MERE APPEARANCE:

REDRESSING THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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The principal aim of this dissertation is to seriously consider what accounts of fashion and dress can offer—have indeed *already* offered—to philosophy. In recounting these histories, I have two primary goals. The first is to show that, despite the breadth of primary literature on the subject, fashion and dress have not been meaningfully taken up as sites of continuing philosophical inquiry. The second is to provide a foundation upon which continuing work on the subject may be done in the discipline of philosophy. Regarding the first, it will be my contention throughout the dissertation that the philosophical disregard for fashion can indeed be accounted for on philosophical grounds.

There are two primary motives accounting for fashion remaining in philosophy's closet: 1) the metaphysical subordination of appearances to essences; and 2) the feminization of fashion, and subsequent subordination of the feminine within philosophy. It is my view that the "feminization" of fashion, or the designation of clothing as a uniquely feminine concern, has perpetuated its erasure as a meritorious topic of philosophical concern.

The five major chapters of the dissertation can be divided into two thematic sections. Section I comprises Chapters II, III, and IV, and centers on the project of "recovery," or rather, the project of "raiding" philosophy's closet for new (old) tools to wield in the development of a philosophy of fashion. Section II analyzes just some of the social and

political implications of a metaphysical schema in which clothing is made to be “only” or “merely” about the world of appearances.

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"Philosophy again and again finds itself in pursuit of the real truth hidden behind the merely apparent, taking thought to discover what *is* as opposed to what *seems* to be the case, and confident that the wisdom worth loving will endure. Philosophy may, then, take itself to have a natural antagonism to fashion, as well as a perfect antipathy to any interest in clothes—those wrappings of the wrappings of the mind—those superficial goods situated at least two removes from reality, from the philosopher's perdurable realm of ideas."
—Karen Hanson,
"Dressing up, Dressing Down: The Philosophic Fear of Fashion"

"How, then, comes it, may the reflective mind repeat, that the grand Tissue of all Tissues, the only real *Tissue,* should have been quite overlooked by Science—the vestural Tissue, namely, of woollen or other Cloth; which Man's Soul wears as its outmost wrappage and overall; wherein his whole other Tissues are included and screened, his whole Faculties work, his whole Self lives, moves, and has its being?"
— Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*

I. INTRODUCTION

FASHION AND PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

A philosophical history of fashion has been long in the making, or fashioning. From Diogenes to Diderot, Benjamin to Barthes: philosophers of all stripes have given in to fashion's pull and have attempted to reconcile its ever-changing, ephemeral nature with the philosophical search for wisdom: less ephemeral, more *a priori*. In recounting many of the key moments and thinkers of this history throughout the dissertation, I will show that analyses of fashion and clothing alike have produced insights central to the theories and frameworks of the thinkers I focus on throughout. In other words, my principal aim is to seriously consider what accounts of fashion and dress have to offer—have indeed *already* offered—to philosophy. In recounting these histories, I have two primary goals: the first is to show that, despite the breadth of primarily literature on the subject, fashion and dress have not been meaningfully taken up as vital sites of continuing philosophical inquiry. The

second is to provide a foundation upon which continuing work on the subject may be done in the domain of philosophy. In regards to the first, it will be my contention throughout the dissertation that the philosophical disregard for fashion can indeed be accounted for on philosophical grounds.

There are two primary motives which account for fashion remaining in philosophy's closet: 1) the metaphysical subordination of appearances to essences; and 2) the feminization of fashion, and subsequent subordination of the feminine within philosophy. It is my view that the "feminization" of fashion, or the designation of clothing as a uniquely feminine concern, has perpetuated its erasure as a worthy candidate for philosophical inquiry. I understand "feminization" itself as roughly synonymous with the concern for, or love of the world of appearances that has itself been denigrated throughout the history of philosophy. I thereby take the "feminization" of fashion as an extension of the subordination of appearances to essences I track in the first major section of this introduction. The dissertation's major chapters will both account for and work to disrupt these two suppositions.

Before detailing each chapter in detail, I will first attend to these two major motivations in respective sections. Before detailing the relevant metaphysical history in the first section, it is worth saying a few things here about how I conceive of and treat metaphysics as a feminist philosopher. A critical stance towards metaphysics adopted by feminist philosophers in particular is based on an "argument that [metaphysics] is politically pernicious," as Johanna Oksala puts it (2016, 22). The argument is as follows: "Metaphysics should be resisted because it masks an effective ideology of oppression. As numerous feminist thinkers have demonstrated, the devalued side of each ontological

suppositions as mind/body, nature/culture, reason/emotion, and animal/human, for example, has been attached to femininity and this has led to and upheld oppressive practices and conceptions about women" (22). But challenging, let alone changing social reality involves disputing the naturalization of binaries, hierarchies, and conceptions of (human) nature which rely on metaphysical paradigms that have for long—that continue to—privilege certain categories over others. I take there to be a critical difference between a project of feminist metaphysics and that of *feminine* metaphysics. Whereby the former challenges the naturalization of biases and prejudice as unchangeable or immutable "facts" about human nature (as *essences* of human nature), the latter merely reverts the problematic dualisms that feminist metaphysics, and feminist philosophy more generally, takes issue with from the beginning. My aim in laying out this distinction is to situate my own project squarely with the former, not the latter.

The femin-*ist* challenge to metaphysics is in its criticism of the history of metaphysics as being immune or immutable to social and historical forces, as well as in its highlighting of the relevance of bias and prejudice in perpetuating naturalized metaphysical truths and dualisms. In other words, it is not that immutable truths dictate "natural" hierarchies among persons, but that bias and prejudice fuel the *justification* of naturalization with an appeal to the metaphysical. I understand feminist metaphysics itself, then, as a methodological "undoing" of the reign of the metaphysical *a priori*: specifically, its function to instantiate and re-instantiate metaphysical "truths" about—for example, and of special interest for my project here—sexed and gendered differences in particular. Therefore, my "method" is to trace the history of metaphysics in order to *redress it* by arguing throughout the dissertation that the "universal truths" upheld by metaphysics have

in fact been conditioned by bias and prejudice alike. In detailing what I call the subordination of appearances to essences throughout this first major section of this chapter, my aim is to "set the stage," so to speak, for my dissertation's *challenge* to this subordination.

But what is metaphysics if not, well, metaphysical? In other words, how is a feminist metaphysics *possible?*[1] Here I follow both Christine Battersby (1998) and Johanna Oksala (2011; 2016), who each develop a "new" metaphysics borne out of their respective critiques of metaphysics as both universalizing and ahistorical. For instance, Battersby proposes feminist metaphysics as a project of recovery by suggesting that metaphysics is not a monolithic tradition with a set canon. Battersby's aim is to re-place women in metaphysics in a dual sense: first, by arguing that their elision in the history of metaphysics has been intentional but is not *necessary* for a functional metaphysics*;* and second, by thinking metaphysics anew from the *place* of the female-subject position (cf. 1998, 2). As to the former, Battersby writes that in the history of western metaphysics, woman have been seen as "fall[ing] outside 'essence'—or the defining characteristics of a species or thing—in ways that have been supposed to make it a mistake to look for an essence of female nature or experience" (1). In terms of the latter, Battersby writes: "I am not positing an 'other' form of subjectivity which is that of the 'feminine' or 'female' subject. Instead, I am asking what happens if we model personal and individual identity in terms of the female" (2).

Like Battersby, I contend that "woman" has been excluded from the history of Western metaphysics, and that she has been intentionally and willfully constituted as mere

[1] This question alludes to Johanna Oksala's chapter title of the same name. See "How is Feminist Metaphysics Possible" in *Feminist Experiences* (2016).

appearance: understood, as Battersby puts it, as "unrepresentative of that distinctive, underlying 'essence' of humanity that philosophers have associated with 'truth'" (cf. 1998, 1). Unlike Battersby, however, I do not seek to "model" identity on either female or feminine subjectivity. Instead, I employ a similarly deconstructive approach to the history of Western metaphysics in order to expose long-maintained prejudices for the sake of excavating and cultivating a philosophy of fashion: a topic which Battersby pays no mind to as a meaningful *part of*—a meaningful *force of*—the perpetuation of the metaphysical dualisms and subsequent domination/subordination dyad she sets out to revert.

Johanna Oksala concentrates—more concretely than does Battersby—on the linguistic dimension of metaphysics, or, on the histories, effects, and influences of language and syntax on metaphysics, and vice versa. As Oksala puts it: "…it is vital that any attempt to construct an alternative metaphysics responds to this challenge adequately" (2016, 29). Following Foucault, Oksala suggests that a feminist metaphysics must consider the "strong emphasis on the historical, social, and political aspects of the constitution of reality" emphasized by the linguistic turn (29). Language, in other words, is not only or just "an abstract grid of intelligibility," but a "social and historical practice incorporating power relations" (30). Bracketing the issue of Foucault's commitment or non-commitment to metaphysics, Foucault (at the very least) denies any conception of metaphysics as identifying "universal structures of reality" (32). Conducting an ontology of the *present,* opposed to an ontology *in general* or *as such,* historicizes and politicizes metaphysics alike by rendering it vital to the project of problematization: to the "possibility of contesting and transforming ontology understood as the sedimented and normally taken-for-granted background" (33). As Oksala puts it, the politicization of ontology is not merely a process

of "unmasking," but of "redescription" or rewriting (33).[2]

Like Oksala, I take (feminist) metaphysics to be commensurate with the project of a (feminist) ontology of the present. In other words, the project of a feminist metaphysics is to *unmask and redescribe* the taken-for-granted which, in turn, displays both the contingency and historicity of metaphysical schemas. In their understanding of metaphysics and metaphysical schemas as both situated and historical, I follow both Battersby and Oksala. However, rather than turning to Foucault as Oksala does, my method bears more similarities to that of Battersby, who mines the history of philosophy for alternative readings of identity that would normatively resituate metaphysics as beginning with woman, and not treating her as "phenomenal" or as "mere appearance." My project, however, does not have the same normative impulse. Instead of mining, I *raid* the history of philosophy's proverbial closet in order to prepare for a new avenue of philosophical inquiry: that of philosophy's relationship to fashion and clothing.

The Metaphysical Subordination of Appearances to Essences

Beginning with Plato, the mimetic paradigm maintains that "truth" or essence is located *beyond* the world of appearances in a metaphysical or transcendental world of ideal forms (cf. Plato 2001; cf. Beistegui 2012). While by no means the only trajectory in the history of metaphysics, the Platonic schema remains a dominant one: worth interrogating for its enduring force and influence. With Plato, the world of appearances becomes a world of

[2] While she says little of the *historical a priori* in her discussion of feminist metaphysics, it is worth noting the conceptual identification that is actually taking place. In order to excavate or to problematize an ontology of the (historical) present, one must employ a conception of the *a priori* as equally historical (cf. Foucault 2002). For further discussions of the historical a priori, see Allen and Aldea's edited collection on the subject (2016), particularly their introduction (Allen and Aldea 2016) and Carr (2016).

"mere" appearances: the *incorrect* (or false) realm of philosophical judgment. In John 7:24, Jesus implores his followers to "stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly." The charge of judging by mere appearances comes from a Biblical distinction between the human and the divine: while human persons "look at the outward appearance," the Lord "looks at the heart," because he "does not look at the things people look at" (1 Sam 16:7). From a Biblical perspective, then, remaining in the world of appearances is tantamount to rebuking the divine, since judging others by their "mere appearance" is a way of feeling righteous without actually *being* righteous, i.e. without truly following the wisdom of God. Just as Biblically "correct" judgment involves going *beyond* the judgment of appearance, philosophically "correct" judgment, too, often involves a forsaking of the world of appearances for the metaphysical or for the ideal. Inward essence (or the divine) is traded in philosophy for the metaphysical.

Appearances are made to be "mere," or insufficient, when they become subordinated to a deeper, "truer" reality than that which we encounter through appearances. The distinction inaugurated a metaphysical and philosophical trajectory whereby the search for wisdom and truth necessarily subordinates the world of appearances for that of another world or realm. The subordination is significant, for it signals that a bias against aesthetics is in fact built into the pursuit of metaphysics. Even Platonic and Aristotelian inquiries into aesthetics—a domain in which discussions of fashion would seemingly reign—subordinate the aesthetic to the metaphysical in such a way that confirms this bias as a structural component of a long-reigning metaphysical method.[3] Book 7 of Plato's Republic is

[3] Despite important differences between Plato and Aristotle, scholars like Miguel Beistegui maintain that the Platonic schema holds out. Aristotle's subversion of the imagic from a source of skepticism to a source of learning and potential truth nonetheless maintains wedded to the minimally dualistic structure between the sensible and the intelligible. That is, even though mimesis functions pedagogically for Aristotle, it always

infamous for its depiction of the "Allegory of the Cave," where the shadows on the cave's walls represent the appearances that are not to be trusted: the images that exist not only as mere appearances, but as shadows of the real, later conceived in more detail in Book 10 as the "original." There, Socrates ponders the work of art as a special kind of image. But, special as it is, the work of art is still thematized in the language of deception, conceived there as imitation or mimesis (μίμεσις). In the *Sophist,* Plato writes that certain images may *resemble* the originary truth from which they exist as mere derivatives, and these images in particular may even be able to act as a *ladder* between appearance and essence, essentially capitulating to the same pedagogical function as the cave's shadows (2015, 128-9). As Julia Kristeva writes of Plato's Cave in *Intimate Revolt*: "…trapped by deception, sensation for Plato is necessarily false, for it is always subordinated and flawed in relation to the intelligible" (2003, 53). In the *Republic,* the figure of Socrates warns not only against images, but of the "luxurious city"—what he calls the "fevered state"—characterized by "the manufacture of all kinds of articles…that have to do with women's adornment" (1963, 619). In his plight against physical desire, the body, and sensation more broadly, Socrates insists that philosophers keep their distance from "smart clothes and shoes and other bodily ornaments" (1963, 47).

Aristotle departs from Plato in subverting the image from a source of skepticism (as it is in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave") to a source of learning and site of potential *truth.* Despite this, however, he remains committed to the minimally dualistic structure forged by Plato between the sensible and the intelligible, conceived in Aristotle as the distinction between *hyle* and *morphe,* or between form and matter (Aristotle 1992; cf. Aristotle 1996,

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points beyond the object it imitates. This renders "truth" as located in the intelligible realm only, while appearance remains "merely" sensible (cf. Bestegui 2012).

6). Aesthetic objects may be a source of knowledge themselves for Aristotle, who distinguishes between *knowledge* of "matter" and *knowledge* of "forms" (cf. 1992, 27-28). However, all art is itself guilty of a fundamental mimesis: of "imitating" nature (Aristotle 1992, 27). Even the pleasure derived from art, and the "knowledge" one might attain from it, is itself dependent, on Aristotle's account, on having some prior familiarity with—some implicit or *a priori* understanding of—that which is being represented. As he writes in the *Poetics,* people "take delight" in seeing images because "what happens is that as they view them they come to understand and work out what each thing is (e.g. 'This is so-and-so'). If one happens not to have seen the thing before, it will not give pleasure as an imitation, but because of its execution or colour, or for some other reason" (1996, 6). As John Sallis puts it, on Aristotle's account "one can learn through the image *only* if it is recognised *as* an image of the thing itself" (1995, 177). In other words, the image or aesthetic object is not taken on its own terms, but always subordinated to its original or originary essence or form.

Kant concedes, as did Plato and Aristotle, that learning happens primarily, or at least initially, by imitation. Kant decries mimesis as a subordinate form of aesthetic pursuit, writing in the *Critique of Judgment* that genius is "entirely opposed to the spirit of imitation" (2001, 187). Aristotle wrote that human beings have "a strong propensity to imitation and in learning their earliest lessons through imitation," and Kant that "learning is nothing but imitation" (1996, 6; 2001, 187). For Kant, imitation is "on the natural path of inquiry," but is by no means its height (187). In the *Critique of Judgment*, the beautiful gives way to the understanding that there exists a power of judgment with its own corresponding principle: the principle of judgment. The judgment of the beautiful—

especially of nature—is in a very necessary sense the access point to the principle of judgment: a threshold to an understanding of judgment as a faculty in itself. While judgments of the beautiful refer to objects that exist in nature, judgments of the sublime only refer to that which exists in the mind (2001, §27-8, 140-8). Importantly, beauty is a "symbol" of morality which gives morality its sensible form only (2001, §59, 225-228). Symbols for Kant are "representations based on mere analogy" (226). As such, they constitute a realm of mimetic appearances. Beauty, contrasted with reason for Kant, becomes feminized (cf. Gatens 1991; Klinger 1997; Mann 2006). Kant writes that "to find perfection in a thing requires reason … and to discover beauty in it requires nothing but mere reflection (without any concept) on a given representation" (2001, 310). The "purposiveness of form in appearance is beauty" (48). The purposiveness of form in appearance is a contrast to the purposiveness of the faculty of reason. As I will argue in great detail in Chapter II, the process of reason's ascension (in its full realization of itself) is not a sex or gender-neutral one, and reason (sexed male and gendered masculine) is indeed *catalyzed* or propelled up the ladder on account of Eve's folly in the Garden of Eden. In feeling shame and covering herself up with the original clothing—that tiny fig-leaf—reason is able to direct itself away from "instinct" (sexual temptation) and come into its own as a properly human faculty, separate from the animal (for whom instinct reigns, on Kant's view) (cf. 1786/1999, 224). Aesthetic representations therefore only serve, as Kant writes, "contingent" rather than essential functions: means to reason's ultimate end (cf. 2001, 49).

Even though human beings only *ever* experience mere appearances for Kant, and not things as they are in themselves, Kant conceptualizes the faculty of reason in terms

which dislocates "truth" from their phenomena (1999, 104).[4] The developmental (or epigenetic) account of reason proffered by Kant creates a hierarchy which subordinates appearances to the "understanding," not unlike the Platonic "ladder" or the Aristotelian claim that pleasure in aesthetic objects is really, or truthfully, a pleasure of the understanding. In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant conceived of himself as departing from a Platonic metaphysics that split sensibility from intelligibility by positing that it is not possible for human persons to have *a priori* knowledge of the intelligible world, for it is a world completely independent to the human mind (1999). However, Kant replaces the world of Platonic forms with reason, and the first critique is especially concerned with the possibilities of human reason to have *a priori* knowledge. Metaphysics thereby becomes in Kant the "inventory of all we possess through pure reason" (1998, 104). As I will argue in Chapter II through a novel reading of Kant's "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," the exclusion of femininity and of women from the realm of reason is achieved by Kant through the function of clothing—and the feminine shame it inaugurates—in catalyzing a reason distinguished from femininity (cf. 1999).

Kant's "departure" from Platonic metaphysics nonetheless functions to re-instantiate its most problematic dualism: that between the sensible and the intelligible which once again wrenches essences from appearances. For Hegel, however, there is no essence that does not itself appear. That means that for Hegel, the distinction between essences and appearances is likewise a problem for Kant as it is for Plato. For Hegel, essence is instead conceived as the movement of reflection: "the movement from nothing to nothing and thereby back to itself" (2010, 346). In understanding essence more as the

[4] Kant's thesis on transcendental idealism (the transcendental aesthetic) maintains that human beings only ever experience mere appearances, and not things as they are in themselves.

history of how something comes to be (to exist), rather than as a mysterious metaphysical property—whether knowable or unknowable is beside the point—Hegel subverts the traditional metaphysical distinction subordinating appearances to essences. As Stephen Houlgate puts it, rather than a conception of essence conceived as fundamentally distinct from appearance, it is conceived in Hegel as "that which is *responsible* for all seeming immediacy" (2011, 141, emphasis mine). Houlgate continues: "Illusory immediate being, or seeming, ceases thereby to be something distinct from essence and comes to be seen as essence's *own* seeming or the '*seeming of the essence itself*'" (2011, 141, emphasis original; Hegel 2010, 398). Conceived by Hegel as the "movement of reflection," essence comes to designate the *movement* of this "seeming," or, as Houlgate puts it, the "process of seeming to be immediate being *and* of seeming to be distinct from such seeming immediacy" (141).

However, not all "appearances" are treated equally by Hegel, as evidenced by his discussions of clothing and dress in the *Lectures on Fine Art Volume II* in particular (1975). There, despite its function in making the expressive body really "shine forth," modern clothing for Hegel is itself is "without significance" because it is "purely sensuous" (745). Hegel contrasts the "purely sensuous" with "true" beauty or proper sensuous expression, understood as art which manifests the true freedom of spirit (the "expression of the spirit") (726). In proper sensuous expressions of the beautiful, there is not the "mere" appearance of freedom, but freedom itself (699, 702, 719, 725, 741). However, these beautiful objects are themselves subject to scrutiny, and not all objects of beauty qualify. For Hegel, true beauty is only found in works of art that are "created freely" out of the "spirit of the artist" (725). In sculpture, only the "posture" of the figure is able to express the spirit; everything

else is merely “imitation” (786-7).

Against the complaint that modern sculpture is often “compelled to clothe its figures,” Hegel defends clothed sculptures (1975, 742). The prejudice, he writes, comes from the view that “no clothing can match the beauty of the form of the human body” (742). But the elicitation of sensuous beauty (of properly sensuous beauty) is not actually fully realized in sculpture for Hegel, since it is only through “posture” that it sculpture is able to express spirit at all (786-7). This means that it does not matter very much for him whether or not clothing, in sculpture, fulfills the function of expressing spirit. Scholars have convincingly shown that “Spirit” is gendered masculine for Hegel, and that women and the feminine alike are subordinated in the *Phenomenology* (Chanter 1995; Willett 1990, 1994; Oliver 1996; Kane 2015). In the subject’s trajectory from “consciousness” to “Spirit,” for instance, Kelly Oliver shows that woman is the “essential unconscious element of consciousness,” or, the “spirit behind the Spirit” (Oliver 1996). As Hegel writes: “The feminine […] does not attain to consciousness of it [the ethical], or to the objective existence of it, because the law of the Family is an implicit, inner essence which is not exposed to the daylight of consciousness” (1977, 274, fn. 457).

Like Kant, Hegel also locates a dual “genesis” of shame and clothing. But unlike Kant, for whom the burden of shame rests squarely on Eve’s shoulders—or rather, on her clothing—Hegel makes no mention of Eve. However, inflections of gendered differences are nonetheless present in Hegel, who writes of the Fall that “man becomes conscious of his higher vocation to be spirit and he must therefore regard what is animal as incompatible with that and struggle to conceal, as incompatible with his higher inner life, especially those parts of his body—trunk, breast, back, and legs—which serve purely animal functions or

point to the purely external and have no directly spiritual vocation and express nothing spiritual" (742). On my view, the identification of women, the feminine, and clothing alike with "nothing spiritual" continues to reproduce the essence/appearance distinction Hegel is especially concerned with overcoming.

Hegel contrasts the "pure" or "absolute" beauty of Greek sculpture with "concrete" beauty: its most developed form. Since true freedom is not merely metaphysical or idealized for Hegel—since freedom *itself* can actually appear in itself (appearance *as* essence)—it must appear not in the abstract, but in the concrete. Clothing capitulates to the "abstract" when it does not authentically reflect the person and environment of the time (750-1). It is Hegel's criticism of sculpture that its subjects are often clothed in "ideal" garments opposed to garments which reflect the "inner life" of the person (750). Consider a contemporary analogue in the form of magazine editorials, where the subjects wear, but do not own, the clothes that they wear. For her recent editorial spread for Vanity Fair, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez received (Republican) backlash aimed at her wardrobe, to which she retorted in a tweet that "you don't keep the clothes" (2020).

The incident illustrates two points. The first is a point that Hegel makes against the idealizing tendency of clothing. The expensive garments do not and did not signify AOC, but rather, a particular vision or *version* of the Congresswoman for Vanity Fair audiences. Hegel thought fashion ought to be "real" rather than "ideal," and in fashion he saw a fundamentally idealizing tendency—abetted by fashion's temporal configuration as ephemeral, and thereby, as juxtaposing the "real" or the concrete and lasting—that would make it very difficult, if not impossible, for "clothing" to escape (1975, 749). In his *Letters,* Hegel writes that against the "idealization" of extravagant costumes donned by the majority

of seventy guests to a luxurious New Year's Eve party in 1808, he "opposed a note of realism by donning a valet's uniform coat belonging to the Court doorman, along with his wig" (1808, 156; cf. Valvo 2016, 546). In the valet, no doubt, Hegel saw at least an analogue of the "slave" central to his conception of the master/slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), published just one year earlier, for he returns again to the figure of the valet in the *Philosophy of History* ([1821] 2000). Although Hegel was by no means a critic of capitalism per se, he was an astute observer, like Denis Diderot, of the material avarice of the upper-classes that continued to perpetuate class distinctions (Hegel 1991; Diderot 1767; cf. Buchwalter 2015). Clothing has played a key role in "keeping people in their place" in the most literal senses. Not only did Hegel recognize this, but endeavored to *illustrate* the point by donning the valet uniform in a performance of "class drag" (Valvo 2016, 546).

The second point that the Vanity Fair backlash illustrates is that clothing plays a role in alienation. In *Elements of a Philosophy of Right,* Hegel conceptualizes the "alienation of personality" as the disqualification of ownership (1991, 96). Just as a home "owner" with an outstanding mortgage *possesses* but does not actually *own* their home, so too do the subjects of fashion editorials "possess" without "owning" their garments. Hegel writes:

> If today a portrait is to be made of an individual belonging to his own time, then it is essential that his clothing and external accessories be taken from his own individual and actual environment; for, precisely because he is an actual person who here is the subject of the works of art, it is most necessary that these externalities, of which clothes are essentially one, be portrayed faithfully and as they actually are or were (748).

Hegel clearly seems to be concerned with the "alienation of personality" that happens when clothing is made to idealize its subjects. The "rent the runway" phenomena, where designer clothing can be temporarily rented (not owned), would certainly make Hegel squirm, and confirm all of his worries about the insidious ability of fashion to make its subjects into who they wish they were, and not who they actually are.

The only kind of bodily ornamentation that qualifies as truly beautiful, sensuous expression on Hegel's view is the actor's mask. Hegel's admiration for Antigone is well known; he makes no secret of masking his praise for the text throughout his works, from the *Philosophy of Religion* to the lectures on aesthetics. His commentary on tragedy gives special attention to the mask. In an aside in the *Aesthetics*, he writes:

> Just as it is essential that sculpture be the work of human hands, so his mask is essential to the player— and not as an external condition from which artistic consideration must be abstract; or, so far as we have to abstract from it, that is as much as saying that art does not contain within itself the true and proper self (1975, 443-444).

I take this to mean that the mask is not *external* in the sense that it does not simply cover the face of the actor in order that the art of the play can manifest itself. The mask is also not external in the sense that it is "external" to the personality of the actor: Hegel's concern, outlined above, that garments may function to alienate the personality. For the actor, however, it cannot be the case that the mask is an "external" or idealized object, since it would imply that there is no autonomy or freedom to the work of art itself for Hegel: that there remains an essence/appearance distinction. The mask, then, *is* the giving of expression to our human freedom which brings us to our own truth.

In Marx and Engels, the metaphysical distinction between essences and

appearances is, likewise as it is for Hegel, rejected for a conception of essences that *appear*, or for a unificatory schema which would not subordinate that which appears to an underlying metaphysics (1998). Thinking is not governed by an "intelligent principle," but by ever-evolving material conditions, including the fact of whether or not material needs have been met.[5] Thought is not necessarily a separate substance from the body (mind *versus* matter) but becomes *alienated* from it when it likewise becomes alienated from the means of production. For Marx and Engels alike, the industrialization of textiles in particular becomes a locus from which to develop their conception of historical materialism. Engels' father owned large textile factories in Salford (Manchester) and he occasionally worked in one of the mills. In observing that the deterioration of clothing stimulates its own (renewed) production—catalyzing a system, a *dialectic* between production and consumption—Marx and Engels refine and support their conception of materialism as both historical and dialectical. History unfolds as the *result* of dialectics: in this instance, the dialectic between production and consumption.

But the dialectic is itself built into the production process. Prophesying the later development of "fast fashion," Marx observes that quickly deteriorating materials were used precisely in order to stimulate production at a greater pace (1993, 91). It is not the case that the theory and methodology of dialectics was created *ex nihilo* from Marx and

[5] Philosophical materialism is not immune to metaphysics nor to the distinction between essences and appearances I have been tracking. Materialism itself may be considered a response to the metaphysical problem between essences and appearances, although new problems emerge for the theory: namely, the problem of how things *change* without a governing metaphysics. The main issue of materialism had since then been, as Auguste Comte put it, "explaining the higher level in terms of the lower level," that is, explaining how matter (and not "mind" or "soul") causes or effects more matter (cf. Wolfe 2016, 1). If everything is understood as matter, then thinking, too, would need to be understood as something like matter acting on matter. But if matter is instead understood as having an inertial force of its own—a force which causes itself to happen and to change—then it must also be the case that this process is very much unlike the process of "thinking" as human persons conceive of the term: that is, as a mental process ultimately related to but disconnected from the body.

Engels lounging in respective armchairs. Instead, this revelation in historical materialism was generated from their *experience* witnessing the production process in the textile mills, and their experience of quickly deteriorating clothing, crafted from cheaper material. In other words, the experience of the mills gave rise to the theory, and not the other way around. In this way, the phenomena of fashion became theoretically *generative* for Marx and Engels as thinkers. What would have become of historical materialism, if not for two of its most celebrated figures taking clothing seriously as objects of inquiry and catalysts of thought?

Both Nietzsche and Marx believed that religious metaphysics either devalues or subordinates the material world.[6] Metaphysics for Nietzsche is the "transference of herd standards" into the realm of the ideal (204). In other words, metaphysics stands for nothing else but the *naturalization* of dominant values into the world of the eternal: a normative world of ideals for Nietzsche. Similarly, Marx writes that "just as it is not religion that creates man but man who creates religion, so it is not the constitution that creates the people but the people which creates the constitution" (1977, 30). In both thinkers there is not only a rejection of the essence/appearance dyad, but a rejection of the existence and function of an "essential" realm to dictate, or rather, to justify (human) action, including governance, as having metaphysical justification.

The problematization of the essence-appearance distinction is imperative both to Nietzsche's critique of theological metaphysics and to his ultimately positive project of

[6] For Marx in the *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right,'* private property becomes imbued with a religious quality or character. It becomes the "highest thought form of th[e] brutality" of private property. It is only when the "other-world of truth" has "vanished" that the "truth of this world" may be established (1977, 132). For Nietzsche, the mimetic paradigm upheld by religion results in nihilism. The value of essences over appearance is not an inalienable one, but a constructed one (1967, 125, 161, 204).

creative life-affirmation: in conceiving of the individual as an aesthetic project or a real-life *mannequin* to be dressed. Mannequin, after all, means "artificial man" (cf. Critchley 2015). In *The Gay Science,* Nietzsche writes that "to give 'style' to one's character" is a "great and rare art!" (2001, 163). In giving "style" to one's character, one dresses oneself as one would a mannequin. Having no underlying "essential" human nature, the artificial man or mannequin becomes its authentic self only through a (literal) self-fashioning. While it is much *more* than clothes that make the person, they are not without meaning or significance for Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's affirmation of the world of "appearance" is predicated not only on the critique of the metaphysical as such, but on its collapse. We might say that the conception of appearances as "mere"—the "mere-ing" of appearances—is itself the product of the dualism between this life and another, sustained by the belief in a theological metaphysical world-view. In other words, the "depth" of Nietzsche's thought rests precisely in his reclamation of the surface as a vital and informative place of meaning-making and of self-fashioning. As Nietzsche writes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: "body I am entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body" (1978, 34). It is not that the (clothed) body is juxtaposed to the inner workings of the self or the soul, but that the body is the *starting point* for meaning-making. Nietzsche's ultimate resistance to the metaphysical naturalization of values functions as a significant reminder that clothing exceeds and often subverts its supposed "essential" meanings: or rather, that it is not tied to them.

Nietzsche's rejection of a two-worlds system, or of the appearance-reality dyad, results in a fervent affirmation of the world of appearances: and with it, a profound

reconsideration of the meaning(s) of clothing, especially in its relation to the body. In *The Birth of Tragedy,* he introduces the concept of "aesthetic justification" as an understanding of life as a work of art (1999; cf. Noble 2018, 6). Nietzsche writes: "only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* is existence and the world eternally *justified*" (1999, 33). This is not *l'art pour l'art,* or art as surface phenomena existing for its own sake, but art (including existence understood *as* aesthetic) as a vital force: as its own source of truth (or essence) (Nietzsche 2005, 170-1; cf. Noble 2018). Aesthetic justification is *key* for Nietzsche in overcoming nihilism, itself conceptualized as destabilizing the primacy of another-world over this-world. The affirmation or the justification of the self as an aesthetic being is thereby an important means of overcoming the metaphysical dualism which would subordinate this world—the world we *live* in—to any other. He rejects the paradigm, introduced in Plato and Aristotle, that art, images, and appearances constitute the "illusory world" (2005, 171). The "fight against purpose in art" is therefore a fight against finding an "essence" which would subordinate the medium to the message: a "moralizing" tendency in and of itself (2005, 204). Affirming oneself as an aesthetic being affirms the reality of this world as *the* world.

When Nietzsche invokes masks and masking, as he frequently does, he often does so in irony—in a "playful" way—to indicate that there is no truer or deeper "essence" of subjectivity underneath the mask. Nietzsche's playful ways are developed into an ontology of play by Eugen Fink later on, who locates fashion as one if its primary sites (cf. Fink 1969). In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* Nietzsche writes that "the person of today couldn't wear a better mask… than that of your own face" (2006, 93). This is not to say that as a mask, the face indicates something like psychological interiority. Instead, the language of

masking is what permits Nietzsche to develop an ontology of self-creation or self-fashioning. Instead of a dyad between appearances and reality, reality *is* the world of appearances, and aesthetics is not to be subordinated to other philosophical endeavors (to ethics or epistemology for instance), but instead enjoys a primacy in Nietzsche's thought.

Husserl's injunction to "return to the things themselves" may be considered a robust refusal of the metaphysical subordination of appearances (and consequently, of *things*) outlined so far (2001, 168). And indeed, I find many resources for cultivating a philosophy of fashion in phenomenologists like Husserl, Fink, and Merleau-Ponty most especially (see Chapters IV and VI). For Husserl, intuition is an act of *perception*, understood as a bodily capacity, and not an act fulfilled with recourse to *a priori* knowledge or understanding (like it is for Plato and Aristotle). In other words, neither intuition nor perception are *ideal* acts or categories, but are only (and ever) fulfilled in and through worldly engagement; they do not "exist" in any metaphysical register without such a world. "Essences" are only present in eidetic intuition in their "corporeal identity," meaning, as Merleau-Ponty puts it later on, "we never have before us pure individuals, indivisible glaciers of beings, nor essences without place and without date" (1968, 115). I see in phenomenology a methodological refusal of the essence/appearance distinction which would discount appearances as unworthy of philosophical attention (or even trust), although there still remains a minimally dualistic structure in phenomenology between essences and appearances, albeit a less pernicious one.

Despite its reorientation to the sensible world, phenomenology has been critiqued *as* metaphysics. Jean Wahl, for instance, wrote that Husserl "separates essences from existence," and Jacques Derrida infamously labels Husserlian phenomenology as a

"metaphysics of presence" (Wahl 1942, n.p.; Derrida 2011). Briefly, Derrida's forceful and important critique of Husserlian phenomenology suggests that in prioritizing (sensible) presence, it also privileges an ultimate point of origin for existence which functionally produces age-old metaphysical dyads, like those between origin and accident, essence and appearance, speech and silence, and so on and so forth. In other words, the absolute assurance that there *is* being indicates to Derrida a privileging of being over non-being, and therefore, the continued maintenance of metaphysics instead of its overcoming.[7] However, there is a difference between an essence/appearance dyad in which appearances become either subordinated or naturalized to essences, and an essence/appearance dualism which functions to think critically about the nature of appearances. While Derrida's critique is certainly warranted against the early Husserl in particular, for whom the search for "essential" features of consciousness was central, I do not take the criticism to dampen the productive potential of phenomenological inquiry into fashion and clothing.

Husserl's early work, especially his elaboration of the method of the epoché as a suspension from the world of the natural attitude, and even his emphasis on the "silence of primary consciousness," all fuel Derrida's critique of phenomenology as metaphysical (cf. Derrida 2011). Husserl, especially in his later works, gets very little credit for developing a conception of essence as both bodily and as fundamentally historical (cf. 1970). In other words, the Husserlian conception of "essences" actually challenges the problematic paradigm of essences I have tracked throughout. In making essences fundamentally

[7] For Derrida, dualisms always produce hierarchies: dualisms are always dualisms of dominance and subordination. The production and reproduction of dualisms is for Derrida the fundamental "metaphysical gesture," and in phenomenology—in its search for the essential structural features of consciousness—he sees no exception (1998, 236). Derrida writes: "An opposition of metaphysical concepts (speech/writing, presence/absence, etc.) is never the face-to-face of two terms, but a hierarchy and an order of subordination" (1982, 195).

historical, Husserl elevates the quest to understand the world of appearances without also naturalizing or subordinating them.

Merleau-Ponty develops these aspects of Husserlian phenomenology more fully. His emphasis on the reversibility of visibility/invisibility, his concept of the world as *flesh,* of the *chiasmic* nature of perception, and so on, may all be read as attempts to deepen the anti-metaphysical thrust of phenomenology. The development of a non-dualistic ontology is not novel to Merleau-Ponty, and as I will show in Chapter VI, is both indebted to Husserl and is itself fruitful for developing a positive conception of dress and clothing that do not capitulate to the metaphysical subordination I track throughout the dissertation. In his introduction to the *Phenomenology of Perception,* Merleau-Ponty, coming to Husserl's defense, writes that "Husserl's essences are destined to bring back all the living relationships of experience, as the fisherman's net draws up from the depths of the ocean quivering fish and seaweed" (2012, lxxix). In "Eye and Mind," he writes that "the gradient [of perception] is a net we throw out to see, without knowing what we will haul back in it" (1964, 160). There is indeed a conception of "essence" in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty alike, but they are conceptions of essence which are non-ideal, and which do not fully submit to the metaphysical mismanagement that Derrida accuses.

Merleau-Ponty departs from Husserl in his much more robust development of a non-dualistic ontology, or ontological monism (2012). While essences are non-ideal in Husserl, the absolute primacy of transcendental consciousness is difficult to shirk, or to square with the idea that Husserl really is the anti-metaphysician he set out to be. Phenomenology is not free of metaphysics, but neither is it guilty of reproducing its most pernicious dualisms. Against the mimetic paradigm, Merleau-Ponty writes that "painting

celebrates no other enigma but that of visibility" (1964, 166). But it is not only phenomenology's attention to visibility that makes it a methodological ally for a project about fashion, but its reorientation to other sense modalities as constitutive of experience. In other words, it is not only the realm of the visual that constitutes appearances. Touch, the way one *feels* in particular clothing, for instance, informs perception, (including self-perception).

I take it as absolutely essential that we are not to mistake "progress" in metaphysical debates for progress in their real-life iterations. The "fashion police" have a strong normative force that should not be underestimated. It is not the case that just because Nietzsche proclaimed that "there is no 'being' behind the deed," and Butler—taking up Nietzsche's invitation—wrote that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender," that the (feminist) metaphysical issue is at all settled (Nietzsche 2006, 26; cf. Butler 1990, 34). So far, I have said very little about the specific ramifications of the metaphysical distinction I have been tracking for a conception of clothing. It is my view that the same suspicion, distrust, or worry about the world of appearances that has characterized so much of philosophy's history is indelibly tied to its subordination of the feminine, a subordination which is itself characterized by a "distrust" of feminine appearance, especially as manifest in clothing. I turn now to the feminization of fashion that has supported the subordination of appearances, or, as Karen Hanson puts it, a philosophical "hostility to fashionable dress" (cf. 1990, 107).

The Feminization of Fashion

Of all "appearances," fashion may be among the most distrusted. Karen Hanson has argued that both feminism and philosophy share an unexpected alliance in their mutual distrust of fashion: a mutual hostility to fashionable dress (1990, 107). An "anti-femininity" has gripped feminist philosophy, both implicitly and explicitly. Entire texts devoted to the subject of feminine subjectivity have little to say about clothing and its role in the construction of femininity (Brownmiller 1984; Hekman 2014). Many who have tackled the subject head on have dismissed fashion and dress on the grounds that femininity is a derivative or byproduct of masculinity, or that its constitution as a set of signifiers for oppression and subordination means that it cannot be reclaimed or resignified on its own terms (Bartky 1990; Jeffreys 2005). There are those whose rejection of the fem/masc-subordination/domination dyads have taken the form of *valorizing* and celebrating that which has historically been put down, subordinated, and dismissed (Irigaray 1985a, 1985b; Wolf 1990; Scott 2005; cf. Whitford 2014). This approach, characterized by Luce Irigaray and Linda Scott, constitutes what I have called *feminine* metaphysics: a metaphysics which, in its reversal of the binary, risks reproducing it. It also characterizes what Sandra Bartky criticizes as a liberal feminist approach which would seek in feminine clothing the power of individual choice in signifying or resignifying meaning and value.

The social constructivist approach to gender, taken up by many feminist philosophers, has not propelled a sympathetic treatment of femininity as a social construct (Bartky 1990). This is due at least in part to the fear of capitulating to the "eternal feminine," especially prevalent in the landmark work of Simone de Beauvoir (2010). The rejection of essentialism in feminist theory has often meant overlooking nuances and

complexities in certain strains of feminist thought, like that of Irigaray, who was at the least attempting to really think and thematize femininity (cf. Deutscher 2002; Grosz 2011; Chanter 1995; Salamon 2018b). Beauvoir's critique of femininity is motivated by the worry that "femininity" has become a code-name for—has become commensurate with—subordination. In becoming naturalized onto women in particular, femininity becomes a state of achievement (one becomes who one is as a woman by being feminine) disguising its true reality: a mechanism of enforced subordination. For Beauvoir, "femininity" is another word for "domination."

Anti-femininity is its own essentialism. I follow Julia Serrano when she writes that the "antifemininity tendency may represent the feminist movement's single greatest tactical error" (168). Serrano shows how the seeming incompatibility between feminism and femininity capitulates to a "sexist interpretation of femininity," understood as the function of sexism to subordinate femininity to masculinity. One way that this happens is through the interpretation of feminine self-presentation as existing solely to entice or attract men, and thus, an interpretation of femininity as a discourse of heterosexual normalization (cf. 2007, 172). Even when femme subjects do not dress with this expressed aim in mind, theorists like Sandra Bartky write that femininity nonetheless continues to work against them, or to perpetuate their own subordination (1990). Many feminist Foucauldians argue that femininity is a discursive exercise which functions to maintain the hegemony of a patriarchal order (cf. Bartky 1990; Jagose 2010; McRobbie 2015). For instance, McRobbie writes that "overly and demonstrably feminine" appearance in the workplace functions to appease women's desire to be sexually attractive to men without threatening men in presumably dominant positions on the corporate ladder. The discourse of femininity, then,

functions to appease women by giving them the option to "have it all," albeit, at their own expense.

Antifemininity maintains a "unilateral" view of femininity: the view that femininity cannot simply signify differently just because the expressed aim or intention of the individual femme or feminine subject differs from that of its public reception. For Serano, the unilateral view of femininity is equivocal to the myth of the eternal feminine. In other words, the view that femininity must be rejected on account of its function as a discourse of oppressive, heterosexual normalization ends up *reifying* femininity as a set of "eternal" signifiers. As Serano and many other scholars have attempted to show, the unilateral view of femininity is itself not only a historically and culturally specific one, but is white, middle-classed, and cis-sexed (cf. Gilman 2002; Skeggs 1997; Serano 2007; cf. Dahl 2010, 2012, 2019). While clothing is often treated as if it is inherently or naturally sexed—as if certain garments *naturally* correspond to differing bodies—many garments have undergone radical alterations and (gendered) determinations that challenge the view that the concern with aesthetic presentation somehow belongs to, or inheres in femininity. Femininity has not been given the same treatment as other "discourses." In failing to account for its historical specificity, to interrogate its constitution, to question its metaphysics, and to investigate its *possibilities*, the silence as well as the outright repudiation of femininity by (feminist) philosophers has perpetuated its status as a (seemingly) universal discourse or set of signifiers.

Contrary to the "myth of the eternal feminine," femininity as it has come to be known today (at least in the West) is itself largely the product of a specific historical event: the Great Masculine Renunciation. The Great Masculine Renunciation marks a symbolic

historical moment at the end of the 18th century, in England and France predominantly, when adornment, refinement, and ornamentation were renounced as central defining features of masculine dress, and relegated thereafter to the feminine (cf. Flügel 1930). Inspired by Enlightenment ideals and philosophy, men relinquished their claim to beauty in favor of a pursuit of reason, understood as its antithesis. Elevated social status was previously achieved by the prevalence of impractical clothing (and their signification of luxury). However, this shifted in alliance with the Enlightenment, as the (masculine) ideal of "utility" gradually came to replace the previous ideal of beauty (cf. Kremer 2020). A similar phenomenon seized the U.S., when Benjamin Franklin famously gave up his wig during the revolution (cf. Peiss 2011).

The "becoming" feminine of fashion is significant and reveals an important insight that my dissertation will take up: that the gendering (and subsequent maligning) of dress is a historically contingent fact and not an *ahistorical, a priori,* metaphysical truth. It is my view that the "feminization" of fashion, or the designation of clothing as a uniquely feminine concern, has perpetuated its erasure as a meritorious topic of philosophical concern. I understand "feminization" itself as roughly synonymous with the concern for, or love of the world of appearances so denigrated throughout the history of philosophy. I thereby take the "feminization" of fashion as an extension of the subordination of appearances to essences I have tracked throughout the introduction so far. Specifically, I understand the making-feminine, and the policing of femininity in particular, as a mode of maintaining the metaphysical dyad between essences and appearances, and of the subordination of the latter to the former in particular. Aesthetic presentation (and especially, perceived mis-representation) continue to perpetuate the "appearance-reality

contrast" between the biologically sexed body and one's gender presentation in particular: where the "reality" (one's sexed body) is taken to be the truth of one's gendered presentation. This metaphysical view, which subordinates the world of appearances for the world of essences, is also at the heart of the natural attitude about sex and gender, where gender is understood as an extension of one's biological sex.

I understand a hesitancy to take up fashion and clothing in feminist theory in terms of the distinction I made at the beginning between feminist and feminine metaphysics. For instance, feminist theorists have been and *ought* to be concerned with the reification of feminine qualities as natural or as *naturalized* onto feminine bodies, themselves often understood or read as cis-gendered bodies. The refusal of such a naturalization is a refusal of a femin-*ine* metaphysics which would only reify the "myth of the eternal feminine." A femin-*ist* metaphysics, however, should still *attend* to (the history of) femininity as a valuable source of insight for feminist projects. In *not* taking up fashion and clothing, appearances continue to be subordinated to essences in a number of ways significant for feminism. The abandoning of ornamental, bright, decorative clothing by men during the "Great Renunciation" has been linked to the influence of Enlightenment ideas and ideals, specifically, the rise of utility or function over beauty and the beautiful (cf. Bourke 1996, Flügel 1930, Kremer 2020). As Flügel put it, the phenomenon of renunciation refers to the time when men "abandoned their claim to be considered beautiful… [and] henceforth aimed at being only useful" (Flügel 1930, 111). On my view, the renunciation clearly indicates a case where metaphysical schemas influence social life. I will say more about the genesis and history of these ideals in Chapter II.

I turn now to another concrete example which illustrates how metaphysical

schemata influence experience. The natural attitude about sex and gender informs the "rhetoric of deception" prevalent in violence against transpersons understood as "liars" or "deceivers." This is the archetype of the trans person as the "deceptive transsexual" (cf. Serano 2007). While clothing is not taken up or thematized in Gayle Salamon's early work, it becomes vital in her more recent work on Latisha King, where she questions the vital role of gender norming in clothing as it played out in the death of Latisha King in 2008 (cf. 2018). On February 14, 2008, fourteen-year-old Brandon McIninerney shot and killed fifteen-year-old Latisha King during a shared class at E.O Green Junior High School in Oxnard, California. Having previously disclosed her affection for McIninerney, the shooting is considered to be motivated by McIninerney's own bias towards Latisha's gender identity.

Clothing plays a vital and under-theorized role in the production and enforcement of the disjunction between the body's "felt sense" and their "corporeal contours" (cf. Salamon 2010). At the time of the shooting, the Ventura County Star wrote that Latisha "dressed in feminine attire and told friends he was gay" (2018a, 27). Both Latisha's "telling" and her "dressing" function as two different modes of expression that "announce two different kinds of identification, the first of gender and the second of sexuality" (27). The rhetorical separation of Latisha's dual transgressions—her gender expression and her sexuality—enabled the media to erase her transness. As Salamon argues, the erasure was facilitated by the refusal of the media to conceptualize the interrelation between gender (dressing) and sexuality (telling). Latisha's case clearly illustrates to Salamon that non-normative gender expression is seen as provocative in a way that normative gender expression is not: that is, that non-normative gender expression *incites* or *provokes*

violence. Salamon writes: “in suggesting that Latisha’s gender expression provoked Brandon McInerney to violence, they [the legal team] suggested in essence that by expressing her gender identity, Latisha authored her own murder” (2018a, 30). Trans embodiment is not the only way that feminine forms of gender expression become understood as inherently violable, but it is one of the most socially and politically pressing, as trans women continue to be violated and murdered at an alarming rate (cf. Human Rights Campaign 2020).

In 2002, four men beat and killed Gwen Araujo in Newark, California. The men claimed that Araujo was to blame for her “sexual deception.” They are quoted as saying: “Sure we were angry. Obviously she led us on. No one knew she was a man” (Bettcher 2007, 44). Araujo was subject to “sex verification” understood as “identity enforcement”: Araujo’s identity was understood to be whatever was disclosed by her genitals, and not by her own identification as a trans woman. The mark of “deception,” somehow “confirmed” by the disjunction between genitalia and gender expression, both justifies the attribution of *blame* (the trans person is blamed for their deception), and thereby authorizes *retribution* (punishment for deceiving others). Even those who have undergone genital reconstruction surgery, Talia Mae Bettcher contends, have still been represented as deceivers (2007, 48). In cases like Araujo’s, dress is both that which facilitated her self-presentation, and that which instigated homicidal identity enforcement. Such enforcement capitulates to a metaphysics of sex discovery, where the sexed body is understood to be the essential reality underneath a dressed/gendered subject. As Salamon writes: "Conceiving of gender expression and sexual identity as fungible encourages people to look at gender expression as an act, and often as an aggressive act, akin to a sexual advance or even a sexual assault"

(2018, 30).

Even as early as 400 B.C.E, aesthetic presentation in dress was understood as an indicator of biological sex. Diogenes Laertius recounts an incident between a young man and Diogenes the Cynic as follows: "When he was asked something by an effeminately dressed young man, Diogenes refused to say anything to him unless he first pulled up his clothes to show whether he was a woman or a man" (cf. 2012, 172). In this incident, sex verification also occurs as identity enforcement, and feminization is perceived as a threat to "male" identity that warrants interrogation. Given the prevalence of pederasty, the threat that the young man presents to Diogenes is not the threat of homosexuality or of sexual identity. When a youth complains to Diogenes of the large numbers of men pestering him for his affection, Diogenes advises that the young man should stop dressing in a feminine manner (cf. 2012, 145). The threat, then, is that of femininity itself, understood both as inherently shameful and as an invitation for sexual advance. A third incident between Diogenes and an "effeminate" young man is recounted where Diogenes says: "'Aren't you ashamed,' he said, 'that you should have worse intentions for yourself than nature had? For nature made you a man, and yet here you are, forcing yourself to become a woman'" (144). In 1915, American philosopher Charlotte Perkins Gilman claimed that "[t]he mere insistence on a totally different costume for men and women is based on this idea—that we should never forget sex" (Gilman 2002, 10).

Dress is a significant way through which a binary sexual hierarchy is maintained when it is relies on a genital-centric conception of sex, of gender, and the "alignment" of the two in public presentation. As Susan Stryker observes, there is a very real difference between "passing" and not. She writes: "Being perceived or 'passed' as a gender-normative

cisgender person grants you a kind of access to the world that is often blocked by being perceived as trans or labeled as such" (2017, 8-9).Misaligning biological sex and self-presentation becomes tantamount to lying, and the implication of this is that "correctly aligned cases" offer a "disclosure of genital status on a regular basis through gender presentation" (Bettcher 2007, 52-3). Bettcher writes: "This is ironic, of course, since one of the main functions of attire is to conceal the sexed regions of the body. Yet insofar as gendered attire and gender presentation more generally indicate genital status, systematic symbolic genital disclosures are secured through the very items designed to conceal sexed body" (2007, 53). The naturalization of gender identity and gender expression alike onto a biologically sexed body produces a "shallow" conception of the identification of others—of identity—as little else then the expression of one's biological sex through genitalia.

Debates in the metaphysics of gender have not considered the role that fashion and dress have played in supporting the gender binary, the collapse of the sex-gender distinction, nor the metaphysical apparatus upholding them. The "metaphysics of gender" is a moniker for debates in gender essentialism more broadly, insofar as the concern for essences, as illustrated in the above section, has been metaphysicalized throughout philosophy's history (cf. Witt 1995, 2011). My project is not one in the metaphysics of gender, but in the metaphysics of clothing. While there are significant overlaps, the metaphysics of clothing is not reducible to the metaphysics of gender, although it is supported by many of the same beliefs: namely, the belief in a "metaphysics of substance," understood as a natural kind essentialism or as gender realism (Witt 1985, 2011). Taking a cue from the Aristotelean idea that essences are natural kinds, Charlotte Witt writes that "[t]hose who would advocate gender essentialism understood as kind essentialism mistake

what is social and variable for what is natural and fixed" (2011, 7-8). Certainly, clothing represents a serious and overlooked way in which gender essentialism, understood as masked sex essentialism, manifests. In other words, the belief that there are "correct" forms of clothing for "each" sex, evidenced by "boy" and "girl" clothing sections in stores, indicates an essentialism about gender presentation that doubles as an essentialism about sex.

Judith Butler's conception of performativity as a *style* of being that also *expresses* being has been central to the disruption of biologically-reductive gender essentialism of the kind that concerns Witt, and which has plagued the metaphysics of gender more broadly. Although Butler herself engages extensively with butch and femme subjects as subjects whose very embodiments of their gender dispels tropes about gender by subverting or denaturalizing them, she says very little about clothing itself. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler references drag in order to suggest that the donning of "differently" gendered garments functions to destabilize gender. The subversion of gender enacted by drag is not found in the "swapping" of gendered norms of dress, but in destabilizing the myth of gendered origins, including those of dress. In other words, it is not the case that feminine clothing belongs to heterosexual female-sexed bodies, and masculine dress to heterosexual male-sexed bodies. In *Gender Trouble* (1990) clothing is mentioned only once, in the context of the legal obligation of Herculine Barbin to dress in men's clothing (336). For Butler, this indicates the "juridical and regulatory pressures of the category of 'sex'" manifested in the imposition of "men's" clothing.

In *Bodies that Matter* (1995), Butler discusses drag performance, including drag clothing, stemming principally from an analysis of the film *Paris Is Burning* (1991), where

the use of clothing in the drag balls chronicled by the film is primarily understood as a mechanism for illustrating and destabilizing norms of gender, including its intersections with race and class. Contestants are judged based on their performative embodiment of different categories ("Ivy League student"; "butch queen"; the "executive"): all of which are judged based on the believability or "likeness" of the contestants' appearance. In other words, what determines the winner in each category is the respective contestants' ability to embody, reiterate, and impersonate the norms that govern each category (88). For Butler, the performances effect "realness," understood as the production of naturalization, or, the production of a *seeming* or *appearing* natural, where no "artifice" is detected: a "disjunction" between a contestant's appearance and the meaning (or essence) of that appearance. Butler writes: "Significantly, this is a performance that works, that effects realness, to the extent that it *cannot* be read. For 'reading' means taking someone down, exposing what fails to work at the level of appearance, insulting or deriding someone" (88).

Butler's thematization of gender as performativity—an appearance that is its own essence—enacted a metaphysical shake-up. Indebted both to Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics and to Merleau-Ponty's conception of *style* as a way of being that also expresses being, the novelty of Butler's position was in developing the critique of metaphysics as a critique of the metaphysics of sex and gender specifically. But subsequent discussions of gender as style have paid very little attention to clothing as a *site* of style which meaningfully informs gender. For instance, Ephraim das Janssen writes that while clothing is "frequently one very visible aspect" of gender expression, gender expression is "not simply about clothing" (2017, 59). And yet the fact that gender expression exceeds clothing should not mean that there are so few discussions of clothing as a meaningful site

of gender expression. In the case of Janssen, who takes up both Butler and phenomenology, the dismissal and elision of clothing from the conversation does more harm than good in perpetuating harmful tropes about femininity in particular. Throughout his text, Janssen writes that the "value of the feminine" cannot be proven within a framework that accepts its inferiority. Instead of challenging its inferiority, however, Janssen—following in the footsteps of Sandra Bartky—reaffirms the supposed inferiority of the feminine by not recuperating it for analysis.

Scholarship in what has come to be known in anthropology as "critical femininity studies" or "femme studies" aims to disrupt anti-femininity essentialism (Dahl 2019; cf. Walker 2012). The starting point for critical femininity studies is that it does not begin with the assumption that femininities are "primarily an effect or imposition of dominant men and masculinities" (Giunta 2020, 1). Since *femininity* is replaced with *femininities,* the same metaphysical hangups do not hold for the burgeoning anthropological sub-discipline as it does for philosophy. Ulrika Dahl's ethnographic work on femme subjects around the world disrupts the hegemonic narrative of femininity as a *trait* of cis-sexed, heterosexual women in particular (2010). Mishali argues that non-binary femme subjects in particular *destabilize* the connection (what I would thematize as a bias) that connects femininity with attraction to men (2014). The presumption that feminine subjects are both cis-gendered and heterosexual plagues feminist critiques of femininity (cf. Connell 1987; Bartky 1988, 1990). While scholars of critical femininity studies take their cue and inspiration from the work of Judith Butler, they depart from Butler in a few significant ways. Rather than primarily understanding (certain) femme embodiments as a subversion of heterosexualism and gendered norms, critical femininity studies, as I understand it, aims to *begin* with queer

femininity as an originary phenomena, not as "Other" to heterosexualized femininity and to masculinity.

I do not engage critical femininity/femme studies in any detail in the dissertation, nor do I begin with femininity as its own starting point. My goals are different. While I also adopt an anti-essentialism about clothing, I believe that the bias which pits fashion, ephemerality, and femininity against essence, truth, and philosophy, is one that can be corrected for with recourse to philosophy's own history. In this vein, I opt to use the "master's tools" to dismantle the master's house, or maybe just the master closet (cf. Lorde 1984). Philosophy is not hostile to fashion; canons of philosophical history have just made very little room for it. As I will endeavor to show throughout the dissertation, philosophers have had plenty to say about clothing and fashion, both implicitly and explicitly. In mining many of these resources and offering preliminary analyses of them, I endeavor to create a starting point, a capsule closet if you will, filled with the staples of fashion philosophy.

Outline of Chapters

The five major chapters of the dissertation can be divided into two thematic parts. Part I comprises Chapters II, III, and IV, and centers on the project of "recovery," or rather, the project of "raiding" philosophy's closet for new (old) tools to wield in the development of a philosophy of fashion. Part I deals most explicitly and directly with the history of philosophy. In Chapter II I argue that the Biblical or theological relationship between women and clothing cements the metaphysical distinction between essences and appearances that I take issue with throughout the dissertation: a distinction that I trace through Kant and then through Levinas. In Chapter III, I trace the role of clothing in the

development of the materialist philosophy of Diderot, Marx, and Benjamin: the recovery of which is vital for the project of *problematizing* an understanding of clothing as "superfluous" to meaningful philosophical analysis. Chapter IV, on Eugen Fink, is a fulcrum between the two major parts of the dissertation, insofar as I read Fink's major text on fashion, *Mode: Ein Verführerisches Spiel (Fashion: a Seductive Game)* (1969), both as a vital but neglected text in the history of philosophy, and as a meaningful application of (clothing) theory to contemporary life. Part II analyzes just some of the social and political implications of a metaphysical schema in which clothing is made to be "only" or "merely" about the world of appearances. Chapter V attends to one of the most insidious manifestations of the appearance/reality dyad I track throughout the project: its apparition in what I call the "coloniality of clothing." Chapter VI investigates the formative role of clothing in the constitution of subjectivity.

In Chapter II, "The Theology of Clothing," I begin—where else?—at the beginning (or at least *a* beginning). There, I trace the *origins* and the *genesis* of femininity-cum-superfluity as it is tied to clothing in order to support the larger claim of the dissertation that the identification of femininity with superfluity has an enduring normative force. I attend to Judeo-Christian theology in particular with a focus on the story of "Genesis" primarily because such theology undergirds the history of metaphysics so central to my project overall. Given that there is no distinction between sex and gender as it is conceived today in the Bible (and equally for Kant and Levinas, around whom my chapter is centered) I take the normative dimension of clothing in the Bible primarily to indicate a naturalization of clothing onto cishet subjects. In other words, clothing does not only differentiate men from women, but understands men and women as cishet subjects and further understands

clothing to signify these categories. For Kant and Levinas alike, clothing does not exist as a cultural invention but as a "natural fact" around which their accounts are informed. In this chapter, I will show that clothing plays a key role in both Kant and Levinas' accounts of women and of femininity alike. Specifically, I will show that an attention to the role of clothing in each thinker will illuminate their respective reliance on a naturalized account of feminine inferiority. In this chapter, I concentrate primarily on accounting for the genesis of what I will develop in Chapter V as the naturalization of clothing.

In Chapter III, "Fashion and Materialism," I consider the role of clothing and of fashion in the development of the thinking of three significant materialist philosophers: Diderot, Marx, and Benjamin. I show that fashion and clothing are not incidental or "superfluous" considerations, but central to the history of materialism I trace here. In doing so, I argue that these reflections are vital to the respective philosophies of each of the three thinkers. Similarly as is the case in Chapter II, the work of this chapter aims to account for the vital role of femininity and of clothing within the history of philosophy. In stark contrast with Kant and Levinas, clothing is unabashedly and admittedly central to the development of the history of ideas presented here in these three thinkers. In other words, it enjoys a relatively positive status and recognized role as a site of theoretical acumen and insight. That so little has been made up of the role of clothing and fashion in these three thinkers indicates, while not a bias of their own, a theoretical or disciplinary bias against the subjects as relevant, vital, and "serious" enough for philosophy.

In Chapter IV, "Eugen Fink: Phenomenologist of Fashion," I look to Eugen Fink as a phenomenological philosopher of fashion. There, I offer one of the first English-language commentaries on Eugen Fink's untranslated *Mode: Ein Verführerisches Spiel*

(Fashion: a Seductive Game) (1969). Although itself drawn on very little in philosophy, those who have drawn on the text have done so primarily to place Fink in a line of philosophers who write about Fashion and dress (cf. Marino 2017). I read the book both as an important contribution to Fink's philosophical oeuvre and as a novel contribution to the history of philosophy and to the history of phenomenology in particular. I will argue that the text develops Fink's ontology of play in addition to offering an early indication of a conception of phenomenology as a critical practice, or what has more recently come to be considered as critical phenomenology. Attending to Fink's phenomenology in connection to fashion will help to lay the groundwork for my last and final chapter, where I detail the possibilities of a phenomenological approach to fashion and clothing.

In Chapter V, "The Naturalization of Clothing," I attend to naturalization as it pertains to clothing. I understand naturalization to be a process whereby values and meanings become naturalized, or, made to seem and to appear *natural* understood as self-evident: embedded or embodied not only in or on individuals, but on groups and populations. I understand naturalization as a necessary byproduct of a metaphysics of essences or a substance metaphysics. Colonialism, and its related iterations in neocolonial "dress policing" (including the criminalization of clothing and veiling bans) all gain ground through the production of homogenous groups and populations for policing. What I will call the *coloniality of clothing* is a specific mechanism of clothing's naturalization which has served colonialism's ends, and which continues to wield power and dominance as a tool for neocolonialism. Naturalization is a continuously developing or ongoing historical process which not only *makes natural,* but functions by *continuing* to make natural in its reliance on sedimented meanings and values. In other words, while taken to be natural or

self-evident—as "always having been this way"—I posit that naturalization is an ongoing process which is sustained by continued instances of reproduction. What becomes "naturalized" onto clothing are specific values, and the naturalization of those values often serve sexist, racist, xenophobic ends.

In Chapter VI, "Recovering Our Clothes," I cultivate a conception of clothing as that which *personalizes* subjects, or which meaningfully informs subjectivity by drawing primarily on Iris Marion Young's essay, "On Women Recovering Our Clothes" (2005). Sandra Bartky argues that femininity is a "mere" style of the flesh which ultimately capitulates to inherently patriarchal standards of beauty. Against Bartky, Iris Marion Young argues that femininity and feminine subjectivity may be better explored and understood through "touch" rather than through the lens of the objectifying male gaze: the filter through which Bartky's conception of femininity is formed. Young advocates for the recuperation of "pleasure" in feminine clothing: a pleasure that is not, as Bartky worries, nothing other than the pleasure derived from pleasing or appeasing the male gaze, whether literal (as objectifying in time and space) or as internalized (as the subconscious adoption of normative ideals of feminine beauty). With recourse to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, I develop Young's discussion of touch as a feminist resource for femme and feminine subjects to re-cover their pleasure in their clothes in order to argue that her thematization of touch in the essay does not capitulate to a mere reversal of the vision/touch dyad, in which objectifying, masculinist vision is simply traded for a feminine sensibility of touch. Ultimately, my analysis situates lived experiences of clothing and femininity alike as meaningful and constitutive sites of subjectivity.

Conclusion

My dissertation constructs a history that has always existed, although it has been relegated to the proverbial back end of the closet. Researching this project has felt very much like rediscovering an old garment, which, in its rediscovery, becomes new or renewed. What I set out to do and what I did are two very different things, for in my research I discovered that the project was not to develop a philosophy of clothes, for it already existed. My task, instead, became to create something new from the scraps of philosophical fabric. Philosophers have had plenty to say about fashion and clothing; many of us just haven't listened. I have already suggested that this inattention has been a willful one, conditioned both by metaphysical bias and a long-standing history of a supposedly natural or essential feminine inferiority, both of which are inextricably bound up with clothing. In paying serious attention to clothing, the dissertation disrupts both biases.

> "The philosophy of clothes is the philosophy of human nature."
>
> — Gerardus Van Der Leeuw

II. THE THEOLOGY OF CLOTHING

Introduction

Biblical metaphors about clothing are not *only* metaphors: they indicate an entire metaphysics of clothing which has been supported by theology. To be "clothed by grace," for instance, signals that divinity may protect the spirit in at least an analogous way to the manner that clothes cover the body. Theological understandings of the world, including the natures of those who live in it, still endure. When gospel is understood as, well, *gospel,* then the task of historicization required by problematization stagnates. In other words, the hold of the "a priori" is especially strong when it comes to theology. For this reason, the dissertation formally begins by challenging some of the core metaphysical biases of "Genesis." Throughout the chapter, I will refer principally to theology instead of metaphysics in order to signal a particular metaphysics that is bound up in beginnings. I will trace the *origins* and the *genesis* of femininity-cum-superfluity as it is tied to clothing in order to support one of the larger claims of the dissertation that the identification of femininity with superfluity has an enduring normative force. The superfluous—meaning inessential or external to—takes shape in Kant and Levinas as the uncredited or discredited ground, or condition of possibility, for each of their respective accounts. I will show that the feminine (and her clothing) are ultimately subordinated and devalued in favor of "real" philosophy. It is not only that particular values and characteristics (unreasonableness and

shame, among others) become naturalized onto clothing, women, and femininity alike, but that the constitutive role of all three becomes decentralized: tossed away like unsalvageable garments. In showing the vital, constitutive role they play, I aim both to disrupt their naturalization and re-center or re-focus them as generative of foundational insights for both Kant and Levinas alike.

I attend to Judeo-Christian theology in particular with a focus on the story of "Genesis" primarily because such theology undergirds the history of metaphysics so central to my project overall. The Bible is especially rife with discussions of clothing, and such mentions primarily function to identify and to differentiate between the categories of man and woman. In Deuteronomy for instance, it is written that "woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man," and "neither shall a man put on a woman's garment" (Deuteronomy 22:5). Written as a commandment, the statement betrays a powerful belief in the function of clothing to indicate sex and gender alike. The dictum functions as a regulative normative ideal: so much so, in fact, that the transgression of clothing's norms (a woman dressing in a man's garment, for instance) is considered an "abomination" that will be "detested" by God (cf. New King James Bible 22:5, Standard Bible 22:5; New International Version Deuteronomy 22:5). Given that there is no distinction between sex and gender as it is conceived today in the Bible (and equally for Kant and Levinas, around whom my chapter is centered) I take the normative dimension of clothing in the Bible primarily to indicate a naturalization of clothing onto cis-gendered, heterosexual (cishet) subjects. In other words, clothing does not only differentiate men from women, but understands men and women as cishet subjects and further understands clothing to signify these categories.

For Kant and Levinas alike, clothing does not exist as a cultural invention but as a "natural fact" around which their accounts are informed. In this chapter, I will show that clothing plays a key role in both Kant and Levinas' accounts of women and of femininity alike. Specifically, I will show that an attention to the role of clothing in each thinker will illuminate their respective reliance on a naturalized account of feminine inferiority. In this chapter, I concentrate primarily on accounting for the genesis of what I will develop in Chapter V as the naturalization of clothing. To begin (Section I), I will briefly situate Kant within a broader framework of an inherited metaphysics subordinating appearances to essences. I argue that Kant's reading of Genesis in the "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History" (1786) naturalizes women and clothing as superfluous: to humankind and to the ascent of reason alike. However, their function as the condition of possibility for Kant's own system will show that they are anything but superfluous, but essential. In Section II, I will turn to Levinas as another prime example of the endurance of such a metaphysics in the history of philosophy. There, I will show that Levinas thematizes shame and femininity as co-constitutive of one another: both of which are indelibly tied to discourses of dress and of nudity which further reify a normative understanding of femininity as that which is regulated by modesty and shame. I suggest that modesty and shame are themselves regulated by norms of dress and clothing, and vice versa. In the final section (Section III), I turn to Irigaray's critique of Levinas and suggest specifically that her call to "dress differently" ought to be interpreted in the context of the inherited theological history outlined in the first two sections.

My analysis will ultimately suggest that both thinkers naturalize women and clothing as superfluous: for Kant, superfluous to humankind and to the ultimate ascent of

reason; and for Levinas, superfluous to ethics and to ethical consideration more broadly. I contend that an understanding of the naturalization of femininity within the history of philosophy can aid future feminist projects in accounting for the naturalization of: 1) feminine bodies as biologically female bodies, 2) female bodies as bodies that ought to be feminine bodies, and 3) feminine bodies as shameful bodies. Attention paid to the construction of femininity through the lens of the theology of clothing preliminarily challenges all three as "natural" facts, and further, proves that all three are anything but superfluous.

Kant's Conjectures

Kant's essay was written in the period between the first two critiques. In what follows, I will first briefly discuss the first two critiques in order to contextualize the "Conjectures" within Kant's corpus and his thinking more broadly. Kant's simultaneous concern for the possibilities of (human) reason and for a corresponding metaphysics in the first critique is extended to his extensive discussion and interpretation of "Genesis" in the "Conjectures." In the essay, reason itself is conceived of in terms of its "genesis," and in fact, Kant primarily reads "Genesis" as an account of reason's ascension or becoming. Just as humankind *becomes* itself through the Fall, so too does reason simultaneously come into its own. Adam indeed acts as a *template* for the conception of moral agency that Kant will go on to develop in much more detail in the second critique. More significantly however, as I will argue below, the "genesis" and ascension of reason is only made possible through Eve's covering-up of herself. I argue that the act naturalizes both shame and clothing onto a feminine body conceived as *un*-reasonable. It is against this foil of unreason that reason

(through Adam) is able to reach its own heights.

In the first critique, Kant's concern with metaphysics manifests as the concern for the possibilities of *a priori* knowledge, which Kant identifies with reason (1781/1999). The project of the first critique therefore considers the possibilities that human reason *has* or is capable of attaining *a priori* knowledge. Metaphysics, then, is primarily about reason for Kant: including the nature, scope, and limits of its domain. As "the inventory of all we possess through pure reason," metaphysics for Kant is more indicative of a *system* of human knowledge. Kant's thesis on transcendental idealism (the transcendental aesthetic) maintains that human beings only ever experience mere appearances, and not things as they are in themselves (1781/1999, 104). According to one dominant view of Kant's transcendental aesthetic (beginning with Christian Garve and J.G Feder's review published in 1782, known as the Göttingen Review), Kant essentially maintains the traditional "two-worlds" metaphysics which distinguishes between appearances and "objective" reality (cf. Garve 1782; see Sassen 2000; see also Strawson 1966, Aquila 1983, Guyer 1987, Van Cleve 1999, and Jankowiak 2017). This two-worlds or two-objects interpretation of Kant maintains the *reality* of things in themselves, despite the fact that they cannot be grasped by reason. The two-objects or two-worlds view eventually lost favor to what has come to be known as the two-*aspects* interpretation of the transcendental aesthetic: distinguishing not between two different, discrete kinds of worlds or realities, but instead between two sides or aspects of one and the same world.[8] Interpretations of this view vary widely as to whether or not it actually *commits* Kant to a metaphysics whereby the world remains only partially available to us. According to the two-aspects theory, appearances are at least a

[8] For more on this interpretation, see Bird 1962, Bird 2006; Prauss 1974; Langton 1998; Allison 2004; and Allais 2015.

part of their objects and not merely mental representations of them. To put the difference simply: the latter theory takes Kant's claim that human beings only ever experience *appearances* to mean that there *is* no other reality in which things "really" inhere, while the former does commit Kant to the view that there is in fact another, secondary reality.

The first critique is also a vital early work of Kant's burgeoning moral philosophy: especially so for my purpose here because it is there that he begins to develop his account of freedom as a necessary condition for and precursor of moral evaluation, including moral consciousness. As I will show in my reading of the "Conjectures" below, the development of reason is bound up in the "freedom" from sexual temptation that Adam feels once Eve is clothed. Moral rightness or wrongness may only be ascribed to someone who was *free* to do otherwise: that is, someone able to control their desires and actions. Kant's conception of the free moral agent who is able to direct and control their actions finds its model in the man controlling his sexual "impulses," thematized as sexual desires which are *literally* tempered by clothing.

Despite the live issue of *how many worlds* there really are for Kant in the first critique, the second critique maintains that explanations for actions and events—explanations which are themselves reliant on a conception of freedom—are unable to be derived from the world of appearances alone. This means that freedom is not actually "given" in experience, but arrived at through reason. In the second critique, Kant argues that the fledgling, free moral agent is subjected to—is *responsible* to—the categorical imperative. He also argues that the adherence to the categorical imperative does not actually inhibit freedom, meaning that ethical responsibility (duty) is compatible with freedom (1788, 5:29, 5:30, 5:39, 5:46, 5:48). The inhibition of acting on sexual desire,

tempered as it is through clothing, thereby indicates a metaphysical *step* in the reach toward reason. In the second critique, Kant writes that he is "gratified" by comparisons made between the second and first critique: that the comments "rightly occasion the expectation of being able some day to attain insight into the unity of the whole rational faculty" (2015, 74, 5:91). It is in this vein that I read and understand the "Conjectures" as a contribution to the development of Kant's critical project.

Between the first two Critiques Kant wrote what he called a "conjectural history" of the development of human freedom through a reading of "Genesis." "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History" (1786) is an account of man's ascent above animal society through a conjectural or speculative reading of "Genesis" that functionally carves up a division between the animal and the moral.[9] Despite Kant calling the essay a "work of

[9] After the publication of all three critiques, Christian garve went on to write "On Fashion" (1792) which was heavily influenced by his work on Kant. Garve's free market Enlightenment ideals informed his view that fashion was a key element in the formation of a liberal democracy. Advancing an early iteration of technological utopianism—echoed today in discourses surrounding climate change most particularly—Garve's 1792 piece "On Fashion" suggests that as consumer goods, changes in fashion design are indicative of advancements towards an ultimately perfectable human society. He defines imitation as a primary motivation for the spread of fashion, identifying the desire for uniformity as part and parcel of human nature. Fashion, then, is to be understood as a movement towards uniformity through imitation. The language of teleological perfectibility, of societal utopianism, preempts correlated assumptions about evolution and evolutionary theory developed by Darwin decades later. Garve's notion of a Spencerian form of social evolution indicates, more than anything, his own interpretation of Kant's teleology: that is, at least for my purpose here, Kant's emphasis on ultimate perfectibility. This is significant because Garve seems to modify Kant's notion of "inner" purposiveness by extending it beyond human consciousness and to a societal level. This renders fashion as a vehicle for a kind of evolutionary perfectibility. This understanding of fashion as ultimately teleological in nature works to render clothing itself as subordinate to its telos. This is not the same subordination that occurs when truth is located "beyond" the world of appearances, but bears an important structural similarity insofar as materiality becomes, yet again, a means to a higher-ordered end.

Garve identifies two types of laws: immutable moral laws and laws of fashion which are governable by change. As will become clearer later on, the distinction between fashion and morality can be traced back to Kant's carving up of a distinction between reason and morality on the one hand, and unreason and the feminine on th eother. In accord with this distinction, Garve writes: "we can explain fashion as the dominant opinion of the beautiful and proper at any time in small matters, matters which cannot be regulated with unanimity by the application of the rules of either taste or utility" (67). The essence of fashion is marked precisely by its mutability: a mutability which has a 'national' character, i.e. he believes that the essence of fashion is different in different 'nations'. He writes: "The mutability in everything concerning fashion arises from the drive for employment and the activity of the spirit, from the taste of the beautiful and the judgment of it, and finally from national industry. Because these factors are present among any people to a greater or lesser degree, this mutability will be greater or lesser in each nation" (68). Garve identifies the division of

fiction," scholars have rightly taken seriously the developmental account of human freedom that Kant offers here in this text. While scholars like Chakrabarty (2016) and Baumeister (2019) concentrate primarily on the human-animal distinction, my aim is to understand the function that clothing has in producing a gendered metaphysics of shame which precludes women from Kantian freedom. Following Moira Gatens (1991) and Cornelia Klinger (1997), reason and unreason function as one of many gendered Kantian binaries, taking its place among, most notably, the (gendered) Kantian distinction between the beautiful and the sublime (cf. Mann 2006). These pivotal feminist interpretations of Kant have shown that the binaries and dichotomies employed by Kant are neither sex-neutral nor gender-neutral. My analysis will show how shame becomes naturalized onto the feminine body: a feminine body constituted, in juxtaposition to Adam, as a site of *unreason,* or as the condition of possibility for Adam's reason and freedom alike. In his own little-known text on fashion and dress, Eugen Fink (1969) wrote that Kant saw in Eve's fig-leaf "the irritating effect of shame" (18). Perhaps it is because, as Silvan Tomkins wrote, shame is a key feature of intersubjective and thus of ethical life that "Genesis" includes an account of shame (1995).

For Kant, the introduction of the fig-leaf specifically catalyzes the movement from instinct to the first step of reason and is ultimately what inaugurates human freedom. He writes that the arousal of desire is itself a property of reason (224). Accordingly, the fig-leaf is "the product of a much stronger assertion of reason" (224). Elicited by the serpent's tempting, desire in this case corresponds to the desire for the forbidden fruit. Since desire indexes both will and want for Kant, it indicates that the faculty of reason is its underlying

labor and the proliferation of the bourgeois classes as that which marks the acceleration of this "essence" of mutability, though he does not pinpoint or criticize capitalism as such.

property or condition. It is Eve's dilemma of desire specifically that interests Kant. While giving in to bodily temptations usually marks what Kant calls "animal" or "non-human" instincts, the pause that Eve gives to her initial choice to pick the fruit indicates to Kant a newfound possibility to choose *against* instinct, unlike the animal. Kant interprets the eating of the forbidden fruit not as the mere giving in to (animal) temptation, but as that which for the first time indicates the possibility of choice, despite Eve's choice to indulge. It is precisely this newfound ability to choose one's own way of life which marks the human—now fully human—from the animal.

The discovery of choice is what Kant calls the first step of reason to becoming fully realized. The tasting of the apple signifies the discovery of man's ability to "choose his own way of life without being tied to any single one like the other animals" (224). Indeed, it is *man's* ability, and not woman's. The tasting of the apple is simultaneously a tasting of the first stage of freedom, juxtaposed to what Kant calls the state of servitude, understood as servitude or "animal"-like adherence to instinct (224). Eve's choice, then, can be understood as the choice between *reason* (man) and *un-reason* (animal). It is the dilemma itself, and not the outcome specifically, which functions to indicate to Kant the radically human possibility of choice. However, it is Eve's *actual* choice to eat the apple that places her squarely on the side of choosing un-reason. Although she is excluded from reason herself, Eve takes on the role of grounding reason's possibility.

Eve's un-choosing of reason is what results in the donning of the fig-leaf as first clothing. Since her choice marks both the advent of reason *and* the severance of the human from the animal, the fig-leaf becomes "the product of a great effort of reason itself," as Eugen Fink calls it, and the product of a wholly human reason (1969, 22). In other words,

clothing catalyzes reason *and* simultaneously marks the human *as human*, or more specifically, “reason” marks man as reasonable and woman as unreasonable. We cannot then say that the fig-leaf merely “covers” the human body, since it is what actually marks or makes the human by ultimately differentiating human beings from animal kind. This collapses (challenges) the essence/appearance dualism. For Kant, there is no human *before* the fig-leaf: the nakedness of Adam and Eve before the Fall indicates human-animals, and not the human as such.

The second step of reason involves its ability as a faculty to prolong sexual satiation, or acting on sexual desires (224). This happens (or rather, does not happen) through the development of the imagination, itself mediated by the function of clothing to conceal. The fig-leaf thereby becomes the first incentive for man’s development as a *moral* being, borne from his “sense of decency, his inclination to inspire respect in others by good manners (i.e. by concealing all that might invite contempt) as the proper foundation of all true sociability” (225). This is why Kant calls the donning of the fig-leaf an act “more important than the whole endless series of subsequent cultural developments” (225). It is the fig-leaf which ultimately makes man: not only by separating him from the animal, but by putting him squarely above them, and women (barely) above them. Rather than sexual desire and satiation being understood as periodic or episodic (Kant’s description of the animal’s sexual nature)—as happening during “mating seasons,” for instance—it now has a durational, temporal dimension. For Kant, the animal is that creature for whom sexual desire and stimuli occur transiently and periodically, while man is that creature who can choose to prolong satiety: sexual desire can be kept in wait, “chosen” not to be acted upon.

The imagination is best equipped to function the farther away the object of sexual

desire is from the senses. While imagination in the third Critique "plays very much the role of the woman as possessor of a beautiful understanding," and "is gendered feminine" (Mann 2006, 45), here in the Conjectures the imagination plays a constitutive role in its temptation of reason away from "animal nature." The withdrawal of the object of desire from the senses renders sexual inclinations and impulses "more intense and lasting" (224). For Kant, this withdrawal—from the senses to the imagination—is an exhibition of having rational control over the impulses. This control is itself thematized as the function of reason to control oneself from acting on one's sexual desires. This sense of control is praised by Kant as a significant development of reason, now able to plan and prepare for the future by tempering (man's) sexual appetite. This "remarkable" step of reason which is now able to express reference to time by planning for future events is itself conditioned upon the condition of a distinctly heterosexual feminine modesty to temper male sexual desire. This insight lends credence to the idea that male temperance—further, that men "not" assaulting or raping women—ought to be lauded as a kind of virtue in itself (cf. Aponte 2020).

And when they do, and even when they go so far as to kill the women whom they fantasize about—and here I have in mind the perpetrator of the March 2021 shootings of (predominantly) Asian women in Atlanta—their actions are treated by some as explainable on account of their sexual addiction. On his own admission to detectives, twenty-one-year-old Robert Aaron Long committed the murders in order to rid himself of "sexual temptation" (cf. Graham 2021). Based on Kant's account, if "reason" is associated with prohibition, then Long's decision to rid himself of the very temptation required by reason is itself a refusal of the dictum to be reasonable. Having been taught precisely that he should abstain from temptation, and that to give in is not only to act unreasonably but to disappoint

God, Long thought it better to eliminate the source of temptation than wrestle with his own views on women: to reason with himself. The promotion of the idea that men are less able to control their sexual urges than women are also promotes basic civility and respect for bodily autonomy as some kind of miraculous feat. Women, thereby charged with setting the sexual boundaries, become responsible for the promotion and provocation of sexual violence committed against them. Indeed, women's clothing—*"what was she wearing?"*—is frequently used to *justify* sexual violence (cf. Awasthi 2017; Burnett 2018).

J. David Velleman has suggested that sex becomes shameful with the introduction of privacy that corresponds with clothing. The reference to genitalia as "private parts" (*parties honteuses,* or shameful parts) most clearly seems to indicate the association of sexual organs with privacy (2001, 31). Velleman writes:

> The realization that they [Adam and Eve] were naked must have been the realization that they were unclothed, which would have required them to envision the possibility of clothing. Yet the mere idea of clothing would have no effect on Adam and Eve unless they also saw why clothing was necessary. And when they saw the necessity of clothing, they were seeing—what, exactly? There was no preexisting culture to disapprove of nakedness or to enforce norms of dress. What Genesis suggests is that the necessity of clothing was not a cultural invention but a natural fact, evident to the first people whose eyes were sufficiently open. (31)

The serpent's message to Eve—that she does not have to obey—indicates more than a shame brought about by her own disobedience, but introduces the very notion of sex itself as shameful. In the divine injunction to "be fruitful and multiply," sex between man and wife is not seen as shameful. It is only when the injunction is rejected, and thus made private through the donning of the fig-leaf, that it becomes shameful. Since it is "after sin that lust began," desire understood as lust is only made possible when the sexual body

becomes a private body (31). When Jesus beseeches his followers in Sermon on the Mount not to worry about clothing or what to wear, it is because its very concern points to sexual disobedience (cf. Matt VI). Lambden interprets Adam and Eve's covering-up of themselves after having disobeyed God to point to "the foolishness of humans thinking that they can cover their nakedness" (1992, 75). In other words, (human) clothing always points to the shameful folly of having fallen from divinity in the first place: the shame of being human.

It is ultimately in the subordination of the animal to the human that reason finally becomes "completed" for Kant. Man now realizes that "he is the true end of nature, and that nothing which lives on earth can compete with him in this respect" (225). This "enduring Kantian fable," as Chakrabarty puts it, strictly demarcates between our moral (human) and animal (biological) lives, which assumes that the animal dimension "would always be taken care of by the natural order of things," or that animal life can more or less be understood as corresponding to those beings who can take care of themselves, while we (humans) "struggl[e], consciously, in search of a collective moral life" (2016, 378). One of the most striking comments that Kant makes on the human-animal distinction in the "Conjectures" is as follows:

> When he first said to the sheep 'the fleece which you wear was given to you by nature not for your own use, but for mine' and took it from the sheep to wear it himself [III. 21], he became aware of a prerogative which, by his nature, he enjoyed over all the animals; and he now no longer regarded them as fellow creatures, but as means and instruments to be used at will for the attainment of whatever ends he pleased. (225)

Here we can clearly see that animality and clothing are just as co-implicated as the human is with the animal. As suggested earlier, it is both the wearing of clothing and the ascension

of man over animal that marks reason's development. Here in this passage we can see clearly how the two are materially related: clothing is that which comes from animals, and is that which man feels entitled to take.

"Conjectures" is not the only place where Kant writes of the relationship between clothing and animality. In a section entitled "On the Character of Humanity in General" in the Friedländer anthropology lecture (1775) Kant describes clothing as that which "represses" bodily fluids (2012, 213). In trying to imagine what "kind" of animal the human would be—what Kant calls "the naked state"—he determines that the human would be a "crude" and "very ugly" animal (ibid). There, he makes a distinction between a "savage state" (less-developed human) and a "naked state" (animal). The former is characterized by the human retaining his beard, while in the latter, the beard disappears. It is in the latter that "the fluids which are now repressed by the clothes, and cause the beard, might evaporate more, and [the human being] would then naturally also be otherwise altogether crude" (ibid.) The citation indicates that Kant conceives of hair as a kind of clothing in itself, which is produced in order to cover up what clothing does not otherwise adequately protect. Thus, the "naked state" (or the animal state) is that which has been unmediated or evolutionarily affected by clothing. This recalls Kant's analysis of human beings before the fall in the "Conjectures" (or better yet, as *prehuman*, as Fink puts it) as both animal-like and as un-clothed. The distinction between savage and naked, too, makes sense of the pre-fall Adam and Eve as more animal-like than "savage" like: more like animals than like "lesser" developed humans.

Kant's account of the development of reason in the "Conjectures' is an epigenetic one. Kant conceived of epigenesis as "the system of generic preformation, since the

productive power of the generating beings, and therefore the form of the species, was still preformed virtualiter in the intrinsic purposive predispositions imparted in the stock" (1790/1987, 309). Intrinsic purposivity is contrasted with a conception of evolution understood as non-virtual: that is to say, an account which involves actual material preformation. In evolution, "all relevant material pre-exists, and only its aggregation is shuffled, whereas in a product, altogether new things emerge, presumably by immanent processes" (Zammito 2003, 91). This epigenetic account is consistent with Kant's belief that reason has insight "only into what it itself produces according to its own design," or into the realm of appearances in accord with its principles (1999, 109). In other words, his account of reason is itself epigenetic. It is thus that the world becomes dependent on man in the most significant way. This core element of Kant's idealism follows smoothly from his "conjectural" account of the beginning of human history. Since to be of the world is precisely to designate man's "fall" into reason through his initial "temptation," the world is quite literally dependent on him since it was his (epigenetic) ascent into reason that inaugurated his worldly condition to begin with. In addition, it indicates that woman's "strong inborn feeling for all that is beautiful, elegant and decorated" can also be accounted for epigenetically as intrinsically purposive (1960, 81).

Through his developmental account of reason, Kant's reading of "Genesis" ultimately posits a conception of man as epigenetically progressive, and woman as the condition for the possibility of such progression. Since his epigenetic account relies on a biologized form of purposiveness, woman is both socially and biologically excluded from reason. In other words, it is not the case that Eve *could* have chosen differently. This means that the very "discovery of choice" Kant locates in the moment of decision as to whether

or not to heed temptation and to eat the forbidden fruit is itself an impossibility based on his own account. His conjectures, then, begin to sound less than conjectural—that is to say, like the work of fiction he claimed he was writing—and more like a significant development of an idealism predicated on a pernicious sexed and gendered bias.

My analysis has shown that Kant's reading of "Genesis" naturalizes women, the feminine, and clothing as necessary precursors: both to mankind and to the ultimate ascent of reason. Kant achieves this by creating a system of signification wherein all three are intimately linked, and where the presence of one functionally makes present the others. Conceived by Kant as "mere" conditions of possibility for the achievement of the ultimate philosophical endeavor (the emergence of reason), they are ultimately excluded from the domain of the properly philosophical: becoming, in their own way, superfluous for Kant, insofar as they are unnecessary for and unrelated to reason itself.

By analyzing the genesis of femininity with Kant's theology of clothing, rooted in sexism, I have laid the groundwork for challenging the ways that both clothing and femininity become essentialized and reproduced as instruments of shame and violence. I have also shown that femininity in Kant functions heteronormatively. The presumption of heteronormativity underlies many conceptions of the feminine through the history of philosophy, and continues to obscure the history of femme critique within queer studies, and critical femininity studies within anthropology (cf. Skeggs 2001; Dahl 2019). The future feminist task, then, is not as simple as disentangling "woman'" from the "feminine"—a project that Sandra Bartky declares as impossible—but to challenge the constitution of femininity itself as a homogenous phenomena. Reconstructing and disputing accounts like those of Kant, in which femininity is conceived of as "natural," is

one step in this direction.

Levinas, Shame, and the Feminine

For Levinas, Kantian idealism is unable to respond to ethics and so unable to arrive at ethics as first philosophy, which it is for Levinas (cf. Levinas 1969, 1998). As Paul Davies aptly puts the difference between the two thinkers: "There is no way of getting from the Kantian reflection on the subjectivity of space, and time, to a sense of the subject 'outside' ontology," that is, to ethics as first philosophy for Kant, which it is not (1998, 130). It is this specific concern for grounding ethics as first philosophy for Levinas that motivates his detailed reflections on ethical relations and shame, and which accounts for the prevalence of the related topics of clothing and femininity. In a framework in which ethical relations are primary, "Genesis" represents a fundamentally ethical text for Levinas simply by virtue of being a story about beginnings (cf. Cohen 1986, 30). The ethical imperative is therefore not a derivative one, which is to say, arrived at through a chain of ascendency as it is for Kant. Instead, the ethical relation exists at the outset, present in each and every encounter.

While my analysis of Kant in the preceding section concentrated primarily on the centrality of clothing and its role in the naturalization of women and femininity as constitutively inferior, my reading of Levinas will concentrate more squarely on the role of shame in the development and reinforcement of the feminine subject as a passive, superficial (secondary or derivative) subject. In this way, her very being is constituted by Levinas as superfluous, with little exception. Even though Eugen Fink later goes on to write that what Kant saw in the fig-leaf was "the irritating effect of shame," shame itself does not overtly factor into Kant's "Conjectures" (cf. Fink 1969). However, it becomes

absolutely central for Levinas. Levinas does not, however, thematize shame as happening the same way for differently situated persons (cf. Guenther 2011). In what follows, I will show that the unique shame of the feminine subject prevents her from undergoing the process of justification that produces ethical subjects and which constitutes ethical subjectivity for Levinas. Similarly as was the case for Kant, Levinas' conception of femininity is also bound up with shame and clothing. I will begin with a more generalized account of shame in Levinas before moving on to a discussion of "feminine shame" in particular.

For Kant and Levinas alike, shame is intimately bound up with freedom. Whereas for Kant, shame is produced *as* reason ascends—as both freedom and reason become fully realized—shame in Levinas' work functions as a *signal* or *cue* that one must *justify* their freedom. In other words, shame is actually what indicates that our freedom *has not been* justified, since it is in the experience of shame for Levinas that we recognize our failure to bear responsibility for the other, and as a result, realize our utmost responsibility to *become* responsible to others (1969, 83, 84, 86). The work of freedom's justification is done by the investment of freedom into ethical responsibility. This notion of "invested freedom" is, as Lisa Guenther puts it, "divested of its arbitrary spontaneity" by situating meaning "not in subjective affirmation," as Levinas reads Kant, but "in critical response to an interlocutor who is perpetually putting me in question" (Guenther 2011, 32). This means that freedom is invested as the possibility of giving (or bearing responsibility) to the other (1969, 84, 88).

Drawing on Eve Sedgwick, Guenther suggests that "we feel shame because others matter to us in ways that are constitutive of who we are" (2011, 25). While for Sedgwick,

shame is opposed to what she calls "interest" (understood as connection to others) Guenther argues that shame is instead an *intensification* of the intersubjective connection: "the point where the subject emerges as a radical being-for-Others" (25). The conception of shame that emerges from the intersubjective relationship is thereby a shame that comes *from* the other, which is why it is understood as the *reversal* of intentionality, which is necessarily outward-directed. For Levinas, shame is "something that is on you, coming from the outside" (Critchley 2015, 23). The condition of shame is elicited *from* the primary ethical relationship for which I am responsible which then forces me to justify (and invest, or re-invest, perpetually) my own freedom *into* the ethical relationship.

One of Levinas' most detailed and striking accounts of shame is found in his description of the phenomenon of nausea in *On Escape* (1982). He writes:

> It [nausea] is not only shameful because it threatens to offend social conventions. The social aspect of shame is fainter in nausea, and all the shameful manifestations of our body, then it is in any morally wrong act. The shameful manifestations of our bodies compromise us in a manner totally different than does the lie or dishonesty. The fault consists not in the lack of propriety but almost in the very fact of having a body, of being there. (67-8)

In this passage, shame is bound up with the riveting of one's body to one's self, or better yet with the lack of *distance* between shame (indexical to the body) and the self (or subjectivity). This is why nausea is a "fact of consciousness, which the I knows as one of its states" (68). In other words, nausea is an *embodied* experience (a "fact" of consciousness), and not merely indicative of the bodily aspect of a mind/body dualism. Shame as described the passage above has two distinct components: 1) the flouting of social conventions, and 2) the indexing of bodily existence. Both are generative sites of

shame, where generative indicates a becoming or a happening of an event of shame: the genesis of shame. As Levinas writes, the shame of nausea indicates the second component more so than it does the first.

For Levinas, the shame of having a body is less than the shame of any "morally wrong act." At least analogously to Kant, Levinas carves up a distinction between the bodily and the moral, where the bodily is clearly characterized as being of lesser significance. In another parallel to Kant, bodily shame functions as a catalyst to the understanding of the experience of shame in general. In other words, it is because I have felt bodily shame that I can experience a "higher" level shame: the shame of breaking the moral law. Again, however, as I will show in more detail later on, it is the function of the feminine (conceived in Levinas as the passive "beloved") to indicate to her male lover the possibility of an ethical ontology or an ontology of ethics.

Oddly enough, one of the ways that Levinas differentiates himself from Kant is by attending to bodily existence. Levinas' attention to what is present, his emphasis on the phenomenal world, is still somewhat Kantian in nature: his move from Being or ontology to the "there is" or to the "il y a" is Kantian insofar as it aims to take stock of what presents itself in experience. As Levinas writes here, shame is strongest when it indicates a "morally wrong act." However, it is not reserved as a phenomenon of the moral order (such as shame for having acted badly) or *only* a moral phenomenon (cf. 1982, 64). In extending shame to the bodily and to the social (indeed, to the intersubjective), shame may become a personal, social, and moral failure alike.

Levinas' account of "shameful nakedness" in *On Escape* further describes shame as indexed to "the very fact of having a body," as cited above (cf. 1982, 67-8). There,

Levinas writes that “shame arises each time we are unable to make others forget [*faire oublier*] our basic nudity” (64). Shame arises in this context because it is “related to everything we would like to hide and that we cannot bury or cover up” (64). Shame is then the manifestation of—and even the *acknowledgment* of—bare, (literal) stripped down existence, where bare is understood not as that which is unable to be hidden, but as the “sheer visibility [*patence*] of our being, of its ultimate intimacy” (64). In other words, to be rendered bare indicates a kind of failure of hiding the very fact that one has a body: not only or just from others, but from oneself, only to find that one cannot flee from either.

Here I am reminded of the seemingly perennial suggestion that public speaking nerves may be quelled by imagining the attendees as naked. Based on the analysis given, the function of this tactic would be to quell anxious or nervous energy with laughter garnered from the sight of the naked attendees. Such nakedness, however, indicates a social and moral failure that is laughable enough to warrant an investment in oneself as superior (as clothed). Such a sense of superiority, and of ensuing confidence, is literally buoyed by the clothed/unclothed dyad in which the unclothed are laughable by virtue of simply having bodies. Levinas describes this condition (the shame of being or even seeming naked) as the “unalterably binding presence of the I to itself [du moi à soi-même],” where one’s sense of oneself, or consciousness of one’s self, becomes inextricably bound up to one’s bodily self (64). In other words, one is not *free* in one’s consciousness to imagine oneself elsewhere or to distance oneself from one’s bodily reality. Heidegger writes in the *Zollikon Seminars* that one may “imagine” oneself at a train station despite not physically being there, and Sartre writes in *Being and Nothingness* that the prisoner in his cell is ultimately “free” (in his own consciousness) to react to his situation in a myriad of ways (1987, 86; 1956, 622).

Neither of these accounts account for the soi-même, where consciousness is not able to be separated from lived, physical reality.

This ultimate "visibility of our being" is oddly enough not actually correlated to the body without clothes for Levinas. Instead, such "visibility" of being is what is revealed *through* clothing. Levinas writes: "Poverty is not a vice, but it is shameful because, like the beggar's rags, it shows up the nakedness of an existence incapable of hiding itself. This preoccupation with dressing to hide ourselves concerns every manifestation of our lives, our acts, and our thoughts" (64). The beggar's rags "show" the poverty that cannot be hidden: ragged clothing reveals to ourselves and to others that "we cannot hide what we would like to hide" (64). As he writes very succinctly: "Being naked is not a question of wearing clothes" (65). This is resonant with Silvan Tomkins description of shame as a kind of "feeling naked" without being naked (cf. Tomkins 1995, 133). In other words, clothing is precisely what facilitates "shameful nakedness," since even the allusion to their absence may instigate the "binding" of the I to itself.

Shame both indexes the human condition (*makes* the human, as we saw with Kant above), and inaugurates the literally ungraceful descent into humanity (so much for being clothed by grace). The Fall, marked by the original event of feeling shame, is equally marked by the donning of the fig-leaf as a response to the experience of shame (cf. Critchley 2011). In Levinasian terms, this experience of shame can be understood as the experience of the soi-même, which Levinas defines as a being that is "expelled into itself outside of being," in "exile or refuse in itself" (1998, 105). This "self-same" self is contrasted with the "territorial expansion of self-consciousness" which moves outwards. It is, in other words, the reversal of intentionality (cf. Critchley 2015, 23). The decry "shame

on you!” illustrates this idea: shame exerts itself as a force coming from without, *on* to someone (cf. Crtichley, ibid.).

The experience of shame indicates a self who is already guilty, and always responsible: a self that has been, as Lisa Guenther puts it, “chased into myself and out of being” (2009, 178). This sense of self as a self that is expelled from itself (soi-même) invokes the originary expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden which marked their becoming-human. Expelled from the garden, Adam and Eve literally became who they are: riveted to their bodies, their shame, and their humanity alike. Paradoxically, the “expulsion” is conceived in Levinas as an inward movement: as the riveting of the soi-même described above. To be expelled from the self, then—just like Adam and Eve—is to be fatefully marked as human. Interestingly, both fates (that of Adam and Eve, and that of the soi-même) are marked by shame: shame at becoming human due to Eve’s folly in the former, and shame at the fact of not being able to rid myself of my body in the latter. As it is thematized in Levinas, I understand modesty, then, as a mechanism to keep shame at bay. In terms of clothing, modest dress “covers over” the naked body which may incite the experience of shame.

Bonnie Mann’s analysis of shame is significant for understanding the ways in which shame becomes constitutive of “woman” and of femininity alike (2018a, 2018b). Her view of shame as an internalized and inward-directed phenomenon indexing vulnerability and finitude complements my own reading of the “genesis” of shame in the Fall, where shame literally indicates the becoming-finite of humankind, as supported by Kant. Mann’s account is also compatible with the Levinasian account, for whom the directionality of shame is the same (shame is the “reversal” of an outward or spatially-

oriented consciousness). In the accounts of all three, shame is a (self) orientation towards limitation and thereby of finitude. In the accounts of shame in "Genesis" as well as in those that Mann critiques (Steinbock and Zahavi), shame is a transition towards something else: a lesser-than status in "Genesis" (man *falls* from Grace, into his humanity) and towards "moral" improvement in the latter (or "moral amelioration"). In the ameliorative account, shame is likened to a developmental stepping stone, where it becomes integral to the transition to "higher realms of human existence and moral standing" (Mann 2018b, 60). For women and for feminine subjects, however, shame denotes a "permanent and unremitting moral failure." Like Eve, then, women are precluded from ascension or transcendence.[10]

In *Difficult Freedom* (1963), Levinas describes a tension between "spontaneous life" and "the life of spirit" that parallels Mann's diagnosis of the masculine or patriarchal assumptions in ameliorative accounts of shame, and the foreclosed, feminine, or feminized nature of shame when understood as foreclosing the future. In the text, "spontaneous life" designates material goods (corn and flax are his examples) not interfered with by man, and the latter indicates their manufacture into commodities (32). It is this (literal) uprooting of life in the forms of corn and flax, work done by man, that is women's task to respond to:

[10] Mann critiques the ameliorative account of shame offered by both Steinbock (2014) and Zahavi (2014) as being unreflective of the normatively laden dimension of "life" of which shame functions as a modality. As that which (re)orients my self to my life and my own precarities and vulnerabilities, the ameliorative nature of shame in prominent accounts like those of Steinbock and Zahavi suggests that the receding to or falling back into one's vulnerable life is a temporary state of being rather than, as it is for many, a more stable and constituting state. For many, Mann presses, life is itself laden with a kind of *permanent* shame that cannot merely be shorn or taken off like a coat: not because living life (as a woman, as a feminine subject, etc.) is inherently shameful, but because shame is understood as a natural condition for certain subjects. Mann's feminist phenomenological intervention challenges the underlying assumption shared by Steinbock and Zahavi that shame is a ubiquitous moral emotion. But shame is not always or only a step towards moral progress or virtue. Mann shows instead how shame functions concretely as that which can both perpetuate power-laden tropes and stereotypes (the trope of the "blushing virgin," for instance) and *foreclose* futures rather than opening them in morally ameliorative ways. Moral amelioration does not justify shame nor does it account for its gendered constitution.

not only to "ground the corn and spin the flax" which man has gathered, but to return man to himself by dis-alienating him from the elements of nature which he has proven to have conquered through the acts of hunting and gathering. By making the corn into bread and the flax into clothing, woman functions to return man back to himself as non-alienated (33). For men, then, clothing is that which *returns* them to themselves in an event of self-coincidence unlike that of the soi-même described above, while women are considered as the literal means to the end of such affirmation. Clothing, then, is not a fundamental site of shame for men as it is for women. Indeed, clothing often becomes a site of shame for men, or at least a site of attempting shaming, when it is feminized (cf. Hill 2007).

The two components of shame outlined above (social-moral and bodily) are both fulfilled in Levinas' conception of femininity. It is only in its feminine form that the face "laughs under the cloak of its own expression . . . without leading to any specific meaning" (1969, 264). The cloaked feminine figure who laughs under the garment of her own expression invokes a characterization of the feminine as deceitful: that trickster who, were it not for her temptation in the garden, would not have catalyzed man's fall. Indeed, to draw on the account of Kant discussed earlier, there was a choice in the matter, although it is still Eve's fault in choosing poorly. I thereby understand Levinas as an inheritor of the theological conception of shame operative throughout the chapter: a conception of shame borne out in the temptation of Adam, and a shame that is both inherently sexual and one which is intimately tied to the shame of the feminine in her particularity.

What also appears in this passage is the dual delineation of the feminine figure and her garments alike as non-signifying. That is, both the (biological) female and the (socially-constructed) feminine are co-original for Levinas, and in fact, the two are not separable

(1990, 34). The inseparability of women and femininity means that "feminine" shame can be understood as a kind of shame experienced by women and on account of feminine presentation alike. Even though Levinas claims that "the whole body [...] can express as the face," the characterization of the face as *inverted* and *disfigured* in femininity begs a consideration of the relevance of such non-signifyingness for Levinas' conception of the feminine (1969, 262). Levinas writes that the face is exterior only in its morality: meaning that it constitutes an ethical response simply by virtue of its indicating an "other" to whom I am responsible. This is precisely why the dead face becomes a "mortuary mask" and no longer appears as a *face*, as our ethical relations and responsibilities to the dead may differ from those to the living. Irigaray's later call to "take off" the masks, as I will argue in the next section, ought to be read as a demand to rethink ethics beyond the harmful tropes of femininity and feminine clothing alike reinforced by both Kant and Levinas.

Levinas' discussion of "erotic nudity" in *Totality and Infinity* furthers implicates the feminine in familiar historical tropes of passivity and submission. Briefly, erotic nudity is conceived in Levinas as the (literal) "bare" encounter between a male lover and a female beloved. Levinas calls erotic nudity "lascivious" for invoking and revealing that sexual desire of the body which yet "signifies falsely" by renouncing expression and speech: by sinking into "the equivocation of silence," beyond "the decency of words" into the "absence of all seriousness" (1969, 263). Importantly, erotic nudity can never be overcome or surmounted (transcended) so as to attain grace, for erotic nudity is always, on my reading of Levinas, anchored in the event of original sin understood as the feminine condition from which the feminine is not considered to be able to escape. Levinas himself writes that "the mode in which erotic nudity is produced (is presented and is) delineates the original

phenomena of immodesty and profanation" (1969, 257). Original sin is also part of the "original phenomena," since, to draw on Velleman from earlier, the event literally *produced* (and continues to *re*-produce) not only a conception of sex itself as shameful (as private), but of a feminine figure who is quite literally responsible for covering up that shame.

The lack of reciprocity between male and female lovers is vital for Levinas' conception of the ethical relation, which *requires* alterity (or difference) in order to function. This is because, for Levinas: "ethics concerns the infinite and absolute Other" (Anderson 2019, 173). Drawing on Iris Marion Young, Ellie Anderson describes the relation between the (male and female) lovers as one of "asymmetrical reciprocity," where male is understood as "Same" and the feminine as "Other" (Anderson 2019; cf. Young 2007). As Anderson argues, the desire of the (male) lover for the other is best understood as a "metaphysical desire," oriented towards the infinite (the ethical), and such desire eclipses (or goes beyond) the (female) lover with whom he is amorously engaged. Indeed, such an "asymmetric" ethic is precisely disclosed through this example of the lovers' encounter, and through the erotic figure of the feminine in particular. As Anderson writes: "because Levinas takes the relation between masculine 'Same' and feminine 'Other' to be *exemplary* of ethical relations, problems that arise with his theory of eros are problems for his view more generally" (2019, 173). Underscored in Anderson's critique of Levinas is the idea that Levinas' conceptions of eros and ethics alike are predicated on an "indefensible" equation of femininity with otherness. Not only is the feminine confined to the historical tropes of passivity and submission for Levinas, but as I have suggested, she is riveted to her shame and precluded from ethics.

In Kant's account, Eve—her folly, her shame, and above all, her clothing—functions as nothing more than the means to the *end* of his own philosophical system. Similarly in Levinas, the feminine beloved becomes the condition of possibility for Levinas' own system, his ethical ontology. In Kant, I showed how the "othering" of the feminine also functioned as a necessary step or *movement* of male or masculine ascension or transcendence. Here in Levinas—whether she is spinning flax or in an asymmetric erotic encounter—her function is to elevate her counterpart: either by affirming him in his manhood or by serving as the means to the end of the ultimate realization of ethics as that which strives towards the infinite.

Dressing Differently

The conceptions of the feminine and of shameful femininity I have been describing throughout do not reference singular "events" of shame with clear temporal book-ends, but shame as a condition of particular lived, gendered, and dressed experiences. I have suggested that feminine dress in particular is meaningfully informed by the inheritance of a theologically-laden, gendered, and sexualized shame. In what follows, I will consider the gendered and sexualized dimensions of shame more explicitly than I have done so far in order to lay the foundation of Irigaray's critique of Levinas as one motivated by the role of sexualized, gendered shame in the production of a morally suspect or inferior feminine subject. The beginning of this section is therefore dedicated to a brief discussion of gendered shame and femininity. I invoke Sandra Bartky and Iris Marion Young in particular because their competing—indeed, their seemingly *incompatible*—conceptions of feminine subjectivity drive home the point that femininity must reckon with its inherited

history and corresponding theology of clothing. The second part of this final major section of the chapter considers Irigaray's call to "dress differently" as an explicit response to the seeming impasse of femininity as riveted to shame. In "The Fecundity of the Caress," Irigaray writes that lovers may "inhabit their world together and dress it differently" (1993, 207).

Gendered shame is not in itself a homogenous phenomenon (cf. Skeggs 1997; Felski 2000). For Sandra Bartky for instance, not only is shame *constitutive* of femininity, but femininity does not (and simply cannot) exist without shame (1990). For Bartky, this means that there is no way "through" femininity, and that the only way to disrupt the particular ways that gendered shame gains traction as a mechanism which dismisses, harasses, objectifies, and harms, is by ridding "woman" of the "feminine" altogether (1990). Drawing on Ann Hollander (1978), Iris Marion Young develops Bartky's analysis by suggesting that normative femininity continues to gain purchase in ways that reproduce gendered shame because of the ability of pictorial representations to "naturalize" feminine ideals by "freezing" them into images, such as those in art, advertising, and fashion editorials (2005, 64). As a result, women "seek to fashion ourselves in the mode of the dominant pictorial aesthetic" (Young 2005, 64; cf. Hollander 1978). For Bartky, "self-fashioning" is none other than a process of the internalization of normative patriarchal standards and ideals of beauty: what she refers to as the "fashion-beauty complex" (1990). However, since femininity on Bartky's view is nothing *other* than this process of internalization, there is no authentic or non-derivative manner by which one can inhabit, be, or become feminine. There is, then, no meaningful distinction for Bartky between femininity and normative femininity; femininity is always normative.

By contrast, Young offers an alternative to Bartky's position, and I will attend to her specific methodology in much more detail in Chapter VI. Briefly however, Young's analysis of clothing in "Women Recovering our Clothes" suggests that a serious attention paid to clothing as one aspect of feminine existence that challenges the staunch post-structuralist or discursive view of femininity like that of Bartky (2005). For Bartky, feminine clothing is simply (and only) a part of the fashion-beauty complex. While she agrees with Bartky that she may "seek to find the approval of the transcending male gaze" in clothing, Young argues that the reduction of clothing to this function would mean admitting that "there is no subjectivity that is not his, that there is no specifically female pleasure I take in clothes" (2005, 67). Reluctant to give up claims to a subjectivity meaningfully inflected by gender and by gendered experiences, Young suggests that the reduction of clothing to its role in reproducing women's oppression under patriarchal capitalism means giving a reductive and homogenized account of social relations within patriarchy and capitalism alike (67).

The reduction of femininity and feminine attire in particular to an instrument in the reproduction of oppression (women's oppression in particular) also dismisses the critical potential of clothing as the *site* of analysis for such oppression. The reduction forecloses analysis of the ways that femininity is itself a telling mode of visibility and of representation. Shame, for instance, is not bestowed democratically, and is itself implicated in the relative visibility or invisibility of particular bodies. Clothing informs a body's legibility as either visible or invisible, and clothing is a formative part of this complex system that cannot be reduced to its mere participation in the reproduction of women's oppression. As I will argue in Chapter VI, it is this *view* of femininity which in fact

produces and reproduces harm and oppression.

In terms of visibility, women's clothing may be *noticed* in ways that men's are not: soliciting comments, accusations, dog-whistles, etc. Mary Edwards argues that women's clothed bodies seem (or appear) *more visible* because their clothes are "taken to make visible something politically significant about them, in a way that men's are not" (2018, 572). "Seeming" more visible has to do with the differential ways in which shame is experienced. As Luna Dolezal puts it, men may often:

> . . . get to experience shame as a switch from (in)visibility to visibility . . . The situation is different for oppressed persons, who may only rarely experience the comfort of (in)visibility, and instead fluctuate between feeling painfully visible and feeling 'invisible,' that is, 'seen, but then seen through,' in the company of others.'" (Dolezal 2015, 88 in Edwards 2018, 571)

Sexualized shame in particular represents the discomfort (and often times, the danger) of forced visibility or of a *default* visibility. This kind of default visibility is exemplified by cat-calling understood as visible and audible sexualization. Edwards' analysis of the revival of the pantsuit in the 2016 U.S. Election cycle diagnoses the avoidance of sexualized shame as part of what accounts for the garment's continuing and enduring "feminist" success. Sexualized shame here indicates a metric of objectifying and sexualizing visibility as the default. The pantsuit may thereby be understood as a way of *shifting* the default mode of public apprehension from one of sexualization to one of (sexual) invisibility, where the objective is to facilitate de-sexualization for the sake of "being taken seriously." If the juxtaposition is between sexualization and seriousness—and sexualization is itself often equated with feminine attire in totem—then feminine attire becomes equivocated not only with an absence of seriousness, but with a shameful absence.

The idea that feminine subjects are "more visible" than others is echoed in Levinas. While both man and woman bear the burden of original sin for Levinas, it is only woman who bears (and wears) its weight: Levinas asks the beloved to "efface an original wound of which she would be the bearer" (Irigaray 1993, 201). This original wound is the "suffering of an open body that cannot be clothed with herself, within herself, unless the lover is united with her in the joy" (1993, 201). "Joy" here refers to the joy of transcendence, attained only in and through the production of the child. To reiterate from the previous section, such transcendence is for Levinas the pinnacle of an ethics which concerns the infinite, borne out in the literal reproduction—or in the infinite continuation of—familial lineage. For Kant, Eve is the clear bearer (and cause) of the event of original sin. On Irigaray's reading of Levinas, however, Eve is not heralded or championed as having made a great "sacrifice." Instead, she is charged with having made a fateful and shameful decision. For Irigaray, this interpretation of Eve, however, is not a natural fact but a hermeneutical difference between her reading and that of Levinas. On her reading, the hermeneutical shift from *shame* to *sacrifice* would necessarily mean that the burden of shame is not actually on woman to (continue to) bear. It would mean that "the threshold of the garden . . . remains open" (201). For Irigaray, Levinas' gaze is the same gaze through which Adam saw Eve: a gaze which is "still innocent of the limits set by reason" (201). It is a male gaze, informed by the unnatural divisions and hierarchies of Judeo-Christian theology, which burdens woman with shame. It is a gaze which fails to recognize the "face to face encounter of two naked lovers in a nudity that is more ancient than and foreign to sacrilege," an encounter that can be perceived otherwise than one of profanation (201). It is a male gaze informed by the *unnatural* divisions and hierarchies of Judeo-Christian

theology: divisions which also inform Kant's conception of reason's ascension as a "natural fact" supported by feminine folly.

A hermeneutics of feminine suspicion founds the male gaze while also informing the meaning(s) of nudity and of erotic encounters for Levinas. Irigaray critiques the Levinasian conception of profanation (the "immodest apparition" of "erotic nudity") by suggesting that there need not be an ongoing complicity between nudity, profanation, and the feminine. She calls instead for a nudity that is "more ancient than and foreign to sacrilege," a nudity not inflected by this theology of clothing, where "love does not yet know, or no longer knows, nudity as profane." Irigaray envisions, then, a nudity which is not shameful, and which does not rivet the feminine as its carrier. Recall from Section I the suggestion that Kant's account makes women and feminine subjects *responsible* for the temperance of male sexual desire. Irigaray would have us return to the time of pre-profanation: an erstwhile dream given the very real and distinctive ways in which gendered shame is continuously lived (201). Irigaray writes that "Modesty is not found on one side only. Responsibility for it should not belong to only one of the lovers. To make the beloved woman responsible for the secret of desire is to situate her also, and primarily in the place of the beloved man—in his own modesty and virginity, for which he won't take ethical responsibility" (205). Here, Irigaray invokes a conception of women as the "gatekeepers" of desire. Earlier, I showed how this idea also operates in Kant to make women responsible for the cultivation of reason in man. In this way, modesty functions to juxtapose woman to "reasonableness." For Levinas, modesty functions as a prohibition against shame: a shame in being nude, of *having* a body at all. But since it is only women who are responsible for such modesty, we again see a conception of modesty that functions to serve men's

cultivation as moral subjects. The injunction against shame is what preserves the difference (alterity) between the lovers, and it is this injunction that allows the male lover to act sexually: the act itself aimed at the production of the child. It is not that sex is inherently shameful for Levinas, but because woman keeps shame at bay in her modesty that the sex act can become at once an ethical act.

Irigaray is equally concerned about the harms of the Levinasian conception of the feminine for men. In making woman responsible for the prohibition of shame through modesty, men wholly deny or repress the "shameful" act of having a body. Disagreeing with the idea that naked bodies are inherently shameful, Irigaray suggests that "dressing differently" may return to man "a possible site of his identity" (207). I do not take Irigaray to necessarily mean adopting different forms of dress, but to be suggesting the adoption of a new hermeneutic, and consequently, a new modality of sexual ethics. In calling for a "creation of love that does not abandon respect for the ethical," Irigaray suggests that the ethical is to be found within the sexual union itself, where the equality of the pair is precisely what makes for an ethical encounter. Irigaray's ethics of equality does not necessitate the obliteration of difference or of alterity. Instead, the relation may still maintain heterogeneity while still commanding reciprocity. True reciprocity is *denied* in a Levinasian ethic of male or masculine activity and female or feminine passivity and modesty. "Porosity" is the name Irigaray gives to her new conception of sexual-ethical reciprocity. Porosity indicates a *movement* from self to other which maintains heterogeneity and mutual activity (or mutual activity) or even alternating activity and passivity, rather than a wholly asymmetric relation where such qualities (activity or passivity) are *fixed* or *naturalized* onto gendered subjects.

I read Irigaray's call to "dress differently," then, as a demand for ethical reciprocity that can only happen in the absence of sexualized, gendered shame. The ethical-sexual relation ought to preserve the quality of the encounter as heterogenous. The "profound intimacy" generated by such an encounter acts as a "protective veil" (191). A veil is not a cloak: a veil allows for a seeing-out and onto a world in which one moves and participates. Similarly, such an intimacy "turns itself into an aura" (or a veil) which both separates and protects. Rather than romanticizing the union as one of which obliterates difference, Irigaray argues that—much like a veil demarcates difference without removing the self from view (or hiding the self)—an intimacy of equality would preserve difference and yet allow for a "seeing-in." True intimacy then—from the Latin meaning *inmost*—allows for a "seeing" which does not shame or violate. This is not the "intimacy" that Levinas describes. As Irigaray writes:

> Spelled out in images and photographs, a face loses the mobility of its expressions, the perpetual unfolding and becoming of the living being. Gazing at the beloved, the lover reduces her to less than nothing if this gaze is seduced by an image, if her nudity, not perceived as endlessly pulsating, becomes the site of a disguise rather than of astonishment at something that moves, unceasingly and inwardly (1993, 192)

Fixed as an image, the beloved is neither a free agent or an equal sexual partner who may reciprocally engage with her partner. Here, I recall Young's claim that the fixation (or "freezing") of feminine ideals into images functions to naturalize harmful tropes about femininity and feminine subjects. Instead, Irigaray imagines a world where the lovers "meet as a world that each reassembles and both resemble. Inhabiting it and dressing it differently [*les amants s'abordent comme monde que chacun rassemble et auquel il*

ressemble. L'habitant et le revêtant différemment]" (207; 1984, 191). Here, *revêtir* indicates a dressing or a clothing which also indicates a facing, or an *opening* onto the possibility of an ethics of reciprocity. Such ethics calls for a gaze which no longer witnesses "profanation" or "shameful nudity," but sees an equal other who is not "fixed" or "frozen" in her modesty.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that both Kant and Levinas reproduce a theological conception of shame borne out in the temptation of Eve: a shame that is both inherently sexual in nature and one which is intimately tied to the shame of women and of femininity alike. My analysis of Kant shows that his reading of "Genesis" naturalizes women, the feminine, and clothing as superfluous both to mankind and to the ultimate ascent of reason: principally by creating a system of signification wherein all three are intimately linked, and where the presence of one functionally makes present the others. My reading of Levinas shows the endurance of a theological conception of femininity which regulates women, the feminine, and dress as ultimately inferior to their male or masculine counterparts. I have considered Irigaray's response to Levinas in "The Fecundity of the Caress" as indicating the productive philosophical work, as well as the work to be done, in critiquing a metaphysics of shame which continues to gain purchase from a particular theology of clothing.

Clothing is not devoid of metaphysics. My analysis throughout has suggested that it plays a vital role in separating out the superfluous from the reasonable and the ethical alike. The naturalization that I have thematized throughout (the naturalization of clothing

onto the feminine, of femininity onto women, of unreason onto feminine women, etc.) can itself be understood as a kind of theological process. In other words, it may be difficult to *think* women, clothing, and femininity otherwise when what is considered "natural" (i.e., that which has been naturalized) has the *feel* of an *a priori:* in this case, under the guise of a creation story. The theological entanglements of these concepts imbue them with a feeling or a sense of non-history, or as somehow being outside of place and of time. In accounting for the history of the production of shameful femininity and shameful dress alike, however, I am not suggesting that such significations ought to remain, or that we are indelibly tied to the origin stories which impact, inform, and shape our conceptions of who we are as clothed, gendered subjects. Indeed, the force of Irigaray's critique of Levinas suggests that such re-significations are both possible and necessary: that they can be reclothed. To say that a philosophy of clothes is also a philosophy of human nature—to draw on the chapter's epigraph by Dutch philosopher Gerardus Van Der Leeuw—is not to say that garments indicate something *inherent* about human nature. Instead, it is to say that the shifting significations of clothing also indicate corresponding shifts in conceptions about who we are, which means reckoning with the stories about where we come from.

III. FASHION AND (HISTORICAL) MATERIALISM

Introduction

Similarly as was the case in the preceding chapter on Kant and Levinas, the work of this chapter aims to account for the vital role of clothing within the history of philosophy. In stark contrast with Kant and Levinas, however, clothing is unabashedly and admittedly central to the development of the history of materialism presented here. In other words, it enjoys a relatively positive status and recognized role as a site of philosophical insight. This chapter considers the role of clothing and fashion in the development of the thought of three significant materialist philosophers: Diderot, Marx, and Benjamin. I show that fashion and clothing are not incidental or "superfluous" considerations, but central to the history of materialism I trace here. In doing so, I argue that these reflections are vital to the respective philosophies of each of the three thinkers. That so little has been made of the role of clothing and fashion in these three thinkers indicates—while perhaps not a bias of their own—a theoretical or disciplinary bias against the subject as relevant, vital, and "serious" enough for philosophy. In considering the "material" of clothing, materialism challenges the metaphysical dualism between essences and appearances. While new problems emerge as a result (namely, those of change and causality) my focus here is on recuperating materialism's insights into the relationship between fashion and philosophy in order to demonstrate the impact and importance of fashion on philosophy—of fashion *as* philosophy—when taken seriously, and not as "mere appearance."

What I offer in this chapter is both a historical and interpretive account of the role

of dress and clothing in three significant philosophers of materialism.[11] I follow Charles Wolfe in understanding the history of materialism to be relatively scattered and diachronous, save for the undergirding belief held by materialist philosophers that *either* everything is real, or that everything is at least the product of material processes (2015, 3). My aim is not to reconcile divergent materialist philosophies and philosophers, but to argue

[11] While I am motivated by the effort of feminist materialist philosophy to analyze oppression in material terms, no scholarship has seriously considered or analyzed fashion or dress. Feminist materialism has revitalized the turn (back) to concrete material conditions away from the "linguistic turn" (and social constructionism more broadly) which dominated much of the latter 20th century (cf. Landry and MacLean, 1993). As Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman describe it, the linguistic turn—motivated by very real feminist concerns of reductive essentialism—resulted in a concerted movement *away* from materiality, understood as a "tainted" or hopeless realm for feminist thought and scholarship (2008, 1). Even in her book on the subject of femininity (*The Feminine Subject*) Susan Hekman does not address the construction of feminine subjectivity in relationship to fashion or clothing (2014).

While feminist theory has no doubt been enriched by structuralist and deconstructionist insights, the postmodern account of the "real" as constituted primarily by structure and language—by discourse—has meant a foreclosing of the very "matter" of materiality. The tendency to subsume or to subordinate the material to the discursive has also meant that discourses tend to be "about" something rather than "of" something (Alaimo and Hekman 2008, 3). This does not mean that we merely ought to revert the binary, in what would surely be an endless tug-o-war between the material and the discursive, but should—to invoke Donna Haraway's formulation of the project of material feminism—interrogate the "material-discursive." Attending to the "material-discursive" means, as Alaimo and Hekman put it in *Material Feminisms,* practicing feminist philosophy as a method of paying attention to materiality, and not as a discipline of the "unconstrained play" of abstract theoretical exercises (2008, 6). The "material turn" is "a wave of feminist theory that is taking matter seriously" (6).

In developing critical conceptions of materiality as non-neutral—that is, in understanding the role that material conditions play in contributing to specific forms of oppression—feminist historical materialist philosophy aims to understand concrete histories of oppression (cf. Kuhn and Wolpe 1978; Vogel 1983, 1995; Delphy and Leonard 1980; Hennessy and Ingraham 1997; Gimenez 1998, 2000). For Martha Gimenez, a broad or general understanding of materiality is insufficient, for an ambiguous concept of materiality renders it as both "real" ("gender and race are as real as class") and as central, meaning that "ideologies are just as central or have as much 'material weight' as class" (2000, 20). The problem with this broad (or abstract) understanding of materialism for Gimenez is that it rests upon a "functional notion of causality according to which all institutions or elements of the social system mutually interact and affect each other, and none is 'more' causally efficacious than any others—that is, none can set parameters for the conditions of possibility and development of the others" (2000, 21). While a broad understanding of materialism may still invoke material conditions as relevant, a more focused definition for a feminist materialist framework would refer instead to the material conditions *of* the oppression of women (2000, 20). For Gimenez, feminist materialism must be capable of theorizing about social change. Gimenez is critical of Landry and McLean's account of feminist materialism in particular, guilty on Gimenez' view of not taking materialism seriously by concentrating squarely on the linguistic, or on a conception of materialism as a kind of critical reading practice (as deconstructive). While all forms of materialism emphasize the agentive capacity of matter—indeed, understood matter as a force of change and causality—different iterations emphasize different forms of "matter" as their locus of analysis. For example, while there is a tension in materialist feminism between the material and the linguistic, new materialist feminism (represented by Karen Barad, Donna Haraway, and Jane Bennett, among others) focus on a sharper attention to the "matter" of scientific inquiry in order to challenge (often anthropocentric) binaries, such as those between mind and matter.

that analyses of fashion and clothing have been central to the development of (historical) materialist thought. Retracing (or redressing) the role of dress in the history of materialism in particular is especially important, since it works to challenge the crude association of fashion with material-*ism* as the incessant desire for various objects of consumption, and to illuminate it instead as a vital theoretical linchpin of materialist accounts of alienation and of history in particular: central concepts which preoccupy the three figures I focus on throughout.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. In Section I, I develop Diderot's latent theory of alienation from his own biographical account of his scarlet dressing-gown in his 1769 essay, "Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre." In Section II I argue that Marx's development of historical materialism is meaningfully indebted to dress and its relationships to materialism and alienation as thematized by Diderot. Having argued for the place—indeed, the necessity—of dress in this history of historical materialism in Diderot and Marx, I am then equipped to explain the central role of fashion in Benjamin's reconception of historical materialism in Section III. What I intend to show throughout the chapter is not an unmistakable lineage between these three thinkers, but the simultaneous centrality and erasure of fashion from materialist philosophy broadly construed. Ultimately, the chapter is an effort to understand fashion and dress not only as concrete objects of material analysis, but as theoretical tools which promote and inspire conceptual analysis. As I will show in my analysis of Diderot, Marx, and Benjamin, garments are not mere objects upon which their respective ideas are cashed out or tested (they are not merely "examples"), but incentivize and motivate the theoretical work being done.

Diderot, the Dressing Gown, and Embodied Materialism

While alienation is theoretically central for Marx's early conception of historical materialism, its place in the French materialism of the 17th and 18th centuries is less widely discussed in the literature. Marx's account and critique of alienation is itself predicated on his critique of capitalism from which his own account of materialism develops (Marx 1844). While there is no explicit critique of capitalism in Diderot (eighteenth century France was not capitalist, but dominated by mercantilism and statism) there is a growing frustration evidenced in Diderot's writings at the growing gap between the poor and the wealthy, and the ensuing development of a conception of alienation that develops throughout his work which parallels or even preempts Marx's later account. Both Diderot and Marx offer accounts of alienation that develop from their reflections on existing and burgeoning relationships with/to material objects, and to objects of fashion in particular. I understand Diderot as a proto-dialectical materialist whose conception of alienation ultimately stems from his observations of the contradictions inherent within fashion: specifically, the contradiction between an epoch or era defined by opulence and lavishness, and the individual lived experiences of poverty and struggle he witnesses.

While historians of materialism generally find their most fruitful resources for thematizing Diderot's materialism in works such as *Le Rêve d'Alambert* (1830), *Le Neveu de Rameau* (1805), or even *Jacques le Fataliste* (1796), my analysis stems principally from Diderot's early essay, "Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre" (1767).[12] Briefly, I will discuss the more established account of alienation found in *Le Neveau de Rameau* before arguing that an equally rich account of alienation is also to be found in "Les regrets sur ma

[12] See Phoebe von Held (2007) for a sophisticated account of the concept of alienation in Diderot's work.

vieille robe de chambre." While there already exists a scholarly recognition of Diderot's "embodied materialism," there has yet to be any discussion of the role that dress plays in such embodiment, and in such materialism (cf. Wolfe 2016).

Although it was published in 1805, Diderot wrote the majority of *Le Neveu de Rameau* between 1761-1762 and made substantial revisions between 1773-1774. "Les Regrets" (1769) is situated between these two periods of writing. The 1805 novel is constructed as a dialogue between two figures: the philosopher (*Moi*) and the Nephew (*Lui*). As a performer, Lui comes to signify —through his dramatization—a myriad of caricaturized figures enigmatic of a "mimeticised society," to use Phoebe von Held's term to describe a society which is fundamentally alienated from itself (2007). Held's conception, embodied by *Lui,* recalls an understanding of mimesis as a fundamental alienation, or of the reproduction of images as fundamentally alienated from their original as discussed in Chapter I. *Lui* embodies and exemplifies this conception of mimesis by publicly arguing a*gainst* the merits of originality and truth with his interlocutor. An auto-alienation also takes place: *Lui* transitions, almost imperceptibly, from speaking of himself as an "I," and then as an "autre," or from soliloquy to story-telling (von Held 2007, 278). His "self-dividing" or auto-alienating tendencies are themselves derived from his wish to in fact *be* somebody else entirely. It is this desire which fundamentally constitutes *Lui'*s relation to reality as one which brushes up against the demands of social assimilation. In this novel then, Diderot is able to "readdre[ss] the issue of roleplay as a strategy of material survival and social assimilation in the context of an alienated social universe" (von Held 2007, 275). Alienation is not (only) an abstract theoretical concept, but is *lived* and embodied by the character *Lui* in Diderot's novel.

Diderot's description of his dressing gown—in his 1769 essay which I will turn my attention to now—amounts to an early account of alienation as it is experienced through the very embodiment (the actual wearing) of novel, material commodities. In the essay, Diderot both mourns the deterioration of his old dressing grown and expresses shock and disdain at his new one. The new robe replaces Diderot's well-worn, beloved evening robe and causes him a flurry of existential unease. The new garment symbolizes the "savages of luxury," and Diderot curses the one who "invented the art of giving a price to common cloth by tinting it scarlet."[13] I take Diderot to be referring here to the history of calico (a common fabric, cheap and versatile due to its unfinished nature) becoming calamande (a slightly more glossed and fine version). Initially developed as an alternative to earlier forms of calimanco and calico, the history of calamande is itself inseparable from the British colonization of India (cf. DePlessis 2009). The calamande variety boasted a glossed fabric and was produced predominantly in Flanders and Brabant. Given this history, the "inventor" Diderot chastises in the above citation is none other than industrialization itself, motored by the production of commodities requiring exploitation and colonization in order to materialize as, well, as material garments. The very color of the robe not only comes to symbolize power, wealth, and opulence, but these significations are *felt* by Diderot as the wearer, who is made to feel uneasy (1769, 14).

Diderot's yearning for his old robe signals more than a nostalgic desire for a particular object, but is itself indicative of an embodied sense of alienation from his garment. The replacement of the old garment with the new one ignites an *affective shift* in Diderot's comportment: a reaction to the concrete economic and political changes which

[13] In the original: "Maudit soit celui qui inventa l'arte de donner du prix à l'étoffe commun en la teignant en écarlate!", translation mine, 14.

facilitated the differences between the garments, in look, texture, and feel alike. Since Diderot understood and practiced materialism as a "working philosophy—" a "tool in the scientific investigation of the material universe"—I consider his descriptions of the scarlet robe as a resource or a "tool" in the investigation of the production of the garment as a commodity (Hill 1968, 90).

Diderot considered himself to be a disciple of the Cynic Diogenes. In linking himself to the Cynic heritage and describing himself as an heir of Diogenes, Diderot also points to a conception of fashion and dress as vital for social-political critique.[14] Often barefoot and dirty, Diogenes scandalized the public through his refusal to self-discipline, carried out through norms of dress and hygiene. In his refusal—which itself was a simultaneous refusal to feel shame—Diogenes was able to reflect back onto the public the very norms and systems of values that were structuring their existence. Diderot writes: "O Diogenes! How you would laugh if you saw your disciple beneath Aristipius' luxurious mantle! O Aristipius, this luxurious mantle was paid for by many low acts" (1). Between Aristipius (the notorious Hedonist) and Diogenes (the infamous Cynic) there could not exist a greater contrast. Here, Diderot mocks his own kinship with Aristipius that the fine new evening gown seemingly symbolizes. Unlike the teaching of Aristipius who, famously, was the first to charge students for philosophical education at the Academy, Diogenes' pedagogy took place in the classroom of the world, so to speak: in the public realm. It is central to Cynic philosophy more broadly that ideas are both produced and enacted in and through action alone, and not merely in theory. That is, Diogenes' cynicism performs political critique *through* embodied action.

[14] For a fuller account of Diderot's relationship to the cynical tradition, see Jean Starobinski 1984, "Diogène dans le *Neveu de Rameau*," Stanford French Review 8: 147-65.

It is this foundational element of Cynic philosophy (or perhaps, of Cynic politics) that Foucault, in his final lecture series (1983-1984) finds so promising about a return to the Cynics for a conception of truth. Foucault locates in Diogenes a rejection of a metaphysical (two-worlds) conception of truth in favor of what he describes as an *aesthetic* conception of truth: truth that itself manifests as *parrhēsia* or as truth-telling. Foucault clearly identifies the Cynics with *parrhēsia* (free and true speech) and as *parrhēsiasts*: those who "brin[g] into play the true discourse of what the Greeks called *ēthos*" (2011, 19). The *parrhesiast*, the truth-teller, does not tell the truth of the metaphysical *what is:* the "truth of being and the nature of things." Instead, Foucault writes: "The parrhesiast does not reveal what is to his interlocutor; he discloses or helps him to recognize what he is" (19). In other words, it is not *content* that is disclosed and exchanged, but the act of being accountable to oneself and the transformations that doing so effects. Being is thereby conceived as a kind of self-relation, or better, as a self-saying that is also fundamentally aesthetic. *Parrhēsia* is "telling the truth without hiding any part of it, without hiding it behind anything" (9-10). Foucault sees the commitment to truth-telling as a simultaneous commitment to the risk of undermining relationships (11). Again, Diogenes is a prime exemplar in this respect. As Foucault writes: "In a way, the parrhēsiast always risks undermining that relationship which is the condition of possibility of his discourse" (11).

Diogenes exemplifies to Foucault what it means to have an "aesthetics of existence," and dress is not incidental to this aesthetics for either Diogenes or Foucault. An aesthetics of existence includes "bearing witness to the truth by and in one's body, dress, mode of comportment, way of acting, reacting, and conducting oneself" (173). In Cynicism, we become acquainted with a way of seeing that is bound up with a way of

being: to say that there is "truth" to being is just to say that there is a truth to seeing, and that seeing can reveal something about what conditions its own possibilities, and ultimately, its own contingencies. The aesthetic dimension of Cynicism may best be summed up in the dictum to "practice what you preach," and clothing is an integral part of this practice. Nicholas Pappas describes Cynic fashion as the "display of withdrawal" (2016, 211). The "well-draped gentlemanly" cloaks of the Platonic dialogues finds its counter in the Cynics, whose "rags" evoke the description of poverty by Levinas cited in the previous chapter. Recall that Levinas described poverty as shameful because "like the beggar's rags, it shows up the nakedness of an existence incapable of hiding itself. This preoccupation with dressing to hide ourselves concerns every manifestation of our lives, our acts, and our thoughts" (64). Cynic fashion is not shameful, or rather, Cynics were not *ashamed* of their rags like Levinas' beggar. Rather than inciting shame, Cynic dress functioned as a political statement: as *parrhēsia*.

Diogenes is the ultimate resistance to a Platonic idealism which ultimately foregoes the materiality of the body for the forms (cf. Plato 2001). Plato's famous description of the human being as a featherless biped is rejected by Diogenes, who allegedly tore the feathers from a rooster and brought it into Plato's academy, proclaiming: "Here is Plato's human" (cf. *Diogenes Laertius* vol. VI, 40). Diogenes' human is clothed, and the fact of that clothing is significant for the way Diogenes *lives* his philosophy. Diderot's clear alliance with Diogenes indicates that his clothing, too, is to be taken seriously as an element of his thinking.

In another passage in the essay, Diderot describes a peasant woman and highlights the contrast between the image of the woman on one hand, and an ensemble on the other.

Consider the passage below:

> I can bear the sight of a peasant woman without disgust. That piece of crude cloth that covers her head; that sparse hair fallen on her cheeks; these worn rags that only half cover her; that poor petticoat that only covers half of her legs; these naked, muddy feet cannot hurt me. It is the image of a state I respect. It is the ensemble of the disgraces of a necessary and unhappy condition which I pity. But my heart rises; and, despite the redolent air that follows her, I distance myself, I turn my gaze from this courtesan whose English-style hair and torn cuffs, the white stockings and the worn shoe show me the misery of the day associated with the opulence of the age.[15]

It is not the woman's garments which are either pitiful or disgraceful for Diderot. The garments themselves do not mark an inferior status or elicit shame, but signal the failings of a system which "necessarily" produces poverty and keeps the poor in their place. "Necessary" then refers to the fact of limited social mobilization, and not to an ultimately necessary state wherein some are poor and others are not. It is not the woman who is the site or source of Diderot's criticism, but the system which has allowed for such poverty in the first place.

I do not read "ensemble" to be referring to the garments themselves (or only to the garments), but to the social, historical conditions which produce them and which give them their meaning. To say that the woman's "necessary and unhappy condition" is something of an *ensemble* indicates the seemingly determinate place she holds within the economic system: that it is held together (ensemble) by both "misery" and "opulence." Whereas the

[15] The original passage is as follows: "Je puis supporter sans dégoût la vue d'une paysanne. Ce morceau de toile grossière qui couvre sa tête; cette chevelure qui tombe éparse sur ses joues; ces haillons troués qui la vêtissent à demi; ce mauvais cotillon qui ne descend qu'à la moitié de ses jambes; ces pieds nus et couverts de fange ne peuvent me blesser. C'est l'image d'un état que je respecte. C'est l'ensemble des disgrâces d'une condition nécessaire et malheureuse que je plains. Mais mon coeur se soulève; et, malgré l'atmosphère parfumée qui la suit, j'éloigne mes pas, je détourne mes regards de cette courtisane dont la coiffure à points d'Angleterre et les manchettes déchirées, les bas blancs et la chaussure usée me montrent la misère du jour associée à l'opulence de la veille."

function of an image is primarily representative, “ensemble” goes beyond the image: it is, perhaps, a “working” image, to draw on my earlier invocation of Diderot’s conception of materialism as a “working” or “embodied” philosophy. Well before Barthes’ analysis of fashion as a system of signs, Diderot conceives of clothing as a part of an *ensemble,* that is, as part of a constellation of signs. Diderot understands clothing as more than a collection of garments and accessories (another definition of *ensemble*), but as signs that bear insight into “the age.”

Just as it was only through the transgression of norms of dress, cleanliness, and public comportment that Diogenes scandalized the Athenian public, perceived differences in dress function for Diderot as a catalyst for critique: specifically, a critique of the contradiction between an epoch defined by opulence and lavishness, and the individual lived experiences of poverty and struggle.[16] These contradictory elements are those of the opulence displayed by the quality of the dress and their eventual wear. This suggests a fundamental contradiction between the demand for newness (and hence, for production itself) and the eventuality of destruction or wear through consumption which in turn stimulates more production. It is precisely this formulation which Marx draws on in his own conception of the dialectic of production and consumption, detailed in the following section. After describing the scene of the peasant woman, Diderot goes on to proclaim that this fate would have been his lot had it not been for the “imperious” scarlet robe (16). Here,

[16] Eighteenth century France was not capitalistic; it was an age where mercantilism and statism dominated (cf. Schaeper 1980). Textile production was one of the most dominant industries at the time, owed in large part to the invention of the flying shuttle by John Kay, patented in 1733 (cf. 1871). Kay’s invention revolutionized textile production by mechanizing weaving and decreasing the number of weavers required per person from four to one, all while dramatically *increasing* injuries sustained to workers (cf. 1993; 1901). Kay moved from England to France in an attempt to rent his looms there. While Diderot does not speak directly of Kay’s invention, an image of it appears in Diderot and d’Alambert’s *Encyclopédie.* Many weavers, fearful of losing their jobs, destroyed the machines. Kay himself barely escaped when angry weavers stormed his house in 1753 (1993, 148-9).

I take Diderot to mean that the new robe, understood as one without tears or other signs of wear, prevented him from displaying the very contradictory elements shown to be at work in considering the torn cuffs and worn shoe of the peasant woman against the opulence and wealth Diderot witnessed.

Diderot's analysis of the peasant woman and his dynamic conception of "ensemble" in particular is aligned with his materialist philosophy more generally. Diderot puts forward a conception of materialism in which substance itself changes both through time and through history.[17] This conception of substance as dynamic allows Diderot to think about the relationship between matter and history while avoiding the pitfall of causality between thought and matter. Briefly, if everything is understood as matter, then thinking would also need to be understood as something like matter acting on matter.[18] But if matter is instead understood as having an inertial force of its own—a force which causes itself to happen and to change—then it must also be the case that this process is very much unlike the process of "thinking" as human persons conceive of the term: that is, as a mental process ultimately related to but disconnected from the body.[19]

Diderot's conception of matter as active was itself a response to D'Alambert's criticisms of Cartesian-Malebranchian notions of matter as inert and mechanistic (Wolfe 2016, 11). In other words, Diderot's conception of matter is a response to the "split"

[17] This suggestion is consistent with Leibniz' own rejection of intersubstantial causality (cf. 1720).

[18] This assessment of the materialist as a causalist produced a caricatured archetype of the early modern materialist (cf. D'Alambert 1757; Wolfe 2015).

[19] The materialists that d'Alambert is critiquing here are those who ascribe thinking to bodily matter without also being able to give a satisfactory account of how the two separate substances interact with one another, let alone an account of how *one* substance could causally effect and change a substance completely other than itself. These "bad" materialists, as the Cambridge Platonist Henry More calls them (1668), defend a staunch form of mechanism which reduces everything to matter. However, even "good" materialists on this view also defend a form of mechanism, without, however, the ultimate reduction to matter (cf. More 1668; Wolfe 2016, 2). A classic form of "bad" materialism, can readily be found in the work of Carl Vogt (cf. 1847).

between mind (active) and matter (inert). The substance dualism of mind and matter in Descartes is called into question when the nature of the "I" is thought of as the designation of function, and not as a substance in itself.[20] Diderot's conception of matter supposes a dis-identity of substance with and within itself, meaning that substance is both always one, and yet is always changing: it is both continuous and discontinuous with itself. Indeed, Engels acknowledges that Diderot's materialism is dialectical in this way, writing that Diderot produced "masterpieces of dialectic" (1908, 77).

Diderot's conception of the self develops from his conception of matter, rendering his materialism an "embodied materialism." In other words, the self is not pitted against the body, as in mind versus matter. Instead, both Diderot's conceptions of the self and of matter are conceived as continuous and as discontinuous. For Diderot, a conception of matter as active does not mean a conception of matter as causal, but one which "incorporates progressively more properties, from motion to thought, chemical dynamism, sensitivity and life" (Wolfe 2015, 3).[21] Not only is it the case that the body is not "separate" from the world (Diderot rejects the mind/matter distinction of Descartes), but "mind" and "body" (or matter) are correlates rather than separate substances. "Embodied materialism" is another way of saying "materialist theory of the self" or of subjectivity. Both are *of* the world in a phenomenological register. This means that the "mind" is not that of the solipsist: it is not separate from the world, unable to grasp it: it is informed by it. Concretely

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[20] This early, 'organismic' theory of personhood prefigures Whitehead (cf. Alexander 1953) as well as contemporary feminist materialisms (cf. Grosz 2004; Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; Braidotti 2013).

[21] This active quality of Diderot's materialism begins to account for the inter-relational or ethical dimension to his materialist philosophy, itself indebted to Spinoza. I do not here make any claims that suggest that Spinoza was himself a materialist, as some do (cf. Moreau 2000; Korichi 2000) but emphasize the inheritance of a rather social conception of self which lends itself to Diderot's materialist theory of self. Regardless of his status as a materialist, Spinoza was indeed dialectical (cf. Illyenkov 1977). That is, there is a relational ontology present in both Spinoza and Diderot (cf. Spinoza Ethics II; Morfino 2006; Wolfe 2016).

and for my purpose here, this means that Diderot's observations are not that of an onlooker who is "puzzled" by his robe as an object wholly foreign and strange. Neither does he consider it an object of mere curiosity or passive interest. Instead, his reactions indicate the seriousness with which its changing matter indicates something salient about its own signification.

"Les regrets" was not a side project to Diderot's more serious materialist philosophy, although it has been treated as such. That is, although the majority of scholarship has focused on Diderot's naturalist materialism (including his views on epigenetic development, on evolution, etc.) I have read "Les regrets" as a vital work of materialist philosophy (cf. Yolton 1983; Thomson 2001; Wolfe 2014, 2015, 2016). Even Engels, whose experience with and in textile mills informs his work with Marx, praises "Le Neveu de Rameau" and other texts by Diderot without mentioning "Les regrets." "Les regrets" shows materialism as an embodied *working-through* of the shifting and changing significations of matter, down to the very clothes we wear. In other words, materialism is not only a philosophical or theoretical enterprise about the nature of matter, but comprises the embodied experiences (of, with, and *as* matter) which alert us to the ways in which social forces influence and inflect those experiences.

Marx, Fashion, and Dialectics

While Diderot considered himself to be a discipline of Diogenes, Marx was indebted to Diderot. Marx's fondness for Diderot is well-known: indeed, he names him publicly as his favorite writer in a questionnaire published in *Confessions* (1865). Although the two thinkers are both understood to be central and defining figures in the history of materialism,

the philosophical influence of Diderot's materialism on Marx's own conception of materialism has been poorly traced, despite the recognized influence and impact of French materialism on German materialism more broadly (cf. Hegel 1991, I; Marx & Engels 1845, VI 3).[22] Marx wrote that Diderot added "wit, flesh, blood, and eloquence" to materialist philosophy: an addition that is not to be taken lightly (1845). Marx also takes from Diderot a particular sensibility towards and about materialism. Diderot's materialism is, as Isabelle Stengers puts it, one that centralizes wonder as an affective stance towards matter: to give matter the "power to challenge" well-defined categories (Stengers 2007, 10). It is this affective sensibility toward matter and attunement to the embodied nature of matter that Marx inherits from Diderot. Ultimately, I will argue in this section that fashion exists not as a mere anecdotal example or as metaphor in Marx, but is itself central to his formulation of the dialectic of production and consumption.

The young Marx was forthcoming in his praise of Hegel for conceptualizing alienation as one of the most instrumental and structuring forces of production (Marx 1975; cf. Sayers 2011). Both Hegel and Marx are indebted to the title-character of Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* for showing them how alienation functions within the self (cf. Easton 1961; von Held 2007). For Hegel, Spirit develops precisely through the concrete and actual movement of alienation (1807). This means that wealth or state-power, for instance, should not to be understood as external conditions that are merely encountered, but as conditions which are themselves concretely revealed through the self, much like the insights that were prompted by Diderot's reflections on the sight of the peasant woman. For Hegel, alienation is not itself an external force but is that which both comes to be and functions *through* a

[22] One such explanation might lie in the characterization (and perhaps stereotype) of early modern materialism(s) as both causal and explanatory in nature, as briefly discussed in the preceding section.

subject as subjective alienation (Hegel 1991, 4A, 187A, 258A; cf. Jaeggi 2014, 8). Marx follows Hegel's account of alienation as alienation from a social or common world, but on this point, Hegel follows Diderot (Easton 1961, 195). Marx, however, was critical of Hegel for deriving concrete, material things from thought, rather than thought from material experience (Marx 1844; Sayers 2011). Hence, for Marx's reading of Hegel, "the essence of nature was outside nature, the essence of man outside man, and the essence of thought outside the thinking act" (1961, 196).

Marx's appeal to Feuerbach against Hegel indicates Marx's own Diderotian materialist sympathies, for in Feuerbach Marx finds an ally in the prioritization of direct experience or of "sensuous consciousness" over and against abstract (or absolute) ideas (1845). It seems then that where Hegel fails for Marx, Feuerbach succeeds. But there is also an important way in which Feuerbach fails and Hegel succeeds: for despite Feuerbach's emphasis on direct experience, Marx condemns him for his neglect of the role of history in the formation of subjectivity (1867). Young Hegelians such as Feuerbach are guilty on Marx's critique of a contemplative materialism: a materialism which ultimately fails to take social and economic relations into considerations (1845). And so Diderot succeeds where the Young Hegelians failed. Marx's materialist conception of history supposes a theory of human history that ascends from earth to heaven, rather than from heaven to earth. This means that "morality, religion, metaphysics, and all the rest of ideology as well as the forms of consciousness corresponding to these" develop from material production (1867, 42).[23]

Marx believes that material conditions, and not abstract ideas, are the generative

[23] Marx's rejection of the idealism characteristic of the Young Hegelians (including Feuerbach) in part catalyze his own clear formulation of a materialist conception of history in the *German Ideology* (1867).

agents of history. The view commits him to a non-deterministic conception of the unfolding of history prioritizing the processes and forces of production (1998). This basic tenet of Marxist materialism is in line with Diderot's materialism insofar as both materialisms: 1) reject causality as explanatory, and 2) invoke a conception of matter as an active, dynamic, *historical* force.[24] In contrast to a Feurbachian naturalism maintaining a rather static conception of nature (as unchanging), as well as a Hegelian system viewing nature as the "alienated existence of the absolute idea," Marx and Engels conceived of a materialist philosophy that is attentive to history (1998; cf. Bellamy Foster 2000, 111). In *The German Ideology,* Marx and Engels criticize Feurbach in particular for collapsing the metaphysical distinction between being and essence which, on their view, dissolves religious alienation into material existence, thereby making him ill-equipped to understand real, material alienation (1998, 572; cf. Bellamy 2000, 111-2). As Marx writes in his *Theses on Feurbach:* "The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that the educator must himself be educated" (2002, 572-3).

Some of Marx's most mature insights into the nature of alienation are—similarly to Diderot—arrived at through the examination of fashion and dress, including textile production. In the *Grundrisse* (1857-8) Marx lays out the dialectic of production and consumption with specific reference to clothing: "A product, a garment," he writes, "becomes a real product, a real garment only in being worn, becoming worn out, being

[24] This is an oversimplified comparison, as the accounts of "causation" that are rejected in each thinkers are indeed different, as Diderot's focus (in works other than the one my analysis focused on) is on biological causality (or evolution), and Marx's on historical causality, emphasizing the superstructure-base distinction, of which he rejects a uni-directionality of causation (cf. Marx 1859).

consumed." Through wear, clothing "disintegrates and negates itself, stimulating more production" (91). In other words, consumption motivates production. Prophesying the nature of fast fashion inchoate in early stage industrialization, Marx writes how the very reliance on quickly deteriorating materials is necessarily built into fashion's production. For Marx, the commodity is itself a transient form which needs constant renewal and regeneration. The commodity can thereby be understood as the "cellular unit" of capitalism, as Esther Leslie puts it, requiring life and regeneration in order to keep capitalism functional. Fashion, as Leslie puts it, becomes its host (2017). As Tansy Hoskins writes: "Fashion is more than just clothes; it is a commodity cycle of newness that makes clothes go out-of-date and keeps retailers in business" (2014, 55). When Marx writes of the "murderous, meaningless caprices of fashion," as he does in *Capital*, this is a description he takes quite literally (1976, 609). The textile industry was a significant catalyst of the Industrial Revolution, and effectively inaugurated the "factory system of exploitation" (Leslie 2018). Since both "work and income are reliant on fashion's fancies," the fashion industry participates in the hiring and firing of workers at whim, depending on the demands placed by "fashion" itself. Since "no-one can say beforehand what will be in demand" in the future, the capricious nature of fashion—manifest in the especially capricious nature of "trends"—creates remarkable precarity and uncertainty (608).

Ironically, the advent of technologies like trains and telegraphs, which increased the speed and efficiency of early stage industrial garment production, also functioned to *increase* the precarity of the industry itself. Even though these technologies increased the efficiency of production, they had an adverse effect on any normalization or stabilization of the production of desire itself. Desires could then change more quickly since materials

could be transported faster and faster yet in order to accommodate them. Messages could be sent and received at increasing speeds. By calling fashion capricious, I believe that Marx intended this understanding of the industry as one marked by the rapidly evolving temporal structure of desire which is itself conditioned by the dialectic of production and consumption. Fashion "seasons" have promoted the "sudden placing of large orders that have to be executed in the shortest possible time" (Marx 1976, 608). Commodity fetishism especially promotes the continued production/consumption dyad of fashion especially. Briefly, Marx conceives of commodity fetishism as the fetishization of commodities perpetuated under consumer capitalism in particular (cf. 1976). As Marx puts it, fetishism "attaches" itself to commodities, such that the fetishized desire for the object, including the desire for what the fashion object in particular may signify about its wearer, becomes inseparable from it. Tansy Hoskins describes commodity fetishism as the "imbuing of objects with powers beyond their composition," harkening to a much earlier conception of the a fetish (*feitiço* in Portuguese) as an amulet or charm believed to give its owner special powers (Hoskins 2014, 63; cf. Jhally 1990, 53-4).

It is also because of the particularly social nature of fashion objects as commodities that make them so rife for commodity fetishism. As Marx writes in *Capital,* the enigmatic character of the (fashion) commodity—its *allure*—is presented to the consumer not just as a thing, but as a "social relation" comprising the invisible labor of the commodity's production, as well as the labor of the buyer as manifest in their purchasing power (1976, 130). The fundamentally social component of fashion makes it unlike many other commodities in this regard. Unlike many other commodities of cultural capital, the fashion garment is able to signal virtues and values to others, including strangers. As Jane Addams

writes in 1902, class is differentially manifest in the ways that fashion allows for "interior home life" to be lived as an exterior, public life (2002, 19-20). In other words, unlike other forms of cultural capital which may signify only in private—facilitated by the inviting of others into one's home—fashion becomes a vehicle to, as it were, take one's home along through the streets. In rendering value and social status alike as a never-ending effort requiring serial purchasing, and in locating values (in "attaching" them) to clothing items in particular, the fashion industry fuels commodity fetishism and the engines of the production/consumption dyad. It is for this reason that "autumn cloth"—clothing that becomes so threadbare it needs immediate replacing—is hardly ever reached, on account of a fashion system which demands that these garments are replaced before reaching such a point (Marx 1857-8; cf. Hoskins 2014, 55).

Marx's distinction between abstract work and concrete work in *Capital* (1867) is again cashed out in the lexicon of fashion: he says that the weaving of a linen coat is "concrete work" while the tailoring of the coat is "abstract work" (1990, 130; cf. Lehmann 2000, 68-9). It is to his horror that ten yards of fabric go into the production of this singular garment (Marx 1990, 56-69). Since Marx conceives of labor as embodied in the commodities that labor produces, it does not seem incidental that Marx again chooses dress to develop his conceptions of labor and of the commodity (133). He compares the use-value of the fabric and the coat, respectively, in order to illustrate the nature of labor as contained within commodities, writing that "use-values cannot confront each other as commodities unless the useful labour contained in them is qualitatively different in each case. In a society of commodity producers, this qualitative difference between the useful forms of labour which are carried on independently and privately by individual producers

develops into a complex system, a social division of labor" (133). The use-values of the coat and of the fabric represent this qualitative difference, and as such represent different forms of labor (tailoring and weaving respectively). This is why it does not make a difference for Marx in terms of use-value "whether the coat is worn by the tailor or by his customer" (133). What is "embodied" by the wearer is still the labor put into its production (in terms of both the weaving of the fabric and the coat's tailoring), and what Marx points to here is the inability to "take off" or otherwise alter that signification in consumption. The example itself illustrates the fundamentally dialectical nature of production and consumption, itself pointing to the inability to *detach* processes of production from commodity consumption.

Both the linen and the finished coat are the "physical bodies of commodities" and are made of the same fundamental elements according to Marx: the material elements (provided by nature), and labor (provided by "man"). Here, Marx cites English economist William Petty, who writes that "labour is the father of material wealth" while "the earth is its mother" (134). The "physical body" of both is then dual: the labor that goes into the production of each commodity is masculinized while the material component of each commodity is feminized. The distinction is mirrored by the account given by Levinas in *Difficult Freedom*, detailed in Chapter II. In my analysis of Levinas, I suggested that manufacture becomes masculinized wherein the raw materials needed for manufacture become feminized. The distinction functioned to highlight that the manufacture of clothing from its raw materials becomes an avenue to dis-alienate man by returning him (through his clothing) to "nature." In Marx, the consumption of the commodity results in a similar feeling (if only a feeling) of non-alienation between self and world, facilitated not only by

the purchasing of commodities, but in wearing them.

Benjamin, (Fashion) History, and (Evolutionary) Progress

Benjamin was inspired by a "biological theory of fashion" that seriously considers nonadaptive or seemingly purposeless features (AP 73: B5, 3). In his reliance on non-teleological accounts of evolution, including vestimentary evolution, Benjamin finds the necessary support for his own critique of historical materialism—itself a kind of evolution or evolutionary theory—as wrongly conditioned by a principle of progress which functionally aligns the movement or progression of history with teleology (cf. Benjamin 1940). In *The Arcades Project,* Benjamin develops a conception of clothing as an exemplar *Tigersprung* (leap) into the past. Throughout this section, I show that fashion is instrumental to the *Arcades'* critical project: to reconceive historical materialism against the "principle of progress."

For Benjamin, it is not the case that evolutionary "mutations" (fashion or otherwise) indicate a deviation from a grand plan or from ultimate perfectibility. Instead, their study can *illuminate* the historical and contextual reasons for their existence: namely, their meaning. Benjamin's renewed approach to the study of history is one which considers the mutated, the cast-off, and the dismissed as integral to non-teleological developmental processes. In terms of fashion, it is not the case at all then that it is "senseless and nonsensical," but that it in fact has "played the role of wise nature" (ibid.). I read Benjamin as making a significant intervention in progressivist tendencies in both historical materialism and evolutionary theory alike: namely, in theories of the development of (human) history. Benjamin develops an alternative account of history as non-linear and

non-teleological. In challenging the development of fashion and history alike as teleological, Benjamin's critique is also apt to disrupt the naturalization of clothing at issue throughout the dissertation. For my purpose specifically, challenging the notion that fashion or clothing has a *telos* is helpful for also challenging the naturalization of garments to particular bodies and norms.

For Benjamin, the progressivist model of universal history relies on a teleological conception of materialism as involving matter which evolves towards a more perfectible realization of itself. In other words, matter *changes* on this account because it is always on its way to becoming its own highest form or most perfect version of itself. Progressivist models of materialism are informed by "uncritical assumptions of actuality" instead of holding a "critical position of questioning" (Buck-Morss 1989, 80). "Uncritical assumptions of actuality" refers to the belief that matter develops in accordance to its own evolutionary ends. In other words, the bad assumption actually holds that the unfolding of matter is preformed or predetermined in some way. This account is resonant with that of "intrinsic purposivity" or epigenesis in Kant, which I conceived in Chapter II as a naturalized, even "biologized form of purposiveness." Benjamin rejects this account of purposiveness, and in doing so, he establishes the analysis of fashion—much like Diderot and Marx—as a serious and meaningful site of philosophical engagement. Were fashion only oriented toward the future—toward its own evolution—then there would be little point analyzing it as a locus of insight into the past and the present. Indeed, this "shallow" reading of the temporality of fashion is rejected by Benjamin.

Benjamin's insight into the evolution of fashion as non-purposive supports his own aim of reconceiving historical materialism away from similar accounts of purposivity. In

offering an account of evolution as non-teleological in nature, but as fundamentally oriented and influenced by the *past,* Benjamin reconceives of the development of human history as that which is always inflected by its own past. In contrast to the developmental account of Kant, for instance, Benjamin's view of human history resists the naturalization of clothing and femininity, which, as I showed with Kant, become naturalized precisely through such developmental accounts: by circumscribing their place in the course of human development. In resisting the notion that fashion has an "intrinsic purposiveness," Benjamin does not concede that fashion has *no* purpose. On the contrary, it illuminates history while simultaneously resisting being naturalized onto it, or subordinated to it. Fashion's ephemerality, its ever-changing state of nature, is precisely what makes it so valuable; its "superfluousness" is an asset, not a liability. In other words, it is precisely *because* it has no "intrinsic" meaning that it is able to be utilized as a source of constant insight.

Benjamin's critique of progressivism is not in itself a rejection of progress. As Amy Allen puts it, Benjamin does not reject progress altogether, but aims instead to "break it apart and reconceive it dialectically" (cf. 2016, 5). Benjamin aimed to reconceive of historical materialism so as to involve the breaking down of the "epic" element of history: that is, a linear, narrative structure evocative of progressivist teleology which assumes a conception of time as homogenous, empty, and therefore as fillable. As Allen suggests in her reading of Benjamin's "On the Concept of History," it is because "the idea of historical progress depends on the idea of humanity" that Benjamin takes such great issue with 'progress'" (174). The specific idea regarding humanity that Benjamin takes issue with is an evolutionarily progressive conception of humanity. In Kant, for instance, the sense of

purposiveness in his developmental account of human reason functions to naturalize shame onto clothing and the feminine alike. Their “purpose” then becomes to (literally) catalyze the ascent of reason in man. For Benjamin, the present is not merely a transition between moments (from past to future), in which progress would be conceived as the fulfillment of these temporal transitions (1940, thesis 16). Instead, “progress” is conceived as a reorientation towards the past in redemptive moments of insight and revolution. In other words, instead of accepting naturalized accounts—perpetuating myths that they are indeed natural—Benjamin offers a mode of resistance and retelling alike.

To understand the way that fashion acts as a central element of Benjamin’s reconception of historical materialism, it is important to understand how Benjamin’s concern about progressivism was not limited to historical materialism. He saw similar trends in certain strains of evolutionary theory, with which he was deeply engaged. In challenging the progressivism in certain strains of evolutionary theory, Benjamin is equipped to challenge the progressivist model of human development more broadly. He does this primarily by adopting many of the positions held by Georg Simmel in challenging the normative account of progress in certain evolutionary theorists (cf. Benjamin 1999, 73).[25] *The Arcades Project* is thus not only Benjamin’s attempt to support his argument that an uncritical notion of progress is imbedded within the concept of universal history (itself reliant on a particular conception of time that remains his focus here in this work),

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[25] For instance, even though evolution amounts to a normative account of progress for Herbert Spencer (in line with what Lamarck conceptualizes as the drive of a “vital internal force”) it is an account of progress which Benjamin, following Simmel, understands as not having a necessarily teleological structure (cf. Simmel 1997). Although there is debate about this point, Lamarck’s commitment to materialism meant that all evolutionary changes/phenomena are derivative on underlying *physical* principles, not on teleological ones. Science historian Charles Coulston Gillispie argues that it is on this ground that Lamarck ought *not* to be confused with holding a vitalist view (cf. Gillispie 1960, 272). This point—that not all universalist trajectories are progressive in a normatively perfectible sense—is vital to understanding why Benjamin attends to fashion in such detail within his critique of progressivism in *the Arcades Project*.

but a particularly pernicious form of evolutionary theory.

Benjamin makes a strikingly similar claim as Herbert Spencer, writing that "fashion functions as camouflage for quite specific interests of the ruling class," going on to quote Brecht who writes that "rulers have a great aversion to violent changes" (AP 71-2, B4a,1).[26] For Benjamin, as for Spencer, there also exists a relationship between politics and dress. But for Benjamin, the relationship is also implicated with his (re)conception of time. An obsession with "progress"—a worry Benjamin shares with Spencer—may result in the fallacy of mistaking novelty for improvement: or, with mistaking "progress" itself as always a necessary good. From Spencer, Benjamin is inspired to think of clothing not only as incidentally coinciding with certain political leanings, but as the very access point from which "progress" may be critiqued.

Even though Benjamin does insist that nature progresses historically, history does not itself proceed "naturally," which is to say, in a developmental or progressive manner. Time is instead conceived of as dialectical, prompted by occasions of historical witnessing which jolt one into the past as a means of assessing the present, i.e., engaging in critique. Benjamin's reconception of historical materialism is guided by a principle of actualization (instead of a principle of progress) (69). The principle of actualization involves the removal

[26] Herbert Spencer was one of the first and most prominent European social scientists to seriously engage fashion. Spencer was also a renowned "Social Darwinist" holding both Lamarckian and Social Darwinist views. The influence of Lamarck on Spencer is more noticeable in Spencer's early works, before and soon after Darwin published his *Origin of Species* (cf. Spencer 1859). "On Manners and Fashion," for instance, is an early text by Spencer dominated by Lamarckianism (1854). In it, he espouses the Lamarckian position that evolution qua natural selection proceeds in accordance with environmental and behavioral changes and differences. Herbert Spencer affirms just such a Lamarckian belief by drawing out an analogy between political revolutionary aims (roughly commensurate with environmental factors) and revolutions in behavior (analogous to evolutionary variation). Spencer suggests that there is an essential relationship between political conservatism and conservative dress, and similarly, a relationship between revolutionary politics a tendency towards sartorial differentiation or sartorial difference (1854/1917). Spencer writes: Must we not rather conclude that some necessary relationship obtains between them? Are there not such things as constitutional conservatism, and a constitutional tendency to change? Is there not a class which clings to the old in all things; and another class so in love with progress as often to mistake novelty for improvement? (2)

of an event or individual from universal categories in which notions of progress or teleology are embedded (cf. Lindroos 1998, 92). A new temporal order is thereby at the core of the principle, which is carried out (or actualized) through events of witnessing the "dialectical image" (11). This revelation of temporal experience is prompted by Benjamin's own experiences walking the streets of Paris: taking in the sights, the scenes, and the fashion. Indeed, it is Benjamin as a *flaneur* that comes to such a realization about the capacity for witnessing to be a catalyst for insights about history. An image or *sight* of something, someone, or something, becomes dialectical when it is able to "freeze" the "Now" and traverse time. This occurrence is the *Tigersprung:* the dialectical leap *back* into time (cf. Benjamin 1940). Benjamin writes:

> …image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent (N2a, 3, 462).

Benjamin rejects the notion that images may only function as indicators of the past (as "archaic images") (N3, 1, 463). Even as shadows on Plato's wall, the function of images as second-order representations not to be trusted means that they are incapable of signaling anything but the past: the originals from which they derive. Conceived instead by Benjamin as dialectical, the image functions to disrupt linear temporality by *syncing* past with present, disrupting an understanding of the "present" as the developmental progression of the past. The present is, instead, a "point of explosion" (N3, 1, 463). Benjamin's distinction between "archaic" images and "dialectical" images comes out of his critique of Heideggerian phenomenology in particular. Briefly, Benjamin understands the phenomenological search for "essences" one which renders the "truth" of images as

transhistorical in nature and so unable to account for their historical specificity. The rupturous moment of "explosion" that the dialectical image produces is conceived by Benjamin as the "death of the *intentio,"* or of intentionality, since the occasion is not one of consciousness intending a particular object, but of an object "bursting" with historical truth and insight (N3, 1, 462-3). Contrary to what Benjamin sees in phenomenology as the search for transhistorical structures of consciousness, dialectical images inaugurate a "resolute refusal of the concept of 'timeless truth'" (N3, 1, 463). In terms of fashion, clothing objects may function as dialectical images, understood not as "mere" appearances (the mimetic paradigm), as representations of an inherent or "purposive" truth, nor as objects on the receiving end of consciousness. Instead, clothing may appear to us as having its *own* story, its own meaning(s), and own truth.

The phenomena which serve as dialectical images are themselves multiple: fashion, film, architecture, etc., can all be shown to "uncover the specific present that is webbed in the structures of the chosen material, and which becomes created anew during the course of our interpretation" (Lindroos 1998, 13; cf. Benjamin 1990, 10, 11, 69). Appearances and public presentation thereby become absolutely central for Benjamin, especially for the principle of actualization to, well, actualize. The insight renders encounters with fashion and with clothed others as vital moments of insight: specifically, as moments which reorient one to the past in such a way so as to interrupt and to disrupt a steady or unthinking march towards progress. Similar to Diogenes, these encounters rupture everyday life so as to catalyze critical thinking and prompt social and political critique in particular. An example of this disruptive power was illustrated above in Diderot's descriptions of the peasant woman. An heir of Diogenes himself, the "shock" value of dress so important for

Diogenes' embodied philosophy functions in Benjamin not only as social disruption prompting social analysis, but as a *temporal* disruption challenging the "natural" order of things: specifically, the onward movement of time towards perfectibility. In de-naturalizing time as progressive in this way, Benjamin's insight into the disruptive power of fashion to act as a *Tigersprung* into the past functionally denaturalizes an understanding of it as superficial, or as mere human cover. In occupying a central role in re-*figuring* the human, clothing plays an *active* role in Benjamin's development of historical materialism. It is itself a materiality which matters: an active *force* or agent of history. In sum, actualization (dialectics) replaces "progress" as the basis for Benjamin's reconception of historical materialism.

In *The Arcades Project,* Benjamin writes that "the eternal is in any case more the ruffle on a dress than some idea" (1999, 69). I interpret the enigmatic phrase to mean that time is not bound up with future-oriented thinking: the confusion of new or novel ideas as improvement, to draw once more on Benjamin's indebtedness to Spencer. Time is better understood dialectically than it is as always uni-directionally moving forward, pressing on into the future. The "ruffle on a dress" refers to the garment *as* a dialectical image, and thereby as able to facilitate the movement (*Tigersprung*) through time that it catalyzes. Andrew Benjamin analyzes the "ruffle on a dress" phrase in the terms set by Benjamin's earlier work, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility," where the eternal becomes concomitant with the reproducible (cf. 1940). Briefly, mass-produced works are removed from history, specifically, from having an origin or an original. In other words, the significance of space, time, specific location, social-political context, etc., is lost

for mass-reproduced works which do not have a point or place of (meaningful) origin.[27] Since finitude implicates both a spatial and temporal origin, they are, in this way, ephemeral.

Andrew Benjamin's interpretation of the ruffle as a commodity befitting this description of technological reproducibility, however, neglects to take seriously the fact that the ruffle functions *as* a dialectical image for (Walter) Benjamin. There is no guessing as to whether or not Benjamin thought that it functioned as such: it is written right next to the ruffle remark (69). Briefly, Andrew Benjamin's analysis is incompatible with fashion's function in Walter Benjamin as a *Tigersprung.* If clothing were comparable to mass-produced artworks, then it would not also be able to act as a *Tigersprung,* which demands

[27] Benjamin conceived of the origin [*Ursprung*] as a "thoroughly historical category" that "nonetheless has nothing to do with beginnings" (quoted in Buck-Morss 8). Origin does not designate that process of becoming which occurs as an aftermath of an initial event, but that which itself "emerges out of the process of becoming and disappearing" (8). Many Enlightenment thinkers espoused versions of theories of social evolution more broadly in some form of another, including Hegel. For Hegel, the *Sprung* is that nodal line of measure relations in which certain nodal changes in quantity result in qualitative changes: a qualitative "leap" from one matter to another. This is exemplified by both the boiling-point and freezing-point of water, where a change in quantity results in a transformation of quality (Lehmann 2000, 241, fn. 77). It is interesting, if not curious and coincidental, that Engels referenced the *Sprung* in relation to Hegel's interpretation of objective and natural laws in a letter he sent to Marx from a textile mill in Manchester in July 1858. This concept of the *Sprung* (leap), which itself has a long history in materialist thought, is indebted more to Engels than to Marx. This qualitative leap is what is invoked by the famous phrase in the Communist Manifesto that "all that is solid melts into air" (cf. Lehmann 2000). Since the *Sprung* fundamentally consists (qua qualitative change) in that which distinguishes itself from its previous state, it is always directed toward the past (2000, 241). Hegel's relationship to evolution and evolutionary theory is a complicated one, but I note it here briefly in order to establish the connection between evolutionary and historical thinking so relevant for Benjamin later on. Some of Hegel's most important comments are to be found in his intervention in the debate in geologic history between the Vulcanists and the Neptunists (cf. Kolb 2008). While both posit that catastrophic geologic change was central to the development of the Earth, the former located the main agency in volcanic eruptions and the latter in flooding. Hegel, suggesting that both were certainly at play, nonetheless rejects the historical chronology of geological stratification as having philosophical import. What is philosophically salient for Hegel is the "intrinsic connection or necessary relation of these formations," in which "time plays no part" (2004 339a; cf. Kolb 2008, 101). This point is succinctly summarized by David Kolb, who says that this means that for Hegel, "nature has no history, even if it has a history" (Kolb 102). In the *Science of Logic* (1812) Hegel argues against an evolutionary principle or law of continuity which would hold that generation happens mechanistically, or in a continued order. It is precisely from this rejection of continuity that the concept of the Sprung develops in Hegel's thinking. This maps onto Georg Simmel's notion of individuation developed later on as a negative principle and not a positive one. Individuation is not borne ex nihilo, but from the inhibition or blockage of the principle of heredity. So too is the Sprung to be understood as that creation of difference borne from competing tendencies (where difference is understood as qualitative change).

temporal flexibility and openness, since the former can "leap" into the past while the latter has no "history" in a meaningful sense for Benjamin. Indeed, Benjamin's conception of clothing as exemplar dialectical images becomes even clearer when considering his claim that clothing "is as much at home with what is dead as it is with living flesh" (1999, 69). This points to the transhistorical nature of fashion achieved by the *Tigersprung*. As Ulrich Lehmann argues, the transhistorical element of fashion (the eternal) exists as a contradiction or opposition to the ephemeral: but the opposition is "rendered obsolete by the leap," by the *Tigersprung* that "needs the past to continue the contemporary" (2000, xviii). The *Tigersprung* and image alike are thereby both dialectical in nature for Benjamin (ibid.).

Fashion is the tiger's leap (*Tigersprung*) into the past. This means that it does not exist solely within one singular temporal or aesthetic configuration. This in turn functions to generate a conception of historical development and historical time as fundamentally dialectical, opposed to teleological (Benjamin 1999; Lehmann 2000, xvii). This begins to challenge the progressive dimension of historicist time of which Benjamin remains critical. Now-Time or *Jetztzeit* is Benjamin's concept for a temporality which operates against a conception of time as linear, empty, and homogenous (cf. Benjamin 1930).[28] *Tiger* has etymological origins in the Avestan word tighrhi, meaning "arrow." Benjamin's *Tigersprung* might in this case be thought of as that leap which travels quickly and swiftly, much like an arrow, into the past. This invokes a notion of *Sprung* as one of nodal relationality and qualitative change, charged here with the added dimension of swiftness

[28] An illuminative illustration of Now-Time can be found in Benjamin's essay on "Surrealism" (1929) where he shores up an image of an alarm clock which rings each minute for sixty seconds. This incessant ring functions as a strike against homogenous time by blasting itself out of the historical continuum understood as the linear progression of history and of historical time (Weigel 1996).

(understood as movement in time and space) indicative by the "arrow" like quality of the leap. Benjamin's reconfiguration of historical materialism towards a principle of actualization functions similarly to accounts of evolutionary theory which seek to understand evolutionary change as a dynamic process of the actualization or non-actualization of differing tendencies, rather than as part and parcel of teleology or else some causal conception of ultimate perfectibility. It is in this sense that fashion is so meaningfully correlated with human evolution. Fashion, then, is a fundamental part of evolutionary history, and a central material by which materialist philosophy has henceforth developed, as well as the key to its reconception. On this analysis, it is not "retro" fashion that Benjamin is interested in, but fashion *itself* as retroactive (as *Tigersprung*). Fashion does not merely belong to the past, but illuminates it.

Fashion is not limited to being a catalyst of the *Tigersprung* for Benjamin, even though this seems to be its central role. When Benjamin writes of the "forward-thinking" quality of fashion, or its ability to *anticipate* the future (opposed to its animation of the past) he associates this ability with a mysterious "the feminine collective" (1999, 64, B1a, 1). Seeming to invoke the myth of the eternal feminine, Benjamin's association of the predictive nature of fashion with femininity does not limit the premonitions to future trends alone but to "new legal codes, wars, and revolutions," provided anyone can decipher the secret, mysterious codes—the "secret signals of things to come"—inchoate in fashion (ibid.). Benjamin's claim does at least two things. First, it invokes a well-worn conception of femininity as mysterious and epistemically unknowable: or at least, as that which requires difficult work to fully discern and understand. Second, in excluding femininity from the retroactive movement of the *Tigersprung*—in illuminating the past—it becomes

reified as shallow or superficial, where superficiality would designate a concern only with present and future trends and possibilities, and would not have the "depth" of meaning associated with the past.

Benjamin recognized that many qualities and characteristics associated with women at the time (living sedentary lives, family lives, etc.) only "appeared destined" because of the clothing that actively constricted their movement (1999 74, citation from Charles Blanc). In the challenge of a teleological account of evolution which necessitates a *genesis* (or "Ursprung) of human development, neither femininity nor clothing are *destined* in their significations. Non-deterministic accounts of evolution are compatible with Benjamin's concern to re-orient historical materialism away from a guiding principle of progress.

Insofar as historical materialism concerns itself with the reproduction of life throughout time and history, evolutionary theory is not tangential, but essential to analyzing the changing dynamics of these relationships. The notion of sexual selection in particular is extremely helpful in this regard. Charles Darwin's conception of sexual selection has generally been understood to privilege maleness and to attribute maleness to activity, while femaleness has been relegated to a passivity (Grosz 1999). This essentialist critique is merited. However, the principles and entailed gendered norms of "fitness" and "survival" which govern the process of natural selection are irreducible to his conception of sexual selection (Grosz 2011). On Elizabeth Grosz's view, sexual selection operates in accordance to a principle of excess in relation to survival, whereby the "energetic excess" of sexual selection accounts for the production of both "biological and cultural extravagance" in various species. This "uncontainable production of intensification" exists

"not for the sake of the skills of survival but simply because of its force of bodily intensification, its capacity to arouse pleasure or 'desire,' its capacity to generate sensation" (2011, 118). The feminist reading of Darwinian evolution offered by Grosz suggests a non-reductive account of sexual difference as a site of productive excess, intensities, and possibilities. In other words, it is precisely by attuning ourselves to sexual selection, and to variations in kinds of adornment specifically, that a non-progressivist view of evolution qua selection begins to emerge. As Grosz writes: sexual selection actually involves the "nonadaptive, non-reductive, [and] nonstrategic investment of (most) forms of life in sexual difference" (2011, 119). One of the most stellar examples of this account of sexual selection can be found in the work of George Darwin, nephew to Charles: or, as I like to call him affectionately: the other Darwin.

George Darwin analyzed the parallels between biological development and vestimentary development, or vestimentary evolution (1872). His argument is firstly an analogical one: the garment corresponds to the organism in much the same way as the system of dress corresponds to a species. Like his more well-known uncle, G. Darwin locates survival as the mechanism for vestimentary evolution. This does not mean that survival should be understood as the need to adapt to one's climate, as one might expect. Rather, he suggests that dress evolves for the sake of its own *own* survival. While George Darwin considers fashion to be an external force that meaningfully influences vestimentary evolution, it is not central to it. Fashion is external to processes of "natural selection" which would account for slight differences and variations in dress throughout time. On Darwin's view, fashion is analogously related to processes of sexual selection, including both a love of novelty and penchant for exaggeration. Within this evolutionary process, fashion itself

selects for exaggerated forms. When this happens, they are "retained and crystallized" as part of dress, in spite of any former use functions. The second form of evolutionary dress involves garments which previously held particular use values but which no longer function as such in the present. High heels are an excellent example of this. While there are multiple evolutionary histories of the popular shoe, its initial design was informed by the need for equestrian riders to remain secure in their stirrups (cf. Semmelhack 2015). The former has its analogue in the peacock's tail and can be explained through sexual selection, while Darwin likens the latter to the wing of the apteryx, and can be explained through the effects of disuse.

Benjamin intended his *Arcades Project* to be a materialist philosophy of history constructed with the "utmost concreteness" (1999; Buck-Morss 1989, 3). In the *Theses*, Benjamin remarks that the historicist presents an eternal image of the past, while the task of the historical materialist is to describe a unique moment within that past (cf. 1940, 254). This is precisely the work of the *Arcades Project*. It is for this reason that sartorial fashion becomes one of the single most important metaphors in the Arcades Project; as some argue, it is the most important (cf. Lehmann 2000). As Lehmann suggests, fashion existed for Benjamin as the metaphor best equipped to evoke the sense of time he was attempting to articulate in this work (2000, 202). While Lehmann stresses fashion's significance, he also neglects to take seriously its central role beyond its capacity as a "metaphor," albeit a powerful one. The suggestion that fashion operates as a metaphor functionally relegates the material of fashion to 'bad' mimetic objects. For Benjamin however, mimesis has a phylogenetic component, meaning that mimetic objects are far from their Platonic or Aristotelian heirs as being "mere" representational objects. For Benjamin, mimetic objects

have both a representational function and a reproductive capacity (cf. Benjamin 1933). This means that mimetic objects functionally double as evolutionary phenomena. Benjamin's aim to reconceive historical time in anti-teleological and progressivist terms also entails a rejection of history in similar terms. This renders historical objects as "evolutionary" objects only when evolution is also conceptualized in similar anti-teleological and progressivist terms.

Benjamin was set to give a lecture course at the Collège de France on *the Arcades Project*, but the lectures never materialized. When Georges Bataille asked Benjamin what the specific topic would be on, Benjamin replied, with brevity: "Fashion."[29] While we can only imagine what those lectures would have included, I have shown here that his commentary on fashion is not incidental to his thinking, but developed from a much longer, richer history. It is by keeping the legacy I have detailed here in mind that we may continue to develop philosophical thinking on fashion as an important continuation and extension of materialist philosophy.

Conclusion

It is not a coincidence that three of the most important materialist philosophers were interested in fashion and in clothing. As I have shown throughout, their commentaries are not incidental, but vital to their respective works. In line with the rejection of progressivism witnessed in Benjamin in particular, the history I have outlined between these three thinkers does not follow a straightforward or pre-formed evolutionary trajectory: there is not an unmistakable influence or a *heredity* of sorts that I have traced here. But that is also

[29] This anecodate is recounted by Hans Meyer, who witnessed the exchange.

not the point. The point is that fashion endures as both ephemeral and as eternal, and that the dialectic is a productive one for materialist philosophies which would seek to understand the complex role it continues to play. For all three of the major figures whose accounts I have developed here, fashion exists both as a set of material objects *and* as a dynamic, dialectical force or process informing the materialist philosophy of each. Clothing plays a pivotal role in the disruption of human history as "naturally" unfolding over time in a pre-determined direction: an idea most fully realized by Benjamin.

IV. EUGEN FINK: THE PHENOMENOLOGIST OF FASHION

Introduction

This chapter offers one of the first English-language commentaries of Eugen Fink's untranslated *Mode: Ein Verführerisches Spiel (Fashion: a Seductive Game)* (1969), a text that I read both as a vital but neglected text in the history of philosophy, and as a meaningful application of clothing to philosophy (and vice versa). Fink was especially concerned with the dominance of metaphysical views of human nature that subordinate and hierarchize. In *Play as Symbol of the World*, for instance, he writes that metaphysics "decided in advance that the beautiful is subordinate to the true and is a sensuous image for pure non-sensuous thought," and that such subordination has "had great consequences not only for the conception of human beings, but also for the representation of the whole of beings" (2016, 99). As I suggested in Chapter I, the subordination is so longstanding that it "appears" as natural, or as an unquestioned *a priori* seemingly outside of the whims and wills of time and of history. Play, what Fink conceives of as a "fundamental phenomenon of existence," becomes one of many phenomena that get the short end of the metaphysical stick, along with fashion. In other words, both fashion and play become juxtaposed to "reason," "truth," and "essence" as being both superficial and trivial. Fink rejects the Platonic dualism between original and representation (appearance) supported by the mimetic paradigm, writing that "an imitation, a *mimesis,* of philosophy" exists "only as long as it allows philosophy to determine its character" (2016, 99). In other words, it is not metaphysics that should determine philosophy, but philosophy that should determine metaphysics. So long as philosophy discards or casts aside the world of appearances as the inferior, false, or

deceitful world, its insights will continue to be undermined as being incredible in the etymological sense, as *not* credible. It is not philosophy that should determine the "character" of its subjects, but its subjects that should determine the character of philosophy.

In this chapter, I will argue that Fink's insights into fashion develop his ontology of play: an ontology which is itself motivated by the refusal of the essence/appearance dualism. Fink's conception of ontology is not as the search for the ultimate "there is"—of essences—but is the analysis of what uniquely characterizes human beings: of how and in what ways they exist, interact, and *appear*. In Section I, I will contextualize *Mode* in relation to Fink's ontology. In Section II, I highlight the influence of both Kant and Nietzsche for Fink in order to further contextualize some of Fink's major insights. Briefly, Fink critiques Kant's conception of clothing as that which primarily expresses (or conceals) shame (1969, 55). From Nietzsche—specifically Nietzsche's rejection of a two-worlds system, or of the appearance-reality dualism—Fink inherits a fervent affirmation of the world of appearances. In Section III, I focus squarely on *Mode,* having contextualized Fink's ontology and relevant philosophical inheritances in the previous two sections. In the final major section, Section IV, I develop the phenomenological component of Fink's analysis: his conception of dress not only as part of the lived body (*Leib*) but as "a second *Leib*" itself (1969, 69). As such, clothing does not cover the body—reinforcing yet another iteration of the essence/appearance dualism—but is itself bodily.

Historical Context and the Reception of *Mode*

Commissioned by the German Fashion house Spengler, *Mode* is a small but extraordinary text. Fink's discussions of fashion are not "mere" applications of his thinking (an applied philosophy) but represent a vital and original kind of philosophical thinking. In other words, fashion is not just *an* object of inquiry among any other object for Fink to apply his philosophical ideas, overlaying it like an oversized coat. Instead, it is a phenomenon which generates and inspires his insights. For Fink, philosophy ought to have a fundamentally anthropological orientation. Fashion provides just such an orientation. Similarly as in Kant, the Fall represents the making-finite of humankind: repetitive insofar as the human is precisely marked by the "fall" into finitude. Whereas for Kant, the Fall propels or kickstarts reason's ascension, for Fink, the fall into finitude indicates that the newly-minted humans ought to orient their search for wisdom in line with their conditions, meaning that philosophy ought not be oriented towards the metaphysical or theological, but to the anthropological, the imminent, and the concrete. The intermingling of theology with ontology is, on Fink's view, especially "disastrous" (1969, 39). Fink thereby conceives of philosophy as "a finite possibility of the finite human being," and argues that we ought to embrace it rather than fear or repress it (39). In a Nietzschean vein, Fink argues that the "human spirit" ought to "take up finitude as its fate" (39). With such an affirmation, Fink writes that the "words of the serpent, *eritis sicut deus,* should have no further seductive power" for the human who takes up their own finitude. In primarily engaging finitude through the infinite, religion thereby represents an "alien interpretation" of human experience, which is to say, *inhuman* understood as non-finite (or infinite). Philosophy, by contrast, ought to be a "self-interpretation" of the "sojourn" of human existence *in* the finite

world (39). Fink's understanding of ontology is riveted to this dual concern for the anthropological and for finitude. It is this distinct sense of humanity bound up in finitude that grounds Fink's ontological philosophy, but is especially evident in the decidedly anthropological turn of his later work. It is against this backdrop that we must read *Mode.*

The most sustained engagement with Fink's text is by Stefano Marino in "Ideas Pertaining to a Phenomenological Aesthetics of Fashion and Play: The Contribution of Eugen Fink" (2017). Marino considers Fink's text to be an under-regarded contribution in the ever-developing nexus of work on clothing and Fashion within the human sciences (and slowly, within philosophy). The aim of their article is to analyze the place of the text within both a "phenomenological aesthetics" and an "anthropology of Fashion" (334). *Mode* is a late text for Fink, and follows the "ontological turn" of his work in the 1940's and 1950's. The 1950's and 1960's led Fink more explicitly in the direction of phenomenological anthropology, but the ontological and cosmological dimensions of his phenomenological work (of the 40's and 50's) still persists in the 60's work. His insights into the nature of play (developed earlier) play a prominent role in *Mode.* In the 40's and 50's, Fink developed a speculative phenomenology of play as a counter to a dominant conception of play as "mere idle amusement, to be valid only as a restful pause" (quoted in Marino 2017, 343). In contrast to this view, Fink writes in *Oase des Glücks* that play:

> ...is always an occurrence that is luminously suffused with sense [*sinnhaft*], an enactment that is experienced. […] Play belongs essentially to the ontological constitution of human existence; it is an *existentiell,* fundamental phenomenon. […] If one defines play, as is usually done, only in opposition to work, actuality, seriousness, and genuineness, one merely places it, falsely, next to other phenomena of life. Play is a fundamental phenomenon of existence, just as primordial and independent as death, love, work and ruling, but it is not directed,

> as with the other fundamental phenomena, by a collective striving for the final purpose. It stands over and against them. (2016, 16)

The devaluation of play— understood as antithetical to the serious—is paralleled in Fashion and dress (cf. Marino 2017, 346-7). The devaluation of dress represents the "ambiguous" relationship that the human being has to their body and world. Such a notion of ambiguity was also vital to Fink's earlier development of play's ontology, such as when he writes that the relationship between metaphysical philosophy and play is one of "stimulating ambiguity" (2016, 97). The ambiguity precisely concerns the dynamic *interplay* between opposites, which is lost in hierarchization and subordination which necessitates a *privileging* of one element over another. For instance, of Plato's thought he writes that it is both "serious in its jests and jesting in its seriousness, familiar with and enjoying the allure of the mask" (2016, 97). Plato "takes the beautiful to be the veiling of what is really true," or rather, the beautiful is related to the true in the same way that the visible is related to the invisible (98). This is important for Fink in situating play as much more than a "merely" preliminary way of "understanding the relation of the human beings to the gods," by which Fink means the relation between the material and the immaterial or the beautiful body to the form of the beautiful. Instead, play is a *mode* of existing and of relating, similar to "the mode in which the gods handle human beings … delivered over to them like playthings to the child" (101). Play is, to quote from above, a "fundamental phenomenon of existence."

Of Plato's very late text, the *Laws,* Fink writes:

> The gods play—they do not work onerously like mortals; they do not struggle for sustenance; they do not forcefully wrest from the earth stones to build houses, clay for jugs; they do not clear the wilderness; they do not sow in order to reap, nor gather the harvest into barns; they do not stand their ground against one another in a battle for life and death; they are immortal, they cannot starve, and are not killed. And if they procreate and love, then this does not have among them the sense of a striving after "immortality" as it does for mortal human beings who can only live on in children and grandchildren, but as individuals themselves pass away. (2016, 101)

Fink is critical here of the appraisal of immortality in Platonic metaphysics and in the metaphysical tradition more broadly. Such striving towards the infinite couches human experience in terms of its ability to attain such a status, thereby constituting an "alien interpretation" of that existence: an interpretation which is foreign to the experience of being human as it is lived. What is especially relevant for my purpose is the idea, elicited by the citation, that humans actually *fear* play. In not being oriented toward a goal or *telos,* play represents a fundamentally human phenomenon (although not exclusively human) which is also a phenomenon of finitude. As paradoxical as it may initially sound, play really indicates death, but in indicating death, it may also reorient us to *life*: not as a stepping stone toward another realm, but life as a finite and precious gift to be enjoyed, even to be played with. In terms of clothing, the charge that its concern is "unserious" is really an accusation (stemming from fear) that it concerns finitude: the undergirding belief being that "real" philosophy must concern the infinite in some capacity.

Since "the god is without need, he is able to play continually" (101). For the human being, however, "playing is the activity that happens in leisure relieved of all need" (101).

Since the human being is bogged down by the necessities of material life, they may "only occasionally" be able to participate in "true" or "pure" thinking, which requires a certain abstraction from the realm of immediate need and concern. Pure thinking thereby requires a mind "free from need" (101). This foundational interpretation for the history of metaphysics understands the "thinking of thinking," or "absolute knowing" (à la Hegel) as the highest determination of divinity and/or thought itself. "Play" and "thinking" thus become juxtaposed as two poles of this "ambiguous" interpretative moment of metaphysics.

Even though both play and thinking indicate a degree of leisure, thinking becomes "the highest determination" of divinity (101-2). The quest for absolute knowing, or the quest to "think about thinking," all express this ambiguous moment of metaphysics which privileges thought to play. Play is thus rendered as the "non-serious" and non-*laborious* other of thinking itself. Even though the activity of thinking is distinguished from those of manual or physical labor for Plato, its proximity to the "good" and to the gods alike makes it a form of work or labor, but of a different sort: the virtuous kind. To preempt my reading of *Mode,* it is for this reason that Fink remains so attentive to labor in his analysis of fashion. On his view, the "prejudice" of philosophy against both play and fashion have to do with its juxtaposition against the serious labor of thinking (of intellectual labor). This background is crucial for understanding the analogously "ambiguous" role of fashion and dress in mediating the relation between self and structure. In *Mode,* Fink writes that "the dark seriousness of philosophy is … a prejudice of public opinion" (15). On this view, because philosophy *is* thinking *is labor,* "Fashionable" [*Modische*] is thus "hurled as an invective" to indicate the non-thinking, non-laborious realm of "mere" appearances,

distinguished, also, from the realm of need.

However, it is also clear that *Mode* indicates a development in Fink's own thinking, and not just an application of his ontology. In *Play as Symbol of the World* (2016), while there are no concrete analyses of fashion and dress, his few mentions of the phenomena reinforce the very notion of "superficiality" his later work seeks to uproot (and that, in general, his notion of play itself seeks to upend in the philosophical imaginary). For example, in "Play and Celebration" he writes that clothing is one of the "superficial things" that life necessitates "for the sake of the body" (2016, 223).[30] And yet Fink already begins to point to the significance of dress which he will elaborate in much more detail later on in *Mode* by suggesting that such "superficial things" change a sense of bodily possibilities.

In the "play-world" of Olympic sports, the athletes plunge themselves into a situation where "the human being casts off his everyday armor like a bothersome garment—and ventures to find out what the body can be" (2016, 224). The "armor" of the human being is meant to invoke the ways that social and cultural mores, like clothing, both delimit and prescribe bodily possibilities in an extremely physical manner. For instance, just as a dress might inhibit one's posture and movement (for instance, one might feel inhibited from spreading out on a train, or scaling a rock wall) social customs also dictate appropriate and inappropriate movements, gestures, and comportments. Fink does not, however, understand the display of the "naked" body as a "pre-technological" body understood as more natural.[31] In other words, he does not idealize nor romanticize the body.

[30] The full quote is as follows: "For the sake of the body we need the necessities of life and even for the most part superficial things: nourishment, clothing, a house and village, tools, machines, weapons, all the myriad things of an artifact-culture, an immense technological apparatus."

[31] Fink writes: "In the comportment of sports that is complementary with technology, . . . The task is to purely give prominence to the human body, to elevate it in its own performances, to cultivate delight in the body. The competitors who step up with their trained bodies and perform at a high level compete 'naked' to a

Instead, he understands the naked body (or what he thematizes as the athlete's body) as unrestricted by that which would otherwise function to restrict and confine: namely, social customs and clothing alike. In Olympic sport, what appears is *the body* itself. All "essential moments" of human existence are inextricably linked to this sensuous, creative, uninhibited body where "the theme of play" can be celebrated. "Essential moments" for Fink are composed of those instances where the body becomes its own center of activity, and not merely "the place from which activities proceed" (224).

The insight that Fink gleans from Olympic gymnastics is integral to his anthropological-ontological conception of the body and the constitution of play within the body. Both "real" and "imaginary" features of play alike are "bound up with the body and exhilarated by it," which is to say that "incarnation pervades all structures of our existence" (223). It is this insight that leads to Fink's conception of the intellect as sensuality or materiality (223). He rather explicitly condemns an idealistic conception of the body which denounces the body as " a source of disturbance for the intellect […] as a confusion of reason, […] that saw in it a principle of evil, the seat of lusts and wicked desires; that defamed it and yet have just not been able to ever 'overcome' it" (223). Instead, the playful body becomes the very *seat* of Fink's ontology, where attention to the dressed body does not distract from serious ontological investigation, but is required by it.

certain degree. They are not set inside an efficient apparatus. They perform a presentation of the human body in the possibilities that belong to it alone. The race, the toss, the blow, form exemplary basic models of a bodily action that is not technicized" (223-4).

Fink on Kant and Nietzsche

So far, I have shown that Fink's emphasis on the centrality of embodiment for ontology is tied to a broader metaphysical rejection of play. In privileging thinking over playing, metaphysics dis-embodies itself and the "serious" business of philosophy becomes juxtaposed against the frivolous, the superficial, and the playful. The importance that Fink places on the embodied dimension of human existence extends to the importance of fashion and clothing in his work. Fink writes that "fashion is a phenomenon that is essentially connected […] to the human being's embodied nature, to our existence's being-incarnated (ein Phänomen, das mit der Leiblichkeit des Menschen, mit der Inkarniertheit unserer Existenz […]. Zusammenhängt) (77). Instead of reading Kant's "Conjectures" as a "work of fiction," Fink's reading of Kant predates contemporary scholarship which also seeks to reckon with the implications of taking Kant's essay "seriously" (cf. Chakrabarty 2016; Baumeister 2019). In Kant's "Conjectures," Fink locates the "process of man's incarnation" [*Menschwerdung*], his literal coming-int-bodily-being, which is to say, into a finitude marked by clothing (18). Similarly as to Plato, Fink writes that Kant addresses a "serious problem" in a "playful nature" (17). Fink writes that "it would be outlandish to see here only a transcription of a sacred document" (1969, 22). Within this small book of 1786 written between the first two critiques, Kant in fact "designs a whole anthropology… which shows the central structures of being human" (22). Dress *is* this central structure. Since the philosophical anthropology of Kant preoccupies a significant part of *Mode*, I attend to his analysis and critique here briefly in this section.

In the fig-leaf, Fink suggests that Kant sees "the immanent erotic power of veiling" which is simultaneously "the irritating effect of shame." This insight is developed by Fink

later on in his text. Not only was the fig-leaf the first dress, Fink claims, but "the first erotic light around the beloved body of the sexual partner and symbol of a bond, a covenant, a mutual dedication and affection" (22). This is explained (away) in Kant as the movement of reason towards the future, expressed as the ability to plan and prepare for said future. Thus, this remarkable "step" of reason to express reference to time is itself bound up in the "covenant" of marriage and its relationship to modesty. Fink's reading of Kant is significant for making of clothing a distinctly human phenomena, bound up in the becoming-finite of the human being which is proper to the objects of study for philosophy as a discipline. For Kant, the "clothed" dimension of humanity functions to subordinate the feminine and to clear the path for the ascent of a masculinized reason. By contrast, this understanding of human persons as *clothed* beings makes clothing *central* to the study of Fink's anthropologically-oriented philosophy. Since clothing was especially vital in the process of human beings' becoming-finite (on Kant's own account) it is made to be especially relevant in Fink's finitude-centric approach to philosophical ontology.

Departing from Kant, Fink disagrees with the idea that clothing primarily expresses (or conceals) shame or else otherwise acts as a *moral indicator* like it does for Kant (55). Fink describes the aesthetic realm of fashion as neither moral nor immoral: "beyond good and evil" (71). Fashion presents a particular difficulty when it comes to valuation. This is because, for Fink, morals are fundamentally historical phenomena which more or less fall along an axis of either being useful or useless (111). And yet he warns against applying traditional aesthetic categories to the evaluation of fashion (by which he means criteria which would evaluate the garment "as a work of art"). Key for my purpose here is the related idea that metaphysical dualisms hierarchize, and therefore actively subordinate. In

doing so, they *create* moral and aesthetic categories alike. For instance, in determining the notion of essences as "truth," not only are appearances rendered a kind of playful untruth, but both become distinctly (im)moral categorizations. To be concerned with play and with fashion, then, is not only frivolous or superficial, but decidedly immoral.

Human kind has "fashioned" their own place in the cosmological system through the self-fashioning permitted by clothing. As a dressed being who "has the opportunity to design himself 'superhumanly' as well as 'sub-humanly'" mankind "does not stand 'objectively' in the hierarchy of all beings." Unlike Kant, whose descriptions of clothing are used to situate the human squarely between divinity and animality, Fink argues that clothing permits a self-fashioning which does nothing other than indicate that very humanity. In other words, it is the very humanness of clothing that is grounds for its reclamation as a site of philosophical inquiry.

Fink's positive reclamation of finitude is certainly inspired by Nietzsche.[32] Nietzsche's rejection of a two-worlds system, or of the appearance-reality dyad, results in a fervent affirmation of the world of appearances, and with it, a profound reconsideration of the meaning(s) of clothing, especially in its relation to the body. In denying a robustly metaphysical conception of truth, the quest for truth becomes a wholly human enterprise grounded in lived experience. Instead of a dyad between appearances and reality, reality

[32] It is not only Nietzsche's philosophy of the body or of incarnation that inspires Fink, but Nietzsche's commentary on clothing specifically. In the *Genealogy of Morality,* Nietzsche writes that "philosophy would have been absolutely impossible for most of the time on earth without an ascetic mask and a suit of clothes" (2006, 84). I interpret this claim to mean that a pernicious metaphysical dualism between this world and another (a "two worlds" system or theory) has sustained the history of philosophy as a particular history of metaphysics. I argue elsewhere that the "ascetic mask" is Nietzsche's symbol for a devaluation of the bodily and the earthly. Ascetic morality not only maintains the metaphysical dualism between this realm and the beyond, but marks and subordinates the world of appearances as a false world. The suit of clothes thereby comes to represent one of philosophy's scapegoats. In taking clothing to signify mere covering (or a covering *over*) of a deeper, truer self, the same ascetic morality that governs religion on Nietzsche's view also governs philosophers' dispositions towards the body, including their own.

itself is now to be understood *as* the world of appearances. When Nietzsche invokes masks and masking, as he frequently does, he often does so in irony (in a "playful" way), to indicate that there is no truer or deeper "essence" of subjectivity underneath the mask. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* Nietzsche writes that "the person of today couldn't wear a better mask… than that of your own face" (1978, 93). This is not to say that as a mask, the face indicates something like psychological interiority. Instead, the language of masking is what permits Nietzsche to develop an ontology of self-fashioning.[33]

In no longer being relegated to the realm of metaphysical unintelligibility, morality *becomes* both aesthetic and sensible for Nietzsche, opposed to abstract, theological, unintelligible, or metaphysical. As Salomé puts it, in Nietzsche: "ethics unobtrusively merges with aesthetics" (2001, 121). Concretely, this means that appearances become morally indicative, or indicate something about morality rather than only "superficially" indicating or indexing the immoral. In Chapter II, I argued that the appearance of the feminine in particular indicates moral responsibility for both Kant and Levinas. For both, the "modest" feminine figure in particular is what *permits* moral growth for both thinkers. This morality of appearances, however, renders only *some* appearances as morally relevant ones. By contrast, Nietzsche's ontology of self-fashioning democratizes the world of appearances—the domain of aesthetics—as the site and locus of the moral.

In a letter to Salomé on the "teaching of style," Nietzsche writes that "a style should live" (1882). This claim emphasizes that style is not to be understood as superficial cover,

[33] This concept of self-fashioning is perhaps best captured by Daniel Anderson, who writes of Dionysos that "Dionysos was god of masks. But as god of masks his essence is to be masked; there can be no Dionysos unmasked" (1993, 8). A conception of masking *as* essence is juxtaposed to a conception of masking as "mere" cover or as "deceptive" cover. The latter emphasizes or reinforces the metaphysical dualism between appearances and reality whereas the former affirms the world of appearances *as* reality. Masking for Nietzsche thereby emphasizes the playful, costumed world as the "true" world.

but as that which affirms life (and the condition of finitude specifically). On Nietzsche's view, dress does not lack "depth." Instead, it is wholly reconfigured by the rejection of the distinction between surface and depth. Lack of depth, then, cannot be the reason by which to continue to exclude dress from philosophy. As Ron Scapp and Brian Seitz write, with Nietzsche: the "time-honored opposition between reality and appearance—a product of a confused fantasy—is readily exposed by fashion" (2010, 3).

The Depth of Surface: Fink on Fashion

Just as in *Play as Symbol of the World, Mode* is motivated by the same philosophical disposition. It is a disposition which is both suspicious and critical of a discipline which continues to gain purchase from articulating the boundaries of what is to be considered "serious" philosophy, and what "serious" topics merit its considered attention. The juxtaposition between the serious and the unserious indexes a more fundamental juxtaposition between the moral and the immoral. Fink's approach to the writing of *Mode* is similar to that of his analysis of Kant's "Conjectures": it is precisely in taking "seriously" what has been outcast or dismissed as "mere play" (or, as a "work of fiction" in the case of the "Conjectures") that *Mode's* insights are reached. In the two previous sections, I established that the "corporeality of existence" quite literally grounds Fink's ontology. Grounded in finitude and incarnation, Fink comes to fashion and clothing alike as rich, complex phenomena that shed light on the human condition.

In the broadest sense, Fink considers fashion to be the "style of an epoch" that encompasses the "total spirit that shapes and determines all manifestations of life" (31). Fashion "expresses itself in the great and small things of social life, beforehand imprinting

every individual and his own personal attitude of life" (31). Events of everyday life are thus to some degree "determined by the zeitgeist and contemporary taste in most people—at least in the manner of their performance." As determined by the zeitgeist, Finks also understands fashion as a system of power that marks and stratifies social classes by assigning status and rank to its symbols and signs. Fashion also regulates gender relations. Fink writes that much of fashion is predicated not only on a two-gender system, but on a system of heterosexuality in which designs are "determined by the attractiveness of the two genders for one another" (51).

Fink's insight is a prescient one for understanding the ways that fashion not only produce and reproduce products based on naturalized notions of masculine and feminine existence, but for understanding that the production of clothing along a two-gendered axis is itself conditioned by the production of gender *as* dual. Much in the same way that the shameful feminine functioned to bolster and constitute the Euro-masculine subjects of Kant and Levinas, so too does the dualism between masculine and feminine dress more broadly function to subordinate one to the other: indeed, to lend to the other its "seriousness." Norms or requirements of "professionalism" also enforce this, where dressing "seriously" or "appropriately" is synonymous with a process of defeminization.

Attraction and eroticism play a sizable part in Fink's analysis. He writes that dress both "refers to the living flesh underneath it" while it also "seems to have been invented and made only for the sake of undressing" (52). Unlike other erotic objects which have a taboo presence in social places, fashion objects are still able to participate in the insertion of the erotic into the social (53). It is in fact precisely in its concealing nature that Fashion objects are able to reveal images which stir the erotic imagination; it is precisely in

revealing (partially) that they conceal (53). The dynamic and ambiguous role they play already indicates that it is their *characterization* as mere appearance that is indeed what is shallow, and not clothing itself.

There is a long-standing philosophical prejudice which holds that "what is valid and reliable must last a long time," or even "defy" and "withstand" time itself. One main site of philosophy's "prejudice" towards fashion thereby has to do with its relationship to time and temporality. Fink writes that since "the phenomenon of Fashion is related to change, impermanence, and volatility, it dances through time rather than resting on it, stone-like" (31). The "scale" or spectrum of this prejudice goes from "moral devaluation" to a "misunderstanding of the hovering fluff-like reality of Fashion" (31). On this view, what "blossoms, shines, and goes out" has no weight of being behind it. Rather than directly critiquing this paradigm, Fink points to the relative irony of the position, considering that, in comparison to the mountains, for instance, human beings are essentially no different than the temporally fleeting garb dismissed by philosophy for its ephemerality. In other words, we are pots calling the kettle black: the most ephemeral things ourselves, dismissing something's import on account of its ephemerality? If we were really to take this prejudice seriously, then, we couldn't pursue *philosophy* either, understood as the quest and love of a wisdom that bears on human life. Philosophy's distrust, then, bespeaks a very particular brand of anthropocentrism, in which the objection on temporal grounds simply does not hold. In other words, if Fashion is rejected on the basis of its fleeting character (in favor of, it is implied, more enduring temporal structures) then what business does philosophy (or phenomenology) have in privileging the temporally enduring?

In the narrower sense, fashion is "a phenomenon of taste" which proceeds to change

quickly. Fashion is a “delicate structure” which, like the Japanese cherry blossom, is “beautifully lit and soon blown by the wind” (31). As a human creation, it “is linked to the rhythm of the natural process, has its spring, summer, autumn and winter forms, but begins differently each spring; it adapts to the seasons, but does not return to the cycle with the same regularity” (31). Fink suggest that this prejudice persists even in those who “join the Fashion” (33). Perhaps ironically, at least in part, this manifests in the donning of (fashionably) “serious, solid, dignified, and practical clothes,” as if to counteract the frivolity that characterizes Fashion in its essence, or its perceived form.[34] That is, the donning of “serious” clothing may at least in part be understood as a response to a fear of being perceived as being as “frivolous” as one’s clothing. Indeed, there is something in this identification of seriousness with fear that points to the normative impact of fashion’s association with frivolity.

Fink considers four objections to fashion which inhibit its serious consideration in philosophy. These objections also constitute three misleading beliefs about fashion. The first belief is that ephemerality is the “nature” of fashion, when it is instead a condition produced and reproduced by the fashion industry itself, specifically, in accord with the dialectic of production and consumption: a “deceitful trick” by those in the business of perpetually selling clothes. While Fink actually says very little about the business of

[34] It is important to note here that the temporality of fashion (understood as one of constant change) does not also designate a more general, ubiquitous, or universal temporality of clothing. Since I have predominantly understood fashion to designate a system of change, its ensuing temporality is commensurate with its system (of consumption and production). This differs, however, from clothing more generally, since there are certainly clothing items that do not change, or change very little. Fink’s concern with fashion, then, ought to be understood as a concern with “Fashion,” that is, fashion as a system designating a particular temporality. This temporality, it is also important to stress, is bound up in the capitalist system itself underlying the production/consumption dyad, as most presciently remarked on by Marx. That is, Fink’s understanding of fashion is not only specific to his own historical and geographical location, but with the capitalist infrastructure undergirding those specifics.

"deception," in Chapter III I argued (through Marx) that the "ephemeral" nature of fashion is in fact built into its manufacture, itself reliant on the dialectic of production and consumption. Echoing Marx, Fink discusses the fundamentally dialectical nature of both production and consumption, writing that "the manufacturers of Fashionable clothing are no less dependent on the buyers than they are on them," and that both subsets depend on the game or play of imagination in the intersubjective sphere in which Fashion's possibilities are animated (47). Deepening or expanding Marx's analysis, I take Fink to be suggesting that an ontology of play undergirds or underlies the dialectic of production and consumption fueled by capitalism. There is an open space for free play, for creativity, and for expression—what I call an ontological fabric—even when it is foreclosed. Fink makes a distinction between "dress" and "Fashion" where the former is characterized by the function of the marketplace to produce clothing as a bare necessity. In this sense, the clothing market is always a stable one. This contrasts with the Fashion industry insofar as the latter relies on going beyond the function of dress or clothing as "mere" cover (i.e., a necessity in the same way that food and water are) in its reliance on novelty, luxury, etc (47). This industry has more to do with the "addiction to innovation" and the "unpredictable impulse for freedom" which cannot rely on taste as something already fixed and always stable (47).

The second objection is that the fashion lover (or fashionable person) is just as "capricious" as their clothing. The heart of the objection, as Fink rightly points out, is that this prejudice or preconception actually reveals a fear or uncertainty about the nature of power, and, by extension, the power of fashion. The "power" is in its playful and imaginative nature, and in its ability to contribute to imaginative variation more broadly,

which I will address in more detail in the next section. Fink identifies play as an *invariant* structure of fashion which always remains despite its “ephemeral” iterations. In other words, despite its manifestation in ever-changing garments and trends, play functions as a crucial, ontological element of fashion’s nature. It is evident to Fink that play is at work “whenever there is an original cheerfulness,” a “relaxed … floating feeling in spite of all existence and life” (39). When such a feeling that corresponds to dress is identified, fashion “cannot be interpreted as capricious” (39). In other words, whenever fashion animates such a feeling, it cannot be dismissed as “merely” superficial or as capricious. What Fink misses is connecting the function of such naturalization (of capricious garments on capricious people) to his earlier identification of fashion as that which signals a fear of finitude, as I discussed in Section I. In other words, a philosophical resistance to or dismissal of the “capricious” actually indicates a disciplinary resistance to consider the finite, the emphemeral, and so on. In its privileging of the transcendental, philosophy displays more than a “distaste” for fashion—as if it was merely a matter of preference—but confesses its own resistance to making philosophy about human beings and their lives.

The third objection is that fashion is inherently wasteful and costly: that it necessarily involves the divestment of capital, material, and labor power away from the “productive economy.” The underlying assumption of this belief is that fashion is unnecessary, understood as both superfluous and capricious: that resources could be better allocated (and money better spent) elsewhere, perhaps on those things that are more long-lasting. This evaluation puts fashion in a paradoxical position: as a system which produces commodities, it is inherently a part of the “productive” global economy. But since its products are themselves considered extravagant and superfluous, it is simultaneously seen

as *unproductive.* As Fink succinctly puts it in his own formulation of the paradox: “there is nothing more necessary than the superfluous” (1969, 43). In other words, the superfluous indicates what is *necessarily human,* or, what marks the human and thereby constitutes the relevant (and not “superfluous”) site of inquiry. There is no dispute that, as a global industry, fashion is both wasteful and costly in numerous respects, including environmentally. The industry is approximately the fourth largest global polluter depending on evaluation criteria, accounting for approximately 8% of global carbon emissions in 2018 (cf. Wicker 2020). Fink’s point is only that fashion’s “necessary superfluity” makes it a vital and relevant site of philosophical inquiry. Both can be true: the system, empire, and practices of fashion can be criticized, while the relevance of fashion as a site of inquiry and critique may also be acknowledged.

Fink argues, in line with Georg Simmel, that one of fashion’s primary functions has been to signify wealth, and thereby, to differentiate between social classes. For Simmel, the form of fashion (opposed to its content in material garments) is to be understood as the mediation of dual tendencies: immitation and differentiation. Since fashions are always classed for Simmel, the imitation of “high fashion” by lower socio-economic classes is what drives the cyclical nature of fashion: its *re*-creation and continuous *re*-individuation by means of the upper class. In other words, it is the desire of upper classes to *distinguish* themselves from lower classes—to maintain and to exacerbate class stratification—that obstructs conformism (where lower and upper classes are dressed similarly) and motivates differentiation (the actualization of the principle of variation). Thus, the dual tendencies for imitation and differentiation manifest in fashion as: 1) the imitation by the lower classes of the upper classes, and 2) the consequent drive of the upper classes to differentiate

themselves from the lower classes. The contempt of the lower class built into the "form" of fashion on Simmel's analysis indicates that the classed nature of fashion is not incidental, but central to its very being: indeed, to its enduring evolution. Fashion cannot exist without the desire for integration; yet as soon as it is universally recognized (namely, adopted by the masses), it paradoxically no longer becomes characterized as fashion (191, 192). This "essential" feature of fashion is not a random penchant for the ephemeral, but a concerted effort to maintain and exacerbate class stratification. When Fink then writes that "public" and "individual" always oscillate, he refers precisely to this evolutionary tension between imitation and variation. This is importantly related to the analysis Fink gives of the development from unique, one-of-a-kind couture pieces to mass-produced commodities. For Fink, the original uniqueness of a garment becomes dispossessed, as the very site of its uniqueness changes in location: from the individual or specific garment, to the design (or "form") itself (48). This is precisely the process by which fast fashion operates. In taking the general form or design of a garment and reproducing it for commercial sale (often poorly and with certain modifications), fast fashion has profited off of the idea that a once original "uniqueness" may be transmuted into the general form of a garment, such that the purchase of a knock-off or deviation from its original may still satisfy the drive to conform.

As one of the most incisive indicators between "weekdays" and "weekends," fashion has functioned as a powerful set of symbols demarcating the world of necessity from the world of "leisure." The world of leisure, and leisure wear in particular, signifies the "disillusioned removal from the sphere of necessity" (36). For Fink, the disillusionment comes from the false pretense from which the distinction is forged and from which

"leisure" is derived: namely, the false belief that we may transcend the world of labor and the dictates of work that define and delimit experience. Fink argues that fashion has become one of the most dominant mechanisms of defining leisure: not only as a contrast from work, but as its end or ultimate goal. Leisure, in other words, incentivizes work and contributes to the imperative of/to work. As the concept and domain of leisure expands to include a variety of different activities, fashion expands along with it, as different forms of fashion become expected (or even required) depending on the activity and the situation. It is in this way that fashion steadily becomes, as Werner Sombart put it, capitalism's favorite child (1902).

The fourth and final major objection that Fink considers is the objection that fashion is exclusive: that is essentially belongs to the elite, or that it "cannot be applied to a broad consumer class" (38). Fink grants that while couture specifically is for the elite and the wealthy, fashion plays a much broader and important role in "intersubjective life" (38). Research shows, however, that fashion has a "trickle down" effect, and that even those who may believe themselves to be outside of its reach may still be participating in it. It is also worth noting that it takes only two weeks for runway designs to be (re)manufactured into their fast fashion versions (cf. Buckley and Clark 2017). As a phenomenon of public social life, fashion is one way or mode of being in "political community" (45). Fink's conception of politics here involves publicness or public life, itself understood as that which is shared. Fink characterizes public life as "the general way in which one moves, behaves, [and] dresses" (46). What might also be taken as a definition of *style*—movement, behavior, and dress—equally describes Fink's conception of public or political life. Style not only pertains to individuated existences, but characterizes a shared sense (or senses) of being in

shared community with others.

Fink writes that the "instinct" for imitation governs fashion and biology alike (1969, 19). Fink's appeal to the biological may seem odd at first, but actually appeals to a history of debate on "vestimentary evolution," a term coined by George Darwin (nephew of Charles, or as I like to refer to him, the other Darwin). In "Development in Dress" Darwin analyzed the parallels between biological development and vestimentary development (1872). His argument is firstly an analogical one: the garment corresponds to the organism in much the same way as the system of dress corresponds to a species. Like his rather famous uncle, Darwin locates survival as the mechanism for change and development for vestimentary evolution. This does not mean that Darwin's analysis of dress locates the vehicle of vestimentary evolution in survival understood as the need to adapt to one's climate, as one might expect. Rather, he suggests that dress evolves for the sake of *its own* own survival.[35] While Darwin considers fashion to be an external force that meaningfully influences vestimentary evolution, it is not central to it. Fashion is external to processes of "natural selection" which would account for slight differences and variations in dress throughout time. On Darwin's view, fashion is analogously related to processes of sexual selection, including both a love of novelty and penchant for exaggeration.

The influence of Simmel on Fink's work is both more explicit and more direct than that of Darwin. In Simmel's work on fashion and evolution, he suggests that fashion operates according to dual principles: a principle of heredity and a principle of variation.

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[35] This insight preempts a theory of memetics offered by more contemporary thinkers such as Dan Dennett and Susan Blackmore. While Richard Dawkins was the first to coin the term "meme," Dennett and Blackmore have extended Dawkins' analysis and cultivated memetic as the study of the replication of cultural units (cf. Dawkins 1976). Modern memetics like that taken up by Blackmore suggests that, similarly to a virus, memes care naught but for their own self-replication, even at the expense of their host (Blackmore 1999; cf. Dennett 1998).

As antagonistic principles, the former (heredity) represents the drive for uniformity and stability, and the latter (variation) for motion and differentiation (1957). Evolutionary development, including vestimentary evolution for Simmel, is constituted by the dialectical movement between these two principles. The principle of heredity finds satisfaction through mimetic imitation. Mimetic imitation functions due to a combination of "charm" and "power." In other words, charm functions as a mechanism of power which itself drives reproduction. In the context of fashion specifically, the allure of fashion as manufactured in editorials, advertising, etc., creates demand: I want to be wearing what *she's* wearing, and so I purchase it, trying to attain the same allure of the ad. In driving and promoting actual consumption, "charm" is therefore fused with power. The increase in consumption—in *more* people donning the same garment—fulfills the drive for mimetic imitation. By contrast, the principle of variation operates as a counter-purposive principle: by obstructing the principle of heredity. This means that variation or change occurs when there is an obstruction to the mimetic process, or to the continuation of the same. For example, a river will flow in the same direction unless it is obstructed, in which case, something different will arise, like a dam or a split in the river's path. Similarly as on Simmel's view, difference or newness emerges in instances of obstruction. On this view, creation does not occur "ex nihilo," but emerges from points of tension or obstruction. On my view, this insight counters a conception of genius and of creativity which involves sudden epiphanies, rooted not in the world (or in struggle, instances of obstruction or frustration, etc.) but in the mind of the lone inquisitor. This "armchair philosopher" has no need for—and in fact, might be burdened or distracted by—the world of fashion. However, the counter-view that I have presented here describes a philosopher in the world—or at least, out of that armchair—for

it signals that true creativity emerges *from* something else, and is therefore not an abstraction from the world. For example, it was only in the felt absence of places to put things that pockets were created, and not from a general or abstract philosophizing of ideal garments (cf. Lubitz 2016). On Simmel's view, difference (understood as variation from the same, or from custom) is nothing other than the obstruction of heritage. Variation thereby becomes derivative from heredity.

Simmel's conceptualization of the two principles of vestimentary evolution suggests a "dual directionality" of the drives. He calls this the dual direction of the "striving for the general" and the simultaneous "need to grasp the particular," or, the drive towards both universalization and particularization (187). The dualism between universality and particularity is mirrored in the two principles: one, striving towards adapting and conforming, and the second, towards difference (or towards individuation). This "fundamental duality" pertains to fashion and to biology alike for Simmel. Biologically, the duality is that between genetic heredity and genetic variation. The "social embodiment" of this duality, as Simmel puts it, is found in fashion through the competing drives to conform and to differentiate (or to "express oneself"). Simmel actually paints a rather sympathetic portrait of the "drive for imitation," not dismissing it as an unthinking conformism (as Nietzsche did: as "herd morality") (cf. Nietzsche 2011). Instead, for Simmel, imitation represents the drive towards political community. In conforming with others, one is met with "the assurance of not standing alone" in action (quoted in 1997, 188).

This background on vestimentary evolution provides context for what might then otherwise appear as a strange botanical interlude in Fink's text. Fink writes that just as the

bud of a flower protects the "germ of the future leaf", or as the "larva pupates in its self-spun cocoon," so too does man "cover the thing that he wants to protect, hide, keep" (49). For Fink, these comparisons suggest that the coverings themselves do not serve as independent mediums of expression. Rather, their function is to express its contents by cultivating the life and longevity of what is enclosed. Here, he compares the flower bud or the cocoon to a sword sheath. Not only does the sheath cover the sword, but is itself created in such a way as to "express" and indicate its contents (50). This is not to say, however, that our naked selves represent our "truth," and that clothing merely expresses or indicates sex. For Fink, the body is not a "thing" in itself, but an "incarnated existence," of which I will say more in the following section (50). Dress itself becomes part of the ever-changing development of bodily expression, rather than having a fixed signifying purpose, such as the sheath. This expressive nature of the human body is reliant on how it reveals itself through gesture, of which style is a vital component (50). Dress operates as a sort of language, or better yet, as a mechanism of translation, similar to the way that gestures may function to mediate a conversation between two people who do not share a common language (51). Indeed, the comparison Fink makes between clothing and language is meant to invoke clothing's expressive capacity, whereby such expression refers not to the expression of an individuated, sexed existence, but the expression of the lived body. As Fink writes, clothing functions "as a second *Leib"* (69).

Clothing and the Lived Body

Mode is a clear investment by Fink in social critique, as his focus on the phenomena of fashion illuminates its intersections with class, gender, and political economy in particular. But it is equally a work of phenomenology, as Fink develops a conception of dress not only as *part* of the lived body (*Leib*) but "as a second *Leib*" itself (1969, 69).[36] It is to the phenomenological and the "lived" experience of dress in Fink that I turn in this section. As a phenomenon of public social life, fashion operates as "a way in which … each individual can emphasize his individuality and express his self-esteem in many ways" (45). However, Fink thematizes the expression of individuality not as a case of false consciousness under capitalism, but as indicative of the way that dress functions "as a second *Leib"* (69). At the same time, the previous section of the chapter showed that for Fink, dress is a central apparatus in our dealings with the world in all of its concrete, material dimensions: our dealings with others, with the political, and so on. Fink is not a "naive" phenomenologist: the lived experience of dress cannot be separated from a world that informs those experiences. In this sense, Fink is a *critical* phenomenologist who "refus[es] to accept the taken-for-grantedness of experience:" in this case, the understanding of dress as "superficial" (Weiss, Murphy, and Salamon 2020).

[36] From Husserl, Fink retains the notion of the lived body (*Leib*), although he develops it by considering dress as a "second *Leib.*" Crucial to his conception of the lived body is the idea of existence as "incarnated," or, as belonging to this world. He writes that: "Fashion is a phenomenon that is essentially connected […] to the human being's embodied nature, to our existence's being-incarnated (*ein Phänomen, das mit der Leiblichkeit des Menschen, mit der Inkarniertheit unserer Existenz […]. Zusammenhängt)* (77). It is to Kant, and not to Husserl, that Fink's notion of "incarnation" is indebted. Kant, he says, "is to be interpreted as the discoverer of the cosmological horizon of the being of beings [das Sein des Seienden]. Being [das Sein] = in principle worldly; beings [das Seiende] = in principle intra-worldly!" (V-11 4 (section 3)). As Ronald Bruzina writes, while this clearly echoes Heidegger's 1929 lectures, it was to Kant that this insight is most primarily indebted (2004, 44, 202). It was Heidegger's thinking however, Bruzina suggests, that encouraged Fink's reading of Kant "in an ontological rather than epistemological orientation" (2004, 203). And as Fink himself notes: "Of course, [this also means] the transposition of ontology into the problem of cosmology," including anthropology (OH-III 3-4 from 1935, emphasis Fink's, bracket insertion Bruzina 2004, 203).

The sense of the public and of the political as "shared" enterprises, mentioned in the above section, also pertains to fashion. Indeed, fashion is often a key way or mode of "sharing" public or political space with others. The emphasis Fink places on the shared is fueled by what he writes is an "original instinct for imitation," accounted for briefly above in a biological or evolutionary register. But Fink also writes that the "original instinct for imitation" that fuels fashion "can be sublimated and varied by human freedom." The study of the body indicates to Fink that "reason" and "freedom" alike are informed, constrained, and even determined by divergent "bodily" ways of being. This bodily way of being manifests "not only in sensory experience" for Fink (seeing, touching, tasting, etc.): reason itself is bound and conditioned by bodily existence. To be in a "bodily way" does not only refer to sensory experiences, however.

For Fink, sensory experiences are required for reason and for freedom alike. As living concepts, they do not "move in a bodiless unearthly sphere" (25). In contrast to Kant, for whom incarnation functions only as a stepping-stone towards reason, reason for Fink is something that "lives in the sounding language and in the images of the language" (25). Reason in fact "needs the sound of the word, the melody, and the rhythm of the human voice" (25). Fink intends this quite literally to mean that reason does not function as an abstraction from the material and the concrete. Instead, reason is demarcated by concrete possibilities and the worldly conditions which afford them. While he does not go this far in his critique of Kant himself, it is reasonable to say that Fink fundamentally disagrees with the disembodied, voyeuristic way that Kant reaches his insights into the nature of reason and its ascension in particular. Gazing at Eve—or imagining ourselves to be staring at her, clutching at her clothes, drenched in shame—cannot produce insight into reason,

since this would be a disembodied experience. In other words, Kant would have been better off reflecting on his *own* dressed existence as the catalyst for his thinking rather than peeping on Eve. This kind of reflection at a distance is only another form of "armchair" philosophy: looking out from the chair at an image hung on the other side of the room.

Freedom is similarly conditioned by the body. When Fink writes that freedom "appears" in acts, works, struggles, etc., he means that freedom is not an invisible or abstract metaphysical force. Freedom *literally* appears because it is "sunk in the natural ground of our existence" (25). Freedom is also *documented* in "tools, machines and weapons, in all of these…artificial things" since such things are "necessarily only for people" (25). In Fink's anthropological ontology, artifacts indicate and constitute something vital and telling of humanity. Since freedom is incarnated, the production of social and cultural objects provides a direct link between freedom and object. These artifacts are "necessary only for people," meaning that, since freedom only exists as a foil to constraint, it is something that is distinctly human. In other words, the question of whether or not god(s) are "free" may not make sense in a metaphysics which supposes their omnipotence. Freedom "appears in the work, in the laborious acts that come out of the hand, appears in the warlike struggle for power and domination" (25). The creations and products of human beings, then, represent the conditions of their freedoms or unfreedom. As human creations, then, clothing ought to be a fundamental site of philosophical analysis, for in it we can gain insight into our freedom and unfreedom alike. The point is to say that its meanings are not predetermined in advance.

More emphatically than Fanon, Fink emphasizes the cultural significance of dress. Fink writes that the body "expresses all … essential structures of existence, not only in

words and deeds, but also in gestures and facial expressions, attitude and gait—and not least in the way he dresses." Dress "is the cultural thing that he carries on his body and through which the body manifests itself" (34). Not only is dress the most visible sign of culture—and as such has been utilized as an instrument of colonialism, as Fanon writes—but the lived body is itself expressed through dress. In other words, clothing items are not purely "cultural" products distinguishable from the individual persons who wear them, but function to express personhood.[37] Clothing affords various "possibilities of expression" which also "ignite the subconscious" (77). Fink rejects a conception of unique personhood as absolute psychic interiority, offering a phenomenological conception of personhood in its place. Fink's phenomenological conception of personhood is in line with that of Husserl, for whom personhood is grounded in subjectivity without lapsing into solipsism: a *constituting consciousness* that exists within an intersubjective horizon (Husserl 1977).

The history of phenomenology can also be told as a development of a certain anti-Platonism. As Catherine Homan puts it, for many in the phenomenological tradition (including Fink) the terms "history of philosophy" and "Western metaphysics" are used interchangeably and synonymously to indicate a particular "mode of thought pervasive in the history of Western philosophy since Plato" (2019, 35). Merleau-Ponty crucially develops the anti-Platonist tendencies already present in Husserl. As Sara Heinämaa puts it, Merleau-Ponty argues that "we should not think that the meanings of bodies belong to another realm behind or above the visible and tactile world" (2003, 39). The expressive relation which constitutes Merleau-Ponty's "gesture theory of expression" is thereby a relation "between the visibles" (Heinämaa 2003, 39). Whereas the expressive relation is

[37] I will attend to the *de*-personalizing aspect of clothing in the next chapter.

usually discussed in terms of visible gestures—such as the gesture of my smiling indicating my being happy—Fink extends the expressive relation to the dressed body. He writes that fashion is "fundamentally connected with the "corporeality of human beings … the incarnation of our existence …with the elementary cultural process of clothing becoming luxury… [and the] possibilities of expression …that ignite the subconscious" (77). In analogizing dress to a house, Fink tries to suggest that they both have "ambiguous expressive value" (35). Like the body, the house "has a double orientation: inwards and outwards at the same time" (35). Both "contain and expose, envelop and represent" (35). Both function as shields or forms of protections (as shelters), and both—insofar as they are each limited by the "general style of the epoch"—are constructed within the respective constraints and possibilities afforded to thinking by environment, culture, peer groups, etc. This "epochal" sense of fashion, or, the idea that different times afford different styles and possibilities, regulate variances in expression while also making innovation possible. Difference or variation are the *products* of their predecessors: of age-old or time-worn traditions and customs which become outmoded or outdated, which is to say, become an "obstruction" which itself motivates renewed thought and creativity.

In creating anew, fashion "act[s] as a wake-up call" (38). It is precisely through exaggeration that an "all-too familiar feeling" in a "new and unheard-of direction" can be motivated and catalyzed (38). This "all-too familiar feeling" is play: fashion's most central ontological element. In play, fashion "shows possible variations" [Variationsmöglichkeit], or, a "playful effect" in exaggerated form (38). There is an important connection here to Husserl's notion of imaginative variation. There is a long and important history of the role of imaginative variation (or eidetic variation) within phenomenology that has its origins in

Kant (cf. Mohanty 1991). Eidetic or imaginative variation is essential to Fink's methodology as a phenomenologist. Understood as a method in itself, eidetic or imaginative variation is that which entertains and goes through differing possibilities (different variations) until an "invariant structure" is arrived at. As a communicative sign, the semiotician of fashion is able to "read" fashion forebodingly, that is, as an indication within a larger system of communication. This insight parallels that of Walter Benjamin, whose *Arcades Project* (1982) similarly looks to the communicative dimension of Fashion as a significant predictive tool. For Husserl, the imagination functions as a medium or a facilitator between hyletic data and "higher order cognitive processes" (Aldea 2013, 372; cf. Hua III/Ideas II 1989). In the phenomenological register, such higher order processes refer specifically to layers of judgment. The imagination [*Phantasie*] functions by modifying direct perceptual presentation (opposed to indirect perceptual presentations, or picturing [*bildliche*]. Imagination is not the same as image-consciousness; it does not require mental images (Aldea 2013; Hua XXIII). In other words, imaginative variation does not involve mimesis, understood here as a process of copying images from perception into "mental images."[38] It is Fink who, despite his "strong doctrinal allegiance to Husserl," tries to "restore to images their inherent 'intuitive' character" (cf. Casey 1971, 485). "Intuitive" here refers to Fink's notion of images as possessing a "self-designatability" (*Sichzeigenkönnen*): meaning that, unlike symbols and signs which typically have exterior references (mimesis), intuitive images direct us to themselves by drawing in our "aesthetic concentration" (cf. Casey 1971; cf. Fink 2016). Imaginative variation is thereby a playful

[38] Ed Casey puts the problem with this view as follows: "The very notion of 'representation' tends to deny any unique presentational feature to images, reducing them to second-order extensions of sensations" (1971, 484-5).

enterprise which suggests that the “images” we have are not direct copies or faithful representations, but are reflective of our lived experiences. This notion of images, and of a process of imaginative variation which remains grounded in the images themselves as those which retain our “aesthetic concentration” and do not point elsewhere, are in line with a philosophy rooted in this-world.

Conclusion

In his analysis of fashion as a kind of “serious play,” he writes that it has a mimetic or representational function, but is not limited to that. Fashion “illusorily” creates an imagined world, and in directing intentionality on that world (or on the images which demand our unwavering aesthetic concentration) we are able to analyze and critique our reality. In other words, the “illusions” created by fashion, in advertising and editorials most especially, are, as Fink puts it: “as vital in the ultimate sense as the truth” (99). An “uncovered” or naked truth that “leaves nothing in the dark …knows no shadows and cannot beautify and enchant anything with imagination … may belong to the gods and is inhumane if the human being is [understood as] a player [*Spieler*] and a friend of appearance” (99). Aligning himself with Kant, Fink affirms that the world of appearances is all that is knowable. Aligning himself with Nietzsche, Fink suggests that we celebrate, affirm, and interrogate that world: for it is the only world we have.

V. THE NATURALIZATION OF CLOTHING

Introduction

While colonialism has primarily operated through force, coercion, enslavement, displacement, and exploitation, it has also capitalized on what I will conceptualize throughout as the naturalization of clothing. I understand naturalization to be a process whereby values and meanings become naturalized, or, made to seem and to appear *natural* understood as self-evident: embedded or embodied not only in or on individuals, but on groups and populations. Through naturalization, metaphysical binaries become sedimented: reinforced as *a priori,* natural, or otherwise irrefutable. In this second major part of the dissertation, I am concerned principally with the social and political implications of the metaphysical split as well as with the feminization of fashion as outlined in the introduction. This chapter attends to one of the most insidious manifestations of the appearance/reality dyad: its apparition in what I call the "coloniality of clothing," effected by clothing's naturalization.

Colonialism, and its related iterations in neocolonial "dress policing" (including the criminalization of clothing and veiling bans) all gain traction through the essentializing production of homogenous groups and populations for policing. What I call the coloniality of clothing is a specific mechanism of clothing's naturalization which has served colonialism's ends, and which continues to wield power and dominance as a tool for neocolonialism. Naturalization is a continuously developing or ongoing historical process which not only *makes natural,* but functions by *continuing* to make natural in its reliance on sedimented meanings and values. In other words, while taken to be natural or self-

evident—as "always having been this way"—I posit that naturalization is an ongoing process which is sustained by continued instances of reification. Naturalization, that is, endeavors to produce natural kinds. I do not understand natural kinds to be "unconditional," as Quine or Kornblith might have it, but as historically conditioned and contingent (Quine 1970; Kornblith 1993). In this chapter, I am not considering the natural kinds of semantic theorization, but concentrate primarily on the understanding of particular clothing items as natural kinds, produced as they are in images and representation. What becomes "naturalized" onto clothing are specific values, and the naturalization of those values often serve sexist, racist, xenophobic ends.

It is worth briefly foregrounding the relevant metaphysical debates involving natural kinds by way of introduction. Throughout the chapter, I will show how particular values become naturalized onto garments, and how this naturalization participates in racist, xenophobic, colonial, and neo-colonial ends. Implicit in the argument I am making is a form of realism about values understood as natural kinds. I will suggest that the coincidence of clothing with naturalized values—or an understanding of clothing as literally valuable in this way—abets a "realism" about those values understood as physically coinciding with (belonging to) particular garments. This means that certain values may be treated as natural kinds which are considered to exist in, to be manifested in, or embodied in and through dress. Indeed, one of the most major successes of the fashion industry has been to promulgate a coincidence between clothing and value, whereby the attainment of a garment signals the ascription of particular values or virtues (cf. Barthes 1990; cf. Bernays 1928). In becoming naturalized onto material garments, particular values may become inseparable from their garments. But because naturalization often serves pernicious ends, garments

become the means of justifying violence in the name of such values. There are many ways that clothing participates in or fosters natural kind essentialism in which values become "essential" to particular garments and garments come to signify "essential" meanings about their wearers. The bifurcation of clothing into "women's" and "men's" or into "boys" and "girls," for instance, perpetuates the "natural attitude" about sex and gender alike, whereby gendered forms of expression become naturalized onto differently sexed bodies (cf. Garfinkel 1967; Bettcher 2007, 2012).[39] In other words, there is a pervasive "sex essentialism" surrounding clothing in which clothing is considered as an extension of biological sex. In being reduced to sex, the abilities and possibilities of clothing to signify diverse gender expressions (which may or may not correspond to sex) are precluded. I will address this topic in more detail in the following chapter. However, relevant to my discussion here is the idea that clothing has an "essentialism" problem. Unlike other forms of essentialism, in which traits or characteristics become *naturalized* as genetic or biological features of a sex or race, dress essentialism functions to naturalize values first onto garments and then *onto* bodies. The immediate visibility of clothing quickens processes of judgment and stereotyping. Indeed, stereotyping (including racialization) functions as a feature *of* perception, and not as wholly separate from it (cf. Al-Saji 2010).

The wholly visible nature of dress contributes to the "kind realism" of dress essentialism. In other words, in always *seeing* dress we believe that we also *see* the values contained therein. Values themselves thereby become as "real" (as concrete, and as

[39] Stemming from Husserl's conception of the "natural attitude," Garfinkel develops a concept of the "natural attitude about sex," which both reduces and naturalizes sex to strict genetic dimorphism. Bettcher's critique shows how dimorphic gender conceptions become naturalized onto this conception of sex, participating in the labelling of trans people as "deceivers" which then provides justification for those who do commit violence and murder against them.

tangible) as the garment itself: possessing one is possessing the other, and equally, *not* possessing one may signal a deficit of the other. Kripke argued that kinds do not necessarily have characteristic observable properties (kind realism), and considers Kant's claim that it is an *a priori* truth that gold is a yellow metal (1980, 118). In asking the reader to consider that the yellow-ish appearance has in fact been a longstanding *illusion*, Kripke argues that we should not employ this knowledge to support the conclusion that gold does not exist, or that it does not still have "essential" properties. Instead, it only means that we held a fallible belief about the expression of gold in observable properties. This is both a pernicious and potent insight and line of inquiry. On the one hand, such skepticism about appearances and presentation indicates an even more robust essentialism by promoting and upholding a metaphysical distinction between essences and appearances: the very heart of which is a distrust of appearances as "mere," that is, as *only* appearance and not as an indication, expression, or instantiation of truth. In other words, it is not the case that appearances are distortions of reality that may still harbor some truth, but may be completely illusory in the sense that an object's essence may not even appear (whether distortedly or not) at all. On the other hand, the position also suggests that in projecting a natural kind essentialism about values onto objects of dress, we falsely understand appearances as unfaithful copies or representations of their essence. To me, this holds a promise that we may therefore consider appearances on their own terms.

The significant temporal function of clothing challenges its classification as a group of "unconditional" or *a priori* natural kinds. I will argue throughout that naturalization functions as a refusal to recognize *particular* garments and styles as belonging to larger frameworks of meaning and of communal sense-making. The acknowledgment that

particular garments, styles, etc., do in fact belong to particular groups, historical times, and loci, challenges the premise upon which naturalization justifies itself: namely, that particular garments or styles "always" index an "objective" meaning. The appeal to "objective" meanings are often motivated by racist, sexist, xenophobic ends. As Gilles Lipovetsky puts it, the "Western phenomena" of fashion abides by a "logic of change," or by a "principle of ephemerality" that is itself complicit with a kind of liberal secularism (1994). Such a guiding logic may be incompatible in communities, tribes, societies, etc., where a deference to origin stories and guiding cosmologies functionally produce a "logic of tradition" which may stand at odds with a certain understanding of fashion as that which abides by the logic of change. This metaphysical difference manifests at the least as a relevant social and political one, as the association of "old clothes" with "old ways" functionally inscribes a distinct understanding of progress onto cultures and peoples with the expressed aim of eradication in the very name of—for the sake of—such progress.

The chapter will proceed as follows. In Section I: Clothing, Naturalization, and Criminality, I will do two things. First, I will discuss the "naturalist" understanding of clothing with recourse to clothing history and fashion theory in order to anticipate the ways that the naturalization of clothing operates. Second, I discuss some ways that clothing has been criminalized and the reliance of an enduring "dress police" on pernicious, naturalized, essentialized conceptions of both race and nation. In Section II: Clothing and Coloniality, I show how clothing has been weaponized as a tactic of colonialism specifically. In Section III: Liberal "Values" and Naturalization, I show how certain values of secular liberalism, especially gender equality, end up promoting the naturalist understanding of clothing and thereby promoting harm and actively working against its own principles.

Clothing, Naturalization, and Criminality

The naturalization of clothing produces those "unconditional" natural kinds referred to above: pernicious for their failure to incorporate the historical and the ideological alike. Understood as *a priori,* or as having a meaning that "always" pertains, the production of naturalized understandings of clothing continues to produce reductive, essentialist accounts about the "meaning" of clothing. This was indeed Roland Barthes' critique of J.C. Flügel's *The Psychology of Clothes* (1930). Flügel's account—the first of its kind—was indeed remarkable, and it is worth briefly considering both Flügel's account and Barthes' critique in order to better appreciate and understand the enduring force and mechanisms of the naturalization of clothing. The impetus for Flügel's undertaking was twofold: first was the realization that religion and clothing bear an intimate, shared, mutually-constituting history, and second, that the proliferation of academic monographs on psychologies of religion had not been met with any development in the psychology of clothes. Flügel's brief response to this seemingly illogical and conspicuous absence of the topic is that perhaps the topic of clothes is both too familiar (that is, too mundane) and too frivolous (that is, too inconsequential). The topic of clothing is to philosophy today what it was to psychology in 1930: too mundane, and too frivolous.

Neither of these judgments are epistemically neutral, as both substantiate a conception of clothing as essentially irrelevant to both a study of knowledge and as a form of knowledge itself. The claim of its mundanity is equivocal to the claim that clothing does not need to be probed as a topic because its meaning is already transparent or familiar, or, worse yet, the prejudice that there is not much meaning to be discovered at all: that it is, in a word, shallow. The "too frivolous" claim is a more complicated one. It posits a conception

of clothing as literally non-essential, while harkening to a conception of femininity as equally inessential or frivolous: in a word, as superfluous. Free from the "triangle of motivations" (protection, modesty, and ornamentation), clothing instead comes to signify the deep psyche on Flügel's account, and thereby becomes an *extension* of the psychological self.[40] On Barthes' critique, Flügel's overly reductive, essentialist account would consequently lead to a universal form of clothing, or at least to very weak variation instead of the absolute variation that exists (2006). For Barthes, Flügel's psychological account fails to consider the links between clothing items themselves which would allow for a systematic attempt to consider clothing as a structure opposed to an "anarchic collection of tiny events" (2006, 33-4).[41]

Psychologistic accounts like Flügel's easily lend themselves to naturalization. For instance, for Flügel, the drawing of our garments "closely round us" in "unfriendly surroundings" expresses a psychologized need to protect oneself without accounting for the rather contingent nature of that need as (often) produced or informed by socialized and prejudicial conceptions of others as dangerous (Carter 2003, 89). Barthes' critique might then be better understood as a criticism of Flügel's reductionism of otherwise complex social, historical, political, and ideological phenomena to "primitive" or "primary" urges of a psychic subject, although he also does not address, or rather, *redress* these issues

[40] Flügel identifies three such meanings: protection, modesty, and ornamentation. Flügel conceives of his work as moving beyond this "triangle of motivations," naturalized in their own right in histories of clothing and hygiene up until that point. However, by naturalizing all three onto the psychic subject (instead of understanding them as external motivations), there persists a "latent essentialism" in Flügel's account (Barthes 2006).

[41] Barthes' critique, however, is not entirely accurate. Indeed, Flügel did consider the spectrum of differences characterizing different kinds of clothing. However, Flügel's move was to reduce such differentiation to a fundamental tension between exhibitionism and modesty: between those who consider clothing to be the outer layer of themselves, and those who view clothing as "other" to their sense of selves (Flügel 1929, 1930; cf. Carter 2003, 84).

sufficiently himself.

It is not only the case that clothing has come to signify some expression of individuality through the psychic subject, but a certain kind of psychologistic individualism produced under capitalism. Edward Bernays, considered to be the founder of public relations, is known by many for his program of engineering of consent: a coordinated system of propagandist advertising toward the "conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses" (1928, 9). In his seminal book, *Propaganda,* Bernays writes that fashion occupies a particular role in driving communal change. The nephew of Sigmund Freud, Bernays was versed in his uncle's theories and effectively employed them to exploit, sell, and control the masses. By "introducing eros into the marketplace," as MJ Lusensky puts it, Bernays was revolutionary in making mass consumption feel personal (2014). Drawing again on Barthes, it is not *any* garment that I want, but *this* one (even though this one is also what everyone else wants).[42] Such a psychologistic naturalism about clothing theorized by Flügel and assumed in practice by Bernays introjects garments into the psyche as a means of justifying attitudes and beliefs about those very same garments. Reduced to natural drives and impulses, beliefs about clothing which inform action thereby become justified, and hence, themselves become justifiable.

Capitalism, and its agents in advertising, create specific desires that can only be satisfied with recourse to the purchase of specific commodities. More than this, however

[42] Flügel's *Psychology of Clothes* was also steeped in Freudianism, although he differed from Freud on his interpretation of clothing. For Freud, clothing (and clothing fetishism) are more or less reductive to their symbolization of genitalia (cf. Freud 1927, 1928). The sexual symbolism of individual garments is where Freud's treatment of clothing ends, but Flügel propels clothing into the deep reaches of the psyche. For Flügel, clothes have "entered into the very core of our existence as social beings," and are not "seemingly mere extraneous appendages" (1930, 16).

paradoxically, “I” only come to be by (quite literally) buying in. Bernays’ calculating genius was to promote the myth that one need to buy the clothes that “express” their individuality, even though “individual expression” is for the most part offered in pre-determined forms. This myth continues to express itself in variations of American or Western exceptionalism, where the “freedom” to dress as one pleases is understood as a freedom to express oneself in clothing, understood as a kind of seminal and hallmark individual right. However, it is far from true that such a freedom even exists. Instead, it exists within a narrow form of acceptable judgments, where deviations are often violently enforced. It is also the case that available forms of expression are predominantly pre-determinate in the sense that the margin of people who create their own clothing is quite small. In other words, we are prey to the forces of fashion whether we like it or not.[43] These often invisible realities challenge the alignment of dress with “freedom” in any robust sense. It instead appears to be a great folly, an embarrassing error, to mistake freedom of dress for material freedom.

For Barthes, the many variations that exist in clothing and in traditions of clothing is itself evidence that we ought to be weary of naturalist psychologies like those of Flügel. Certainly owing to the intuitions considered above, clothing becomes one of the primary engines of naturalization, plugging along without much notice or suspicion. While naturalization can serve many ends, it finds an ally in what Barthes calls democratization. Democratization happens through a process of naturalization and “myth-making.” In “From Gemstones to Jewellry,” Barthes chronicles the naturalization of various

[43] Hazel Clark and Cheryl Buckley’s work in ‘ordinary fashion’ discusses the trickle-down effect from high-fashion to ‘low’ fashion, where designs are cheaply reproduced and purchased and worn by those who are unaware of these processes and thus don’t consider themselves to be participating in the “fashion system” (cf. Buckley and Clark 2017).

mythologies of women onto objects. Such naturalization occurs through something like a transitive property of signification, where values themselves are transacted between objects and persons. For example, Barthes details the way that gemstones initially became associated with women, tasked with (literally) making the wealth of her husband visible (1990, 56).

The naturalization of value onto particular objects or garments (and through the transitive property, onto persons) is aided semantically through demonstrative pronouns in particular. In *the Language of Fashion*, Barthes argues that such elliptical shifters enable a temporal confusion which permits (indeed, which *accounts* for) the efficacy of fashion as a global, capitalist system (2006). For instance, it is not that any dress will confer said values onto its wearer, but *this* dress in its particularity (or "this tailored suit, "the shetland dress,") (1990, 7). This "shortcut" of naturalization achieved by the demonstrative language of advertising promises a direct link between value and garment. Barthes' conceptualization of the representation (imaging) of clothing as a kind of temporal confusion is also significant for naturalizing (perceived) value onto the garment which signifies in excess of its wearer. But as simultaneously bound to its wearer—by being animated by its wearer— such (naturalized) significations may become perceived as competing values and perhaps even as aggressive or threatening. I will discuss this idea in further detail in the next section.

Barthes worried that discrimination becomes more difficult to discern and identify as such when it becomes couched in the language of "taste," (i.e., of personal preference), and clothing is an all too easy avenue of disguising one's prejudice in making recourse to the judgment of "taste." Consider the claim that someone might allege at a workplace, that

“I am not racist; I just think that natural hair in the workplace is unprofessional.” In other words, “you shouldn’t have been wearing that” becomes code for “you shouldn’t be who you are, or, “you shouldn’t be who *I think* you are.” “Bad” and “poor” are not neutral descriptors of taste, but to be understood as synonyms. Luc Ferry argues that the judgment of taste (and the power of taste to exercise judgment) arises as a sort of secular stand-in for divine judgment, or as Kant puts it: “Taste …clip[s] genius[s’] wings” (Kant 2001, 197; cf. Ferry 1993, 10). It is because, as Ferry writes, “the classical genius is not that which invents, but that which discovers,” that taste inherits a privileged role in determining the good, the great, and the beautiful. This is to say that taste is not “purely subjective,” but implicated in a certain privilege and power of judgment. Or, as Barthes puts it, democratization (as a mode of secularization) “does not escape from new ways of conferring value” (2006, 57). Taste may therefore become “another form of discrimination” (Barthes 2006, 57). Whereas what used to indicate good taste was that which stood out (i.e. as the opulent display of prestige and wealth) is now “bad taste” in a democracy on Barthes’ view.

Clothing’s signifieds become part of the discourses which work to define them (Barthes 2006, 39). For instance, hoodies have come to stand in for criminal activity and affiliation and inform a larger discourse about Black males *as* criminals. Not only do hoodies stand in for Black male bodies, but Black male bodies more specifically understood as *about* to commit a crime. Anti-Black racism is indeed informed, fueled, and even justified by this naturalization of immorality onto hoodies and onto Black bodies themselves. The futural *about to* (commit a crime, an act of terror, etc.) not only seems to extend “naturally” from both garment and body, then, but seems to be elicited from them.

The reader may recall when George Zimmerman attempted to justify his brutal murder of Trayvon Martin on account of what he believed Martin was *about* to do. In 1991, jurors in the Rodney King case similarly justified the actions of the white police officers based on the officers' testimonies of what they believed King was *about* to do (cf. Pollizi 2012). The naturalization of value—in these cases, of morality or immorality—incite the futural *about to* which becomes the justificatory means to actively target persons without due cause.

The United States has a long and enduring history of criminalizing clothing. Ordinances against sagging and against hoodies alike continue to systematically target Black male bodies (cf. McIlwain 2012). One might be kicked out of school, fined, kicked off public transportation (including airplanes), or even arrested. While many styles garner public disapproval, few have produced the "moral panic" generated by sagging (cf. Demby 2014). As Gene Demby puts it: "anxieties around something like goth dress don't get codified into laws that threaten jail time" (2014). Arguments against sagging continue to betray an obvious hypocrisy: other styles or symbols with related histories involving imprisonment (tattoos, for instance) do not evoke the same "moral panic."[44] The zoot suits of the 1940's similarly invoked "moral panic" surrounding Black and Mexican-American men in particular. Often stripped of their clothing and badly beaten by policemen and lay white persons alike, zoot suiters—in their signature oversized suiting—became similarly associated with criminal activity and gang affiliation.[45]

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[44] There are multiple myths and conflicting origin stories about the genesis of sagging, many of which involve incarceration. On one account, convicts prohibited from wearing belts maintained the sagging look once they were released. On another, more prolific account, prisoners sagged their pants to indicate sexual availability to fellow inmates. Both confer the status of criminality onto the style.

[45] Historian Alison Ford writes: "The style is linked to jazz music, it's linked to urban spaces, it's linked to a criminal underworld" (quoted in Demby 2014). Historian Luis Alvarez, author of *The Power of the Zoot,* writes that the zoot style "came to represent what was morally and politically deficient with the home front during World War II—violence, drinking, premarital sex, and the threat of street attacks" (Demby 2014;

The zoot suit style came to represent both the political organization and coordination of low-income Black and Brown communities. When rations were put on textiles and fabrics in the early 1940's, the excessive use of fabric which characterized zoot suiting came to be seen by opponents as "an affront to the nation's war goals" (Demby 2014). This set the stage for what was already an anti-Black, anti-Brown, anti-poor sentiment to develop into accusations of anti-Americanness, whereby being American meant being white and at least passing as middle-class. On June 3, 1943, mobs of white policemen and white servicemen (including many sailors) searched for, beat, and brutalized hundreds of zoot suiters in an extraordinary and harrowing coordinated program of violence. The riots ensued for four days, and hundreds of zoot suiters (mainly Mexican-American) were arrested. These men, including many young teenagers, were publicly stripped of their clothing and their suits were burned in the streets (Alvarez 2008; Demby 2014; Ramirez 2009).

Perhaps it is also because uniforms are most readily associated with military costume that the zoot suiters appeared as a coordinated threat or as a paramilitary organization. But not all "coordinated dress" of American peoples was equally or democratically targeted. And so the threat, or specter of a threat that the zoot suiters "instigated"—instigated among white servicemen—was not the threat of military-like action, but the threat of challenging and destabilizing a certain self-understanding of good, white masculinity as loyal patriotism. In critiquing America—in *doubting* her—the zoot suiters ignited a gendered insecurity in male servicemen in particular, whose masculinity

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Alvarez 2008). The origin of zoot style is perhaps less mythic than that of sagging, although there are still competing accounts. Largely, however, the style came out of improvisation according to Ford. Poor teens would buy suits at thrift-stores but were unable to afford tailoring.

was exposed as bound up simultaneously in whiteness and in unwavering patriotism.

Women zoot suiters, or pachucas, have received far less academic and cultural attention. In an astonishing account of historical recovery, Catherine Ramirez analyzes the circumstances surrounding the pachucas' absence in cultural memory. While many donned a recognizable, hyper-feminine look (tight skirts and red lipstick), many adopted the oversized suiting of their counterparts (cf. Ramirez 2009). Those who did so were deemed unpatriotic, where unpatriotic was not only to be understood in the sense of being un-American described above, but as a transgression of appropriate, patriotic, white femininity. The patriotic feminine was the domestic woman who supported the war-time efforts by upholding "American" values at home. Mexican-American pachucas truly found themselves in a double-bind: dismissed both as un-American and as un-Mexican for "threatening the gender order of heteropatriarchal Mexican families" (Mora 2010).

Patriotism remains bound up with class, race, and gender, and often relies on naturalized conceptions of clothing to further its ends. The zoot suit riots explicitly demonstrate the intersection between patriotism and racism. As Les Back writes, "revolts in style" are often read in contexts of "postwar explosion[s] of teenage consumption" rather than as incisive indicators of the complex cultural politics of race (cf. Back 2002, 439; cf. Melly 1970). Indeed, much overt racist violence has been perpetuated in the name of "nationalism" or "patriotism." In 2005, for instance, the Cronulla race riots involved a group of Australian flag-wielding Anglo-Australians who attacked a group of Middle Eastern men based on their appearance, expressing their fervor for "white Australia" in slurs such as "We grew here. You flew here" (cf. Due and Riggs 2008). In Cronulla, the violence was incited by the mere appearance of the "foreign" (non-white) other. In the zoot

suit riots, the violence was incited not only by the presence of Black and Mexican-Americans, but by their uptake and caricature of the suit, itself understood as an *incitement* to violence, or as a kind of taunting. In changing and adapting the suit, zoot suiters communicated their refusal to be sidelined or invisibilized in their difference. The recognizability of the suit communicated a kind of assimilation which acted as an *affront* to white servicemen. The threat of assimilation, perhaps, was even greater than the threat of difference. The hostility and violence towards zoot-suiters by servicemen in particular indicates that the "ill-fitting'" suits did much more than offend taste or aesthetic sensibility, but presented a perceived threat or challenge to a way of life: a way of life where service and dedication to the country (for which being "in uniform" is a euphemism) becomes an extension for the system of values worth fighting for back at home. The "mockery" of value that zoot-suiters were seen as making thereby challenged the status of the servicemen as the supposed guardians of those values. Gender, race, and class all converge in the values which become naturalized onto suiting.

The baggy, oversized suits that came to be known as zoot suits contrasted with tailored suits (Breward 2016). The "modern" suit of the 1920's and 1930's contrasted greatly with its earlier counterparts and iterations, which were highly decorative, intricate, and had much longer jackets (down to the knee) (cf. Hollander 1994). Ann Hollander argues that the evolution in suiting that occurred in the nineteenth century changed in conjunction to a change in the appearance of the ideal man. The tapered shoulders and waist of the "new" suit also "suggest a male body that tapers from broad shoulders and a muscular chest, has a flat stomach and small waist, lean flanks and long legs" (1994, 84). Instead of "ignoring" the body by covering it up in extravagant layers of fabric, the new

suit drew attention to it by clearly highlighting and differentiating between the limbs. This "system of clearly delineated limbs" was "adopted as the most authentic vision of the body, the real truth of natural anatomy, the Platonic form" (85-6).

In the post-WWII years of Britain, a "similar rhetoric of moral panic was in operation … [which] more firmly focused on the sartorial habits of young working-class men" (2015, 222). The "subcultural" reading of the loose-fitting, draped suits donned by British youth understands the wide-spread phenomenon as an intentional and deliberate way of marking difference from dominant culture, which, at the time, was seeing a resurgence of Edwardianism (222). The teddy boys, as the subcultural group came to be known, supported their lifestyles thanks to rising incomes (150, 222). The moral panic elicited by the teddys did not, however, result in violence. Instead, they were protected by their status as raucous but upwardly-mobile teenage youth. Following the war and the Macmillan economic boom, these teenagers had nearly twice as much disposable income comparable to their parents when they were their age (150).

Just as demonstrative language may function to boost advertising in creating an identification between the garment and consumer, demonstrative language also functions to aid and abet the naturalization of specific garments onto persons. For instance, the naturalization of hoodies onto Black bodies, or of zoot suits onto Black and Brown bodies, perpetuates an understanding that *these* garments signify immoral, dangerous, and criminal activity. Of course, it often *is* the case that particular garments, when they become a "uniform," do in fact willfully and intentionally *signify* specific meanings to its wearers, as with Nazism. Roger Griffin (2001) distinguishes between a "cosmetic" and "non-cosmetic" Nazism, where the former designates the "cosmetic use of Nazi trappings …

simply as a uniform for racial hatred," opposed to a "non-cosmetic" Nazism, understood as a "real commitment to National Socialism's underlying palingenetic vision" (cf. Griffin 1991, 164). Griffin's distinction, however, seemingly simplifies the way that clothing (deemed as "superficial") is often a vehicle for "deeper" meanings. In other words, it is often not actually the case that there is a distinction between clothing and meaning (here understood as "serious" intellectual or ideological commitments). In contrast to Griffin's distinction, Tynan and Godson understand uniforms to function as a "mediator" between ideology and the "the individual" (2019). The authors therefore do not understand uniforms to be (merely) "outward emblem[s] of power and authority,"—although they certainly function this way as well—but understand them as part of an "embodied social practice that involves the mutual constitution of objects and subjects" (2019, 2). As I will show more explicitly in the next section, the bifurcation between clothing (as "shallow") and meaning (as "depth") is a reproduced misconception which actually abets colonialism. In other words, colonialism has in fact *relied* on this misconception in order to quietly effect "cultural destruction" through forced unveiling, etc. (cf. Fanon 1994, 38).

Clothing and Coloniality

In this section, I will argue specifically that naturalization has functioned as a feature of coloniality. As Frantz Fanon observed, it is precisely because clothing constitutes "the most distinctive form of a society's uniqueness" that it becomes the avenue for its destruction (1994, 37). While cultural identity has many components, clothing occupies a privileged and unique role. The colonization of Algeria by France relied on a systematic program of forced unveiling. Fanon writes: "converting the woman, winning her over to the foreign

values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the men and attaining a practical, effective means of destructuring Algerian culture" (1994, 39). This strategy persists in making women the continued bearers of culture (cf. Brown 2012). The acquiescence of Algerian women functioned as evidence of the "goodness" or "rightness" of French values and thereby sanctioned unveiling as a requirement of freedom. The resistance on the part of Algerian women, however, *also* worked in French favor, as those who refused had their intransigence attributed to (or reduced to) "religious, magical, fanatical behavior" (Fanon 1994, 39). Algerian women were put into a double-bind, where both their acceptance and refusal were made intelligible through the value of freedom as it was conceptualized and deployed within the colonial program.

Unveiling thereby came to signify a form of acquiescence or consent which itself aided and abetted the colonization of Algeria. As a way of destabilizing both intimate relations and social norms, unveiling relied on the particular location of women within the cultural-religious hierarchy in order to engender such destabilizations. Anibal Quijano's conception of the coloniality of power and Maria Lugones' development of Quijano's thought are relevant here. For Quijano, superiority and inferiority exist as categories of relation which become established through coloniality and domination. These categories thereby become naturalized (Quijano 2000). Despite challenging the enforced sedimentation of racial categories as "naturally" superior or inferior, Quijano's account naturalizes both gender onto sex (understood as strict biological dimorphism) and heterosexuality as natural and thereby as compulsory (cf. Lugones 2007). Lugones reads the absence of these analyses in Quijano's work as indications that Quijano has taken for

granted the "light side" of the modern/colonial gender system which "accommodates rather than disrupts" the subordination (or naturalized inferiority) of colonized women in particular. Lugones' critique is also relevant for understanding the force of heterosexualism as an instrument for colonization.

While the identification of the force of heterosexualism is not directly addressed by Fanon, he does write of the particular gender politics that underlied colonial unveiling. Unveiling was employed as a tactic which would specifically "get to" the men through the women: this, in addition to actual rape, as well as consumptive and voyeuristic displays of public unveiling (Lazreg 1994; cf. Drif 2017; cf. McMahon 2020). In this way, the colonization of Algeria is analyzed by Fanon in terms of the reliance on a kind of disruption of the control men have over their wives and the other women who figure prominently in their lives. Seducing the women with French values simultaneously acted as a mechanism of shaming Algerian men ("'We want to make the Algerian ashamed of the fate that he metes out to women'") (Fanon 38). As Fanon writes of the colonial mindset: "'Let's win over the women and the rest will follow'" (1994, 37). This "winning over" involved the presentation of a false binary between necessarily patriarchal, repressive subjection on the one hand, and "freedom" on the other: the very same binary that dominates many debates around unveiling today. In falsifying the choice—and indeed, in misleading the women to play "'a functional, capital role' in the transformation of their lot," unveiling was "forced" onto the women, whose autonomy was neither genuinely respected nor encouraged in the process (38). In other words, there was no meaningful choice to be made to remain veiled in a colonial context in which women's unveiling was made to be a public spectacle. In undressing *themselves*, however, Algerian women could be viewed as "consenting" to

French values.

As a mechanism of coloniality, unveiling is rife with its own complicated set of meanings. Its violence, too, takes on its own speed, form, and force. It operates in tandem with what Alejandro Vallega has called "the coloniality of images" (2011). More recently, Mariana Ortega has proposed a concept of "photographic incandescence" as a fecund site of ambiguity and potential for the photographic imaginary to both undo and remake the self (2019). For Vallega, the coloniality of power and of knowledge alike work to "sustain the Eurocentric image" understood in both its symbolic and literal registers (2011, 208). In other words, knowledge (including self-knowledge) becomes dependent on "images that are not our own" (Vallega 2011, 207). Vallega's research concerns the "liberation of the colonized from the coloniality of images" (208). My project is instead oriented to tracking the histories of naturalization which further the aims and ends of coloniality. In the vein of Vallega, the image of the unveiled woman came to symbolize a Eurocentric conception of freedom. This understanding is problematic for the ways that it continues to gain purchase by distorting the significance of Muslim women choosing to unveil. As Fatima Mernissi argues, the view that only Muslim women brainwashed by Western notions of liberalism and democracy would seek their rights to citizenship is a false conclusion itself based on a misunderstanding of Islam (Mernissi 2003; Moors and Tarlo 2013). Indeed, a naturalized binary between veiling and democracy obfuscates the tensions and paradoxes (in addition to the terror, the violence, and policing) of Muslim women living under compulsory hijab. In this way, relations of superiority and inferiority persist as naturalized relations whereby the unveiled ("free") women are lauded as superior over the veiled ("unfree") women.

When George W. Bush proudly and sternly proclaimed America's investment in

liberating "women of cover," he invokes Muslim women as a means of "getting to" the men, as Fanon had put it. But Bush's rhetoric also functioned as a palliative to reassure Americans about their own freedom. In specifically reassuring American women about their freedom—manifested *in* a freedom of dress—Bush also attempted to "get to" the men through the women by signifying that Americans are free because they are equal. In this way, Bush invoked gender equality (itself reliant on a conception of freedom as freedom of dress, or of "sexual freedom" as Kelly Oliver puts it) as justification for the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. As Oliver puts it, the rhetoric of justification not only functions to reassure "Western" women about their own sexual freedom, but to "legitimate constraints on women's sexual agency here and there" (2010, 127). Bonnie Mann's conception of gender as justification is relevant here. Drawing on Beauvoir, Mann argues that justificatory accounts of gender rely on the "entanglement of power with nature" and on essentialized appeals to human nature more broadly (and by extension, I would add, to naturalization as an enduring mechanism of *making nature* by making to seem or to appear natural) (Mann 2014, 38).

Gender works as justification because of the norms, traits, etc., which have become naturalized upon it. When gender is carried out as justification, as it is in sexualized forms of torture, it functions precisely because gender differences are not considered value-neutral differences. Rather, femininity and feminization are put to work in order to destabilize their counterparts. As Fulden Ibrahimhakkioglu argues, feminization also indexes racialization understood as a "mark of inferiority," since "it is culturally understood that femininity is marked by shame" (2018, 422). In the Turkish context of which Ibrahimhakkioglu writes, feminine bodies are "inherently shameful" because of the

"possibility of impurity" that they designate (419). Feminization thereby becomes a set of mechanisms which mark (that is, which *visibilize*) and thereby *make* shameful bodies, enacted through "willful misgendering, sexualization, and sexualized violation/violence" (2018, 420). Although we are a far cry away from Kant, there is a significant parallel to be made in understanding femininity (feminization) as a willful process of subordination. Although underthematized in both Mann and Ibrahimhakkioglu's account, clothing and its naturalized meanings (bound up with both gender and race) plays a vital role in the continued production of colonial others. Scholars have attended in great detail to the role of violence (especially torture) in dehumanization and still further to the role of feminization in such processes (Ibrahimhakkioglu) as well as to the upholding or presentation of pernicious conceptions of masculinity which enable them (Mann). Less attention has been given to the specific histories of clothing in sedimenting and naturalizing meanings, which are necessary for effective violence and torture.

The account of unveiling offered earlier is not non-violent but, as noted, functioned as a particular form of violence. Relying largely on the efficacy of imagic coloniality—that is, on the function of representation to produce new forms of (self)-knowledge and understanding—efforts geared toward unveiling continues to rely on the aesthetic transmission of colonial values effected through the sight of the unveiled woman. The mechanism of unveiling is meant only to indicate one of colonialism's many forces. As quoted earlier, Fanon observed that clothing constitutes the "most distinctive form," its most visible and observable form, of a society's uniqueness (1994, 37). I understand clothing to similarly constitute the most distinctive form of a person's uniqueness. In my estimation, this understanding of clothing as fundamentally compository of unique

personhood is what makes it efficacious as a tool of de-personalization. When the Chilean Luis Muñoz was tortured under the Pinochet regime, torturers took his clothes and wore them while torturing him: a common practice in torture. Of the violence, Muñoz wrote: "It's as though they want you to feel you are torturing yourself, something that you've honoured and bought and worn, your leather jacket, your jeans, your shirt, they are suggesting to you that they have completely removed your personality, and it reverses everything, takes a personality and destroys everything a person loves" (quoted in Belton 1999, 276; cf. Soper 2001, 21). As Kate Soper observes of Muñoz' testimony, denuding within contexts of torture occurs as "the power to depersonalise the other's clothing or adornment: to treat it as mere use-value without ulterior significance" (2001, 21). As Mann puts it, it is the dimension of "self-betrayal" in torture, understood as simultaneous powerlessness and complicity, that constitutes it as a "particularly virulent moral wrong" (2014, 196; cf. Sussmann 2005, 3).[46]

Sophie White argues that it is because clothing functions to both affirm and uphold identity on a daily basis that it is employed by colonizers to quite literally strip colonized subjects of their identity (2013). This also helps to explain accounts of the re-appropriation of clothing by colonized subjects against their colonizers. I will briefly discuss two such notable accounts: the first is the 1729 uprising at the original land of the Natchez peoples, renamed Fort Rosalie (Louisiana, USA), and the second is the sapeur movement in the Congo. The account of the former is based largely on the narrative reports of Marc-Antoine

[46] Writing specifically on the role of pain to index such self-betrayal in torture, David Sussman writes: "What the torturer does is to take his victim's pain and through it his victim's body, and make it begin to express the torturer's will… now [the victim] experiences within himself something quite intimate and familiar that speaks for the torturer" (2005, 21). Mann shows in great detail the privileged function of sexualized torture in enacting the most harrowing, and on some accounts the most unbearable acts of torture, but underthematizes the specific function of clothing in effecting de-personalization.

Caillot, then clerk for the Company of the Indies in Louisiana. In 1729, the indigenous Natchez peoples rose against their French colonizers at Fort Rosalie by capturing, torturing, and killing them (2013). The Natchez stripped the French and donned their clothing. In the aftermath of the events, accounts by the French suggest, as White puts it, "the passivity of being stripped with the agency of getting re-dressed (or dressed up)" (2013, 498). Caillot's narrative details "the theme of metamorphosis: the loss and transfer of power when stripped, tortured, and killed, or the renewal of power when colonists' bodies that had been temporarily divested of their conventional sartorial markers recovered their Frenchness through the material act of dressing" (498). The actions of the Natchez, who had been divested of their home, can be understood as attempting to reclaim it by divesting the French of France, including that part of their French identities bound up in their clothing.

The SAPE movement (Societé des Ambianceurs et Persons Élégants) in Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a sub-culture marked by a sartorial style often compared to dandyism. Sapeurism has often been dismissed as the mere mimicry of European colonizers and thereby minimized as a byproduct of colonialism. While not an analysis of sapeurism specifically, Terneus argues that the reappropriation of clothing by colonial subjects is a politically-motivated exhibition of agency by those subjects: an intentional distortion, a mockery of the power of their colonizers in making themselves in a version of their master's image (Terneus 2016, esp. 112; cf. Bhabba 1994, 121-132). The "mere mimicry" narrative divests (by de-personalizing and de-politicizing) the sapeurs by imposing a colonial understanding or a colonizing reading. Such accounts are in line with the "coloniality of images" discussed earlier. One element of sapeurism is its willful perversion of the colonizer's image: a

resistance against the idea that their knowledge of themselves (self-knowledge) is produced by the image that the colonizer has of them. There has been much work on the complex processes of resignification that took place as garments were literally translated and re-signified: both sartorially (being worn in different ways) and linguistic-materially (as new words and slang came to identify SAPE-specific garments) (cf. Porter 2010).

The reduction of clothing to "mere mimicry" parallels its characterization as frivolous or superfluous. However, the systematic, intentional, and coordinated program of the coloniality of clothing indicates that those perpetuating such programs have capitalized on the undisturbed, persistent conception of clothing as too inconsequential to be part of the carrying out of colonial programs. Indeed, accounts like the one recounted by Fanon show that colonization has *relied* on a more nuanced understanding of clothing as both personalizing and culturally significant. The coloniality of clothing continues to gain purchase as a method of coercive political and cultural assimilation which uniquely targets women as the bearers of culture through their dress, and continues to police women and men of color. Falguni Sheth has argued that the dress-policing of women politicians of color in particular is part of a new colonial enterprise which harkens to a long history of colonialism. But, as Sheth writes: "Demands to behave or comport oneself 'properly' were not only about modesty or perceived liberation as in the case of Algerian women, they were often about knowing one's place . . . The regulation of clothing then, like today, was a vehicle to require women and men of color to know—to submit—to their subordinate place in relation to their masters and other free/elite populations" (Sheth 2019).

Liberal "Values" and Naturalization

The key component of the naturalization of value onto clothing relevant to its function in colonial projects is the refusal of the intersection of values. That is, the coloniality of clothing (including its contemporary iterations in veiling bans, dress policing, and clothing bans) functions by positing a primary signification, both pre-determined in advance and pre-structured by coloniality. For example, then French President Nicholas Sarkozy's statement that the burka "is not primarily a sign of religion, but of subservience" harkened to a history of French colonization which has similarly wielded the equation of veiling with unfreedom. In other words, by naturalizing the burka as an imminent threat to gender equality—understood as a value of liberal, secular democracy—those who argued in favor of the French veiling ban necessarily capitulate to the tactic of homogenizing groups and populations in order to advance their (rather paradoxical) ends of achieving "equality." As Sheth argues, the veil has taken on symbolic force as an imminent threat to liberalism largely because it is seen as a homogenous signifier instead of being seen as a part of heterogenous practices (2012). But, as Sheth writes: "veiling is neither purely embedded in a monolithic culture nor purely strategic, but rather inhabited for a variety of motives and reasons that will appear to be 'incoherent,' exploitative, or perceived as oppressive regardless of circumstance" (2012, 918).

Sarkozy's statement, echoed by lawmakers in Quebec in 2018-19, capitulate to the faulty logic of what Joan W. Scott calls "emancipation by association" (2018; cf. Scott 2012). The governing belief is that secularism reinforces a "universal code of justice" brought about by the "subordination of inherently patriarchal religions to gender neutral legal liberalism" (Brown 2012, 2). Carol Pateman and Charles Mills have shown,

respectively, how liberalism is not only bound up with sexism and racism, but that its principles are such because of its erasure of numerous intersecting histories of oppression (Pateman 1988; Mills 1997). Their critiques show that secular liberalism relies on an ideal and idealized (bordering on metaphysical) race and gender-neutral conception of equality, or rather, that such a conception proffers the white man as its ideal citizen.[47] The orthodox interpretation of the social contract is that such a contract is the very basis for freedom. Pateman and Mills alike show that such freedom is the freedom of the white man which requires the subordination of Black men and women and white women in differential ways. The social contract theory upon which liberalism relies not only excludes these bodies, but props up the great "myth" of liberalism that all citizens within a social contract are free, equal, and equally free. As the Black folk aphorism goes: "when white people say 'Justice,' they mean just us" (cf. Mills 1997).

It is not only liberalism, but secularism and secular liberalism which has systematically relied on gender and racial inequality in order to prop up its own great myth. Scott shows that gender inequality was "fundamental to the articulation of the separation of church and state that inaugurated Western modernity" (2018, 3). This "new order" of women's subordination assigned them to a feminized familial sphere designed both to complement and ensure the separation of this sphere with the "rational masculine realms of politics and economics" (2018, 3). As introduced above, the "emancipation by association" belief prescribes the destabilization of "inherently patriarchal religions" as absolutely paramount to women's equality understood as a guiding value of secular liberalism. In other words, gender equality as a value often becomes weaponized as

[47] Iris Marion Young brings explicit attention to the "metaphysical presuppositions" undergirding liberalism and the paradigm of distributive justice specifically (cf. Young 1990).

justification for, to use an enduring example, the legalization of veiling bans. The enduring (although fundamentally misguided) belief in fundamental or inherent gender equality which a discourse of secularity relies on is thereby used to "justify claims of white, Western, and Christian racial and religious superiority" (Scott 2018, 3-4). Such a view also functions to reinforce distinct cultural norms of feminine dress under the guise of gender equality promoted as a universal value which does not take cultural or religious considerations into mind as composites of gender. In other words, not only is the value of gender equality taken to promote the same interests across the globe, but its expression is also understood to *look* the same way irrespective of location. Such a view fails not only to take an intersectional approach to identity more broadly, but to understand that gender more specifically is necessarily made up of intersections.

The argument that veiling should be banned because it is a symbol of male domination is an inconsistent one. Writing on the 2010 debate in Catalonia on the proposed ban on burqas in public places, Martha Nussbaum writes that legislators who advance this line of argumentation do not also propose bans on other symbols of male domination (2012). The inconsistency betrays that the ban is itself a justificatory means to some other governmental ends. While Nussbaum couches the inconsistency within a broader framework of the politics of fear, I take it to indicate a gendered insecurity or anxiety about the inherence of equality within the nations proposing such bans, where a freedom of (women's dress) has been taken to be a stand-in or universal signifier for women's freedom and for equality. A challenge to the former thereby challenges the latter, even though the brief history of clothing's coloniality indicates that the promotion of the former is often employed as mere cover or as cover-up for programs of colonialism, domination, or

assimilation. For some women in Muslim-majority countries, veiling is an active means of resisting sexualization, and some women take up hijab as a form of protection (Lazreg 2009). The naturalization of religiously-based gendered oppression onto the veil would fail to seriously consider veiling as a response to persistent sexism and sexualization, among many other reasons behind Muslim veiling.

The naturalization of the veil also creates a false binary between anti-sexist and anti-racist efforts (Al-Saji 2004). When France banned "conspicuous religious symbols" in 2004, a false binary was created between anti-sexism and anti-racism, where critics of the law understood the French to be capitulating to the same tactics of the French colonization of Algeria. However, such a view was heard as "anti-feminist" or as sexist, since it argued against the supposed promotion of gender equality to which the ban was seen as supposedly contributing. The false binary pits anti-sexism against anti-racism which, as Al-Saji argues, logically excludes their interrelation and intersection. When debate ensued about *loi 21* in Quebec in 2019, the rhetoric of legislators advocating the ban similarly invoked secularism as a value which necessarily entailed the denial of religious expression through dress. The bill's passing, much like its counterparts, unequivocally targets non-Christian women of color and wields its support in the name of gender equality and freedom from oppression. Al-Saji writes: "In the case of Quebec, it is worth remembering that the social fabric from which Muslims are now being excluded was constructed via the excision, assimilation, and decimation of indigenous peoples and by suppressing the history of indigenous and Black slavery" (2019). Understood in light of an enduring legacy of colonialism and active ignorance, such policies shift the focus from one about "transparency and 'security'" to "an attempt to whitewash Muslims, by assimilating those who are 'moderate,' head-

uncovered,’ and ‘secular,’ while excluding those hijabi women who are cast as unruly and unassimilable” (2019).

Assimilationist policies and politics are indeed compatible with secular liberalism, although at odds with its purported value of multiculturalism. In the U.S. context, assimilation was an express aim of early New Deal era welfarist policies which drew on the belief that the welfare state was “a tool for turning peasants into Frenchmen,” or “immigrants into Americans” (cf. Weber 1976; cf. Kymlicka 2019). Insofar as liberal secularism also purports to uphold values of equality and multiculturalism, the tensions that emerge between them are relevant. Even though scholars have pointed out the unsustainability and unlikelihood of the welfare state to integrate and assimilate, it is worth reflecting on the enduring understanding of liberal, welfarist ideology with a certain assimilationist vision of nation-statehood. Even John Rawls defended the welfare state, which, Katrina Forrester writes, must be contextualized as a view that was forged in an era when liberalism was full of contradictions, “namely, a fundamental contradiction between equality and exclusion” (2019, xi). Such a contradiction is mirrored in that between assimilation and multiculturalism, where the former is bound up not only with the naturalization of value onto (reductive) gender-differentiated, racially-marked clothing, but with a conception of nationhood as European, white nationalism.

Liberal nationalism holds that a distinct obligation to national members can be squared with the values of liberty, formal equality, constitutional law, nondiscrimination, and democratic procedure (cf. Young 2000). Iris Marion Young has argued that efforts to distinguish the nation as a unique cultural group meriting its own distinct set of moral considerations presupposes what they aim to justify: that the nation is itself a particular

cultural group which one has special obligations of justice to above and beyond those of other nations (Young 2000, 148). European iterations of nationalism in particular, Young argues, tend to justify themselves as being "cosmopolitan," where cosmopolitanism is understood as a form of nationalism insofar as it privileges sameness over difference (2000, 147-8). Young here draws insights from Derrida's reflections on European identity. Derrida describes the dual imperative or contradiction between national and European identity, writing that Europe exists only through "non-identity to itself" (cf. Young 2000). As Young argues, nationalist ideologies capitulate to an essentializing tendency which maintain that there is some "essence" to nations and to national identity specifically. Nationalist ideologies thereby tend to define groups in "either/or" terms, conceiving of the nation as "strictly bounded between insiders and outsiders" (2000, 252). An integral part of Young's critique against liberal nationalism is the insistence of liberal nationalists that a nation is able to be distinguished from other ethnic communities by a distinct public culture (this is, at least, the most overt in David Miller's account, but also in Will Kymlicka's).[48] At the core of this new neo-nationalism is a rejection of cultural plurality understood as multiple modes of occupying the public sphere. Veiled women represent an affront to culture understood as secular, despite the role of religious plurality (understood as freedom of conscience) in the constitution of secular society. The affront is a prejudice masked (or veiled) as a political one (the issue of secular nationalism), itself bound up in the scapegoating of prejudice onto "taste." The aesthetic affront to taste (the perception of

[48] This results in the following binary: "Either a group is a historical community, living in its historic homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture, or it is a cultural group whose members have left their homeland voluntarily to make a new life within another nation. The concept of nation thus dominates the logic of the distinction between nation and ethnic group, as the hegemonic unity of a society that justifies both separate government and the expectation that newcomers will integrate. This either-or concept of nation, however, does not accommodate well to the actual diversity of peoples." (2000, 153-4)

differently dressed others) becomes perceived as a threat rather than an iteration of multiculturalism.

It is relevant to consider the interrelation between democratic liberalism and aesthetic individualism. To draw on earlier, "freedom" is often confused with, or seen as being expressed by, a "freedom to dress," where the assurance of the latter acts as a palliative to assure oneself that one possesses the former. Luc Ferry traces a history of democratic liberalism and aesthetic individualism. The capacity for self-determination and self-governance (freedom)—"to give oneself one's own laws"—is itself bound up with "the death of God" (1993). To put it simply: religion opposes freedom for Ferry. Substituting religion for culture, Ferry argues that in contemporary times, the expression of individuality creates the world rather than merely reflects it: that is, expression or representation does not refer itself to another world order. Ferry's position is ironic insofar as it maintains individual expression as both a contemporary value and as fundamentally creative, and yet denies that religious expression could have the same function. It will perhaps then be of little surprise to hear that Ferry was the architect of the 2004 French law banning conspicuous religious symbols (law 2004-2028 of 15 March 2004) while he was serving as the Minister of Education (2002-2004) under conservative Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin.

I previously indicated that the maintenance of freedom to dress as a value worth fighting for diagnoses an insecurity or an anxiety about gender and gender equality specifically. Based on the analysis above, this insight can be expanded even further, and the appearance of veiled women can be understood as signaling a threat to a particular form of liberalism as it is bound up with capitalism. Indeed, legislation aimed at unveiling may

thereby also be understood as an effort to maintain the capitalist order upon which liberalism relies, where freedom to dress may itself indicate free purchasing power (all for the sake of *truly expressing* your individuality. “Free dress” is then not only associated with (or justified by) the sexual freedom of women in particular, but with economic nationalism. Under this lens, the zoot suiters flaunted or made visible their poorness, and indeed mobilized their status as a form of collective order which reflected, like a mirror, the system’s failings (or maybe, the system working). As literal caricatures of their white, middle-class counterparts, zoot suiters represented both scrap and excess, leftovers and waste. Their clothes did not fit them. This of course has a meaning that is at least double. In the most literal sense, the clothing was too large: over-sized in a time when this was not the fashion. In another, the suits did not appear to fit them in the sense of “being right” for them, since suiting designated white and middle-class. As indicated above in Section I, the “mockery” of value that zoot-suiters were seen to be making functioned to challenge the status of the servicemen as guardians of those values.

“Value guarding” is perhaps just another way of saying “moral policing.” At least, both emerge in the face of “moral panic,” which manifests along a spectrum of public disapproval and is often disguised in decries against “bad” or “poor” taste. Here, I am adapting the view (and outdated legal “defense”) that confrontations with sexual difference may incite a “panic” which results in violence (cf. Lee 2009). Gay and trans panic defenses have historically justified homophobic and transphobic violence. In the case of the zoot suit riots, the perceived “mockery” of values instigated by the suited zoot suiters functioned to create a “panic” in white servicemen in particular. The violence was ultimately justified against the zoot suiters on account of their perceived stance against the war: the “bad taste”

of donning garments with an "excess" of fabric in the midst of a fabric ration. But as I wrote above, the fabric was not in fact "excessive" understood as the product of deliberate consumption. Instead, the suits were often thrifted and oversized. Amateur tailoring (or no tailoring) is what resulted in the oversized look, not eager and wasteful shopping. In fact, the zoot-suiters had the *most* sensible and considerate response to the rations. In line with the analysis I have been giving throughout, I understand their "panic" to be better justified by a certain threat of emasculation. Here, the threat of emasculation does not come from a "making feminine," but in expanding masculinity beyond whiteness and beyond (or below) the middle-class: in making suited masculinity Black, Brown, and poor. This was the "threat" posed by the zoot suiters, who also threatened to expose white masculinity as having an unthinking nationalist loyalty, which they called into question. It is for this reason, too, that we cannot see the sapeurs as merely wearing their master's clothes, when they are in fact using the master's tools.

My argument throughout this chapter extends the insight that "taste" functions as a mode of discrimination by foregrounding the role of naturalization in colonial domination, the criminalization of clothing, and violence abetted by aesthetic appearance. The naturalization of particular values onto garments has both promoted racist, xenophobic violence (whether in physical violence or in the imposition of ordinances or bans) by naturalizing particular garments, styles, etc., onto bodies. Garments, in other words, come to *stand in* for bodies and perceived actions or threats alike by coming to signify particular values and ideas. The assumed transitive property taking place between *garment* and *meaning* elides the ways in which meaning(s) are transformed, altered, and adapted by lived experiences of dress. For instance, in naturalizing the veil as inherently oppressive to

women, the discourse and debates surrounding veiling legislation were forced into a binary: either veils *are* or *are not* oppressive. This view, as scholars like Al-Saji and Akbar Akhgari argue, both obscures nuance and reduces (complex) lived experience into a simple either/or. In the case of the zoot suits, the naturalization of value onto the traditional "suit" informed the perceived "threat" of those values posed by the zoot suits.

Conclusion

In its essentialism, naturalization functions to erase or to minimize difference. The judgment of clothing as too mundane or as too frivolous to warrant "serious" attention is indeed what has permitted the events I have detailed throughout, or at least has contributed to its success in not raising much widespread alarm, panic, or criticism. As I suggested at the beginning, neither of these judgments are epistemically neutral, but neither are they socially and politically neutral. Part of the efficacy of processes of naturalization is owed to such judgments, which both distracts and deflects from any "serious" attention paid to clothing. As Falguni Sheth recently observed, the dress policing of women of color politicians in particular is a tactic of neocolonialism when it is understood in its larger historical context, only part of which I have accounted for here. But in naturalizing values onto garments, these items function as synecdoche: aiding in the maintenance of harmful stereotypes and biases. In other words, a particular part—the perceived value(s) of particular garments—stands in for a whole (in this case, whole persons or entire populations). Individual personhood—including that person's lived experience of dress, is subordinated to broad or general categories which are themselves marked by non-neutral descriptors. For instance, it is not just the case that a hoodie may signify a Black body, but

a criminalized Black body: or a Black body about to commit a crime. Similarly, hijab may not just signify "Muslim woman," but *oppressed* Muslim woman. The synecdoche affected by garments is therefore not a simple one. "Suits" is a common synecdoche designating "businessmen." Even the presence of suits may designate this group of corporate go-getters. But as my analysis of the zoot-suiters shows, "suits" are not themselves neutral signifiers, and in fact the term, as synecdoche, is inflected with both race and class. If it were not, the zoot suiters would not have incited such "moral panic."

On my view, the histories of clothing's coloniality and enduring forms of prejudicial policing indicate a distrust of appearance: not as "mere," but as an expression of competing truths or world-views. At the same time, an essentialist belief about values is projected onto clothing, precisely as a way of snuffing out competing interpretations of those values, where such competing values may be perceived as threatening values which themselves compete with others. As I have shown throughout, values like freedom in particular are not racially neutral, ungendered, or unclassed. Indeed, freedom and related notions of patriotism, secularism, and nationality are implicated in fraught histories and fierce battles involving clothing, and efforts at denuding a person or a people are part of enduring legacies of imperialism and colonialism which have themselves relied on a transitive property of consent, but which more broadly refers to a program of value transference. The naturalization of clothing continues to gain purchase in various methods of attempted political and cultural assimilation. As Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) put it at her Congressional swearing-in ceremony in 2019: "Next time someone tells Bronx girls to take off their hoops, they can just say they're dressing like a Congresswoman" (2019).

VI. RECOVERING OUR CLOTHES

Introduction

In Chapter V, I suggested that it is only because dress *personalizes* its wearer that it works so effectively as a tool of *depersonalization.* I understand personalization as the formation rather than the destruction of subjectivity. And while its role in depersonalization was made apparent by the last chapter, I here want to emphasize the role that clothing plays in the formation of subjectivity.[49] Iris Marion Young turns to the sense of "touch" as a modality by which (feminine) subjectivity is meaningfully constituted. While her focus is on feminine subjectivity in particular, the insight is a crucial one for understanding the role of dress more broadly in the constitution of subjectivity. The theorization of touch is inspired by the work of Luce Irigaray, who also advocated a "turn" to touch as an alternative to the male gaze, or what Irigaray thematizes as a particular mode of vision which represents, objectifies, and sexualizes (1985). Although indebted to Irigaray, Young's work does not encounter the same problem of essentialism as Irigaray's work. In developing a "feminine" alternative to "masculine" vision, Irigaray both concedes vision to the male gaze and essentializes femininity as a soft, supple, gentle counter-part to an equally essentialized conception of masculinity as rigidly objectifying. I will argue that Young does not, as

[49] Throughout, I will focus on "feminine" subjectivity in particular, which I understand as an identification with and/or a pleasure derived in dressing or in otherwise appearing feminine or as femme. I do not understand feminine subjectivity as an identificatory marker of biological sex. In the topic of femininity, the two main motives of my dissertation collide or align: 1) the metaphysical subordination of appearances to essences; and 2) the feminization of fashion, and subsequent subordination of the feminine within philosophy. It is my view that the "feminization" of fashion, or the designation of clothing as primarily a feminine concern, has perpetuated its erasure as a meritorious topic of philosophical concern. I understand "feminization" itself as roughly synonymous with the concern for (or love of) the world of appearances that has itself been denigrated throughout the history of philosophy. I thereby take the feminization of fashion as an extension of the subordination of appearances to essences.

Irigaray does, problematically invert the vision/touch dyad, so that (feminized) touch is privileged over and against (masculinized) vision. Instead, I argue that Young develops a conception of touch and of the "tactile imagination" which shows how the lived experience of dress and of being clothed both *personalize* and inform subjectivity. The "pleasure" one may take in one's own clothing cannot be reduced to or delimited by eternal signifiers or "a priori" meanings. I develop instead—following Young following Merleau-Ponty following Husserl—a conception of clothing (a conception of *pleasure* in clothing) as a multi-sensory and affective experience.

The chapter will proceed as follows. In the first section, I make recourse to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty in order to show how the role of clothing's materiality in eliciting sensations is vital in disrupting a conception of clothing as a set of overdetermined signifiers. The accounts of matter, sensation, and style that I develop in this section will suggest that lived experiences of dress animate subjectivity in a central, and not merely "superficial" way. In the second section of the chapter, I introduce Young's discussion of touch as a resource for the recovery of a genuine pleasure in clothing (not only for feminine subjects, although this is the focus of Young's essay). I argue that her thematization of touch in the essay does not capitulate to a mere reversal of the vision/touch dyad, in which objectifying, masculinist vision is simply traded for a feminine sensibility of touch. Ultimately, my analysis here situates lived experiences of clothing and femininity alike as meaningful and constitutive sites of subjectivity.

Recovering a *Sense* of Clothing with Husserl and Merleau-Ponty

Before turning to Young's analysis of touch as a mode through which to access the clothed body-cum-lived body of phenomenology (Section II), I will first show the import of matter (*hyle*) in constituting perception. Filling out this missing phenomenological background will show that Young's analysis of touch as a vital resource in "recovering" pleasure in clothing does not merely constitute a (problematic) reversal of the vision/touch dyad. In what follows, I detail the role of matter in both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, including relevant corresponding concepts, including: sensations, imagination, depth, and style, in that order. By showing that matter exists neither as a set of external properties nor as *experiences* of external properties, I will then be equipped to suggest that the experiences of *touch* and of *pleasure* function phenomenologically as constitutive of subjectivity. In other words, touch experiences are fundamentally *generative* of meaning, experience, and of the meaning of experience, and thereby to a sense of clothing as constitutive of subjectivity by way of perception. To put it simply, the phenomenological conception of subjectivity I develop here as pertains to dressed experience directly challenges the view that femininity is (over)determined from the outset in its signification. In refusing to concede subjectivity to discourses of clothing and femininity alike, I—along with Young—argue that the overdetermination of meaning (the meaning of femininity, the meaning of clothes) effected by naturalization covers over or elides the import of clothing in constituting subjectivity.

Husserl and Merleau-Ponty both suggest that sensory experiences ought not to be understood as *capturing* objects (as objectifying), but as modes of orientation which commune with the world, and not over and against it. The analysis provided here suggests

that even objectifying vision does not overdetermine or wholly constitute subjectivity such that there is no individual subject that remains. If this were the case, there would be no pleasure (or dissatisfaction, or anything else for that matter) that was my own in any individuated way (i.e., apart from the influence and internalization of discourses and norms). Insofar as it is *my* body that responds to, for example, the experience of objectification, the experience of individual sensations that arise in and on it impact and augment my perception, including self-perception. My own self-image is modulated by the feeling-sensations elicited in experiences of myself as a dressed being, meaning that the image I have of myself is forged from these sensations and not separate from them. In other words, the image I have of myself has not been "put there" from without. While this means that negative or even violent occurrences of objectification are also not superficial—that even a stare from afar can actually make me *feel* differently in my clothing and in my body, in both *Leibs*—it also means that my own feelings, such as those of myself in clothing, can similarly affect and constitute my perception. It is not only that vision (the stare) affects touch (the feeling of myself in my clothing), but that touch also affects vision. Young's turn to touch can only be understood as an *uncritical* turn from vision to touch *if* the phenomenological account of sensations I have detailed here is ignored. Understood as a mere reversal which does nothing to subvert objectifying, masculinist vision, touch could only be understood as an uncritical valorization of the feminine.

Hyle (Matter), Sensations, and Imagination

For Husserl, touch (or touch-data) constitutes a type of *hyle* or matter. Invoking Kant, *hyle* refers to the schematic content of experience: formless content that both has the potential

to receive form and which is itself not directly perceivable (cf. Gallagher 1986, 132). Husserl's examples include "color-data, touch-data, and tone-data," but also include "sensuous pleasure, pain, and tickle sensations, and so forth" (Hua III/I, 192/203). Hyletic data compose "a constantly changing flux of sensed material" (Gallagher 1986, 134). *Hyle* is not out there or external to perception, but comes to consciousness by being made available for perceptual and reflective experience alike (cf. Gallagher 1986, 134; cf. Hua XIX/I). In other words, it is through experience and reflection on experience alike that sensations come to have meaning: that is to say, come to consciousness at all, since consciousness is always inflected by the *meaning(s)* of things, and not just by "things."

Hyletic data are not the same as "objective properties." Hyletic data refers to the contents of consciousness which are necessary for the constitution of noetic phenomena/appearances. Early in his writings on *hyle*, Husserl wrote that hyletic data have no intentional content in themselves.[50] He amended this view later on, writing that intentionality is in fact at work in the hyletic stratum itself (Husserl 1907, 1991; cf. Staiti 2019). The change of heart is significant. Not only is it a direct rebuke of Merleau-Ponty's later claim that Husserl submits to a realism about matter, but more directly to my purpose here, it suggests that matter is *affectively laden*: readied for apprehension and engagement with subjects. In other words, it is not the case that hyletic data exist "out there," ready only to be apprehended as they are in their concrete existence, as objective objects with naturalized meaning. Instead, they exist as "tendency" [*Tendenz*] which operates in tandem with other data and with subjects.[51]

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[50] Husserl first discusses the particular intentionality of *hyle* in his analysis of inner time consciousness (Ideas I 1931/2012; cf. Hua X 1905).

[51] The intentionality at work within the hyletic stratum is not the intentionality of consciousness, however.

Concretely, this means that experiences of particular sensations are informed by experience and by perception more broadly: zoomed-out from the localizable sensation. While the "push and pull" of my clothing constitutes a sensation of touch for Husserl, the sensation is itself contingent on a host of other factors, including but not limited to my mood and intentionality. So, for example, the garment may appear to me to be uncomfortable and constricting if I am experiencing anxiety about an upcoming presentation: since I am "there" in consciousness (at the presentation, worrying how it will go). Even though Husserl writes that there are "real properties" or "material qualities," he does not invoke this as a juxtaposition to "sensed" or presumably "unreal" properties. Rather, real properties (the *matter* of a thing, including its extension, color, etc.,) are just as subject to affection as sensings, which we can understand as the experience of sensations, including, for example, the warmth of a hand or the "pressure and pull" of my clothing (Al-Saji 2010, 19; Husserl 1999, 176).[52] The difference for Husserl is not one of reality and irreality, but of the perceived place or *localization* of the sensation.

Understanding that *hyle* has intentionality is vital in disrupting the view that matter (including clothing) is immune to shifting significations.[53] In *Ding Und Raum* (*Thing and Space*, 1907), Husserl writes of the central role that kinesthetic data play in shaping or

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The former exists as "tendency"" [Tendenz] which, as Andrea Staiti puts it: "creates synthetic connections among the rudimentary sensory materials of hyle and organizes them in pre-objective unities that are ready for objectual apprehension" (Staiti 2019, 12). Tendency here indicates only that hyle are not directed towards a transcendental object, by transcendental consciousness, or by teleology. Instead, tendency indicates that hyle are affectively laden, readied for apprehension.

[52] For Al-Saji, "sensings" is a concept with potential to undermine the active/passive, subject/object binaries (2010, 19).

[53] Upon hearing the enduring note of the violin, the process of abstraction results in the remaining or residual sense datum as inextricably linked to time and to temporal extension specifically (Ideas I 1931/2012; see cf. Addition to Ideas I, Hua IV, 22; Hua X; Rabanaque 2003, 208). *Hyle* compose sensations: both by giving sense (in the apprehension of sensation), illustrated in the example above, and by organizing fields of sense. An analysis of the latter is taken up in *Ding Und Raum* (Thing and Space) (1907).

morphing sensations in making the ego aware of bodily motion (cf. Hua XVI; cf. Rabanaque 2003, 209). The intentionality of *hyle* ought then to be understood not as a kind of vitalism or realism about matter, but as the capacity for things to make *us* aware of *them,* instead of the intentionality of consciousness acting as the filter for what we do and do not notice, and in what ways. This is applicable to specific sensations as well (such as in "push and pull" of clothing mentioned above), and not just to "objects" of matter. The process of making the ego aware occurs because *hyle* have affective force (*affektive kraft*) comprising both attraction [*Anziehung*] and repulsion [*Abstoss*]. That hyle have such affective force means that the ego is made aware of the body precisely because *hyle* contribute to sensations of both attraction and revulsion, including pleasure and pain (cf. Manuscript C; cf. Rabanaque 2003, 211). *Hyle* thereby works affectively by attracting or repulsing the ego: in bringing background to foreground or by relegating foreground to background. To draw once more on the example given above: while I may be aggravated and uncomfortable at the constricting sensation elicited by my clothing (itself elicited by my nerves), I may experience it very differently the following day, while unwinding with friends. In the former instance, my ego is "repulsed," while in the latter, it is "attracted."

For Husserl and Merleau-Ponty alike, sensations are not what happen on or to the body, but *constitute* the lived body in its relation to the world. Consider Fink's notion that clothing constitutes a second *Leib.* Concretely, this means that the sensations afforded by clothing not only effect or impact the *Leib*—a derivative account which would reinforce a subject/object dualism—but are themselves fundamental to the lived body in a particularly special or unique way. While it is the case that *all* sensations are constitutive (and ought not to be understood as external perceptions/experiences of matter), the proximity that

clothing has to our skin—the constant and consistent elicitation of sensations—makes it both a vital and enduring part of the lived body's constitution. While we may only occasionally burn a hand, be embraced, or hear music, we are almost always clothed. To be clear, *all* sensations are "intentional" and vital for both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological accounts of subjectivity. But while all sensations are meaningful—that is, participate in meaning-making—clothing is uniquely situated as a constant site.

Husserl's insight into the fundamentally temporal nature of sensations is extended by Merleau-Ponty, for whom they also become spatialized. This means that sensations *spatialize*, understood as giving shape or form to the world.[54] It is not just that they spatialize in the sense of differentiating—between self and other, self and hot stove, and so on—but spatialize in the sense that they *attract* and *repulse* the ego: the idea of which I introduced above. In bringing consciousness closer to (or farther away from) certain sensations, the world takes shape *as* a world where I am moved to (and away from) particular sensations. This is significant because it suggests a process of dynamic and contingent interaction between self and world, and means that consciousness is at the ready to be affected by sensuous elicitation (which is not to be understood as predetermined in any way). This capacity of consciousness relegates dressed experience as consistent and contingent sources of sensuous elicitation and of meaning, and not as a *stable* site of meaning in which significations are predetermined or else otherwise predictable and determinable. Concretely, my experience of my dress as constricting may also *constrict*

[54] This does not also mean that sensations themselves have a discrete form for Merleau-Ponty, who rejects the hyle/morphe distinction itself. For Husserl, the hyle/morphe distinction was first introduced in *Ideas I* as the twofold structure of a noesis (an act of intention). For Husserl, morphe is merely that through which hyle are apprehended. For Merleau-Ponty, the distinction exists as a secondary or as a derivative one; he argues that Husserl's account considers hyle as void of meaning, whereby he himself maintains that the field of sense is "already charged with meaning" (2012 4).

my world, which may not appear to me then as one in which I can move freely in. I may be more timid, inward, and distracted, such that my sense of the world as an open space augments in conformity with the sensations elicited by my dress, my mood, and so on.

Sensations are also affective. Affective or sensuous sensations ("feeling-sensations") are kinesthetic, meaning that "they are cut off from the representative function ascribed to presentational-sensations (Al-Saji 2000, 52). By motivating both tactile and visual sensations alike, kinesthetic sensations play a "constitutive role in perception" (2000, 52). They "outline the features and possibilities of the world" which are then represented by visual perception (2000, 52). Feeling-sensations, and the broader view of sensations offered by Husserl, suggest a different way of considering presentation-sensations, or sensations of vision in consciousness. Instead of considering presentation-sensations and affective sensations to be wholly different in kind, or as having a causal relationship where the latter is the condition of possibility for the former, the very recuperation of affective sensations may refigure our understanding of presentation-sensations (cf. Al-Saji 2000). In other words, the feelings elicited by tactile sensations (the feelings one has in clothes, for instance) are not only relevant and constitutive *of* and *for* perception, but visual perception as well. Concretely, this means that the overdetermination of the meaning of clothing is incompatible with a truly phenomenological account.

What is significant about this idea is that it challenges the primacy of visual perception in favor of a more complex multimodal system or network of sensations which includes the affective and the kinesthetic. On this new (old) Husserlian model, the lived body is "constituted through the localization of sensations in and on it, for which touch

(bound with kinaesthesis) is of particular importance" (Al-Saji 2000, 54).[55] Said otherwise, experiences of visuality are not *wholly* or *solely* visual in nature, but are themselves informed by and through a constellation of other sensations.

Affect functions to orient both temporally and spatially for Husserl (cf. Rodemeyer 2006, 159; Zahavi 1999, 116). As Dan Zahavi puts it, to be affected is tantamount to being "invited" to "turn one's attention toward that which exerts the affection" (1999, 116). It is not that touch is wholly other to vision, but that it disrupts "a particular model of vision and more generally of perception" (Al-Saji 2010, 27). On Al-Saji's reading, touch operates as such an interruption which does not naively turn away from vision, but shows how the monolithic understanding of vision as objectifying (as inhibitive of subjectivity, as Young will write) simply misses the import of sensations in generating a subjectivity which is more than passive, objectified, or lacking (2000, 2010).[56] For my purpose here, the reading I have been giving refutes the idea that clothing is overdetermined: not only or just by vision, but by the objectifying gaze in particular.

The imagination is vital in bridging hyletic data with judgments and with reflections of one's own experiences: reflective consciousness opposed to consciousness. In a phenomenological register, such higher order processes refer specifically to layers of judgment. The reader may object that this understanding of hyletic data as the first step of higher-order judgment functionally subordinates the data to revered processes of judgment:

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[55] The difference between Körper and Leib is "the insertion of sensings [Empfindnisse] into the body [Leib], or in its possession of sensations" (2000, 54). Indeed, the lived body is nothing but "this field of localized sensations" (2000, 54). The lived body is a body for whom matter matters, and such mattering occurs through sensations.

[56] This points to a crucial difference between Merleau-Ponty and Husserl's respective accounts of the touching-touched hands. As Al-Saji puts it: "Whereas for Merleau-Ponty being-touched interrupts the subjectivity of the hand, identified with its intentional activity, for Husserl this generates a subjectivity inseparable from passivity and affectivity" (2010, 29).

the very charge I accused of Kant in Chapter II. There is a fine line between an idealizing tendency which would render material stuff subordinate to cognitive judgment, and a more nuanced conception of sensory data as not merely sensory. The constitutive role of hyletic data in both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, however, aligns them more with the latter concepetion than the former. Concretely, this means that dress is not the "mere matter" upon which judgments are borne because it does not exist either as wholly separate from or subordinated to the faculty of judgment.

For Husserl, the imagination functions as a medium or a facilitator between hyletic data and these "higher order cognitive processes" (Aldea 2013, 372; cf. Hua III/Ideas II 1989).[57] This means that the imagination does not rely on the representative function or capacity to "objectify" understood as delineating borders and boundaries by turning persons into objects and into images. As Smaranda Aldea writes: "The language of mental images invites, in the case of imagining consciousness [Phantasie], significant limitations as to what its objects (and powers) may be" (2013, 372). One of the most significant hindrances is that of the space of objects, or of their spatialization. Limited to the representational medium, a "crippling consequence of this claim is that imagined objects cannot exhibit features that surpass the scope of features exhibited by perceptual objects (such as spatial determination)" (2013, 372). The "close dependence of imagination on perception" elicited by the representational model of the imagination fails to come to grips with this facilitator model of the imagination offered here instead.[58] That is, it is not the

[57] For Husserl, the imagination [Phantasie] functions by modifying direct perceptual presentation (opposed to indirect perceptual presentations, or picturing [bildliche]. Imagination is not the same as image-consciousness; it does not require mental images (Aldea 2013; Hua XXIII). This is in contrast with indirect perceptual presentations, also referred to as picturing [bildliche]. As Smaranda Aldea argues, imagination for Husserl does not actually require mental images (2013, 374).

[58] Even though, as Aldea writes, Husserl is staunch to abandon the import of mental images, he nonetheless

case that the imagination is limited to perception, for if this were the case, femininity would really be "internalized" in the way that Bartky suspects at her most critical: that is, as a set of perceptions from an outside world which fundamentally constitute one's "inner" world. Instead, however, the imagination may function as a mode of resistance to perception, including the perceptions which arise from or because of the objectifying vision of others.

Depth and Style

For Husserl, *hyle* does not exist representationally, as self-contained and limited. Instead, it exists affectively in a "constantly changing flux" (Gallagher 1986, 134). Merleau-Ponty misunderstands Husserl's conception of *hyle*, and so also misinterprets his conception of sensation. On Merleau-Ponty's reading of Husserl, *hyle* exists "out there" in the world, and therefore is interchangeable with objective properties. This would renders sensations as nothing other than "products of analysis" corresponding to "nothing in our experience" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 3).[59] Merleau-Ponty rejects the distinction between *hyle* and *morphe* itself, writing that "there is no hyle, no sensation which is not in communication with other sensations or the sensations of other people, and for this very reason there is no morphe, no apprehension or apperception, the office of which is to give significance to matter that has none" (1962, 405; 1964, 256). Essentially, Merleau-Ponty's critique maintains that Husserl considers hyle as void of meaning, whereby Merleau-Ponty maintains that the field of sense is "already charged with meaning" (2012, 4).

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maintains the role that the imagination plays at "the highest levels of abstract cognition" where the imagination does not play a representational role (2013, 373).

[59] More specifically, what Merleau-Ponty rejects (or thinks he is rejecting) is a latent hylomorphism in Husserl.

Merleau-Ponty's misreading of Husserl is a productive one, however, since Merleau-Ponty's critique is vital in informing and motivating his later formulation of the concept of depth. Even though Merleau-Ponty is wrong to write that Husserl considers *hyle* as "void of meaning," his criticism motivates a related critique of the concept of "depth." On a view that maintains that the world is formed from a base of "mutually indifferent, meaningless sensations," "depth" would only ever be mere subjective projection (Mazis 1988, 228). In rejecting the former, Merleau-Ponty also rejects the latter. The "depth" of meaning he conceptualizes instead is necessarily bound up in—is unfolded in—both space and time, lest it be relegated as externally spatialized and/or temporalized sensations which would become discoverable to the subject understood as wholly separate from the depths of meaning. This is clearly rejected by Merleau-Ponty, writing that when seeing an object, he always feels that there is "still some being beyond what I currently see," which is "not merely more visible being, but also more tangible or audible being, and not merely more sensible being" (2012, 224).

Merleau-Ponty gives an account of depth—of deep subjectivity—meant to juxtapose its "shallow" counterpart, understood as the dualistically-configured subjectivity which displaces meaning from matter.[60] Shallow subjectivity is discoverable. Merleau-Ponty thereby aims to conceive of depth as the primary dimension of experience. In working to develop a non-dualistic ontology based on the rejection of shallow subjectivity,

[60] What Merleau-Ponty later conceives of as "haunting" indicates the residuum of meaning that cannot be captured by the conception of sensation which he rejects. Depth thereby becomes conceived as the very "haunting of time" which refers to the "peculiar way in which perception proceeds by regression to earlier significations" (Mazis 2016, 238). The related concept of the *flesh* refers to that "depth of experience re-called and re-membered in memory" (Mazis 2016, 238). It is, as Merleau-Ponty writes in his working notes, "because of depth that things have a flesh" (2016, 219). The reversibility of the flesh again indicates Merleau-Ponty's rejection of dualist ontology: that "things are the prolongation of my body and my body is the prolongation of the world" (2012, 147).

itself predicated on his rejection of/critique of Husserlian sensations, Merleau-Ponty invokes the red dress. It is worth citing the passage in its entirety:

> The red dress a fortiori holds with all its fibers onto the fabric of the visible, and thereby onto a fabric of invisible being. A punctuation in the field of red things, which includes the tiles of roof tops, the flags of gatekeepers and of the Revolution, certain terrains near Aix or in Madagascar, it is also a punctuation in the field of red garments, which includes, along with the dresses of women, robes of professors, bishops, and advocate generals, and also in the field of adornments and that of uniforms. And its red literally is not the same as it appears in one constellation or in the other, as the pure essence of the Revolution of 1917 precipitates in it, or that of the eternal feminine, or that of the public prosecutor, or that of the gypsies dressed like hussars who reigned twenty-five years ago over an inn on the Champs-Elysées. A certain red is also a fossil drawn up from the depths of imaginary worlds. If we took all these participations into account, we would recognize that a naked color, and in general a visible, is not a chunk of absolutely hard, indivisible being, offered all naked to a vision which could be only total or null, but is rather a sort of straits between exterior horizons and interior horizons ever gaping open, something that comes to touch lightly and makes diverse regions of the colored or visible world resound at the distances, a certain differentiation, an ephemeral modulation of this world—less a color or a thing, therefore, than a difference between things and colors, a momentary crystallization of colored being or of visibility" (1968, 132).

The red dress is not a thing understood as a discrete entity, since this again would effectively limit it to its representative function and inhibit its fundamental involvement as a participant in meaning-making processes. The different historical and contextual iterations of "red" have all contributed to a vast network of meaning-constellations, meaning that the presentation of red in a particular instance is not the same red that presents itself in other historical configurations.

I do not perceive a *pure* or *discrete* red. Instead, what I do perceive is *red* as it is configured within a larger network of significations. Since the sensation of color for

Merleau-Ponty is not equivocal to the perception of color-data, what I see or otherwise experience and perceive is always more and other than a red being or red thing. In considering red as one point embedded in or connected to a larger constellation—which is itself what I perceive in perceiving the red dress—it is not possible on Merleau-Ponty's account to understood the red as "a chunk of absolutely hard, indivisible being, offered all naked to a vision which could be only total or null" (1968, 132). On the view of color which Merleau-Ponty rejects, either you see the color red or you don't, and perception is correspondingly either complete or incomplete. On Merleau-Ponty's alternative view, the situated and constellated red becomes an "ephemeral modulation of the world" rather than a discrete, objective quality of it. It is therefore not that "red" exists independently and is either seen or not seen, but that the perception of "red" is itself configured within a larger network of meanings and significations which are themselves both spatialized and temporalized. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, the red of a flag does not signify the same meanings as the red of a dress. Nor does the red of a *particular* flag signify the same meanings as the red of another flag, and so on and so forth. The insight is a vital one for disrupting a conception of (feminine) clothing as a bloc of homogenous and naturalized signifiers.

In light of this amended view of the perception of sensory qualities as both historical and contextual, clothing's "ephemerality" (wielded as an indictment of its relevance or import to philosophical discussion) begins to appear less as a criticism than as a vital component of a perceptual ontology. In other words, ephemerality is not the *lack* of meaning (or depth), but a rhythmic state of *keeping up* with shifting meanings and significations. Ephemerality ought not to be synonymous with instability, where *instability*

is itself understood as an antonym of *meaning* (purportedly "stable," i.e., existing throughout time and space). Instead, it is meaning itself which changes in different contexts and throughout different times. Ephemerality is less an indictment than it is the way or mode that meaning shows up: as historically-contingent, as changing, and at times, as fleeting.

Instead of perception understood as the perception of discrete entities, Merleau-Ponty reconceives of perception as a "living communication with the world." The communication (between body and world, or rather, *of* body and world) is facilitated on the "intentional fabric" of the world (2012, 53). Recall Merleau-Ponty's charge against Husserl that hyle is void of intentionality (a view that, remember, he amended). The phrase "intentional fabric" cleary invokes this critique of the early Husserl, while also suggesting that *hyle* are intentional for Merleau-Ponty: that fabric, with its colors and textures, is intentional. The term also indicates the tactile nature of perception (perception is "palpating" things with our look, "cloth[ing] them with our gaze) conceived in juxtaposition to the notion that sense-data (color-data, touch-data, etc.) exist out there, and have no intentionality (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 131). "Clothing" things with our "gaze" does not mean covering over them (as if capturing them), nor does it mean that the "gaze" is hegemonic and objectifying. Rather, it indicates to me that we may see and interact with the world as a shifting and ephemeral locus of meanings, where ephemerality does not indicate a *loss* of meaning, but is instead understood as the very condition of possibility for meaning. The "intentional fabric of the world" is also the "fabric of the visible" for Merleau-Ponty, for whom the "depth" of meaning exists as a chiasmic structure of visibility and invisibility. That is, to quote from earlier, there is "still some being beyond what I

currently see," which is "not merely more visible being, but also more tangible or audible being, and not merely more sensible being" (2012, 224). The visible world is also an intentional world, and does not stand in juxtaposition to, or over and against, the subject.

In extending (rather than departing from) Husserl's elaboration of the affective intentional quality of hyletic data and of sensations and their import for perception, Merleau-Ponty develops the ontological dimension—the ontological significance—of clothing for perception. In writing that the red dress of one context is "literally" not the same as in others, Merleau-Ponty affirms that experiences condition perception and, through perception, the meaning(s) of what is perceived. It is not the case that the meaning or significance of a particular red dress is the same as *all* or *any other* red dress, but that the meaning(s) only arise—indeed, do not exist outside of—the particular set of significations constellated around a specific experience. The "pleasure" one may take in one's own clothing, as I will discuss in the next section, cannot be reduced to or delimited by eternal signifiers or "a priori" meanings.

Merleau-Ponty adamantly rejects a dualist ontology which would consider things to be composites of their objective properties. Recall that this view submits to a metaphysics which supplies a notion of things as "shallow," or, as *nothing more* than such composite characteristics which appear in perception.[61] For Merleau-Ponty, the unity of a thing is a "unique manner of existing of which its properties are a secondary expression" (2012, 333). This "unique manner of existing," or style, refigures a "thing" from being a composite of its objective properties to an *existential unity* (2012, 333; cf. Matherne 2017).

[61] For Merleau-Ponty, it is not only realist or empiricist traditions that produce "shallow" subjects and objects alike, but idealist or intellectualist ones as well, which would trade objective properties for concepts or ideas as the unifying, underlying, or "essential" substrate of subjectivity.

Style is therefore inseparable from things: it inhabits things (333). Style is, as Samantha Matherne writes, “that which binds a thing and all its parts together as an existential unity” (2017, 710). The embodied and enduring nature of style is essential for Merleau-Ponty’s rejection of the intellectualist view (2017, 710). That is, he argues that the sense or style is “not a certain ideal … that would only be accessible to the understanding” (2012, 333). Style is a “way of existing,” that can only be accessed directly in and through perception. Through such direct experience, style opens up a “horizon of sense” understood as the “internal horizon” of the object (2012, 476; cf. Matherne 2017; cf. Husserl 1939, 32-36, 361). In line with the preceding analysis, internal horizon ought to be understood as the perceptual field opened by—left indeterminate by—the affective intentional structure of sensings. Said otherwise, the internal horizon of a thing or a person is elicited by their style as the manifold possibilities contained within it. Such possibilities are not predetermined, but always necessarily indeterminate, since *hyle* are not contained within things (or ideas) but come to be in a “living communication.” A horizon “holds out the unknown to you as something to explore,” or, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, “to promise us always ‘something’ more to see” (2017, 712; 2012, 348).

For Merleau-Ponty, properties are determined and opened up by style, and not the other way around. This is in part because the very description of properties demands the invocation of the thing’s “manner of being.” In other words, definitions and descriptions demand “the entire subject,” which cannot be given (2012, 337). Indeed, the very difficulties that come with describing someone’s style point to its *depth,* as understood in a Merleau-Pontian register. Matherne writes: “if you have two red objects, say a red carpet and a red dress, the redness of each will not be the same because each red will be

determined by the respective object's style and the way in which this style binds the redness to the object's other properties" (2017, 720).[62] Style is both a non-essentializing and yet essential feature of Merleau-Ponty's ontology. For Merleau-Ponty, not only is style inseparable from the person or object, but the person or object is inseparable from its style. On this account, clothing's significations are modified in coordination with the distinct style of their wearer, whose perceptions and experiences of dress meaningfully impact the "existential unity" of the outfitted person. The dressed body constitutes a particular type of *lived body,* the style of which is impacted by clothing.

The Pleasure of Clothes: Young, Femininity, and Phenomenology

For Sandra Bartky, femininity *undermines* feminism and therefore cannot be meaningful embraced, either on an individual or collective level. Her critique is cashed out most explicitly against liberal feminism. As Bartky puts it, this view understands that "the preservation of a woman's femininity is quite compatible with her struggle for liberation" (1990, 78). She writes: "In the language of fashion magazines and cosmetic ads, making

[62] For Merleau-Ponty, style, and not objective properties, are what aids both perceptual presence and perceptual constancy. The problem of perceptual presence "stems from questions related to how it is possible for us to perceive features of objects that are not directly given to our embodied point of view," such as "when I perceive a house as having a back side even though I am looking at its front side" (Matherne 2017, 692). Perceptual constantly involves the question of how we can "perceive something as constant in spite of varying perspectives and perceptual conditions" (2017, 693). Both views of Merleau-Ponty's shortcomings amount to what Schellenberg has called "the unification problem" or the problem of how we are to have a unified experience given the "ephemeral nature" of perceptual appearances according to Merleau-Ponty. For Merleau-Ponty, the unification of perception (of places, persons, and objects) is achieved on account of the unique style of all that is perceived. He sometimes uses style and sense (*sens*) interchangeably, such as when he writes that "the cafés, the faces, the polars along the quays," are all "cut out of the total being of Paris" which "only serves to confirm a certain style or a certain sense [*sens*] of Paris" (2012, 294). I accept what Matherne calls Merleau-Ponty's style recognition thesis. The thesis "involves us recognizing the object's style and its horizon in bodily perception and that this makes a particular form of perceptual synthesis possible in which we synthesize how the object appears to our current point of view with how it appears from other points of view" (2017, 712). The latter part of the thesis concerns amodal perception, or, the perception of absences (such as in the example of the back of a house cited above).

up is typically portrayed as an aesthetic activity in which a woman can express her individuality. In reality, [it] is, in fact, a highly stylized activity that gives little rein to self-expression" (71). For Bartky, such a feminism is, as she puts it, "incoherent," since she understands femininity (including "conventional standards of feminine body display," such as clothing) as a set of disciplinary practices which subordinate and oppress women in particular. She further describes femininity as a process of internalization, and the internalization of norms specifically (including those involving how one should look, what one should weigh, and so on), as well as the internalization of "pervasive intimations of inferiority" (7).[63] Internalization is "when [something] gets incorporated into the structure of the self" (71). Femininity is always normative for Bartky; that is, there is no femininity understood as separate from or differentiatable from normative femininity. This is because, as she writes, the feminine subject is a "social construction" that is at base about discipline (and disciplinary power) (75).[64]

Bartky takes seriously the poststructuralist understanding of femininity as a normative femininity both constructed and regulated by the male gaze and patriarchal

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[63] These norms make up what Bartky calls the "fashion-beauty complex." In a passage illustrating the variety (and incessentness) of these norms, Bartky writes: "I must cream my body with a thousand creams, each designed to act against a different deficiency, oil it, pumice it, powder it, shave it, pluck it, depilate it, deodorize it, ooze it into just the right foundation, reduce it overall through spartan dieting or else pump it up with silicon. I must try to resculpture it on the ideal through dozens of punishing exercises. If home measures fail, I must take it to the figure salon, or inevitably, for those who can afford it, the plastic surgeon. There is no "dead time" in my day during which I do not stand under the imperative to improve myself: While waiting for the bus, I am to suck the muscles of my abdomen in and up to lend them "tone"; while talking on the telephone I am bidden to describe circles in the air with my feet to slim down my ankles. All these things must be done prior to the application of make-up, an art which aims, once again, to hide a myriad of deficiencies." (1990, 40)

[64] She writes: "Now the transformation of oneself into a properly feminine body may be any or all of the following: a rite of passage into adulthood; the adoption and celebration of a particular aesthetic; a way of announcing one's economic level and social status; a way to triumph over other women in the competition for men or jobs; or an opportunity for massive narcissistic indulgence. The social construction of the feminine body is all these things, but it is at base discipline, too, and discipline of the inegalitarian sort. The absence of formally identifiable disciplinarians and of a public schedule of sanctions serves only to disguise the extent to which the imperative to be 'feminine' serves the interest of domination" (75).

power. The simultaneous affirmation of both women's (normative) femininity, and her struggle for liberation, is for her ultimately incoherent as a feminism: for if female subjectivity has been constituted by "disciplinary practices that construct the feminine body," then femininity itself will have to be both deconstructed and surpassed. And yet Bartky simultaneously affirms that "we women cannot begin the re-vision of our own bodies until we learn to read the cultural messages we inscribe upon them daily" (78). While she rejects femininity (calling instead for a "radical and as yet unimagined transformation of the female body") I heed Bartky's call for a re-vision as an invitation to re-fashion femininity as well (78).

Certainly, Iris Marion Young is not one of those liberal feminists so decried by Bartky—is she? So much of Young's career was spent *criticizing* liberalism. So, how ought we to understand Young's essay, "On Women Recovering Their Clothes," and its encouragement that women find genuine pleasure in their clothing? How shall we talk about women's pleasure in clothes apart from the evaluation and scrutinization by the male gaze, which has effectively and historically determined and regulated feminine ideals of beauty? Even Young recognizes (and writes of) this formative and constitutive part of normative feminine subjectivity. Indeed, crucial to my analysis that follows is the idea that the acceptance of the "positive" phenomenological account of femininity bolstered by Young and the phenomenological tradition more broadly does not entail (*should* not entail) a rejection of Bartky's diagnosis and analysis of femininity as a disciplinary power that manifests in the "self-policing" effected by internalizaton. It is my intention, then, only to suggest that there may be a genuine "pleasure" in clothing that is not wholly or ultimately reducible to discourses of femininity and of clothing more broadly.

Before turning to the alternative (or to the positive account) that I locate in Young's essay, "On Women Recovering Our Clothes," let me first briefly describe her diagnosis of feminine norms as oppressive. For example, in "Is There a Woman's World?," Young says that "the norms of femininity suppress the body potential of women," and that, in growing up "learning that the feminine body is soft, not muscular, passive, incapable, [and] vulnerable," we develop "a sense of our bodies as beautiful objects to be gazed at and decorated." This vision "requires suppressing a sense of our bodies as strong, active subjects" (1979; cf. 2005). "Throwing Like a Girl" is similarly concerned with the way that feminine body comportment not only inhibits feminine subjects, but results in *inhibited intentionality*. The source of inhibited intentionality is in what Young calls "bodily self-reference," or the idea that women specifically experience their bodies as both a capacity for agency and also as a thing. Thus, her agency is *referred* back to a certain objective (or object-like) status. Inhibited subjectivity is the state caused by this self-referentiality, which results in the inability to act fully and transcendently with one's body (and the corresponding phenomena of throwing "like a girl") (2005, 147).[65]

For Young, subjectivity is "crucially constituted by relations of looking," which is to say that a subject is constituted through the dual sense of the narcissistic gaze (I am the subject that I see) and the negative self-constitution attained through our distinction from

[65] Drawing on Beauvoir, Young develops a conception of inhibited subjectivity as a subject between immanence and transcendence (2005; cf. Beauvoir 2010). Denied concrete freedoms, women's subjectivity is indeed inhibited wherever their autonomy, creativity, etc., is limited. Certain modalities of feminine body comportment (like throwing) may display the very contradiction a woman is forced to live. As Young writes, many of these comportments are fostered through socialization, which would include a lack of encouraged practice in exploring other possibilities. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Young argues that in order for a subject to exist as transcendental, it "cannot exist as an object" (2005, 123). That is, it cannot be confined to its immanence, which is here understood as a way of confining the body to itself (rather than "onto the world's possibilities") (2005, 38). The realm of the in-itself thereby functions to inhibit the self from moving out, beyond itself, into the world: to partake in "living communication" with it, as Merleau-Ponty had put it. For Beauvoir and Young alike, it is the dual occupation of women as both subjects and objects that thereby "inhibits" the fluid move from one (immanence) to the other (transcendence).

others and from objects (I am the subject that is not those others). Women, Young points out, have a subjectivity complicated by their dual occupation as both a subject in their own right, and object under the male gaze. The way out of this "inhibited" subjectivity, on Young's view, is through the cultivation of a pleasure in one's own clothes. I see this as a movement from an aesthetics characterized by its femininity, to an aesthetics doubly characterized by its feminism: a re-covering of a subject position in which one's dress is a part of one's own proper person, a meaningful for-itself. This is Young's advocacy of the phenomenological approach over and against the post-structural, though she offers no account of dress as constitutive of subjectivity, which is where I aim to extend her analysis.

So far, I have outlined compatible views of femininity expressed by both Bartky and Young. But Young goes on to write that women should "recover" their clothes as a site of genuine (and not derivative or internalized) pleasure. She does so by contending that there is a "subjectivity that is my own": that is, a feminine subjectivity not wholly reducible to the conception of normative femininity of which both thinkers are weary. The difference is, ultimately, one of method. Young's phenomenological training and orientation commit her to a very different position on femininity, or at least, as open to exploring its possibilities. Bartky, by contrast, is very critical of phenomenology as a way for examining the "embodied consciousness of a feminine subject" (1990, 1). Indeed, she writes, it is completely "useless" for this purpose (1). In fact, it is precisely because Bartky rejects the notion that "gender and history" are "mere" appearances that she takes offense to the phenomenological search for "essences", "structures," and invariant features of experiences. Similarly as I do, she is weary that the dualism actively subordinates salient features of identity as add-ons or addendums, as if gender, race, or class were merely

superficial rather than essential or constitutive features of personhood.

Bartky's critique of phenomenology extends to her rejection of femininity. In writing that femininity is a "certain style of the flesh" that will "have to be surpassed," I take Bartky to be both invoking and rejecting phenomenology as a method for examining embodied consciousness (78). Later, she also writes that "there is no reason to anticipate either widespread resistance to currently fashionable modes of feminine embodiment or joyous experimentation with new 'styles of the flesh'" (81-2). I can only presume that Bartky is here engaging (and dismissing) Merleau-Ponty here (perhaps as an emblematic phenomenologist), for whom style is a "way of existing," and "flesh" an alternative to a conception of "subject" or "subjectivity" which would reify a self/other or self/world dualism. For Merleau-Ponty, as indicated in the previous section, "flesh" indicates a chiasmic and dynamic subject for whom the world is not wholly separate from the subject, but a subject who is constituted in and through their experiences of and with the world. *Leib*, what Merleau-Ponty later goes on to conceptualize as flesh, is not a "sum of self-touchings" or a "sum of tactile sensations" (1968, 255). The lived body is of the world, not identifiably separate from it: hence, Merleau-Ponty describes flesh as being "of the world" as "indivis[ible] of this sensible Being that I am and all the rest which feels itself (*se sent*) in me" (255).[66]

Bartky's claim is neither a serious dismissal of Merleau-Ponty nor a legitimate critique of phenomenology, as I see it. I understand the dismissal to indicate a dissatisfaction with the phenomenological method more broadly, while also indicating a misunderstanding of Merleau-Ponty's notions of flesh and style, both of which I detailed

[66] Merleau-Ponty's claim operates as a necessary step of his larger project of developing a non-dualistic ontology.

in the previous section. The dismissal indicates to me that Bartky considers "style" to be a mere mode of being which does not fundamentally constitute being. If power "constitutes the very subjectivity of the subject," then there is little room for style to play much of a role. What could style be in the face of power but a mere modification (or adornment) of the subject? The tension—the incompatibility between the Foucauldian and the phenomenological—becomes even clearer when Bartky writes that the understanding of femininity as a "style of the flesh" is at odds with the task (her task) of deconstructing femininity, or, the critical project of understanding the "cultural messages" that we "inscribe" upon our bodies on a daily basis (78, 82).

Bartky's critique nonetheless points to a significant and relevant tension between phenomenology and feminist philosophy for the purpose of this project: namely, how does one both be a good phenomenologist engaged in the study of appearances, and also be a good feminist: questioning those very appearances, their normative status, and the power structures that constitute them? In turning to Young, I do not offer a mere "alternative" to either Bartky or Young's own readings of the cultural constitution of normative femininity and its disciplinary function. Instead, I consider the phenomenological account to supplement and enrich the account detailed above. In this way, I understand (feminine) dress as a meaningful part of the constitution of the subject in such a way that does not equate a phenomenological analysis of clothing with a kind of crude liberalism. In other words, it is not the case that the phenomenological reading I have been developing is equivocal with the position that *feeling* free is the same as *being* free, or that the phenomenological account is somehow a replacement for real social and political change.

Drawing on Irigaray, Young argues that an attention to the sensation of touch might

offer an avenue by which to affirm women's pleasure in their clothes. In what follows, I suggest that Young's focus on touch does more than offer a competing, reversed, equally-problematic alternative to the visual realm which, for Bartky, is already over-coded by patriarchal ideals of beauty. This is to say that touch is not a mere *escape* from the over-coded, visual world of signification. Rather, I argue that Young's conception of touch as a tool of "taking pleasure" in one's own clothes functionally reorients perception in affirming the primacy of the affective-sensuous in effectuating visual perception. In other words, Young's conception of touch and of the "tactile imagination" which clothing invokes suggests that the way we feel in clothing *affects* the way we *see* clothing (and see ourselves in clothing). Touch and its pleasures are not a mere form of escapism from the broader significations of clothing, standards of beauty, and of normative femininity. Indeed, Bartky's critique of phenomenology is precisely that it fosters a kind of subjective escapism, or a mere subjectivism, which remains detached from the realities of social and political struggle, including the feminist quest for liberation. I develop instead—following Young, following Merleau-Ponty following Husserl—a conception of clothing (a conception of *pleasure* in clothing) as a multi-sensory and affective experience.

My analysis of Young's essay will show that femininity is not at odds with feminism, or, that its embrace does not result in the pitting of individual (feminine) pleasures against collective struggle: the critique of the embrace of femininity as a "liberal" ploy. Bartky not only deprioritizes or de-emphasizes non-visual senses of perception, but gives unyielding authority to the male gaze to make women intelligible. In other words, insofar as Bartky is primarily concerned with the constitution of femininity as a discourse, she does not consider femininity as it is enacted in individual or embodied perception. To

understand a woman's pleasure in her clothes as always derivative of the male gaze—indeed, as produced by it—is to affirm the primacy of the visual perception of others over and against one's own affective sensory responses. My analysis of Young will suggest that Bartky's analysis misunderstands the role of touch (and of sensory-affective sensations more broadly) in constituting and producing a self-image. Said otherwise, my own bodily sensations—the *feel* of my clothing on and against, or slightly off of my skin—actively works to inform my subjectivity.

Bartky's account of feminine pleasure—a pleasure in being feminine—capitulates to what I call the derivation account of feminine pleasure. The derivation account holds that the pleasure women experience in their own clothes is *really* (or truly) the pleasure in men finding them pleasurable. On my view, such an account not only undermines or delegitimizes women's agency, but simultaneously disenfranchises their epistemological status as *knowers* of their own wants and pleasures. To affirm such a view is to "admit that for me there is no subjectivity that is not his, that there is no specifically female pleasure I take in clothes" (Young 2005, 67). A view like Bartky's, Young writes, renders women's/feminine subjectivity more broadly as an achievement which can only be reached in adopting the "position of the male subject who takes pleasure in the objectification of women" (65). There is, then, no authentic feminine subjectivity on this view: femininity is instead rendered as a kind of "mirror in which man sees himself reflected" (68). If only ever reflective of inherently patriarchal ideals of beauty, femininity is nothing but the coordinated effort at upholding such ideals and appeasing and pleasing those who hold them.

The derivative account of femininity relies on a conception of perception as wholly

objectifying. In objectifying perception, properties and their limited significations function to overdetermine persons as objects without *style* which may disrupt, modify, or change meaning(s). Here I rely on a conception of "style" as conceived by Merleau-Ponty in order to suggest that individuals may disrupt and modify meanings and significations that are ascribed to them, their clothing, and so on. The suggestion that individuals have this disruptive capacity is at the heart of Young's rebuke of the derivative account, and, from a methodological view, crucial to dispel a conception of phenomenology as mere subjectivism which does nothing to impact the discourse of femininity which reigns over individual "choice." On this view, the style or embodied existence of a person becomes subordinated to a very limited determination of properties under a closed horizon of signification. Since, however, objects and persons alike have unique *style* for Merleau-Ponty, it is not merely the turning-into-an-object that constitutes the harm of objectification. Instead, objectification indicates a failure of perception to consider properties, sensations, and significations as animated by the *unique* style of the subject or object of perception.

Young rejects the idea that femininity is beholden to the male gaze, and her analysis begins in earnest by wondering "if there's a way we can get him out of the picture" (2005, 63). She does not deny, but indeed confirms that "structures of femininity" support the oppression of women (68). If woman is "well dressed for the male gaze," and if fashion and norms of feminine dress in particular are patriarchal, then her pleasure in these clothes "endows" her with guilt. In turning to touch, however, Young's analysis does not merely reverse the vision/touch dyad, which would trade the male gaze or "masculinist vision" for "feminine touch." A reversal of this nature was indeed advocated for by Irigaray, who

wrote that the visual is the realm of the masculine while touch is the realm of the feminine (1985; cf. Young 2005, 69). Irigaray's account is problematic for its (continued) naturalization of femininity—even in its celebrated or valorized form—with at least a certain understanding of passivity. Despite drawing on Irigaray as a theoretical resource, Young's analysis does not capitulate to the same problem of either naturalizing or valorizing femininity. On my view, this is owed to the phenomenological resources Young draws on, the core of which I explicated in the previous section.

For Young, a vision which objectifies its subject by turning them into an object (objectifying vision) does function to inhibit subjectivity insofar as it may inhibit intentionality. Intentionality may inhibit subjectivity in a number of ways. For Husserl, the objective body (*Körper*) may itself become a part of the consciousness of the lived body when brought to consciousness, such as abrupt, objectifying vision can do. This is to say that the lived body is not merely or not only the activity or animation of the *Körper*, but is itself affected by a consciousness (including a self-imaging) of the *Körper*. To put it simply, we can objectify our own bodies. Objectifying vision not only makes of the body an object for the viewer, but for the viewed. In apprehending one's *own* body as an object or as objectified, the hyletic stratum is itself modified: affects may be re-regulated along the spectrum from repulsion to attraction, and a sensation that once felt good or pleasurable (the sensation of a blouse on my skin, for instance), may now feel very differently, after realizing that someone has been staring.[67]

[67] This kind of experience, as Young puts it, "tur[n] the body or body parts into fetishes" (2005, 67). And it is certainly also the case that the "slit aesthetic"—the aesthetic that "play[s] fabric off against bare skin"—creates the "image of the sexy clothed body" which is simultaneously the "image of phallic female power" (67). As Young writes: "Sweaters cut low in front or back, bathing suits and lingerie cut high on the hip . . . . all pattern the clothing cut to focus on bare flesh, and frequently the cuts also direct attention to the fetishized neck, breast, stomach, genitals, thighs, calves, ankles" (67). In the desire to *conform* to the "image of the sexy clothed body," women also desire to "be that sexy woman" (67).

In all experiences of sensation, however, the hyletic stratum is continually modified, and one's sensings remain one's own: that is, there is no absolute or total passivity. Said otherwise, the objectifying gaze does not *only* objectify, as if from the outside onto the body of another. As Husserl would have it, it is not only that objectifying vision puts an end to or inhibits my intentional consciousness (although that may very well happen), but that I am reconstituted in my activity on an affective register.

Let's consider a few brief examples. For instance, I may feel affectively neutral (neither attracted nor repulsed) in an old jumpsuit. A compliment from a friend may bring a heightened attention to the feel of the worn linen against my skin, soft from many washings. I find that I am elicited by the garment in a new way: not because of any change to its *hyle*, but due instead to reflective attention. It would not be true to say that my friend "caused" me to feel this way or caused me to feel myself in my garment in this new way. In another instance, draped in loose-fitting, billowy black linen and silk, I feel pleasure. The wind, permitted to travel between my top and my skin, generates a positive affect in the form of pleasurable sensations. While I am able to name and describe such experiences in reflective consciousness, I am not always aware of them when going through my day, when my attention—save for the visit by the wind—is mostly turned elsewhere. Yet the hyletic datum is there, readied for sensation and for reflective consciousness alike, but itself not reliant upon it: since, as sensings, they are always already at work. In its different modalities, my clothing is always already informing my subjectivity through sensings or through sensations. This is why the idea that my relationship to them is determined from without is misguided.

Touch facilitates a particular mode or means of self-perception that is not always

or only derivative (such as the perception of myself as filtered through the gaze of another). In touch, I give myself to my body, and *Leib* (as a "field or spread of sensings") is animated (Al-Saji 2010, 20). This understanding of sensings as operative within a perceptual field is meant to contrast a conception of sensation as both objective and objectifying in which things are both fixed and extended. As Young writes: "When I 'see' myself in wool it's partly the wool itself that attracts me, its heavy warmth and textured depth. Some of the pleasure of clothes is the pleasure of fabric and the way that fabric hangs and falls around the body" (70). Some clothing "relate[s] to our bodies in specific ways" (70). The pleasure elicited by these types of experiences is a relational pleasure: the pleasure *of* having a special relationship with one's clothes, even of loving them, and as Young suggests, their "lov[ing] us back" (70). While most clothing does not attain this "privileged status of the beloved," these experiences nonetheless point to their unique participation in perception: in seeing the wool, I "see" myself.

However, it is not only through touch that an alternative relationship to clothing may be fostered. As I have so far suggested, touch is not a "mere" alternative to possessive, objectifying, patriarchal vision. And for that matter, vision is not always or only possessive and objectifying. Although itself under-conceptualized, Young introduces the notion of the "tactile imagination" which may also help in conceiving of women's pleasure in clothes which does not capitulate to the overdetermination of subjectivity through vision specifically. The tactile imagination involves "the simple pleasure of losing ourselves in cloth," which may also involve imagining certain forms that a particular fabric or pattern may take (2005, 70). The tactile imagination is invoked when "we wander through yard-goods stores, stroke the fabrics hanging off the bolts, pull them out to appraise the patterns,

imagine how they might be best formed around the body or the chair or on the windows" (70).

Young's conception of the tactile imagination is enriched by the explanation in the previous section of Husserl's account of the imagination. Recall that for Husserl, the imagination is not a purely mental faculty, but is a medium or a facilitator between hyletic data and "higher order cognitive processes" or intentional judgments (Aldea 2013, 372; cf. Hua III/Ideas II 1989). In other words, the sensations that may arise through touch, perhaps but necessarily in combination with visual sensations, facilitate a conception of the imagination as "tactile": as itself inextricably linked to *hyle* and to sensations. Analogously, the "tactile imagination" as it is conceived in Young is not to be understood as the mental imaging or the *representation* of touch in the imagination understood as a purely mental faculty. Instead, tactile imagination relies on tactile experiences and sensations as its own mediator between kinaesthetic, hyletic data and imaginative variation.

For Young, the pleasure of clothes is related to a distinct pleasure of fabric which is itself a non-objectifying and dynamic pleasure. The pleasure of fabric may not necessarily involve an objectifying or even self-objectifying pleasure in which the pleasure of fabric is related to the particular pleasure of seeing oneself as if through someone else's eyes. The particular "pleasure" of fabric that Young describes instead involves a non-objectifying (or not strictly representational) relation to affect. The pleasure that takes place operates along a spectrum between the *hyle*, the sensations elicited, and higher-order processes of judgments. In other words, the pleasure is not always strictly representational, such as a pleasure in imagining a fabric turned into a future garment. The pleasure, as Young describes it, corresponds much more to a kind of "getting lost" in the fabric: a non-

representational, multi-sensory, affective relationship to the fabric which does not function to understand the pleasure of getting lost as derivative of the male gaze or of self-objectification.

For Young, "seeing" herself in clothing may involve pleasures both representational (objectifying in some register) and otherwise (such as the pleasure of "getting lost" described above). "Seeing" oneself thereby does not only signify a visual register for Young. When Young writes (drawing on Irigaray) that vision might be conceived of as "less a gaze" distanced from and mastering its object, than an "immersion in light and color," she invokes the Gestalt-like nature of perception understood in both visual and kinesthetic registers. Just as the tactile imagination may function to stimulate pleasure, so too can the visual operate as a realm or a way of "getting lost" in sensations which do not necessarily result in the objectification or representation of those sensations. What Young describes is not merely an exercise in imagining differently: of interrupting processes of representation, categorization, and objectification. Instead, Young describes an orientation towards another way of imagining through the *expansion* of the imaginative faculty beyond (objectifying) vision, which is not to say a perceptual experience that ignores it or is uneffected by it (as if it were that simple). The tactile imagination involves *both* touch and vision; it is not a mere alternative to a vision which always objectifies or seeks to master its object.

Conclusion

Young's analysis neither naturalizes femininity nor does it naively laud or celebrate it. Instead, "sexist society" is to bear the responsibility for a subjectivity that is "inhibited,

confined, positioned, and objectified" (2005, 42). Even though Young is staunchly critical of the incapacitating effects of patriarchy for both producing and policing feminine comportment, motility, spatiality, and dress, none are to be naturalized or essentialized as either defining features of female anatomy or of femininity itself understood as a "mysterious feminine essence" (2005, 42). It is worth reflecting on—worth reconciling—Young's criticism of feminine comportment in the one essay, and her call for women to recover pleasure in their clothes in another. In both, the root cause remains the same, but it is important to note that the implication of the former—that women may throw differently—does not mean that femininity is inhibiting in the sense that an inhibited throw might be (although it certainly can be and is for many). Young's analysis of comportment mainly involves her concern with developing a more *expansive* notion of (female) subjectivity in light of the (literal) compression of the body effected by the internalization of norms. Her analysis of clothing, however, seeks to recover a sense of genuine pleasure in clothing that does not subordinate it or otherwise invalidate that pleasure as derivative or second-order. In other words, it is not just or only the case that the "pleasure" of clothing is the pleasure derived either from others or from the fact of seeing oneself in conformity with particular norms and ideals.

Young's call for women to recover their clothes from its overdetermination as part of a "fashion-beauty complex" which subordinates them is informed by a very different understanding of femininity. For Young, the turn to touch and to phenomenology offers a rejoinder to the conception of femininity as inherently patriarchal offered by Bartky. Sexism, not femininity, continues to be the problem. The re-covery of pleasure in clothes thereby also fosters resistance to the objectification of women and feminine subjects.

Young provides the resources in which a more dynamic conception of subjectivity is formed, or better yet, self-fashioned. In “feeling free,” or “feeling pleasure,” subjectivity is indeed fashioned: not only by clothing, but by the feelings and sensations which are elicited in and through them.

VII. CONCLUSION

Throughout the dissertation, I have shown that clothing is much more than a collection of objects we drape over ourselves: that it is not "merely" or "only" a surface-level phenomenon. Indeed, I have argued that there is much to be learned and understood by taking appearances seriously as a starting-point for philosophical inquiry: that is, by not relegating them to the back of the proverbial closet as the insufficient or unimportant half of the metaphysical dualism between essences and appearances. In doing so, I have not subverted the binary. Rather, I have highlighted the relevance of bias and prejudice in perpetuating naturalized metaphysical truths and dualisms, while also demonstrating the generative insights lying in wait on the "appearance" side of the dyad. Indeed, it is not only that bias and prejudice participate in the naturalization of metaphysical truths, but that the very import and the often deadly *serious* nature of the world of appearances becomes mystified in the process. When metaphysics guides philosophy, instead of the other way around (as Fink cautions) then we as philosophers perpetuate false and often materially harmful narratives about the world we inhabit: the world we are responsible for understanding. In terms of fashion and clothing, the prioritization or privileging of essences actually *mystifies* the importance of appearances. The question is not, "do appearances matter?" but "how and in what ways do appearances matter?" The first question reveals a skepticism that, I have argued throughout, characterizes the history of western metaphysics and much of philosophy. The second—the question around which I have oriented my project—takes as its starting point the position that an attention to lived experience and worldly events challenges the metaphysical privileging or favoritism that has guided and

informed much of our discipline.

In other words, life simply challenges metaphysics. While Part I of the dissertation took up the dualism between essences and appearances and the characterization of clothing as "mere" appearance or veneer, Part II suggested explicitly that it is not only the case that appearances *matter,* but showed that their analysis helps to develop a critical perspective on western metaphysics. By showing how clothing and clothing norms have massive normative consequences—that appearances are enforced, policed, and punished alike—I hope to have drawn attention to the ideological implications of a metaphysics which has shrouded or mystified the very serious, often deadly or damning consequences of the world of appearances. In this vein, my analysis of the phenomena of fashion and clothing enacts a critique of metaphysics. I understand the critique as a specifically feminist one, insofar as I have shown how specific notions of the "feminine" and "femininity"—and clothing by extension—have not only been reproduced within philosophy (such that they falsely become quasi *a priori* or "eternal" signifiers) but that their programmatic subordination continues to wield harmful and often deadly consequences. Metaphysics thereby not only "masks an effective ideology of oppression," as Oksala puts it, but intentionally shrouds or mystifies the urgency with which we ought to orient our attention to appearances (2016, 22).

Metaphysical binaries neither reveal nor do justice to the import and impact of appearances, which themselves challenge the conception of such binaries as useful or telling categories by which we live. Contrasted with the violent, oppressive, and even deadly force of clothing, its characterization as "superfluous" ought to be understood not only as inaccurate, but as intellectually and socially irresponsible. Clothing's constitutive,

even joyful role in the formation of subjectivity can also not be understood unless—until—it is itself taken seriously as a phenomenon. I do not understand "serious" here as the antithesis of the unserious or the playful, but as a mode of paying attention, or of regarding. Similarly, I do not conceive of essences and appearances as strict opposites, but as concepts created and reproduced by a metaphysics with an ideological agenda, or at least ideological implications. I have attended to the dualism so fastidiously in order to mount my critique, and not to verify or affirm its existence. Instead, I hope to have shown how pervasive the dualism is and the ways that it continues to manifest itself: not as the manifestation or "appearance" of real metaphysical truths, but as a host of prejudices, perceptions, attitudes, and actions that continue to be justified by an appeal to a ground that does not really exist. If we are to take Fink's provocation seriously, which I do, then it is not metaphysics which should guide life (i.e., an appeal to metaphysics that would justify harmful beliefs, prejudice, and so on) but the analysis of the repercussions of such attitudes which should inform or guide metaphysical inquiry. This is just to say that our experiences of the world should govern the production of concepts used, in turn, to understand those experiences.

In my undertaking, I have not advanced an uncritical acceptance or valorization of appearing phenomena. As I suggested in Chapter I, the "mere" reversal of essences and appearances—the exchange in valorization of the latter over the former—would do little to challenge the very structure of subordination and domination embedded in dualistic thinking. There, I suggested that the move to valorize the feminine in particular constitutes more of a *feminine* metaphysics than a *feminist* metaphysics. I have neither valorized nor rejected the feminine, but have suggested instead that "she" is a problematic figure whose "essential" features have been constructed. In tracing certain key moments in the history

of metaphysics and the history of philosophy as pertains to clothing, I have endeavored to *redress* these histories: and don't they look better?

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