



## Fashion - Philosophy for Everyone: Thinking with Style

*Jessica Wolfendale (Editor) , Jeanette Kennett (Editor) , Fritz Allhoff (Series\_editor) , Jennifer Baumgardner*

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If you just can't decide what to wear, this enlightening guide will lead you through the diverse and sometimes contradictory aspects of fashion in a series of lively, entertaining and thoughtful essays from prominent philosophers and writers. A unique and enlightening insight into the underlying philosophy behind the power of fashion Contributions address issues in fashion from a variety of viewpoints, including aesthetics, the nature of fashion and fashionability, ethics, gender and identity politics, and design Includes a foreword by Jennifer Baumgardner, feminist author, activist and cultural critic, editor of Ms magazine (1993-7) and regular contributor to major women's magazines including Glamour and Marie-Claire

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## From Reader Review Fashion - Philosophy for Everyone: Thinking with Style for online ebook

### Jillian says

Some of these essays were better than others and I would have liked some photos or illustrations to break up the text, but it was a good read overall.

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### the gift says

this is a much later review: just going through my philosophy books- found this one and one on 'global street style' and thought some about what i am 'saying' relative to these street styles:  
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2...>

first review: when i was 21 to 23 i lived with a girlfriend. she was as geology student and model part-time. she cared about fashion, i cared about fashion- though in a more general sense about design, in more how she looked, convinced that my own clothes were a way to cover up, to distract, from what i felt were not masculine qualities. i was tall enough, i was slender, i was found attractive by some women. but i was not big, not muscular, not thick, not a great body i thought. much of these judgments were reflection of the times and not too apparent to anyone else...

so my appreciation of this collection is dated to when i was young, when i was concerned with looking like one of these models in photos or that she worked with, when i was as easily intimidated as any young woman, in the assertion i just did not look man enough. and so the fact there are no essays on fashion focusing on men, is the only obvious lack for me. i have heard of body-issues for boys growing up, mostly comparing the exaggerated hypertrophy of boy 'action figures' that distort ideals no less than barbie. these essays are like any collection, some good, some less... as my interest is by now more the philosophy than the fashion, i do not worry about it anymore. i am interested in the ethical essays, on the experience, but as far as communicating ideals, identity, in-groups... it seems necessary such is ephemeral, superficial, changing, if for no more than to demonstrate how the core of any human is not ever likely to be immediately visually obvious...

any rec on men's fashion essays is appreciated.

here is something for men to look at: <http://aeon.co/magazine/culture/why-h...>

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### Lauren Cripps says

A thoughtful collection of essays which discuss everything from what constitutes fashion to why we follow it, what it means to women and what our choices say about us. Each chapter is thought provoking and gives the reader plenty to reflect on when considering their own fashion choices.

Reading it in 2019 I became aware of questions we should ask of the fashion industry today which have appeared since the book was published in 2011 such as: what choices should we make around sustainable

fashion? What implications do the use of plastic fashion materials have on environment? It would be great to have a revised addition that addressed some of these debates.

In conclusion, a great introduction to fashion philosophy for anyone who wears clothes.

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### **Kim says**

Another very interesting read. I will definitely get back to finish it soon.

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### **Mills College Library says**

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### **Malcolm says**

This is the first of the ‘Philosophy for Everyone’ series that I have read – passing over titles dealing with coffee, dating, food, cycling and serial killers for one of those things that a brief visit to any conference of philosophers should tell us that as a group they desperately need (or at least according to the disparaging observations of several contributors to this really good collection). The series is one of several recently launched that allows philosophers to engage in ‘real world’ discussions and in doing so both popularise philosophical ideas and open the discipline up to broader social debates; the other high profile series takes a series of popular cultural texts – films and TV shows – as the basis of analysis (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and *The Simpsons* all lend themselves to rich philosophical exploration).

The collection is organised into four broad strands – one looks at fashionability and coolness, one at style and design (that is, aesthetics), one at identity and freedom, and one at ethics. It was the fourth that most attracted me (I teach a class in a sport studies programme that, among other things, grapples with sport, clothing design and production and sweatshops so the two papers considering the ethics of sweatshops and shopping seemed that they might be useful – and they will be). There were papers that challenged and surprised me in ways I did not quite expect – Ada Brunstein’s excellent piece on ‘thinking clothing’ and cyborg identities was much richer than I expected, Nick Zangwell’s short piece considering fashionability as alienation (we have to stand apart from ourselves to consider our status as fashionable), and Lauren Ashwell and Rae Langton’s unsettling unpacking of the notion of the slave to fashion, but considering the ontological implications of slavery, objectification and the development of epistemological bondage is an excellent instance of the banality of meanings bundled up in a word.

At the heart of the book is banality – fashion, fashionability, design and the like are all around us, downright ordinary, and just the thing scholars should be attending to. Some of the essays reveal just how important it is – often in unexpected ways: Marguerite La Caze’s closing essay looking at the aesthetics and ethics of taste critiques Kant’s derogation of fashion while noting that even he, in attacking its foolishness and vanity, wrote “But it is always better, nevertheless, to be a fool in fashion than out of fashion”. The collection, in sum, explores important debates in contemporary philosophy while never losing sight of the ordinary lives we lead and the things that shape them. It is hard to produce a consistently high quality collection of essays – Wolfendale and Kenette have done well with this. I’m just finishing an edited (and fairly academically

demanding in places) collection in the philosophy of play (as the lesser player with two others who have carried the burden) – but reading this has encouraged me to think about a new project in philosophy for everyone.

Well worth it – a quality piece of work.

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