equestrian sport, the community has resisted – vehemently rejected – bids to change. For most, the uniqueness of, and traditions bound up in, equestrian dress are a vital, distinguishing, factor in marking out equestrian identity and are points to savor and celebrate (and overcome) in spite of the barriers they impose to functionality.

It remains only for me to express my thanks and gratitude to all the stakeholders involved in the production of *The Dress Issue*: the contributing authors, peer reviewers, and the editor-in-chief, Neil Carr, whose sound advice, encouragement and saintly patience has been unerring throughout.

Notes

1. To note: a reminder that these pleasurable and playful intensities of hedonic consumption may be countered by opposing associations whereby fashion and dress are sometimes cast as anxiety-inducing phenomena serving to highlight self-loathing, self-embarrassment, body inadequacies and imperfections. Fashion has many ‘anxieties’ connected to it. See: Arnold (2001) and Clarke and Miller (2002) for elaboration.
2. The thrill attained through purchase or acquisition may be short-lived and/or lead to consumption patterns and behaviours regarded by some to be socially problematic. This is where consumption as serious leisure may blur into deviant leisure involving, for example, addiction, obsession, crime and sexual fetishism.
3. Hatha refers to hatha yoga, a branch of yoga based on a combination of mindfulness, breathing and physical movements and postures.

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