

Physical Attractiveness & Fashion

We've recently been looking at how the characteristics that men and women find attractive could be related to evolutionary factors. One of the points that comes out of this is how physical characteristics like a woman's relatively low waist to hip ratio are a sort of genetic 'con trick' e.g. by hiding when she is most fertile, the woman can 'con' men into giving up resources.

Evolutionary psychologists sometimes argue that fashion is simply an extension of this evolutionary con trick. Below are some examples of male and female fashions from history. For each one, suggest how it might function in an evolutionary sense to make the wearer more attractive as a mate.



Bustle Dress (19th Century)



Zoot suit (1940s)



Rara skirt (1980s, but making a comeback)



Corset (16th-20th Century)



Early 19th Century gents' suit



Eyeliner (been around forever)