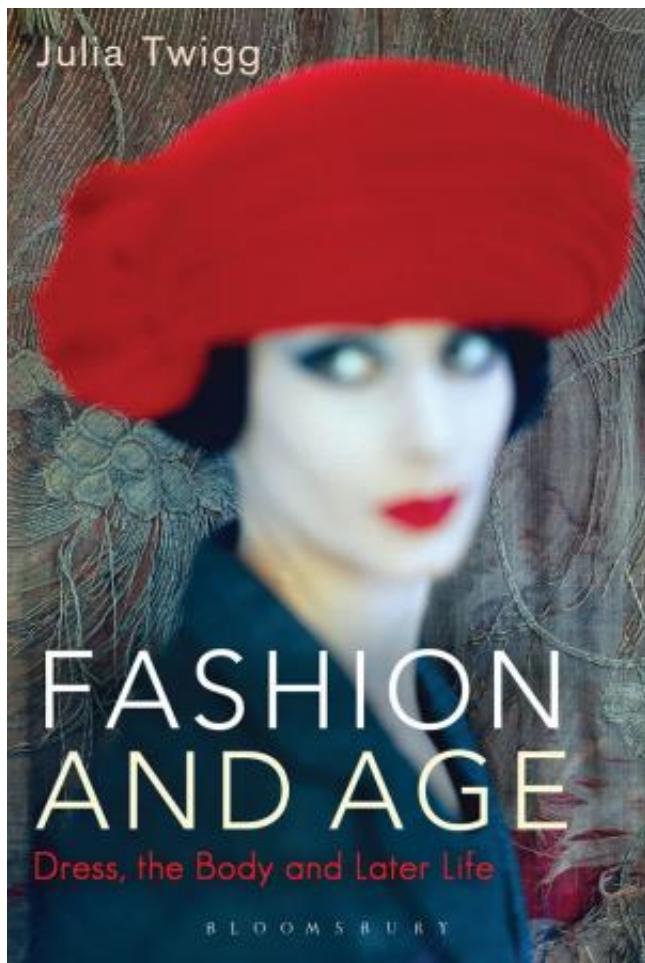


Older women still feel cultural pressure to tone down

September 5 2013



This is *Fashion and Age: Dress, the Body and Later Life*. Credit: Bloomsbury

New research by one of the UK's leading sociologists shows many older women still feel under pressure to tone down their dress.

Others, however, are taking advantage of cheap casual clothing to stay fashionable, as well as remaining integrated in mainstream society through shared lifestyles.

These are among the key findings of research presenting the first detailed analysis of the links between fashion and [age](#).

The research, contained in a new book titled *Fashion and Age: Dress, the Body and Later Life*, by the University's Professor Julia Twigg, shows how clothing and dress can shape identity in later life - particularly for women.

It highlights that many women still feel they become 'invisible' as they've grow older - but points out that others are buying clothes from High Street retailers that are moving to meet the fashion demands of the '[grey market](#)'.

Professor Twigg said: 'Fashion and age sit uncomfortably together. Fashion inhabits a world of youthful beauty, of fantasy [imagination](#), of allure.

'In contrast, age is often seen by people as a time of greyness with a toned-down, self-effacing presentation.'

The research found that women over 75 now shop for clothes as often as those aged 16-34 did in the early 1960s, suggesting that engagement with [fashion](#) can form an important part of continued integration with mainstream culture.

Professor Twigg said: 'The freeing up of age-related codes of dress has brought new freedoms and pleasures for older women. But it has also imposed new demands and new disciplinary requirements that they remain fashionable.

'Clothes are about a great deal more in the lives of older women than simply the attempt to meet or transcend rules about how to behave in relation to age. For many older women, dress remains, despite the cultural limitations imposed, a source of enjoyment and a site of aesthetic pleasure.'

More information: Julia Twigg is Professor of Social Policy and Sociology within the University's School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research. *Fashion and Age: Dress, the Body and Later Life* is published by Bloomsbury.

Provided by University of Kent

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