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A Dialectical Journey through Fashion and Philosophy

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Preface

Topics related to fashion have long been considered part of a somatic-sartorial domain whose main concerns are confined primarily to the body and bodily matters. Much literature on the politics behind appearance and bodily issues that are tied to fashion attests to this connection. Given this strong tendency, overcoming the inclination in academic circles not to accept fashion as a subject matter of philosophical discussion would seem to be a formidable task. Nonetheless, fashion is profoundly intertwined with distinctively modern issues that belong to the realm of the mind as well as to that of the body. Probably no other modern concepts or phenomena are comparable to fashion in terms of the manifestation of the proximity between philosophy and the mode of life in modern times. A proper philosophical probe into fashion should reveal that philosophy is interlaced with issues related not only to the mind but also to the body, and fashion hypostasizes the relation between individual and collective that has its origin in the subject-object dichotomy, which is one of the central themes of modern philosophy. Coming to grips with fashion helps us take in some of the most enigmatic philosophical questions, for example, how *noumenon* and thing-in-itself are different; how synthetic a priori cognition is possible in our mundane life; how one is unceasingly searching for oneself in [Kantian] time; how freedom and unfreedom have reciprocal relations with each other; and how [Hegelian] objectification is different from [Marxist] alienation. It is not a coincidence that fashion, one of the most mundane objects/concepts in everyday life, can be examined with philosophical underpinnings of such thinkers as Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Georg Simmel, Theodor W. Adorno, and Walter Benjamin, for it is one cardinal momentum of modernity as a source of newness as well as a medium of the pursuit of newness while, dialectically speaking, an outcome of modernity. Fashion does not pertain to all philosophical topics related to the new, because it is specific to the time called modernity. As such, philosophical investigations into fashion that involve such modern concepts as change, newness, and individual freedom in relation to collective freedom can disclose the ontological affinity between fashion and modernity.

This book is neither a coherent philosophy of fashion armed with a grand sweep of ideas in respect of fashion nor a prime example of a philosophical approach to fashion studies in one direction only, as its main focus is on the process of elucidating philosophy as well as philosophizing fashion, which, however, are not disparate endeavors in this interdisciplinary undertaking. The aim of this project is to provide one way to analyze fashion through philosophical discourse while at the same time suggesting one way to do philosophization by applying systematic philosophical analysis back to the objective world. Clarifying fashion through philosophical discussion makes philosophy easier to comprehend; explicating philosophy through fashion brings fashion into the light as a distinctively modern phenomenon that is critical for grasping the trajectory of modernity. By investigating the essence of fashion through philosophical scrutiny, the nexus between fashion and modernity becomes easier to identify, and fashion can gain recognition as an area of critical inquiry. The philosophization of fashion carried out in this book has several significances: (1) it gives us a clearer understanding of fashion's close connection to the development of modernity; (2) it opens doors for redeeming fashion from the objective, bodily world and positioning it as an indispensable part of the humanities; and (3) it is a direct application of philosophical discourse and concepts to fashion, demonstrating how metaphysics is of practical use in understanding the human mind and how it is embedded in empirical reality. Hence, the questions raised and postulates proposed in this book while in search of the attributes of fashion should assist philosophers in resolving philosophical quandaries; in turn, my philosophical methodology and inquiries should help fashion scholars comprehend the essential qualities of fashion as a concept and as a phenomenon that are intertwined with the development of modernity.

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Introduction

My fascination with philosophy began when I found out that philosophy is the best tool to make a logical analysis about the underlying structure of fashion, especially in the manner that is in consonance with what is generally viewed as analytic philosophy today. However, I soon realized that the exploration of fashion by drawing on philosophy requires answering a range of questions that is more in line with continental philosophy as well. My very first quandary about fashion as part of this philosophical undertaking was a methodological question as to how to dissect fashion into a concept and a phenomenon, as the essence of fashion is something that is communicated in our mind, while fashion is also something tangible or concrete, something that exists as an object or a phenomenon. I searched for a scientific method by means of which to separate these two disparate predicates of fashion theoretically. Indeed, this was the very starting point of this book. The rest of this book is shaped while answering a series of ensuing questions after my initial search for a methodological instrument. It is Immanuel Kant's schematism that not only availed me in moving on with a theoretical framework to divorce the conceptual and the phenomenal of fashion but also supplied an impetus for me to carry out further philosophical investigations into fashion; Kant's notion of a priori sensible intuitions of time and space aided me in breaking down the mechanism of the concept of newness, which is indispensable to the construction of fashion as a concept and a phenomenon. Nonetheless, with Kant's metaphysics, in which figurative and intellectual transcendental syntheses are intertwined with different aspects of the Kantian dualism between understanding and sensibility, and between categories and intuitions, I was not able to construe the workings of universal consciousness, which is evident in fashion phenomena. Due to the peculiar nature of fashion, which entails the relay between such polar opposites as subject and object, individual and collective, union and separation, and particular and universal, fashion cannot be bound in connection only with the mental activities that are confined to the thinking/perceiving subject. In Kant's transcendental idealism, objects in time and space exist merely through self-consciousness, and even the empirical self remains as object, while the transcendental subject is the principle of the unity of apperception of the manifold. The transcendental subject is the combining act of judgment of knowledge

or consciousness of the subject, not the subject itself, illustrating the Kantian chasm between *noumenon* and thing-in-itself. With his transcendental philosophy, I could not move beyond the absolute dichotomy between the subject and object of knowledge and between thought and being as represented in the transcendental subject and the empirical being. Although not a solipsist, Kant is not regarded as someone who furthered the Cartesian framework of subjectivity, as his transcendental subject is a mere unifying act of intuitions and concepts.

The discernment of the ontic fundamentals of fashion *at the level of desire* requires a theory that accounts for the communicability of knowledge beyond the selfhood. Accordingly, I had to remove myself from the Kantian epistemic idiosyncrasy, the duality in which appearances as such and the unity of apperception merely exist. The due course was to dive into G.W.F. Hegel. By resorting to Hegel, in particular to his concepts of mediation (*Vermittlung*) and recognition (*Anerkennung*), I formulated theoretical underpinnings not only about the tacit communication between the individual and the collective that is intrinsic to fashion phenomena, bridging the rift between subject and object, but also about the mode of dialectical development of fashion history. His philosophy is often denounced as abstract speculation about the experience of consciousness. Karl Marx argues that in Hegel's philosophy, abstract thought and objects of thought, or sensuous reality, are estranged; therefore, objects of thought appear as thought-entities, and the Hegelian history is nothing but a history of abstract and absolute thought (Marx 2000, pp. 104–118). However, with fashion, one can apprehend how the subject-object mediations in the realm of consciousness are dialectically related to the concrete and material expressions of the objective world. Examining fashion through the lens of the Hegelian dialectic can help us comprehend that seeking out the self is not just confined to self-consciousness but also connected to the subject-object/individual-collective mediations beyond the bounds of self-consciousness. With this understanding, one can also grasp how Hegel's concept of the experience of consciousness, which is in operation by virtue of dialectical mediation, is enlaced with social and political life, and the consequence of the dialectical mediations between subject and object is a history of humanity. It is to this purport that a philosophical study of fashion history—by resting on Hegel's dialectic—is proposed. Applying Hegel's philosophy of history to fashion history is an intellectual exercise. This experimentation, insofar as it is to be regarded as a valid hypothesis for a Hegelian project, requires proving the close relationship between the spirit and fashion history, as Hegel puts it: "History is the process whereby the spirit discovers itself and its own concept" (Hegel 1975, p. 62). Hence, when proceeding with this task, it is vital for one to shed light on how the development of the fashion history has to do with the objectification of spirit, identifying the relationship between objective reality and subjective reason, which is crucial to Hegel's philosophy of history. Hegel offers a kind of schematic form (or pattern) of dialectical movement according to which history unfolds itself over time. On the basis of his "rational" logic, fashion history over the course of modern times is analyzed. Even so, I suspected that Hegel's system cannot explain the cause of sublation (*aufhebung*) that is specific to modern times. One cardinal premise about the dialectical development put forward by Hegel

is that sublation is logical and necessary. With his notion of necessity, Hegel accounts for the agent of sublation, but his encyclopedic philosophy does not guide us to identify, *in terms of content as opposed to form*, what it is that prompted the dialectical transformation during modern times, the timeframe with which fashion is closely associated, or the determining factor which is decisively different from that of other time periods. So I moved on to Marx, in an attempt to investigate if there is any necessity at a materialist level, other than a logical necessity, for the dialectical progression in fashion history.

In point of fact, the focus of Marx's dialectical materialism is on production and the mode of production. In Marx's materialist view, products simply stand for use values, while the commodity is a concept that is entrenched with capitalist social relations between products and between producers, and the value of a commodity derives essentially from the sum of direct and indirect labor. However, the cardinal attributes of fashion this book is concerned with consist not in the value of either products or commodities, which is contingent on economic exchange, but the import of the mediations between such antithetical poles as individual and collective, union and separation, and particular and universal. And yet, Marx's philosophical approach to reality, which was imbued with Ludwig Feuerbach's sensuous materialism, led me to pay attention to objects per se and scrutinize the relation between the objective world and the Hegelian mode of dialectical progression in fashion history, in particular, from the seventeenth century onwards. Although I set out to step away from Hegel's idealist dialectic at some point of my investigation, I have come to the conclusion that the Hegelian mode of dialectical movement in history is not incompatible to what I consider as a modified and inclusive materialist view on products or cultural artifacts, as well as to Marx's own. In fact, Hegelian idealism and Marxist materialism are not necessarily contradictory or irrelevant to each other, at least during modern times, when viewed from the vantage point of fashion. To illustrate, contributing to the progression of capitalist economies while being a driving force behind the Industrial Revolution, the mode of production, such as the Watt steam engine for transportation, the spinning jenny, the sewing machine, and even slaves for cotton production—all of which served as a means to meet the demand of textiles and textile goods during the eighteenth century and, in particular, the nineteenth century—bespeaks the increasing power of fashion in a materialist sense. Not only the production side of sartorial fashion items but also fashion itself began to exercise its influence on the dialectical development of history during this time, not just restricted to that of fashion history. It is in the name of fashion that some of the most profound patriarchal ideologies that have strong bearing upon the politics of gender and sexuality, such as the norms of conventional feminine appearance, have been challenged or replaced. Thus, it can be said that from a materialist perspective, it is a victory of the material reality over ideology; however, from an ideologist viewpoint, it is still a manifestation of the superiority of the zeitgeist. It is of great significance to have an understanding that the Hegelian dialectical mediation between subject and object is embedded in fashion phenomena, such that the prevalence of fashion in capitalist societies means nothing other than the evidence that the objective world is inseparable from the Hegelian dialectical development of

history, which starts from the subject-object dialectic in our thought process. Put differently, the spread of fashion is one clear proof that manifests the magnitude of various mediations between pairs of antagonistic forces, such as individual and collective, imitation and differentiation, and particular and universal, that are active in modern times, which have their point of departure in the subject-object dichotomy in our thought process.

Although Marx's materialist perspective drew my attention to fashion as part of the objective world, with Marx I was not able to grasp what entails the graphic (re) presentation of fashion as it is, except the role as a succor of capitalist social relations, while sustaining the material conditions of the capitalist system. Fashion that is reckoned as auxiliary to the development of capitalist social relations and economic bases is none other than a commodity that is sold and bought on the market. However, it has to be highlighted that what defines fashion is not the exchange value or social relations between products and between producers that a commodity carries with it, but the mediations between various pairs of polar opposites, such as the individual and the collective. The fact that fashion phenomena are found to be in effect in many areas of social life, such as academia, exercise trends, and cooking styles—not just limited to wardrobe choices—actually provides us with an inkling as to how ill-founded the misconception about the hallmark of fashion is. It has to be pointed out that not all consumer goods convey the principal trait of fashion, although some fashions can be linked with consumer goods, and the essence of fashion does not belong to the objects that are called fashion in the vernacular but originates from the mediated reality a fashion partakes in as an objectified spirit of the times. My dissatisfaction with the view that fashion is deemed as a mere commodity, which embodies social relations of capitalism or upholds the material conditions of the capitalist social order, led me to look for a theory by which to identify the implications of fashion as an objective reality as it is, without being tainted with any impartiality. It is Walter Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image that helps pose fashion as something quite different from the commodity, which is considered to be responsible for deteriorating men's consciousness owing to the reification created by commodity relations, according to Georg Lukács (1971, p. 86). With the concept of the dialectical image, Benjamin suggests that fashion exposes an unintentional truth while disclosing "the time of truth." His theory about mundane objects, including fashion (i.e., sartorial fashions), assists us in coming to grips with his notion of nowtime (*Jetztzeit*), while discerning the connection between collective awakening and the "now of its recognizability." The graphic exposition projected through fashion as a dialectical image is the (re)presentation of the objectified spirit of the time, which is the dialectical result of the mediation between the individual and the collective, accommodating no *intentio* of any privileged individuals. In order to inquire into Benjamin's philosophy, I explored Plato and Aristotle's different epistemological positions concerning how to reach truth claims.

As one important keynote of this book, I have also discussed the concept of freedom. Not only is it a central theme of Hegel's philosophy of history, according to which, world history is the "progress of the consciousness of freedom" (Hegel 2001, p. 33), but it is also a cogitative breakthrough with which one can cognize

oneself, not as that which appears to oneself, but as the "thing-in-itself" of the self, as per Kant. In *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), Kant states that while one cannot cognize oneself through inner experience, cognition of the self can be made through the consciousness of one's freedom (2006, p. 32). For Kant, cognition of the self in time is a mere representation of the form of the relation between the subject and the sensations in the subject. The perceiving/observing being, which plays as the empirical apperception of sensibility, is not the subject but an object (Ibid., 31). Thus, in the flow of time, the *I* cognizes my unity of apperception, through which, however, the *I* perceives the *me* as it appears to *myself*, not as the *me* in *myself*. By grappling with Kant's distinction between the thinking being and the perceiving being, one can decipher that it is the rudimentary gulf in human beings' cognitive faculty that brings about insurmountable complexities involved in the struggle for subjectivity. To put it another way, Kant's metaphysical explanation about the irreducible cognitive structures clarifies why the modern subject's search for subjectivity cannot be fruitful. Kant's elucidation about the difference between thinking and perceiving also helps us penetrate why the criticism on fashion—fashion is a vacuous, relentless, and meaningless repetition, detrimental to reaching a "genuine" self-consciousness of self—is not totally groundless, as consciousness of the self and consciousness of the movement of time or the temporal rhythm of the lineal progression of time are related at the level of inner experience only. According to the Kantian line of thought, the attempt by the modern subject to find his or her subjectivity through the latest fashion is nothing but looking for the "thing-in-itself" of the self *in vain* over time, which is the form of inner sense. The nexus between fashion and newness, which is a time-based concept, unveils that self-cognition of the self via fashion is a mere empirical knowledge of the unity of the self. However, Theodor W. Adorno's explication about the antinomy between freedom and unfreedom aids us in advancing from the Kantian perspective and recognizing the role fashion plays in the progressive development of consciousness of freedom, although Adorno himself is opposed to the Hegelian notion of the unfolding of history toward freedom. Adorno's illumination on freedom, in particular regarding the dialectical relation between an impulse and reason or rational thought, which is a critique of Kantian rational freedom, lays the bedrock of discourse on the function fashion serves with reference to both freedom and unfreedom. Adorno has elucidated that freedom is an antinomian concept. This is, we feel free and autonomous when our actions are triggered not only by reason but also by an impulse, and freedom does not exist without unfreedom, since individual freedom is not always congruent with collective freedom, all pointing to the fact that there is no universal, absolute freedom. With this theoretical anchorage, we can conclude that the task of fashion in modern times is to be an intermediary between the antinomies of modernity, such as the individual and the collective, freedom and unfreedom, and reason and impulse. In many moments of the oscillation between reason and impulse in everyday life, the modern subject makes a conscious or unconscious endeavor to find his or her subjectivity through fashion, not just in the form of clothing but also in many and varied types of social phenomena, while communicating with the collective. In and through this process, one realizes that the *I* exists in relation to others and eventually

learns how to compromise one's freedom for the sake of freedom of others in a manner, which is different from that dictated by the demands of categorical imperative in Kant's moral philosophy, in which free choice is determined by pure reason.

Adorno remarks, "In many people it is already an impertinence to say 'I'" (*Minima Moralia* #29) (Adorno 2005, p. 50), uncovering his pessimistic view on everyday experiences in late industrial society during World War II. Counter to this elitist argument, I have laid out the framework of theoretical reasoning that accounts for positive aspects of fashion as a domain in which the individual finds his or her subjectivity during many occasions of the day, beyond the vestimentary sphere of eclecticism, in the name of fashion. Some cultural products that are manufactured by means of a large-scale industrial operation, inasmuch as they are sought after as fashion, can take on the essential quality of fashion, that is, the dialectical mediation between the polar opposites—individual and society. In "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1944) Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who coined the term "the culture industry," contend that individuality that is proffered and promoted in mass culture is fictitious (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002, p. 125). For them, both the standardized mode of production of the culture industry and standardization of cultural commodities are responsible not just for providing capitalist societies with commercial and economic bases of capitalism but also for creating the condition in which genuine individuation cannot be attained while hampering the dialectical exchange between individual and society. According to them, in the cultural industry, imitation is not just optional but absolute (Ibid., 103); consumers compulsively imitate what they see in advertisements even though they know that what they imitate is false (Ibid., p. 136). Adorno also writes: "In contrast to the Kantian, the categorical imperative of the culture industry no longer has anything in common with freedom. It proclaims: you shall conform, without instruction as to what; conform to that which exists anyway, and to that which everyone thinks anyway as a reflex of its power and omnipresence. The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness" (Adorno 1991, p. 104). However, when it comes to fashion, Adorno and Horkheimer's argument does not carry any weight. One notable example of consumers' resistance against the power of the industry is the midi-skirt in the early 1970s. Following John Fairchild's advice, who was the publisher and editor-in-chief of *Women's Wear Daily*—the most influential trade publication in fashion at the time in the USA—buyers, designers, manufacturers, and retailers in the fashion industry all promoted the midi-skirt (Davis 1992, 12n, 126n; Reilly 2014, p. 122). Yet, in spite of the consorted effort made by the industry and powerful influencers, consumers did not adopt the midi-skirt; they even petitioned the industry to restock the store shelves with mini-skirts (Ibid.). Indeed, there was a time when entire economies were production-oriented (Raju and Prabhakara 2008, pp. 1–3). In the early days of commerce, producers controlled the market under the production concept; before the 1950s, businesses centered on efficient modes of production. Although it is impossible to deny that consumers today are influenced by manufacturers, buyers, and/or fashion editors, for example, by way of promotional strategies and activities, there is plenty of evidence that demonstrates the interactive mediations between individual

consumers and the industry are real in the business world. Successful retailers and manufacturers do not just push consumers to purchase their products; rather, they are eager to find what consumers want by making use of an array of such methods as interviews, surveys, questionnaires, or data analysis. The fashion industry works closely with trend forecasting agencies or fashion forecasters whose job is to predict what would be the next trend or fashion based on their research on the needs and wants of their target market. Push and pull marketing strategies reflect how keen the industry is to harness the interactive communication between the consumer and the industry in business practice. Notwithstanding, it is naïve to argue that there is a free-flowing harmony between individuals and society during late industrial capitalism. As Jon Elster points out, "[C]apitalism is an unjust system because some get more and others less than they have contributed" (Elster 1986, p. 95). However, Adorno and Horkheimer's contention that mass culture or the culture industry as a whole represents the schemata of the capitalist industry while depleting the dialectical movement between individual and society is an overstatement. Numerous changes that have been made or followed in the name of the latest fashion indicate the fact that the dialectical mediation between the individual and the collective is at work in fashion. Yet, it is erroneous to maintain that the vast range of commodities as a whole exhibits the dialectical exchange between the individual and the collective. In fact, not all cultural products that are popular among people are to be considered "fashion." A case in point is cultural products that become widespread due mainly to the rationale based on some morality or "ought to," as they belong not to the realm of fashion but to that of social mores.

The process of adoption and diffusion of fashion does not simply rest on passive imitation or conformity, as followers of Adorno and Horkheimer would argue. Fashion is not just about imitation or conformity but about imitation or conformity that is dialectically at play along with differentiation or demarcation. In fact, more to the point is the mediation that springs from the polar oppositions. This feature, which is integral to the constitution of fashion, is the underlying motor of fashion some scholars fail to consider in their assessment of fashion. Different sets of antithetical countertendencies found in fashion were already spelled out by Georg Simmel in his seminal article "Fashion," whose delineation of fashion offers profound insights into what makes fashion significant, both philosophically and politically. Throughout the whole process of my investigation into fashion for this book, Georg Simmel has been a huge inspiration as well as a reference point based upon which to argue for and against current discourses on fashion. By linking with or comparing with other philosophers, I have delved into and brought around the two quintessential characteristics of fashion—change and the mediation or reciprocity that derives from the pairs of counterforces, especially one from the polarity between individual and collective, as this polarity is that which encompasses all the antagonistic tendencies that are found in fashion. Hence, it is my view that this book is an extension of the Simmelian critique of fashion in terms of the defining characteristics of fashion. Precisely because of these traits of fashion, that is, fashion as a medium that embodies the dialectical relation between the individual and the collective and as a conceptual construct that is coupled with the concept of change, the

timeline with which fashion is considered to have been in effect starts from modernity. It is for the same reason that the terms "the fashion system" and "the prefashion system" that I used in this book do not refer to object-based sartorial fashion systems; rather, they represent *arbitrary* frames of reference by which judgments about the nature of antithetical opposites found in fashion history are made. Nevertheless, it is misleading to assume that sartorial fashion has little or no significance in our search for the implications of the mediation that is paramount for the constitution of fashion phenomena as such, in that fashion history demonstrates how the spirit realizes itself in reality and how the objective world is dialectically related to the actualization of freedom.

After having completed all the questions I had with regard to the foregoing philosophers and their propositions, I discovered that what I had done is basically a philosophical investigation into fashion in light of German philosophy. Yet, from the very beginning, I didn't intend to write a book about fashion grounded on all or some strands of thought that are subsumed under a particular school or sect of philosophy. Thus, this book does not claim to have systematically probed fashion under any branch of philosophy, although I have discussed German philosophers almost exclusively. My objective in the very beginning stage of this project was to logically analyze what fashion is and demonstrate how the remits of fashion are closely entwined with the topics that are important in the history of philosophy. Only in hindsight did I realize that fashion is deeply interlaced with topics discussed by continental philosophers, in particular with reference to such themes as the self, self-consciousness, desire, freedom, time, temporality, and the politics of gender and sexuality. I think that this thematic commonality is not a pure coincidence, but it only uncloaks that *fashion is distinctively modern in its provenance*. This is not to assert that fashion has little or nothing to do with postmodern times or post-postmodern times. The relationship between fashion and postmodernity and post-postmodernity is an important subject matter to examine in detail, which, however, is not the scope of this book. But in my forthcoming book chapter in *Fashion, Dress, and Post-postmodernism* (eds. Andrew Reilly and José Blanco F., Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), some of my thoughts about the connection between fashion and the time after modernity are to be delivered, with the focus on Gilles Deleuze's transcendental empiricism and Gilles Lipovetsky's hypermodernity. Philosophy has not only served as a means by which to make a logical and conceptual analysis but also functioned as an important source of inspiration for researchers from other academic disciplines. I believe that with a more inclusive frame of mind to everyday topics and a nonpartisan attitude toward scholars outside the normative world of philosophy, philosophy can progress fruitfully as well. I have had many intellectual epiphanies whenever I discover that the philosophization of fashion allows the leap in grasping the wisdom from past philosophers and realize that some of the vexing philosophical enigmas of the past become more accessible, while also linking philosophers' insights to important aspects of fashion. One example is Adorno's interpretation of Hegel's dialectic that a dialectical approach should start from the object that is mediated. It is in this context that this book approaches philosophical discourse from the perspective of fashion.

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Chapter 1
Fashion and Philosophy: An Overview

1.1 Why Does Fashion Matter to Philosophy?

"Why is there something rather than nothing?" asked Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1951, p. 527). In similar vein to this metaphysical inquiry, this book seeks through the philosophization of fashion to answer the question, "Why is there something new rather than nothing new?" The distinction between concept and phenomena, i.e., between *newness* and new fashions of different kinds, can be pronounced through philosophical discourse, illuminating the epistemological meaning of fashion as both a concept and a phenomenon. This in turn will help us grasp certain attributes of modernity in the context of philosophy. The metaphysical question as to the genesis of something new, which is inseparable from the eternal return of the same that is in operation, is closely entwined with the period called modernity,[1] during which fashion played a significant role. Metaphysics is often criticized for its detachment from the real world. However, by investigating fashion through metaphysical concepts and principles, certain esoteric aspects of metaphysics can be broken down, assisting us in finding some fruitful links between the most abstruse branch of philosophy and our objective world. Through this interdisciplinary journey, one should be able to see the salient connections between the thought processes presented in philosophy and the modes of life experienced in the course of modern times. Indeed, metaphysics represents a major point of departure in this unusual project. It is Immanuel Kant's schematism that renders the theoretical basis upon which fashion is anatomized as an a priori concept of the understanding and as a phenomenal a posteriori appearance. The term *fashion* as used in common parlance is, in point of fact, a mode or style with countless examples that are often confined within the bounds of the body. On the other hand, the pursuit of something new in the form of fashion, originating as it does in the mind, requires synthetic a priori

[1] See A. K. M. Adam, *Making Sense of New Testament Theology: "Modern" Problems and Prospects* (Macon: Mercer University, 1995), 13–25.

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cognition. Kant offers clarifications about our intuitions of time and space, with which the metaphysical attributes of fashion become easy to identify. With recourse to Kant's transcendental aesthetic, the pursuance of something new, the conceptual side of fashion, can be reckoned not only as part of the metaphysical domain arrived at by a synthetic a priori judgment, but also as an incessant attempt to seek one's subjectivity.

Whereas an analysis of fashion through Kant's metaphysics guides us to tell the difference between the ontological and epistemological dimensions of fashion as well as that between fashion as a concept and fashion as a phenomenon, G. W. F. Hegel's dialectic provides a theoretical platform from which fashion can be viewed as a hypostatization of the union of a priori and a posteriori experience. Theodor W. Adorno describes Hegelian philosophy as "a philosophy of experience," which is in line with Fichte's claim that philosophy must not be isolated from a posteriori facts and that a priori knowledge must coincide with our empirical experience (Adorno 2017, p. 75). As per Adorno, Hegelian dialectic is dialectic in its highest stage of development as a means of philosophical reflection (Ibid., p. 1 and 5), and its principal feature is that "how we think" and "the matter itself" that is in question go through the process of becoming, which Adorno calls the "programme of 'the movement of the concept'" (Ibid., p. 9). This movement is perpetual in its default mode, since any being established by this movement, even the true, is to be sublated [*aufgehoben*]. What matters while in this interminable process of mediation is, therefore, "what happens with our concepts when we think" (Ibid.). In order to apprehend the cardinal point of this process, Adorno resolutely maintains, "the fundamental experience here must be approached from the side of the matter itself, from the theory of the object rather than the theory of the subject, from the thing which inspired the dialectic itself, from the experience of the fundamentally dynamic character of the matter" (Ibid.). Here comes another significant rationale for the philosophization of fashion, that is as one which can revitalize Hegelian dialectic's seeking to make an endless mediation through sublation, between thought and the object of thought, and between how we think and what we think. To be more precise, the philosophization of fashion offers a concrete example that shows the pith of Hegelian dialectic not merely as a deductive structure that presents the principle of thought in connection with the object of thought, according to which our life experience is subjected, but also as a logic that comes from the matter it strives to comprehend. Indeed, with the philosophization of fashion, one can be appraised of Adorno's advice that it is from the perspective of the matter itself that the key function of contradiction in the dialectic is deciphered, since while unfolding the matter that is under investigation, the thought that is involved in the dialectical thought process is separated as something that is "not identical with itself." (Ibid., p. 81). If one applies this to the philosophization of fashion, then, from the perspective of fashion as an object of dialectical thought, thought can be recognized as that which is disparate from the matter itself—fashion in this case, such that "a philosophical understanding of what is not itself 'subject'" (Ibid., p. 6) can be achieved. In other words, once the conceptualization of the matter (fashion) that is generated by the subject is identified, the subject is now transposed as the object of thought,