



TRANS-DISABLED BODIES AND
FASHION CHOICES – TO
CONFORM OR DISRUPT?



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Introduction



“Dress is a fundamental aspect of embodied communication and the social construction of meaning and gender identity” (Catalpa and McGuire, 2020, pg47).



Gender Policing and Ultra-High Beauty and Fashion Standards



“Gender policing refers to the regulation and enforcement of gender norms that target an individual who is perceived as transgressing normative rules or the heterosexual matrix”
(Hoskin, 2019, pg2-3).



Passing



The complexities of 'passing' and the problematic inference of 'failing'.

Clothing as a device to signify gender.



Comfort Vs Aesthetic

Example: Comfort in compression with binders and autism.

Practical boundaries – dexterity issues (linked to a number of different disabilities)

Sensory boundaries – seams, textures, labels of clothing



A grey sweatshirt with a zip allowing access to an arm



Jeans with a Velcro button



Shirt with magnets instead of buttons



Chinos with openings at the bottom to allow for prosthetic limbs



Disruption and Conformity



Conformity as a mode of
productive presentation.

Disruption to challenge the
cishnormative ableist expectations
of wider society.

Concluding thoughts



Trans-disabled individuals strategically navigate clothing and fashion choices, choosing when and how to pass, and when to be visible or invisible.

Clothing can be a marker of identity, a cloak of mystery and a way to meet disability needs.

When choosing clothing, trans-disabled individuals are walking the tightrope of power and stigma, vying for an existence that is often deemed as 'wrong'.

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