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THE WORLD IN DRESS: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture

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Key Words dressed body, material culture, consumption, clothing practice, style diversification

■ **Abstract** Clothing research has attracted renewed interest in anthropology over the past two decades, experiencing a florescence that had been kept within bounds by reigning theoretical paradigms. The works have been influenced by general explanatory shifts in anthropology, which inform disparate bodies of clothing research that otherwise have little unity. The most noticeable trend is a preoccupation with agency, practice, and performance that considers the dressed body as both subject in, and object of, dress practice. The turn to consumption as a site and process of meaning making is evident also in clothing research. Dress has been analyzed, by and large, as representing something else rather than something in its own right, although new efforts to reengage materiality suggest that this approach is changing. Little work has been done on clothing production issues, though some scholars examine the significance of dress in the context of the entire economic circuit and the unequal relationships between its actors.

INTRODUCTION

A rich literature on dress has appeared across the scientific and popular board in recent years. Active and creative engagements with apparel extend across disciplines into museum exhibitions where fashion is displayed as art. Several encyclopedias on clothing and fashion are forthcoming. The new wealth of academic scholarship includes articles, monographs, and edited collections with regional or topical foci. *Fashion Theory*, a new interdisciplinary journal, complements the scholarship of *Costume*, the journal of the Costume Society in the United Kingdom, and *Dress*, the journal of the Costume Society of America. Berg is publishing a new book series, *Dress, Body, and Culture*. Highly profiled international conferences on themes ranging from clothing and imperialism to fashion and consumption showcase dress scholarship.

Anthropology contributes to this growing body of research by giving new life to the study of clothing, which for a long time received only passing attention.

Reigning theoretical paradigms are to blame for much of this neglect, making clothes an accessory in symbolic, structural, or semiotic explanations. As a result, any serious engagement with clothing itself has almost vanished. Since the late 1980s, anthropologists have set a new research agenda on clothing, placing the body surface at center stage. The chief inspirations for this shift are readily identifiable. Rather than defining culture in the foundational sense of comprising the shreds and patches of a specifically bounded society, we now view culture processually as created through agency, practice, and performance. Conventional physical space and place delimitations have given way to understandings of globalization as a process in which the local and the global interact. The single most important medium through which these processes have been examined is consumption, conceived not only as markets and economic actors but as cultural processes that construct identity.

Clothing research is not a separately identifiable part of anthropology; it shares the general reorientation of the discipline and incorporates many frameworks and concerns from other disciplines that also study the dressed body. Museum-based research on textiles and cloth overlaps anthropological studies of dress, complicating disciplinary distinctions. Anthropologists are inspired by interdisciplinary scholarship on textiles and dress, dress/costume history, design/art history, and social and economic history. Works on representation and textual analysis in cultural and media studies also provide stimulus. Compared to these disciplines, anthropology's hallmark has always been its holistic and contextual approach to the cross-cultural study of clothes and their symbolic and cultural meanings. Excellent overviews (Eicher 2000, Taylor 2002), Schneider's (1987) ARA review on the anthropology of cloth, and Weiner & Schneider's *Cloth and the Human Experience* (1989) set the precedent for this review.

The questions the new scholarship on clothing is addressing are shaped by the paradigmatic shift from social structure to agency and practice. Some works view dress as a set of competing discourses, linked to the operation of power, that construct the body and its presentation. Aside from these general observations, there is little congruence across these bodies of scholarship. Some works pursue historical questions about changes in dress practice brought about by a variety of encounters including colonialism and Westernization. Much recent dress research explores the effects of globalization. The research barely touches high-end clothing, except in works on clothing designed for export and on third-world middle-class efforts to construct class through consumer culture. Although many works focus on clothing consumption, some scholars seek to link production and consumption when examining the significance of dress. Taken together, these new works demonstrate that fashion no longer is an exclusive property of the West. Contemporary fashions are created rapidly and in great volume from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, redefining both consumption and fashion itself in the process and propelling multidirectional style shifts across the globe.

This review considers a selection of anthropological research on dress since the publication of important works mentioned above from the late 1980s. Primarily

discussing works that fall outside the West's conventional fashion canon, I focus on scholarship in which dress is central, omitting works that address clothing in passing and largely considering English-language sources.¹ Throughout the review, I pay deliberate attention to what people wear. The entries by which I organize the review define the scope both topically and conceptually in terms I clarify shortly. The regional focus in the first part of the review identifies processes that play out similarly and differently in specific regional contexts, highlighting distinct concerns of regional scholarship. The next part of the review presents a number of crosscutting themes that command distinct literatures. I bypass several dress issues that appear briefly in the regional overviews but that have not attracted much substantive work.

FROM CLOTHING AND CULTURE TO DRESS AND FASHION

Several terms with overlapping meanings appear in the works reviewed here: clothing, costume, dress, garment, apparel, and fashion. My choice to use dress is strategic, made in an effort to be inclusive and to avoid the ambiguities surrounding distinctions between cloth and clothing that arise when textiles shift from folded cloth to wrapped garments. In adopting the term dress, I follow Eicher & Roach-Higgins (1992) who view it as an "assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements," a definition that reckons both with the strategic effects entailed in the material properties of dress and their expressive abilities. Even then, I continue using the terms clothing/clothes and dress interchangeably but in the inclusive sense of dress just defined. I avoid the term costume used in dress scholarship for ensembles coordinated for masquerades, theatrical parts, dress from distinct historical periods, and native, indigenous clothing styles. The term rarely appears in the works reviewed here save from Latin America in reference to ethnic or regional dress. I speak of garments when referring to specific items of clothing and apparel when addressing issues concerning manufactured garments. Last but not least, I use fashion to frame this review because it is at the heart of widespread contemporary preoccupations with clothing and is central to the most exciting new scholarship on dress.

When examining other people's clothes as fashion, anthropologists have to come to terms with several long-standing scholarly concerns that have marginalized

¹Important works on dress in cultural studies, popular culture, folklore, ethnology, psychology, and marketing fall beyond my scope. I have not considered works on dress and subcultural style, including gay and lesbian studies, a subject on which cultural and media studies are in the forefront. Most clothing research, including by anthropologists, focuses on young adults and adult populations, rarely examining the dress practices of children or the elderly. For reasons of space, I omit many interesting works on individual garments (e.g., Arthur 1999, 2000; Brydon 1998; Colchester 2003b; Foster & Johnson 2003; Kelly 2003).

research on dress. One is the trivializing of consumers', especially Western women's, interest in clothes, an antifashion tendency that devalues the significance of dress as a cultural and economic phenomenon. Today this tendency is less of an issue as many women and men study dress and as negotiations over gender boundaries through dress practice form part of the research agenda.

The second concern is the distinction between fashion in the West and the "traditional" clothing of much of the rest of the world drawn by scholars who explain fashion's origin in terms of the development of the capitalist production system in the West. "Traditional" dress was never a cultural "heritage issue" in anthropology but was always a changing practice, remaking itself in interaction with other dress styles, with garments of Western commercial manufacture and the West's fashion system. Globalization in the era of hypercommunication is creating a new "world in dress," breaking down conventional fashion boundaries. Understanding fashion as a global phenomenon is further supported by shifts in the organization of garment production across the globe as well as by the vast economic significance of garment production in world trade.

The third concern arises from the lingering effects of trickle-down theories that have restrained our understanding of the sources and currents of dress inspirations. Bourdieu's (1984) class-based explanatory model of differentiation may be criticized in this vein for accentuating distinctions between mass and high culture. Polhemus (1994) acknowledges influences on style adoption from the bottom up. Dress influences travel in all directions, across class lines, between urban and rural areas, and around the globe. A proliferation of styles is simultaneously available, facilitating eclectic mixing if not idiosyncratic dress presentations (Polhemus 1996). Examining stylistic choice as a complex and heterogeneous process, contemporary anthropological work has moved beyond the idea of emulation to embrace notions of bricolage, hybridity, and creolization. Clarifying these dynamics and the power differentials that shape them is at the heart of today's anthropological study of dress.

What is it about the dressed body that has prompted so much recent anthropological scholarship to approach it as a site of convergence for transnational, global, urban, and local forces? Because it both touches the body and faces outward toward others, dress has a dual quality, as Turner (1993 [1980]) noted when he coined the notion the social skin. This two-sided quality invites us to explore both the individual and collective identities that the dressed body enables. The subjective and social experiences of dress are not always mutually supportive but may contradict one another or collide. The contingent dynamic between these two experiences of dress gives rise to considerable ambiguity, ambivalence, and, therefore, uncertainty and debate over dress. Dress readily becomes a flash point of conflicting values, fueling contests in historical encounters, in interactions across class, between genders and generations, and in recent global cultural and economic exchanges.

Some recent scholarship has revived a past era's concerns with clothing as material culture but adds a new twist to highlight the efficacy of surfaces. Refocusing

our attention on materiality as a surface that constitutes social relations and states of being, Miller (1994) and his colleagues explore how material properties affect what people do with cloth and clothing (Küchler & Miller 2005). Because clothes are so eminently malleable, we shape them to construct our appearance. There is an experiential dimension to the power of clothing, both in its wearing and viewing (O'Connor 2005). Our lived experience with clothes, how we feel about them, hinges on how others evaluate our crafted appearances, and this experience in turn is influenced by the situation and the structure of the wider context (Woodward 2005). In this view, clothing, body, and performance come together in dress as embodied practice.

While clothes are among our most personal possessions, they are also an important consumption good. Their worldwide production, export, and import circuits have altered the availability of apparel both on high streets in the West and in open-air urban markets in the third world. This accessibility not only facilitates individualism but also pushes the diversification of tastes in numerous directions, turning local consumers into arbiters of stylistic innovations that are contributing to the breakdown of fashion's Western hegemony.

LATIN AMERICA

The rich cloth traditions of Mesoamerica and the Andes loom large in contemporary anthropological scholarship on clothing in Latin America. These works examine the changing dynamics of indigenous dress in more detail than the clothing practices of the large wave of European immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century or the contemporary fashion scene (Root 2004). The cultural dress icons are women's indigenous dress consisting of a variety of pre-Columbian elements: *pollera* (full pleated skirt) and *vestido* (factory-made dress). *De pollera* also connotes identity as Indian or *cholo* (urban Indian) and *de vestido* as *mestiza* or white. There is no straightforward correspondence between dress and ethnicity, and much of the region's new scholarship demonstrates considerable temporal and situational variations in dress practice.

Latin American dress has changed through selective incorporation of influences that have continually redefined individual and local identities against the backdrop of this region's changing political regimes and opportunities in the global arena. In Guatemala, *traje*, Maya dress, is central to the identity of Maya people. Hendrickson (1995) traces the cultural biography of *traje*, examining the elements of dress that come together into complete garments and changes made to it over time. Although defining local Maya identity, *traje* is worn also in parades, queen contests, and in the tourist and export business, making it part of a larger politics.

Dress is a complex ethnic marker among the Sakaka, an Andean group in northern Bolivia (Zorn 2004b). Viewing dress styles as genres, Zorn identifies six variations of Indian "ethnic" dress. These variations shift from pre-Columbian and Spanish peasant-derived, long, pleated dresses with embroidery, *polleras*, shawls,

and felt hats to “new traditional” styles for women and hand-woven pants, vests, and jackets with embroidery, factory-made shirts, ponchos, and white felt hats for men. The new styles have elaborate embroidery and are constructed almost entirely of factory-made inputs. Financed largely by incomes from migration, these dress styles comprise a distinctive indigenous fashion system, a self-conscious choice in the face of white and *mestizo* control of the Bolivian state. Femenias (2004a) discusses how rural Peruvians from Caylloma province shift their identification as Indians, whites, and *mestizos* through locally produced garments called *bordados*. *Bordados* are garments with brightly colored embroidery for which a tourist market has developed. Most artisans are also vendors, and at some point they may become merchants. Both ethnicity and dress practice are situational as vendors wear *pollera* or dress in *bordado* to trade on ethnicity. In another work, Zorn (2004a) examines transformations of cloth production and the effects of its recent commoditization for the tourist market among the Taquile, an Andean group living on two islands on the Peruvian side of Lake Titicaca. Taquileans have been relatively successful at controlling, and thus benefiting from, tourism. Presenting themselves in Indian dress is part of their cultural strategy (2004a).

The Otavalo of Ecuador are well known for their relatively successful local harnessing of economic and social capital from textile and clothing sales and music performances in the international tourist arena. Otavalho entrepreneurs dress in “Indian” costumes for musical performances. Discussing the specific meanings of such dress choices, Meisch (2002) describes the development of a pan-Otavalo dress. This dress style contains archaic elements, such as the dress whites and ponchos that young men wear only on special occasions. As old styles disappear, the new styles become defined as indigenous. Men’s dress is changing more rapidly than women’s, and different generations are wearing slightly different dress. Rather than adopting the clothing styles of the local dominant group, young Otavaleños leapfrog local dress styles.

Contests fueled by women’s dress mediate cross-class interaction between Aymara-speaking migrants who are live-in servants in *cholo pacenos* (racially and culturally mixed, urban) and “white” elite households or work as street vendors in La Paz, Bolivia (Gill 1993). The *cholo pacenas* cultivate *de pollera* styles of expensive materials, adorned with jewels to distance themselves from the less ostentatious *pollera* of their workers with whom they may share cultural backgrounds. Upper-class employers like to see their Aymara servants in *pollera*. Many of the migrant workers like to dress in *vestido*. It is less costly, avoids the stigma of being Aymara, and gives workers a sense of freedom while they are away from the controlling influence of their employers.

AFRICA

Scholarship on dress in Africa revolves around the enduring appeal and transformations of cloth/clothing; the effects on dress and identity of colonization, modernity, and globalization; and dress issues in the diaspora. Diverse local dress practices

have changed in complex ways in interaction with Islam and Christianity. In their examination of these processes, the disciplines of anthropology and history overlap considerably. Africa presents two broad dress cultures based on the draping of cloth in West, Central, and parts of East Africa, and tailored Western-styled attires in much of the rest of East Africa and Southern Africa. The dress icons are the *boubou* (loose gown worn by women and men); cloth wrapper and head tie; and Western-styled dress. In response to local, regional, and external influences, the boundaries of these styles are shifting across the continent and beyond.

Renne's (1996) ethnography of Buna cloth in Nigeria examines culture and history of a specific part of Yorubaland, where distinct categories of women and men wear differently colored and patterned cloths. Young women dress in black cloth at marriage, hunters wear black-and-white-striped shirts, and chiefs don red masquerade cloth with magnificent patterns. White is the color of spiritual relations. The associative power of these dress practices persists as part of everyday life along with factory-produced imported cloth and tailored clothing. As in much of the rest of West Africa, Buna cloths outlive their owners and are handed down. West African cloths are commodities with social lives in Perani & Wolff's work (1999) on cloth and dress as patronage in Hausa, Nupe, and Yoruba cloth traditions in Nigeria. Technologies of cloth production and artistic concerns converge in this study of several types of cloth, the effects of conversion to Islam on the cloth trade, the impact of British colonialism, and the coming of factory-produced yarn. They also discuss the fashionable Yoruba dress world in which lurex yarns entered strip-cloth weaving to produce the popular *shain-shain* styles of the 1990s. The cloth/clothes dynamic in Nigeria continues to shift, most recently in response to structural adjustment programs that reduce overall purchasing power. Denzer (2002) examines how the reforms affected the demand for custom-made clothing. Tailors continued producing traditional garments for ceremonial occasions but had fewer requests for Western fashions.

Comaroff & Comaroff (1997) view clothing as central to missionary conversion in the early nineteenth century in Bechuanaland, a frontier region between colonial Botswana and South Africa. The struggle for souls entailed dressing African bodies in European clothes to cover their nudity and managing these bodies through new hygiene regimes. European clothes were a popular prestige good preceding the arrival of missionaries; converts accepted the clothes eagerly and wore them as they saw fit, expressing their personal desires in a new culture of consumption that the missionaries could not fully control. Martin (1994) offers urban vistas of vibrant and rapidly changing styles that the culturally diverse African townspeople integrated into their dress in Brazzaville during the French colonial period. This colonial cosmopolis was an historical crossroad of trade and exchange where ostentatious body display accentuated long-held cultural ideas that connected dress and social status.

Because of the contingent meanings of the dressed body, clothing readily becomes a contested issue (Allman 2004a). Recent works focus on dress to examine struggles over class, gender, and generation (Byfield 2004, Fair 2004, Moorman 2004), investigating attempts to create "national dress" before and after

independence (Allman 2004b, De Jorio 2002). Tensions over “proper dress” arising from the popularity of miniskirts continue after independence, revolving around issues of national culture (Ivaska 2004), revolution (Burgess 2002), and gender and sexual dynamics (Hansen 2004). Several works examine the incorporation of European styles and fabrics into the local dress universe, such as the smocked *Sotho* dress (James 1996) and the *Herero* long dress (Hendrickson 1994), that serve as visible markers for “traditional” dress in southern Africa. While dressing “our way” is part of the embodied experience of the long dress, the shared sensibility of wearing it is also a means of establishing connections (Durham 1995, 1999).

The symbolic interplay of bodies and changing social experiences devolves on dress in different ways. Masquelier (1996) offers vivid insight into the power of clothing to define identity in Muslim Mawri communities in Southern Niger, where spirits of the *bori* cult choose their hosts and mediums embody spirit identities by the clothes they wear. Renne’s (2000) new research on style interaction in Yoruba ecclesiastical dress demonstrates how hand-woven textiles connect cloth and body, asserting an African identity that is also Roman Catholic. In Cherubim and Seraphim churches (African Independent Churches) (Renne 2004), church leaders’ visions and dreams inspire creativity in clothing designs, tailored by church members to reflect aesthetic aspects of belief and practice. Wearing visionary garments, almost as a souvenir from another world, church leaders emphasize their otherworldly connections and supernatural abilities in material terms.

Dressing differently than cultural norms prescribe may provoke politically charged reactions, as Bastian (1996) describes for southeastern Nigerian women’s adoption of the Hausa-style tunic on top of wrappers or trousers. Experimenting with elite dress from the Muslim north that politicians and businessmen took up in the wake of the 1970s oil boom, women created their own dress practice, as did young male tailors who used colors, fabrics, and accessories to subvert the dress aesthetic associated with chiefly rank in their hierarchically, male-dominated society. Such clothing practices cross not only gender and class/rank lines but also continental divides as in the striking displays of brand-named Parisian garments by the Congolese *sapeurs* who traveled between Congo and Paris to earn money to purchase clothes (Gandoulou 1989). Friedman’s analysis (1994b) of Gandoulou’s work connects this region’s historical preoccupation with body display to the contemporary *sapeurs*’ extravagant experimentation with imported clothes. *La sape* is French slang for elegant and fashionable clothing. Although the *la sape* has precursors in urban popular culture, it keeps incorporating new elements. Today, *la sape* has spread beyond the two Congos to francophone West Africa and the diaspora, involving both young women and men. Recent work explains *la sape* as a contest over equality and participation in a world over which young people have little control (Gondola 1999, Scheld 2001).

Persisting ideas of dressing well have inspired work in Gambia and Senegal on *sanse*, a Wolof noun for finery and a verb for dressing up in elaborately tailored gowns requiring many lengths of expensive woven cloth or imported damask, costly accessories, cosmetics and perfume, and last but not least, a particular

demeanor (Heath 1992, Mustafa 1998). The cut, decorative styling, and embellishments have changed, incorporating influences from many directions including neighboring West African countries, Islamic North Africa, India, and France. Derived from the French verb *changer*, *sanse* alludes to the numerous changes of clothing women undergo at dress-up events.

Linking social identity and wealth, *sanse* marks difference. Yet women of lesser means challenge its sartorial dominance by wearing dress imitations made from factory printed cloth. Analyzing *sanse* as a language of dress, Heath (1992) explains women's dress practice as a dialogue between dominant and subordinate voices. Playing into a vibrant clothing scene, *sanse* arbitrates changing external dress influences. This process creates a sartorial ecumene most pronounced in urban settings where global flows and media are active in creating hybrid styles (Mustafa 1998). On Dakar's lively fashion scene today, everyone wants to look good including youth who go for *la sape*, and yet they dress in elegant gowns on Muslim holidays and at life-cycle events (Scheld 2001). Constant style changes have turned tailoring into an entrepreneurial niche for women as haute couture designers and small-scale tailors. Incorporating influences from magazines, music videos, and street scenes, their custom-made clothes blend cultures from within Africa and beyond, with both new and secondhand clothing serving as resources (Grabski 2002).

Conventional analytical dichotomies of traditional/modern, African/Western, and local/global fall short in capturing the many diverse influences on contemporary style dynamics in Africa and African-inspired dress diasporas in the West. The African dress diaspora includes couturiers from Mali and Senegal in Paris, producers and marketers of Afrocentric fashions in the United States, tourists, and many others (Ross 1998; Rovine 2001). Approaching such processes as a circuit, with three interconnected sites—Dakar in Senegal, Nairobi in Kenya, and Los Angeles—Rabine (2002) analyzes African fashion as a semiotic system. She suggests that economic and symbolic exchange come together in African fashion production, textile printing, and dyeing, imbuing the products with meaning. She is particularly concerned with the subordinate position of artisanal production in a global economic system fueled by mass production. Because they are more interested in creativity and aesthetics than in standardization and uniformity, African artisans do not enter this system easily.

SOUTH ASIA

Dress scholarship on the subcontinent of India includes historically oriented work on negotiations over dress both by colonizers and the colonized and on the interplay of imperialism and nationalism in matters of dress choice. There is detailed work on historical changes in Indian dress in terms of regional, caste, and class differences. Other works include attention to high fashion and contemporary style challenges. A growing body of work considers dress choices in the South Asian diaspora and their

effects on clothing consumption within India. The dress icon is the sari, variations of the draped and wrapped women's garment long prevalent in South Asia. It coexists with the *shalwar kamiz* and with Western dress styles in a relationship that is modified across the region's changing political history in interaction with regional, national, and international styles.

Tarlo (1996) offers rich insights into clothing choices over the past 100 years in India. Both men's and women's dress consisted of cloth folded in specific ways around the body. Throughout the colonial period there was tension between wearing cut and tailored dress and draped styles of clothing. More men than women adopted, and then rejected, different types of European clothing. Dress became a public issue in the 1920s when Ghandi promoted the use of homemade cloth in an effort to restore both individual spirituality and public patriotism but achieved little success especially from the Indian elite and village women. Tarlo describes how members of different castes dealt with dress issues, including "untouchables" who had the least to lose by changing dress. She also examines the ethnic fashion revival in the boutiques of Hauz Khas, a shopping center in Delhi for Indian designer clothes, art, and furnishings.

Banerjee & Miller (2003) take up discussion of the sari where Tarlo stopped, emphasizing the complex personal and social relationships Indian women have with their clothes and examining individual life experiences with saris from youth to adulthood into old age and hierarchical interactions between women and their maids. A special feature of this work is its attention to the sari's materiality and the consequences of this draped garment for the act of wearing it, especially the strategic possibilities of the *pallu*, the end of the sari that drapes over the shoulder. They examine shopping for saris and consider esthetics, design, manufacture, preferences for silk and cotton versus synthetics, and the effects of the visual media on the "modern" sari. Acknowledging the popularity of the *shalwar kamiz*, they suggest that the sari's dominant status as an expression of cultural identity may decline over the long term. Even then, they see the two dress forms as complementary in representing contemporary Indian dress.

Nepal, which did not allow foreigners into the country until 1816 after the Anglo-Indian war, is an interesting contrast to India because it imported foreign goods without foreign interpreters. The elite eagerly embraced a selection of European goods, including clothes. During the transformation process from city-state to nation, these changing modes of elite distinction served to construct class. So does fashion today in the aspirations of middle-class Nepali consumers (Liechty 2003).

Questions about cultural identity and belonging are salient in South Asian communities around the world. The *shalwar kamiz* has become a widespread alternative to the sari among young East Asian women in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States (Khan 1993, Raghuram 2003). Asian women entrepreneurs have begun to manufacture *shalwar kamizes* that now have become a common sight in public in the West (Bhachu 2004). Much more straightforward to wear than the sari, it also has considerable appeal to non-Indian women.

EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

East and Southeast Asia's diverse societies have several dress icons, among them the *sarong* in Indonesia, the *qipao* in China and Vietnam where it is known a *ao dai*, and the *kimono* in Japan. Dress scholarship has focused on changes in clothing practices through complex socioeconomic and political transformations set into motion by shifting local and Western economic and military dominance and, more recently, by processes of globalization.

Indonesian dress is a product of the changing relationship between indigenous, Muslim, and Western influences (Schulte Nordholt 1997). Islam arrived much earlier than did Christianity (van Dijk 1997). Western dress entered with Dutch East India Company rule and was appropriated differently by urban women and men. Revolutionary youth activists dressed in a variety of uniforms (Sekimoto 1997). Incorporating Indonesia's rich textile traditions, "ethnic" dress persists, transformed, reconfigured, if not reinvented in a combination of woven cloths, into dress consisting of a sarong wrapped around the lower body with matching shoulder cloth slung over a blouse (Niessen 2003). They coexist with Western-styled dress, which some urban middle-class women take courses to learn to wear in attempts to control their own appearance and propriety. Whereas some women feel good in Western-styled dress, others are putting on the fitted head covering they associate with being faithful Muslims (Jones 2003).

Dalby's study (1993) of the kimono focuses on the interplay of local and European styles of dress. Describing the changing forms of garments that gave shape to the modern kimono, she examines the kimono as work wear, fashion item, and art form. She explores how this wrapped, geometrically constructed garment faced competition from the West's cut, tailored, and stitched garments, gradually giving way to imported styles after the 1860s. Wearing Western-styled clothing in their everyday lives today, most Japanese use the kimono for special occasions.

Only lately have dress scholars begun exploring how Chinese people experienced the dress edicts and production restrictions under the cultural revolution (Chen 2003, Wilson 1999). In efforts to include China's diverse population into the new socialist body politics, reform campaigns sought to alter dress styles and practices. The effects varied across regions as Friedman (2004) demonstrates for the socialist denouncement of women's distinctive dress, headpieces, and hairstyles in Hui'an in southeastern China. But in the new market economy, such dress styles are extolled as ethnic in a process that is reworking notions of citizenship.

The chief focus in this region's anthropological dress scholarship is on the unfolding dynamics of power and directional influences on fashion and design in the process of globalization (Niessen et al. 2003). Across the region, governments are promoting textile and garment production for export. The emerging fashion industry in China in the 1970s and 1980s combined dress elements from many of China's ethnic groups and Western styles with specific focus on the *qipao*. Designers in Hong Kong and Taiwan used the *qipao* also as a strategy of conscious Orientalizing (Li 1998). The *ao dai* in Vietnam is considered the national costume,

even if it is of hybrid origin and achieved its current form only in the 1970s. Leshkovich (2003) describes the flourishing entrepreneurship to which the *ao dai*'s popularity has given rise as women design, produce, and market both locally and overseas. The Orientalizing strategy may place designers in a bind as Skov (2003) shows, comparing young Hong Kong designers who create garments with "Chinese" motifs with those who try to work in a genuinely international style but have little success. By contrast, Japan has become both a player in the global fashion network centered in Paris and a fashion center for East Asia. Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo's success on the Paris fashion scene in the 1980s had little to do with "traditional" Japanese clothing and more with their design sensibilities and Japan's international prominence in the textile and apparel industry. Their styles are an oppositional gesture, according to Kondo (1992), contesting hegemonic European and American aesthetic conventions, an attempt at counter-Orientalism.

Dress scholarship on Asia qualifies the historical opposition between East and West in many ways (Steele & Major 1999). Yet the East/West divide persists with new twists in the present with the global fashion scene incorporating diverse elements of East Asian dress and immigrants in the West wearing "traditional" dress on a variety of occasions. While Niessen and their contributors (2003) challenge stereotypes of Asian style as passive and traditional, they analyze the globalization of Asian fashions as an Orientalizing phenomenon that construes a feminine Asia and a masculine West. When "Asian chic" fashions travel from Europe and North America to Asia, designers and consumers are ambivalent about the mixed effects of self-Orientalization. Comparing reactions to "Asian chic" gone local in Vietnam and Indonesia, Leshkovicz & Jones (2003) use a performance model to explain the outcomes as strategies for garnering symbolic and material power or as a demeaning trend that accentuates ethnic stereotypes.

Kimono-, *qipao*-, and *sarong*-influenced clothes continue to be worn locally and globally. Analyzing these design and dress practices as a self-exoticization of Asia hides a major part of contemporary Asian wardrobes from view, in effect limiting our understanding of the world of dress. In post-Mao's China, as elsewhere in the region, urban residents wear suits and dresses, polos and T-shirts, jeans and skirts, and high heels and sneakers. Gender, age, and class position probably serve as the main differentiating factors. Although anthropological studies of consumption have noted the widespread localization of Western dress, few have substantively addressed the significance of Western dress styles in Asia. Tobin (1992) refers to the process as a domestication of the West, a formulation that retains agency with local actors rather than by making them slaves of the foreign. Print, visual media, and the culture industry (Skov & Moeran 1995) are contributing to this process that has particular appeal to youth. Socialization into cultural norms of conformity has made uniforms important in many areas of everyday life from schools to government offices in Japan (McVeigh 2000). Reacting to wearing uniforms, young Japanese buy "cute" things and fashion conscious youth use "cuteness" as a dress and adornment strategy to counter the norms of uniformity (Kinsella 1995).

THE PACIFIC

Most of the recent work on clothing from this region is a product of collaborative research between anthropologists and art historians in a British project using museum collections to examine historical and contemporary interactions with cloth and clothing across the Pacific Islands (Colchester 2003a, Kùchler & Were 2004). Rather than assigning the status of dress icon to any single garment or dress practice, in this region we might consider animacy as iconic. Pacific islanders perceive clothing as efficacious.

The Clothing the Pacific project has addressed many of the same themes as scholarship on other regions, yet it stands apart from it by challenging our thinking of how materiality comes to matter. When clothes are not considered to be signs or representations of social relations, what then do they do, asks Keane (2004), discussing the indexical and iconic qualities that he argues are rendering clothing "effective."

Attributing a transformative potential to fibrous surfaces, this scholarship views materiality as powerful in its own right. Throughout the region, this efficacy transforms clothing by shifting motifs onto new surfaces, decomposing and re-assembling materials that prompt recognition and identification by association. A translation results so that even when they do not dress bodies, cloth and clothing contribute to new ways of thinking and being.

Some of these works describe the cultural and ritual significance of dressed bodies and their adornment by gender and status/rank relations and the mutual vexations dress caused Europeans and Pacific islanders in early encounters. They include an analysis of constructions of nakedness, dress, and morality in early European voyagers' descriptions of Tahitian women stripping (Tcherkezoff 2003), and of the stunning cultural synthesis in Samoan Christians' bark cloth "ponchos" (Thomas 2003), which not only expressed new ideas of modesty but in fact made modesty possible by providing new ways to cover bodies. Missionaries delighted in Pacific Islanders' adoption of clothing, seeing it as a sign of religious conversion in the new moral economy of mind and body. But understanding clothing as a product of conversion masks its attraction as a new material medium of ritual efficacy. In Vanuatu, the design and cut of the missionary-inspired Mother Hubbard dress inspired island-specific variations with links to grass skirts and pandanus textiles. This dress form has come close to being considered national dress and is associated with notions of proper womanhood (Bolton 2003).

Efficacy arising from differently constructed surfaces has driven innovation and transformations of what Pacific Islanders did with clothing, creating new styles and designs. Methods of surface construction work out differently across the region with selective appropriations of the patterns from printed calico in Melanesia and the cutting and shredding of cloth for restitching into quilts in Eastern Polynesia. In Melanesia, missionaries saw the eager adoption of printed calico as an outward sign of conversion. Melanesians interpreted these patterns with reference to systems and ideas about empowered bodies. Patterned calico became an agent of translation,

enabling people to establish connections between existing systems and ideas and new ways of being (Were 2005). In Eastern Polynesia, women's groups linked to religious denominations meet regularly to work on quilts. Such quilts condense women's biographical and personal attachments. Kept in trunks to be given away at weddings, birthdays, and funerals, a woman's quilts reappear when she dies, to be wrapped around her body and accompany her into her grave. Cultural value is created, not by the consumption of quilts, but by their divestment into biographical relations and markers of time (Küchler 2003).

THE VEIL

Few other dress items have been as burdened with cultural signification as the veil, the icon for the practice of covering women's heads and bodies, which varies both temporally and spatially across the world's Islamic societies. Many other regional appellations refer to veiling, among them *hijab*, *chador*, *burqah*, and *bui-bui*. Because of its visibility, the veil is the emblem of Muslim identity and the difference in Orientalizing approaches both in scholarship and popular media, serving as the symbol par excellence of women's subordination. Most scholarship on Islamic dress examines women's clothing even though socioeconomic changes and Islamic revival have changed Muslim men's dress as well. Muslim women do not veil everywhere nor all the time. In much of West Africa, Muslim women manipulate the layers of their voluminous robes to present themselves modestly in public. Anthropology's cross-cultural record includes such variations as men's face veiling and women's headdress among the nomadic Tuareg in Niger (Rasmussen 1991).

The 1970s' and 1980s' scholarship qualified the connection between veiling and women's subordination by demonstrating the veil's diverse uses and women's individual experiences with this dress practice in different parts of the Muslim world. Scholarship of the past two decades has expanded the empirical and theoretical scope. In these new works, politics and religion are weighing down heavily on women's dressed bodies as Islamic dress continues to be reframed by events that affect clothing practices locally and abroad.

Past and present in Turkey, dress has been indentured to political ideology according to White (1999). In the 1970s, some young women began challenging the ban on wearing headscarves to university. Blue headscarves and long coats symbolized dissent as well as alignment with the Islamic political party. *Testettür* fashion of long coats and long silk headscarves has become political chic. Both the hardening and blurring of Turkey's Islamicist/secular divide is evident in the increasing differentiation within "Islamic fashion." Providing long-term historical and comparative background, El Guindi's (1999) study of contemporary Egypt discusses how *hijab* became the object and symbol for a new Islamic consciousness and activism. Because this urban style of veiling differs from earlier practices, some considered it a "new" veiling. Middle- and upper-class women have gradually begun veiling.

Such processes have prompted questions about women's agency and resistance. Examining the accentuation of veiling in Malaysia, Ong (1990) explored the revival of practices associated with Islam. Through clothing, including full *purdah*, which historically is alien to Malay culture, the reformist groups introduced rigid divisions between men's public and women's private roles, attacking the new freedoms young village women experienced as factory workers in free trade zones. As consumers in their own right, wanting to wear jeans and other Western-styled garments, these young women challenged household and community claims on their sexuality and income. University students and middle-class women who took up veiling sought to uphold men's authority, constructing the role of women to preserve an Islamic Malay community. In Java where veiling is neither deeply rooted nor encouraged by the majority, Brenner (1996) explored why Islamic dress had become a common sight by the end of the 1980s. Veiling, she suggests, distances the past and envisions a more perfect future where women can refashion themselves according to their own images of modern Islamic womanhood.

Anthropological concerns with context help to reveal agency as in Abu-Lughod's (1990) discussion of Beduins settled in permanent communities in Egypt where women are subject to surveillance whenever they step out. Young women desire nylon lingerie, cosmetics, and perfumes. Brides display them proudly with their trousseaus. Attracted to the kind of sexualized femininity associated with the market economy's consumerism, these young women become enmeshed in new sets of power relations that they do not readily resist. Similar ambiguities are at the heart of Fuglesang's (1992) discussion of young Muslim women's testing the boundaries of respectability in Lamu, an island off the Kenyan coast, in elaborate dress performances in private settings. Preoccupied with appearance, hairstyle, clothes, and their own local fashions, women dress up for each other. On the day after a wedding, the new bride displays herself in all her finery for her women guests who wear the latest "local" fashion, often inspired by designs on Indian film or syndicated American television shows. Such private events form the trend-setting world of aesthetics and fashion where young women experiment with what it means to be modern and Muslim.

BEAUTY PAGEANTS

The dressed body in beauty pageants constitutes a rich site for dress research on representation, gender construction, performance, and politics. While beauty contests demonstrate the proliferation of Western styles and influences, they are also setting into motion complicated negotiations between local and global norms of beauty, gender, and sexuality (Cohen et al. 1996). In these events, body and dress feed into and subvert world fashion trends.

Dress is central to beauty contests' construction of gender on local, national, and international stages, at times prompting controversy. Queen rallies in Liberia in the early 1980s (Moran 1996) were fund-raising events for development by local constituencies rather than sponsored by the central government. The fashion show

followed the Western model of a beauty contest, including revealing outfits such as shorts and swimsuits that were considered quite daring. The winning queens represented different ethnic groups, termed tribes in Liberia, thus mapping the country's political tensions on to women's bodies. Beauty pageants construe an idealized femininity in nationalist projects such as in a Maya queen contest where contestants dressed in *traje* to represent an "authentic" Guatemalan past (McAllister 1996). In Belize's history of national pageants, beauty contests became a tool for articulating different political positions in the country's changing political climate (Wilk 1996). The typical format had contestants entering in "ethnic" costume, sometimes not their own. The swimsuit competition relegated ethnicity to the background, pushing sexuality to the fore. At the end, contestants dressed in expensive formal wear, performing the new nation.

Much of the work on beauty pageants examines local tensions arising over this global phenomenon. Young women from across Mali competed at the 1994 "Miss ORTM" (Office de la Radio et Television du Mali) (Schulz 2000). They paraded in three costumes, two tailored of identical fabric by the same dressmaker: one in the style of everyday dress made from cotton print, and the other from imported cotton fabric with damask weave. They were free to choose the third dress. Participants and spectators did not agree about whether the contest celebrated national identity, local culture, or even African beauty. Still the ORTM contest served as a springboard for Mali's participation in international pageants where the local standard of full-bodied beauty was aligned with that of the slender girl. Beauty pageants represent and contest idealized notions of gender and sexuality as Cohen (1996) shows for a male and female beauty contest in the British Virgin Islands that manifested very distinct gender "styles." In the Mr. Personality and Ms. Glamorous contest all contestants competed in casual and evening wear; only women competed in sports and business wear, while men competed in talent demonstration and bathing suit modeling, highlighting their ability, drive, and power.

Beauty contests are performative. The Miss Galaxy beauty contest (Besnier 2002) at the completion of the Heilala Festival after the crowning of a female beauty queen on Tonga island is a glamorous show of fashion and bodies by transgendered males who assemble outfits from scratch into flamboyant gowns, diminutive miniskirts, and eye-catching accessories. The contest presents a selective adoption of Western-styled clothing, language (English), names, and performance that temporarily dislocates contestants from local society at the same time as they remain in place both geographically and socially. Transvestite beauty pageants in the southern Philippines (Johnson 1996) also fuel debate over local identities in the face of selective appropriations of desirable yet potentially threatening global influences. These contests began with parades of "ethnic attire" or "national costume" in which contestants were presented, for example, as Miss Germany or Miss Canada; the parades were followed by competitions in cocktail dress, summer and sports wear, swim wear, and evening gowns; and the pageants ended with question and answer periods to assess the contestants' intelligence. As performance events, beauty contests provide an occasion for transvestite men to negotiate images

of cosmopolitan femininity with which they test the local boundaries of gender identity.

SECONDHAND CLOTHING

In much of the West today, secondhand clothing makes up fringe, or niche, markets, whereas in many third-world countries secondhand clothing imported from the West is an important clothing source. In secondhand clothing consumption, desire confronts emulation in processes recent scholarship examines from a variety of perspectives (Palmer & Clark 2004). Secondhand clothing has been studied as a consumption site where gender, appearance, and identity are constructed through dress. Most work on secondhand clothing in the West investigates the incorporation of accessories and specific garments into youth wardrobes (McRobbie 1988). Today in Germany, the 1960s style scene of movies, music, and material culture is popular with young people who dress in garments from the 1960s or in self-made clothes constructed from old patterns (Jenss 2004). This retro style attributes history and authenticity to garments that wearers experience as unique and personal.

Dress practices developing around the consumption of imported secondhand clothing in the third world are the subject of works in Zambia, the Philippines, and India. Many economists would be inclined to view the growth of the secondhand clothing market in Zambia as a response to economic decline. Such an account misses the opportunities this vast import offers consumers to construct themselves through dress. Tracing the flow of secondhand clothing from the point of donation in the West, through its sorting and export, to its local distribution and consumption in Zambia, Hansen (2000a) accounts for the incorporation of secondhand clothing as desirable apparel into a gendered dress universe informed by a local cultural economy of judgment and style. Far from emulating the West's fashions, secondhand clothing practices implicate clothing-conscious consumers in efforts to change their lives for the better.

Secondhand clothing only recently became readily available in Ifugao in northern Luzon in the Philippines, some of it shipped directly to Philippine ports and some arriving via Hong Kong. In Ifugao, this translocal trade circulates through channels that are rooted in local cultural scripts (Milgram 2004), guided by notions of personalized associations that women traders operationalize in their business activities. In narratives about secondhand clothing, retailers, vendors, and consumers draw connections between people and clothes that constantly change. Such tales domesticate the logic of the market and the meaning of this global commodity in terms of local norms of status and values, and in so doing, they transform these norms. Combining secondhand garments into styles that display knowledge of wider clothing practice or subvert their received meanings, traders and consumers effect a creolization of this imported commodity to serve their personal and community identities.

Norris's work (2003) on clothing recycling in India shifts the research emphasis on clothing from consumption to the materiality of cloth as a strategic resource for the unmaking and remaking of persons and identities. Unlike Zambia, India prohibits the import of secondhand clothing. It permits the import of woolen fibers among which are "mutilated hosiery," a trade term for wool garments shredded by machines in the West prior to export. Tracing the flow between India and the West, Norris examines two processes. One is the import of "mutilated" fabrics; their sorting into color ranges; their shredding, carding, spinning; and their reappearance as threads used for blankets, knitting yarn, and wool fabrics for local consumption and export. The other process is domestic recycling of Indian clothing by barter, hand-me-downs, donations, and resale. She examines Indian women's wardrobes in detail, their changes over the life course, and the disposal of garments onto India's secondhand clothing market.

PRODUCTION ISSUES

Complex global flows redefine north/south boundaries, localizing the significance of imported goods like secondhand clothing and many other items of apparel, for example the Sebago moccasin produced in the United States, and copied in China and Morocco, so popular with youth in Dakar, Senegal (Scheld 2003), and the Barbie doll indigenized in Maya costume in Mexico (MacDougall 2003). Inspired by interdisciplinary scholarship on commodity chains and systems of provision, these works use clothing to highlight some of the close interconnections in the global economy. By establishing links between specific global economic domains and clothing recycling in India, Norris (2004) revealed an informal economy that turned used garments into industrial rags, reassembled fabrics for interior decoration, and manufactured Indian fashions for tourists. As a result, an export supply chain emerged, formalizing what had begun as an informal trade.

The focus on consumption and dress practice in much of the clothing research by anthropologists hides the exploitative social relations of production so evident in garment manufacturing for export from third-world countries as well as in the West's metropolitan sweatshops. These processes have a literature of their own that is more concerned with unfair labor practices in gender and age terms than with dress. Some anthropological works on artisanal textile and clothing production for the international tourist market (Femenias 2004b), sometimes organized by fair trade principles (Grimes & Milgram 2000, Nash 1993), have investigated local and regional efforts to redirect the unequal terms of the global garment-production industry. The effect of such programs on the global apparel market's inherent production inequalities is limited even if they, in the short term, have positive local ramifications on livelihoods. Such production issues introduce new versions of "ethnic clothing" (Hepburn 2000) in a world of dress that knows few boundaries.

THE WORLD IN DRESS

Clothing matters differently across the world's major regions. Aside from examining the effects on dress practice of grand-scale processes such as colonization and globalization, regional scholarship differs in emphasis. Works from Latin America focus on "indigenous dress" and its transformations, Africanist dress scholarship stresses the importance of dressing well and its significance for dress-style dynamics in contemporary clothing encounters, and South Asian scholarship examines the changing cultural importance of the sari in its interaction with other dress practices. East and Southeast Asian research explores multiple influences on local fashion and the export and import of "Asian chic" styles, and clothing research in the Pacific poses new questions about the efficacy of material surfaces. The regionally specific preoccupations with dress are evident in dress diasporas that domesticate elements of regional dress on global terms. Challenging us to shift perspective, the recent anthropological scholarship on dress outside of the West's established fashion canon opens up new vistas for dress scholarship in general.

Having turned distinct cultural dress icons into framing devices for my regional discussions, I must acknowledge the larger relationship in which their continuously shifting forms interact. This is the world of fashion dominated by the economic power of the West, even if the West no longer fully controls the creative inspirations. When arguing that anthropology's dress world is a world of fashion, I refer to fashion in several interactive senses including and extending beyond the West's fashion system: "Ethnic" dress is dynamic and changing; it even has fads. People everywhere want "the latest" by whatever changing definitions of local preference. Widespread desire "to move with fashion" and be "in style" now (Hansen 2000b) makes notions of fashion and style converge on the dressed body, directing our attention to the combination of garments that construct identity on the surface, and in so doing, objectify it (Miller 1994). This is how dress becomes implicated in life projects, and why there is nothing quite like it in anthropology to enrich our cross-cultural understanding.

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