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Hi everyone and thank you for bearing until the very last day of SCMS to attend this workshop. Seeing so many people in the room I am positive we will engage in a productive discussion about research methodologies. Allow me to briefly share the personal experience that inspired me to put together this workshop. I am currently in the early stages of my PhD at the Centre for Fashion Studies at Stockholm University, and I hold a Master in Cinema Studies, from the same institution. This combined background raises my awareness of the interdisciplinary potential of these two fields combined. During the very first months it was brought to my attention that being fashion studies such a “young” field of studies, several scholars seem deeply invested in canonical discussions regarding the boundaries of fashion studies.

Aside from these scholarly discussions, academic institutions are increasingly merging departments in the main due administrative drive to reduce costs. This is the case of the Media Department at Stockholm University, inaugurated in 2013 out of the merge of the Department of Media Studies, the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, and the Centre for Fashion Studies. As a result of this merge, it is more than ever a priority to discuss if canonical discussions shall bare such rigidity or if research within the humanities and the social sciences, at least, don’t share enough ground to blur such limitations. As countless funding applications pray upon the marvels of interdisciplinarity, and as institutions value scholars with the capacity to approach research with a varied set of tools, it seems to me at least curious that fashion studies intend so hard to detach from the rest of the disciplines. This evidently does not respond to academic requirements but rather to political and economic needs to survive as a standalone field validating an area of knowledge. We can see this development in many other established disciplines, as such was the case of film studies.

Let me draw your attention for a few minutes to the so-called cannon of fashion studies. In 2014, Professor Caroline Evans held a doctoral course for Ph.D. students titled “The Salt and the Sweet.” This series of seminars propelled a discussion of canonical texts within the field. In it, I brought to the attention of participants that when dissecting the content of the *Fashion Theory: A Reader* (Barnard 2007), the curated selection of canonical texts included recognized fashion scholars such as Valerie Steele, Elizabeth Wilson and Joanne Entwistle featured together with Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Roland Barthes, and Umberto Eco among others. Needless to say, Steele, Wilson and Entwistle have not graduated from fashion studies programs due to the understandable recent development of such field within the context of formal University education. Yet, their cornerstone publications have turned them into leading scholars in the subject. Marx, Freud, Barthes, and Eco, among others, remind us of how new fields and disciplines are rooted in more traditional schools of knowledge that serve as a pool of scholarly work for the emerging interest in new subjects of study. Needless to say, semiotics, psychoanalysis, Marxism and linguistics have paved the way for early approaches to film studies based of film texts as the object of study. So, at this point it is worth asking, what do we talk about when we talk about the canon? Is there a canon? In my eyes, the canon is a useful platform for the structuring of a new discipline, to argue for the independence of a field to consolidate as a discipline. But the canon’s own roots in other disciplines bears an intrinsic contradiction that justifies and abolishes disciplinary thresholds at once. This does by no means

imply that fashion study does not have relevant research questions of its own, but rather that the way to approach research in order to find answers to those questions can be approached in similar successful manners as other disciplines have successfully done.

At this stage, it is worth asking then, if academic backgrounds within the humanities are shared in terms of theory, is it the object of study what determines and validates the existence of the field? Perhaps, but this will limit the field in a way that will also make it unsustainable, both in scholarly terms and in practical terms in the contemporary environment of merging departments. If fashion studies are going to set its bases merely on the study of material culture focusing on the study of garments, the same delimitation used to create it will eventually vanish it. It is in this scenario that film studies provide a useful framework to be applied in other academic contexts.

The historical turn of film studies moved focus away from film texts as the focus of the discipline to concentrate on satellite texts, its epiphenomena, that inform the object of study (Klinger 1989; Klinger 1997). Scholars such as Barbara Klinger, David Bordwell (2005), Kristin Thompson (2004), Janet Staiger (2004), Robert Sklar (2004), Sumiko Higashi (2004) Charles Musser (2004), Donald Crafton (2004), Jan Olsson (2004; 2008), Jane Gaines (2004) Douglas Gomery (2004), Richard Abel (2004), among others have made an impact—both through theoretical and historical contributions—to the advancement of the discipline in this direction. This approach, popularly known as film studies without film, has produced some of the most groundbreaking pieces of scholarly work informing the discipline as well as contributing to other areas of study due to the broad dimension of topics covered by these contributions ranging from cultural studies to economic history. I propose to take this approach to film studies for the study of fashion, calling for a “*new fashion history*” movement that follows the historical turn done by film scholars. I am by no means implying that fashion scholars have not engaged in historical work. What I argue is that, if finding the canon for fashion studies rests on denying the interdisciplinary nature of the field, there is a contradiction with the pool of scholarship produced by scholars in neighboring disciplines that contributes, not least, to the formation of the field. Therefore, the revisionist eye of film’s historical turn provides an interesting methodological framework for the study of fashion embracing its interdisciplinary nature and potentials.

The increasing interest in the study of fashion that has opened up to the emergence of Fashion Studies as an independent field has now launched programs in several universities around the globe. However, the study of fashion should not be regarded as a new phenomenon. For decades, scholars from varied disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences have immersed themselves in the study of fashion, particularly in relation to film and media. From a historical standpoint, the film industry played a key role in the promotion and representation of fashion since the early days of cinema. Likewise, its mediated character through newsreels, television, newspapers, magazines, photography and even paintings has facilitated the study of costume and dress history. Film scholars like Jane Gaines (1990), Stella Bruzzi (1997), and Pamela Church Gibson (2012)—among others—have vastly contributed to the interdisciplinary study of these intersections. Furthermore, in order to explore the specificities of these areas, Church Gibson launched the journal *Fashion Film and Consumption*, though the publishing house Intellect Books in 2011.

In this setting, a pertinent and necessary topic to explore is the demand for interdisciplinary approaches, both from the side of fashion scholars with a purist point of view, and from their counterparts in film and media more likely to envelop fashion in visual culture as a whole. As discussions regarding delimitations and canons take place behind closed doors in fashion programs, the need to open up such debate to film and media scholars is vital for the

future of a field that has seen a great part of its development through these neighboring disciplines.

In this workshop, I intend for us to explore the study of film, media and fashion in coexistence with the emergence of Fashion Studies as an independent field, focusing on questions of methodology, theory and practice through the experience of different film and media scholars working with fashion and film. I hope this brief presentation serves as a starting point for discussion, framing the debate by addressing the following questions:

- What are the challenges and advantages of film and media scholars engaging in fashion research?
- Is Fashion Studies an exclusive realm for fashion scholars?
- Is there one singular way to study and teach fashion independently from its neighboring disciplines?
- What can different approaches used in Film and Media Studies contribute to the study of fashion?
- To what extent can Fashion Studies exist as a totally independent field, avoiding connections with Film and Media?

Today with me are Dr. Tamar Jeffers McDonald, from Kent University, and Jenny Romero, Head of Special Collections at the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. Tamar has conducted extensive research in costume design, which—at least in my perspective—could perfectly fit within the framework of fashion studies. She is also an expert in the use of Film Fan Magazines as a source for research. Fan Magazines have been one of the most popular forms of printed press targeting female audiences in the first half of the 20th Century and have been overlooked by fashion scholars. Jenny will present us with a varied set of sources hosted at the Margaret Herrick Library, and will discuss the potentials for using these when conducting fashion-related research.

On this note, Tamar and Jenny will now share their presentations to you, and we will open the floor for discussion after that...

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