

# I Am What I Wear: The Dialectics of Dress and Individuality

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## ABSTRACT

*The article emphasizes on the imperative significance of the focused subject, in which I have typified it comprehensively in the title. Dress and individuality, as the title politicizes, suggests an open mind discussion to unveil the polemical aspects of the parenthesis of the subject. The purpose of the essay is to ignite dialectical intervention by submitting critical observation and literary criticism to the readers. It is clear to say that the sole purpose is designated to its omnipotent course, as opposed to the conventional purpose of essays in which is to merely supply a report-format information. Nevertheless, the content interest myriads perspectives of discussions beyond literary mediocrity. Dress and individuality invite audience to look into the subject with critical eyes and expanded minds. It discusses topic of interests that engulfs multifaced areas such as 21st century fashion and clothing, arts and fashions and socializing fashion. However, the contents predominantly cover areas that focuses on individual expression and aesthetic personification. Fashion aesthetic is a term that has been used to redefine the context of individual versus social clothing in the late 20th century. In spite of the pronouncement made by the alternate defining, the article draws the opportunity to enlighten readers with the heterogeneous elements that embodies the primal characteristics of the wearable arts. The article also touches the influx of the urban culture that changes the topography of the fashion and clothing in the new millennium. The cathartic revolution made assessable by neo romanticism and urban totalitarianism have converted the nexus of fashion world, thus the world of wearable art. The effects of post consumerism cultures influence that affect scenario is also discussed in the article. There are several other relative subjects that touches similar concerns and utters similar tones of the subjects, which have been embedded in the article. It is hoped to invite vigorous sensibilities of the readers to perceive and understand the subjects with an open view.*

**Keywords:** fashion, cultural studies, anthropology

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The indexicalization of the fundamental meaning and concept of fashion art at the dawn of the age of ambiance anarchism and technolust aesthetic endorse the proximity of the widest communication language and interpretation of what we thought the true nature of fashion art and industry.

Unlike definition proposed by predecessors of the past millennia, consumers, prosumers, producers and activist in the relatively connected fashion art community have now recontextualized the predetermined conception and lame perception of fashion art. Recent research and art movements in the clothing art jurisdiction witnesses radical transfiguration and deformation of concepts that once promoted by theorists and artists.

Attributes of traditionally inherited definition of fashion concept and language has made consumers and trend clients warped into the inevitable dress culture, alongside with some discursive understanding and meanings, which are translated by the massive pastiche of kitsch cliché in the fashion market.

Fashion is not just about garment, clothing and lust for stylistic trend. Fashion has the capacity to redemarginalize social strata and human condition. Costume and fabric wear liberate consumer and society at large from deviant materialism imprisonment. Dress and clothes are now perceived as subversive cultural hegemony that gradually build and reform the society. Fashion and wearable art now spark the question that accelerates the paradox of heterogeneous proportion of costume culture in building the social ecology.

The juxtaposition of utilitarianism and aesthetic philosophy of the art of fashion inevitably determine the unbearable complexity of its natural uncertainty. Fashion codifies the politics of taste and individuality. Dress and clothes in the realm of material consumerism replicate the fashionable trend of the lavish industry of the entertainment world.



**Figure 1: Japan Street Fashion**

From underneath the semantic reflection, dress and wearable art culture renders the quest for individualized personification. This individualization unravels the pluralistic perspective of gender issues. Clothing and fashion have the capacity to redefine human sexuality. Fashion produces off-tangen zombies of non- conformist to gender cross-polarity. Fashion produces style war; thus, style war terrorizes trend follower’s consciousness, turns them into obsessive possessor and OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) patients, who’s mostly confined as hipsters fashion posers.

Internationally acclaimed fashion critique Samuel Gylan hypothetically speculates that fashion cultural identity should be depicted and unveiled critically. Many has taken it for granted that fashion was nothing more than an aesthetic utilitarian form of functional applied science product that limitedly necessitates women cosmetics needs and supplies urban trends.

Fashion reflects the attitudes of a society more than any art form. Like art, fashion is a material record of the ideals that swayed the nations at the time of their creation. Through examining the styles and tastes of a particular era, we could understand where the interests and priorities of a time lies. 1920, as Frank Parsons wrote in his study, *The Psychology of Dress*:

*“There is surely no better field in which to trace the devious paths of human thought than in that of clothes, where man has ever given free play to self-expression, in a way which, though not always a credit to his intelligence, is yet quite true to his innermost self, whether he will acknowledge it or not.”*

Through tracing and analyzing, side by side, art and fashion, and the effects that one had on the other and society, we can understand the ideals, and interests of European culture, here, through the Renaissance.

Fashion is fueled by conversion. Designers continually persuade the public with their new ideas, however shocking they may seem, are in fact everything that a stylist wardrobe requires. Next season, the same designers convince everyone to give up their allegiance to such out-modish designs and embrace instead the innovative visual trends of the latest collections. The same garments are successively dubbed 'outlandish', 'in fashion' and 'out-dated' according to the apparent vagaries of prevailing fashionable sensibilities. Are we really being victimized by such duplicity? Or are we involuntary participants that got sucked into the turbulent fashion cycles? And perhaps more significantly, what relevance does the cycle have today in the Western society's culture of hyper consumerism?

The idea that fashion and the art of clothing follow a cyclical phase structure is not new. An acclaimed sociologist, Quentin Bell made such an observation over fifty years ago in his book, *On Human Finery*. Moreover, his observation was based on accumulated evidence of an uninterrupted cyclical flow in dress change in Western society since the thirteen centuries.

Alongside him, another sociologist, Ingrid Brenninkmeyer describes this flow by comparing it to the rolling of waves in the sea. As one fashion gains popularity, crests and dissipates, another stylistic trend forming behind it. Further extension of this metaphor was typified in a different stylistic that features forms of variation in the waves that resembles themselves. These parentheses speculated by these sociologists narrate similar dialectical rendition that resonates the overviews of the subjects discussed in the article. It explores the imperatives of fashion aesthetics and the formation of individual and social characteristics.

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