

MINISKIRTS

IF [Mary Quant's](#) mother hadn't sent her to ballet lessons, the miniskirt might never have been invented.

"During [one ballet class], I could hear exciting music coming from next door, and when I peeked through the glass I saw a tap-dancing class take place, and in the middle of the room, a girl a couple of years older than me who was the vision of everything I wanted to be," Quant said. "She was wearing a short pleated skirt about 10 inches long, with a skinny black sweater, black tights and a bob haircut. What struck me was how the whole outfit focused on what she had on her feet: a pair of white ankle socks, and a pair of patent tap shoes with ankle straps."

The anonymous tap-dancer made a lasting impression on the iconic Sixties designer and the rest is fashion history.

"From that day on I was struck with this lovely vision of legs and ankles," she told *The Week*. "The image of that girl stayed with me, I started trying to make my own clothes, cutting up bed-spreads. I used to start re-arranging my school uniform, hitching up my skirt to be more exciting-looking."

The 1960s and the Politics of the Miniskirt

Teenagers Create Their Own Political (and Fashion) Space

Before the 1960s, young women had been expected to dress in the style of their mothers, which was usually loosely based on Parisian couture. For example, as late as 1962, a Sears catalog portrayed mothers and daughters as "patchwork pals" who were overjoyed that they are wearing identical dresses. Looking back on the late 1950s, the English designer Sally Tuffin remarked, "There weren't any clothes for young people at all. One just looked like their mother" (Steele 1997).

However, by the 1960s, youth protests and demands for individual expression revealed that young adults were gaining a self-conscious awareness of themselves as a distinct and unified group that was able to respond to political events in ways that were different from their parents (Cawthorne 1999). Youngsters felt they no longer needed to follow the rules of bourgeois morality and manners, which they saw as hypocritical and based on double standards. As this young political entity gained a voice, they created a space for a new and distinctive fashion that embodied their own political views—not their parents'.

A New Class of Young Consumerism

The young generation was indeed growing up rebellious and articulate—and with more money than they've ever had before. Young people suddenly became a powerful class of consumers who demanded a fashion that matched the spirit of youth. Consequently, the whole structure of the fashion system was challenged from the youth in the streets as the prestige of "couture" came under attack or, worse, seemed irrelevant (Cawthorne 1999). Upstart designers and boutiques began to cater to a new youth market that could now buy what they wanted—and to older women who began to scramble to look like their daughters.

Honorable



"Mini clothes are symbolic of those girls who want **SEDUCE** a man"

-**Mary Quant**, the inventor of the miniskirt.

Nakedness



In an interview she was asked what kind of person today's woman wants to be, and she answered, "A **sexual creature**. She displays her sexuality instead of this coy business of hiding it. Today she dresses to say, 'I **am sexy**. I like men. I enjoy life.'"

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Note the public boast of Mary Quant, the inventor of the miniskirt. This fashion designer declared that her creation was for the PURPOSE of making sex (illicit) more available in the afternoon. In an interview she was asked what kind of person today's woman wants to be, and she answered....., "A sexual creature. She displays her sexuality instead of this coy business of hiding it. Today she dresses to say, 'I am sexy. I like men. I enjoy life.'"

Then she made this bold statement: "Mini clothes are symbolic of those girls who want SEDUCE A MAN."

Many women have brushed aside criticism of their short dresses by blaming everything on the dirty old men with their evil thoughts. But is that the basic fault? This is not confined to "dirty old men." Every man, woman, and child in the world has a carnal nature by birth. But the male struggle to keep the thoughts straight is based upon more than the fleshly nature. It is rooted in the fact that God created men with a completely different sexual makeup than women. God made man in the beginning with a very sensitive sexual nature that could be quickly aroused by the sight of female nudity. Woman, on the other hand, was created with a sexual nature which would not be so easily stirred, especially by sight. She was made to be more responsive to touch and tenderness. Her more subtle sexuality could be drawn out by the physical attentions involved in the conjugal relationship. God never intended for man's sex emotions to be stimulated outside the marriage chamber. And in order to protect him God placed within the woman a delicate sense of modest reserve, so that she would not expose her body except to her own husband.

The plan was perfect, but it has broken down in one area. Satan has managed to destroy to a very great extent that inherent modesty with which the Creator endowed womanhood. Uninhibited nudity or provocative half-dress has become the accepted norm of modern fashion. On every side, the Christian, as well as the non-Christian, is forced to look upon scenes of nakedness which are utterly foreign to the original plan of the Creator.