

How Does Fashion Represent the Changing Attitudes to the Gender Divide

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Fashion has always dictated what gender stereotypes should wear and how they should present themselves to the world with their fashion, these rules and ideals are constantly changing and reversing, occasionally blurring the lines between the two. Gender roles have lessened and obscured in modern society due to subcultures and immediate availability of clothing, the [gender](#) ideals do however still exist and designers often heavily rely on these assumptions. Advertising companies often use these gender stereotypes to promote their clients' clothing as well which, in turn, only serves to strengthen traditional ideas of what men and women should wear. In this essay I aim to discuss the ever changing gender divide and how fashion reacts to these alterations and views and reflects the ideals at the time.

Prior to the 19th century, it was not unusual to see wealthy, fashionable men wearing stockings and heels such as the likes of the macaroni men who saw extravagance as an essential part of life and to show their wealth. They would often be more flamboyant and exaggerated than the women with their large wigs, they even spoke in an outlandish manners, so to exceed the boundaries of normal fashion and to seem more exotic and extravagant than others. They acted extremely feminine and over dramatic, which would

be deemed offensive in modern times that men should act like this, and considered damaging to the reputation of men in general. Whilst men were still seen as superior at this time the unwritten rules about dress appearance were incredibly different to that of today, women were considered the secondary gender, expected to be mothers to the children and to keep up appearances.

The 19th century witnessed a distinct shift in ideas res...

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...gyny women tend to wear mens t shirts and clothes more often than the other way round, this is because men find it degrading to be considered a woman, whereas it is ok in todays standards for a woman to want to dress as man. Man are brought up to be as masculine as possible and anything feminine they do is met with distaste, for a man to look like a woman at all, even with a colour or accessory, it is degrading, because the thought of being a woman is degrading. F.Davis suggests that many feminists simply see androgyny as "another subtle device for muting the egalitarian demands emanating from the womens' movement" (3)

Works Cited

- 1) <http://www.hoovers.com/industry-facts.clothing-stores.1519.html>
- 2)
- 3) Davis, F, 1992. Fashion, Culture, and Identity. USA: University of Chicago.
- 4) <http://www.dazeddigital.com/fashion/article/18462/1/opinion-is-fashion-over-gender>

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