

# Viral Fashion: Clothing in the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and the COVID-19 Pandemic

BY BRIGID TROTT & ROBIN CHANTREE

VOLUME 5  
ISSUE 1  
ARTICLE 3

## Keywords

Pandemic fashion  
COVID-19  
Medical mask  
1918 influenza  
Flu veil  
Heliotherapy

**MLA** • Chantree, Robin, and Brigid Trott. "Viral Fashion: Clothing in the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Fashion Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2024, pp. 1-46, <https://www.fashionstudies.ca/viral-fashion/>, <https://doi.org/10.38055/FS050103>.

**Abstract** • During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed society and culture rapidly adapt and change in order to survive. In making sense of the new mysterious and deadly coronavirus, there has been renewed interest in historically similar viral pandemics through which humans have suffered. As such, the 1918 influenza pandemic, commonly known by its misnomer, the "Spanish Flu," is a topic of interest. However, there is limited research examining the influenza pandemic through a fashion studies lens. In this paper, we analyse fashion discourse in Canada during and after the 1918 influenza pandemic. First, we look at the way personal protective equipment such as medical masks and veils were discussed in newspapers nationwide, as well as in fashion magazines and journals during the influenza pandemic. We then propose that a focus on health and wellbeing during the influenza pandemic contributed to the suntanning fashion trend in the 1920s. Finally, we examine contemporary fashion discourse surrounding clothing and COVID-19 as well as post-COVID fashion trend predictions. Our research illustrates how dress during and after the influenza pandemic, as well as during the COVID-19 pandemic, embodies contemporary narratives, beliefs, and ideas of illness and health.

**Brigid Trott (she/her)** is a writer and researcher living in Ottawa, Ontario on the traditional unceded territory of the Anishnaabeg People. **Robin J. Chantree (they/them)** is an interdisciplinary creative researcher currently residing in Tkaranto/Toronto but originally from north-eastern British Columbia in Treaty 8 territory, the land of the Dane-Zaa people.

**EPIDEMIC  
INFLUENZA  
(SPANISH)**

**This Disease is Highly Communicable.  
It May Develop into a Severe Pneumonia.**

There is no medicine which will prevent it.  
Keep away from public meetings, theatres and other places where crowds  
are assembled.

Keep the mouth and nose covered while coughing or sneezing.  
When a member of the household becomes ill, place him in a room by him-  
self. The room should be warm, but well ventilated.

The attendant should put on a mask before entering the room of those ill  
with the disease.

## TO MAKE A MASK

Take a piece of material (cambric) 2 x 18 inches.  
Fold it in three 6 x 6 inches. Then fold this to make it  
4 x 6 inches. The ends about 10 inches long of each  
corner. Sew over mouth and nose to shape in  
the pattern.



ISSUED BY THE PROVINCIAL BOARD OF HEALTH



## INTRODUCTION

There is renewed interest in the influenza pandemic of 1918–1920 as we look to the past in an attempt to make sense of the COVID-19 pandemic that has defined the present. The way we work, the way we shop, the way we communicate, and the way we dress have all been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, so it is worthwhile to wonder how Canadian lives were affected by the influenza pandemic over one hundred years ago.

**In this paper, we analyse the discourse surrounding clothing during the influenza pandemic in order to gain a better understanding of the narratives, beliefs, and ideas that dress embodied in society at the time.**

We look at the way personal protective equipment like masks and veils are discussed in newspapers from across the country as well as in fashion magazines and journals. We then propose that a focus on health and wellbeing during the influenza pandemic led to the suntanning fashion trend in the 1920s. We finally compare our analysis of the influenza pandemic to contemporary fashion discourse regarding clothing and COVID-19.

Our research is a discursive analysis grounded in Michel Foucault's discourse theory. According to Foucault, discourse is formed by linguistic and visual signs that bring ideas into existence, thus creating and organizing knowledge in cultural systems.<sup>1</sup> Multiple "series" of unconscious and conscious ideas, or discourses, that have been formulated in a specific context will overlap, relate, and inform each other to provide a framework of meaning.<sup>2</sup> In our research, we acknowledge there is a plurality of health ideologies that converge onto the bodies of the populace through material objects and fashion trends. We therefore specifically analyse fashion discourse as outlined by Agnès Rocamora. Rocamora utilizes Pierre Bourdieu alongside Foucault to propose that fashion discourse constitutes a form of symbolic production, wherein the cultural value of fashion objects is constructed by various entities both within and without the field of fashion.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: The Discourse on Language*, translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith & Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 107; Jane Tynan, "Michel Foucault: Fashioning the Body Politic," in *Thinking Through Fashion: A Guide to Key Theorists*, edited by Agnès Rocamora & Anneke Smelik (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 186.

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and Discourse*, 10.; Tynan, 188.

<sup>3</sup> Agnès Rocamora, "Fashion Media Discourse," in *Fashioning the City: Paris, Fashion and the Media* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 55.



Bourdieu conceptualises a cultural field like fashion as a *field of positions* composed not only of the actors and signs that make up a particular discourse and determine the range of positions that can be taken, but also of the conditions that produce the differentials in social positioning between actors.<sup>4</sup> Using Bourdieu, Rocamora highlights that fashion is not constrained to what produces fashion, but rather that fashion “overflows” the fields that these entities comprise.<sup>5</sup> So, fashion is not solely understood through a single field like fashion media; rather, it is understood through multiple fields in which there are constant struggles for position that are contextualised and constructed within a larger cultural discourse.<sup>6</sup> We argue that with the advent of an epidemic the field of public health overflows into and informs fashion discourse, and consequently highlights the entanglement of fashion objects with societal ideas of wellness, safety, and community.

Notably, throughout our analysis we consider how fashion objects make the body a locus for theories of health and how fashion discourse emphasises the individual’s role in managing one’s own health. Our reflection on this matter is further influenced by Foucault, as we take into consideration his theory of post-industrialization docile bodies, or bodies “that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” in order to increase efficiency and utility, and to consolidate control and power.<sup>7</sup> Discourse, according to Foucault, contributes to the formation of docile bodies because it can enhance and perpetuate established systems of power.<sup>8</sup> Fashion is an everyday socialised and embodied practice; consequently, fashion discourse can present as a surveilling technique that maintains power by disciplining the individual body to fit into collective groups.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, following Foucault such technologies of power that aim to “determine the conduct of individuals” interact with technologies of the self that prompt individuals to act upon themselves.<sup>10</sup> The subject, or individual, is struggling against becoming objectified by technologies of power and against becoming individualised.<sup>11</sup> Our analysis of discourse surrounding the 1918 influenza pandemic and the COVID-19 pandemic is an analysis of struggles that centre around the fashioned body: struggles within and between discursive fields, and power struggles between state and individual.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production, Or: The Economic World Reversed,” *Poetics* 12, no. 4-5 (1983), doi: 10.1016/0304-422X(83)90012-8.

<sup>5</sup> Rocamora, 58.

<sup>6</sup> Rocamora, 55.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, Inc., 1995), 136-138.

<sup>8</sup> Tynan, 190.

<sup>9</sup> Tynan, 189, 195.

<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” *Lectures at University of Vermont*, October 1982, in University of Massachusetts Press (1988), 16-49, <https://foucault.info/documents/foucault.technologiesOfSelf.en/>.

<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1982), 781, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343197>.

# Fashion emerges as a space in which public and personal health is managed. The discourses we analyse maintain the authority of modern medicine while stressing individual bodily disciplines that foster communal wellbeing.

Canada presents as an interesting case study in understanding fashion discourse, as it maintains its status as part of the global north yet lacks strong social positioning within global fashion as a discursive field. The Canadian struggle to support a domestic fashion industry can be attributed to several factors: a decline of domestic manufacturing, an absence of Canadian identity in fashion, a lack of industry and governmental organization that allows domestic brands to compete globally, and a lack of governmental grants to support fashion culture.<sup>12</sup> As a result, Canadians rely on importing their conception of fashion and their clothing from global brands. As a rich nation that remains peripheral, Canada is a unique microcosm that leans on a global fashion discourse to understand itself domestically. Foucault proposes that power struggles evolve around the question: “Who are we?”<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, our discourse analysis of fashion amidst two pandemics explores the formation of Canadian identity during a crisis.

## THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC IN CANADA

The influenza pandemic of 1918–1920 was originally referred to as an epidemic due to ignorance over its global impact. In the nineteenth century epidemics were frequent, as diseases like tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid, and smallpox spread; between 1800 and 1900 there were at least six different influenza epidemics around the world.<sup>14</sup> While these outbreaks of the flu occurred “in excess of [their] expected rate” and were therefore epidemic, the influenza virus that appeared in 1918 was a different beast that killed between 20 and 100 million people worldwide.<sup>15</sup> The strain of influenza was unlike any seen before; it had a high mortality rate and a very high morbidity rate and abnormally affected adults instead of mainly children and the elderly.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Taylor Brydges & Rhiannon Pugh, “An ‘Orphan’ Creative Industry: Exploring the Institutional Factors Constraining the Canadian Fashion Industry,” *Growth and Change* 48, no. 4 (2017): 959, doi: 10.1111/grow.12203.

<sup>13</sup> Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” 781.

<sup>14</sup> Janice P. Dickin McGinnis, “The Impact of Epidemic Influenza: Canada, 1918-1919,” *Historical Papers* 12, no. 1 (1977): 124, doi: 10.7202/030824ar.

<sup>15</sup> Janice Dickin, Patricia G. Bailey, & Erin James-Abra, “1918 Spanish Flu in Canada,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2020, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/1918-spanish-flu-in-canada>; Susan Goldberg, “Killer Flu,” *Canada's History*, 2018, <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/arts-culture-society/killer-flu>.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Humphries, *The Last Plague: Spanish Influenza and the Politics of Public Health in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 150.

Down to its name, the influenza pandemic is intimately intertwined with its social and historical context. To this day it is largely known as the ‘Spanish’ flu, even though it did not originate in Spain. Media censorship in countries fighting the First World War meant that when newspapers in Spain, a neutral nation, first reported on the flu, the misleading moniker stuck.<sup>17</sup> World War I affected not only the name of the pandemic, but also the virus’ impact. In part, the 1918 influenza virus spread widely because of the large-scale movement of soldiers around the globe. Also, in many countries including Canada the war effort was prioritised; doctors and nurses were deployed as army medical staff, leaving a shortage of healthcare providers and equipment on the home front.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, due to the state of medicine in 1918, treatment and prevention of the influenza virus was inconsistent. There were many advancements made in the medical field at the end of the nineteenth through to the beginning of the twentieth century that helped treat the flu,<sup>19</sup> but none that helped scientists understand the illness and create an appropriate vaccine.<sup>20</sup> For instance, a microscope that was strong enough to identify the viral organism was not invented until 1933.<sup>21</sup> The germ theory of disease, however, was widely accepted by 1918. The acknowledgement that disease spread through microorganisms, as well as longer-held medicinal beliefs, helped manage the influenza pandemic.<sup>22</sup> Quarantine, isolation, masks, social distancing, ventilation, disinfection, and personal hygiene were promoted to contain influenza, but so too were purgatives, homemade remedies, and diets. The unknown illness required action, so doctors and health officials used what they had access to while they learned what could effectively contain the deadly flu in the midst of an all-consuming world war.

The influenza pandemic in Canada was shaped by global, national, and local contexts. The first wave of influenza arrived in eastern Canada in March 1918 via soldiers returning from the front and peaked in May of that year.<sup>23</sup> This first wave mostly affected the eastern part of the country as soldiers arrived in Halifax, Québec, and Montréal ports.<sup>24</sup> The second and deadliest wave, from September 1918 to December 1918, spread westward and impacted the whole country.<sup>25</sup> There were subsequent waves of influenza in Canada during the springs of 1919 and 1920, but they were nowhere near as fatal as the fall of 1918.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Dickin, Bailey & James-Abra.

<sup>18</sup> Dickin, 129.

<sup>19</sup> Dickin et al.

<sup>20</sup> Nancy Tomes, ““Destroyer and Teacher”: Managing the Masses During the 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic,” *Public Health Reports* 125, Supplement 3: The 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic in the United States, (2010): 50, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41435299>.

<sup>21</sup> Dickin, 127; Andrew Belyea, “The Plague Sweeps Canada, Canada’s Spanish Influenza Epidemic: A Story of Heartache and Progress,” *Defining Moments Canada*, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://definingmomentscanada.ca/1918-influenza-pandemic/history/the-plague-sweeps-canada/>.

<sup>22</sup> Tomes, 50.

<sup>23</sup> Kandace Bogaert & Steve Marti, “Soldiers Struck Down: The Flu Hits the CEF in 1918,” *Defining Moments Canada*, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://definingmomentscanada.ca/1918-influenza-pandemic/history/soldiers-struck-down/>.

<sup>24</sup> Humphries, 141.

<sup>25</sup> Humphries, 170-171.

<sup>26</sup> Parks Canada, “The Spanish Flu in Canada (1918-1920) National Historic Event,” *Government of Canada*, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/res/information-backgrounder/espagnole-spanish>.



Canada was a nascent nation in 1918, and its response to the influenza pandemic contributed to the formation of the country's bureaucracy. Since there was no federal health authority, the response during the second wave varied from province to province and from city to city. Cities in Ontario like Kingston closed theatres, churches and schools on October 16th, 1918.<sup>27</sup> Regina similarly shutdown churches and schools on October 17th, and, like many places, called upon teachers to volunteer as nurses.<sup>28</sup> Out of desperation, Boy Scouts in Regina canvassed the city to record the effect of influenza on the population.<sup>29</sup> Vancouver's mayor and the city's health official argued about the efficacy of shutting down.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, Alberta enforced mask-wearing laws that were followed in Calgary, but initially ignored in Edmonton (Figure 1).<sup>31</sup> In Winnipeg, working-class families relied on mutual aid and unions to cover mounting funeral costs,<sup>32</sup> and middle-class female volunteers organized themselves to care for poor and immigrant communities who suffered from influenza to a greater degree.<sup>33</sup> Indigenous communities also had higher relative mortality rates during the influenza pandemic due to poor living conditions, remote locations, and a lack of care from the government, since healthcare resources were sent to white Canadians first.<sup>34</sup> Around the country, prevention and treatment was left to locals and therefore differed greatly. Unfortunately, ineffective communication and coordination between authorities helped the virus spread quickly.<sup>35</sup> The total number of Canadian deaths as a result of the influenza pandemic ranged from 30,000 to 50,000, and a quarter of the population was infected.<sup>36</sup> The so-called "Spanish Flu" and our response to it as Canadians taught the country ways to manage a health crisis. As a result of the uncoordinated response to the influenza pandemic, though influenced by progress in the medical field as well, the federal government established a Department of Health in 1919.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Belyea.

<sup>28</sup> Kenton de Jong, "Regina's Darkest Days: The Spanish Influenza," *Defining Moments Canada*, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://definingmomentscanada.ca/1918-influenza-pandemic/history/reginas-darkest-days/>.

<sup>29</sup> de Jong.

<sup>30</sup> Margaret Andrews, "Epidemic and Public Health: Influenza in Vancouver, 1918-1919", *BC Studies*, " *BC Studies* 34, (1997): 30, doi: 10.14288/bcs.v0i34.924.

<sup>31</sup> Mark Minenko, "A Tale of Two Cities: 'Spanish Flu' Mask Laws in Alberta, Canada," *King's Law Journal* 32, no. 1, (2021): 168-177, doi: 10.1080/09615768.2021.1891615.

<sup>32</sup> Eslytt Jones, "Politicizing the Labouring Body: Working Families, Death, and Burial in Winnipeg's Influenza Epidemic, 1918-1919," *Labor* 3, no. 3, (2006): 62-64, doi: 10.1215/15476715-2006-005.

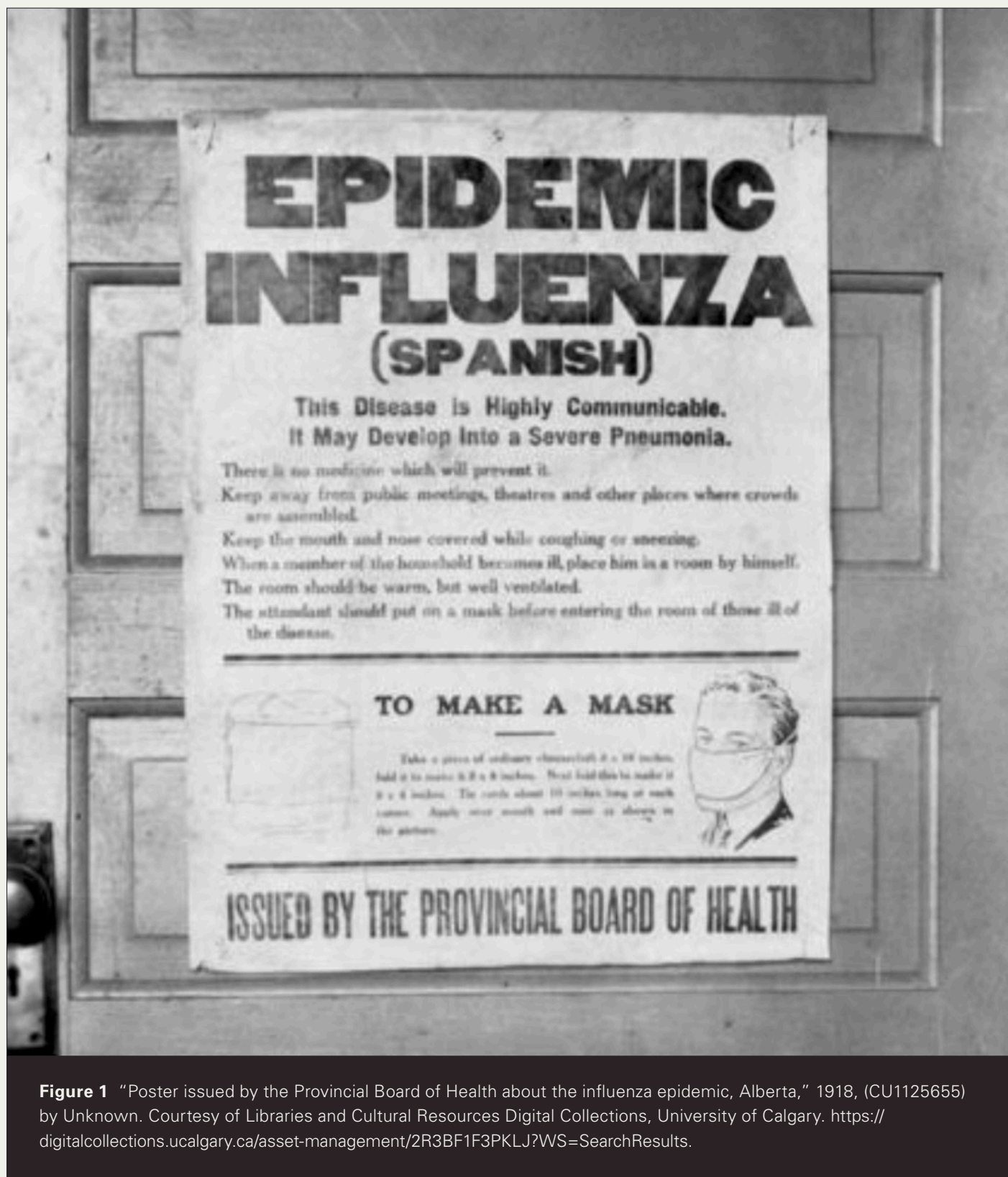
<sup>33</sup> Eslytt W. Jones, "Contact Across a Diseased Boundary: Urban Space and Social Interaction During Winnipeg's Influenza Epidemic," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 13, no. 1 (2002): 119-139, doi:10.7202/031156ar.

<sup>34</sup> Ann D. Herring, "'There Were Young People and Old People and Babies Dying Every Week': The 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic at Norway House," *Ethnohistory* 41, no. 1, (1993): 73-105, doi: 10.2307/3536979; Mary-Ellen Kelm, "British Columbia First Nations and the Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19," *BC Studies*, no. 122 (1999): 25, 45, doi: 10.14288/bcs.v0i122.1498; Mary-Ellen Kelm, "First Peoples Struggling to Survive What Kind of Government is This?: Influenza, First Nations, and Federal Government Policy," *Defining Moments Canada*, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://definingmomentscanada.ca/1918-influenza-pandemic/history/first-peoples-struggling-to-survive/>.

<sup>35</sup> Humphries, 173.

<sup>36</sup> Belyea; Parks Canada.

<sup>37</sup> Parks Canada.



**Figure 1** "Poster issued by the Provincial Board of Health about the influenza epidemic, Alberta," 1918, (CU1125655) by Unknown. Courtesy of Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collections, University of Calgary. <https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R3BF1F3PKLJ?WS=SearchResults>.

## FASHION AND INFLUENZA: MASKING, MANDATES, AND THE FLU VEIL

### MASKING AND MANDATES

Mask mandates were one response to the second wave of influenza that took place in the fall of 1918, however the response was not immediate. Initially, public health officials relied on public health education, with recommendations to manage influenza including: to self-quarantine if one gets sick, to avoid crowds, to disinfect oral and nasal passages with antiseptics, to sneeze and cough into handkerchiefs, and to dispose of those contaminated textiles safely, often through burning.<sup>38</sup> It was also recommended with less frequency to maintain one's general health by keeping one's feet and clothing dry, exposing oneself to the fresh air and sunshine, and trying not to get "scared."<sup>39</sup> Discussion of masking is rare and limited to recommendations for those tending to the sick.<sup>40</sup> However, as the United States learned more about how to handle the influenza epidemic, Canadians were able to observe their neighbours to the south and adopt the health protocols that Americans found to be effective.<sup>41</sup> Masking is one later adoption that would eventually carry over to most provinces as health officials disseminated what they learned about influenza.<sup>42</sup>

### ALBERTA

The consistency with which the Canadian public adopted medical masking during the influenza pandemic varied. While masking was recommended by health officials across Canada, Alberta was especially stringent and had general mask mandates passed during their second wave between October and December 1918 (Figure 2). Despite passing this legislation at a provincial level, enforcement depended heavily on local authorities, as evidenced by Calgary's and Edmonton's respective adoption and implementation of the mask mandates.<sup>43</sup> In Mark Minenko's research of Alberta's masking policies he critiques fellow historian Mark Humphries' assertion that there was little enforcement of masking policies across Alberta in general and that masking was an individual decision; he argues Calgary and Edmonton had varied health outcomes due to the differing authorities' compliance with the provincial mask mandate.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> "Influenza May be Traveling West," *Edmonton Journal*, October 3, 1918. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-3-1918-page-11-14/docview/2395782743/se-2>.

<sup>39</sup> "Influenza Warning," *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 2, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-2-1918-page-10-14/docview/2252550629/se-2>; "How to Avoid the Spanish Flu," *Edmonton Journal*, October 7, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-7-1918-page-6-14/docview/2395837817/se-2>.

<sup>41</sup> "11 More Deaths from Spanish Flu," *Gazette*, October 3, 1918; "Drastic Regulations to Combat Influenza," *Toronto Star*, October 8, 1918.

<sup>42</sup> "City Schools Close to Fight the 'Flu,'" *Toronto Star*, October 15, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/hnptorontostar/docview/1432377107/B98B0A4C89D540B2PQ/2?accountid=14771>. Some other examples include: "Health Authorities on the Spanish Flu," *Toronto Star*, October 5, 1918, 23; "How to Avoid the Spanish Flu;" "11 More Deaths from Spanish Flu," *Gazette*, October 3, 1918, 11, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-3-1918-page-4-16/docview/2150824392/se-2>.

<sup>43</sup> Minenko, 169.

<sup>44</sup> Minenko, 169.





**Figure 2** "Telephone operators wearing masks, High River, Alberta," [ca. 1918–1919], (CU194714) by Unknown. Courtesy of Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collections, University of Calgary. <https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R3BF1ODLXT1?WS=SearchResults>.

Compared to Calgary, Edmonton struggled with enforcing the mask mandate because there was not as much support for it amongst public health officials, and the city solicitor thought a prosecution would not survive a court challenge.<sup>45</sup> As such, Albertans were subjected on two fronts; firstly, through state authority, and secondly, through the wider health discourse that bled into fashion advertisements. This dual-tiered formation of subjecthood can be seen when we contrast the response between Edmonton and Calgary.

<sup>45</sup> Minenko, 174.

## “A SPLENDID PROTECTION”

Between October 2nd and 26th, Alberta came to grips with influenza, beginning with the *Calgary Herald* announcing that fifteen soldiers had arrived with the flu,<sup>46</sup> something the *Edmonton Journal* treated as a rumour.<sup>47</sup> This outbreak led to the closure of public spaces and gatherings,<sup>48</sup> and subsequently the mandating of mask usage on trains and passenger cars.<sup>49</sup> Before any mask mandate was introduced, the provincial board of health suggested that gauze masks should be worn by anyone who had contact with the disease, but it did not yet suggest masking in public settings.<sup>50</sup> Between the 15th and 24th of October, masking started to be promoted as a general health measure for the public,<sup>51</sup> and health officials advertised it as a “splendid protection” that could stomp out the influenza epidemic in five days.<sup>52</sup> After this point we begin to see advertisements for masks to purchase and directions for making masks oneself.<sup>53</sup> Minenko contends that the mask mandate itself was not passed until the 26th — and certainly that is true — but newspapers substantially muddy this date. The *Edmonton Journal* announced the impending mandate and on the 21st,<sup>54</sup> and by the 24th both they and the *Calgary Daily Herald* warned people that the mandate would likely go into effect on Friday morning, the 25th.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>46</sup> “Fifteen Spanish Influenza Cases Come to Calgary,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 2, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-2-1918-page-10-14/docview/2252550629/se-2>.

<sup>47</sup> “Provincial Board of Health Fights Spanish Influenza,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 3, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-3-1918-page-1-14/docview/2395783376/se-2>.

<sup>48</sup> “City Theatres, Dance Halls, Libraries and Public Rooms Closed,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 18, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-18-1918-page-1-26/docview/2252483899/se-2>; “All Public Places in Edmonton Closed,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 18, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-18-1918-page-5-26/docview/2252484466/se-2>.

<sup>49</sup> “Influenza Mask Order Issued for Street Cars, Too;” *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 22, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-22-1918-page-16/docview/2252615385/se-2>; “Passengers on Trains to Wear Influenza Mask,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 21, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-21-1918-page-1-12/docview/2252517138/se-2>.

<sup>50</sup> “Flu is Now Really in Alberta Board of Health Warns Public.” *Edmonton Journal*, October 14, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-12-1918-page-1-34/docview/2395842511/se-2>; “Influenza Still Threatens to be Widespread Here,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 15, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-15-1918-page-9-16/docview/2252596560/se-2>.

<sup>51</sup> “City Schools Close to Fight the ‘Flu’;” “Women Wear Veils to Prevent the Flu,” *Toronto Star*, October 18, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/hnptorontostar/docview/1432377049/pageviewPDF/A60D8C739AD40DDPQ/1?accountid=14771>; “Gauze Veil Would Stomp Out Epidemic,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 22, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-22-1918-page-12-14/docview/2395926349/se-2>.

<sup>52</sup> “Edmonton’s Death Roll From Spanish Influenza Shows Steady Increase,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 24, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-24-1918-page-1-16/docview/2395910237/se-2>.

<sup>53</sup> “Influenza, Prevention and Treatment Dealt with for the Layman,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 19, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-19-1918-page-32/docview/2395905719/se-2>.

<sup>54</sup> “Citizens on Street Cars Must Wear Gauze Masks Orders Board of Health,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 21, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-21-1918-page-1-12/docview/2395845439/se-2>.

<sup>55</sup> “Four Deaths Recorded in Edmonton as Result of Influenza Epidemic,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 24, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-24-1918-page-6-16/docview/2395911297/se-2>; “22 New Cases of Spanish Flu are Reported Today,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 24, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-24-1918-page-11-14/docview/2252593210/se-2>.



In Calgary, there was an especially aggressive crackdown on non-compliance to the mask mandate. Streetcar operators were instructed to deny entrance to riders without masks and were given a supply of masks to sell to anyone who was maskless.<sup>56</sup> The *Calgary Herald* quickly followed-up the various mandatory masking announcements with a reification of police enforcement of mandates on the 28th.<sup>57</sup> As Minenko highlights, enforcement intensified in November, resulting in 149 prosecutions (16 withdrawn) brought before the courts between November 3rd and 16th.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, Edmonton did not enforce masking until the Municipal Affairs Minister from the provincial government stepped in on November 9th.<sup>59</sup>

The punitive enforcement of masking was fundamental to managing the health of the Albertan populace.

Public bodies were treated as docile ones that could be influenced by provincial regulation to embody public space in an altered capacity in order to benefit the function of society at large. However, the public did not act as a submissive entity following the ordinances presented to them; instead, they actively formulated their own understanding of what behaviour would be effective to end the pandemic based on the recommendations of health authorities.

<sup>56</sup> "22 New Cases of Spanish Flu are Reported Today."

<sup>57</sup> "Police to Enforce Influenza Mask Rule," *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 28, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-28-1918-page-1-14/docview/2252567529/se-2>.

<sup>58</sup> Minenko, 173.

<sup>59</sup> Minenko, 174; "Prosecutions Will Be Commenced in City," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 9, 1918, <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/EDB/1918/11/09/1/Ar00107.html>.

As Christos Lynteris highlights, masks are not only a utilitarian tool for managing health but also function as objects that reflect the individual as a modern, hygienic subject.<sup>60</sup> This belief pervaded several articles from Edmontonians that suggested that masking was something they believed to be effective even before the enforcement of the ordinances. “Get Busy With the Masks,” originally published in Toronto but positioned as relevant to Edmonton, was emphatic that masking would end the pandemic.<sup>61</sup> As well, the numerous articles documenting the resistance to, or at least the lackadaisical adoption of, masking amongst the populace do not suggest that people were not masking, but that they were not masking *enough*.<sup>62</sup> Articles like “Mask Order Not Observed,” “Many Citizens are Not Obeying Law,” and “The Flu Mask Order,” lambast those who were not wearing masks, suggesting they were not behaving in accordance with modern medicine. Interestingly, these articles appeared contemporaneously to the local board of health in Edmonton publicising their lack of support for general masking.<sup>63</sup> In contrast to Edmonton’s articles pushing people to mask more, Calgary began to feature pieces that bemoaned masking as an ineffective or impractical practice. Early into the announcement of mandatory masking, the *Calgary Herald* ran a comic poking fun at the impracticalities of masking. While it is not vitriolic in its tone, it does present masking as an inconvenience, impeding people’s ability to communicate and be recognized. Even before the bulk of charges were laid against unmasked people, there was “An Individual” in Calgary who complained masking was “compelling every one to commit suicide.”<sup>64</sup> While this contrarian sentiment appears to be in the minority within news publications, it is distinctly in opposition to the notion of being forced to mask. As such, it does not appear as frequently within Edmonton’s news publications.

<sup>60</sup> Christos Lynteris, “Plague Masks: The Visual Emergence of Anti-Epidemic Personal Protection Equipment,” *Medical Anthropology* 37, no. 9 (2018): 442-457, doi: 10.1080/01459740.2017.1423072

<sup>61</sup> “Get Busy With the Masks,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 25, 1918, <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/EDB/1918/10/25/2/Ar00204.html>.

<sup>62</sup> “The Influenza Epidemic,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 29, 1918, <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/EDB/1918/10/29/7/Ar00703.html>; “Mask Order Not Observed,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 5, 1918, <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/EDB/1918/11/05/3/Ar00325.html>; “The Flu Mask Order,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 11, 1918, <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/EDB/1918/11/11/9/Ar00907.html>; “Many Citizens are Not Obeying Law,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, November 4, 1918 pg.13. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-4-1918-page-13-14/docview/2252500370/se-2>.

<sup>63</sup> “Provincial Health Board Orders Regulations to be Observed by the Public,” *Edmonton Journal*, November 9, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-9-1918-page-3-28/docview/2395905027/se-2>.

<sup>64</sup> An Individual, “Really Alarmed At Those Masks,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, November 1, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-1-1918-page-6-22/docview/2252582248/se-2>.



## ADVERTISING INFLUENZA

Official ordinances were used in Alberta to dictate how civilians should comport themselves in public in response to the influenza virus. We see individuals respond to the same ordinances in ways that reassert their individual selfhood. Within Alberta, clothing marketing was another voice that mirrored existent discourse around health insofar that the health benefits of certain clothing were emphasized. Retailers whose product was directly related to health certainly reacted to the virus first.<sup>65</sup> Fashion retailers were slightly slower on the uptake; even retailers that sold both fashion and health goods were slower to adopt language around health in marketing their fashion goods. Department stores, like HBC (The Hudson's Bay Company), that sold both forms of product only used the Spanish flu to sell disinfectants and pharmaceuticals, and did so at the same speed as dedicated pharmacists.<sup>66</sup> It was not until mask mandates were being discussed publicly that the HBC began to advertise their goods for making masks as well as offer lessons on how to do so; however they do not appear to have invoked the influenza to sell garments in Alberta at all.<sup>67</sup>

## Fashion specific retailers began to use wellness as a selling point later in October 1918.

Martin's Store led the trend relatively softly on the 19th by way of "A reminder" for consumers to "protect [their] good health" with one of their overcoats.<sup>68</sup> One would expect a consumer to be interested in a warm coat amidst a Canadian winter, however health orders at this time were regularly recommending one keep oneself warm and dry to prevent catching influenza specifically. This recommendation was concurrent to Edmonton and Calgary announcing the closing of their public spaces. At this point Calgary was managing an outbreak,<sup>69</sup> but Edmonton's cases were yet to be considered severe.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> For instance, as early as October 7, 1918, there were particularly aggressive advertisements for health insurance: The Mutual Life of New York, "Spanish Flu May Visit You," Edmonton Journal, October 7, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-7-1918-page-4-14/docview/2395837821/se-2>.

<sup>66</sup> Hudson's Bay, "Now, Altogether For A Good Old Fashioned Day," Calgary Daily Herald, October 9, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-9-1918-page-18/docview/2252483995/se-2>; Hudson's Bay, "Hudson's Bay Store Properly Disinfected," Calgary Daily Herald, October 19, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-19-1918-page-13-22/docview/2252567716/se-2>.

<sup>67</sup> Hudson's Bay Company, "Half Holiday Specials at the Bay," Calgary Daily Herald, October 22, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-22-1918-page-16/docview/2252615385/se-2>.

<sup>68</sup> Martin's Store, "A Reminder," Edmonton Journal, October 19, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-19-1918-page-12-32/docview/2395903458/se-2>.

<sup>69</sup> "City Theatres, Dance Halls, Libraries and Public Rooms Closed."

<sup>70</sup> "Ten Cases of Influenza, None Serious, Reported to the Health Officer," Edmonton Journal, October 18, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-18-1918-page-1/docview/2395762825/se-2>.

Within two days a local menswear retailer, The Boston Clothing, Shoe and Hat Store, ran their advertisement “How to Prevent the Spanish Flu,” wherein their overcoats were sold as a flu preventative alongside regular disinfection with listerine and staying outside.<sup>71</sup> The Boston Clothing, Shoe and Hat Store regularly used health as a selling point until December 3rd, 1918,<sup>72</sup> when they celebrated “assured peace and the ‘flu about flown,’” marking a distinct post-war shift where a return to dressing up was on the horizon.<sup>73</sup> While The Boston Clothing, Shoe and Hat Store continued to flout the health benefits of dressing warm on occasion, once the new year arrived the need to do so was lessened substantially.<sup>74</sup>

## THE FLU VEIL

Advertising fashion goods as having health benefits was not specific to Alberta. Across Canada there were retailers who adopted the language of health and wellness in response to widespread illness. In Vancouver, medical masks soaked in disinfectant were sold by a local tailor,<sup>75</sup> a Regina furrier advertised the health benefits of staying warm,<sup>76</sup> and “warm and dry” shoes were in no short supply.<sup>77</sup> We repeatedly see fashion items rebranded to emphasise how their utility corresponded to the common health knowledge of the day. While some tailors did take on mask-making as part of their business, these masks were not considered “fashionable” or part of self-fashioning, rather they were solely medical devices. The flu veil, however, serves as an intermediary between the worlds of fashion and health.

<sup>71</sup> The Boston Clothing, Hat and Shoe Store, “How to Prevent the Spanish Flu,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 21, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-21-1918-page-2-12/docview/2395840214/se-2>.

<sup>72</sup> Some examples include: Boston Clothing, Hat and Shoe Store, “Why Wear Masks?” *Edmonton Journal*, October 29, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-29-1918-page-2-16/docview/2395838573/se-2>; Boston Clothing, Hat and Shoe Store, “To Protect Yourself from Influenza buy a Victory Bond,” *Edmonton Journal*, November 2, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-2-1918-page-28/docview/2395859273/se-2>; Boston Clothing, Hat and Shoe Store, “Flu Protectors,” *Edmonton Journal*, November 20, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-20-1918-page-2-16/docview/2395838281/se-2>.

<sup>73</sup> Boston Clothing, Hat and Shoe Store, “Now Is the Time to Dress Up,” *Edmonton Journal*, December 3, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/december-3-1918-page-2-16/docview/2395745713/se-2>.

<sup>74</sup> Boston Clothing, Hat and Shoe Store, “Protect Your Lungs from Unnecessary Exposure,” *Edmonton Journal*, January 25, 1919, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/january-25-1919-page-2-28/docview/2395939290/se-2>.

<sup>75</sup> Tom the Tailor, “Get the Genuine Medicated Mask,” *Daily Province*, November 7, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-7-1918-page-16/docview/2368292662/se-2>.

<sup>76</sup> Barrie’s Limited, “Protect Your Health By Wearing Good Warm Furs,” *Morning Leader*, November 9, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-9-1918-page-10-32/docview/2212751845/se-2>.

<sup>77</sup> Hood & Irvine, Ltd., “Bargain Basement,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, November 1, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-1-1918-page-6-22/docview/2252582248/se-2>.



Veiling in general was massively popular during 1918; *Vogue* touted it as the only way for a well-groomed woman to “finish” her outfit.<sup>78</sup> Frequently, these veiling styles would draw upon the early twentieth century fascination with Orientalism, as we see in the creations of designers like Paul Poiret. There were numerous different styles of veil available to the fashionable woman. The “Flu veil” appeared often in *Women’s Wear* in October 1918. Sold by the New Jersey department store Hahne & Co, the flu veil was a 3½–4½ inch veil with a wide chiffon border, and came with the approval of the Health Department.<sup>79</sup> *Women’s Wear* continued to promote the flu veil, publicising a statement from the health commissioner of New York, Dr. Copeland, who speculated that it could become compulsory,<sup>80</sup> as well as noting the subsequent adoption of the style by New York department stores and a later design by Stern & Stern.<sup>81</sup> Copeland’s claims were republished in the *Toronto Star*, who advocated for flu veil usage locally.<sup>82</sup> Toronto appears to have adopted flu veils first in Canada and continued to be associated with the style in Canadian media.<sup>83</sup> The only other mention of the flu veil being adopted by local women was in Vancouver, where the city’s medical health doctor, Dr. Underhill, very much approved of the garment.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> “Fashion: Dressing on a War Income,” *Vogue* 52, no. 6 (September 15, 1918): 65-67, <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/fashion-dressing-on-war-income/docview/904293847/se-2>.

<sup>79</sup> “Veilings,” *Women’s Wear* 17, no. 87 (October 11, 1918): 4, <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/veilings/docview/1665829986/se-2>.

<sup>80</sup> “Chiffon Veils for ‘Flu:’ May Become Compulsory to Stop Epidemic,” *Women’s Wear* 17, no. 90 (October 16, 1918): 2, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1665832278/C4AD20E29BA4409DPQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>81</sup> “Veilings,” *Women’s Wear* 17, no. 93 (October 19, 1918): 7, <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/veilings/docview/1665818657/se-2>.

<sup>82</sup> “Women Wear Veils to Prevent the Flu.”

<sup>83</sup> “New ‘Flu’ Veil is Quite Bewitching,” Leader [Regina], November 9, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-9-1918-page-10-32/docview/2212751845/se-2>.

<sup>84</sup> “First ‘Flu-veils’ Made Their Appearance in Downtown Streets,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, October 23, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-23-1918-page-2-20/docview/2368380503/se-2>.

Flu veils and masks appear to have been prevalent within Toronto and Vancouver, despite neither of them having adopted masking ordinances like Alberta. Vancouver health officials did not have the authority to do so at a municipal level,<sup>85</sup> and while some municipalities in Ontario chose to undergo non-pharmaceutical interventions regardless of what the provincial government said,<sup>86</sup> Toronto relied on shutting down rather than mask mandates.<sup>87</sup> Both Toronto and Vancouver newspapers, however, featured ads for flu veils not seen in Alberta. Within weeks of the flu veil reaching Canadian newspapers multiple milliners in Vancouver began to advertise the product,<sup>88</sup> and T. Eaton's Co. showcased their new Buffalo, New York inspired mask-veil.<sup>89</sup> Notably, the article "Get Busy With the Masks" was first published in Toronto, and cites Buffalo's fines for the unmasked as evidence of masks' importance.<sup>90</sup>

As the flu veil began to circulate in publications it gained momentum as a fashionable garment, despite Dr. Copeland having initially framed it as a sacrifice of style for women.<sup>91</sup> Not only did the articles advertising its sale frame it as an attractive item, but the articles documenting its usage by Canadian women also romanticized the style. It is frequently exoticized, invoking Orientalist sensibilities that pervaded styles at this time.<sup>92</sup> For instance, the women of Vancouver seen in the veil are compared to the "ravishing Houri of the mystic East,"<sup>93</sup> and both the Stern & Stern design and the veils in Toronto are compared to harems.<sup>94</sup> Although these sentiments are certainly problematic, relying on deeply racist stereotypes, they do show that the veil was indeed a fashionable item that served a health purpose.

<sup>85</sup> "All Citizens Asked to Don Flu Masks," *Vancouver Daily Sun*, October 28, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-28-1918-page-14/docview/2239791198/se-2>.

<sup>86</sup> Humphries, 185.

<sup>87</sup> "City Schools Close to Fight the 'Flu.'"

<sup>88</sup> The Wonder Millinery, "And Flu Veils Are Pretty," *Vancouver Daily Province*, October 25, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-25-1918-page-3-24/docview/2368461843/se-2>; The Patrick Co. Millinery, "New Shipments Just Arrived, Latest Novelty in Flu Veils," *Vancouver Daily Province*, November 1, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-1-1918-page-2-28/docview/2368361366/se-2>; Mrs. Agret, [Untitled Advertisement], *Vancouver Daily Province*, November 5, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/november-5-1918-page-18/docview/2368339908/se-2>.

<sup>89</sup> T. Eaton Co., "Here is the New Mask Veil," *Globe*, October 22, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1356258293/87A818F37FD94C56PQ/1?accountid=5705>.

<sup>90</sup> "Get Busy With the Masks."

<sup>91</sup> "Veilings," *Women's Wear* 17, no. 87 (October 11, 1918): 4.

<sup>92</sup> Ilya Parkins provides a very interesting reading on Orientalism and veiling during this period in "Figurative Mobility: Veiling, Orientalism, and Unknowing Women in US Vogue, 1917–25," *Fashion Studies* 1, no. 1 (2018): 1–31, doi: 10.38055/FS010108.

<sup>93</sup> "First 'Flu-veils' Made Their Appearance in Downtown Streets."

<sup>94</sup> "'Safety First' Veil a 'Flu' Preventive."

The flu veil stands as a link between fashion and health that was more prevalent in a context where masking was individualized. Like the face mask, the flu veil projected the image of a modern, hygienic subject while intermingling with fashion discourse.<sup>95</sup> While the sources we have referenced in this paper do not confirm the individual concerns of those who chose to adopt the flu veil, Toronto and Vancouver were both cities hit by the second wave earlier than other municipalities, and both chose not to adopt mandatory masking laws. These cities had early, first-hand experience of the severity of influenza and understood masking and veiling as an individual decision to protect one's health rather than something that one had to adopt to avoid punitive consequences. In this instance, the struggle between the power (the state) and the self perhaps favours individual choice, however, the discourse strongly promotes health and style to sway individual decisions. The flu veil thus reflects the discourse of germ theory that informed masking in general, the Orientalist veiling trend within fashion, and was a demonstration of how fashion functions as a form of self-surveillance.

**While the provincial and municipal leaders did not in this instance forcefully mould the docile bodies of the populace in line with their vision of a healthy subject, fashion offered a space for individuals to self-surveil their own subjecthood, as informed by the health authorities of the time.**

The flu veil's emergence is deeply tied to these series of discourse, illustrating how health and fashion together materialized a fine mesh headpiece.

<sup>95</sup> Lynteris, "Plague Masks," 443.



## POST-INFLUENZA: HELIOTHERAPY AND SUNTANNING

### HELIOOTHERAPY

Following the trauma of World War I and the influenza pandemic, health trends like heliotherapy accelerated in popularity, transcending the medical sphere. Heliotherapy, or sun therapy, was a medical treatment from the early twentieth century that exposed the body to sunlight as a cure for tuberculosis as well as to disinfect wounds. Its efficacy in this regard would lead to it being further utilized as a way to improve one's general health, and as a possible cure for less understood illnesses like the 1918 flu. The prevalence of heliotherapy and suntanning discourse in the 1920s demonstrates how a preoccupation with health and wellbeing permeated society after the death and darkness of the previous five years.

Heliotherapy was a specific type of sun therapy that was primarily established in its modern form by the Swiss physician Dr. Auguste Rollier.<sup>96</sup> However, many doctors and scientists determined the connection between UV light and health. Dr. Robert Koch, the German germ theorist, discovered that tuberculosis bacteria are killed by sunlight in 1890.<sup>97</sup> Dr. Niels Finsen, a Dane, found that sunlight helps tuberculosis-related skin infections, and won the 1903 Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology for inventing a UV lamp to treat TB patients.<sup>98</sup> In the 1890s, the Swiss Dr. Oskar Bernhard exposed open wounds to sunlight and then did the same to tuberculosis wounds once he noted the treatment's success.<sup>99</sup> Independently from his compatriot, Dr. Rollier began treating tuberculosis patients with sunlight in 1903; he slowly exposed patients' bodies to sunlight in carefully monitored "sun-baths" in order to strengthen their resistance to disease.<sup>100</sup> Since the curative effect came from UV rays and not the sun's heat, success was determined through the darkness of a patient's tan.<sup>101</sup> Dr. Rollier's precise method of exposing the body to sunlight became the leading method of heliotherapy, and the idea that tanned skin signified health took hold.<sup>102</sup>

Heliotherapy is connected to other nature-based medical treatments and was employed during the influenza pandemic.<sup>103</sup> The British doctor, Sir Henry Gauvin, treated tuberculosis patients with sunbathing, fresh air, and sea bathing. Seawater was long thought to have therapeutic effects: in sixteenth-century Britain, cold sea plunges were prescribed to shock the system and get one's bodily humours circulating, and in the eighteenth century, people drank sea water mixed with milk for its health benefits.<sup>104</sup> Gauvin's open-air method goes back to the eighteenth century, when medical practitioners like Florence Nightingale championed fresh air and sunlight for patients.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>96</sup> R.A. Hobday, "Sunlight Therapy and Solar Architecture," *Medical History* 41, no. 4 (1997): 455, doi: 10.1017/S0025727300063043.

<sup>97</sup> "How does ultraviolet light affect our health?" *Science Museum*, 2018, <https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/how-does-ultraviolet-light-affect-our-health>.

<sup>98</sup> "How does ultraviolet light affect our health?"

<sup>99</sup> Hobday, 457-458.

<sup>100</sup> Hobday, 455, 459.

<sup>101</sup> Hobday, 463; Kerry Segrave, *Suntanning in 20th Century America*, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2005), 13, 17.

<sup>102</sup> Hobday, 460, 464.

<sup>103</sup> Hobday, 467.

<sup>104</sup> Both these ideas can be traced back to classical texts, as mentioned by Adea Braun in "The Historic Healing Power of the Beach," *The Atlantic*, 29 August 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/08/the-historic-healing-power-of-the-beach/279175/>.

<sup>105</sup> Richard A. Hobday & John W. Carson, "The Open-Air Treatment of Pandemic Influenza," *The American Journal of Public Health* 99, no. S2: S238, doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2008.134627.

During the influenza pandemic, little was known about the virus so treatment was determined based on what worked for other diseases such as tuberculosis. Consequently, fresh air and sunlight were used to treat influenza patients. For example, in Dr. William Brooks' outdoor, open-air hospital in Boston, influenza patients' feet and bodies were kept warm, they were fed well and they were exposed to fresh air and sunshine "after the value of plenty of air and sunshine had been demonstrated."<sup>106</sup> It is important to note the nurses and doctors who worked in Dr. Brooks' hospital followed strict hygiene protocols and assiduously wore masks as well.<sup>107</sup> Word of Brooks' treatment reached Canada; the *Toronto Star* wrote about the efficacy of Brooks' hospital on October 8, 1918.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, in the *Calgary Daily Herald* on October 29, 1918, Dr. Mahood, the provincial health authority, states that "[p]lenty of fresh air and sunshine will win the fight against the influenza."<sup>109</sup> Heliotherapy played a role during the influenza pandemic, and it remained in use as a medical treatment throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Post-influenza, sun therapy spread beyond the medical field, and access to sunlight influenced architecture, urban planning, recreation and fashion.<sup>110</sup>

The widespread use of heliotherapy and the tanning trend in the early twentieth century were connected to industrialization and social stratification as well as health. In this period, city living and factory production increased, smog clouds smothered cities and more people worked indoors. As a result, people were exposed to less sunlight daily. In this context, sun therapy proved tremendously helpful in curing children of rickets, a condition caused by a lack of vitamin D.<sup>111</sup> In Canada, exposure to UV rays was argued as being especially important to general health in the dark northern winters.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, up until and throughout the nineteenth century, tanned skin was not considered fashionable or desirable due to rampant classism and racism. Tanned skin was associated with lower-class labourers who worked outside as well as Black and Brown people; these groups were understood to be less attractive than, and inferior to, the wealthy, white and privileged who could afford to be sedentary indoors.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>106</sup> William A. Brooks, "The Open-Air Treatment of Influenza," *The American Journal of Public Health* 8, no. 10 (1918): 748-749; Peter Frost, "An Accelerant of Social Change? The Spanish Flu of 1918-19," *International Political Anthropology* 13 (2020): 128, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.4295574; Hobday & Carson, S239-S240.

<sup>107</sup> Brooks, 749; Hobday & Carson, S239.

<sup>108</sup> "Drastic Regulations to Combat Influenza," *Toronto Star*, October 8, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/hnptorontostar/docview/1432376590/34B17AF556E4E27PQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>109</sup> C. S. Mahood, "Fresh Air With Sunshine Deadly Foes of the 'Flu,'" *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 29, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-29-1918-page-1-16/docview/2252520563/se-2>.

<sup>110</sup> Frost, 123.

<sup>111</sup> Simon Carter, *Rise and Shine: Sunlight, Technologies, and Health*, (Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 2007), 78; Segrave, 17-19, 22-23.

<sup>112</sup> Jane Nicholas, *The Modern Girl: Feminine Modernities, the Body, and Commodities in the 1920s*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 83.

<sup>113</sup> Braun; Segrave, 8; Frost 130. Frost also remarks that in English, French, and German nineteenth-century fiction dark women are often negatively characterised as erotic seductresses with masculine features.

The racist and classist views that supposed white skin was positive and darker skin was negative encouraged skin-bleaching and freckle-removing products.<sup>114</sup> Such long-held associations had to be let go of in order for tanning to become as popular as it did. The promotion of the healthful properties of sunlight helped override these preconceived notions about tanned skin.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, just as modernization contributed to health professionals' use of the sun as healer, it also reframed class-based associations that had previously painted tanned skin as undesirable. As factories multiplied, the labouring class worked inside away from the sun, and tanned skin consequently stopped being associated with the working class.<sup>116</sup> So, tanned skin became fashionable due to a desire for class differentiation as well as for health; in the twentieth century glowy, golden skin came to symbolise richness and robustness.<sup>117</sup>

## TANNING, HEALTH, AND FASHION

Due to heliotherapy, by the 1920s sunbathing and sun tanning were framed as health-benefiting practices; and the desire for health after the influenza pandemic certainly contributed to the sun trend. At the height of their popularity, sun-baths were touted as cure-all treatments that helped with more than wounds, tuberculosis, and rickets; UV rays were able to “influence the nutrition of the body and its resistance to disease.”<sup>118</sup> Sun exposure is thus recommended to the public as a way to maintain wellness and prevent further illness by medical authorities. Dr. J. W. Scott references Dr. Rollier in the *Toronto Star* when he argues for the “curative action” of the sun’s UV rays in 1926.<sup>119</sup> Dr. Hastings, who was Toronto’s Minister of Health during the influenza pandemic, also names Dr. Rollier when he details in the *Toronto Star* how direct sun rays (not through glass windows) prevent and cure disease, strengthen tissue, and increase metabolism.<sup>120</sup> A 1920 Harvard Mercantile Health Bulletin advises to get fresh air and sunshine to avoid catching a cold.<sup>121</sup> By 1929 there were claims that the suntan was “based upon the greatest health-giving discovery of our age.”<sup>122</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Segrave, 7-8.

<sup>115</sup> Segrave, 11.

<sup>116</sup> Segrave, 9.

<sup>117</sup> Braun.

<sup>118</sup> Segrave, 15-16, 19.

<sup>119</sup> J. W. Scott, “How to Keep Well,” *Toronto Star*, April 9, 1926, <https://www.proquest.com/hnptorontostar/docview/1437166496/A0CD2A449D34467CPQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>120</sup> Charles J. Hastings, “Must Have Direct Exposure to Have Benefit of Sun’s Rays,” *Toronto Star*, March 24, 1928, <https://www.proquest.com/hnptorontostar/docview/1432486614/pageviewPDF/DF384D3DF6D48BEPQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>121</sup> “Store Life: Colds Are In Season,” *Women’s Wear* 21, no. 104 (November 3, 1920): 46, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1665853609/7F5F9F8BFBA04544PQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>122</sup> Katharine L. Frohne, “Reading for Profit: Suntan, Backed By Science And Fashion, Wakes Memories Of Sun God Worship,” *Women’s Wear Daily* 39, no. 17 (July 24, 1929): 10, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1653793225/24944EC80D664978PQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>.



These health directives specifically focused on achieving tanned skin and warned that blondes may burn easily; they also said that “redheads” and “freckled people” should not seek sun since they are likely to burn instead of tan.<sup>123</sup> The influence of heliotherapy on fashion becomes apparent during this time as discussions emerged over the best way to dress to get tanned. For instance, Dr. J. H. Kellogg’s belief that white clothing best allowed “great health-giving” UV rays to penetrate the skin was published in *Women’s Wear*.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, Dr. C. H. Miner says light or undyed wool helps get “maximum benefit from the sun’s rays for the body,”<sup>125</sup> and, light cotton, or celanese suits are preferred for sunbathing because “they allow the ultra violet rays to penetrate as though a person had nothing on.”<sup>126</sup> As a 1929 article in the *Delineator* succinctly states, “It has become smart to look healthy, smart to go in for tan, and smart to dress expertly for it.”<sup>127</sup>

Tanning was happening as early as 1908, but it took some time for tans to be interpreted as indications of chicness and health before their popularity took off in the 1920s.<sup>128</sup> Advertisements for freckle-removing cream and skin-whitening lotion persisted well into the 1920s. The skin whitener “Derma Viva” guaranteed “Red, Brown, or Dark Face, Neck, Arms or Hands made a beautiful white at once [sic],” and freckle removing creams promised to “[b]ring back the milk white skin of childhood.”<sup>129</sup> Parasols, veils, hats, sun protectant powders, and high-coverage bathing suits are suggested as ways to keep one’s skin pale and youthful into 1922.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>123</sup> “Must Have Direct Exposure to Have Benefit of Sun’s Rays;” “Red Heads and Freckled People Not Eligible for Sun Treatment,” *Toronto Star*, October 15, 1926, <https://www.proquest.com/hnptorontostar/docview/1436985905/C937E-B09C5604BB7PQ/1?accountid=14771>; “Reading for Profit: Suntan, Backed By Science And Fashion, Wakes Memories Of Sun God Worship.”

<sup>124</sup> “White Apparel Is New Road to Health Found by Doctor,” *Women’s Wear* 30, no. 21 (January 26, 1925): 28, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1676964358/CA3982C498DD4942PQ/3?accountid=14771>.

<sup>125</sup> “Finds Undyed Wool Effective For Sun Baths,” *Women’s Wear* 31, no. 18 (July 22, 1925): 4, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1676857181/9AF2538531C348B-3PQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>126</sup> “Celanese Bathing Suits Permit Allover Sunburn,” *Women’s Wear* 33, no. 138 (December 11, 1926): 18, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1677120936/20BB92E4E-12A44BDPQ/1?accountid=14771>; Staff Correspondent, “Knitted Outerwear – Sports Wear: Vienna Selects Bathing Suits In Tricot And Cotton—Black Preferred: Pajamas Of Frotte A Beach Novelty,” *Women’s Wear* 24, no. 142 (June 19, 1922): 19, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1665786679/8957E305DF5F4A5CPQ/13?accountid=14771>.

<sup>127</sup> “Tan Takes its Turn as a Maker of Fashion,” *Delineator* (February, 1929): 25, <https://witness2fashion.wordpress.com/category/costumes-for-the-17th-century/>.

<sup>128</sup> Segrave, 10.

<sup>129</sup> Derma Viva Co., “Derma Viva Whitens the Skin,” *Delineator* 94, no. 5 (May 1919): 116, [http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092\\_94\\_5#page/116/mode/1up](http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092_94_5#page/116/mode/1up); Stillman’s Freckle Cream, “Banish those Freckles,” *Delineator* 107, no. 3 (September 1925): 80, [http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092\\_107\\_3#page/82/mode/1up](http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092_107_3#page/82/mode/1up).

<sup>130</sup> “Fashion: The Barrage against the Sun,” *Vogue* 59, no. 11 (June 1, 1922): 53, <https://www.proquest.com/vogue/docview/879169029/1EDF91DC38394F32PQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>

We see tension in the discourse between tanning and not tanning as the practice became more popular and people moved away from some of the classist beliefs about browned skin. On this note, since sunbathing as a health therapy was linked with fresh air and seawater, once tanning did become fashionable, the practice of sunbathing integrated seamlessly into the seaside resorts that had been established in the nineteenth century.<sup>131</sup> The designer Erté reported on the post-war scene in Monte Carlo, where the “healing sunshine” cured influenza sufferers and American soldiers.<sup>132</sup> As the 1920s progressed, European destinations like the Lido, Venice and Deauville, France, became literal hot-spots to sunbathe, see, and be seen during the summer.<sup>133</sup> In the winter months, Palm Beach and Bermuda were places where the fashionable could maintain and deepen their tans.<sup>134</sup> Here we see class and social position enter the tanning discourse once more. Pre-influenza, tanned skin was associated with the working class, who did manual outdoor labour and were understood to be less healthy and beautiful than pale-skinned upper-class folk who leisured indoors. Post-influenza, the classes swapped in terms of who had tanned skin, but the class-based associations remained the same. The lower-class were still understood to be less healthy and less beautiful, and the upper-class could still afford leisure time; the only difference was that they leisured in the sunshine.

<sup>131</sup> Braun.

<sup>132</sup> “Erté Plans for the Summer Bride and Writes of Golden Days in Monte Carlo,” *Harper’s Bazaar* 54, no. 5 (May 1919): 42, <https://www.proquest.com/harpersbazaar/docview/1914183101/A40A239DD1BD44D6PQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>.

<sup>133</sup> “Baron de Meyer Writes of Lido Sunshine,” *Harper’s Bazaar* 56, no. 2530 (August 1923): 31-34, <https://www.proquest.com/harpersbazaar/docview/1871480337/888E5DD75051402EPQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>; “Celanese Bathing Suits Permit Allover Sunburn;” “Fashion: Costumes for the Beach,” *Vogue* 69, no. 2 (January 15, 1927): 108, <https://www.proquest.com/vogue/docview/879170154/87004371F934441FPQ/2?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>; “Flowery Chiffon Dots the Plage as Deauville Basks in Brilliant Sunshine,” *Women’s Wear* 31, no. 60 (September 10, 1925): 3, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/pageimage/1676673600/Record/A3D6DAF3D45C4A85PQ/1?accountid=14771>; *Staff Correspondent*, “Color Riotous in Bathing Togs and Tea Frocks Chosen For Wear At The Lido In Venice,” *Women’s Wear* 31, no. 42 (August 19, 1925): 3, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1677181308/FDA53345A938472APQ/1?accountid=14771>; “Tan Takes its Turn as a Maker of Fashion.”

<sup>134</sup> “Celanese Bathing Suits Permit Allover Sunburn;” “Costumes for the Beach;” “Jacket Costumes and Sunback Frocks in Flared Silhouette Endorsed at Palm Springs,” *Women’s Wear Daily* 39, no. 115 (December 11, 1929): 4, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1653941566/FA96C3969FAB4B16PQ/1?accountid=14771>; “Tan Takes its Turn as a Maker of Fashion.”

## FASHIONING THE SUN

In twentieth century materials, suntanning is repeatedly remarked upon as a fashion trend, often with the word “burn” used interchangeably with the word “tan.” In 1922, the *Gazette du bon ton* remarked that it would remain “chic to burn in the sun,” which implies it was already chic to do so.<sup>135</sup> Seven years later, in 1929, the “[r]epitition of sun tan vogue” is predicted.<sup>136</sup> Consequently, the “sunburn movement,” as *Vogue* called it, spawned “sunburn frocks, sunburn suits, sunburn cosmetics, [and] sunburn lingerie.”<sup>137</sup> The tanning trend’s impact on fashion is particularly notable in the changing swimwear styles of the 1920s, when backless swimsuits that expose more skin became popular for children and women alike. In 1927, suits “were cut well down in the back or rolled down, so that the skin would burn evenly, and the parts of the body to be burned were carefully oiled with coconut oil.”<sup>138</sup> Low-cut suits “induc[ed] the sunburned back of perfect line and symmetry,” according to *Harper’s Bazaar*,<sup>139</sup> and some stores sold suits “almost cut to the waistline”<sup>140</sup> in the back with a u-shape or v-shape cut.<sup>141</sup> As well as being backless, suits were sleeveless with lower necklines and shorter hemlines.<sup>142</sup> Children’s summer wear also exposed more skin to the sun, for example with a “little backless suit for both the beach and water,”<sup>143</sup> which makes sense when you consider the sun’s effectiveness in curing childhood rickets. The tanning trend influenced summer wardrobes as a whole in addition to beach-specific attire. Dress lines followed suit lines and had low backs to match (so that all unseemly tan lines were hidden).<sup>144</sup> Sun suits and their accompanying outfits show how health ideas impacted fashion; all these styles with less and less fabric allowed more sun rays to directly reach one’s skin and impart their invigorating benefits. Furthermore, day and evening wear that exhibited one’s tanned skin announced one’s healthiness and ability to adequately care for one’s body to the public.

<sup>135</sup> Jeanne Ramon-Fernandez, “La Mode et le bon ton,” *Gazette du bon ton* 1 (1922): 67, <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/gazettedubonton00d>. Translated by Brigid Trott.

<sup>136</sup> “Jacket Costumes and Sunback Frocks in Flared Silhouette Endorsed at Palm Springs.”

<sup>137</sup> “Fashion: Back to Sunburn With the Mode,” *Vogue* 74, no. 2 (July 20, 1929): 76, <https://www.proquest.com/vogue/docview/879189866/FA9D1334619E4ADDPQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>.

<sup>138</sup> “Costumes for the Beach.”

<sup>139</sup> “Sun-tanned Backs Flash on Summer Bathers,” *Harper’s Bazaar* 63, no. 2600 (June 1929): 104, <https://www.proquest.com/harpersbazaar/docview/1860664388/69A2C358F71B401FPQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>.

<sup>140</sup> “Sportswear: Demand for Sunback Bathing Suits Strong In Chicago Stores,” *Women’s Wear Daily* 38, no. 112 (June 10, 1929): S3, 11, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1727890060/9EDCFF34BDC94615PQ1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>141</sup> “Back to Sunburn With the Mode,” 77; “Sportswear: Suit Designed For Sun Bathing By Portland Firm,” *Women’s Wear Daily* 35, no. 90 (October 15, 1927): S2, 7, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1653563481/93F9C1E423E84053PQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>142</sup> “Jacket Costumes and Sunback Frocks in Flared Silhouette Endorsed at Palm Springs;” “Suntan Fashions Dominant in Retail Sportswear,” *Women’s Wear Daily* 38, no. 103 (May 27, 1929): 9, <https://www.proquest.com/wwd/docview/1727855787/B6090C599148403BPQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>.

<sup>143</sup> “Fashion: Sun Modes for Smart Water Babies,” *Vogue* 72, no. 1 (July 1, 1928): 74, <https://www.proquest.com/vogue/docview/904318021/22DA91D20514E63PQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>144</sup> “Back to Sunburn With the Mode,” 76-77.



Skin creams also responded to the popularity of sun exposure. A 1925 Vaseline advertisement highlights the product's ability to soothe sunburn, as does an advertisement for Absorbine Jr.<sup>145</sup> Cosmetic brands responded to the tanning trend with "sunburn make-up" and tanning powders that made one look evenly tanned without burning or freckling.<sup>146</sup> Iodine baths were also mentioned as a way to get "mahogany" skin without burning.<sup>147</sup> These sources tell us that while dark tans were chic and healthy, red sunburned skin certainly was not and indicated a lack of bodily care. Along with avoiding sunburn, one's tan had to be delicately nurtured so that it did not age one's skin. Creams needed to be used because "dry skin is the first to grow old and nothing dries and coarsens the skin as fast as sun and wind."<sup>148</sup> Balms by Elizabeth Arden, Helena Rubinstein and more were named to help weathered skin, since "over-weathering [...] adds unwanted years."<sup>149</sup> These creams allowed one to revitalize their "bodily health through the sun's rays" while keeping their skin looking youthful.<sup>150</sup>

To the modern Canadian woman, being young could solve all her problems, and if she was not young, looking young could allow her to grasp the social and economic power that came with youth.<sup>151</sup> In Canada, caring for one's body was also explicitly tied to building a strong nation, and using "canned sun" was a way to ensure Canadian youth grew up "straight and strong."<sup>152</sup> The discursive message Canadians received was that tan skin signalled health, youth, fashionability, and a place in the upper-classes — all characteristics that bettered the health of the economy and the nation. The authority, in this case fashion authorities, acts upon docile bodies to transform them into useful (tanned) bodies. Similar to masks, well cared for suntans communicated something about the identity of the tanned individual. Namely, the well-tanned person wanted to look young and thus be valued in society, and they adhered to modern beliefs and therefore worked to ensure their health and the health of the larger community.

<sup>145</sup> Absorbine Jr., "Quick relief from sunburn," *Delineator* 107, no. 2 (August 1925): 73, [http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092\\_107\\_2#page/75/mode/1up](http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092_107_2#page/75/mode/1up); Vaseline, "Handiest Thing in the House: For Sunburn," *Delineator* 107, no. 1 (July 1925): 70, [http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092\\_107\\_1#page/72/mode/1up](http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092_107_1#page/72/mode/1up).

<sup>146</sup> "Advertisement: Glory of the Sun (Carle, Inc.)," *Vogue* 74, no. 5 (August 31, 1929): 72, <https://www.proquest.com/vogue/docview/879196509/75DA729F94CC4058PQ/1?accountid=14771>; "The Cosmetic Urge: Sunburn – For and Against," *Harper's Bazaar* 63, no. 2595 (January 1929): 124, <https://www.proquest.com/harpersbazaar/docview/1860658279/7091E0961CAF417CPQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>147</sup> "Fashion: The Burning Question of the Summer," *Vogue* 72, no. 1 (July 1, 1928): 38, <https://www.proquest.com/vogue/docview/904318884/55B57115A26A424EPQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=1>.

<sup>148</sup> "Don't Let Sun and Wind Age Your Skin," *Delineator* 107, no. 3 (September 1925): 81, [http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092\\_107\\_3#page/83/mode/1up](http://reader.library.cornell.edu/docviewer/digital?id=hearth1891092_107_3#page/83/mode/1up).

<sup>149</sup> "Fashion: The Barrage against the Sun," 53; "The Cosmetic Urge: Sunburn – For and Against," 124.

<sup>150</sup> "Features: The Sun."

<sup>151</sup> Nicholas, 40-42.

<sup>152</sup> Nicholas, 83.

We once again witness the importance of tanning as a sign of the health-conscious modern citizen as tanning extended beyond the beach and into the boudoir. By the 1920s, Dr. Neils Finsen's UV lamps were prevalent at-home healthcare commodities. A health column in the April 9th, 1926 *Toronto Star* cites Dr. Rollier when it recommends UV lamps for "the curative action of sunlight."<sup>153</sup> A January 1928 advertisement in *Vogue* states, "[s]cience has shown conclusively that pure, concentrated sunlight keeps the body well and active [...] acts as a bulwark against disease, enriches the blood, energizes the whole system," and that the lamp is worthwhile because "[r]ain, fog, clouds, clothing, smoke, (and) indoor occupations" meant people did not get enough sunlight.<sup>154</sup> An August 1928 advertisement by the same company targeted "delicate" women and children who could use this "safe, scientific new way to strength and health" to "[store] up vitality, [increase] resistance to disease, [...] look and feel 100% better."<sup>155</sup> The *Toronto Star* once again advises use of the sun lamp on March 24th, 1928, and again mentions Dr. Rollier's heliotherapy as well as Dr. Koch's experiment that proved sunlight kills tuberculosis bacteria.<sup>156</sup> Another *Vogue* article promoted the UV lamp as a way to get a tan in winter, while "reducing colds, stimulating glands, even improving the condition of [...] teeth."<sup>157</sup> And once more, in February 1929, *Vogue* promoted a portable sun lamp for its "healthful properties."<sup>158</sup> These UV lights make a year-round tan possible and a year-round tan is a tool for year-round bodily health. According to Dr. Bell, sunlight would even help Canadian mothers produce strong babies, and therefore all-year access would be beneficial to the country's population.<sup>159</sup> Discourse surrounding science and technology advancements thus bolsters bodily transformation. Cold, dark Canadian winters were no excuse not to sunbathe, and in this context a tanned winter body indicated an especially conscious, modern, and health-minded citizen. Following Foucault, the tanned body was disciplined and docile.<sup>160</sup> The UV lamp ritualized the daily bodily care of tanning and extended the idea that a civilian acting to improve their own health consolidated national health in turn. The tanned body was not just one that needed to be presented in public; the ability to tan at home using UV rays and makeup stifled selfhood by infiltrating personal spaces in which the self could be expressed. The popularity of suntanning would wane by mid-century as warnings about sun damage and skin cancer increased.<sup>161</sup> After the influenza pandemic, however, an emphasis on the overall health benefits of sun rays intertwined with discourse of social identity and nation-building to influence cosmetics, accessories, and clothing.

<sup>153</sup> Scott.

<sup>154</sup> "Advertisement: Sunshine for Health (Sanitarium Equipment Co.)," *Vogue* 71, no. 1 (January 1, 1928): 110, <https://www.proquest.com/vogue/docview/904310414/FA88AFAC566344F5PQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>155</sup> "Advertisement: Sun Arc Bath (Sanitarium Equipment Co.)," *Harper's Bazaar* 62, no. 2590 (August 1928): 105, <https://www.proquest.com/harpersbazaar/docview/1871468409/C55BAB0B55A048D6PQ/1?accountid=14771>.

<sup>156</sup> Hastings.

<sup>157</sup> "The Burning Question of the Summer," 100.

<sup>158</sup> "On Her Dressing-Table," *Vogue* 73, no. 3 (February 2, 1929): 90, <https://www.proquest.com/vogue/docview/879181380/24FCBC9B3E2E4CD4PQ/1?accountid=14771&imgSeq=2>.

<sup>159</sup> Segrave, 22.

<sup>160</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 136-154.

<sup>161</sup> "How does ultraviolet light affect our health?"; Segrave, 1.

## FASHION AND COVID-19

The influenza pandemic and the coronavirus pandemic are modern-day disasters that disrupted society. However, despite surface-level similarities, it is difficult to directly compare how these two events influenced fashion since they occurred in contexts separated by over one hundred years. The discourse surrounding fashion during and after the influenza years shaped how Canada sought to build itself as a healthful, productive, and self-respecting nation. What does the discourse surrounding coronavirus and fashion tell us about the same country today?

The proliferation of information during COVID-19 is a major factor that individualizes health choices. One way federal, provincial, and municipal governments have communicated mask requirements to Canadian citizens has been through resources like posters and fact sheets available online and posted around cities and towns. These resources make available an avalanche of information to the public. For instance, there are posters on how to properly wear a mask,<sup>162</sup> as well as information about choosing and caring for masks.<sup>163</sup> On top of all this educational material, there are posters that indicate when a mask is required or recommended (Figure 3).<sup>164</sup> Additionally, digital dashboards made data on case numbers publicly available at a global, national, provincial, and sometimes even municipal level. This data would then be used by political leaders and health authorities in their frequent public appearances to give updates on the state of the pandemic, including case numbers and potential mandates or recommendations. In spite of streamlined government messaging through digital communications, internet access also expanded the sources of both information and misinformation.

<sup>162</sup> "COVID-19 mask use: How to make your masks fit properly," Government of Canada, <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-mask-fit-properly/covid-19-mask-fit-properly-en.pdf>; "Guidance for Masks for the General Public," Government of Alberta, June 2022, <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d350560d-c988-4c3e-a844-6af05ab0e730/resource/743e04b5-37a1-47ed-ada3-0ccd50f305d6/download/health-covid-19-guidance-for-masks-2022-06-30.pdf>; "How to Properly Wear a Mask," Government of Nova Scotia, <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Mask-poster-EN.pdf>; "How to wear a non-medical mask," Government of Yukon, <https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-how-to-wear-a-non-medical-mask.pdf>.

<sup>163</sup> "COVID-19: How to choose, use and care for a mask," Government of Canada, <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/publications/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering-en.pdf>; "Face Mask Guidance," Government of New Brunswick, <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/Promo/covid-19/Face-Mask-Guidance.pdf>; "Guidance for Masks for the General Public."

<sup>164</sup> "Masks Encouraged," Manitoba, [https://manitoba.ca/asset\\_library/en/coronavirus/resourcesforbusiness-masksencouraged.pdf](https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/resourcesforbusiness-masksencouraged.pdf); "Mask Required," Government of Yukon, [https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-face-mask-required\\_0.pdf](https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-face-mask-required_0.pdf).



According to a Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism factsheet from March of 2020, their instances of reported English language fact checks increased by 900% from January to March of that year.<sup>165</sup> A full analysis of COVID-19 information and misinformation is beyond the scope of this paper, however the proliferation of information in the digital age stands in contrast to 1918 Canada. At that point, Canada did not yet have a centralized Department of Health to disseminate coordinated information and sources of information were also more limited. Today, Canada's Department of Health is one among infinite sources. These circumstances multiply the number of agents struggling for positions of authority within fields, and build tension in the relationship between individual subjects and power institutions. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, pressure was put on individual citizens to react to a highly fractured field of new information received daily, in a manner that did not exist in 1918 when the amount of material was significantly less.

### MASKING IN COVID-19

In both pandemics, self-regulating tools like masks were framed as a way to manage one's personal health and the health of others. However, the responsibility placed on the individual to protect the community's wellbeing was greater during the COVID-19 pandemic. In part, this is due to the difference between the viruses. COVID-19, in contrast to the 1918 influenza, not only spreads quickly but asymptotically.<sup>166</sup> The ability to carry the virus without any external symptoms increased the need to organize the general behaviour of the public. Consequently, unlike during the influenza pandemic, masking mandates were in place across all of Canada during the COVID pandemic, and masks became everyday objects worn by the general population, not just medical professionals or personal care workers.



**Figure 3** "Mask Required," Government of Yukon, accessed August 12, 2022, [https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-face-mask-required\\_0.pdf](https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-face-mask-required_0.pdf). Used with permission from the Government of Yukon.

<sup>165</sup> J. Scott Brennen, et al., "Types, Sources, and Claims of COVID-19 Misinformation," *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, 2020.

<sup>166</sup> Lirong Zou, et al., "SARS-COV-2 Viral Load in Upper Respiratory Specimens of Infected Patients." *New England Journal of Medicine* 382, no. 12 (2020): 1177–79. doi: 10.1056/nejmc2001737.

These mandates changed throughout the coronavirus pandemic, and it was the responsibility of the individual to adapt their practices accordingly. For example, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, homemade cloth masks were popular.<sup>167</sup> In April 2020, Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, shared that "non-medical masks [...] can prevent people who are pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic, yet contagious, from unwittingly spreading the coronavirus."<sup>168</sup> At this point in the pandemic it was advised that "[m]edical-grade masks such as the N95 should still be reserved for medical professionals to use" due to supply shortages.<sup>169</sup> When the Omicron variant spread in 2021, N95 and KN95 masks were more readily available again and were sold as being most effective due to their higher filtration status and tight fit.<sup>170</sup> The type of mask that was acceptable to wear changed due to a variety of factors as the pandemic progressed, but throughout it was down to the individual to stay up-to-date. Much like the 1918 influenza pandemic, individuals were subjectified as docile bodies to be regulated through mandates, but also conditioned to manage their own health through self-surveillance informed by the changing of information.

Government materials discuss masks as a "layer of protection,"<sup>171</sup> a way to "protect each other,"<sup>172</sup> "protect yourself and others,"<sup>173</sup> or simply, to "#protect."<sup>174</sup> The emphasis placed on how masks protect the self and others suggests an attempt to transform what mask-wearing has come to mean in Canada. Sadiya Ansari argues that mask-wearing in Canada threatens illness instead of prevention, and criminality instead of civic-mindedness.<sup>175</sup> Mingyuan Zhang further posits that mask-wearing is associated with Asian populations; to North Americans, masks are worn by anonymous 'Others' who are unconnected to western society and culture.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed, not wearing a mask was treated as a reward for getting vaccinated instead of continuing to wear a mask regardless of personal actions being positioned as a commitment to containment and community.<sup>177</sup> The public campaigns for masking during the COVID-19 pandemic consistently use language like "protect" to try to overcome these notions about face masks. Therefore, during COVID-19 the individual had the responsibility of choosing to wear a face mask for their health and the health of their community despite underlying stigmas against masking.

<sup>167</sup> Konda Abhiteja, et al., "Aerosol Filtration Efficiency of Common Fabrics Used in Respiratory Cloth Masks," *ACS Nano* 14, no. 5, (2020): 6339-6347, doi: 10.1021/acsnano.0c03252.

<sup>168</sup> Wing Sze Tang, "What to Know About Coronavirus Protection," *Elle Canada*, March 16, 2020, <https://www.ellecanada.com/beauty/health-and-fitness/what-to-know-about-coronavirus-prevention>.

<sup>169</sup> Tang.

<sup>170</sup> Jamie Ducharme, "An N95 is the Best Mask for Omicron. Here's Why," *TIME*, January 28, 2022, <https://time.com/6139169/n95-best-mask-omicron-covid-19/>.

<sup>171</sup> "Face Mask Guidance."

<sup>172</sup> "Mask Required."

<sup>173</sup> "COVID-19: How to choose, use and care for a mask."

<sup>174</sup> "Masks Encouraged."

<sup>175</sup> Sadiya Ansari, "The history of our cultural resistance against masks," *MacLean's*, April 22, 2020, <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/the-history-of-our-cultural-resistance-against-masks/>.

<sup>176</sup> Mingyuan Zhang, "Writing Against "Mask Culture": Orientalism and COVID-19 Responses in the West," *Anthropologica* 63, no. 1 (2021): 5, doi: 10.18357/anthropologica6312021327.

<sup>177</sup> Christos Lynteris, "The Social Potential of Continuing to Wear Masks," *Somatosphere*, July 29, 2021, <http://somatosphere.net/2021/the-social-potential-of-continuing-to-wear-masks.html/ru>



A final notable difference between the COVID-19 and influenza pandemics is that masks during COVID-19 have been characterized as fashion items as well as medical equipment by the fashion media.<sup>178</sup>

## Framing masks as a fashion accessory proved a lifeline for designers struggling from the economic impact of COVID-19 lockdowns.

Not only did Canadian designers provide necessary personal protective equipment, like masks and hospital gowns, to frontline workers, but they also sold them online to the public when they had to close their stores and clothing sales diminished.<sup>179</sup> Canadian brands across the country, like Nonie (Calgary), NARCES (Toronto), Hayley Elsaesser (Hamilton), Greta Constantine (Toronto) and Catherine Regehr (Vancouver), quickly pivoted to making and selling masks and other PPE in 2020 in order to stay afloat.<sup>180</sup> Fashion masks were not only good for business but also helped make the mask an appealing functional accessory. Mask wearers were encouraged to simultaneously be healthy and civic-minded, and express themselves by wearing a mask that matched their style. American *Vogue's* website alone has at least four articles, updated in 2022, listing masks to 'shop now,' while *Elle Canada* claims in a 2021 list of masks to buy that "face masks have become the number one fashion accessory in our wardrobes."<sup>181</sup> Contrastingly, during the influenza pandemic the virus and how to cope with it were minimally mentioned in fashion periodicals, despite local craftspeople like the milliners of 1918 Vancouver making a similar shift in their goods to that of 2020 designers.<sup>182</sup> As well as promoting their stylishness, contemporary articles also refer to medical authorities to educate about the importance of wearing masks.<sup>183</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Kelly Wetherille, "Face Masks: The New Global Must-Have Accessory," *Women's Wear Daily*, June 4, 2020, <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/ready-to-wear/face-masks-next-must-have-fashion-accessory-1203643671/>.

<sup>179</sup> Kathleen Newman-Bremang, "Can Canadian Fashion Withstand COVID-19? 11 Designers Weigh In," *Refinery 29*, July 23, 2020, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/canadian-fashion-coronavirus-impact>; Mario Toneguzzi, "Canadian Fashion Industry Hit Hard by COVID-19: Interview," *Retail Insider*, August 10, 2020, <https://retail-insider.com/retail-insider/2020/08/canadian-fashion-industry-hit-hard-by-covid-19-cafa-david-dixon-glenn-dixon/>.

<sup>180</sup> Newman-Bremang.

<sup>181</sup> Elle Canada, "ELLE TOP: 10 Stylish Face Masks to Shop Now," *Elle Canada*, February 17, 2021, <https://www.ellecanada.com/fashion/shopping/elle-top-10-stylish-face-masks-to-shop-now>.

<sup>182</sup> The Wonder Millinery, "And Flu Veils Are Pretty," *Vancouver Daily Province*, October 25, 1918, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/october-25-1918-page-3-24/docview/2368461843/se-2>; The Patrick Co. Millinery, "New Shipments Just Arrived, Latest Novelty in Flu Veils," *Vancouver Daily Province*, November 1, 1918.

<sup>183</sup> Rachel Besser, "The Best Disposable Face Masks to Stock Up On," *Vogue*, March 6, 2022, <https://www.vogue.com/slideshow/best-disposable-face-masks>; Rachel Besser, "The 43 Breathable Face Masks to Shop Now," *Vogue*, January 5, 2022, <https://www.vogue.com/slideshow/breathable-masks>; Emma Specter, "N95 and KN95 Face Masks to Shop Now – Because It's Time to Start Properly Masking Up (Again)," *Vogue*, January 5, 2022, <https://www.vogue.com/article/n95-and-kn95-face-masks-to-shop-now>; Sarah Spellings, "Face Masks to Shop Now," edited by Madeline Fass, *Vogue*, March 3, 2022, <https://www.vogue.com/slideshow/stylish-face-masks-to-shop-now>.



There is reference to the importance of a mask fitting snugly to one's face, covering the nose and mouth, and being breathable, and advice that N95s and KN95s are the most effective.<sup>184</sup> The fashion-minded reader is told, "face masks are still an essential method to prevent the spread of viruses like COVID-19,"<sup>185</sup> and that "[w]earing a mask as a civilian is now common sense."<sup>186</sup> In March and April 2020, *Elle Canada* shared Dr. Tam's mask recommendation, and directed readers where to find Canadian COVID-19 information.<sup>187</sup> While the fashion magazine articles place masks as fashion objects, they also impress upon the reader that mask-wearing is a civic duty when they use terms like "essential" and "common sense." According to this language, not wearing a mask indicates a nonsensical departure from modern medical—and fashionable—society. Similarly to the influenza pandemic, individuals consequently self-regulate their bodies through their fashion choices in order to simultaneously display their role in a health community and as stylish individuals.

When the gauze masks of the 1918 influenza pandemic were sold in clothing retailers they were clearly delineated as medical objects, distinct from fashion. In COVID-19, however, masks became fashion objects for the community-minded individual as well as medical objects, akin to the flu veil, and they provided a means to necessary income for fashion designers during an especially trying time. The face mask became discursively positioned as a fashionable object within the context of COVID-19. The discourse surrounding health and community wellbeing overflowed into fashion, and while these sentiments certainly existed during 1918, in 2020 these ideas were truly in vogue.

## POST-COVID-19: LONGEVITY, LOUNGEWEAR, AND LEVITY

Due to the massive disruption of social life that the COVID-19 pandemic caused, numerous media sources speculated about what a post-pandemic fashion industry would look like. In these discussions, the COVID-19 pandemic was positioned as a catalyst for changing long term systemic issues endemic to the Canadian fashion industry and the industry at large.<sup>188</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Besser, "The 43 Breathable Face Masks to Shop Now;" Specter; Spellings.

<sup>185</sup> Besser, "The Best Disposable Face Masks."

<sup>186</sup> Spellings.

<sup>187</sup> Tang; Victoria Diplacido, "Where to Find Information on Coronavirus in Canada," *Elle Canada*, March 15, 2020, <https://www.ellecanada.com/culture/society/where-to-find-information-on-coronavirus-in-canada>.

<sup>188</sup> CBC Radio, "The pandemic has made it clear just how broken the fashion industry is, says expert," CBC, September 16, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-sept-16-2020-1.5725952/the-pandemic-has-made-it-clear-just-how-broken-the-fashion-industry-is-says-expert-1.5725987>; Isabel B. Slone, "How COVID-19 is Affecting the Canadian Fashion Industry," *FASHION Magazine*, March 30, 2020, <https://fashionmagazine.com/flare/fashion-industry-coronavirus-canada>; Tamara Szames, "Looking Beyond COVID: The Rebirth of Canada's Fashion Industry," *NPD*, December 16, 2020, <https://www.npd.com/news/blog/2020/looking-beyond-covid-the-rebirth-of-canadas-fashion-industry>; Tneguzzi; Carli Whitwell, "Is This The End Of Canadian Fashion?" *Refinery 29*, September 1, 2020, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/2020/09/9952507/future-canadian-fashion-designers-pandemic>.

In 2020, the disruption to the fashion industry was optimistically viewed as a wake-up call that could force innovation and newness in “an industry that could use some shaking up.”<sup>189</sup> For instance, the pandemic made it obvious that a “rewiring” of the fashion industry away from fast fashion is needed.<sup>190</sup> To this end, the pandemic did cause an increased digitization of the industry, which boosts the secondary market and resale and impacts fast fashion brands that rely on storefronts for their sales.<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, the idea that the post-COVID consumer is a more environmentally conscious purchaser and that brands are re-evaluating their sustainability models is persistent.<sup>192</sup> To meet consumer demands, one of the biggest fast fashion producers, Inditex (the parent company of Zara), has recently pledged to cut emissions in half by 2030 and become net zero by 2040 by transitioning to longer-lasting, recyclable materials.<sup>193</sup> Nevertheless, sustainability experts are cautious about such proposals that do not move toward producing less.<sup>194</sup> Programs like the European Commission’s Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which would hold European Union fashion companies accountable for their textile waste, could prompt less textile production.<sup>195</sup> However, according to the Fashion Transparency Index 2023, 99% of the 250 biggest fashion brands in the world “do not disclose a commitment to reduce the number of new items they produce.”<sup>196</sup> Textile waste is of considerable concern in Canada, and Kelly Drennan of Fashion Takes Action estimates that it would take Canada at least 10 years to build a similar EPR reduction program.<sup>197</sup> It remains to be seen whether a true departure from the fast fashion cycle comes to fruition post-COVID-19, but there is a long way to go. For now, the Canadian and global fashion industry remains largely unchanged.

<sup>189</sup> Szames; Toneguzzi; Whitwell.

<sup>190</sup> CBC Radio.

<sup>191</sup> Anita Balchandani & Achim Berg, “The postpandemic state of the fashion industry,” *McKinsey & Company*, March 21, 2021, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-postpandemic-state-of-fashion>; Martino Carrera, “What Will Fashion Creativity Look Like in Coronavirus Aftermath?” *Women’s Wear Daily*, May 14, 2020, <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/fashion-creativity-coronavirus-aftermath-1203630426/>; Laura Husband, “Fast Fashion drops in value post-covid while sportswear brands reign supreme,” *Just Style*, April, 28, 2022, <https://www.just-style.com/news/fast-fashion-drops-in-value-post-covid-while-sportswear-brands-reign-supreme/>.

<sup>192</sup> Balchandani & Berg; Carrera; CBC News, “After the Spanish flu came the Roaring 20s – what fashion trend will follow COVID-19?” *CBC*, January 16, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/covid-fashion-2021-flappers-spanish-flu-1.5868505>; Achala Jaglan, Fashion trends during COVID-19 scenario,” *Fibre 2 Fashion*, October 2021, <https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/9241/fashion-trends-during-and-post-covid-19-scenario>.

<sup>193</sup> RCI, “Can fast fashion slow down? It’s not that simple,” *Radio Canada International*, July 21, 2023, <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/rci/en/news/1997820/fast-fashion-sustainability-targets>.

<sup>194</sup> RCI.

<sup>195</sup> RCI.

<sup>196</sup> “Fashion Transparency Index,” *Fashion Revolution*, 2023, <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/transparency/>.

<sup>197</sup> RCI.

## Trend-wise, clothing that contributes to physical and mental wellbeing remains influential. The conversation around fashion post-COVID-19, similar to post-influenza, is intertwined with ideas of health and wellness.

Fashion experts recognize that casualwear was popular pre-COVID, but highlight that the pandemic solidified the trend.<sup>198</sup> Loungewear, athleisure styles, and activewear are predicted to continue their increase in popularity.<sup>199</sup> In fact, it is predicted that all dress will be casualized; office dress codes will be relaxed,<sup>200</sup> while loungewear and athleisure wear will become more “luxé,”<sup>201</sup> “elevated,”<sup>202</sup> and office-appropriate.<sup>203</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted consumers to focus on health, wellness and fitness, and the preoccupation with living a healthy lifestyle is predicted to remain post-pandemic.<sup>204</sup> Contrastingly, fashion experts predict many individuals will want to move away from wearing sweatpants as they move back into public spaces, and instead wear clothing that brings them joy.<sup>205</sup> This type of dress is alternatively termed “emotional maximalism,”<sup>206</sup> “fantasy dress,”<sup>207</sup> and “dopamine dressing.”<sup>208</sup> Elements of this style include bright colours, prints, exaggerated silhouettes, and playful details that evoke happiness, optimism and joy.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>198</sup> Balchandani & Berg; Donaldson; Freestone; Szames.

<sup>199</sup> Balchandani & Berg; CBC News; Patricia Marx, “The Slob-Chic Style of the Coronavirus Pandemic,” *The New Yorker*, July 13, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/07/20/the-slob-chic-style-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic>; Amanda Tarlton, “8 ways the coronavirus pandemic changed style and fashion trends,” *USA Today*, March 10, 2021, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/reviewedcom/2021/03/10/8-biggest-quarantine-fashion-trends-come-pandemic/6903021002/>.

<sup>200</sup> Aya Al-Hakim, “Functional over formal: How Canadians could redefine office wear as many go back to work,” *Global News*, March 26, 2022, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8707438/covid-pandemic-return-to-office-workwear/>; Freestone.

<sup>201</sup> Donaldson.

<sup>202</sup> Brooklyn Neustaeter, “What post-pandemic fashion may look like,” *CTV News*, May 21, 2020, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/lifestyle/what-post-pandemic-fashion-may-look-like-1.4948829?cache=tzbrsjtr>.

<sup>203</sup> Natalie Theodosi, “What Will Power Dressing Look Like Post-Pandemic?” *Women’s Wear Daily*, June 7, 2021, <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/what-will-power-dressing-look-like-post-pandemic-1234811137/>.

<sup>204</sup> Jaglan; Ross Marowits, “How fashion retailers are surviving COVID-19 on the long road back to normalcy,” *CBC*, July 3, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/retail-covid-fashion-1.5636953>; Szames; Theodosi.

<sup>205</sup> Donaldson.

<sup>206</sup> Carrera.

<sup>207</sup> Priya Elan, “Roaring 20s: Fashion world predicts post-Covid boom,” *The Guardian*, January 31, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2021/jan/31/economists-predict-post-covid-fashion-boom>.

<sup>208</sup> Kayla Marci, “5 post-coronavirus fashion trends to have on your radar,” Edited, June 2, 2021, <https://blog.edited.com/blog/resources/5-post-coronavirus-fashion-trends-to-have-on-your-radar>.

<sup>209</sup> Leah Bourne, “Shopping After COVID: What Women Are Buying,” *Glamour*, May 6, 2021, <https://www.glamour.com/story/women-are-revenge-shopping-after-covid>; Carrera; Marci; Elena Sheppard, “Post-Covid, office wear and other clothing get a rethink as we all try to remember how to dress,” *NBC News*, July 18, 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/post-covid-office-wear-other-clothing-get-rethink-we-all-ncna1274111>.



Loungewear and joy-wear both exemplify how a focus on health and wellness has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and how this is reflected in current and future fashion trends. Loungewear provides physical comfort, and athleisure wear allows for physical activity. The integration of elements of these clothing into office wear and formal wear, where they are not functional elements of design, illustrates how ideas of health have spread, through fashion, beyond their realm. The trend of loungewear and joy-wear also relate to mental health and wellness. Posttraumatic growth is a psychological term for the “positive psychological change that is experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances.”<sup>210</sup> Those who are inclined to dress joyfully post-pandemic are expressing their posttraumatic growth, and so too are those who are staying in their sweats; both groups are caring for their mental state, whatever it may be after coping with the pandemic, through clothing.<sup>211</sup> There are parallels between the fashion trends predicted for post-COVID and the tanning trend that happened post-influenza. After the influenza pandemic, taking care of one’s bodily health through suntanning meant one was also contributing to the health of a growing Canadian nation. Now, shopping conscientiously for clothing indicates one is concerned with taking care of the health of the planet. Meanwhile, although wearing loungewear or joy-wear is not linked back to a specific medical therapy like suntanning was to heliotherapy, wearing clothing post-COVID-19 that provides physical and/or psychological comfort still supports one’s health and wellbeing.

## DISCUSSION

Through the 1918 influenza and COVID-19 pandemic, we can see how times of urgency often result in accelerated change—especially in fashion. As Valerie Steele emphasised in interviews she gave in August and October 2020 about fashion history and the COVID-19 pandemic, stressful historical periods do not necessarily cause new practices or trends to appear in society; instead, they tend to accelerate the pace of changes that were starting to appear prior to disruptive events.<sup>212</sup> For instance, shorter skirts and less restrictive corsets were beginning to appear as early as 1908, long before the rapid popularization of flapper styles in the 1920s.<sup>213</sup> The interventions needed to manage a deadly and infectious illness, from lockdowns and mask mandates to mass public health campaigns, cause all corners of life to be influenced by health discourse. Analyzing the 1918 influenza pandemic and the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada through the lens of fashion discourse therefore presents an opportunity to learn about the changes to the fashioned body these events spurred on.

<sup>210</sup> Maura Brannigan, “The Psychology of Post-Pandemic Dressing,” *Fashionista*, May 18, 2021, <https://fashionista.com/2021/05/covid-19-pandemic-fashion-psychology>.

<sup>211</sup> Brannigan.

<sup>212</sup> Tara Donaldson, “Spring 2021 Fashion: What Will the World Really Wear?” *Women’s Wear Daily*, October 8, 2020, <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/fashion-trends-spring-21-consumer-spending-fit-mckinsey-npd-ideatelier-1234619787/>; Camille Freestone, “What Will Fashion Look Like After the Pandemic?” *Coveteur*, August 31, 2020, <https://coveteur.com/2020/08/31/fashion-after-pandemic/>.

<sup>213</sup> Freestone.

Ideas of health and wellbeing overflow into the fashioning of one's body. Within both historical pandemics, notions of healthiness, wellness, and duty to one's community informed what people wore and how they altered their bodies. The context in which they were regulated determined masks as ambiguous fashion items, and the influenza pandemic instilled a fascination with maintaining one's health that we see expressed in heliotherapy and suntanning. An overflow of discourse occurs again during the COVID-19 pandemic when masks became a fashionable item akin to the flu veil rather than utilitarian medical devices. Post-COVID-19 management of one's own wellbeing through dress focusing on comfort and self-expression also mimics how suntanning became a trend for health and fashion simultaneously. While face masks, suntanning, casual dress and self-expressive clothing may have been present before the respective global emergencies of 1918 and 2020, their prevalence intensified once circumstances made them more relevant.

## LIMITATIONS

While our analysis draws upon a wide range of media sources to establish the field of discourse that informed fashion during both 1918 and 2020, these fields are inevitably composed of ever more actors that affect the larger fashion discourse. Within our research we found a strong current of community-mindedness, however further research could expand upon the moments of rebellion against state messaging and more mainstream opinion. While we did not find evidence of a strong anti-mask sensibility in 1918 Canada, moreso moments of disagreement, during the COVID-19 pandemic there was a much stronger response against masks and mandates. Like Foucault's analysis of the criminal, insane, and sick, the forming of subjects that fall outside the bounds of what the state determines to be desirable can inform how we analyze structures of power and discourse. Further research could delve into if/how these moments of disruption informed fashion discourse, and how said discourse interplays with systems of power.

## CONCLUSION

Within fashion discourse we can see how objects and practices are deemed fashionable within specific fields of possibilities. The pandemics of 1918 and 2020 elucidate how these objects and practices interplay with discourses surrounding health, legislative decisions, and wider fashion discourse to formulate individuals and their subjectivity. Our analysis of masks, the flu veil, heliotherapy, suntanning, and post-COVID-19 sentiments situates each of these within their respective contexts, which then determines which form of self-fashioning is considered fashionable.

**During health crises, fashion discourse entangles itself with that of health authorities and the regulation of bodies by the state but leaves open individual agency in navigating a landscape of information on community and personal safety.**

Fashion therefore works in tandem with the authorities of a period in forming the docile bodies of a populace, but interplays with the existing ideas and actors in the field of fashion discourse. Ideas that circulated previously to a disruptive force, like a pandemic, will be used to inform what is fashionable and will be integrated into what emerges as a fashionable possibility. While we navigate the post-pandemic period, despite COVID still circulating, we will see how this crisis continues to inform our relationship to self-fashioning, health, and well-being.

---

### Acknowledgements

This project was initially written for the Costume Museum of Canada as part of their recent exhibition *Viral Fashion: Fashion in the wake of Pandemics...1920's...2020*, funded by the Government of Canada. With thanks to the Government of Yukon for letting us use their COVID-19 resources.



## Works Cited

- Al-Hakim, Aya. "Functional over formal: How Canadians could redefine office wear as many go back to work." *Global News*, March 26, 2022. <https://globalnews.ca/news/8707438/covid-pandemic-return-to-office-workwear/>.
- Andrews, Margaret. "Epidemic and Public Health: Influenza in Vancouver, 1918-1919" *BC Studies* 34 (1977): 21-44. doi: 10.14288/bcs.v0i34.924.
- Ansari, Sadiya. "The history of our cultural resistance against masks." *Maclean's*, April 22, 2020. <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/the-history-of-our-cultural-resistance-against-masks/>.
- Balchandani, Anita, and Achim Berg. "The postpandemic state of the fashion industry." *McKinsey*, 2021. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-postpandemic-state-of-fashion>.
- "B.C.'s response to COVID-19." *Government of British Columbia*, July 14, 2022. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/response>.
- Belyea, Andrew. "The Plague Sweeps Canada Canada's Spanish Influenza Epidemic: A Story of Heartache and Progress." *Defining Moments Canada*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://definingmomentscanada.ca/1918-influenza-pandemic/history/the-plague-sweeps-canada/>.
- Besser, Rachel. "43 Best Breathable Face Masks for Running and Walking Outside." *Vogue*, January 5, 2022. <https://www.vogue.com/slideshow/breathable-masks>.
- Besser, Rachel. "15 Best Disposable Face Masks To Buy: Black, 3-Ply, Patterned & More." *Vogue*, March 6, 2022. <https://www.vogue.com/slideshow/best-disposable-face-masks>.
- Bogaert, Kandace, and Steve Marti. "Soldiers Struck Down: The Flu Hits the CEF in 1918." *Defining Moments Canada*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://definingmomentscanada.ca/1918-influenza-pandemic/history/soldiers-struck-down/>.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Field of Cultural Production, Or: The Economic World Reversed." *Poetics* 12, no. 4-5 (1983): 311-356. doi: 10.1016/0304-422X(83)90012-8.
- Bourne, Leah. "Shopping After COVID: What Women Are Buying." *Glamour*, May 6, 2021. <https://www.glamour.com/story/women-are-revenge-shopping-after-covid>.
- Brannigan, Maura. "The Psychology of Post-Pandemic Dressing." *Fashionista*, May 18, 2021. <https://fashionista.com/2021/05/covid-19-pandemic-fashion-psychology>.
- Braun, Adele. "The Historic Healing Power of the Beach." *The Atlantic*, August 29, 2013. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/08/the-historic-healing-power-of-the-beach/279175/>.

- Brennen, J. Scott, Felix Simon, Philip Howard, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. "Types, Sources, and Claims of COVID-19 Misinformation." *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*. 2020.
- Brooks, William A. 1918. "The Open-Air Treatment of Influenza." *The American Journal of Public Health* 8, no. 10 (1918): 746-750.
- Brydges, Taylor and Rhiannon Pugh. "An 'Orphan' Creative Industry: Exploring the Institutional Factors Constraining the Canadian Fashion Industry." *Growth and Change* 48, no. 4 (2017): 942-962. doi: 10.1111/grow.12203.
- Carrera, Martino. "What Will Fashion Creativity Look Like in the Coronavirus Aftermath?" *Women's Wear Daily*, May 14, 2020. <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/fashion-creativity-coronavirus-aftermath-1203630426/>.
- Carter, Simon. *Rise and Shine: Sunlight, Technology, and Health*. Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 2007.
- Collard, Eileen. *Women's Dress in the 1920's: An Outline of Women's Clothing in Canada During the "Roaring Twenties"*. Burlington, ON: E. Collard, 1981.
- "Coronavirus (COVID-19): posters, factsheets and resources." *Government of Nova Scotia*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/resources//>.
- "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Québec." *Gouvernement du Québec*, 2022. <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus>.
- "COVID-19 and its Impact on Fashion Magazines." *Canada Fashion Network*, April 27, 2022. <https://www.canadafashionnetwork.com/blog/covid-19-and-its-impact-on-fashion-magazines>.
- "Covid-19 Challenge: How is Canada's Textile Industry Faring?" *Fibre2Fashion*, October 2020. <https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/8787/covid-19-challenge-how-is-canada-s-textile-industry-faring>.
- "COVID-19 info for Albertans." *Government of Alberta*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>.
- "COVID-19: Novel Coronavirus." *Manitoba*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>.
- "COVID-19 Public Health Guidance." *Government of Prince Edward Island*, August 12, 2022. <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/covid-19-public-health-guidance>.
- "COVID-19 public health measures and advice." *Ontario*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures#where-you're-required-to-wear-a-mask>.

- “COVID-19 Resources.” *Government of Northwest Territories*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/covid-19/covid-19-resources>.
- “COVID-19 resources.” *Government of Yukon*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://yukon.ca/en/health-and-wellness/covid-19-information/covid-19-ressources>.
- “COVID-19: Social media and promotional resources for Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada.” *Government of Canada*, August 8, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/digital-resources.html#s0>.
- “Covid: Shoppers swap party clothes for loungewear.” *BBC*, January 11, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59945035>.
- de Jong, Kenton. “Regina’s Darkest Days: The Spanish Influenza.” *Defining Moments Canada*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://definingmomentscanada.ca/1918-influenza-pandemic/history/reginas-darkest-days/>.
- Dickin, Janice, Patricia G. Bailey, and Erin James-Abra. “1918 Spanish Flu in Canada.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, March 19, 2020. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/1918-spanish-flu-in-canada>.
- Dickin McGinnis, Janice P. “The Impact of Epidemic Influenza: Canada, 1918-1919.” *Historical Papers* 12, no. 1 (1977): 120-140. doi: 0.7202/030824ar.
- Diplacido, Vicotria. “Where to Find Information on Coronavirus in Canada.” *Elle Canada*, March 15, 2020. <https://www.ellecanada.com/culture/society/where-to-find-information-on-coronavirus-in-canada>.
- Donaldson, Tara. “Spring 2021 Fashion: What Will the World Really Wear?” *WWD*, October 8, 2020. <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/fashion-trends-spring-21-consumer-spending-fit-mckinsey-npd-ideatelier-1234619787/>.
- Ducharme, Jamie. “An N95 is the Best Mask for Omicron. Here’s Why.” *TIME*, January 28, 2022. <https://time.com/6139169/n95-best-mask-omicron-covid-19/>.
- Edwards, Nina. *Dress for War, Uniform, Civilian Clothing and Trappings, 1914 to 1918*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014.
- Elan, Priya. “Roaring 20s: Fashion world predicts post-Covid boom.” *The Guardian*, January 31, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2021/jan/31/economists-predict-post-covid-fashion-boom>.
- Elle Canada. “ELLE TOP: 10 Stylish Face Masks to Shop Now.” *Elle Canada*, February 17, 2021. <https://www.ellecanada.com/fashion/shopping/elle-top-10-stylish-face-masks-to-shop-now>.
- Farrington, Raquel. “This new Canadian clothing line claims to kill COVID-19 on contact.” *Streets Of Toronto*, October 19, 2021. <https://streetsoftoronto.com/this-new-canadian-clothing-line-claims-to-kill-covid-19-particles-on-contact/>.



- “Fashion Transparency Index.” *Fashion Revolution*, 2023.  
<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/transparency/>.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge: The Discourse on Language*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith and Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1995.
- Foucault, Michel. “The Subject and Power.” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1982): 777-795. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343197>.
- Foucault, Michel. “Technologies of the Self.” Lectures at University of Vermont, October 1982, in *University of Massachusetts Press* (1988): 16-49. <https://foucault.info/documents/foucault.technologiesOfSelf.en/>.
- Freestone, Camille. “What Will Fashion Look Like After the Pandemic?” *Coveteur*, 31 August 2020. <https://coveteur.com/2020/08/31/fashion-after-pandemic/>.
- Frost, Peter. “An Accelerant of Social Change? The Spanish Flu of 1918-19.” *International Political Anthropology* 13 (2020):123-133. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.4295574.
- Goldenberg, Susan. “Killer Flu.” *Canada's History*, September 11, 2018.  
<https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/arts-culture-society/killer-flu>.
- “Guidance and Resources.” *Government of New Brunswick*. Accessed August 12, 2022.  
<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19/guidance.html>.
- Herring, D. Ann. “‘There Were Young People and Old People and Babies Dying Every Week’: The 1918–1919 Influenza Pandemic at Norway House.” *Ethnohistory* 41, no. 1 (1993): 73-105. doi:10.2307/3536979.
- Hobday, R. A. “Sunlight Therapy and Solar Architecture.” *Medical History* 41, no. 4 (1997): 455-472. doi: 10.1017/S0025727300063043.
- Hobday, Richard A., and John W. Carson. “The Open-Air Treatment of Pandemic Influenza.” *The American Journal of Public Health* 99, S2 (2009): S236-S242. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2008.134627.
- Hornik, Susan. “How fashion designers flipped to athleisure during Covid.” *BBC*, June 24, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-57557725>.
- “How does ultraviolet light affect our health?” *Science Museum*, September 28, 2018.  
<https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/how-does-ultraviolet-light-affect-our-health>.
- Humphries, Mark O. *The Last Plague: Spanish Influenza and the Politics of Public Health in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013.
- Husband, Laura. “Fast Fashion drops in value post-covid while sportswear brands reign supreme.” *Just Style*. April, 28, 2022. <https://www.just-style.com/news/fast-fashion-drops-in-value-post-covid-while-sportswear-brands-reign-supreme/>.

- Jaglan, Achala, and Kavita Patil. "Fashion trends during and post COVID-19 scenario." *Fibre2Fashion*, October 2021. <https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/9241/fashion-trends-during-and-post-covid-19-scenario>.
- Jenkins, Jane. "Cures, Clothes, and Comfort: Profiting from the 1918 Influenza Pandemic." *Acadiensis*, April 13, 2020. <https://acadiensis.wordpress.com/2020/04/13/cures-clothes-and-comfort-profiting-from-the-1918-influenza-pandemic/>.
- Jones, Elylt. "Politicizing the Labouring Body: Working Families, Death, and Burial in Winnipeg's Influenza Epidemic, 1918–1919." *Labor* 3, no. 3 (2006): 57-75. doi: 10.1215/15476715-2006-005.
- Jones, Elylt W. "Contact Across a Diseased Boundary: Urban Space and Social Interaction During Winnipeg's Influenza Epidemic." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 13, no. 1 (2002): 119-139. doi: 10.7202/031156ar.
- Kelm, Mary-Ellen. "British Columbia First Nations and the Influenza Pandemic of 1918–19." *BC Studies*, no. 122 (1999): 23-48. doi: 10.14288/bcs.v0i122.1498.
- Kelm, Mary-Ellen. "First Peoples Struggling to Survive What Kind of Government is This?: Influenza, First Nations, and Federal Government Policy." *Defining Moments Canada*. Accessed 12 August 2022. <https://definingmomentscanada.ca/1918-influenza-pandemic/history/first-peoples-struggling-to-survive/>.
- Kirke, Bob, and Elliot Lifson. "The Way We Wore: The COVID Crisis in Canada's Clothing Industry." *Policy Magazine*, 2020. <https://www.policymagazine.ca/the-way-we-wore-the-covid-crisis-in-canadas-clothing-industry/>.
- Kislenko, Arne. "1918 vs. 2020: A look at pandemics in Canada—Alumni." *Toronto Metropolitan University*, September 17, 2020. <https://www.torontomu.ca/alumni/news-and-stories/2020/09/a-look-at-pandemics-in-canada/>.
- Knight, Heather. "The impact of Covid-19 on the people who make our clothes—Fashion Revolution." *Fashion Revolution*. Accessed 17 August 2022. <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/covid19/>.
- Konda, Abhiteja, Abhinav Prakash, Gregory A. Moss, Michael Schmoltdt, Gregory D. Grant, and Supratik Guha. "Aerosol Filtration Efficiency of Common Fabrics Used in Respiratory Cloth Masks." *ACS Nano* 14, no. 5 (2020): 6339-6347. doi: 10.1021/acsnano.0c03252.
- "Living with COVID." *Saskatchewan*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/about-covid-19>.

- Lynteris, Christos. "Plague Masks: The Visual Emergence of Anti-Epidemic Personal Protection Equipment." *Medical Anthropology* 37, no. 6 (2018): 442-457. doi: 10.1080/01459740.2017.1423072.
- Lynteris, Christos. "The Social Life of Coronavirus Masks." *The New York Times*, February 13, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/13/opinion/coronavirus-face-mask-effective.html>.
- Lynteris, Christos. "The Social Potential of Continuing to Wear Masks." *Somatosphere*, July 29, 2021. <http://somatosphere.net/2021/the-social-potential-of-continuing-to-wear-masks.html/>.
- MacCara, Mary E. "Combatting Spanish influenza: Focus on pharmacists, pharmacies and drugs." *Canadian Pharmacists Journal/Revue des Pharmaciens du Canada* 153, no. 6 (October 17, 2020): 335-342. doi: 10.1177/1715163520960178.
- Marci, Kayla. "5 post-coronavirus fashion trends to have on your radar." Edited, June 2, 2021. <https://blog.edited.com/blog/resources/5-post-coronavirus-fashion-trends-to-have-on-your-radar>.
- Marowits, Ross. "How fashion retailers are surviving COVID-19 on the long road back to normalcy." *CBC*, July 3, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/retail-covid-fashion-1.5636953>.
- Marx, Patricia. "The Slob-Chic Style of the Coronavirus Pandemic." *The New Yorker*, July 13, 2020. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/07/20/the-slob-chic-style-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic>.
- Matthews David, Alison. *Fashion Victims: The Dangers of Dress Past and Present*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.
- Minenko, Mark. "A Tale of Two Cities: 'Spanish Flu' Mask Laws in Alberta, Canada." *King's Law Journal* 32, no. 1 (2021): 168-177. doi: 10.1080/09615768.2021.1891615.
- Moore, Booth. "From WWD Archives: How the Spanish Flu of 1918 Affected Fashion." *WWD*, 4 June 2020. <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/how-the-spanish-flu-of-1918-affected-fashion-1203646397/>.
- Neustaeter, Brooklyn. "What post-pandemic fashion may look like." *CTV News*, June 1, 2020. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/lifestyle/what-post-pandemic-fashion-may-look-like-1.4948829?cache=tzbrsjtr>.
- Newman, Kathleen. "Canadian Fashion Designers Coronavirus Effect Business." *Refinery29*, July 23, 2020. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/canadian-fashion-coronavirus-impact>.
- Nicholas, Jane. *The Modern Girl: Feminine Modernities, the Body, and Commodities in the 1920s*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2015.



- Norris, Craig. "After the Spanish flu came The Roaring 20s—what fashion trend will follow COVID-19?" *CBC*, 16 January 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/covid-fashion-2021-flappers-spanish-flu-1.5868505>.
- "Nunavut's Path." *The Government of Nunavut*. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/nunavuts-path>.
- "The pandemic has made it clear just how broken the fashion industry is, says the expert." *CBC*, September 16, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-sept-16-2020-1.5725952/the-pandemic-has-made-it-clear-just-how-broken-the-fashion-industry-is-says-expert-1.5725987>.
- Parkins, Ilya. "Figurative Mobility: Veiling, Orientalism, and Unknowing Women in US Vogue, 1917–25." *Fashion Studies* 1, no. 1 (2018): 1–31. doi: 10.38055/FS010108.
- Parks Canada. "The Spanish Flu in Canada (1918–1920) National Historic Event." *Government of Canada*. Accessed 12 August 2022. <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/res/information-backgrounder/espagnole-spanish>.
- Pollock, Donald. "Masks and the Semiotics of Identity." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1, no. 3 (1995): 581–597. doi: 10.2307/3034576.
- "Posters, Infosheets and Videos." *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador*. Accessed 12 August, 2022. <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/posters-infosheets-and-videos/>.
- RCI. "Can fast fashion slow down? It's not that simple." *Radio Canada International*, July 21, 2023. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/rci/en/news/1997820/fast-fashion-sustainability-targets>.
- Rocamora, Agnès. "Fashion Media Discourse." In *Fashioning the City: Paris, Fashion and the Media*, 54–62. London: I.B. Tauris, 2009.
- Segrave, Kerry. *Suntanning in 20th Century America*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2005.
- Sheppard, Elena. "Post-Covid, office wear and other clothing get a rethink as we all try to remember how to dress." *NBC News*, July 18, 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/post-covid-office-wear-other-clothing-get-rethink-we-all-nca1274111>.
- Slone, Isabel B. "How COVID-19 is Affecting the Canadian Fashion Industry." *FASHION Magazine*, March 30, 2020. <https://fashionmagazine.com/flare/fashion-industry-coronavirus-canada/>.
- Specter, Emma. "N95 and KN95 Face Masks to Shop Now—Because It's Time to Start Properly Masking Up (Again)." *Vogue*, January 5, 2022. <https://www.vogue.com/article/n95-and-kn95-face-masks-to-shop-now>.
- Spellings, Sarah. "Where to Buy Face Masks That Are Stylish Online." *Vogue*, March 3, 2022. <https://www.vogue.com/slideshow/stylish-face-masks-to-shop-now>.

- Strasser, Bruno J., and Thomas Schlich. "A history of the medical mask and the rise of throwaway culture." *The Lancet Journal*, May 22, 2020. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31207-1.
- Szames, Tamara. "Looking Beyond COVID: The Rebirth of Canada's Fashion Industry." *NPD Group*, 2020. <https://www.npd.com/news/blog/2020/looking-beyond-covid-the-rebirth-of-canadas-fashion-industry/>.
- Tang, Wing Sze. "What to Know About Coronavirus Protection." *Elle Canada*, March 16, 2020. <https://www.ellecanada.com/beauty/health-and-fitness/what-to-know-about-coronavirus-prevention>.
- Tarlton, Amanda. "8 ways the coronavirus pandemic changed style and fashion trends." *USA Today*, December 16, 2021. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/reviewedcom/2021/03/10/8-biggest-quarantine-fashion-trends-come-pandemic/6903021002/>.
- Testa, Jessica. "Dressing for a Post-Covid World." *The New York Times*, April 10, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/10/at-home/virus-clothes.html>.
- Thanh Ha, Tu, and James Keller. "Mandatory masks, shuttered theatres and confusing rules: The 1918 Spanish flu pandemic and its similarities with today." *The Globe and Mail*, December 28, 2020. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-mandatory-masks-shuttered-theatres-and-confusing-rules-the-1918/>.
- Theodosi, Natalie. "What Will Power Dressing Look Like Post-Pandemic?" *Women's Wear Daily*, June 7, 2021, <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/what-will-power-dressing-look-like-post-pandemic-1234811137/>.
- Tomes, Nancy. "'Destroyer and Teacher:' Managing the Masses During the 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic." *Public Health Reports* 125, Supplement 3: The 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic in the United States (2010) : 48-62. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41435299>.
- Toneguzzi, Mario. "Canadian Fashion Industry Hit Hard by COVID-19: Interviews." *Retail Insider*, August 10, 2020. <https://retail-insider.com/retail-insider/2020/08/canadian-fashion-industry-hit-hard-by-covid-19-cafa-david-dixon-glenn-dixon/>.
- Tynan, Jane. "Michel Foucault: Fashioning the Body Politic." In *Thinking Through Fashion: A Guide to Key Theorists*, edited by Agnès Rocamora and Anneke Smelik, 184-199. London: I.B. Tauris, 2016.
- Wetherille, Kelly. "Face Masks: The New Global Must-Have Accessory." *Women's Wear Daily*, June 4, 2020. <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/ready-to-wear/face-masks-next-must-have-fashion-accessory-1203643671/>.

- Whitwell, Carli. "Did Coronavirus Kill The Canadian Fashion Industry?" *Refinery29*, September 1, 2020. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/2020/09/9952507/future-canadian-fashion-designers-pandemic>.
- Zanoni, Elizabeth A. "Far, Fast, and Fashionable': American Women Swimmers and Their Swimwear in 1920s and 1930s Sport and Consumer Culture," Master's thesis, Western Michigan University, 2005. [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/masters\\_theses/3913/](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/masters_theses/3913/).
- Zhang, Mingyuan. "Writing Against "Mask Culture": Orientalism and COVID-19 Responses in the West." *Anthropologica* 63, no. 1 (2021): 1-14. doi: 10.18357/anthropologica6312021327.
- Zou, Lirong, Feng Ruan, Mingxing Huang, Lijun Liang, Huitao Huang, Zhongsi Hong, Jianxiang Yu, et al. "SARS-COV-2 Viral Load in Upper Respiratory Specimens of Infected Patients." *New England Journal of Medicine* 382, no. 12 (2020): 1177-79. doi: 10.1056/nejmc2001737.





## Author Bios

**Brigid Trott** (she/her) is a writer and researcher living in Ottawa, Ontario on the traditional unceded territory of the Anishnaabeg People. Her work has centred around idealised depictions of fashion on feminine bodies in visual culture. While her research previously focused on historical representations of clothing, recently she is interested in the modern depiction of the fashioned body and its role in the hyperconsumption of clothing. She graduated from McGill University with a BA in Art History and from Toronto Metropolitan University with a MA in Fashion.

**Robin J. Chantree** (they/them) is an interdisciplinary creative researcher currently residing in Tkaranto/Toronto but originally from north-eastern British Columbia in Treaty 8 territory, the land of the Dane-Zaa people. They hold an MA in Fashion from Toronto Metropolitan University, and a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design. Their practice spans visual art, illustration, fashion and graphic design, and often consists of them researching and mixing analogue and digital tools. They are interested in how clothing embodies historical and cultural norms, and how these ideas can be challenged through the materiality of garments.

---

### Article Citations

**MLA** • Chantree, Robin, and Brigid Trott. "Viral Fashion: Clothing in the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Fashion Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2024, pp. 1-46, <https://www.fashionstudies.ca/viral-fashion/>, <https://doi.org/10.38055/FS050103>.

**APA** • Chantree, Robin, and Brigid Trott (2024). Viral Fashion: Clothing in the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Fashion Studies*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.38055/FS050103>.

**Chicago** • Chantree, Robin, and Brigid Trott. "Viral Fashion: Clothing in the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Fashion Studies* 5, no. 1 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.38055/FS050103>.

Toronto  
Metropolitan  
University

# Fashion

at The Creative School



# FASH/ON5 STUDIES



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

ISSN 2371-3453

Copyright © 2024 Fashion Studies - All Rights Reserved

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BYNC-ND 4.0) license  
(see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)