*The Geographies of Fashion: Consumption, Space, and Value.* Louise Crewe. London: Bloomsbury. 2017. 188 pp. ISBN 978147589952 PB.

*Fashion and Everyday Life: London and New York.* Cheryl Buckley and Hazel Clark. London: Bloomsbury. 2017. 313 pp. ISBN 978187888266 PB.

‘What has fashion got to do with geography?’ At the start of *The Geographies of Fashion,* Louise Crewe suggests that her book is a response to this question, which she is frequently asked (p. x). My experience is that the question has become rather less common in recent years, in part because of the work of Crewe herself, who has championed the serious study of fashion’s geographies since the early 1990s. In the British school system, the fashion industry is now commonly used as a case study of economic globalization and the connections between places, or of urban renewal and significance of creative industries. New geography undergraduates seem to grasp the relationship between fashion and some of the key ways of thinking geographically pretty readily. However, as Crewe suggests these more apparent geographies of fashion are only part of the way that a geographical imagination is central to the understanding of fashion and fashion systems.

It is instructive to look outside of the discipline of Geography to see the force and breadth of these ways of thinking. While not a unified set of ideas or approaches, the broad intellectual movement that can be described as ‘fashion theory’ (and since the late 1990s focused on the journal *Fashion Theory*) has been characterized both by direct borrowings of geographical ideas, but also by a strong commitment to broader geographical thinking. In attempting to get beyond a narrow obsession with the work of individual ‘genius’ designers, or cataloguing the succession of different styles associated with older approaches, fashion theory has emphasized close associations between fashion and urban modernity, and thought relationally about the connections between places, people and cultures in fashion systems. It is Elizabeth Wilson’s work, particularly her classic *Adorned in Dreams* (Virago, 1985), rather than Roland Barthes’ 1967 study of *The Fashion System*, that is the archetype of this work. In the work of succeeding generations of fashion historians and ‘theorists’ like Christopher Breward, Caroline Edwards, Joanne Entwistle, Alistair O’Neill, Sean Cole, Agnes Rocamora and many others, there is a central commitment to what are evidently geographical themes, thinking through the relationships between cities and clothing, the international hierarchies and interconnections of high fashion, the performative nature of street styles, and the spatialities of the clothed body.

Cheryl Buckley and Hazel Clark’s wonderful *Fashion and Everyday Life* is the latest contribution to this geographically inflected approach to fashion. Informed, but not over-determined or overwhelmed by the approaches to everyday life of Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre and Walter Benjamin, this a detailed study of fashionable garments, both cheap and not-so-cheap, after they leave the shop and become part of the lived culture of cities. The book is, of course, focused on London and New York, two of the usual-suspect world cities of fashion, but the account is distinctive and important. Buckley and Clark use a wide variety of sources to build a detailed understanding of the importance of fashionable dress for ‘ordinary’ people – and in both cities this is a story of how that category of the ordinary was understood, reinterpreted and re-expressed at different times. The study is particularly good at looking at the rise of popular mass consumption, and the redefinition and expansion of the urban middle-classes in the inter-war periods. This is the story of the rise of the fashionable masses, which gives full agency to the decisions and pleasures of new kinds of consumer in the period. The study also looks closely at the movements of people and clothes through London and New York; in particular it uses the relationship between fashion and dance cultures in the two cities to demonstrate the importance of non-white culture in remaking every-day dress. Clark and Buckley move beyond cutting-edge street styles. The photographs of urban crowds used in the book include many of people wearing clothes more readily associated with earlier periods, such as ‘fifties’ styles in the midst of the supposedly swinging sixties. Throughout the book there is a sensitivity to the wearing of clothes in particular sites in the cities. These are not just major shopping streets, or places that have entered the mythologies of fashionable London and New York; *Fashion and Everyday Life* is as concerned with suburbs, new towns and social housing estates/projects as with Fifth Avenue, Carnaby Street or either Chelsea.

This rich and nuanced approach to the spaces of London and New York is rather different from the approach to fashion and the city taken in Crewe’s *The Geographies of Fashion.* Crewe’s route into the ‘myriad ways that fashion shapes contemporary urban space’ (p. 13), starts from the antagonisms between fashion and architecture as creative disciplines. This is a long-running tension, and Crewe has some fun calling out some big-name architectural theorists (notably the gulf between Rem Koolhaas’s ‘Harvard academician-speak and his real world built structures’, which ‘could scarcely be wider, the rhetoric and the reality startlingly contradictory’) (p. 18). Crewe makes important points about the ways that ‘clothing and architecture overlap to fashion the contemporary city’, but this focus on creative disciplines rather than broader practices and experiences produces a rather narrow reading of the fashion city.

Crewe’s professed aim in *The Geographies of Fashion* is nothing less than ‘a powerful new Geographical Theory of Fashion’ (p. 6). That’s a tall order, particularly in less than 200 pages. The book is better seen as a series of linked essays about fashion’s geographies; it is notable that the book doesn’t have a conclusion or final synthesis setting out its central contributions. The strongest of these essays concerns the interconnections between places inherent in contemporary fashion systems, particularly those associated with the so-called ‘fast fashion’ of Zara, Primark and other companies, mapping out what Crewe describes as the ‘complex relational scalar geographies of fashion’ and moving beyond a simple commodity chain approach (p. 59). The book also includes a long consideration of brand flagship stores in major cities and the geographies of luxury, and chapters on the emotional power of the material objects of fashion, and the effects of the digital age on fashion’s geographies. A short essay in the middle of the book, woven around the examples of the tailoring of London’s Savile Row and the production of Harris Tweed makes a case for ‘slow fashion’, a reaction to the outsourced production of rapid, cheap disposable production. Unsurprisingly, this essay is better at expressing the qualities of such slow fashion than in suggesting the kinds of politics that might make it more than a tiny elite section of fashion markets. Overall, *The Geographies of Fashion* is distinctive and sometimes provocative. I don’t think it amounts to that ‘powerful new geographical theory of fashion’, but then I’m not sure that this is needed any more than distinctively sociological, economic or aesthetic theories of fashion. As Buckley and Clark demonstrate, geographical thinking is always a key component in scholarship that tries to untangle the complexities of fashion systems.

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