

Timothy Campbell, *Historical Style: Fashion and the New Mode of History, 1740-1830*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. Pp. 376. £56. ISBN 9780812248326.

Fashion, characterised by ephemerality, novelty, and built-in obsolescence, presents a challenge to narratives of history that depend on progress and development. Yet, what Campbell's study highlights is the numerous contradictions and paradoxes that govern fashion, a phenomenon which, in its fleetingness, holds a 'provisional distance from history' (27), while simultaneously offering an archival record through which we can trace the past. Campbell's central premise, which pivots compellingly around the tensions underlying fashion and its representation, is that in eighteenth-century Britain the rise of fashion forged a new consciousness of the historical past. Print culture was key in constructing this emerging historical self-consciousness, even reimagining the past as a form of novelty.

Campbell opens with an homage to *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1982), the first extensive examination of the rise of fashion in eighteenth-century Britain. Since its publication, scholarship on this era's unique consumer world has thrived, and Campbell's book is a timely contribution to this rich field. Campbell does not offer a history of the development of eighteenth-century fashion; for this, we can turn to the writings of Amanda Vickery, John Styles, Beverly Lemire, Maxine Berg, Hannah Greig, and others. Campbell's study instead fills a lacuna in current criticism by showing how, as eighteenth-century Britons became accustomed to the accelerating pace of consumer cycles, they were offered a new means of perceiving the past.

Historical Style overflows with an impressive array of familiar and less well known visual and literary material. Campbell is particularly successful in delineating the 'nascent print-cultural fashion system' (7), visible in eighteenth-century periodicals and pocketbooks. Campbell's analysis of these texts is welcome: while it is well documented that the eighteenth century witnessed a burgeoning market for periodicals, many fashion-centric magazines remain overlooked. However, a recent Leverhulme project led by Jennie Batchelor has begun to uncover the significance of the *Lady's Magazine*, a publication which Campbell equally identifies as being part of this print-cultural fashion system. In addition, the print-cultural ties between fashion and fiction, which often highlight the role of periodicals, have recently been deftly analysed by Jennie Batchelor and Chloe Wigston Smith. Campbell nevertheless offers a new perspective on these connections.

The study is divided into two parts, the first of which considers the impact of the new visual print culture of fashion on representations of history. This is framed by a discussion of the ways in which the emerging 'print-cultural archive of dress' (27), visible in illustrations adorning pocketbooks and magazines, constructed fashion as force which could 'date and memorialize new qualities and scenes of social life' (27). Chapter 1 focuses on the implications increasingly widespread visual records of dress had for Anna Laetitia Barbauld, whose use of such records became a means through which she could represent different forms of history. Chapter 2 offers an absorbing account of the dilemma fashion presented to the portrait painter Sir Joshua Reynolds, who became precariously caught between his own neoclassical aesthetics, the demands of commerce, and the historicist implications of dress.

Part II of Campbell's study focuses on the emergence of the historical novel, a genre which epitomised the new fascination for charting Britain's past. In Campbell's account, the rise of fashion had consequences for the ways in which fiction, specifically the historical novel, represented history. It is the seriality of historical fiction that is, Campbell observes, emblematic of the rhythms that define fashion, and reflective of the intimacy between commerce and early novelistic representations of historical experience. Moving

chronologically in from David Hume to William Godwin, Part II examines the diverse ways writers approached a historiography that seemed inextricable from commerce.

Historical novelist Walter Scott takes centre stage in this study. Campbell reads both Sophia Lee and Maria Edgeworth as influential antecedents to Walter Scott's historical project, and key contributors to the emerging interest in Britain's historical past. Scott himself is characterised as a writer dependent on fashion, using material culture to alter his reader's perceptions of, and relationship to, the historical periods he conjures in his fiction. Campbell demonstrates persuasively throughout how authors concerned with historical representation were forced to confront the fashion system, while showing how commerciality was in turn essential in enabling access to the past.

Campbell does not discuss the shifting meaning of 'fashion' in the period. However, he does impress upon the reader a strong sense of the limitations and possibilities that meanings of fashion held for eighteenth-century historiography. Campbell's closing Coda offers some additional reflections on the relevance this has not only for twentieth-century representations of history, but also for theorising the role of fashion more broadly within historiography. Indeed, *Historical Style* is valuable not simply due to the many questions it raises for future scholarship on eighteenth-century culture and literature, but for its solid affirmation of the value of fashion within literary and historical research.

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