Fashion's Borders

An Introduction

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Abstract The introduction traces the long history of fashion's movement across cultural, national, and political borders. After brief case studies of early twentieth-century French and Spanish styles imagining fashion as an engine of transnational amity, the introduction highlights how fashion navigates some of the most troubled borders of recent years, including the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and racial violence. Fashion forces viewers and consumers to choose sides, whether through national identification or through recognition of the long history of black and brown bodies producing fashionable objects. To advance the global history of fashion, the introduction briefly discusses the work of designers Rawan Maki (Bahrain), Laurence Leenaert (Belgium), and Kim Jones (Great Britain), examining how each upends gender, race, class, or fashion binaries, and analyzes how LVMH and Uniqlo, brands at opposite ends of the contemporary style spectrum, underline the very different ways in which fashion traverses the globe in the twenty-first century. The introduction concludes with the hope that this issue will raise questions about fashion's articulation of the relation among the local, the national, and the global, as well as about the human experience of interacting with the fashion industry in one national context while living in a globalized world.

Keywords fashion, global, history, race, nation

Fashion's Transnational Histories

Fashion, we assert, is the cultural medium through which borders shift and move—in which place can be understood as a state of mind or a geographic location. Fashion theorists, dress historians, and literary critics (such as Walter Benjamin, Pierre Bourdieu, and Diana Crane) have long argued that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries spelled the end of localized clothing cultures and regional dress, positing a diversity and richness of clothing practices that were effaced by the homogenizing powers of modernity. With the rise of ready-to-wear, such thinking suggests, clothing became less locally produced than mass distributed across nations and national borders, resulting in consumers who no longer knew where their garments had been manufactured or who had made them. This understanding of dress history credits local elites prior to 1800 with exclusive knowledge of, and access to, imported styles

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and materials, which they could use to represent exceptional status and knowledge of other places and cultures. Moreover, this historical model places modern consumers in an ever-shifting game whose fashion rules are determined by connoisseurs who regulate social rank. Arjun Appadurai, in his work on the cultural circulation of things, has remarked that in the domain of modern fashion what is "restricted and controlled is *taste* in an *ever-changing* universe of commodities, with the illusion of complete interchangeability and unrestricted access."[1] Such illusion, while challenged by the everyday clothing practices of ordinary individuals, remains powerful, resting as it does on the assumption that dress is "democratic" and subject to accelerated and widespread changes.

While fashion's movement across cultural, national, and political borders may seem to be a modern, twentieth- and twenty-first-century phenomenon, the history of French fashion serves as an example of the *longue durée* of the transnational circulation of styles, materials, and specific garments. As early as the 1670s the French court set the standard for upper-class attire throughout Europe. In Joan DeJean's words, by the end of Louis XIV's reign "those who ruled over the Parisian fashion scene had women from London to Saint Petersburg anxiously awaiting information about all the latest trends. Barely a decade later, newspapers in major U.S. cities such as Boston began to trumpet the arrival of any sign of French fashion life."[2] While French fashion thenceforth *was* international fashion, there was a reverse flow of "Anglomania" in men's dress in the 1780s. The English frock coat became popular for Frenchmen, as did other English materials and accessories like "leather breeches and boots."[3] As Aileen Ribeiro has argued, Anglomania represented not only a craze for the new but was driven by tastemakers' political allegiances: "One of the promoters of English fashions . . . was Phillippe, duc d'Orléans, a friend of the Prince of Wales; both men were at the centre of opposition to court politics and Orléans . . . used costume to focus attention on his political sympathies."[4] Anglomania, however brief its sway, points to the fact that fashion has long crossed borders and brought with it not only style but also ways of thinking, allowing wearers to embody other places and ideas at odds with local values and assumptions.

It was the French, however, whose fashions crossed borders most consistently over the next two centuries, and we highlight France as a case study that demonstrates the lively transnational trade networks that facilitated the exchange of dress materials. By the nineteenth century French haute couture houses had "global trade networks across Europe and the Americas" that dispersed "designs, in the form of model dresses, and the rights to reproduce them."[5] A dress designed in Paris might be manufactured in New York and sold in Chicago; enterprising (and unscrupulous) "counterfeits" manufactured by individuals who had not purchased reproduction rights were nevertheless offered as exemplars of genuine Paris style.[6] If the names of specific designers had cachet, then the simple phrase *a Paris frock* was enough to signal a garment's (and thus its wearer's) cosmopolitan style, a habitus as global connoisseur and traveler, even if the person wearing it had never left home.[7]

So international was French fashion and so deep and wide its appeal in the early twentieth century that cartoonists even imagined that it might halt the entrenched

Figure 1. From *Sunday Pictorial*, March 26, 1916. Dame Fashion requests a cease-fire in the trenches so that couturiers might offer women the latest modes.

combat of World War I.[8] In March 1916 the British newspaper the *Sunday Pictorial* reprinted a cartoon that had originally appeared in the Brooklyn *Citizen* (fig. 1). It depicts a stylishly dressed woman raising one calming hand over the trenches; in her other hand she holds a flag bearing the motto "Parisian Spring Styles." The cartoon is captioned "The world conqueror. Before the victorious onslaught of the Queen of Fashions, all enemies are forced to surrender." Such a tongue-in-cheek treatment of the conflict in March 1916 seems shocking—the German navy had sunk the *Lusitania* almost a year earlier, and the bloody Battle of Verdun commenced in February 1916—but the image offers the fantasy that fashion might pause or even stop war. Indeed, it suggests that French styles transcend the individual grievances of nation-states and might triumph where France's armies (and those of her allies) had not. The fact that an American and then a British newspaper published this cartoon underlines a transatlantic sense of the power of Paris designs, which citizens from a variety of countries admired and on which they could agree.

Parisian spring styles did not, of course, bring an end to World War I, but postwar fashion showed a dedication to thinking across borders—to borrowing ideas and accessories to create a cosmopolitan, modern look.[9] At the same time, the case study of Spanish style reveals deep connections between fashion and long histories of national conflict. The 1920s is best known for the rise of the "flapper," but it was important as a period when Spanish modes influenced women's dress around Europe and in the United States.[10] Inspired by Rudolph Valentino films like *Blood and Sand* (1922) and the dance craze for the tango, the Spanish look impelled women

Figure 2. From *Sunday Pictorial*, August 28, 1921. The "Mainly for Women" section highlights a model wearing a fringed Spanish shawl with a Spanish comb in her hair.

to adopt a range of cuts and accessories: the "Infanta dress," which departed from narrow, chemise modes through its wide panniers; fringed and embroidered Spanish shawls and even Spanish combs were in vogue.[11] Photographs on the "Mainly for Women" page of the *Sunday Pictorial* demonstrate that the fringe on Spanish shawls carried over to dresses, with hairstyles echoing the look through combs (fig. 2). "Kiki," the author of "Mainly for Women," often comments on the appearance of members of the Spanish court and the Spanish ambassador at cultural events and popular restaurants in Great Britain, indicating that her audience was interested in political figures who crossed borders as well as the styles that alluded to their home countries. The prevalence of Spanish shawls, combs, *and* visiting dignitaries helped signal transnational amity during a decade when many wanted to forget the conflicts that had riven Europe between 1914 and 1918.

Writers of the period noticed. Occasionally, they would collapse historical time to conflate Spanish styles with metaphors drawn from previous international conflicts. Virginia Woolf, for example, repeatedly described the hostess and art patron Ottoline Morrell in terms that conflate Spanish styles with naval references.[12] The connection is rooted in the fact that Spain boasted the most powerful maritime force in the world during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During the period of colonial expansionism from 1492 to 1821, the territories that became a part of the Spanish Empire through seafaring conquest included all of Mexico, much of Central America, the southwestern part of the United States, and vast areas of the West Indies. Twentieth-century Spanish style became a reminder of that history. On one occasion, Woolf described Morrell as looking "precisely like the Spanish Armada in full sail," figuring Morrell as the 1588 fleet infamous for its failed attack on England.[13] On another occasion, she described Morrell as looking like "a Spanish galleon, hung with golden coins, and lovely silkin [*sic*] sails."[14] Spanish fashion, in Woolf's eyes, vacillates between the ridiculous and the lovely.

While her comments document the prevalence of border-crossing fashion, they also shore up those same borders by reading the look through histories of naval conflict, reminding readers of times when warships, as opposed to shawls, left Spain to circle the globe.

Fashion in the Global Age

As this special issue on the topic of fashion's borders came together in March 2022, Ukraine had been invaded by Russian tanks and artillery targeting civilian areas. While more than half a million refugees fled, one of Kyiv's leading fashion designers—Svitlana Bevza of the label Bevza—remained there despite rising tensions.[15] Bevza is known for infusing her garments with modernized "ethnic symbols and cultural codes" of Ukrainian identity, and when the designer ended her fall 2022 collection at New York Fashion Week in February 2022, she projected a large blue and yellow image of her nation's flag as a show of support for Ukraine's sovereignty.[16] That same month Bevza's home page foregrounded not fashionable garments but a banner that highlighted the bizarre reality of trying to run a business while besieged by Russian forces: "Dear Customers! We are obliged to announce that due to Russian invasion Ukraine is in state of war. All deliveries are postponed. We will get back to work as soon as we can."[17] Rather than induce customers to purchase a nautical necklace or taffeta sailor hat from Bevza's aptly titled "We Are All in the Same Boat" spring–summer 2022 collection, customers are instead invited to click on a link that will enable them to make a donation to Ukraine's armed forces.[18] Both the "same boat" collection and the website's attention to the Ukrainian military are clear attempts to highlight the idea of collective responsibility in the face of military conflict—not just the designer's but the consumer's as well.

The juxtaposition of fashion and warfare may at first glance appear slight or even worrying if one thinks about precedents, such as fascism's eroticization of the uniformed male body in Nazi Germany, but if we instead seek to understand the social and political underpinnings of fashion in relation to modern democracies, we see a different picture.[19] Gilles Lipovetsky, in *The Empire of Fashion*, asserts that fashion is not a frivolous outlet of conspicuous consumption for the rich (as Thorsten Veblen argued) but is in fact constitutive of modern democracies.[20] Bevza's embrace of Ukrainian motifs in her own contemporary designs can be read within this paradigm, in which fashion functions as a symbolic sartorial language of resistance. It acquires even greater potency if one remembers that traditional Ukrainian clothing was either prohibited or suppressed during the long period of Soviet rule. Furthermore, if we read Bevza's wordless articulation of cultural identity through dress in terms of the art historian Anne Hollander's argument that "clothes are social phenomena; changes in dress *are* social changes," then we can see how Bevza's garments arguably function as a form of national identification even as Ukraine's own national borders are violently breached.[21]

Of course, traditional Ukrainian motifs on garments cannot neutralize powerful military mobilizations, but they do symbolically function as the focal point for where the public and private worlds of the individual meet. Christopher Breward and Caroline Evans have argued that "fashion is a process in two senses: it is a

market-driven cycle of consumer desire and demand; and it is a modern mechanism for the fabrication of the self. It is in this respect that fashion operates as a fulcrum for negotiating the meeting of internal and external worlds."[22] Walter Benjamin has observed that clothing can have a predictive power, giving "secret flag signals of coming things. Those capable of reading them would know beforehand about new laws, wars, and revolutions."[23] As Bevza and other Ukrainian designers aim to draw international attention to Russia's ongoing assault on Ukraine through dress, one wonders: How can the power and meaning imbued in clothing possibly make any difference to what threatens to become one of the worst humanitarian disasters in recent history? Daria Shapovalova, cofounder of DressX, a global digital marketplace founded in 2020 that is dedicated to sustainability, has created a collection of blue-and-yellow digital garments with all proceeds going to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense.[24] Echoing the urgency conveyed by the Bevza label, the DressX home page features a pivotal-moment message to potential customers (emblazoned in solid blocks of Ukrainian blue and yellow): "Support Ukraine Now, When It's Not Too Late."[25] As these decisive and historic banners make clear, fashion is not just a manufacturing industry or the "cultural construction" of an individual's "embodied identity" but a complex system of signs that has the power to "portray and invent national and global identities."[26]

But what happens to one's national identity (from a fashion perspective) when houses and roads and actual physical bodies are being damaged or destroyed? This is the question implicitly posed by the 1916 "Paris Spring Fashion" cartoon, and we see those issues and concerns reiterated in 2022. One element of fashion's complicated historical relation to geopolitics that is relevant to this issue's engagement with physical and conceptual borders is Benjamin's invitation to critically reassess our embedded assumptions about clothing. As Benjamin himself acknowledges about the seductiveness of fashion's predictive power, "No doubt, this motion contains fashion's greatest attraction, but at the same time the difficulty of rendering it productive."[27] What does it mean to use fashion "productively," and what role might ideals of national sartorial taste play in political conflicts and regimes?

This special issue of *ELN* provides no answers to these impossibly difficult questions, but it does seek to explore the transnational and global role of fashion.[28] In doing so, it aims to shed some light not just on the relation of fashion to questions of national and global identities but on what role borders—both literal and figurative—play in the processes of economic and cultural globalization. Since the last decades of the twentieth century, scholars of fashion have interrogated the dominance of Eurocentrism in the study of dress—particularly the assumption that fashion did not exist prior to mid-fourteenth-century Europe and the fallacious argument that the garments and style of non-Western cultures exist outside the fashion system because they are supposedly "changeless."[29] This equation of Western dress with modernity and progress is critical to understanding the development of fashion theory before the late twentieth century and can be traced, as Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun observe, to the confluence of social Darwinism and imperialism.[30] Within that constellation, the dress of so-called primitive and tribal peoples was considered "outside of fashion," and the dress practices of the West were regarded as

superior to those of all other cultures.[31] Welters and Lillethun argue that such intractable ideas about the conceptual policing of borders shaped fashion theory until the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Today one of the most salient examples of the opposition to this racist view of fashion history is the Fashion and Race Database, a groundbreaking online platform that seeks to expand the narrative of fashion history by challenging misrepresentation within the fashion system.[32] The database's far-reaching objective is to amplify the voices of those who have been racialized (and thus marginalized) in fashion and to illuminate underexamined histories while addressing racism.[33] The site offers extensive reading lists on a diverse range of topics such as "globalizing Muslim fashion," "Indigenous fashion exhibitions," and "decolonizing fashion," and it provides readers with scholarly and popular articles as well as podcasts, films, and exhibitions that address the intersections of fashion, race, the body, and material culture in a global context. Cumulatively, the Fashion and Race Database provides readers with incontrovertible evidence that fashion history involves styles and ways of dressing that are not exclusive to the West, dominant white culture, or the elite—even though surviving examples of dress prior to 1800 are rare and most often represent the attire of nobility or landed gentry, who could afford to have their garments archived and their portraits painted for posterity.

No visual artist critiques the phenomenon of racial erasure in fashion history more effectively than the Haitian-born and Brooklyn-raised art photographer Fabiola Jean-Louis, who uses fabricated "historical" garments to interrogate both the garment industry and the African diasporic experience. Her mesmerizing 2016 project, *Rewriting History: Paper Gowns and Photographs*, is a haunting photographic assemblage that combines paper-painted, crumpled, and folded handmade garments in conversation with both the dresses worn by female European nobility between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries and the bodies, histories, and untold stories of Black women.[34] In one striking portrait, *Madame Leroy*, encased in the stomacher of the bodice of the dark-skinned subject's luxurious eighteenth-century rococo gown, Jean-Louis reveals the hidden history of racist violence through the gruesome image of a lynching.[35] A cropped close-up of this hinged stomacher, titled *Rest in Peace*, highlights the stark figure of a chained and lynched Black man as he hangs from a beautiful pink climbing rosebush.[36] Jean-Louis uses these paper gown sculptures to transform history, excavating layers of time to show how they press and intrude on the present; in doing so, she implicitly invites viewers to activate generational memories and reflect on the harrowing treatment of Black bodies today. Jean-Louis's conceptual fashion photography crosses multiple borders—temporal, geographic, racial, and ancestral.[37] As a group, this series of photographic prints (which look like oil paintings) expands our understanding of the relation among fashion, race, gender, and the body, inviting us to rethink the role of material culture in our reconsideration of the violent legacies and mythologies of American and European histories.[38] With the rise of globalism and the increased focus on interdisciplinarity, fashion scholars have embraced the study of fashion within a global framework.[39] Yet despite these new intellectual developments, a genuine "paradigm shift" in which global fashion history is in the foreground "has yet to fully occur."[40]

Upending Fashion's Borders

This special issue on fashion's borders is one attempt to reassess new evidence and reinterpret familiar territory with an eye toward contributing meaningfully to a truly innovative global history of fashion. Our cover, which features Rawan Maki's designs, is one way that we seek to draw attention to the globalization of fashion today (fig. 3). Maki is a Bahraini fashion designer with a background in environmental engineering who works in London. Her debut fall–winter 2017 collection sought to highlight her brand's non-Western design approach by featuring an eclectic mix of sustainable dresses and pantsuits made with fabrics that used low-impact dyes, were farmed organically, and consumed low levels of energy during the production process. This inaugural collection included an off-white abaya with purple peace flowers made from recycled plastic products.[41] Maki, who is interested in the life cycle of the garments that we wear every day, seeks to draw attention to the Gulf region as a location that is "both a post-colonial and neo-colonial space."[42] Her eponymous label was dubbed "the Arab world's first sustainable clothing brand," but the collections are available to a global audience (online) and the cover photograph was taken in London at Selfridges department store.[43] In August–September 2021, during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, Maki worked with a group of designers who were part of a collective called Reture, which was built on the concept of offering garments and accessories based on UN Sustainable Development Goals.[44] As a member of this international group, Maki took part in a fashion sustainability pop-up at Selfridges called "Resellfridges: The Wedding." Our cover highlights Maki's participation at this event, which sought to reimagine sartorial wedding culture as sustainable, one-of-a-kind, and "planet-positive."[45] With its emphasis on a global collective of fashion designers, the pop-up also implicitly challenged the perception that the movement for sustainable fashion is "largely a white phenomenon."[46] The pop-up crossed multiple fashion borders, bringing an international conversation about sustainability and high-low fashion to the flagship high-end department store, founded in 1908 on Oxford Street.[47] The framing of this event clearly attempted to displace the Western bias deeply entrenched in fashion history by showcasing designers such as Maki, who hails from a former British colonial protectorate and seeks to reach a global audience by marketing Gulf- and Arab-world fashion awareness.

While much has been written on both non-Western fashion influences on Western dress and the homogenizing spread of Western dress styles around the world, less attention has been paid to the more playful and subversive dimension of Western fashion culture on global fashion trends. The notable example of such conceptual, national, and temporal border crossing is the Belgian fashion designer Laurence Leenaert, who runs her global brand LRNC in Marrakech while incorporating motifs and designs inspired in part by the early twentieth-century English artisan guild the Omega Workshops.[48] Today several artists have been inspired by the Omega's kinetic colors and imperfect handmade designs. One of the Omega's founders, Roger Fry (the preeminent early twentieth-century English art critic), argued that the guild grew out of a distinctly English tradition, but in fact it was Continental in origin and drew its primary inspiration from non-English cultures.

Figure 3. Designer Rawan Maki sits with her work in the window of Selfridges department store (2021). Photograph courtesy of Rawan Maki.

We see the spirit of this philosophy reflected in the work of designers such as Leenaert, whose LRNC line includes tapestries, clothing, rugs, and small household objects painted in brightly colored wavy lines and circles that remind us of the Omega's vibrant and decorative aesthetic.[49] The website's juxtaposition of "art" clothing alongside household objects is also reminiscent of the Omega's own integrated marketing strategy, which sought to sell unique garments alongside decorative household objects such as textiles and ceramics. One example of this strategy can be seen in LRNC's marketing of their woven jacquard coat, which appears hand-painted (in muted shades of blue, gray, and brown covered in squiggly lines, grids, and abstract shapes) and is photographed in front of hanging textiles that are also available for sale on the company's website.[50] LRNC's bold, fluid, geometric designs have a spontaneous, sculptural quality that seeks to preserve the integrity of handmade design and privilege beauty over preciousness—all hallmarks of the Omega ethos.

While the Omega Workshops was a short-lived though influential venture, the Bloomsbury Group artists who opened, supervised, and supported that radical artisanal project are still influencing global fashion trends today—often in terms that highlight gender border crossing. More than a century later we see elements of that shared aesthetic in the work of the British fashion designer Kim Jones, whose sumptuous spring–summer 2021 collection for Fendi is a homage to Virginia Woolf and her lover Vita Sackville-West. Reminding us of Woolf's own col-

lapse of historical time in her description of Ottoline Morrell, the Fendi couture collection showcased iconic Bloomsbury sites (such as Charleston, the sixteenth-century Sussex retreat inhabited by Vanessa Bell, Clive Bell, and Duncan Grant) and featured Woolf's only extant BBC recording and quotations from her gender- and sexuality-bending novel *Orlando*.[51] Literary allusions abounded in the runway show: models held metal-bound book clutches, and lines from *Orlando* were "inscribed into mother of pearl minaudières [small decorative handbags] and leather boots," while extracts from love letters exchanged between Woolf and Sackville-West during their courtship were read aloud.[52] Jones's lavish collection included flowing capes, elaborate embroidery, and high collars—alluding to Orlando's fantastical time travel from the Renaissance to the 1920s, but all infused with a modern sensibility. His androgynous silhouettes engaged conceptually with Woolf's time-traveling novel and culminated in "split-personality dresses hybridized from half an evening gown and half a blazer or shirt" that conveyed "an air of upholstery about them"—perhaps a "nod to Charleston" and its renowned shabbiness.[53]

Jones's sartorial engagement with *Orlando* is implicitly in conversation with earlier artistic experiments that highlight the novel's relation to fashion, namely, Tilda Swinton's guest editorship of *Aperture*'s 2019 summer issue, which was inspired by Virginia Woolf's work. Swinton assembled a group of artists who made work expressly for this issue, including painter-photographer Mickalene Thomas's *Orlando*-inspired portraits that bring together fashion, racial and sexual ambiguity, and nineteenth-century painting."[54] Also in the same *Orlando*-inspired volume of *Aperture* is the work of the photographer Jamal Nxedlana, whose stunning portraits of the Johannesburg-based performance duo FAKA (a Nguni word meaning "insert it" or "put it in") highlight the concept of "borderless worlds" that transcend gender, sexuality, race, and class through uncategorizable fashionable dress. Like the protagonist of Woolf's *Orlando*, FAKA "escape the confines of linearity as figures from the ongoing past, becoming somehow all genders, all ages, all times all at once"—the embodiment of "a protest" through their curated looks that upend gender, race, class, and fashion binaries.[55]

A growing number of interdisciplinary scholars have examined fashion's international reach, particularly material practices in a global context.[56] At the beginning of the twenty-first century, LVMH (the world's leading luxury goods brand) had sales totaling over 44 billion euros—up from 8.5 billion in 1999.[57] The global spread of such high-end mega brands provides evidence of how quickly fashion crosses borders in today's marketplace—but it is of course not just high-end clothing and goods that are subject to globalization. While in the latter half of the twentieth century most ready-to-wear clothing chains moved from the West to the East, Uniqlo provides an example of contemporary fashion's reverse, transcontinental flow. The Japanese company began as a menswear purveyor in 1949 but began to sell unisex clothing in 1984. By 2002 Uniqlo had opened outlets in China and London; in 2005 it opened stores in Manhattan as well as in Hong Kong and South Korea. Although, like chain stores everywhere, the brand has needed to shutter unprofitable locations over the last two decades, it is firmly established as a global business. Uniqlo's website explains the worldwide appeal of its garments by stating

that "our clothes are simple and essential yet universal, so people can freely combine them with their own unique styles, in any way they choose, every day of the year."[58] The company slogan, "Made for All," captures the capacious remit of their garments. In their examination of Uniqlo's worldwide expansion, Hongjoo Woo and Byoungho Jin have noted that Asia is still considered largely a manufacturer of garments even as Asian brands proper have internationalized.[59] They argue that Uniqlo has pursued a strategy of "opening eventful flagship stores in iconic fashion cities in foreign . . . countries,"[60] pointing to the way that *location* can help fashion cross borders: a store in New York or Paris positions its clothing as fashionable no matter where it comes from because those cities are fashion centers. Such a strategy helped the brand build a "global reputation" as it focused "on basic apparel design [that] enabled [it] to be free from design localization across different foreign markets."[61] In short, by occupying a niche within fashion retailers—focusing on jeans and other basics—Uniqlo established a model that easily crosses borders through garments that complement what a wearer in Japan, Paris, *or* New York pairs with them.[62] This example, like many others we could cite, demonstrates that the contemporary fashion world is no respecter of borders or of Western dominance.[63]

Why Fashion's Borders Now

The essays collected here examine how clothing is placed in particular texts, contexts, or commercial venues; how it travels; and how it places or locates others in certain local, national, and global contexts. The essays examine the borders of the body as it intersects with larger defining regional and geopolitical borders as well as the institutional, spatial, and temporal journey that fashionable garments and objects travel. This interdisciplinary issue traces fashion across multiple borders, with writers traversing nations that include France, Brazil, the United States, Ireland, Egypt, the United Kingdom, France, Mauritius, Germany, India, and Bahrain. Although additional national and continental identities and borders surface peripherally, the locations treated here obviously do not encompass the subject of fashion's travels and domains. Emerging from each of the contributions and the issue as a whole is our awareness that the topic of globalization and fashion has not been exhausted.[64] Our aim instead has been to highlight the geographic and cultural range of the work represented here and inspire further scholarship on the study of fashion—particularly the question of what constitutes the fashionable in a global context. We hope that this issue will inspire further scholarly work on fashion and its relationship to borders of all kinds.

This special issue begins with two essays on women and fashion navigating twentieth-century borders in the pages of the periodical press. These essays focus on the global North, starting our issue in the location that has long dominated fashion theory and studies. In "'Smartness Aloft': Aviation Technology in Interwar Transatlantic Fashion Media," Marylaura Papalas examines how interwar fashion designers and journals imagined the boundaries between female bodies and machines, particularly through the airplanes that promised to help women cross countries and continents with greater ease than ever before. In the pages of *Vogue*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and other interwar women's magazines, airplanes emerged as symbols of

female freedom. Designers such as Elsa Schiaparelli and Madeleine Vionnet created garments for aviatrix that resembled planes themselves, positioning the female body as imbued with, and amenable to, the latest technology. As Papalas notes, flight fashions thus offered a vision of liberation and travel that was available to women; at the same time, the assumption in advertisements and fashion spreads is that Western bodies alone have access to fashion, machines, and the globetrotting they enable. Flight becomes both a stylish possibility and a marker of privilege for women moving outward from West to East and from North to South.

Melissa Dinsman's "Marketing Masks and Makeup in Mollie Panter-Downes's 'Letter from London'" takes the discussion of fashion in periodicals later into the twentieth century, demonstrating that style remained of great importance to women during World War II, when Panter-Downes's regular *New Yorker* column informed American readers of how the British "carried on" through the difficult months and years of the conflict. Arguing that Panter-Downes's references to lipstick and gas masks subtly encouraged American readers to take a side in a conflict many wanted to sit out, Dinsman demonstrates how fashion forged links of sympathy and support across political borders that hardened during wartime. Moreover, Dinsman illustrates that Panter-Downes's references to lipstick crossed borders within the *New Yorker* that its editor in chief tried to maintain: the Ethics Wall, which was meant to separate the advertising and editorial departments, was breached by Panter-Downes's references to products that were advertised a few pages later in the same issue. Lipstick, her essay suggests, smudged more than one type of boundary as fashion worked to create the transatlantic allyship that would eventually help win the war.

The issue then transitions to a set of essays that examines how fashion thinks the relationship between the global North and South from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries. The methodologies employed by the authors vary widely—literary study, dress history, and interviews are among the approaches here—but these essays highlight the long history of fashion's hemispheric crossings and of the importance of situating local garments and social norms within a global approach to style. Lise Shapiro Sanders's "Emily Dickinson's Shawl: Textiles across Borders" begins this section by examining garments and textiles owned and worn by the famed American poet, with particular attention to a shawl manufactured in Europe but modeled on, and called, an "India shawl." Fashion cycles in which the popularity of such shawls rose and fell, and in which the authenticity of shawls was key to their value ("real India shawls" alone were the mark of style), demonstrate how "Orientalism was produced, distributed, marketed, and consumed." Sanders surveys and unpacks references to shawls in Dickinson's poetry, but her essay is equally interested in nineteenth-century material culture: in what the poet's shawl might have meant to Dickinson. Such wraps—in parallel to cotton textiles, which abolitionists repeatedly tied to slavery—not only were fashionable but also alluded to the labor and suffering of textile workers in India. Dickinson's shawl thus points us toward the long history of fashionable appropriation of colonial products for Western consumption even as its occluded European origin illuminates the complicated global production of commodities at the apex of imperialism.

Thinking through and across the colonial divide, the global North and South, also animates Ria Banerjee's "Fashions and Wars: Negotiations of Liberal Humanism

in E. M. Forster's Writings, 1915–1925," which examines how Forster's personal and sartorial border crossings challenged his liberal humanism. Scholars have long known that Forster's wartime work in Alexandria, Egypt, and later in India forced him to confront British violence and imperialism; his travels also enabled Forster's intimate sexual contact with Egyptian and Indian men. Banerjee demonstrates that it was Forster's understanding of clothing, particularly his clothing exchanges with (and donations to) his Egyptian friend and lover Mohamed El-Adl, that helped him come to terms with the privilege that he, though a closeted gay man, enjoyed because of his English identity, education, and comparative financial security. Forster's repeated gifts of clothing to El-Adl do not, however, represent only a one-way flow of charity from England to Egypt—from North to South and from colonizer to colonized. Banerjee argues that garments El-Adl appropriated, such as Forster's "latrine socks," index the intimacy between the two men, an intimacy that allowed El-Adl to challenge his English friend's worldview. A humble pair of forgotten socks crosses borders and bridges inequities within the space of Forster and El-Adl's correspondence even as those borders remained fixed in the men's public lives.

The legacy of colonialism and the ongoing differences between the global North and South is everywhere evident in Heidi Brevik-Zender's "Critiquing the Global Clothing Chain in Mauritius: Christine Duvergé's *The Lives of Loréna* (*Les Vies de Loréna*)," which examines how Duvergé's 2020 novel traces North-South border crossings through its representation of clothing manufacture in Mauritius and the conspicuous consumption of high fashion in the Mauritian protagonist's new home in the United States. Arguing that "the narrative itself performs the interconnections among the various sectors of the global clothing chain that the novel seeks to expose," Brevik-Zender traces the doubling of garments in Mauritius and Ohio, a doubling that points to the grave inequities that structure access to global fashion. Individuals in both locations wear the same costly items, but this similarity marks the difference between North and South subjects, since the Mauritians receive costly accessories in exchange for sex with wealthy tourists. Duvergé further represents garments made in Mauritian factories hanging in an American shop, where their presence underlines the shocking gap between wages and the costs of the clothing workers make. Even the name Bel-Air crosses borders, designating different sites in Ohio and Mauritius and ironically pointing to the despoilation of the island nation, which has anything but *bel-air* because of the pollution caused by garment factories. Brevik-Zender's essay sheds light on how Duvergé represents the winners and losers of the global clothing industry and draws attention to the structures and networks in which Americans wear, and profit from, the global South.

The question of the ecological impact of the global clothing trade and of the differences between the consumption of fashion in the North and South is also raised by Rawan Maki in "Local Ontology and Lived Experience of Fashion toward a Gulf Fashion 'Sustainability.'" Maki analyzes the role of shopping malls and local tailoring in Bahrain. She argues that any effort to create a sustainable fashion system in the Gulf must come to grips with local garment life cycles and with the affective associations of acquiring clothing from different sources. While malls, which promote the consumption of fast fashion, are often disparaged in sustainability discourse, Maki highlights such locations as providing rare public space for Bahraini

sociability: one goes to the mall in Bahrain not only to acquire clothing but to meet others and be seen. Because shopping malls thus serve a social purpose in tension with sustainable fashion, individuals Maki interviews offer suggestions to render mall shopping less damaging to the environment. Maki further examines why some consumers prefer malls and others local tailors, who make both traditional garments and items influenced by fashion trends. While visits to local tailors also play an important role in Bahraini sociability—family members exchange designs before visiting a tailor and often go to the initial consultation and fittings together, thus making the life cycle of garments very different than in the West—tailor-made clothes are not necessarily more sustainable. Ultimately, Maki finds the need for close attention to local ontologies before rushing to judgment on the means of achieving sustainable fashion. What works in one country, one culture, will not work in others.

This issue's examination of fashion's hemispheric travels concludes with analysis of transatlantic exchange between continents in the South, specifically between Africa and South America. In "Fashion in *Aṣọ*: Tradition and Modernity in the Dress of Candomblé *Terreiros*," Aymê Okasaki explores the fabrics, styles, and accessories used in the Brazilian religious practice of Candomblé, which involves dance, ritual trance, and the possession of adherents by spirits. Religious communities and practices are often understood as *outside* the fashion system, but Okasaki demonstrates that the garments worn during Candomblé ceremonies and rites reflect changing fashions, particularly trends in the use of specific fabric and materials, over the course of three centuries. Candomblé costumes not only disprove the assumption that religious garments are unfashionable; Okasaki also reveals that the costumes forge transatlantic allegiances, with an increasing emphasis on African materials and styles that reflect adherents' desire to re-Africanize their religious practices. Analyzing how fashion crosses the borders and oceans that divide the global South, Okasaki shows how fabrics and styles move and how fashion pervades even domains governed by tradition and hierarchy.

The final two essays on fashion scrutinize the very idea of tradition and nation as they explore the mythmaking behind specific garments and high-fashion brands. These essays return "Fashion's Borders" to the global North, but they make the manufacturing and marketing strategies there strange, defamiliarizing what we thought we knew about ubiquitous items and fashion houses. Ann Rea's "Convoluted Yarns: The Aran Sweater's Legends and Modernity's Fashioning of a Mythology" draws attention to the paradox that the famed Irish sweaters, touted as traditional knitwear rooted in an authentic Gaelic culture, are in fact the product of knitters and patterns from the Atlantic seaboard. The status of the sweaters as authentically Irish is challenged by the industrial production of most such garments in the present—a circumstance that echoes the origin of Dickinson's "India shawl" in a European factory—but it is the Aran sweater's roots in Scotland, the United States, *and* Ireland that most directly underline the border crossing behind the garment we see today. Even as manufacturers and the Irish tourist industry point to the sweater as a chance to wear something genuinely Irish, Aran knitwear serves as a stunning reminder of the hybrid origins of twentieth-century fashion.

Rhonda Garelick's "Lagerfeld, Fashion, and Cultural Heritage" then highlights how Karl Lagerfeld's helming of the iconic Chanel house illuminates the shifting role of national borders in haute couture in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As a German man leading a brand widely considered "a symbol of French culture," Lagerfeld distilled Chanel's "brand DNA" into a few styles and accessories he could theatrically reinterpret through witty and exaggerated revisions. Garelick argues that under Lagerfeld's leadership of Chanel, "French nationality and *patrimoine* felt light, even whimsical. He seemed to regard nationality as a changeable accessory" that could be turned into "splashy spectacle," an attitude reflected in his decision to claim the label of foreigner when he was invited to identify as French. Most startlingly, Garelick demonstrates that Lagerfeld turned Chanel into a territory of its own—a "country" that includes elements of French nationalism even as it references Chanel's suppressed connections to Nazi Germany and sometimes rejects national boundaries outright through landscapes created for Chanel fashion shows. In Lagerfeld's hands, national identity and cultural inheritances were everywhere and nowhere as he reimagined the borders "of family, nation, the environment, and reality itself."

This issue of *ELN* thus begins with the fantasy of easily traversing national borders and concludes with the imagined dissolution of such boundaries. Across the nine essays, contributors take up the ways that fashionable objects, brands, and ideas have engaged with questions of mobility and identity, of the power differences between those who make clothing and accessories and those who consume them, and of the global fashion system's impact on the natural environment. We hope that this special issue—with its diverse approaches and methodologies—will raise questions about the relation among the local, the national, and the global, as well as the human experience of interacting with the fashion industry in one national context while living in a globalized world. We present a series of case studies across a vast geographic range to explore these and other questions that seek to interrogate the effects of fashion and globalization.

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CELIA MARSHIK is professor of English and interim dean of the Graduate School at Stony Brook University. She is author of *British Modernism and Censorship* (2006) and *At the Mercy of Their Clothes: Modernism, the Middlebrow, and British Garment Culture* (2017), coauthor of *Modernism, Sex, and Gender* (2018), and editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Culture* (2015).

Notes

1 Appadurai, *Social Life of Things*, 25.
2 DeJean, *Essence of Style*, 39.
3 French women's dress was shaped by late eighteenth-century Anglomania as well. One example is the Indian cashmere shawl, first imported to England but by 1790 part of the French "toilette à l'anglaise" (Ribeiro, *Art of Dress*, 49). For more on the international circulation of such shawls, see Lise Shapiro Sanders's essay in this issue.
4 Ribeiro, *Art of Dress*, 49.
5 Evans, *Mechanical Smile*, 11.
6 For a discussion of the tension between originality and reproduction in haute couture, see Troy, *Couture Culture*.
7 In 1882 M. Augustin Challamel, in *The History of Fashion in France*, wrote: "At present the type of feminine dress always originates in France, into the most distant regions of Europe, and even into Asia and America" (quoted in Welters and Lillethun, *Fashion History*, 50).
8 For a fuller discussion of the role of French fashion during this period, see Bass-Krueger and Kirkdjian, *French Fashion*.
9 Stewart discusses French fashion during the interwar period in *Dressing Modern Frenchwomen*. Steele focuses on the cultural significance of Paris as the epicenter of fashion in *Paris Fashion*.
10 While the Spanish Golden Age (roughly the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) and the two centuries immediately following have received substantial scholarly attention in relation to fashion, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have not been deeply studied. See Fernandez de Alba and Garces, *Fashioning Spain*, 3.
11 In 1928 Paul Nystrom pointed to additional reasons for the Spanish fashion craze: "Spanish art has been the inspiration for several fashion motives during the last ten years, such as the use of rouge, certain types of hair dressing, softening the line of the feminine silhouette, and so on" (*Economics of Fashion*, 87–88).
12 Although her focus is fashion in Argentina, Regina Root discusses the dress codes in relation to the Spanish Empire in *Couture and Consensus*, 37–38. For an examination of Spanish style during the interwar period, see Gameiro and Taylor, "Lisbon as the Centre of Couture Fashion."
13 Woolf, *Letters*, 2:282.
14 Woolf, *Letters*, 3:91.
15 See Satenstein, "'We Made the Decision to Stay Here.'" For a link to Bevza's minimalist, eco-conscious designs, see *Vogue Runway*, Bevza.
16 For a link to Bevza's ethical attitude toward nature and philosophical investment in showcasing Ukraine's national heritage, see https://bevza.com/pages/about. Alexander Maxwell examines the utility and challenges of nationalized clothing in *Patriots against Fashion*.
17 Bevza home page, https://bevza.com (accessed February 28, 2022).
18 See the National Bank of Ukraine site at https://bank.gov.ua/en/news/all/natsionalniy-bank-vidkriv-spetsrahunok-dlya-zboru-koshtiv-na-potrebi-armiyi. For a link to the nautical collection, see the Bevza site at https://bevza.com/collections/ss22.
19 For a classic take on the "eroticization of fascism," see Sontag's essay "Fascinating Fascism," 322. For additional analyses of the role of fashion in relation to fascist regimes, see Guenther, *Nazi Chic*; Lupano and Vaccari, *Fashion at the Time of Fascism*; and Paukicelli, *Fashion under Fascism*.
20 Lipovetsky, *Empire of Fashion*.
21 For a discussion of Bevza's embrace of traditional Ukrainian dress in her personal life, see Satenstein, "How One Ukrainian Designer Celebrates Orthodox Christmas."
22 Breward and Evans, *Fashion and Modernity*, 3.
23 Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, quoted in Lehmann, *Tigersprung*, 251.
24 For a link to DressX's Support Ukraine Collection, see https://dressx.com/collections/support-ukraine-collection. For a link to DressX's commitment to sustainability, see https://dressx.com/pages/sustainability.
25 DressX, https://dressx.com.
26 Steele, "Letter from the Editor"; Paukicelli and Clark, *Fabric of Cultures*, 2. This is not ideological hyperbole; pressure is growing for fashion companies across the globe to show support for Ukraine by ceasing trade with Russia. See Cartner-Morley, "Worldwide Fashion Industry Urged to Show Support for Ukraine."
27 Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, quoted in Lehmann, *Tigersprung*, 251. Lehmann regards fashion as fundamental to Benjamin's thought regarding revolutionary struggle: "Fashion understands what the future holds while glancing back at the past. Given that Benjamin's historicopolitical concept regards recourse to the past as of paramount importance for a prospective and necessary revolution, fashion with its constant and imperative reference to the past becomes the natural *agent provocateur*, an explosive force for social upheaval" (251).
28 Djurdja Bartlet discusses the rise of transnational fashion in relation to the

formation of the nation-state in "The Politics of Transnational Fashion," in a special issue of *Fashion Theory* dedicated to the phenomenon of transnational fashion.

29 Welters and Lillethun discuss this phenomenon in *Fashion History*, 1–10.

30 This notion of modernity is not exclusive to fashion studies but is a conventional Western trope. For a fuller examination of the modern/primitive dichotomy, see Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*; and McClintock, *Imperial Leather*.

31 Welters and Lillethun, *Fashion History*, 34.

32 See Fashion and Race Database, https://fashionandrace.org/database/. Catherine E. McKinley focuses on countries such as Mali, Niger, Ghana, and the Republic of Congo to illustrate how fashion in these countries is linked to colonization in *African Lookbook*. She also seeks to demonstrate how much of what we see on fashion runways in Paris, Milan, and New York is inspired by African women's dress. For another challenge to preconceived ideas concerning race in the fashion industry, see De Jaeger and Gansbeke, *Haute Africa*.

33 See the Fashion and Race Database vision statement at https://fashionandrace.org/database/vision-statement/.

34 *Rewriting History: Paper Gowns and Photographs* was a solo exhibition at the Harlem School of the Arts in New York City.

35 In *Madame Leroy* Jean-Louis uses the large, eye-catching piece of jewelry on the center panel of her subject's dress to highlight the image of a Black man hanging from a tree, literally opening a window (the hinged jewelry is open to the viewer) on the trauma of the Black past. For a discussion of this image, see Tzegai, "Traveling through Time."

36 For a link to *Rest in Peace*, see Jean-Louis, *Rewriting History*.

37 For an analysis of *Rewriting History: Paper Gowns and Photographs*, see Morris, "Fabiola Jean-Louis on the Art of Time-Travel." See also Misha, "Fabiola Jean-Louis Rewrites History with a Magical Lens." The images are all strikingly beautiful, but they also imply the African descendants' bodily connection to an unspeakably brutal past. In one particularly arresting portrait, *Madame Beauvoir's Painting*, an elegant young Black woman in a gorgeous gown gazes into a framed painting that depicts a runaway slave. The slave, identified by historians as Gordon, was the subject of a famous Civil War–era photograph known as *Whipped Peter*, by William D. McPherson and his partner Oliver (see https://www.loc.gov/item/2018648117/). The photograph of Gordon's scarred back, originally published in *Harper's Weekly* in July 1863, became one of the most widely circulated images of slavery's brutality. In Jean-Louis's artwork we see the horrific whip marks on the man's back, which are visually echoed by the elaborate embroidery on the woman's beautiful dress to convey her ancestral connection to this gruesome past. Despite the fashionable dress and the aesthetic beauty of the portrait, this history cannot be concealed or erased. For a description of the *Rewriting History* series, see Jean-Louis, *Rewriting History*.

38 In 2021 the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library acquired the entire Rewriting History series. See Kuhl, "New Acquisition." For a link to the series, see, Jean-Louis, *Rewriting History*.

39 See Welters and Lillethun, *Fashion History*, 62–65.

40 Welters and Lillethun, *Fashion History*, 66.

41 For a discussion of Maki's debut collection, see Santamaria, "Bahraini Designer Rawan Maki."

42 Gupta, "Environment in Context." In this podcast Huma Gupta speaks with Maki about fashion sustainability in Bahrain and beyond.

43 Ghanem, "Introducing the Arab World's First Sustainable Clothing Brand"; Ghanem, "Rawan Maki's Online Store Launches."

44 For a link to Reture's investment in sustainable production and upcycling, see https://reture.net/landing-about/.

45 For information on the pop-up event, see Core and Wassman, "Resellfridges: The Wedding." The event juxtaposed "pre-loved" wedding outfits alongside vintage couture items and bespoke sourcing services. In addition to appearing in store as designers and displaying their ready-to-make collections, the Reture team booked customers for one-on-one upcycling consultations inside the Selfridges department store.

46 See Beltrán-Rubio, "Decolonizing Sustainable Fashion."

47 For a link to the network of global designers who are a part of Reture, see https://bespoke.reture.net/#/designers.

48 See Hass, "How an Early Twentieth-Century English Guild Is Inspiring a New Generation."

49 For a link to LRNC's collection, see https://lrnce.com. Almost everything in Laurence Leenaert's collection is sourced from Morocco, and sustainability is key to the brand's production process. For a discussion of Leenaert's work, see Callaghan, "Artist Laurence Leenaert"; Santiago, "Belgian Designer in Morocco"; Smith, "Global Young Designer Spotlight";

Romack, "Inside Laurence Leenaert's Chic Marrakesh Studio"; and Delavan, "In Marrakesh, One Designer's Adobe House."

50 For a link to the woven jacquard jacket called Athiec, see https://lrnce.com/shop/to-wear/clothing/athiec/.

51 See Hussey, "Bloomsbury in the Light of Italy." For another analysis of the Fendi show, see Humm, "Kim Jones OBE and Virginia Woolf."

52 See Conroy, "Rare Books behind Kim Jones's Fendi Couture Debut."

53 See Madsen, "Fendi Spring 2021 Couture."

54 *Aperture*, "Tilda Swinton Guest Edits *Aperture*'s *Orlando* Issue." The publication was accompanied by an exhibition originating in New York City, *Spirit of the Age* (May 23–July 10, 2019), which then traveled to Munich and San Francisco. The website from the original *Aperture* exhibition is still accessible: https://aperture.org/exhibitions/orlando/. The exhibition was accompanied by a showing of Sally Potter's 1992 film, *Orlando*, starring Swinton. For a review of the *Aperture* exhibit, see Byrne, "Photographing *Orlando* in Manhattan."

55 Bongela, "FAKA by Jamal Nxedlana."

56 See, e.g., Paukicelli and Clark, introduction.

57 Karra, *Fashion Entrepreneurship*.

58 See Uniqlo, https://www.uniqlo.com/uk/en/info/about-uniqlo.html.

59 Woo and Jin, "Asian Apparel Brands," 2.

60 Woo and Jin, "Asian Apparel Brands," 7.

61 Woo and Jin, "Asian Apparel Brands," 8, 10.

62 Tets Kimura argues that ethical violations such as sweatshop conditions in Uniqlo's manufacturing plants and abusive scheduling of its retail store workers may limit the company's appeal to consumers in countries like Australia. This argument suggests that quality, style, and price are not the only factors in the transnational movement of contemporary fashion.

63 For additional examples analyzing East-West fashion, see Tinajero, "Far Eastern Influences in Latin American Fashions"; and Slade, "Neither East nor West."

64 We had hoped, for example, to include essays on Indigenous fashion and on style in Black Nordic communities, but the challenges of academic publishing and the realities of the tenure clock in the United States precluded those submissions.

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