Chapter 2
Influences, Impacts and Attire in Colonial Western Australia

Overview

This chapter compares the influences and impacts upon attire and finery in colonial Western Australian society with the British/European context. The process of social influence occurs when an individual accepts influence from another person or group, to achieve a favourable reaction or to gain status. Nystrom, however, divides the factors which influence fashionable finery into three categories, ie, dominating groups (ie, royalty, nobility), ideas (ie, feminism, unionism) and events (ie, wars, Industrial Revolution). This chapter expands on Nystrom’s classification by adding to the investigation the influences of trade, media, climate, social order and religion. Because the study site is outside Europe, this chapter also investigates international influences as well as comparing fashions with those of the mother country and Europe.

This chapter addresses the research question, “What were the major social and geographical impacts on early Western Australian clothing?”, and raises questions relating to ‘international influence’, ‘local influence’ and ‘colonial uniqueness’. In examining whether the international factors, ie, British influence, French influence etc, had an impact on colonial clothing, this chapter examines the importance of British identity and ideology in the colony. This link with Britain also enhances the application of Veblen’s and Simmel’s theories to the colonial context. As the upper-classes were regarded as fashion examples (according to the Simmel’s nineteenth-century trickle-down theory), it is important to examine the influence of the upper-class, ie, governors and their spouses, on clothing in the colony. Thus, the traditional influences of dominating groups, their ideas and events as identified by Nystrom and used by Crane and Bell are fundamental in the study of clothing and fashion.

The colonial context, in this case Western Australia, was embodied by geographical isolation, a six month period of seasonal differences, shortages of supplies, materials and man power, and a harsh and inhospitable climate compared with England. So, in addition to Nystrom’s three categories, the clothing examined in this thesis was influenced by other more physical and pragmatic impacts. Therefore, in analysing clothing influences in the colony, it is essential to understand the connection between prevailing fashion trends and range of materials imported to the colony. This helps the examination of how and why subtle but significant changes in clothing occurred.

Nonetheless, in spite of the strangeness and isolation of the new environment, the early colonists were essentially British and sought to maintain their social and cultural inheritance in the new land. The transfer of this inheritance and re-interpretation that occurred in the face of both old and new influences is the major focus of this chapter.

This chapter is divided into sections, ie, International influences: The British influence, Religion and clothing in colonial Western Australia, Other international influences, ie, French influence and Indian influence, East and South East Asians and their clothing. Local influence: Colonial press and its influence in relation to clothing in Western Australia and climatic impact. The chapter concludes with an interpretation of the data in terms of Veblen’s and Simmel’s theories as outlined in Chapter 1.

According to Georg Simmel’s *trickle-down theory*, fashion is initiated by the highest socio-economic classes and imitated later by lower-classes. As he explains, “Social forms, apparel and aesthetic judgement are constantly transformed by fashion. However, fashion in all these things affects only the upper-classes. Naturally, the lower-classes look and strive towards the upper.”138 Thus lower-classes, which aspire to improve social standing within their class, imitate upper-class fashion. But by the time the fashion has reached the lower-strata, the upper-class has adopted other different fashions/styles, which keeps them distinct from the lower-classes.

---

The British Influence in Colonial Western Australian Clothing

To understand the British influence, the notion of identity, and British Nationality in particular, requires definition. Since the nineteenth century, national identity was significant throughout Europe and "Britishness was an amalgam which transcended both 'Englishness' and 'Scottishness". The term British is the dominant descriptor of patriotic identification, while the term England has been the demographical, economical and political synonym of Great Britain. According to the British Census of 1801, the population of England was comprised of 54% from the United Kingdom, Ireland 33%, Scotland 10% and Wales 3%. By 1871 England provided 68.7% of the population, Wales and Scotland 14.6% and Ireland 16.7%.

The authority of the British was strengthened by the English language. For example, according to Robbins "Ever since the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543, when Welsh had been proscribed as an official medium, English had been steadily replacing Welsh in the principality for most public purposes. Only in the sphere of religion, especially in churches, Welsh language maintained a dominance from the nineteenth century." Nevertheless, as Grant and Stringer claim, neither Englishness nor Britishness is a separately identifiable phenomenon, rather they are the product of complicated cross-cultural developments.

Besides the dominance of the English language, there was dominance of British culture and style. This is particularly evident in clothing and fashion. For example, the tartan kilt had been the traditional costume of Scots from the sixteenth century. By the 1700s, wearing tartan was seen by the ruling English as extremism and tartan became a symbol of Scottish nationalism. By mid 1700 the Dress Act restricted the Highland clothing including the kilt and tartan and by 1783 the Dress Act was repealed. However, during Queen Victoria’s reign tartan and the kilt became popular throughout the United Kingdom, not as a Scottish nationalist statement but as a fashion of English society. In relation to Western Australia, according to Appendix I, plaid (woollen cloth worn as part of Highland costume), ie, Scotch plaid, gala plaid, fancy plaid, shepherd’s plaid, woollen plaid and tartan plaid was imported from the 1840s.

The British way of dressing was evident in every Australian colony. As Veblen notes, in the nineteenth century, "The chief motive of dress is emulation"\(^1\) and colonial settlers emulated British styles and fashions in spite of their unsuitability. For example, as Joel explains, "The first settlers were certainly not going to start changing things just because of a little matter of sub-tropical heat. There was a determination not to give in to the land or its climate."\(^2\) Cunningham, a New South Wales colonial surgeon, also describes the importance of appearance and the significance of dressing in London fashions during the early nineteenth century: "The moment a lady blooming fresh from England is known to be tripping along Sydney streets, you will see our prying fair, singly or in groups, popping eagerly out their repositories for curls; to take a note of the cut of her gown, the figure of her bonnet, and the pattern and colour of the scarf or shawl she displays upon her shoulders, that they may forthwith post off to put themselves in the 'dear fashion' too."\(^3\) Also during the 1880s, English traveller Richard Twopeny observed the existence of the English influence in relation to attire, in the initial settlements in the eastern states of Australia. Twopeny noted that, although in summer 'Australians', living at the time in either New South Wales, Victoria or South Australia dressed in the thinnest and lightest dress materials, their perceptions regarding fashionable attire were insensible, unrealistic and unsuitable to the environment, ie, "Can you imagine yourself wearing a black coat and high hat with a thermometer jogging about from seventy to one hundred and ten degrees in the shade? I might put you down a fool, but would admit your claims to be a dandy"\(^4\).

In relation to Western Australia, the British influence was paramount. According to the Census of 1834, almost 98 per cent of the population was of British descent. For example, colonist Ogle wrote in the 1830s, "The elegancies of life are sedulously cultivated by the higher order of society. They have formed associations corresponding with similar establishments in their native country."\(^5\) Moreover, the powerful colonial personalities including Governors' spouses, especially Lady Broome, also known as Lady Barker, influenced the implementation of British tradition in every manner. For example, as an author of several books, \((House\ and\ House\ Keeping,\ The\ Bedroom\ and\ Boudoir,\ Letters\ to\ Guy)\(^6\), she detailed

---

\(^3\) Cunningham, P. 1827, *Two Years in New South Wales: vol. 1*, Henry Colburn, London. pp. 56
British traditions and customs in fashion, furniture, house and house keeping as well as food. Photographs\textsuperscript{150} of the Governor’s House from 1882 to 1889 suggest that the furniture and other decorations followed the styles of the day, as well as those illustrated in her own books. Additionally, in keeping with the maintenance of British fashion, affluent Western Australian colonist Lady Forrest’s delight was to wear new fashionable dresses ordered from London.\textsuperscript{151}

The distinctive attire of British domestic servants evolved into uniforms in the Victorian era. The only item to be generally worn by every servant was the apron.\textsuperscript{152} Initially females who wore aprons were farmworkers, whilst cooks, builders and masons were the primary male wearers.\textsuperscript{153} Aprons, also called *aperne* and *napron*, for men were used from the thirteenth century onwards, whilst from the fourteenth century, women also wore them.\textsuperscript{154} In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the apron became one of the most popular items of domestic servants.\textsuperscript{155} A typical apron was large, bibless, tied around the waist, often trimmed with a band of embroidery below the waist and usually made of coarse linen.

Domestic servants’ apparel was significant in colonial Western Australia. According to newspaper advertisements, aprons of different styles and materials were imported from the 1840s. For example, printed aprons, gig aprons, housemaids’ muslin aprons, housemaids’ Indian linen aprons with bibs, ladies’ German aprons, Holland aprons, cooking aprons, muslin aprons and satin aprons were imported to Western Australia throughout the nineteenth century. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914) Significantly the different aprons for ladies and their housemaids imported during the 1890s indicated the distinction between colonial master and servant in the existing class structure. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914)

\textsuperscript{150}Perth Archives
\textsuperscript{151}Crawley, F. K. 1962, *Western Australia’s Lady Forrest*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne. pp. 10
European fashion features such as crinolines, bustles and tea gowns also reflected the British influence in the colony. As Fletcher explains, "The crinoline was the dominating element of the fashions of the 1860s"\(^{156}\) in eastern Australia. This was also the case in Western Australia, e.g., in the 1860s Janet Millett wrote of "Two ladies (in Fremantle) with crinolines of considerable magnitude ..." \(^{157}\) Colonial Western Australian newspaper advertisements for crinolines appeared from 1859 to 1880 which also illustrates the acceptance of this style in the Western Australian colony. Numerous crinoline dresses, bustle dresses and tea-gowns are to be found in surviving clothing collections in Western Australia. For example,

A. The printed barege (wool muslin) crinoline dress with high, round and piped neckline and three-quarter-length sleeves with double frill at cuff line. Full pleated skirt.
Swan-Guildford Historical Society Collection

B. The grey/blue taffeta dress with grey satin trimmings, high neck with mandarin collar and long sleeves with grey trimming on cuffs. Skirt with train and bustle.
Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection

C. The burgundy coloured silk tea-gown, with princess-line cut with six gores and a mandarin collar. Leg-o-mutton sleeves with ruched silk inset.
Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection

\(^{156}\) Fletcher, M. 1984, *Costume in Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne. pp. 114
\(^{157}\) Millett, E. 1980, *An Australian Parsonage or the Settler and the Savage in Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 12
Figure 2:
Crinoline dresses, bustle dresses and tea gowns: Western Australia

Source: Swan-Guildford Historical Society
Royal Western Australian Historical Society
Drawn by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage
Women in colonial Western Australia clearly wanted to dress in a similar manner to women in Britain, but like all the fashion conscious they did not want to appear identical to each other. Therefore identical costumes were scarce, in spite of similar cut, material and trimmings. *(See Figure 3)*
Figure 3:
Similar Style dresses worn in Western Australia c1860

A. 26472P  C. 21423P
B. 26470P  D. 21472P

Source: Battye Library Photograph Collection
E. 26339P  F. 263581P
G. 26473P  H. 26823P

Source: Battye Library Photograph Collection
I. Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection
The resemblance between colonial attire and British attire suggests the prominence of British leverage in colonial Western Australia throughout the nineteenth century. For example:

**Figure 4:**
Comparison: Similarities between Western Australian Surviving Costumes and Costumes in British Collections

Source: Royal Western Australian Historical Society
Swan-Guildford Historical Society

Photographed and drawn by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage
Dress c1830

Waistcoat c1850

Dress c1830
Fremantle Heritage Museum Collection

Waistcoat c1850
Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection
**Dress c1855**

**Dress c1850**
Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection.

**Dress c1870**

**Dress c1870**
Fremantle Heritage Museum Collection
Dress c1870

Dress early 1880
Swan-Guildford Historical Society Collection.

Dress c1890

Dress c1890
Swan-Guildford Historical Society Collection.

Summer dress of rose pink foulard with broad stripe of white. 1891
The British influence on attire approximately sixty years after the establishment of the colony is noteworthy. For example, on 23 March 1894, *The West Australian* reported the fashion for the winter season: "It is not to be expected that a display of fashionable garments for the winter season could be as bright, pleasing and artistic as a spring or summer show. Even in this country, where winters are not dreary and dark as they are at home, similar colours and hues prevail in our clothing. The dress materials are perfectly suited to the present modes," and in January 1886, *The Western Mail* reports, "English tailors are designing dresses with double or second skirts with plain lower skirts."

**Figure 5:**
Goldfields ladies: Western Australia late 1890

---

159 *The Western Mail*, 2 January 1886, pp. 5
The British influence on attire even in the remote goldfields is also notable. On 17 March 1899, *The Express and Murchison and Yalgoo Goldfields Chronicler* published an illustration reflecting the fashions of the Goldfields ladies. In addition, colonial traveller Vivienne describes the women in the goldfields: "I was surprised to see women so richly dressed, elegant Redfern tailor-made gowns, Worth carriage costumes (although no carriages were to be seen, but plenty of buggies with dust covered hoods) were much in evidence; many of the rich women send to London and Paris, I am told for their gowns." The population at the time in the goldfields was approximately sixty thousand and these colonists appeared to maintain their clothing traditions regardless of climatic conditions and an environment which was even more harsh than that of Perth.

Over the centuries, sumptuary laws had regulated dress, wedding celebrations and other types of extravagant display throughout Europe. In fact, British social structure was controlled by the practice of sumptuary laws particularly in relation to attire. For example, in the thirteenth century British sumptuary legislation specified that 'no one except the King may wear sendal (rich silk) or silk; no one may wear marten furs except the King or noble; no one may wear ermine or otter on their cloaks.' Also in an early Elizabethan proclamation, the *Proclamation Against Excess in Apparel*, ruled that, "None shall wear in his apparel any: silk, nor any sables- except earls, viscounts and barons; furs- except dukes, earls or their children, barons and knights of the order; furs of leopards- except baron’s sons, knights, or men that may dispand 200 pounds by year..." (Proclamation, Elizabeth 1, 21st October 1559, Dyson 1618: No. 14) By the nineteenth century, however, sumptuary legislation was no longer administered in Britain, although silk and fur remained a visible demonstration of the social class of the wearer. In Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the use of fur on clothing evolved into vicarious displays of wealth and power, as Mrs Oscar Wilde wrote in 1889: "Sable is for the rich only, judging from the jacket I was lately shown costing 900 pounds."

---

In colonial Western Australia, a significant quantity and variety of furs and silks were imported. Newspapers published versions of fashion trends in Europe, as well as the information on supplies in the colony. For example, *The Western Mail* in 1886 claimed that “Beaver, otter and silver fox are to be the favourite furs of the coming season in their natural tints. Fur-trimmed very high collars, sleeves and cuffs are in fashion”, and according to the *Ladies' Column* of 2nd January 1886, the fashionable trend in fur in Europe was described as, “Favourite combinations of furs are light beaver, light otter, natural lynx, dark red, grey and blue cloth with black Astrakhans [the dark curly fleece of lambs from Astrakhan in Russia], light grey velvet, corduroy, and rough cloths with natural Astrakhans.” Further imports in nineteenth century newspaper advertisements included fur boas, beaver cloth capes and chesterfields, marmot stoles, coats and necklets, moleskin and sealskin jackets, hare, Russian hare, foxaline [Russian hare], squirrel and Russian squirrel necklets, foxaline and sealette stoles, moleskin, buckskin, doeskin trousers, doeskin waistcoats, French beaver skins, chamois skins, swan skins, foxaline, seallette, mole seallette and curl beaver as well as imitation bear skins, imitation seal skins, imitation racoon, imitation badger, imitation silver fox and imitation musquash skins. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914) Fur hats were also evident as early as 1840, as colonist E. W. Launder recorded, “The Governor was habited in his white beaver hat ...” Silks, eg, grenadine, taffeta, sarsenet, Persian, gossamer, coloured gossamer, Japanese silk, coded, Paris, foulls, broche, surah, and brocaded silks were also imported as dress fabrics. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914)

In the nineteenth-century Britain and France, actual sized imitation animals, ie, birds, cats, ouistitis (small monkeys) were used to embellish clothes, hats, bonnets and boas were in fashion. This was one of the most extravagant fashion trends in the nineteenth century and was a precurser to the use of feathers. An adornment of colourful feathers symbolised status, conforming to the theory of conspicuous consumption and fashion-dictated social dominance. The feathers from coloured birds, ie, peacock, quetzal and the bird of paradise, were reserved for the ornamentation of the ruling-classes of society in the same way as ruling-classes in many primitive civilisations have used feathers for body decoration. Peacock tail

---

165 *The Western Mail*, 02/01/1886, pp. 5
166 *The Western Mail*, 02 January 1886
feathers in particular were generally reserved for royalty and nobility in Europe. In early times the Egyptians, Minoans, Assyrians and Persians wore plumes on their head-dresses and the Chinese used plumes as an indication of rank, ie, during the Manchu dynasty, a peacock feather was a symbol for nobility, while a pheasant's feather symbolised lower-classes. During the nineteenth century, feathers such as ostrich, bird of paradise, peacock, pheasant, egret, heron, African stork and marabou were used to decorate ladies' headwear and dresses as trimmings and accessories. Thus, feathers were also regarded as a sign of the nineteenth-century woman's status. 170

Western Australian colonists were obviously influenced by this particular fashion in the nineteenth century, as attested by The Western Australian in 1891 which reported that, “Hats were elaborately trimmed with birds” 171 and by surviving stuffed/imitated animal-trimmed boas and bonnets in the Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection, King Cottage Museum and newspaper advertisements of the time. The surviving fur and animal-trimmed items in the Western Australian museum and historical society collections were imported from Europe, especially from Britain and were obviously European animals. The absence of Australian animals suggests the either these animals were not seen as possible fashion items or that there was a lack of knowledge of or resources for taxidermy in Western Australia at the time.

Native animal skins however, were used for other purposes. The furs and skins of native animals, ie, platypus, opossums, wallabies and kangaroos were primarily use as floor-mats in the eastern colonies of Australia, as Lady Audrey Tennyson wrote in 1903, “I was given the most lovely platypus rug of 20 guineas ...” 172 Native animal skins were also used as floor coverings in colonial Western Australia, ie, “Forrest boys [the John Forrest family] learned how to tan possum and kangaroo skins to serve as rugs.” 173

171 Western Australian, 27 October 1891
173Crowley, F. K. 1971, Forrest 1847-1918, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia. pp. 10
Professional clothing in nineteenth-century Britain also had its own specific styles. Black coloured clothing continued to dominate in the medical profession, the church and the legal profession. As De Marly explains, “A doctor wore a black suit, waistcoat and knee breeches”\textsuperscript{174} and Cunnington describes, “His (a doctor) black suit filled without a wrinkle and his thin dress boots shone with patent polish”\textsuperscript{175} in nineteenth-century Britain. This custom was undoubtedly maintained by the transplanted British settlers of the Swan River colony, as George Fletcher Moore stated in August 1831, “As to clothing, black and blue clothes are most saleable. Our medical men, lawyers, clergymen, and those in mourning, as among you, wear black.”\textsuperscript{176}

As Taylor describes, a vast array of special mourning attire had developed over the centuries which was worn by the bereaved, particularly widows.\textsuperscript{177} The colour black had been regarded as an official mourning colour from the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{178} Mourning dress for men in the nineteenth-century Britain was simple in contrast to women’s. Mourning cloaks and trailing hat weepers were replaced by a black crepe armband, worn with an ordinary black suit and black tie or with normal clothing.\textsuperscript{179} By 1860, mourning cloaks were only worn by the funeral undertakers. On the other hand, affluent Victorian upper-class women in mourning wore black dresses, black mourning gloves and long black mourning veils with accessories such as handkerchiefs, weepers, fans, parasols, umbrellas, aprons, pin-cushions and jewellery.\textsuperscript{180} The working-classes appeared in their dark coloured Sunday-Best clothing at funerals and servants in the wealthy households wore special mourning attire and accessories during the family’s mourning.\textsuperscript{181}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item Moore, G. F. 1884, \textit{Diary of Ten Years: Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia}, M Walbrook, London. pp. 59-60
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The British mourning customs were clearly also practised in colonial Western Australia, eg, "In mourning, as among you, we wear black," wrote colonist George Fletcher Moore in August 1831. In addition, the newspaper advertisements announced the importation of black dresses, black clothes and mourning attire throughout the century, eg, 'Mourning collars', 'widows' caps', 'mourning flowers'[black, white, grey or mauve coloured silk/crepe/ribbon flowers worn in bonnets, caps or dresses]. A significant amount of black fabric was also imported to colonial Western Australia. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914)

In nineteenth century Britain, those who could not afford to purchase new mourning attire, dyed their ordinary clothes black with Indian logwood. This practice was also employed by colonial Western Australian mourners, as attested by an advertisement in The Inquirer in 1871:

```
"J.F. Herold
St. George's Terrace, Perth.
Silk, Cotton and Woollen Pattern Dyer.
Family mourning dyed in 48 hours."
```

Mourning and the customs associated with the bereavement, especially attire, played a significant part in the lives of the colonists. The diaries and letters of colonists constantly discussed the mortality of infants and childbearing mothers, eg, “Language refuses to utter what I experienced when mine died in my arms in this dreary land”, wrote Georgiana Molloy in October 1833. In November 1842, Rev. Wollaston stated, “Tomorrow I have a funeral in Bunbury. A Roman Catholic woman, who has died in childbed.” Therefore among the surviving costumes, black attire, especially silk and crepe, is substantial.

---

182 Moore, G. F. 1884, *Diary of Ten Years: Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia*, M Walbrook, London. pp. 59-60
183 *The Inquirer*, 17 September 1862, pp 1 & 5 June 1844
184 *The Inquirer*, 24 December 1862, pp 1
185 *The Inquirer*, 19 December 1868, pp 1
186 *The Victoria Express*, 28 January 1880
188 *The Inquirer*, 1 February 1871, pp 1
The influence of royalty on mourning attire from the mid-nineteenth century was significant. Much of this can be attributed to Queen Victoria and her own personal grieving for her consort Prince Albert. After the Prince’s death in 1861, the Queen wore black or white and different versions of black or white widows’ weeds for the remaining forty years of her life. According to Taylor, it was Queen Victoria who ‘fanned the cult of mourning and spread it to all classes of society’. During 1850-1890, the etiquette of mourning and the importance of special mourning attire became highly significant in British social history.190 Many of Queen Victoria’s colonial subjects followed her example. For instance, the surviving black dress of Mary Higham in the Fremantle Heritage Museum collection resembles Queen Victoria’s mourning dresses. Higham, a widow in her late fifties and sixties, wore this black dress in Fremantle during 1870-1880.

Figure 6:
Mary Higham’s black silk dress with trained and ruched bustle skirt and long sleeves with pleated flounces.

Source: Fremantle Heritage Museum

There were many black dresses worn in Western Australia after 1860, for example,

**Figure 7:**

A. The 1870s black satin dress with stand-up collar and hook fastening. Shaped bodice with darts and dropped waistline. Beaded braid either side of front centre of shoulder to edge of pleats at lower skirt. Ruched panel from hipline to top of pleats. Cotton lining.

*King Cottage Museum Collection, Bunbury*

B. The 1880s black silk dress with fitted bodice and V shaped yoke. Fully lined sleeves, skirt with flat front and fullness at back ends in short train. Back has stitched box pleats on either side.

*King Cottage Museum Collection, Bunbury*

C. The 1880s black silk bustle dress worn by Ann Sutton, arrived in Western Australia in 1850. Long sleeves with beaded bodice.

*Museum of Western Australia Collection*
Figure 7:
Black dresses worn in Western Australia after 1860

A.

B.

C.
There were also black, white, or black and white caps worn by elderly women. The caps, worn mainly after 1860, were very similar to the head-dresses worn by Queen Victoria. See examples below:

Figure 8:


D. Lee, S. 1903, *Queen Victoria's Biography*, Smith & Elder, London. pp.4

Figure 8:
Similar head dresses worn by Queen Victoria and colonial women

A. 

B. 

C. 

D.
Throughout the centuries, the British have been influenced in every facet by their royalty. This supports Simmel's theory of fashion mutation and transformation whereby fashions created by the upper-classes are imitated by social inferiors. In this case, the royal family at the pinnacle of society, influenced first the upper-classes and then social classes of lower status. Many styles of clothing, head-wear and foot-wear stemmed from the preferences of royalty. The Balmoral petticoat, Balmoral shoes and Balmoral boots, for instance, began with Queen Victoria's personal requirements and taste. Balmoral shoes and boots were made of brown kid or black, brown or grey morocco leather, buttoned-up front with gilt buttons and high-heels. With Balmoral shoes/boots, scarlet petticoats called Balmoral petticoats were frequently worn. In the colony of Western Australia for instance, advertisements for Balmoral shoes and boots appeared in newspapers.

The British influence seems to have had considerable impact on the clothing of colonial Western Australians. Although situated on the other side of the world, colonists were aware of changes in fashion that occurred in Britain as seen by the use of British and European styles and decorations and even the occasional importation of gowns. As in Britain, clothing in the colony was a symbol of status, separating the New world upper-classes from the working-classes.

Religion and Clothing in Colonial Western Australia

Dress standards have long been maintained according to religious customs. As Mcleod explains, the Sabbath had eight characteristic ingredients: the absence of or at least a diminution of work; wearing special clothes; eating better food; spending time with family; meeting close friends; religious observance; music and appreciation of the beauties of nature. Regardless of social position and class, the British were accustomed to these religious rituals and regulations. They wore their finest clothes on Sundays and, as Fussell explains, "Little enough can be discovered about the quantities and types of clothing owned by the labourers and their families during the Victorian era. However any labourer above the poverty line, owned two garments, one for working days and one for Sundays. On Sundays, the best smock frock and a tall hat were usual, or if he had a wedding suit that would become Sunday suit for life." The phrase of 'Sunday-best' obviously

193 The Inquirer 10 January 1886, 23 October 1887
195 Fussell, G. E. 1949, The English Rural Labourer: His Home, Furniture, Clothing and Food from
originated within the working-classes, because the upper-classes were renowned for their extravagant fashionable clothing habits regardless of the time or place.

In Western Australia, as the below table indicates, the majority of colonial inhabitants were Christians, i.e., Anglicans, Methodists, Protestants or Catholics. Anglicanism (Church of England) was the dominant religious denomination in the colony. 196

Table 2:
Religion: Western Australia 1848-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>1848</th>
<th>1854</th>
<th>1859</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>3063</td>
<td>6656</td>
<td>9942</td>
<td>13651</td>
<td>16263</td>
<td>24768</td>
<td>75617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>1363</td>
<td>2084</td>
<td>4595</td>
<td>17823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>2034</td>
<td>3354</td>
<td>6674</td>
<td>8413</td>
<td>12464</td>
<td>40584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>4622</td>
<td>11743</td>
<td>14837</td>
<td>24785</td>
<td>29708</td>
<td>49782</td>
<td>184124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Western Australia 1848-1901
Collated by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage

Religion performed a vital role in every early colonists’ life, regardless of their social standing and class. As Sanders explains, “On Sunday everyone put on clean clothes. After the bath and feeling so clean, and being Sunday, it was a day of rest for everyone but the cooks. Sunday dinner was the chief dinner of the week.”197 and pioneer settler, Georgiana Molloy, describes her special Sunday attire, in 1836: “I never wear anything but dark cotton and a muslin kerchief, and a lighter print for Sundays.”198

Regardless of some of the early pioneers’ destitution, they retained their religious values in relation to clothing, as Eliza Brown wrote in 1844: “Shoes and boots they (her children) only wear on Sunday when they go to Church.”199 Further evidence is provided by Rev. Wollaston who stated that “We males can only indulge ourselves with a shirt and collar for Sunday wear, and I have given my boys all my

196 Census Western Australia; 1848, 1854, 1859, 1870, 1881, 1891, 1901
197 Sanders, T. 1975, Bunbury Some Early History, Roebuck Society Publication, Canberra.. pp. 91
stockings stock, except one pair for Sundays.” Janet Millett, wife of an English clergyman, who arrived in Western Australia in 1863 observed, “the early colonists in old times [of Western Australia] to patch and mend worn-out boots, in order that one neat pair might be kept for Sundays until the arrival of some long-expected ship”. Also, the Weld Club members wore heavy tweed clothes with billy-cock hats on week-days and frock coats and silk hats on Sundays. Mrs Millett noted that even convicts wore their best on Sundays: “The inmates of convict depot were marched once a week to church wearing their best suit”, as they were not obliged to work on Sundays. T. B. Wilson, who visited the Australian colonies in the 1830s, also observed the practice of the Sabbath tradition, and noted the ‘clean and neat’ appearance of the settlers’ servants on Sundays.

Western Australian Quakers were attired in the manner of their universal counterparts. Quakers who rejected fashionable finery, wore drab [dull] grey. But there were many varieties of shade, such as red-drab, brown-drab, and yellow-drab as well as several tones of fawn and slate. These hues were determined by inexpensiveness and similarity. The sober, dark clothes of the women, with the distinctive long white collar and close-fitting white cap and black silk hood, remained for generations as did the corresponding sombre clothes and tall hats of the men.

Sally Gear, who migrated to Western Australia from England in the 1900s noted that the nineteenth-century Western Australian Quakers were very plainly attired and they often wore their traditional Quaker grey clothes. This costume included a grey dress, often with white collar and white bonnet. This is supported by Louisa Clifton who noted that “Quakers wore dark grey colours, covered their heads with bonnets which were often unfashionable”. However, according to another

201 Millett, E. 1980, An Australian Parsonage or the Settler and the Savage in Western Australia, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 121
203 Millett, E. 1980, An Australian Parsonage or the Settler and the Savage in Western Australia, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 345
Western Australian Quaker, Bobbie Taylor, who migrated from California, the
traditional style of Quaker attire in the United States of America was a black dress,
black stockings, black shoes and plain white bonnet without any embellishment.
This was regarded as the official uniform of the religious sect.\textsuperscript{210}

Ecclesiastic habits were also worn in the colony. For example, Benedictine Bishop
Rosendo Salvado mentioned his black habits and trousers in his memoirs.\textsuperscript{211}
Colonial traveller H. Taunton also observed that as far as “Clothing they [the
missionaries] had none beyond the black Benedictine habits....”\textsuperscript{212} Further, in 1850,
colonist Alfred Stone recorded the identical attire worn by the Benedictine
monastics: “They [Bishop Joseph Serra] all dress exactly alike, from the Bishop to
the cook.”\textsuperscript{213}

In the nineteenth century, religion segregated classes and class differences were
played out in social places, eg, church. Clearly the religious observances of Britain
and Europe were carried to Western Australia and along with them the custom of
dressing in one’s best on Sundays, and the ecclesiastical robes of the clergy and
missionaries.

Other International Influences

\textbf{French Influence}

Throughout the centuries, all of Europe and especially the European courts
influenced each other’s fashion and textiles. During the eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries, the French and British courts dominated the European fashion domain as
trend-setters of their respective countries, as in other European countries such as
Spain, Germany, Italy etc. In the eighteenth century particularly, French fashions
dominated the Western world, that is, “The whole civilised world imitated the
French. As French fashions changed, so changed Western dress”.\textsuperscript{214} In the
nineteenth century, the French influence on British fashion and British influence on
French fashion was highly visible\textsuperscript{215} According to Cunnington, Englishwomen
always borrowed styles and materials from France.\textsuperscript{216}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{210} Source: Information obtained from the discussion of the members of the Western Australian
Quakers Society, Mount Lawley, Perth.
\bibitem{211} Stormon, E. J. (ed) 1977, \textit{The Salvado Memoirs}, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 43
\bibitem{212} Taunton, H. 1903, \textit{Australind: Wandering in Western Australia and the Malay East}, Edward
Arnold, London. pp. 120
\bibitem{215} Bigelow, M. S. 1979, \textit{Fashion in History, Western Dress Prehistoric and Present}, Burgess
\end{thebibliography}
The French fashion influence was manifested in colonial Western Australia in many ways. For instance, George Fletcher Moore bought a quantity of French wine called *Cette wine* in March 1835.\(^{217}\) French textiles and haberdashery were available in the Western Australian colony throughout the nineteenth century. For example, Mary Higham and sons, wholesalers, retailers and importers of clothing haberdashery advertised on 10 April 1878, "...the French twills and Parisian cords,"\(^{218}\) and on March 1888, "Paris fashions and French dress lengths."\(^{219}\) Also, in 1865, J.C.G. Carr promoted Paris fashions and French footwear,\(^{220}\) and in 1898, *The Western Mail* reports, "The latest fad in Paris."\(^{221}\)

The famous French fashion label, *Bon Marche*, *Paris*, exists on surviving costumes in the Western Australian clothing collections. The *Bon Marche* agent in Western Australia during the 1890s advertised French fashions providing further evidence of this influence in colonial Western Australia.

---

Edward T. Hope  
The Bon Marche, Perth.  
French and English millinery, clothing, haberdashery.\(^{222}\)
Figure 9:
Bon Marche Labelled Costumes in Nineteenth-century Western Australia

This Bon Marche labelled ladies' black taffeta and net cape, c1880 is an example of the application of French fashion in the colony. The cape's neckline has a spiral design of black beads and various sized sequins. The label at the centre-back, with gold writing on black, reads "Bon Marche Ltd. Perth."

Source: Royal Western Australian Historical Society
Photographed and drawn by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage
Additionally, according to the fabrics advertisements in colonial newspapers, Paris silk, Paris gauze, French gingham, French beaver, French crepon, French delaine, French twill flannel, French flannel, French lace, French cambric, French organdie, French printed muslin, French satin, French velvet, French voile, French silk, French dress tweed, French merino, French cashmere were also imported to Western Australia. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914)

Indian Influence

Colonial India as part of the British Empire received unique attention in nineteenth-century Britain. It was a colony which was important to the British as it had vast wealth and resources. In relation to appearance, British nationals in India in the nineteenth century maintained codes of conduct which distanced them physically, socially and culturally from their Indian subjects. At home, in the office and hunting in the field, the British dressed in their own fashions.223

As Cunningham224 notes, English fashions in the early nineteenth century were affected by a shortage of French textiles ie, French silks, because of the French political Revolution and subsequent British-French wars. Under these circumstances, it became more patriotic to use Indian (cotton) fabrics, especially the many kinds of muslins which were even used for evening dresses. Indian clothing, ie, shawls and textiles, especially silks, also became fashionable in Victorian society in Britain.

Trade between other British colonies and India during the nineteenth century, included clothing textiles, spices etc225 Indian clothing, hats and shoes were commonly available in Western Australia from the initial settlement ie, “Indian worked muslin dresses226 India made shoes,”227 were advertised in The Inquirer. Nainsook (Indian muslin), Indian surah silk, Indian linen, cashmere and cotton cashmere were also imported to the colony during the nineteenth century. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914). Newspaper advertisements and the

223 Cohn, B. S. 1928, Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India, Princeton University Press, New Jersey. pp 111 & 112
226 The Inquirer, 1 February 1854, pp. 1
227 The Inquirer, 5 June 1844, pp. 1
letters and diaries of early settlers constantly discussed the departure and arrival of ships and vessels to and from India. For example, in October 1834, May 1835, and February 1838 George Fletcher Moore wrote about vessels which arrived from India. Also in November 1838, he bought Indian tea from a ship, and mentioned a ship from India with silks and tea on board in August 1839. Rev. Wollaston wrote of the Indian goods available in the colony in March 1843, "I procured Indian shoes, slippers, and some straw hats for the boys. India [sic] mats for the church."

Indian commodities were imported and marketed in Western Australia throughout the nineteenth century, regardless of dissatisfaction of the wealthy colonists such as George Fletcher Moore, ie, Moore wrote in November 1831, "No shoes in the whole country, except a few made in India, not worth a farthing" which suggests that they were imported especially for poorer colonists who could not afford costly European products. Nevertheless, by the latter part of the nineteenth century, this attitude had changed somewhat as the well-to-do bride, Margaret Hamersley, wore a gown of white Indian silk. Therefore, Indian clothing catered for both upper and lower-classes in the colony. On one hand, the use of Indian made silks and cashmeres indicates 'conspicuous consumption' of the upper-class and on the other, Indian cheap shoes etc, provided for low income earners' needs.

---

228 Moore, G. F. 1884, *Diary of Ten Years: Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia*, M Walbrook, London. pp. 236, 266, 336
229 Moore, G. F. 1884, *Diary of Ten Years: Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia*, M Walbrook, London. pp. 365
230 Moore, G. F. 1884, *Diary of Ten Years: Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia*, M Walbrook, London. pp. 391
232 *Western Australian newspapers*
233 Moore, G. F. 1884, *Diary of Ten Years: Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia*, M Walbrook, London. pp. 88
Figure 10:
The Indian beetle-wing decorated Indian muslin dress

Source: Royal Western Australian Historical Society
Photographed and drawn by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage
Indian beetle-wings created an extensive European export market for India in the nineteenth century as a fashion embellishment as fashionable Victorian ladies became obsessed with unusual foreign fauna ie, feathers and beetle-wings. They wore ballgowns, shawls and fans embellished with glittering touches of beetle wing exotica and in the Great Exhibition of 1851, held in the Crystal Palace London, a dress embellished with beetle wings in leaf and flower motifs was displayed.\textsuperscript{235}

\textbf{Figure 11:}
A Dress Embellished with Beetle-wings
The Great Exhibition 1851

There are a few beetle-wing decorated dresses in Western Australian clothing collections, for example, the 1868s fine Indian muslin dress with metallic green Indian beetle-wing decoration (worn in Busselton). (See Figure 10)

The European passion for shawls began with the Indian Cashmere shawl which was produced in the Indian province of Kashmir. These fine and light-weight textiles were presented to the world by Francois Bernier, the first European visitor to Kashmir in the mid-seventeenth century. Until the end of the eighteenth century, these long shawls had a decorative border at both ends, ie, a row of flowering plants or small pines on a natural unbleached or coloured background. The Kashmiris also wove striped shawls and square ones decorated with medallions. Britain was the first nation to develop an interest in Kashmiri textiles through its East India Company and from the last quarter of the eighteenth century fashionable ladies in Britain passionately sought cashmere shawls. This fashion was also adopted by French women during the nineteenth century. Costs and demand brought about the manufacture of cashmere shawls by the British and French in the nineteenth century. As a result, European-made shawls with cashmere ornamentation, ie, French and Paisley (from Norwich and Edinburgh) were mass-produced and worn by European women throughout the nineteenth century.

The acceptance of shawls in nineteenth-century Western Australia was significant. For instance, colonial clothing importer and retailer Thomas Brown requested woollen and cotton shawls in January 1846. Also, according to the importations in newspaper advertisements and surviving articles, there were numerous varieties of shawls imported, eg, the cashmere shawl (1840-1880), the Paisley shawl, the Norwich shawl, lace shawls, pusher-lace shawls, woollen shawls, Scotch wool [Scottish woollen] shawls, satin shawls, plaid shawls, the Shepher’s plaid shawl, California shawls, berege shawls, printed berege shawls, crepe shawls, gossamer shawls, China [Chinese] shawls, printed shawls, lama shawls, half shawls, Spanish shawls, Spanish lace shawls and silk shawls. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914) The interest in shawls declined in Europe during 1870 and according

to colonial newspaper advertisements, shawl importations to Western Australia also decreased during the 1870s.

East and South-East Asians and Their Clothing

This section examines the minority ethnic groups in colonial Western Australia, especially the Chinese and Afghans, and whether their cultural practices in relation to clothing influenced the mainstream fashion. The arrival and presence of the Asians, especially Chinese, Japanese and Afghans in the late nineteenth-century Western Australia was significant because of their contribution to the colonial labour force as labourers, servants, market gardeners, launderers, pearlers, and cabinet makers and cameldrivers.

The recruitment of Chinese immigrants for Western Australia in the nineteenth century was for purely economic reason, as Ryan explains, "[The] Chinese were no more than commodities, transported as a strict business venture." Afghani cameleers arrived in Western Australia during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the transportation they provided improved the quality of life on the goldfields. In relation to customs, "[The] Chinese were distinct from all other foreigners and minor groups, in their speech, their clothes, religion and social attitudes," which included wearing their traditional clothing.

According to Gittins, the Chinese who arrived in Australia from the region of Sze Yap were attired in traditional loose blue jackets and black trousers, with hats of basket-weave and strong rope sandals. The Chinese in Melbourne in early 1854 wore dark coloured clothing, thick cotton socks and wood-soled cloth shoes or sandals. In 1857, the first shipload of two hundred Chinese gold seekers landed at Port Robe, South Australia, and wore loose dark jackets and wide-legged trousers and had their long hair neatly plaited.

The Chinese who migrated to Western Australia, also wore their traditional clothing. Market gardeners, for example, practiced attire of rural Chinese and wore ‘coolie hats’. Many Chinese in the late nineteenth-century Western Australia were employed as launderers and labourers, therefore it was improbable that colonial Western Australian clothing was influenced by their minority ethnic sub-cultures, primarily because of their status. Moreover, Chinese immigrants were usually males. For example, the 1891 Western Australian census registered only three adult Chinese females in the colony.\(^{246}\)

The importation of Chinese goods was began as early as the 1840s, as J. Mangles advertised Chinese hats, caps, baskets and trunks.\(^{247}\) According to the clothing materials and textile advertisements in colonial Western Australian newspapers, China crepe, China gauze and Tussore silk were imported to the Western Australian colony. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914) As explained in the Chapter 3, many cheaper imported Chinese clothing and fabrics were more likely to be worn by the working-class in the colony. For example, as Jane Roberts articulated during the 1830s, “the ladies did not like the Chinese silks, and it was considered more fashionable to wear those of English manufacture.”\(^{248}\)

To reinforce the above statement, in relation to the clothing demands, taste and trends of the eastern colonies of Australia, colonial visitor Cunningham wrote on 1827, “...of sighing after China crepes and India muslins, like the English beauties, our Sydney belles languish after nothing, but what comes with the name of ‘London’, stamped upon it.”\(^{249}\)

On the other hand, it is interesting to note whether these minority groups were themselves influenced by the colonial clothing trends. As Ryan claims, some colonial Western Australian Chinese accepted Western clothing and societal conduct.\(^{250}\) (See Figure 12) Chinese businessmen, who wanted endorsement by colonists as acceptable citizens wore European-style clothing, whilst Chinese labourers and market gardeners wore traditional clothing. Also, according to Gittins, colonial Chinese were anxious to be accepted, despite their fundamental differences in appearance, culture and disparity in customs and ways of life which led to misunderstandings and prejudices.”\(^{251}\) To overcome this difference, Chinese

\(^{246}\) Census, Western Australia
\(^{247}\) The Inquirer, 5 June 1844, pp. 1
\(^{248}\) Roberts, J. 1834, The Narrative of a Voyage Swan River and Van Dieman’s Land During the Years 1829, 1830, 1831, Richard Bentley, London. pp. 129
\(^{249}\) Cunningham, P. 1827, Two Years in New South Wales, vol. 1, Henry Colburn, London. pp. 56-57
\(^{251}\) Gittins, J. 1981, The Diggers from China: The Story of the Chinese on the Goldfields, Quartet
Society Headquarters in Melbourne in June 1854 developed rules and regulations which defined correct dress codes, for example, “Europeans are very particular about their clothing, hats and shoes. No member must go bareheaded or barefooted- not only will he be laughed at, but he will also be in danger of having his feet cut by broken glass which will disable him from digging. Members must wear European style trousers.”252 As this evidence suggests, perhaps colonial Australian Chinese in general were forced to wear European style clothing in order to gain respectability.

Figure 12:
Chinese in European clothing in colonial Western Australia

Source: Battye Library Photograph Collection (4637B)

The initial Afghans who arrived in Australia wore their traditional garments. They wore turbans and loose-flowing clothing such as pants with a drawstring waist, collarless shirt worn outside the pants, light-coloured, often accentuated silks and embroidery. The Islamic Afghan women were prohibited from wearing tight-fitting clothing, while the men were dramatic in their appearance.253 According to

nineteenth-century photographic evidence\textsuperscript{254} (See Figure 13), although some Afghan clothing was similar to European apparel, for example, “The Afghans being frequently seen wearing ordinary European coats decorated with strips of vivid red or green velvet...”\textsuperscript{255} their traditional head-dress, the turban visibly existed, suggesting the Afghans restricted their complete acceptance of the European customs and at least partially maintaining some of their traditional clothing. This merging of European and Afghan dress codes were also indicating their adaptation to the Australian climate.

\textsuperscript{254} Battye Library, Perth.

\textsuperscript{255} Ware, L. C. 1908, ‘Life on a Westralian Goldfield’, \textit{Williamstown Advertiser}, 8 February.
Figure 13:
Afghans in Colonial Western Australia

A. c1896 (B10486) B. 24594P C. c1890 (5279P)
Source: Battye Library Photograph Collection
In addressing the research question, what the major social and geographical impacts on early Western Australian clothing were, the above section examined the international influences, ie, British, French and Indian, on colonial clothing.

Especially, during the early period, colonists practised social customs which operated in Britain. Rituals of social life, eg, religious and mourning customs, were rigorously maintained. There is little doubt that dress in the early Western Australian colony was heavily influenced by Europe, especially Britain, and the transmission of style was simply a one-way flow.

The influence of France and India on colonial fashion is significant. The strength of the Parisian fashion influence remained undiminished throughout the colonial era. Besides the French influence, the effect of Indian styles on colonial clothing suggests the uncritical acceptance of British taste. Although the colonial social circumstances were very different from those of Europe, the relationship between early Western Australian clothing and British dress was very straightforward.
Western Australian Local Influence

Colonial Press and its Influence in Relation to Clothing in Western Australia

Newspapers had a vital influence on the colonists’ everyday life because they brought the news and trends of the outside world to the colony. The first newspaper (or information poster) to be published in Western Australia was posted on a tree. As T. B. Wilson wrote on 18 October 1829, “In my perambulations, I fell in with the ‘written’ newspaper of the place, appended to a stately eucalyptus tree, where, other public notices, I observed the Governor’s permission for one individual to practice as a notary, another as a surgeon, and a third as an auctioneer.”

The first known newspaper to be published in Western Australia was a single hand-written sheet entitled The Fremantle Journal and General Advertiser of 27 February 1830. On 19 February 1831, another hand-written newspaper The Western Australian Chronicle and Perth Gazette, containing some advertising, shipping and news items was published. The colony’s first printed newspaper, The Fremantle Observer, was published in 1831, and the Perth Gazette was established on 5 January 1833. The Inquirer: Western Australian Journal commenced on 19 August 1840, and later in 1886, The Western Mail began publication.

The press in early colonial Western Australia was controlled by wealthy proprietors as owner-editors. As Uren describes, the first ever Western Australian newspaper editor James A. Gardner, purchased printing machinery from England. Businessmen such as W. K. Shenton, Charles Macfaull, Francis Lochee, Edmond Stirling and Captain William Temple Graham were some of the colony’s earliest newspaper proprietors. Therefore, those newspapers reflected on upper-class point of view and catered to their requirements.

The information presented by the colonial newspapers includes imports/exports, auctions, shipping, law, intelligence, public/commercial notices, amusement and leisure. Editorials and the letters to the editor often reflected the society and social attitudes. For example, colonial Western Australian newspapers presented an abundance of information in early court and official records. As Enid Russell points out, there were no official law reports in Western Australia prior to 1899.

257 Frost, A. C. 1985, ‘Early West Australian Newspapers’, Early Days. vol. 9, part. 3, pp. 77-87
and for reports of all earlier court cases, it is necessary to look to the newspapers at the time. Colonial newspapers also reported on the political or social situation in England as evident in Georgiana Molloy’s private correspondence: “Tell me what you think of the present state of affairs in England. We know nothing but what we glean from the newspapers.” Therefore, British newspapers were also read by colonists.

The contribution of these newspapers is not quantifiable, however through their articles and advertisements of clothing they had considerable influence on colonial attire and finery. From their initial circulation, colonial newspapers published fashion statements, the latest trends in Europe, especially in London, royal and noble fashions in Britain and Europe and fashion suggestions for each season. Newspapers also advertised imports such as ready-made clothing, fabrics and haberdashery. The *West Australian* newspaper during the 1870s published a *Ladies’ Column*. In December 1879, it published detailed descriptions of *Designs for Fancy Ball Dresses*. *The Inquirer, Perth Gazette*, and *Western Mail* regularly published ladies’ clothing information, ie, clothing auctions, clothing advertisements and current fashion information. In 1886, a half-page fashion coverage in the *Western Mail* published details of fashions in Britain and Europe, for example, styles, such as, dresses with double skirts, colours, eg, “Orange seems to be favourite colour”, fabrics, ie, wool, lace and embellishments and fur-trimmed hats, bonnets and dresses. The first fashion descriptions with illustrations were published on *The Inquirer* in 25 May 1894.

**Figure 14:**
The first fashion descriptions with illustrations were published in *The Inquirer* in 25 May 1894.

---

262 *Western Mail*, 2 January 1886
OUR FASHION PLATES.

THE LADY.

A new one has been shown to the public and it is a very popular design. The dress is made of a soft material, which gives it a graceful drape. The sleeves are long and the neckline is high, adding to the elegance of the design. The skirt is fitted and the overall silhouette is flattering.

The fabric is of a high quality, ensuring durability and comfort. The dress is suitable for formal occasions, providing a sophisticated and elegant appearance. It is a testament to the skill and craftsmanship of the designers, who have managed to create a piece that is both stylish and practical.

INDIGENT VICTORIA.

Victoria, the indigent wife of a wealthy businessman, found herself in a dire situation. Her husband had recently passed away, leaving her with no means of support. She was forced to rely on the kindness of strangers to survive.

Despite her circumstances, Victoria remained dignified and strong. She took on odd jobs to earn money, often working long hours in difficult conditions. Her spirit never wavered, and she continued to care for those less fortunate than herself.

Andrew Dyson,

A new fashion plate has been released, featuring a dress that is both elegant and practical. The design is suitable for various occasions, making it a versatile piece for the modern woman.

The dress is made of a high-quality fabric, ensuring durability and comfort. The neckline is high and the sleeves are long, adding to the overall elegance of the design. The skirt is fitted, providing a flattering silhouette.

Andrew Dyson, the designer, is known for his ability to create pieces that are both stylish and functional. His designs are often featured in fashion magazines, and he has a loyal following among fashion conscious individuals.
"Ladies' Columns" reported on the latest fashions in Europe. Comments on the attire worn at public events in Britain, Europe and Western Australia, as well as details of fashions and dress-making suggestions were included. For instance, on 25th May 1894, *The Inquirer*[^263] published in its "Our Fashion Plates" page, "illustrated ladies' fashion ideas for new cone-shaped hat, walking dress and evening gown with illustrations, latest trends, seasonal colours and latest fashion developments and statements from London". In the *Western Mail* on 2nd January, 1886, latest trends in England were described, "English tailors are designing new wool dresses, with double or second skirts with plain lower skirts. Wool laces are again used for autumn gowns, they are made of durable mohair, which is said to be firmer than the soft wool laces of this summer. The patterns are small and new."[^264] The impact and influence of the newspapers of the time clearly assisted colonists to imitate British fashions in Western Australia.

In these 'Ladies' Pages', there were also many reports on the latest local fashions. For example, the *Western Mail* reported: "The following are some of the dresses worn at the function. Mrs. F. Craig, black silk and sequenced net, Miss. Harris, cream silk with lace and tulle flounces, elbow sleeves of lace and pink flowers, Mrs. H. E. Petherick, blue brocade with cream lace and Miss. Peacock, cream silk with red velvet belt..."[^265]

The interest in the English women's magazines is also noticeable. For example, Isabella Ferguson, a pioneer gentle-woman, requested a copy of *Maples's Illustrated Catalogues* from her sister in England in August 1867.[^266] In fact, colonial settlers' personal correspondence often referred to English women’s magazines and newspapers such as *The English Woman's Magazine, Maples Illustrated Catalogue, Sunshine, Penny, Illustrated London News, The Times, Punch*, etc.

To understand these colonial publications' effectiveness in a broader context, the literacy capability of the colonial Western Australian colonists requires definition.

[^263]: *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, 25 May 1894
[^264]: *The Western Mail*, 02 January 1886, pp. 5
[^265]: *The Western Mail*, 4 August 1988, pp. 38
[^266]: Joske, P. 1989, *Dearest Isabella: Life and Letters of Isabella Ferguson 1819-1910*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 139
Table 3:

Literacy Capacity of the Colonial Inhabitants 1859-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Read Only Males Out of Total Male Population</th>
<th>Read Only Females Out of Total Female Population</th>
<th>Read Only Population Out of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>55.53%</td>
<td>53.32%</td>
<td>54.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>74.81%</td>
<td></td>
<td>64.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>71.58%</td>
<td>72.62%</td>
<td>73.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>82.03%</td>
<td>72.56%</td>
<td>71.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td></td>
<td>79.42%</td>
<td>81.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Western Australia 1859-1901
Collated by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage

Table 4:

Read Only Population 1859-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>35.64%</td>
<td>19.10%</td>
<td>54.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>42.96%</td>
<td>30.91%</td>
<td>73.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>29.11%</td>
<td>71.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>50.28%</td>
<td>30.73%</td>
<td>81.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Western Australia 1859-1901
Collated by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage

Table 5:

Write Only Population 1859-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>31.34%</td>
<td>15.46%</td>
<td>46.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>38.76%</td>
<td>26.99%</td>
<td>65.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>40.75%</td>
<td>27.14%</td>
<td>67.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>49.40%</td>
<td>29.97%</td>
<td>79.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Western Australia 1859-1901
Collated by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage
As the above tables explain, 54% of the total population were capable of reading during 1859, whilst only 19% of females could read. 53% of the total female population (approximately half the female population) could not read. Nevertheless, the literacy capacity of the colonial inhabitants rapidly accelerated, as in 1901, approximately 80% of the total population could read and write.

Naturally it was generally only the upper-classes who were able to afford magazines and newspapers. As in Britain, the lower-classes received minimal influence through these publications in relation to their clothing. Cost and literacy levels were factors which restricted access to newspapers and magazines.

Very little male fashion information, except for tailors and importation advertisements, appeared in colonial Western Australian newspapers. This is in marked contrast to the focus on male fashion in Britain at the time. In nineteenth-century Britain, male fashions were tremendously popular and were published several fashion magazines such as, Gentleman's Magazine of Fashion 1829-1850, Gentleman's Herald of Fashion 1851-1862, Minister's Gazette of Fashion 1857-1867, West-End Gazette of Fashion 1865-1877, The Tailor & Cutter 1868-1900, A. Lyne's Journal 1869-1876, Tailoring World 1895-1899 and The London Tailor 1898. The absence of male fashion particulars suggests that colonial men behaved differently from British males. As described in Chapter 3, their social duties were also distinct from those of the British male, primarily because of different social structures, different physical and climatic conditions therefore, the activities they performed were also distinct from those of the British male.

The resemblance between some colonial clothing and clothing from the catalogue of the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 suggests the influence of the British press in colonial Western Australia. For example,

---

267 Census Western Australia; 1859, 1870, 1881, 1891, 1901
Figure 15:
The resemblance between some colonial clothing and clothing from the catalogue of the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851

A. The Indian beetle-wing decorated dress c1860  
Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection

B. Deccan silk and black lace dress with beetle-wing decoration  
Made by Mary West of Dublin.  
*The Art Journal Special Issue on the Crystal Palace Exhibition.*

Ca. Black wool waistcoat c1860  
Swan Guildford Historical Society Collection
Cb. Black wool waistcoat c1860  
Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection

D. Four examples of the embroidered waistcoats by J.W. Gabriel of London.  
"The ornamentation is derived principally from natural flowers."
*The Art Journal Special Issue on the Crystal Palace Exhibition.*
Western Australian Local Influences:
Climatic Impact

Contrary to Joel’s explanation in relation to the Eastern states of Australia (See Page 57), that “The first settlers were certainly not going to start changing things just because of a little matter of sub-tropical heat. There was a determination not to give in to the land or its climate,”268 this study respects quite a different accommodation of clothing. For almost a century historians have debated the relative importance of the environment in shaping colonial societies.269 Fabrics such as silks, cottons, and linens were favoured in the colony because of their easy maintenance (washing, ironing etc). As Hasluck notes, “All the settlers had found that a different type of clothing from that which they had worn in England was necessary. Cotton clothes were worn because of the heat, and because they washed well, while the bugbear washing day could be staved off a little if the cottons were coloured and small-patterned, so that they did not show marks.”270 According to much early personal correspondence, the Western Australian environment and hardship of colonial life enforced fabrics and costume construction quite distinct from those of England. For instance, “I never wear anything but dark cottons and muslin kerchief, and a lighter print for Sundays. Plaid or stuff are best for winter, but indeed it is so cool in Augusta that I make no change from England.”271 wrote Georgiana Molloy in January 1836. Colonist Fanny Bussell requested the heavy-duty fabric her school-bag was made from for her dresses, because it would wash and wear well and was suitable for the harsh colonial environment. “Although things are coarse, let them genteel and small patterns (sic).”272 Thomas Brown, a colonial clothing importer, purchased strong calico and prints, described as “warranted to wash”.273 The Shaw family, who arrived in Western Australia in the 1830s, made their hand-sewn ‘serviceable’ clothing from strong calico and drill.274 Durable and strong fabrics, ie, chintz [hard and coarse cotton], drill [fine and strong cotton], flannel [fine medium weight wool], fustian [heavy and fine cotton], linen and pilot cloth [heavy coarse woollen fabric] were imported to Western

272Shann, E. O. G. 1926, Cattle Chosen: The Story of the First Group Settlement in Western Australia 1829-1841, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 34
Australia throughout the nineteenth century. (See Appendix 1: Imported Clothing, Clothing Materials, Haberdasheries and Accessories: Western Australia 1829-1914)

The colonial environment with its dusty roads and mud etc, and the new life style, where people worked hard, required clothing that had to be washable. For example, Georgiana Molloy was totally ill-equipped to cook, clean, wash, mend, sew, milk cows and make butter and cheese when she first arrived in Western Australia.275 Similarly in June 1835, Fanny Bussell wrote to her cousin in England: “We have no servant. Think of our difficulties,”276 and 4 March 1843, Thomas Brown wrote: “Mrs. Brown [wife] and myself are to churn and make butter at daylight in the morning.”277 Also, on 17 August 1844, Eliza Brown described that her husband has done all the ploughing with his own hands.278

276 Shann, E. O. G. 1926, Cattle Chosen: The Story of the First Group Settlement in Western Australia 1829-1841, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 49
Figure 16:
The Utilisation of Wear-resistant Clothing Material: Nineteenth-century Western Australia

A. Source: King Cottage Museum
   Royal Western Australian Historical Society
   Swan-Guildford Historical Society
   Drawn by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage

B.

C.

107
Surviving clothing supports the popularity of wear-resistant clothing in the colony. A. The c1880, cream colour princess-line dress was made of fine wool and cotton lining (King Cottage Museum Collection). B. The 1870s, black colour, wide V-necked velvet jacket (Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection), and C. c1870, cream coloured fine linen bodice (Swan-Guildford Historical Society Collection) also indicated the utility and application of washable fabrics in colonial Western Australia. Approximately ninety per-cent of surviving costumes were made from cotton and cotton assorted fabrics. In contrast, according to the Curator of the Museum of Costume in Bath, England, about ninety per-cent of nineteenth-century English costumes were made from wool and woollen assorted fabrics. Thus the colonists dressed in accordance with the climatic and environmental conditions.

"British Colonial White" or white muslin was worn by English men and women especially in the tropics for not only practical reasons, but also as a sign of status. Although white was popular with the British in other colonies, it was kept for ceremonial occasions in Western Australia. For example, colonist Georgiana Molloy describes: "The Government officers and military personnel wore white duck trousers and blue coats with gilt crown buttons on ‘great occasions’, while clothing taste of our sensible people...blue shirts and dark corduroy trousers, light black beaver hats." Also, in 1891, a fashion columnist discusses how laundry cost are high for white dresses, though suitable for the climate. However, at a church service in February 1835, three young Bussell ladies appeared in white dresses, and in 1897, one of James Lilly’s daughters attended a race meeting wearing a white muslin dress. There are few white muslin dresses in the surviving clothing collections. The following white muslin dress (c1830) with its green and white garlands of embroidered lily of the valley is one of the few examples of surviving white muslin dresses. It features puffed ‘Marie’ sleeves and a full gathered skirt which was typical of the period.

Heritage Museum of Fremantle Collection

---

281 The Western Australian, 31 December 1891
282 Hasluck, A. 1955, Portrait with Background: A Life of Georgiana Molloy, Oxford University Press, London. pp. 135
283 The Western Australian, 4 May 1897
Figure 17:  
White muslin dress: Western Australia c1830

Source: Fremantle Heritage Museum  
Photographed and drawn by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage
Nevertheless, in colonial Western Australia, there was much personal correspondence requesting dark coloured clothing; ie, colonist Georgiana Molloy wrote, "I hope if you hear of emigration you will recommend its votaries to Augusta, and let them be supplied with woollen goods of dark colour". Also, Fanny Bussell wrote "I find grey and black stockings invaluable." Dark coloured clothing was clearly much sought after and this is most likely because of the unmade roads causing clothes to soil quickly. As a result, there are many dark coloured clothes in Western Australian costume collections. Women's attire, the fashions throughout the period were ankle-length and frequently with trains, requiring constant cleaning because of the dust. Water supplies and washing facilities would have also been limited, so clearly the colonial attitude towards dress was influenced by the washing and maintaining of clothing.

In Victorian England, keeping clothes clean and fresh was an arduous task. Very little outer clothing was made of washable fabric. Therefore, several layers of underwear were worn to protect these outer garments from bodily contact. Vulnerable areas, ie, necks and wrists were safeguarded by detachable collars, cuffs and undersleeves which were removed for frequent washing. Washing was a complicated procedure, because every item required special methods of cleaning depending on its material, style and dyeing substance. Different colours required different fixatives. For instance, for black materials, ammonia was added to the wash and rinse; for violet, ammonia or soda was added to the rinsing water; for green, vinegar was used in the rinse; for blue, common salt, and for white, laundry blue. Black pepper was recommended as a fixative for black calico or cambric and to wash print dresses. Some items, ie, cuffs and collars were treated with starch and bleach. Although washing machines had been introduced at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, much was done by hand. Wringer and manglers only appeared in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Washing in the colony was excessively difficult. For instance, Rev. Wollaston wrote, "Washing day! In our circumstances, it is a most laborious employment. This morning I avail myself of the great boiler to wash and scour out ..." Even the affluent Bussells, who arrived in the 1830s, did their own washing, cooking and milked cows, and "There were the usual household chores, cooking, washing...

285 Shann, E. O. G. 1926, Cattle Chosen: The Story of the First Group Settlement in Western Australia 1829-1841, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 89
286 Walkley, C. & Foster, V. 1978, Crinolines and Crimping irons, Victorian Clothes; How They were Cleaned and Cared for, Peter Owen, London. pp. 11-34
287 Burton, C. A. 1975, Wollaston's Picton Journal (1841-1844), University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 21
288 Shann, E. O. G. 1926, Cattle Chosen: The Story of the First Group Settlement in Western Australia 1829-1841, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. pp. 89
and sewing for the youngsters,” wrote James Turner.289 Also, Rev. Wollaston states, “My poor wife is gone to bed with the very picture of fatigue, having been washing,” which further indicates the great obstacle of colonial washing.290 In 1884, *The Eastern Districts Chronicle* reports,291

**Instructions for washing of clothes:**

Dissolve 2 pounds of bar soap in about 3 gallons of hot water. Add 1 tablespoon of turpentine and 3 of liquid ammonia. Stir and steep the cloths in this for 3 hours. This treatment is calculated to save much labour in cleansing summer cloth stained by fruit or wine.

The brown and beige silk dress c1859, dark purple three-piece face cloth dress c1870 and black linen dress c1880 for instance, were some of the dark dresses worn in the colony.

A. Dark brown dress with high round neck, velvet ribbon trimmed bodice, long and tight sleeves and eight-piece full skirt.  
**Swan-Guildford Historical Society Collection**

B. Purple jacket with high-necked upright collar, collar and front trimmed with black net and black embroidery. Long sleeves. Full skirt with train, trimmed with black braid and purple chenille fringe and tucks.  
**Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection**

C. Black fitted bodice with full sleeves, pintucked long cuffs and pleated flounces, and high collar. Flat fronted skirt with short train and box-pleated back.  
**King Cottage Museum Collection**

**Figure 18:**
Utilisation of dark coloured clothing in nineteenth-century Western Australia

**Source:**  
Swan-Guildford Historical Society  
Royal Western Australian Historical Society  
King Cottage Museum  

**Drawn by author Damayanthie Eluwawalage**

---

291 *The Eastern Districts Chronicle*, 30 January 1884, pp. 8
Therefore, contrary to Lurie's assertion that white was worn as a sign of status, although living in sub-tropical conditions in Western Australia, colonists dressed differently and more sensibly favouring the climate and environment.

Professional washer-women were also employed in the colony, as in May 1839 Anne Elizabeth Turner recorded in her diary: "Washing day. Treated the washer-woman with cheese cake, seed cake, rum and milk" and by the latter part of the nineteenth century, Chinese launderers and laundries existed throughout the colony. According to Sanders, after Sunday with cooking, visiting and Church-going, Monday was a washing day. Soap was made from tallow and caustic soda, and starch was made from flour.

The hot climate also had an impact on the way people dressed. For instance, in outback Western Australia, it was acceptable even for bank officers to be seen without their jackets. According to the British Parliamentary Papers, "Striped cotton shirts were common in working class dress." However, in August 1831, landowner George Fletcher Moore wrote: "Letty [servant] has been preparing striped cotton shirts for my expedition, these being more suited than linen ones to our climate" showing the colonial gentleman to be more practical about his clothing. Therefore, contrary to the British tradition, Western Australian land-owners worked beside their servants and labourers creating a different social hierarchy, also reflecting a breakdown of class distinctiveness in clothing. Especially, in the early days, primarily because of a shortage of labour, although the superiority remained, the appearance was often indistinguishable.

Newspapers constantly advertised apparel suitable for the colonial climate. For example, The Inquirer advertised, "White counterpanes suitable for warm climate." According to personal correspondence of the time, many colonists requested suitable fabric from Britain. Pioneer settler Isabella Ferguson, for instance, received muslin-de-laine and tartan as gifts from her relatives in England, and in December 1842 Rev. Wollaston wrote, "Clothing in any kind suitable to the climate is just as good as money."

298 Moore, G. F. 1884, *Diary of Ten Years: Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia*, M Walbrook, London. pp. 62
299 The Inquirer, 25 October 1854, pp. 1

113
Western Australia’s harsh climatic conditions also had an impact on the ethnic minorities such as Afghan cameleers. Its not just the harsh climate which would have been intolerable for traditional robes, but the low lying scrub which was dry and prickly would have torn their loose fitting clothes. According to photographic evidence,\textsuperscript{302} cameleers readily adopted European-style clothing. As Stevens describes, “As time passed, and with the severe conditions of the Australian outback, the pale, loose, flimsy clothing was recognised as impractical and the Afghans began to adopt the Australian bushman’s clothing (consisting of long boots, a durable and coarse jacket, waistcoat and trouser, shirt, neckerchief, leather belt, hat or cap\textsuperscript{303}).”\textsuperscript{304}

The origin and development of the unique bush clothing in colonial Australia is therefore important in the consideration of the impact of the environment. There are many accounts of these ‘bush costumes’, ie, “The explorers rode the faithful camels. They were dressed in bush costume, their rifles slung on their pack-saddles,”\textsuperscript{305} reported \textit{The Inquirer}. Colonial traveller Richard Twopeny observed during the 1880s that “The bushman, at least, dresses sensibly. When he comes to town, he puts on a slop-coat, but retains, if not a cabbage-tree, at any rate a wide brimmed soft felt hat; the slop clothes even become picturesque from the cavalier fashion in which he wears them.”\textsuperscript{306} Taunton also describes the Western Australian squatters’ distinct clothing, such as a Crimean shirt, moleskin trousers, a broad felt hat, boots and a broad belt with suspended leather pouches and sheath-knife.\textsuperscript{307}


\textsuperscript{304}Illustrated Sydney News, 11 May 1870, pp. 395


\textsuperscript{307}The Inquirer, 24 November 1875


\textsuperscript{301}Taunton, H. 1903, \textit{Australind: Wanderings in Western Australia and the Malay East}, Edward Arnold, London. pp. 148
Some sections of the working-class in pre-1900 British society had developed their own distinctive garments such as the countryman’s smock, smock-frock or slop-frock, primarily because of poverty and suitability to their way of life. However, there was scarcely any comparison to the Australian bushman’s clothing in any previous era. Arguably, the harsh colonial environment induced the development of bush clothing.

In addressing the research question, what the major social and geographical impacts on early Western Australian clothing were, the above section, newspapers and climate, examined local influence on colonial clothing.

From the early years, the contribution of colonial newspapers is noticeable, but by the late 1860s an increased emphasis on sewing instruction, latest style information and information on supplies etc, verifies a greater significance of these newspapers catering to women’s dress interests.

Certainly during the early pioneering era, the British tradition was extremely strong and colonial dress replicated British practice. However, as the century progressed, colonial dress showed more adaptation to the climate. It is also clear that although women’s clothing and fashion were more closely related to those of Britain than men’s, they also wore clothes suited to the warm climate of the colony.


Summary Analysis

Fashion in colonial Western Australia was influenced by external or international sources. The early Western Australian colonists followed British fashion closely. The differences in climatic seasons (in the Western Australian winter period England experienced its summer) and the shipping duration (travel by sea between Britain and Western Australia took approximately six to eight months) suggests that European seasonal fashions travelling to Western Australia thrived half a year later, facilitating the adoption of British fashionable trends. The popularity of the fashion press also illustrates the importance of British fashions.

British ideology was the principle influence in colonial Western Australia, especially in the early years. The early settlers who nurtured a strong British inheritance implemented their traditions in the new country. The British influence in the colony is verified by fashions, such as, crinolines, bustles and tea-gowns, the variety of furs, silks and animal embellishments on hats, bonnets and boas. The absence of Australian animals in these particular fashion trends suggests that native animals were not considered fashionable or perhaps a lack of technical resources for preservation in the colony. The use of black clothing and black fabric was evident in colonial Western Australia especially for professional clothing, eg, doctors, and for mourning attire, suggesting the maintenance of British customs. However, on the one hand, colonial clothing was similar to the existing English clothing in patterns, styles and looks, whilst on the other hand, it was different in decoration and colour (ie, less decorative, less colourful and less alternative). This colonial uniqueness was due to frequent shortages of supplies/imports, acknowledgment of the serviceability of clothing in harsh conditions, and a new life style where servants and labourers were not always available or could be afforded.

In nineteenth-century Western Australia, the difference in men’s and women’s appearance and their attitudes to clothing was extreme. The nineteenth century (western) demands of appearance, ie, the requirement that women wear decorative and concealing dresses and men wear austere suits with neckwear were evident in the colony, indicating the colonial pursuit of British fashion and the advocacy of the international influence in the colony.
There is a common belief that early Western Australians unconsciously followed British fashions regardless of their suitability for the Australian environment. However, the chapter shows that the colonists did not slavishly follow British. For example, every surviving costume was constructed according to European techniques and therefore comparable with European fashions. However, the materials used were thinner, softer and more light-weight, ie, cotton, silk and linen. These finer and lighter materials, evident in importation records, personal correspondence and surviving costumes suggests Western Australian colonists were conscious of the need to dress according to the climate. In particular, protection against the sun is evident in the bonnets, sun shades, hats, parasols, caps and cotton caps for men and women in surviving collections, photographic collections and the imports advertised in newspapers. Comparing the Western Australian surviving clothing with English clothing in the nineteenth century, colonial clothing is more simple than the British in terms of decoration and embellishment. In addition, the arduous living conditions caused substantial wear and tear on clothing and the pioneering life obviously had an impact on simplifying the clothing itself and the way of dressing.

Surviving items of male clothing, ie, the heavy and dark-coloured European-style attire, made from natural materials, such as cotton and wool, for personal or professional wear by politicians, proprietors and lawyers etc, also indicates a strong British influence. However, personal correspondence constantly included requests for clothing more appropriate to the colony’s climatic conditions. The early colonists therefore adopted European fashion in a sensible manner, adjusting it to the colonial environment in a unique and distinctive way.

Imports of Indian clothing/textiles and Chinese textiles in the colony, regardless of some (affluent) settlers’ disfavour, suggests these items were imported especially for low-income earners. Nevertheless, the acceptance and popularity of shawls was significant, corresponding to English and European fashion trends. Shawl importations declined during the 1870s as their popularity decreased in time with other parts of the world, providing further evidence of the similarities of fashion trends between Britain and Western Australia.

There is no evidence to suggest that ethnic groups, ie, Chinese and Afghans, influenced the Western Australian clothing. Initially, these ethnic workers wore their traditional clothing and as the century progressed, however, it was their clothing that became influenced by western styles. The scarcity of an ethnic influence in the Western Australian clothing supports the Chinese practice of wearing western clothing. As pointed out above, the Afghans often retained
traditional clothes with some adaptation, and their preference for western clothing was influenced by their harsh working conditions and climatic conditions.

The influence of French and Indian styles play a significant role in colonial Western Australian clothing. Nonetheless, these foreign fashions were adopted as an imitation of British fashions, because at the time, British fashions were influenced by these Indian and French styles.

The bushman's clothing, which evolved in the latter part of the century was unique to Australian colonies. The harsh colonial environment induced the development of this clothing which was suitable for colonial climatic conditions. Interestingly, while the upper-classes imitated British styles, the lower-classes created a distinctive Australian dress code, perhaps resulting from poverty and deprivation. In the pioneering society, the practical clothing of the working-classes, ie, bushman's clothing, generated a unique Australian dress-style. Men's, especially squatters' and diggers' clothing was subject to a visible transformation with distinctive features long before any noticeable mutation of the women's clothing. Australian men's clothing choices appeared innovative, sensible and adventurous, compared with colonial women's clothing. Evidence also suggests that colonial men, especially gentlemen, behaved differently from their British counterparts, reflecting the dissimilar societal and social conditions in the colony.

The religious influence of the Western Australian society in the Victorian era was significant. Western Australian colonists dressed in accordance with their religious rituals and regulations. They wore clothing similar to other Christians and Quakers around the world.

Early newspapers verify the development of the colony in fashion and clothing. However, the colonial press was the instrument of wealthy classes, being controlled by wealthy newspaper proprietors as owner-editors. From the initial circulation, colonial newspapers published fashion statements and fabric/material availability in the colony. The similarity of fashion trends between Europe and the Western Australian colony verify the influence and impact caused by the newspapers of the time. The influence of English fashion and English women's magazines as a vehicle of fashion persuasion is also significant.
As similar to Nystrom’s analysis, ie, the factors which influenced fashionable finery, world dominating events, eg, World Wars, on Western Australian fashion were profound. The appearance of Western Australian women was clearly influenced by the war, for example, the use of braids, buttons (*See Appendix 2*) and tailored effects on dresses in the latter part of the nineteenth century (*See Appendix 3*).

Also, as explained in the chapter, world fairs, ie, the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, had important effects on Western Australian fashion.

Applied to the early colonial context, Simmel’s trickle-down theory can be seen from a new perspective. We have evidence of a trickling down of fashion from the mother country to the colony, as well as a trickling down of fashion through the colonial class system, particularly toward the end of the century. Any fashion coming from Britain was seen as that to be achieved by the local gentry. The general lack of evidence of a trickle-down of styles within the early colony is exacerbated by two factors; the control of clothing imports by the upper-classes and the harsh working conditions.
Especially, in the early pioneering era, there is less evidence of Veblen's conspicuous leisure in the Western Australian colony. The major leisure time for the colonists was their observance of Sundays where formal clothing was worn. Limited sporting activities were soon introduced by the upper-classes and supported by the importation of riding and walking costumes. However, there is little evidence of conspicuous consumption in the colony, particularly in the pioneering era. Extravagant clothing and lifestyles would have been impossible with shortages of resources and labour, as evidenced in much of the early personal correspondence.