‘I just don't think I look right in a lot of modern clothes ...’: historically inspired dress as leisure dress

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I just don’t think I look right in a lot of modern clothes …’: historically inspired dress as leisure dress

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This study examined the motivations and dress practices of individuals who wear what appear to be historical styles of costume or historically inspired dress in settings that do not require wearing them. Qualitative case studies were conducted and analysed using Colaizzi’s method of phenomenological analysis [Edward, Karen-Leigh, and Tony Welch. 2011. “The Extension of Colaizzi’s Method of Phenomenological Enquiry.” Contemporary Nurse 39 (2): 163–171]. By applying historically inspired dress to Eicher and Miller’s [1994. “Dress and the Public, Private, and Secret self: Revisiting a Model.” In Proceedings of the International Textile and Apparel Association, Inc., 145. Minneapolis, MN.] Public, Private, and Secret Self (PPSS) Model, as presented by Miller-Spillman and Lee [2014. “Female Civil War Reenactors’ Dress and Magic Moments.” In Fashion, Design and Events, edited by Kim Williams, Jennifer Laing, and Warwick Frost, 69–83. Abingdon: Routledge], we found that motivations for wearing this type of dress in settings where costume was not required (leisure and reality settings) were similar to those in which costume was required (fantasy settings). Additionally, while some motivations were limited to some settings, some were salient across multiple settings, while others were salient across all settings studied. We also uncovered new motivations, such as feelings of social permission, desiring an ideal body shape or flattering figure, and expressing ideologies and/or world views not previously reported by the model [Miller-Spillman, Kimberly, and Min-Young Lee. 2014. “Female Civil War Reenactors’ Dress and Magic Moments.” In Fashion, Design and Events, edited by Kim Williams, Jennifer Laing, and Warwick Frost, 69–83. Abingdon: Routledge]. This study contributes to understandings of the relationship between dress and leisure because we found that the practice of editing plays an important role in distinguishing leisure dress from fantasy dress, a concept not currently recognized by the PPSS model.

Keywords: costume; fantasy dress; historically inspired dress; leisure dress; motivations; self-expression

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Introduction

Corsets, Edwardian dresses, Victorian waistcoats, 1950s vintage sweaters, and 1930s-style suits – some individuals wear what seem to be elements of historical styles of costume as part of their everyday dress style. We describe this style of dress as ‘historically inspired’ dress, and define it as any form of clothing (full ensembles or pieces) that looks historical. This includes authentic historic pieces (antique or vintage), reproductions or replicas of historic pieces, historical styles of costume and/or re-enactment dress and retro or revival fashions that are sold in mainstream venues, which have a similar cut or material based on those from a former time period (Jenß 2004). Motivations behind wearing these forms of dress have been widely studied but primarily within socially acceptable settings. For example, the dress of re-enactors has been studied at re-enactment events where costume is required for participation. Re-enactment events usually occur on weekends and not only include dressing historically but also living in the past, to some degree, by cooking historical foods and camping in historic housing (Strauss 2003). Miller-Spillman and Lee’s (2014) study of female re-enactment dress, which they refer to as fantasy dress, utilized a questionnaire to address motivations relating to re-enactment clothing specifically when engaging in re-enactment activities within re-enactment surroundings. As a result of studying historical styles of costume within these types of settings, scholars view wearing costume as an escape from the pressures of modern-day life, creating for participants an alternate reality of leisure (Allred 1996; Belk and Costa 1998; Hall 1994, Handler and Saxton 1988). Motivations for wearing costume within this context include social bonding, expressing cultural heritage, love of history and those relating to self-expression, such as an opportunity to assume another persona, an opportunity to escape or to reinforce an illusion or fantasy (Miller 1998; Strauss 2001, 2003; Turner 1990).

Other scholars have studied youth cultures and subcultural groups, such as Goth, Punk, and Steampunk who wear historical styles of dress that appear costume-like or theatrical to differentiate themselves from mainstream society (Cherry and Mellins 2012; English 2007; Goodlad and Bibby 2007; Jenß 2004, 2005; Steele and Park 2008). For example, members of the contemporary mod or sixties scene in Germany dress in actual vintage clothing from the sixties, as well as retro fashions (Jenß 2005). Because they wear this style on a daily basis, Jenß (2005, 194) describes this style tribe’s dress as ‘identity wear’. This implies that this group wears retro fashions in a variety of social settings. Kaiser (1985) explains that some individuals adopt a non-mainstream style of dress because it allows them to deviate from the prevailing social norm, while enabling them to gain a sense of belonging within a group.

Although members of these subcultures may wear their subcultural style in a variety of settings, researchers seldom examine subcultural members’ dress practices and motivations in specific social settings. Sklar and DeLong’s (2012) study of Punk dress in occupational settings, is an exception. Their findings indicate that their participants manipulate their dress to appear appropriate for work while maintaining subtle cues like shoes, hairstyles, colours, and mixtures of punk and mainstream clothing pieces that express their punk identity.

This paper differs from previous research in that we examine dress practices and motivations of individuals who wear historically inspired dress who do not ascribe themselves to any of the previously mentioned subcultures. We also examine their dress practices and motivations in non-costume-sanctioned settings apart from
costume-sanctioned settings. Because historically inspired dress resembles costume, an accepted form of fantasy dress and leisure dress when costume is required for leisure settings (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014), it may be perceived as extreme or unacceptable in leisure settings that do not require costume. The Public, Private, and Secret Self (PPSS) Model (Eicher and Miller 1994) suggests that the combination of motivations and settings distinguishes dress as being reality, fun/leisure, and fantasy dress. This paper seeks to understand the relationship between dress and leisure by studying what distinguishes historically inspired dress as leisure rather than fantasy dress. This paper may add to the general understanding of the connection between dress, motivations, and setting. For example, leisure dress for ‘casual sports activities’ (Eicher 1981, 40) is sometimes worn in occupational (reality) settings. What distinguishes leisure from reality dress in such a case? Because historically inspired dress blurs the lines between reality, fun/leisure, and fantasy dress, it serves as a worthy subject to achieve understanding of leisure dress.

**Theoretical framework**

The PPSS model (Eicher and Miller 1994) presented in *Female Civil War Reenactors’ Dress and Magic Moments* by Miller-Spillman and Lee (2014) served as a framework for the study on which this paper is based. Eicher and Miller’s (1994) PPSS model was built on sociologist Gregory P. Stone’s (1962) and dress scholar Joanne B. Eicher’s (1981) original PPSS framework. In addition, Eicher and Miller’s (1994) PPSS model drew from the works of symbolic interaction theorists such as sociologist Herbert Blumer (1969) and philosophers Langer (1942) and Mead (1934). These theorists believed that the self is constructed through social interaction and communicated through symbols. Scholars in the field of dress credited Stone (1962) as the first to add appearance and dress to symbolic interactionism (Miller 1997; Miller, Jasper, and Hill 1993; Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1992). Stone’s theory highlighted the dependency of interaction on appearance through ‘non-verbal symbols as gestures, grooming, clothing, location and the like’ (1962, 21) and illustrated that dress and appearance have a powerful ability to either facilitate or end social interaction. Within his framework, Stone (1962) discussed socialization as the acting out of roles and socialization’s relationship to identity construction. ‘Fantastic socialization’ refers to the acting out and dressing for roles ‘that can seldom, if ever, be expected to be adopted or encountered in later life’ (Stone 1962, 31) or ‘when individuals play non-realistic roles’ (Miller 1997, 224). Stone (1962, 36) wrote that fantastic socialization occurs in public for children and in private for adults ‘in the bathroom, behind closed doors, and before a secret mirror’. However, Eicher and Miller’s (1994) PPSS model showed that fantastic socialization, which includes the wearing of costume as a form of fantasy dress, occurs for adults in private, as well as public settings.

According to Eicher (1981, 40), there are three types of dress: reality, fun/leisure, and fantasy, and each type communicates the public self, the private self, and the secret self, respectively. The public self expresses one’s age, gender, and occupation, while the ‘intimate’ or private self is communicated through fun or leisure dress, which is worn among close family and friends, and includes ‘the dress of the boudoir, the garden, around the house, barbeques, picnics, parties, casual sports activities’ (Eicher 1981, 40). Eicher asserted that the ‘secret self may or may not be shared with any other person’ (40) and is communicated through fantasy dress. According to Eicher’s (1981, 40) model, fantasy dress included sexual dress, garments that the
wearer owns, but never wears, and costumes that hide an individual’s true identity in public.

Miller (1990) applied the study of costume to Eicher’s (1981) model, and found that the relationship between self-expression and dress was more complex. Her findings ultimately resulted in the expansion of Eicher’s (1981) framework and a model indicating that fantasy dress could also include expressions/communication of the public and private self, in addition to the secret self (Eicher and Miller 1994). Miller-Spillman and Lee’s (2014) presentation of the PPSS model (Eicher and Miller 1994) includes information extracted from Miller’s previous works on costume (Miller 1990, 1997, 1998; Miller, Jasper, and Hill 1993), in addition to other types of dress unrelated to costume, such as dress for gardening and housework. For the study on which this paper is based, we applied historically inspired dress to the most current version of Eicher and Miller’s (1994) PPSS model as it is presented in Miller-Spillman and Lee (2014).

Methods and procedures
We performed qualitative case studies and collected data in multiple forms, including semi-structured in-depth interviews, written interviews, observations, photographs, and wardrobe samples. Data were collected between December 2010 and February 2014. We interviewed 12 participants using questions designed to extract information regarding the expression of self through historically inspired dress. Questions were drawn and adapted from Miller’s (1998) study of motivations for wearing costume to uncover motivations for wearing historically inspired dress. For example, Miller’s (1998) question, ‘To what would you attribute your interest in dressing in costume?’ (44) was re-worded as ‘To what would you attribute your interest in dressing in this type of dress?’ Questions were also drawn from Muggleton’s (2000) study of the motivations behind wearing punk subcultural dress to explore underlying ideologies, values, or beliefs that may also serve as individuals’ motivations for wearing historically inspired dress as fun/leisure dress within non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings. These questions included, ‘Can you tell me what it [this style] means to you?’ and ‘Are you trying to say anything by wearing this style?’ (Muggleton 2000, 172). The resultant interviews averaged one hour in length.

Photographs and wardrobe samples from the 12 participants were checked against findings that emerged from the in-depth interviews to add credibility to the study. Field notes and notes taken during the interviews were recorded and served as a data reduction strategy. Data analysis took place in the form of narrative analysis in which common themes were identified, categorized, and compared within the data using a modified version of Colaizzi’s method of phenomenological analysis (Edward and Welch 2011). The fundamental structure or essence of the phenomena was developed into the description of the qualitative findings below.

Participants
The researchers utilized a purposeful sampling strategy to recruit 12 participants living in the United States. There were two participants in Washington, two in Oregon, three in Colorado, and one each in Indiana, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Connecticut. The participants ranged in age from 24 to 69 with a mean age of 45 years. Occupations included grocery clerk, innkeeper/technology professional,
freelance massage practitioner/author, sewing teacher/convention worker/factory worker, realtor, casino security manager, fashion history teacher/corset maker/costumer, and theatre lighting designer. Several participants were retired, and of these, one had worked as a museum curator. Participants were chosen based on their frequent use of historically inspired dress (historical costume, antique/vintage/reproduction clothing, and re-enactment dress). A majority of the participants wore historically inspired dress on a daily or near-daily basis, including while at work (as reality dress) or at non-costume-sanctioned events. This sampling technique was executed by contacting members of historic re-enactment groups, folk or historic dance groups, and the Costume Society of America (CSA) via email, nation-wide social networking sites, such as Facebook©, and various organizational sites, such as The Society for Creative Anachronism. All participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their privacy.

Results and discussion
The original intent of the study on which this paper is based was to examine the motivations and dress practices of individuals who wear historically inspired dress on a daily or near-daily basis. This led to the identification of three major themes. First, we discovered that wearing historically inspired dress on a daily or near-daily basis entailed wearing historically inspired dress across a range of settings, including fantasy settings, which we describe as costume-sanctioned settings, reality settings, and non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings. Second, we found that some motivations were limited to some settings and were not present in all settings. For example, a feeling of social permission was a motivation evident in non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings, but not fantasy settings. This motivation led to the practice of editing where participants altered their dress to appear less costume-like for non-costume-sanctioned leisure and reality settings, distinguishing it from that worn in fantasy settings. Third, we found that several motivations such as love of history and/or related interest and ideologies and world views were expressed through all settings. This third theme illustrates that motivations for wearing historically inspired dress as leisure dress are similar to those as wearing historically inspired dress as fantasy dress. Wearing historically inspired dress in all settings demonstrates that some aspects of self-expression are salient across all settings. Each theme is discussed in depth in the following sections.

Wearing historically inspired dress across a wide range of settings
As previously mentioned, we found that our participants wore historically inspired dress across a range of settings, including fantasy settings, which we describe as costume-sanctioned settings, reality settings, and non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings. Additionally, we found that participants wore historically inspired dress in two types of non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings: period-related settings and non-period-related settings. These settings and the forms of historically inspired dress in which they are worn are described below.

Fantasy settings
Most participants who wear historically inspired dress in non-costume-sanctioned settings also wear historically inspired dress in costume-sanctioned settings. For example:
Adam participates in up to three Civil War re-enactment events each year in which he wears a full re-enactment uniform, but he also wears historically inspired dress in a range of leisure and reality settings. Erin, Catherine, Karen and her husband, Lee, indicated that they sometimes attend balls where a period-appropriate costume is required. Heather participates in historical dance troupes and attends Victorian balls. Erin, Catherine, Gloria, Karen and her husband, Lee, are involved in vintage dance groups. Jane participates in a range of costume-sanctioned activities with her costume group and administrates events such as a ‘Great Gatsby picnic’, where ‘music, the look, the food, the feeling, the activity, tea, of a particular time period is recreated’.

Forest also mentioned that he ‘dedicates his discretionary time to historically-informed entertainments and pastimes’, and Nicole and her husband, Patrick, perform Victorian lady and gentlemen dressing sequences to educate others about Victorian dress.

Period-related leisure settings
The participants who wore historically inspired dress for fantasy also wore it for leisure events and settings. Period-related leisure settings involve events that are open to the public such as theatre performances, orchestra concerts, and tea parties in which the participants found an appropriate relationship between a historical period and the event or setting. For example, several participants stated that they would dress up in the period of clothing in which a play was set.

Erin, Catherine, Karen, and Lee participate in non-costume-sanctioned vintage dance events, but they wear clothing styles that coordinate to the time period of the style of dance. Catherine explained, ‘If I’m going to a particular dance or a particular era, like the jazz era or the ragtime era, then I wear costumes particular to that era’. Gloria explained that when she and her friends, which include Catherine and Erin, go to a jazz club once a month to dance, they often wear 1930s and 1940s vintage clothing and occasionally costumes and vintage pieces. In addition to wearing period attire relating to period dances, Catherine mentioned that although it is not required, she dresses ‘in the period of the house’ that she is ‘interpreting’ when conducting historic house tours.

Jane’s costuming group sometimes dresses in costume at non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings such as concerts or theatre productions. She explained that her group wore eighteenth-century attire to a concert featuring eighteenth-century music. Likewise, Gloria explained that she and her social group attended a theatre production called Nineteen-Forties Radio Hour in which they dressed in 1940s clothing.

Non-period-related leisure settings
Non-period-related leisure settings are those in which no costume is required, and there is no direct time period connected to the event/setting and the social activity. These types of activities can include hanging out at a shopping mall, a bookstore, or at a private party. For example, Gloria, Catherine, and Erin wear historically inspired dress to tea dances in which there is no particular time period connected to the event or setting (Figure 1).

Daniel wears 1930s and 1940s-inspired suits, complete with gloves, spats, and cane, when going to the movies. He also wears kilts with peasant tops as a casual alternative when hanging out with close friends or at a bookstore. Brian mentioned that he wore his ‘late nineteenth-century British gentleman’s attire’, which included a cloak, top hat, and pocket watch, to class while attending college and going out with friends.
Reality settings

Gloria, Erin, Daniel, Brian, Heather, Mary, Forest, Adam, and Nicole wear historically inspired dress that may consist of full ensembles, pieces of costume or vintage clothing, or modern clothing styled to achieve a historical look, as part of their everyday wardrobe or personal style. For example, Nicole (Figure 2) wears late Victorian/Edwardian-style attire on a daily basis, which includes 1880s and 1890s authentic antique or replica pieces that she creates herself. Heather (Figure 3) wears modern clothing that is inspired by past styles. Gloria explained that she wears 1940s and 1950s vintage jackets and sweaters for everyday events and to the theatre. Like Gloria, Erin reported that she wears vintage jackets and sweaters with jeans as part of her everyday work style.

These individuals wear historically inspired dress across a range of leisure settings, and in many cases, occupational settings. Therefore, for them, historically inspired dress is not only classified as fantasy and leisure dress, but also as reality dress.

The specific settings (occupational, non-costume-sanctioned non-period-related, non-costume-sanctioned-period related) in which historically inspired dress is worn are listed in Table 1, Salient Motivations of Reality, Fun/Leisure, and Fantasy Dress, which is based on the PPSS model (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014). Unlike the PPSS model (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014), this table separates setting, motivations, and type of dress in order to provide better insight into the public,
private, and secret aspects of self that are expressed through wearing historically inspired dress within each setting. These motivations are discussed below.

**Motivations limited to some settings**

Motivations for wearing historically inspired dress that differed among settings included feelings of ‘social permission’ (Miller 1997, 232) and love of history and/or related interests, shared interests, and the potential to experience what Miller-Spillman and Lee (2014, 70) term as ‘magic moments’.

Feelings of social permission

When it came to wearing historically inspired dress for non-costume-sanctioned events and settings, our participants were concerned with editing. For period-related events, editing involved choosing appropriate settings to wear historically inspired dress, dressing in the right time period for the occasion, and for some participants, dressing authentically. For example, Karen felt that authentically representing the time period related to the event helped her and her husband appear more appropriate. Karen explained, ‘It is historically accurate what we wear. … We don’t cobble together things that look very strange or weird …. We look like a dignified elderly couple’. Participants may be motivated to wear historically inspired dress in these settings based on whether they feel they have ‘social permission’ (Miller 1997, 232). Gaulding (2003, 60) found that retro wearers sought out social venues that allowed them to dress up and look different,
and escape ‘into a world of fantasy and glamour’. Our participants selected non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings in which there was a period connection to the event or physical setting. This legitimizes the practice of wearing historically inspired dress. However, as Jane indicated, even in period-related settings, onlookers will seek an explanation from those dressed in costume within a non-costume-sanctioned setting. Jane’s costume group dressed up in eighteenth-century clothing to attend an

Figure 3. Another example of historically inspired dress worn for non-costume sanctioned, non-period-related leisure and reality events and settings.
Note: Heather often wears modern clothing with historical inspiration. Here, Heather is wearing a dress inspired by the 1930s. Photograph courtesy of and printed with permission from Heather.
eighteenth-century musical concert and were asked by others in attendance why they dressed in costume. The group responded, ‘We just wanted to dress in costume to support the music,’ eliciting the response, ‘Ah, that’s so nice!’ This dialogue reveals that when a legitimate verbal explanation is given, social permission is granted to wear historically inspired dress. Miller (1997) surmised that her participants, males in particular, felt they had social permission [to dress in costume] within the context of group activities; thereby providing a sense of freedom to do so than when they dressed in costume by themselves. However, our findings suggest that there is little social permission to wear extreme versions of historically inspired dress, such as full historical-style costume, in non-period-related settings and outside the context of a group. Nicole explained, ‘I’ve actually had people just walk up to me and start repeating over and over again, “That’s odd. That’s odd. That’s odd”’. Therefore, the tendency for individuals to wear historically inspired dress outside the context of a group suggests they have other motivations for doing so.

It appears that if historical costume is worn within non-period-related leisure and reality settings, it must be altered to appear less costume-like. Participants like Jane and Adam edit their appearance so that they do not look too outlandish. Jane explained, ‘I really try to fit in some way, so I might stand out from the crowd, but in a good way, in an attractive way, not in a clownish, over-the-top way. I don’t work to be the center of attention’. Heather, who wears many Victorian and early-

### Table 1. Salient motivations of reality, fun/leisure, and fantasy dress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Type of dress</th>
<th>Salient motivations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>Edited forms or authentic representation of historical styles (full ensemble, pieces and/or accessories)</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love of history and/or related interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of social permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun/leisure</td>
<td>Edited forms or authentic representation of historical styles (full ensembles)</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public performances: re-enactment and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vintage dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>All styles of costume including authentic historical styles of costume, vintage, antique reproduction/replica (full ensembles or pieces)</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shared interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Magic moments’ (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014, 70)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: © [Kimberly Miller-Spillman and Lee]. Reproduced by permission of Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor and Francis Group and Kimberly Miller-Spillman and Lee.

to-mid-nineteenth century styles, and Adam, who wears pieces of his nineteenth-century re-enactment clothing, stated that they refrain from wearing certain period styles in leisure and work settings. For example, Adam stated, ‘I have a very strong interest in ancient history classical Roman and Greek but can’t really wear anything other than a little jewelry without really upsetting the herd in modern society’.

This practice of editing can be compared to Sklar and DeLong’s (2012) findings regarding punk dress in the workplace. The authors found that their participants manipulated their dress to appear appropriate for work while maintaining subtle cues like shoes, hairstyles, colours, and mixtures of punk and mainstream clothing pieces that express their punk identity. This demonstrated ‘identity salience’, which Stryker and Burke (2000, 286) defined as ‘the probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations, or alternatively across persons in a given situation’. In the case of the nineteenth-century American Rocky Mountain fur trapper re-enactors, known as mountain men, Belk and Costa (1998, 235) recognized that the group’s ‘ethos’ or ideology was salient among some of their participants because they retained part of their re-enactment dress, such as long hair and beards, outside re-enactment settings. Adam’s gold wire-rimmed ‘1860s glasses or modern-esque versions’ (Figure 4) serve as an example of identity salience. Although he commonly wears other pieces of his nineteenth-century re-enactment clothing, such as a grey Confederate great coat, ‘puffy-sleeved’ shirts that date between the 1850s and 1900s, vests, and hats within a variety of leisure and reality settings, he always wears the glasses that he obtained either from a sutler’s tent or website that caters to Civil War re-enactors.

The practice of editing and/or retaining identity symbols related to costume or fantasy dress suggests identity salience. Therefore, feelings of ‘social permission’ (Miller 1997, 232) is listed as public motivation for period-related and non-period-related leisure and reality settings in Table 1.

Love of history and/or related interests

We found several motivations related to the public self for wearing historically inspired dress in non-costume-sanctioned settings. Miller (1997, 53) wrote ‘Respondents’ love of history, not surprisingly, motivates their involvement in re-enactments and associated costuming’. Like Miller’s (1997, 1998) wearers of costume, we found that all of our wearers of historically inspired dress claimed that they had a general interest or appreciation of history. This was evidenced in their preferences for literature and films with historical themes. Most of them also claimed that they had related interests such as costuming, vintage dance, and collecting, researching, and educating others about historic dress.

Miller (1998) found that love of history was a primary motivation for wearing costume among male re-enactors and believed that this was among the only motivations they were willing to publicly claim so they would not have to admit that the feminine activity of dressing up was appealing to them. However, our results suggest that love of history may be a genuine motivation among wearers of historically inspired dress. It is also a motivation publicly communicated by women. Therefore, love of history is listed for reality dress and fun/leisure dress within both period and non-period-related leisure settings, on the Salient Motivations of Reality, Fun/Leisure, and Fantasy Dress (Table 1), because love of history or related interests appeared to be a driving force to wear the style in those settings.
Shared interests

The PPSS model (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014) shows that the motivation of shared interests exists only among male re-enactors. Previous researchers found that costume-sanctioned settings such as re-enactment events serve as a social setting for like-
minded people (Miller 1998; Strauss 2001, 2003; Turner 1990). Our findings suggest that non-costume-sanctioned, period-related events do the same within some settings. Several participants (Catherine, Gloria, Erin, Jane, and Karen) attended or created events where they dress in costume in mainstream venues due to a lack of available costume-sanctioned events that allowed them to share their interests in historical costume.

Jane and Karen attend costume-sanctioned events outside of their self-formed groups for this reason, as well. Miller-Spillman (2008) studied re-enactment costume in costume-sanctioned settings, but because it allowed individuals to express shared interests among family and friends, she claimed it could also be leisure dress. Because the motivation of shared interests was found in both fantasy and leisure settings in the current study, this is reflected on Table 1. In this model, shared interest is a motivation that is present among both genders and is not limited to male re-enactors (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014). Furthermore, our evidence suggests that this is a motivation found among participants who primarily wear historically inspired dress in period-related leisure settings or within a group in non-period-related leisure settings. It was not, however, often claimed to be among motivations of participants (Heather, Daniel, Brian, and Nicole) who primarily wear historically inspired dress in non-period-related leisure settings and reality settings by themselves.

Magic moments

The motivation ‘All Reenactors “Magic Moments”’ (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014, 70) is listed as a secret aspect of self under fantasy dress on the PPSS model (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014). Miller-Spillman (2008, 461) used the term ‘magic moments’ to describe ‘the feeling of being taken back in time’. She found that for males in a Civil War re-enactment group, wearing period dress was necessary in order to experience ‘magic moments’, which were dependent on the interaction between a historical setting and historical dress. The setting involves other people partaking in the same activities, thus adding to the historical environment. Likewise, Miller-Spillman and Lee (2014) found that for females, clothing and the environmental surroundings in which it was worn were necessary for them to experience magic moments.

The potential to experience ‘magic moments’ (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014, 70) served as a secondary motivation for wearing historically inspired dress in some leisure settings. Miller-Spillman and Lee (2014, 69) defined experiencing a magic moment as ‘when an individual is no longer re-enacting but feels as though s/he is participating in the actual moment in history’. Catherine described one of these moments:

I think it’s [the feeling of going back in time] more of a different place really, and it occurs when you’re in the middle of dancing. You are that focused on that activity, and there you get a different emotional feel … So, it’s like being in a time machine. You’re focused on that activity, so in many ways, you are in a different world in your head.

Although Catherine felt she was in a different place rather than a different time period, she still illustrated the effect that her dress, along with the historical activity, had in her experiencing a magic moment. Jane and Gloria explained that they have also experienced ‘magic moments’ while attending period-related, non-costume-sanctioned
events/settings, but that they believed it was less intense than those experienced by re-enactors. Those who wear historically inspired dress more often in non-period-related settings stated that they did not feel that the potential to experience ‘magic moments’ served as a motivation. These findings reflect Miller-Spillman and Lee’s (2014, 70) conclusions that dress alone does not produce ‘magic moments’. Therefore, ‘magic moments’ is listed in Table 1 as a motivation for wearing historically inspired dress in period-related non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings, but not non-period-related, non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings.

**Motivations expressed in all settings**

The motivations that were present in all settings included childhood memories/influences, desire ‘to assume another persona’ (Miller 1998, 46), desire to achieve an ideal body shape or flattering figure, and differing ideologies and/or world views.

**Childhood memories/influences**

We found that motivations relating to the private self for wearing historically inspired dress were the same as those for wearing costume, such as childhood memories/influences and shared interests, which includes fun with dress among friends and family and while participating in an activity (Miller 1997). The motivation ‘Childhood Memories’, according to Eicher and Miller’s (1994) PPSS model, is restricted to fantasy dress, but because we found that this motivation was expressed through leisure dress and reality dress as it was worn in both non-costume-sanctioned period and non-period-related leisure settings, we felt it should be listed for leisure and reality in addition to fantasy (Table 1). This would lend further support to the idea that costume can be worn for both fantasy and leisure dress (Miller, Jasper, and Hill 1993).

**Desire to assume another persona**

A desire ‘to assume another persona’ (Miller 1998, 46), a secret aspect of self, served as a motivation for only two participants, Mary and Daniel. Mary explained that her dress allows her to take on different personas that enable her to express different moods; for example, ‘romantic’, ‘hottie-Victorian’, and ‘Elvin princess’. Likewise, Daniel explained that he knows how to manipulate the styling of his suits to put forth the different personas of ‘gangster’, ‘pimp’, ‘businessman’, and ‘preacher’. It is interesting that one of these participants is male, when Miller-Spillman and Lee (2014) showed that this motivation is more often found among female re-enactors. Additionally, this motivation was expressed in both non-period-related and period-related leisure and reality settings in addition to fantasy settings. This is reflected in Table 1.

**Desire to achieve an ideal body shape or flattering figure**

On the PPSS model (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014), the connection with sexual fantasies among female re-enactors is classified as a secret motivation for fantasy dress. Although historically inspired dress could have a sexual component, the participants did not feel comfortable communicating this. Instead, we found that many of our female participants used historically inspired dress to achieve an ideal body shape or flattering figure. When Miller (1998 49) compared motivations for wearing re-
enactment dress between gender, she found there were ‘socialization issues’ among females. One of her respondents who identified herself as a larger woman, felt her re-enactment clothing was more comfortable and attractive than her everyday dress. While studying themed weddings, Stuart, as cited in Winge and Eicher (2003, 213) found that ‘many full-figured brides wear early eighteenth-century wedding gowns because such gowns create a more appealing silhouette than do those of contemporary styles’. Heather, Gloria, Nicole, and Jane indicated they preferred the fit and flattering appearance of historical styles to modern-day styles. When asked why she dressed in historically inspired dress as a style, Heather suggested that she felt historical styles gave her a more flattering appearance, ‘I just don’t think I look right in a lot of modern clothes, and I just feel much better in long skirts, and I feel prettier in corsets’. Likewise, Nicole explained that she felt that the Victorian era clothing she wears ‘fit perfectly’ and was ‘made to show a person to their best advantage’. Jane explained that some historical styles served as a worthy alternative to modern dress, which requires an ideal body type that she does not have:

I incorporate the look of the thirties, forties, and fifties into my look partly because my figure is flattered by that hourglass look that was very popular in the forties and fifties, fitted to the waist and a fuller skirt is something that looks a lot better on me than say, for instance, the look that was popular in the late sixties and seventies, of Twiggy and a sort of an androgynous, slim-hipped, small-breasted, straight up and down look.

Alternatively, Gloria explained that her petite frame and thin body shape are more suited to the dress of the 1930s and 1950s, because it conceals that she is ‘not as fleshe out as some people’. Several female participants used historically inspired dress to seek out and embrace an alternative ideal of beauty, which has been a practice of subcultural groups through their non-mainstream forms of dress (Steele and Park 2008). These women used historically inspired dress to pursue fantasies regarding an ideal body shape or figure, in both period-related and non-period-related leisure settings, as well as reality settings in addition to fantasy settings (Table 1).

Differing ideologies and/or world views

Whereas Miller (1997) found that costumes allow wearers to express personal fantasies, Strauss (2001) found that other secret aspects of self, such as inner feelings, beliefs, and ideologies, were also expressed through costume. When Strauss (2001, 152) studied the motivations of Confederate re-enactors, he found that many of his participants re-enacted due to ‘fealty to southern cultural heritage’, a motivation that Strauss (2001, 159) felt was underwritten by ‘feelings of discomfort with the eroding state of white hegemony in the U.S.’, which drove them to express their whiteness. Likewise, Belk and Costa (1998, 235) found that mountain men acted out their ‘ethos’ or ‘desire for natural open spaces in the mountains, as well as freedom from government, bureaucracy, rushed schedules, and imposed obligations’. In the present study, a differing ideology, which includes attitudes, feelings, opinions, ideals, or a differing world view from the mainstream, were found to be expressed through leisure and reality dress.

Daniel, Brian, and Forest all expressed a desire to dress themselves more formally. As Daniel explained:
Well. I look back at the thirties and forties back when if a man wanted to go outside and
go do something, he had to put on a suit and a tie, wear a hat, and would present himself
to the world looking his best. Always.

The three men also communicated oppositional attitudes toward the cultural trend of
dressing down that began in the 1980s and led to the acceptance of wearing casual
clothing for almost any occasion (Agins 1999). As Forest explained, ‘I began “dressing
up” in response to the rest of the world (coworkers, I suppose) “dressing down”’. Thereafter,
these participants use historically inspired dress to express their attitudes
towards dressing more formally.

Smith and Topham (2005, 80) wrote, ‘Fabric, color, cut and even the way in which
garments are fastened and attached to the body all play significant roles in expressing a
society’s social habits at a particular moment’. Nicole, Forest, Daniel, and Brian
dressed in clothing inspired by one time period in particular, and their motivations
stemmed from the styles’ historical meanings. In addition to social habits, we found
that our participants used particular historical styles to show agreement with philosophies of the past. Nicole demonstrated this while explaining the meaning behind her
dress:

They [the Victorians] had a very firm belief that people can better themselves, that they’re
not just victims of our past. I think that a lot of modern philosophies revolve around a
culture of victimhood… Whereas, the Victorians believed in responsibility for one’s
actions, and they believed in actions having consequences and having to deal with
those consequences.

Participants not only indicated their preferences toward past philosophies and ideolo-
gies, they adopted them or developed their own ideologies inspired by those of the past. This seems to be an element of a more complex world view based on admiration
of the past and love of history. For example, throughout her interview, Heather stated
that she looks through what she calls the ‘lenses of history’ at everything in life. The
‘lenses of history’ is a term she used to describe her world view. Hallowell (2002) men-
tioned the link between cultural objects and a culture’s world view using anthropolo-
gist Robert Redfield’s (1952) concept of world view which he applied on a more
individual level. Redfield explained that world view is connected to the self:

‘World view’ attends especially to the way a man, in a particular society, sees himself in
relation to all else…. It is, in short, a man’s idea of the universe. It is that organization
of ideas which answers to a man the questions: Where am I? Among what do I move?
What are my relations to these things? (1952, 30)

Heather described her world view as one in which she perceives everything around
her in relation to the past. This world view is not only evident in her dress, but as she
pointed out, lifestyle practices such as her conversation, hobbies such as historical
dance, choosing to rent historical homes, her historical aesthetic for furniture and
other decorative objects, and even the substances she uses to clean her home. Nicole
explained that Victorian/late nineteenth-century culture not only influences her
dress, but other lifestyle choices, including refusing to carry a cellular phone, riding
a bicycle instead of driving a car, filling her home with Victorian furniture and appli-
cances, and writing and self-publishing Victorian novels.
Many of our participants were motivated by a sense of individual freedom to express themselves through dress (Muggleton 2000). Jane explained that she simply wanted to look distinctive, ‘There’s lots of ways that people invest in their personal grooming. I spend lots more time and lots more money on clothes, just because I want to have a different look’. Erin expressed a disregard for homogeneity in fashion, and this motivated her to incorporate vintage jackets and sweaters into her work and leisure wardrobe, as she elaborated, ‘The whole thing about dressing vintage is, I’m not just going into Dillard’s and buying everything everybody else is buying. I’m wearing something … I picked, because I like it, not because it’s fashionable today’. Muggleton (2000, 78) wrote that some individuals possess an ‘ideology of individualism’ that motivates them to stand out in a homogenous society. Like Erin, Brian demonstrated this ideology as he purposefully strived to ‘appear different’ and differentiate himself from others. Mary also stated that she felt other people were ‘boring’ and were ‘lemmings’ (followers) because of the way they dressed.

‘Inner difference’, is an idea related to this ideology regarding individualistic self-expression which Muggleton (2000, 55) found to be a motivation for members of the punk subculture to dress differently than the mainstream. Feelings of inner difference were alluded to by several participants, including Heather, as she referred to herself as ‘weird’ multiple times throughout her interview, and Nicole as she related she is more comfortable ‘being alien’ and ‘pushing herself to do things out of the ordinary’. Likewise, Karen, who primarily wears historically inspired dress in non-costume-sanctioned, period-related settings, stated, ‘I have always felt different from the average person’.

The motivations of differing ideologies and/or world views, which include Muggleton’s ‘ideology of individualism’ (2000, 78) and feelings of inner difference (2000, 55), are not currently represented on the PPSS model (Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014). We found these motivations among several participants who wear historically inspired dress in both period-related and non-period-related leisure settings and reality settings. Therefore, these motivations appear in Table 1 under fantasy, leisure, and reality settings.

Conclusions

Examination of specific settings in which historically inspired dress was worn on a daily, or near-daily, basis provided further insight into the motivations for wearing historically inspired dress, and revealed that some motivations are limited to selected settings, while others are present in all settings. The examination of the specific leisure settings of non-costume-sanctioned period-related and non-period-related provided further insight into motivations for wearing historically inspired dress within those specific settings. This examination also led to the identification of new motivations that relate to the public self and secret self. One of these, feelings of social permission, a motivation relating to the public self, was limited to selected settings. This served as a public motivation for all participants in both period-related and non-period-related leisure settings even when they were not part of a group. Feelings of social permission also served to distinguish historically inspired dress as leisure dress (and reality dress) from historically inspired dress as fantasy dress by driving the participants to edit or alter their dress to make it appear appropriate for these settings. This suggests that a combination of setting, motivation, and practice transforms historically inspired dress from being a costume (fantasy dress) to a style of leisure (and reality) dress inspired by historic styles. This is an important finding not currently recognized by The PPSS model (Eicher and Miller 1994), which only acknowledges the roles of motivations
and settings in distinguishing between reality, fun/leisure, and fantasy dress. The remainder of the new motivations identified were those that were evident in all settings. These included the desire ‘to assume another persona’ (Miller 1998, 46), achieve an ideal body shape or flattering figure, and express differing ideologies and/or world views.

Once identified, new motivations were classified according to the settings in which they were worn, and this led to the development of the model, *Salient Motivations of Reality, Fun/Leisure, and Fantasy Dress* (Table 1). This model shows the motivations seem to be salient, lending evidence that historically inspired dress expressed salient identity (Sklar and DeLong 2012). Even when motivations were limited to some settings, they were still expressed as aspects of self in more than one setting. By exploring the relationship between fantasy and leisure dress, we found that the motivations classified as those relating to fantasy dress also exist when historically inspired dress is worn as leisure dress. The paper also revealed that motivations for historically inspired dress within non-costume-sanctioned leisure settings may be inseparable from the motivations for wearing historical costume in costume-sanctioned (fantasy) settings. For example, feelings of social permission served as a motivation in period-related leisure settings, non-period-related leisure settings, and reality settings. This lends additional evidence to claims that costume can be worn as both fun/leisure and fantasy dress (Miller, Jasper, and Hill 1993). The model also illustrates that motivations relating to the secret self tended to be more salient. Participants who wore historically inspired dress in costume-sanctioned (fantasy) settings, non-costume-sanctioned period and non-period-related leisure settings, and occupational (reality) settings not only expressed aspects of the self in costume-sanctioned settings, but expressed them on a daily basis in leisure and/or reality settings by wearing edited forms. Ultimately, we argue that the aspects of self discussed here are salient, and some that are expressed through fantasy dress can also be expressed through fun/leisure dress and reality dress.

Miller (1997, 1998; Miller-Spillman 2008; Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014) primarily used quantitative research methods to identify common motivations for dressing in costume. The different methodological approaches used in this study may account for the differences in findings with regard to the identification and classification of motivations relating to reality, fun/leisure, and fantasy dress (Miller 1997, 1998; Miller-Spillman 2008; Miller-Spillman and Lee 2014).

Some motivations for wearing historically inspired dress in leisure settings were difficult to classify as public, private, and secret; therefore, additional research is needed to fully understand or expand the classifications of public, private, and secret aspects of self so that new motivations can be properly identified. Furthermore, historically inspired dress is a form of dress that is difficult to classify, especially when some individuals wear historically inspired dress as reality dress in addition to leisure and fantasy dress. Likewise, settings may be difficult to classify as leisure settings. Such may be the case of an office party among work colleagues that takes place outside work hours and in which employees wear leisure clothing and engage in social behaviours typical of leisure settings. We started and continued the study on which this paper is based under the assumption that historically inspired dress had much in common with historic styles of costume or re-enactment dress. This assumption was problematic in that some participants, mainly the participants who wore it more often in non-period-related settings, did not refer to their leisure dress practices as dressing up in costume. As Nicole explained, ‘There’s actually [a] Victorian society
here, and they dress in what they call Victorian style on special occasions, but they only
do it if they have a specific reason for it, so for them, it’s still a costume’. According to
Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992, 3) costume is defined as clothing for an ‘out-of-
every-day’ social role or activity that include [sic] ‘dress for the theater, folk, or
other festivals, ceremonies, and rituals’. To address this issue, we propose the study
and application of the current version of the PPSS model as presented in Miller-Spill-
man and Lee (2014) to other non-mainstream-styles of dress. Properly classifying his-
torically inspired dress, as well as other types of leisure dress and/or non-mainstream-
styles of dress that allow for multiple forms of self-expression, can continue to provide
insight and add to the body of knowledge regarding dress and self-expression.

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