

#### **Research Article**

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# Dress and Metaphors of Mobility in British Visual Culture

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**Abstract:** This essay traces the presence of mobility metaphors in the sartorial practices of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Britain. While fashion is frequently deemed ephemeral and changeful, it is also often theorised with reference to the concept of mobility, either physical or metaphorical. In fact, it seems that it is in the realm of fashion that the notions of motion, mobility, change and transition all become linked through visual representation. Based on Cognitive Metaphor Theory as well as insightful research on visual metaphors by Charles Forceville, one may argue that the concept of mobility is mapped onto garments and attire, resulting in change of fashions, as it was the case with the twentieth-century development of women's tennis wear. At the same time, oppositional styles adopted by a subculture such as Teddy Boys are frequently theorised as metaphorically communicating class mobility and hence viewed as expressing a protest against British class structure. A more recent example of a close relationship between mobility, migration and fashion can be found in the British debate over the Muslim veil, in which Muslim women's choice not to wear a veil becomes a metaphor of their cultural mobility and readiness to embrace the British way of life.

Keywords: fashion, metaphor theory, mobility, identity

Defining the word "fashion" represents a considerable challenge even to fashion theorists. As noted by Malcolm Barnard, the editor of one of the most comprehensive collections of texts in the field, entitled Fashion Theory. A Reader, "the word leads us into more or less confusion" (3). While fashion is commonly used as a synonym to such words like "dress" and "style" and implies both glamour and changeability (Barnard, Fashion as Communication 3-4), in fact, according to Barnard, it should be viewed as a much more capacious term i.e. as "all instances of what people wear, from catwalk creations, through High Street and outlet purchases, to police and military uniforms" (3). It is, therefore, this broad definition of fashion that underpins the present analysis of sartorial practices as metaphorical communication. Many theoretical approaches to communication through fashion view dress as capable of transferring, transmitting, or transporting cultural meanings. As Barnard observes, this form of expression is a metaphor, in which "the 'meta'... means 'beyond' or 'over' and the 'phor' means 'to carry" (Barnard, "Fashion Statements. Communication and Culture" 175). While the concept of motion seems inherent in metaphorical language, clothes and dress can be interpreted as metaphorical statements, which move "something ... from 'inside' someone's head, or a cultural community's 'unconscious' (a meaning, intention, or value), to 'outside'" (175), thereby linking fashion with the notion of mobility. In fact, the connection between fashion and motion is especially visible when examining verbs and verb phrases frequently collocating with the word "fashion," which include "fall out of, go out of, come back into, follow, keep up with, keep pace with" (Online Oxford Collocation Dictionary); here, fashion is represented as constantly on the move, forcing fashionable items and fashionable individuals either to follow hastily or risk dropping out. Elżbieta Rejakowa, who has

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examined fashion discourse based on Polish fashion magazines, also stresses the abundance of metaphors in fashion journalism. According to Rejakowa, one of the dominant rhetorical figures in descriptions of fashion collections (Kulturowe Aspekty Jezyka Mody, 28), is a poetic metaphor, which helps to create a common ground between the author of the text and the reader (28). As noted by Rejakowa, frequent use of metaphors that evoke not only visual but also gustatory sensations serves persuasive function, as it is meant to increase the impact of the accompanying fashion photographs.

The aim of this essay is to examine how motion and mobility are reflected in and connected with dress in diverse media (photography, advertising, political cartoons), which have constituted the public visual imagination. For the sake of clarity, the discussion of fashion and mobility has been divided into the following categories: sports fashion and physical mobility; military and subcultural fashions and social mobility; and religious dress and cultural mobility. Although the four categories of clothing listed above might be treated as types of "uniform" (sport, military, subcultural and religious, respectively), it is worth noting that as such they correspond to different prescriptions. The development of sportswear has been motivated largely by ease of movement, military attire is dictated by the requirement of uniformity, subcultural fashions by the wish for difference, while religious styles derive from rules of modesty. Yet in a variety of ways, motion, mobility, movement seem to be the concepts that underlie these specific sartorial practices at diverse moments in history.

In fact, as demonstrated by the wide spectrum of examples which are discussed in this essay, ranging from the early twentieth century to the beginning of the twenty-first, the connection between fashion and mobility has frequently been exploited in visual culture, particularly in popular images such as advertisements, media photographs, posters, and newspaper cartoons. These popular images might be viewed as forming "non-discursive texts" (Murray 11) through which meanings and values are transmitted. According to Murray, "rhetoric throughout history has often taken advantage of our ability as a species to symbolise through non-discursive text" (11) as a result of which "all possibilities of symbolization" (12) become rhetorical tools. If these rhetorical tools may easily embrace "the symbols of math, music, textiles, food, commerce, violence, inaction, and even silence" (12), sartorial practices also seem to be part of rhetoricity. In fact, "Rhetors have always known about ... the value of grooming and general appearance" (11). Therefore, it is hardly surprising that ideologically charged images such as war posters or advertisements have exploited the symbolic power of clothing to convey meanings and to influence their viewers' attitudes. In other words, as my later discussion of motion and mobility will demonstrate, particular depictions of sport, military or religious clothing highlight the values that underlined the construction of normative femininity or masculinity in specific decades in twentieth-century Britain.

As greater mobility represented one of the key values of the increasingly gender-equal and meritocratic society that Britain was becoming during the twentieth century, it is not surprising that this value was metaphorically represented in clothing. In the popular images discussed in this article, fashion seems to perform the function of what Roland Barthes terms "anchorage" (156), allowing viewers to read the status and position of the represented participants correctly. Following Joan Ramon Resina, who proposes to view the city as text and applies Barthes's theory to a study of the meanings that urban landscapes produce, one may posit that fashion is also treated like a text. It is through the use of particular items of clothing that the photographs, adverts and cartoons transmit ideological messages, for, performing the function of anchorage, dress "directs the receiver's attention toward a preempted meaning" and "controls the consumption of the image" (Resina 16). According to Erving Goffman, clothes are an essential element of appearance, which together with setting and manner constitute the so-called "social front" necessary for the successful selfpresentation (19). As noted by Goffman, individuals engage themselves in a performance when observed by others in order to communicate their position and status and to elicit the desired confirmation of their identity, i.e. "the valuation of self" (13).

Based on the semiotic or structuralist approach, "communication through or by means of fashion and clothing . . . is a social interaction that produces or constitutes the individual as a member (or not) of a culture" (Barnard 139). Through connotations, which are "associations or feelings" dependent on one's cultural background, items of clothing communicate the wearer's "cultural values and beliefs" (Barnard 139). These, in turn, are influenced by the individual's "age, nationality, class, gender" (139). Although, as Barnard observes,

meanings produced by clothing are by no means clear and unequivocal, what the wearers communicate by clothes is their identification with the set of values of a given group. If clothing is a metaphor, individuals can downplay their membership of some groups while highlighting their attachment to others through their sartorial practices. When examining such forms of communication through fashion, the application of what Barnard terms the "ideological connotation" model, "in which meanings are constructed by members of cultural groups" (141) may be complemented by "the sender-receiver model," in which the sender/ wearer is deliberately projecting meanings, by means of the metaphorical language of fashion.

Like Barnard's, Fred Davis's argument in "Do Clothes Speak? What Makes Them Fashion?" aims to fill the analytical void in scholarship on fashion by seeking to answer the question of the meaning of fashion, which he views as embedded in the process of communication. According to Davis, the meaning of fashion is related to how "images, thoughts, sentiments, and sensibilities [are] communicated by new and old fashion and the symbolic means by which this is done" (149). Because fashion is a form of code, Davis notes that semiotics offers the possibility of investigating its meanings. Even though fashion as a code is different from a language, for in fashion one needs to be "cautious about ascribing precise meanings to most clothing" (Davis 150), clothes communicate meanings through design elements. Through "associative linkages," a garment's qualities, such as angularity-curvilinearity or dark-light colour, have connotations on a spectrum of femininity-masculinity or formality-informality. While it is hard to disagree with Davis, who advises caution when "ascribing meanings to most clothing" (150) and observes that the exact meaning of various qualities of clothing such as cut, fabric, colour is difficult to determine, it seems that fashion used in the public realm is less ambiguous, neatly fitting the three major characteristics of the clothing-fashion code proposed by Davis, namely: "context-dependency" (151) "high social variability in the signifier-signified relationship" (151) and "undercoding" (152).

While, according to Davis, "different combinations of apparel with their attendant qualities are capable of registering ... consistent meanings for wearers and their viewers" (154) and people are generally competent "readers" of "styles of clothing," it is in the public sphere that this communicative function of fashion becomes not only most noticeable but also most important. Cross-cultural and historical variations of styles and fashions adopted for political purposes easily prove fashion's context-dependency. For example, while the suffragettes in early twentieth-century England willingly wore styles that connoted commonly held beliefs about normative femininity, their followers, second-wave feminists, challenged the feminine ideal sartorially, offering alternative looks and clothing styles. Both the suffragettes and the feminists of the 1970s, however, used clothes to communicate their membership in a group of progressively thinking, independent women, although they did so in radically different ways. Viewing dress as a code in which individual items of clothing communicate shared cultural values helps one to appreciate that difference. Also, the study of various visual texts whose message is reliant on the viewer's ability to "decipher" correctly the meaning of the items of clothing depicted in them seems to prove the unique position of fashion in debates about identities and consumption. The fact that, as Angela McRobbie observes, fashion is both a "feminist issue," and "an almost wholly feminised industry" (41) makes vestimentary practices an area of particular interest to anyone who deals with questions of how patterns of consumption relate to the construction of gender, class, and ethnic identities. Moreover, McRobbie, who has investigated both the production and the consumption of clothing, regards fashion as "a substantial sector of the economy" (26) and argues that, like other "culture industries," fashion "traverses the boundaries of social class, ethnicity and gender" (27). Since in all the visual texts discussed below clothing seems to enhance the socially dominant (normative) ideal of femininity, this study of selected adverts, posters and cartoons sheds some light on how the media might influence sartorial expression of identities.

### **Metaphor Theories and the Meaning of Fashion**

My discussion of the metaphorical connection between the concepts of mobility and fashion is informed by Conceptual Metaphor Theories [CMT], in particular the findings of Zoltán Kövecses who developed the classical definition of metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), in which source domain A is target domain

B (e.g. love is a journey) based on some shared cultural characteristics of the conceptual domains A and B. Kövecses observes that metaphors exceed the realm of language and cognition, for they can be found abundantly in the material world of cultural practices. I propose to include sartorial practices among the latter. The analysis of images presented later in this paper is based on Charles Forceville's (2000) and Paula Pérez-Sorbino's (2016) study of pictorial metaphors in advertising. According to Forceville, "print advertisements are word and image texts" (33) in which the verbal and the pictorial elements complement one another, with the words assisting the correct interpretation of a pictorial metaphor that the advertisement contains. Likewise Pérez-Sorbino, who conducted a corpus-based survey of 210 advertisements notes that "64% of the source domains identified in the corpus were delivered exclusively in pictures" (78). Offering the first statistical examination of multimodal metaphor in advertising, Pérez-Sorbino complements Forceville's study by differentiating between metaphoric and metonymic relationships of the advertisements' contents and their "message." While she defines the former through the "A IS (LIKE) B" paradigm, and the latter through "A IS RELATED TO B" (76), she also establishes a category of "metaphtonomy" to label the instances when a metonymy supports a metaphorical relationship (77).

Referring to George Lakoff (1993), Kövecses and Benczes present examples of metaphors that are found outside language and call them "non-linguistic realisations of conceptual metaphors" (63). Numerous instances of such metaphors, Kövecses argues, can be found in films, which "may be structured in their entirety in terms of conceptual metaphors" (Kövecses 170). Yet other cultural texts such as sculpture, cartoons or architecture are also loaded with metaphors (Kövecses & Benczes 73). For example, the metaphor Significant is big, finds its realisation in architecture as well as in monumental sculptures (Kövecses & Benczes 64). Not only is material culture replete with metaphors, but political discourses and morality are also structured around conceptual metaphors, which relate to notions of strength, weakness, being good or bad, as in "being good is being upright, being bad is being low, doing evil is falling, evil is a force, morality is strength" (Kövecses & Benczes 69). Another commonly operating metaphor, quality is quantity, underlies the grading systems of schools, where "matters of quality, such as knowledge, skills, understanding, sensitivity, are comprehended through units of quantity" (Kövecses 176). Owing to rapid developments in Conceptual Metaphor Theory—particularly the insightful research of Charles Forceville (2000, 2006) and Alan Cienki and Cornelia Müller (2008) on non-verbal metaphors—metaphors are currently regarded as "manifested in ... pictures, sound, music, and gesture, and perhaps even smell, touch, and taste" (Kövecses & Benczes 72). Because, as Kövecses and Benczes note, "conceptual metaphor pervades much of our social, artistic, psychological, intellectual and cultural life" (73), it seems somewhat surprising that so far CMT has not been applied to the analysis of fashion and the interpretation of meanings attributable to clothing. The aim of this study is to fill this void at least partially, and to trace primary metaphors realised in female clothing in twentieth-century Britain.

As a conceptual, non-linguistic metaphor fashion reflects social divisions, with different social groups expressing such meanings as elegance through different sartorial arrangements; "if it is true that metaphors reveal and, in some cases, constitute human experience, then we should expect metaphors, both of the conceptual and of the linguistic kind, to vary according to these social divisions" (Kövecses 88). While, according to Kövecses, linguistic metaphors reflect gender, regional and class divisions, the same can be said about dress. For example, members of different social classes will use different clothing to indicate their class affiliation or levels of formality metaphorically. Although such differences are economically based, they are also indicative of specific tastes into which the group members are socialised (Bourdieu 51). As noted by Kövecses, metaphors exceed the realm of language and cognition, for they can be amply found in the physical world of cultural practices: "When I say that a conceptual domain "turns into" socialphysical reality, I simply mean that the conceptual domain occurs not only as a concept or as a word but also as a more or less tangible thing or process in our social and cultural practice (i.e., as a social and physical object, institution, action, activity, event, state, relationship, and the like)" (164).

Although fashion is not included in the cultural practices mentioned above, it seems that sartorial practices are a vital component of actions, events, and states. Also, clothes form part of what Kövecses calls the *life as a show or spectacle* metaphor, which predominates for example in American culture. According to Kövecses, this is a "foundational metaphor" (184), which organises vast areas of cultural practice, dating back to the ancient or Shakespearian conceptualisation of life as theatrical performance. The linguistic evidence proves that theatre vocabulary is commonly used to relate to various life experiences, while closer analysis of such metaphors proves that they are based on such mappings as: a person leading their life is an actor, the beginning of the play is their birth, the end of the play is their death, while parts are the person's roles in life. This conceptualisation of life became dominant in the USA in the twentieth century, when consumerism and the entertainment industry started to govern social and cultural life. In the process, the old Puritan values of courage and hard work embraced by the earlier "character culture" gave way to likeability, personal charm, and the ability to perform, which loom large over the new "personality culture" (Kövecses 186). Yet, if it is assumed that life is a performance, then clothes should be regarded as costumes that help people to play their parts convincingly, can be put on and discarded when necessary, but most importantly serve as a code that assists the actor in communicating their message. While Kövecses argues that the show metaphor dominates in American politics as well as daily activities, he does not extend the metaphor to sartorial practices and fails to account for the importance of clothing as costumes in these performances. The implication of adding the new mapping of "clothes are costumes" to the *life* is a show metaphor aids the perception that actors consciously select dress to enhance their public performance. In some cases, particularly in public discourse, which includes media photography, advertising and newspaper cartoons, this effectively minimises the problem of the unpredictability and randomness of fashion which in the past precluded the possibility of a more systematic analysis of meanings expressed in and through clothing.

#### Fashion and Physical Mobility

One of the spheres of life in which the link between fashion and physical mobility seems most pronounced is sport. Although many contemporary sport disciplines, such as tennis, developed out of elite leisure activities, for which initially there was no special attire, throughout centuries sport clothing have evolved towards styles that ensured greater physical mobility. As documented by sport fashion theorists, back in the fifteenth century, when tennis arrived in England (most probably from France), the desire to display status rather than the need for physical comfort dictated the choice of garments for the game (Cunnington and Mansfield 81). Similarly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the lower classes were legally excluded from aristocratic games, tennis gear did not differ substantially from the everyday clothing of upper-class men (Cunnington and Mansfield 83). Even in the twentieth-century polarisation in British society found its reflection in tennis attire, which had continued to communicate metaphorically the privileged status of the players. The pervasive use of light-coloured garments in pale blue and white, far from being practical during any outdoor activity, not only ensured the greater visibility of the players, but most importantly communicated the neatness, grooming, and civility of the leisured class. As noted by Cunnington and Mansfield, as early as 1903 for female players "white was advised as appearing neater than any coloured skirt" (97).

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of female sports in England as in the period between 1870 and 1897 women made their presence felt in tennis, cricket, golf, and hockey. Though initially "the dread of appearing 'unladylike'... hampered dress reform" (Cunnington and Mansfield 91) and until the twentieth-century female players regularly wore outfits consisting of "bustles, long skirts and corsets" (Wilson 160), changes in mainstream fashions also affected sportswear. According to costume historians, although clothing dedicated to specific sports activities had been gradually developing in England from Tudor times onwards, initially there was little difference between sportswear and everyday clothes (Cunnington and Mansfield 11). While in the nineteenth century the evolution of sports fashion gained momentum, in the twentieth-century specific sports attires became hugely diversified. For example, female tennis clothes underwent revolutionary change after in the 1920s French player Suzanne Lenglen pioneered a new tennis outfit modelled on a fashionable flapper dress (Cunnington and Mansfield 97). The new style was swiftly adopted by British tennis champion Kitty Godfree, as the sleeveless or short-sleeved blouse accompanied by a short, pleated skirt not only allowed unprecedented freedom of bodily movement but also made the movement of the players' hands and legs the focal point of a game. When the

body was released from the layers of restrictive clothing, the player's dexterity, speed and precision could be appreciated to a far greater extent, also thanks to one of the cinematic innovations at that time, i.e. slow-motion film, which allowed for a careful analysis of the player's individual technique. The increased visibility of the player's well-toned body seemed to correspond with the 1920s fascination with physical prowess and athleticism, which went beyond tennis and found its reflection in the rise of such initiatives like the rather bizarre youth group Kindred of the Kibbo Kift, founded by John Hargrave in 1920. Inspired by the scout movement, Hargrave promoted a healthy lifestyle through outdoor physical activities, for he strongly believed that after the First World War there was an urgent need "to cultivate new physically, mentally and spiritually fit and trained clusters of men and women to evolve a new kind of human race" (Pollen 50).

Sports historian Fiona Skillen also stresses the connection between the growing participation of women in sport, the appearance of new ideals of femininity in the form of "The Modern Girl" and the arrival of "the simple, linear fashions of the 1920s" (755). As the fit body became the fashionable body, photographic and cinematic depictions of bodies in movement clad in fashions that showed or accentuated musculature became intertwined with the new feminine identity. The metonymic relationship between mobility and sports gear was evident in the early twentieth-century advertising that represented active women. For example, the Chesterfield cigarettes advert<sup>1</sup> seems to be based on a multimodal verbo-pictorial metaphor in which the characteristics of a tennis player are mapped onto an advertised commodity i.e. Chesterfield cigarette). The advertisement features a young woman caught mid-air in a graceful posture mimicking numerous photographic depictions of the 1920s players who, in an attempt to reach the ball, would literally defy the laws of gravity. Yet, from the technical point of view the posture in the ad seems unnatural and also unjustified given the fact that the player is holding a tennis ball in her hand. It seems therefore that the movement depicted in the ad has a purely aesthetic function. It is but a pretext to add motion to the white tennis dress which, lifted in the air, acquires a wing-like shape.

The aesthetic function of the movement is strengthened by the word "taste," used in the embedded text—"...on the court it's FLASH! ...in a cigarette it's TASTE!"- which refers not only to tasty cigarettes but also to the player's taste in fashion, as exemplified by her fashionable tennis attire. Both the whiteness of the tennis clothes and the right-leaning position of the player are repeated in the representation of the cigarette pack pictured in the bottom right-hand corner of the advert. The three cigarettes partially drawn from the packet are visibly related to the posture of the player as well as to her raised, air-lifted white skirt. By mapping the characteristics of the tennis-player onto the cigarettes, the advertisement utilises an implicit metaphor pattern "A is B" where source domain (A) is a tennis player and target domain (B) is a Chesterfield cigarette. On close analysis, then, the image and the text reveal the objectification of a female tennis-player, which might lead to a conclusion that the advert was directed at male consumers rather than liberated cigarettesmoking flappers. At the same time, however, the advert consolidates the image of a female tennis-player as physically liberated: she is caught mid-air, and her freedom is stressed by the wing-like dress.

## **Fashion and Social Mobility**

The gradual simplification of female sportswear, as evidenced by the evolution of the tennis attire, mimicked earlier transformations in menswear, as a result of which men's fashion had become less decorative and plainer. According to Brent Shannon, the Great Masculine Renunciation (initiated by Beau Brummell in the 18th century), which is the term used by Flügel in 1930 to describe the adoption of simpler clothes by the rising middle-class men in order "to gain sociopolitical legitimacy" (Shannon 598), by no means accounts for all male sartorial practices at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. However, its role in democratizing male fashion remains largely unquestionable. As noted by Wilson, "Early street fashion for men adopted the dandy's dark sobriety and clean white linen. They carried this 'uniform' on into evenings" (33). The "uniform," which as noted by Wilson was a day dress of the nineteenth century landed aristocracy

<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield cigarettes advert, https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/an-original-advertising-poster-for-chesterfield-cigarettes-news-photo/451597204

who became "rural capitalists," incorporated "everyday riding clothes—sports clothes—of woollen cloth in quiet colours" (27). The new fashion became then swiftly adopted by urban business men, replacing more ornamental styles or more decorous fabrics.

Likewise, Joanne Entwistle (2000) stresses the link between the Great Masculine Renunciation, "a stiff and sombre appearance for men" and the sociopolitical conditions of the early nineteenth century in Britain. According to Entwistle, the simplified style resulted from "the struggle for political power between middleclass and aristocratic men" (154). The men of the emerging bourgeoisie, who earned their high social position by hard work rather than inheritance, popularised a three-piece suit that accentuated their "solidarity and uniformity" [emphasis in the original] (Entwistle 154). Entwistle views the style as separating the middle-class men from the aristocracy, who sartorially "shunned all associations with economic activity" (154) a and hence showed preference for "'decadent' plumage" (154). Yet the fact that the new style in menswear was pioneered by Beau Brummell, a self-made man and a dandy who, with his clothes and distinctive lifestyle, made his way into aristocratic circles—as noted by Bill Bryson, "Brummell was not rich or talented or blessed with brains, He just dressed better than anyone ever had before" (468)--seems to support a contrasting view, namely that when worn by middle-class men, a three-piece suit became a sartorial metaphor of upward social mobility. As nineteenth-century visual sources (paintings and photographs) prove, simplicity, sobriety and functionalism became the characteristic feature of the costumes of both middle-class men and the aristocracy, and social distinctions became effectively blurred. Since the qualities of the source domain—a simplified and orderly three-piece suit can be viewed as mapped onto the target domain—the new masculinity ideal characterised by entrepreneurial skills, level-headedness, and determination, the three-piece suit could be interpreted as a metaphor of a new masculine identity. In the light of such interpretation of men's sartorial practices, the Great Masculine Renunciation could also be seen as reflecting the shift in power relations whereby the aristocracy would gradually lose its dominant position in industrial Britain.

A further vestimentary erosion of class distinctions that marked the upward social mobility of Britons found its expression in the Neo-Edwardian styles of the mid-twentieth century. Fashion theorist Christopher Breward, who relates Neo-Edwardian fashion to Beau Brummell, states that the adoption of Edwardian glamour by the 1950s dandies "challenged gendered and class-based expectations" (562). According to Breward, sartorial evocation of the pre-WWII aesthetics reflected "a naïve trust in the power of consumerism to transform humdrum realities" (565). Likewise, Dominic Sandbrook interprets the early 1950s sartorial practices of the Teddy Boys and Teddy Girls as rooted in Edwardian stylistics (442-43). If, using the CMT terms, the Edwardian upper-class sartorial glamour is the source domain and the new youth identity is the target domain than the working-class men and women in the 1950s, metaphorically challenged the rigidity of class boundaries and dramatically exploited the potential of fashion to re-create or re-represent workingclass affiliations. While Teddy Boys adopted the Edwardian dandy look which comprised "colourful shirts and suits worn with bootlace ties; tapered drainpipe trousers and bright socks, brothel-creeper shoes or smart pointed black boots" (Sandbrook 442), Teddy Girls, as famously represented in Ken Russell's iconic 1950s photographs—accidentally discovered in 2005—either emulated their boyfriends' dandy styles and wore jeans paired with jackets, or opted for the ultra-feminine glamour of a wide, gathered skirt and ballet pumps, mixing "clothing styles from the Edwardian and Victorian eras" (Hennessy 340). Through such sartorial choices, a Teddy Boy and a Teddy Girl not only appropriated styles of early twentieth-century aristocratic youth but most importantly challenged the working-class masculinity and femininity ideals in 1950s Britain by placing himself/herself right in the centre of fashion consumption, and spending on clothes what was regarded as "a shocking amount of money for a working-class youth" (443). The notoriety and violent behaviour of the Teddy Boys also effectively changed the metaphorical meanings attached to Edwardian groomed dress style and, as Sandbrook remarks, "by 1955 many young people were inhibited from dressing in Edwardian finery because of the public outcry" (444). The Teddy Boys and Teddy Girls, represented by many scholars as working-class dandies whose preoccupation with visual appearance resulted in exuberant fashion consumption through their adoption of upper-class stylistics, would be theorized as adopting "a mode of social resistance" (Breward 564). In their leisured lifestyles, devoted to excessive stylization of the body (particularly the hair), sociologists saw the erosion of family values and "rejection of 'respectability'" (564).

Although the Teddy Boys were the first British youth subculture, they were by no means the first to express their social mobility sartorially; women's fashions during the two World Wars also communicated transformation of social roles with the uniforms connoting both upward and downward mobility across the social ladder. According to Cheryl Buckley, during the First World War "fashion functioned as the key representational site" (16) in which women renegotiated their identities. With the introduction of female uniforms styled after male military clothing (based on Pérez-Sorbino's distinction the female uniform (A) seems to be in a metonymic relationship with a male uniform (B), represented by A IS (LIKE) B pattern), not only gender but also class identities became blurred. While according to Buckley, upper-class women would often "dress down," to show their commitment to wartime effort and patriotism, working-class women could easily pass for their social superiors when wearing the same military clothing. The new sartorial practices metaphorically conveyed the social and physical mobility of members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF), whose wartime posters utilize fashion to accentuate their members' active participation in the war. While the female uniforms, like their male equivalents, seemed to produce disciplined, useful bodies that were in high demand during the war, the images of uniformed women marked a shift in representation of fashionable femininity, for they stressed the importance of functionality over aesthetics. A war-time image showing a woman putting on a coat and getting dressed for her job in a munitions factory (Figure 1, 'These Women Are Doing Their Bit. Learn to Make Munitions', poster designed by Septimus Scott. The National Archives of the UK, ref. EXT1/315 (17)) affiliates clothing with social and physical mobility for, as the caption indicates, the woman is active and "doing [her] bit." Because in the image the metaphor's source domain is the factory coat while the target domain is new, active femininity, the poster seemed to be addressed to young women, who might be willing to take advantage of adopting a new professional identity. By being shown as both uniformed and active, the represented participant served as a role model for those who perhaps had previously been expected to assume more passive, domestic roles. The new way of dressing and the introduction of female uniforms marked and accentuated this transition in normative femininity.

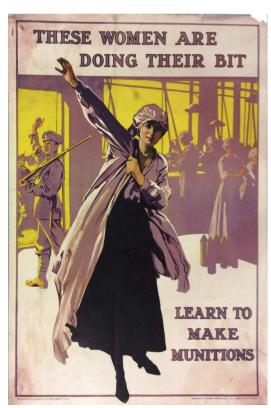


Figure 1. 'These Women Are Doing Their Bit. Learn to Make Munitions', poster designed by Septimus Scott. The National Archives of the UK, ref. EXT1/315 (17)

Upward social mobility and the transgression of gender boundaries, but also greater physical freedom during the Second World War is evoked by many photographs depicting uniformed women either as mechanics or as drivers of military vehicles. Ranging from photographic representations of Princess Elizabeth in overalls changing a wheel on a car² to photographs and posters designed to encourage Palestinian women to join the armed forces, these images propagated new values related to wartime female identity. Many such photographs (which served as propaganda materials) seem to imply a conceptual link between a military uniform and mobility. For example, the 1944 photo of Leah Seidemann (Figure 2, Leah Seidemann, ATS, 1944), who served in the British military, as a uniform-clad young woman driving a military car while looking over her shoulder at an imaginary viewer behind her, casts her in the role of an active, mobile, and classless female. Since in the photograph the uniform becomes conceptually linked with the military vehicle and the role of a driver, the attire connotes not only freedom of movement but also power and control. At the same time, the posture suggests that the represented participant is at the vanguard of a new feminine ideal, and that her primary role was to entice other (perhaps more conservative-minded) women to follow by getting recruited to the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS).



Figure 2. Leah Seidemann, ATS, 1944

#### **Fashion and Cultural Mobility**

While certainly during the Second World War, fashion became a political issue, with the uniforms pushing the gender boundaries and the Clothing Utility Scheme strongly influencing the design of civilian fashion for many years to come, the political role of dress is frequently downplayed. Yet, it suffices to cast a glance at random election posters to realise that appearance in politics matters and so-called first impressions are what election spin-doctors and candidates particularly hope to capitalize on. Following Roland Barthes' statement on electoral photography that "what is transmitted through the photograph of the candidate are not his plans, but his deep motives, . . . all this style of life of which he is at once the product, the example and the bait" (105), it can easily be observed that much of this is transmitted through clothing. Various degrees of informality manifested by the candidates in populist gestures of donning a casual look (rolled up shirt sleeves and unbuttoned shirt collars), for example, are meant to convey metaphorically a

**<sup>2</sup>** Her Majesty serving World War, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2149307/Ever-seen-The-Queen-change-car-tyre-Unseen-pictures-Her-Majesty-serving-World-War-II.html, accessed 13 September 2017.

more authentic, grassroots identity as opposed to an aloof and distanced political leadership associated with a formal wear. If a seemingly minute detail like a button can make such a substantial semantic (if not political) difference, it is hardly surprising that the Muslim veil features so prominently in many recent Islamophobia and community relations in Britain. In fact, some prominent British politicians would blame the veil for making "community relations more difficult" (Gabriel and Hannan 1), as did Jack Straw in 2006. Although the veil is polysemic, and the causes for wearing it might be complex, for, as noted by Gabriel and Hannan, on the one hand "it can be a symbol of piety, of religious identity, of women's need for anonymity and security" (2) but on the other hand "it can also signify protest against social and political injustice" (2), in the process of politicization the garment has become what Gabriel and Hannan term "a symbol of alienness, opposition to cultural integration, even of covert evil intention" (2).

The representation of the Muslim veil in academic debates, press articles and cartoons concentrates on its threatening potential to obscure identities and/or to produce false identities. When set against Western sartorial practices, it is also imbued with a sense of cultural Otherness, suggesting the wearer's inability to assimilate into British society. According to Imene Ajala, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, Muslim identity has been increasingly linked with "disloyalty" (123), with Muslims being represented as "a homogeneous block" and constructed as the "Other" (123). As the most visible sign of the commitment to Islamic religion and lifestyle among women, veil has become the most frequent metaphor of practices threatening so-called Western democratic principles. What is more, as a garment that effectively hides individual features and hence identity, it has also come to be associated in Western cultures with dishonesty. In fact, in several European countries, including France, Belgium, some regions of Italy and the city of Barcelona in Spain, the connection between the Islamic veil and anti-democratic values has resulted in legal bans on wearing the headscarf in public places<sup>3</sup>. A few other countries in Europe, like Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland are considering forbidding veils in the future. As observed by Ajala, in European debates about immigration and integration the central place has been awarded to the incompatibility of religious and national identities, with Muslims often feeling excluded from the nation's "imagined communities" (124), which is a concept borrowed from Benedict Anderson's seminal work on the formation of national identities. In fact, Ajala quotes the finding of the Gallup Coexistence Study that "in Europe, 'immigrant' is virtually synonymous with 'Muslim'" (125). Media representations of Muslims as dangerous and treacherous Others seem to conflate the following conceptual spaces: terrorism, Muslim sartorial practices, particularly the wearing of the veil, and an attack on European democracies. As noted by Ajala, "the consequence of such a construction is that terrorism and the veil issue end up being situated on the same level of analysis as violence against European values and principles" (126). In Britain, studies of national identity, imagined communities and British Asians (many of whom are Muslim) suggest that many members of this minority group do not "imagine' the national community as united and inclusive of their ethnic in-group, which can constitute a phenomenologically important group membership (Modood et al., 1997)" (Jaspal and Cinnirella 1). The lack of a positive identification with the mainstream community, which is often caused by the individual's inability to reconcile conflicting cultural values, according to Jaspal and Cinnirella, may result in a greater attachment to one's ethnic group. In such cases, it is dress that seems to serve as the most outward and hence the most obvious indicator of community affiliation. As exemplified by the cartoons discussed below, the Muslim veil might be interpreted with reference to the notion of mobility, in that it indicates the wearer's commitment (or lack of it) to move beyond the boundaries of her cultural or religious identity. The different types of veils, which allow for greater or lesser exposure of the body, from hijab to burka, seem to express metaphorically the extent of the wearer's cultural mobility.

The three sample cartoons contain verbo-pictorial metaphors, to use Charles Forceville's categorisation, in which veils are represented as protective, identity-obscuring garments. The "Silly Burka" cartoon by Peter Brookes<sup>4</sup>, which depicts Theresa May wearing a Muslim burka and trendy high heels, refers to May's

<sup>3 &</sup>quot;The Islamic Veils across Europe." BBC, 31 January 2017, <www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13038095>. Accessed 13 March 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Brookes, Peter. "Silly Burka." The Times. 5 November 2013. <a href="https://archive.cartoons.ac.uk/GetMultimedia.ashx?db=Catalog">https://archive.cartoons.ac.uk/GetMultimedia.ashx?db=Catalog</a> &type=default&fname=99998.jpg>. Accessed 13 March 2018.

dismissive commentary on the fact that in 2013 a terror suspect, Mohammed Ahmed Mohamed, managed to escape captivity dressed in a burka. While the decoding of the cartoon requires some background knowledge, the imagery and the embedded text – "It's all so very embarrassing! Better hide, so no-one knows. . . who I am" – clearly suggests that putting on a burka at least potentially offers the safety of becoming unrecognisable. Therefore, one might propose the following metaphor *A burka is the cap of invisibility*, where features of the source domain – the mythological cap of invisibility worn by ancient Greek gods Athena, Hermes and Greek hero Perseus in order to be undetectable by others – is mapped on to the target domain, the Muslim veil (burka). While in classical mythology the cap was associated with the god of the underworld, in European literary tradition the cap denoted anyone who was dishonestly trying to hide their identity; for example, in Francis Bacon's words, "the helmet of Pluto, which maketh the politic man go invisible, is secrecy in the counsel, and celerity in the execution" (Bacon). Brookes' comment, "Theresa May would never wear a burka (not, designer enough) but I think yesterday she would have welcomed the chance to hide away. Her statement as to how the terror suspect Mohammed Ahmed Mohamed managed to escape was very short and not so sweet" (Brookes), appears to confirm that the burka, like the cap of invisibility, allows the wearer to hide from sight.

The Daily Express cartoon by Paul Thomas<sup>5</sup> features the same multimodal (verbo-pictorial) metaphor A burka is the cap of invisibility. The cartoon represents four characters walking down the road; two of them are wearing burkas. Since the other two are women dressed in fashionable Western clothes, one of whom is saying "I'm getting a veil to avoid the attentions of Russell Brand...," the cartoon might be interpreted as referring to British celebrity gossip about the relationship between Jemima Khan and Russell Brand. Together with ,the embedded text the image alludes to both Jemima Goldsmith's Muslim marriage ceremony to Imran Khan in 1995 and her affair with Brand, indicated by the caption "Russell Brand linked with Jemima Khan." As in the cartoon I discussed above, here too the source domain (A) is "cap of invisibility" and a target do, and (B) is burka i.e. a garment that offers protection, guarantees that the wearer will go unnoticed, and based on the modesty principle (Rouse 123) at least in theory, allows them to "avoid the attentions" of other people. Although the person wearing a burka stands out in the crowd, the fact that the garment disempowers any technological inventions designed to identify individuals (e.g. the CCTV cameras and other computer-aided identification techniques) seems to turn the veil into a modern cap of digital invisibility. While the religious importance of the garment is played down, the cultural Otherness of the burka-clad characters is highlighted. These two cartoons represent the wearing of a veil as an abnormal practice connected with unwillingness to be identified and recognised. In the context of the "securitisation" debates (the term "securitisation of migration" was used by Derek McGhee with reference to the 2007 government paper entitled "Securing the UK Border: Our Vision and Strategy for the Future about methods of reducing terrorist threats") following a series of terrorist attacks in Britain since 2005 the veil marks out the wearer as an ultimate and unidentifiable (hence more threatening) Other. This sense of Otherness is pictorially evoked by juxtaposing burkas to mainstream female sartorial practices, which include wearing high heels and carrying briefcases (in both cartoons), as well as skirts with fitted tops and jackets and no headgear (the Daily Express cartoon). It seems worth noting at this point that because in the European cultural context from the mid-twentieth century, headgear ceased to communicate a person's social status (in the case of men) and decency (in the case of women), the wearing of caps and hats has served largely utilitarian (protective) purposes or performed a decorative function. Digitalised security procedures have further infringed on sartorial practices, by demanding that any ID photographs be taken without head- and face-accessories such as glasses or hats, as these might impede computer identification. The Muslim veil, which in Islamic societies communicates the wearer's modesty, in Western European countries, such as Britain connotes the impossibility of identification and so unsurprisingly signals cultural Otherness.

Interestingly, the cartoon by Matthew Pritchett<sup>6</sup> includes a verbo-pictorial metaphor based on an

**<sup>5</sup>** Thomas, Paul. The Daily Express. 18 September 2013. <a href="https://archive.cartoons.ac.uk/GetMultimedia.ashx?db=Catalog&type=default&fname=PTD0178.jpg">https://archive.cartoons.ac.uk/GetMultimedia.ashx?db=Catalog&type=default&fname=PTD0178.jpg</a>. Accessed 13 March 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Pritchett, Matthew. Daily Telegraph. 20 September 2013. https://archive.cartoons.ac.uk/GetMultimedia.ashx?db=Catalog&ty pe=default&fname=99615.jpg. Accessed 13 March 2018.

affinity between Western sartorial practices and a Muslim veil. Depicting an operating theatre and two surgeons dressed for their jobs in caps and masks, the cartoon's pun rests on the metaphor surgeon's mask is a veil, where the Muslim veil is a source domain whose features are mapped onto the surgical headgear, a target domain. It is the embedded text reading: "It's ridiculous to think NHS staff can treat patients while wearing a veil" that establishes the metaphor and also places the cartoon within the context of a wider "national debate" about the ban on Muslim veils in public places, initiated by former Home Office Minister Jeremy Browne. The cartoon identifies the main feature of the Muslim veil as covering the head and face, which performs a protective function, ensuring that the wearer is safe either from the gaze of other people or from any harmful agent (germs, bacteria, viruses).

Based on the cartoons showing an Islamic veil as a signifier of threatening Otherness and a metaphor of cap of invisibility or surgeon's mask, one may conclude that the veil indicates a lack of cultural mobility across communities. The veiled are depicted as impenetrable Others who lack individual identity and thus are referred to as a homogeneous group to which outsiders have no access, for their very gaze is effectively stopped by the face-covering. As the case of the veil proves, in visual culture fashion is used as a metaphor of certain attitudes that are present in the society at a given time. Particularly in moments of transition or social upheaval the language of fashion becomes a carrier of values and ideas and may become a powerful aid in the process of defining and redefining gender, class, or religious identities. As such, clothing in general, and specific sartorial practices in particular, have become inseparable from the notion of mobility. Gender, class, and cultural mobility have found visual representation in specific garments, which metaphorically convey the idea of greater or lesser physical and social freedom.

All the visual texts discussed in this essay are constructed around clothing as a metaphor of movement, which is an element that helps to strengthen the normative gender, class and ethnic identities of the imagined recipients of the advert, posters, or cartoons. Interestingly also, all these images are structured around a powerful binary opposition of visibility/invisibility, which for centuries has informed vestimentary practices across cultures. The reading of fashion as a metaphor of movement helps us to view items of clothing as either allowing for greater visibility and individualisation (sportswear) or as flattening or even obliterating class, gender and ethnic differences, offering a promise of social invisibility (as do subcultural styles, military uniforms and religious costume).

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