



Is Fashion a Woman's Right?: The Thinking Woman's Fashion Book

By Carolyn Beckingham

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From a feminist rather than a postfeminist point of view, this book addresses the evidence for the widespread belief that enjoyment of fashion is necessarily inconsistent with feminist values. It begins by establishing that many feminists in fact hold this belief and argues that disagreeing does not mean claiming that feminism was unnecessary or that it is now rendered redundant by changing social mores. The author describes the historical background as applied to both men's and women's clothing in various cultures. By examining the alleged symbolism of particular fashions and meanings attached to the concepts of "nature" and "creativity," the book then rebuts the main antifashion arguments by exploring the issues of personal freedom and political correctness, the claims that fashion makes women sex objects for men, and the charge that the subject is too trivial to merit serious discussion. Allegations of links between fashion and pornography are explored, and the disagreements between feminists on this topic are set out. Finally, the issue of dressing for special occasions and whether this practice has a place in the modern world is addressed with candor.

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Editorial Review

Review

“This new book on fashion and its history is brilliant and fascinating. It is a must read for all who are interested in style and clothes.” —Roy Miles, author, *Priceless: A Life in Art*

“An impressive piece of research which Carolyn Beckingham has translated into a persuasive narrative. She marshals her material with skill and authority and presents her arguments in clear, well-written prose, avoiding academic jargon. The book will appeal not only to the specialist in this area of study but also to the general reader. Many will find added pleasure in returning to the classic literature from which she draws many of her examples.” —Alan Beecham, writer and journalist

“The definitive overview of fashion. An impressive and witty chronological history of our way of adorning ourselves. A must to enjoy and to treasure.” —Lucienne Phillips, fashion doyenne

About the Author

Carolyn Beckingham works as a freelance researcher and legal interpreter in the French language. Most recently she has been translating books from French for the Iran Liberty Association, has contributed reviews to *Everywoman*, and has translated several works for Oxfam and SOAS.

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