We are What we Wear: A Mundane Slogan but Humane

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Opinion

How does Fashion Technology & Textile Engineering relates with Psychology was the first problem I equated. On a second thought, if I already came across references about history and social role of fashion, fashion and communication, studies about beauty, aesthetics, body image, identity, visible self, etc., the challenge to think about fashion technology in people's daily life sounded to me like if I have been attracted to a newly inspiring indexing term, with potential to elucidate issues of my professional interest. Indeed, for decades I have been focused on human development and learning, inclusion and welfare throughout every stage of life. The perspective of supporting integral development, considering the most diverse dimensions, from sensory to cognitive, affective or social, ... and the view about learning on multiple literacies, bearing in mind abilities to read, understand and express using different languages, communicating and appreciating thoughts, feelings, signs and intuitions in different contexts, in fact, ought to embrace the ultimate skin layer: the tissues that bind us to the circumstances of living. Moreover, as Andy Clark and Dave Chalmers explore, there is an extended mind or "Where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?" [1] and argued, differently from those that accept that skin and skull are the limits and what is outside the body is outside the mind, that there is an active role of the environment in driving cognitive processes. External features are coupled with the human organism "playing a crucial role in the here-and-now". A somehow related concept is the embodied mind [2].

Crossing this concepts over a socio-psychological framework, looking at attribution theories and the view of "behavior affected by people's concerns with their public impressions (...) human beings have a pervasive and ongoing concern with their self-presentations" [3]. Clothes and self materializes own appearance to the world [4]. [5] dressing is a situated bodily practice. Those authors also cite Karen de Perthuis about perceiving "clothes as memory-keepers, bearing vestiges of the experiences and emotions felt while they were being worn". In order to reach someone's interiority, what is first given to observe is the exterior aspect; that we interpret giving a meaning that conditions the way we act. At the same time, for the ones in position of being observed, the way they materialize their "cover card" is how they can, know or want to show themselves. That means impressions people try to convey or manage on others; they are social interaction tactics and dress-code reveals that managed impression as a manner of welcoming or demarcate and a style of making oneself known or contemplated. "Try to express yourselves, better, in your dress" was a statement of 'Mrs Stillman - Celebrity Aviator 1920s', from Adam Curtis' Century of the Self Documentary (2002), about Psychology of Dress, and an early argument for a huge scientific production in Psychology about fashion issues. At this moment it is the technological fashion approach to produce psychological effects that my reflection is concerned about.

On the other hand, daily routines are supported by technology, especially in the extension of oneself – extended mind. [6] refers to "wearable technology", after [7] has referred to "wearable intelligence", intelligent clothes, social and affective wearables and connected concepts that the author later resumed. People's mood, attitude towards others, occupations and situations, as well as interactions and others perceptions about us, openness, confidence and opportunities are mediat(ize)d; highly visual triggers to perception and interaction. We live in a world-wide

communication paradigm, in which the almighty presence by technological means is an advantage but also a worry, and the image associated with that presence is decisive for the future of each one. It's all about clothes, appearance, and its power in the role-playing game of a character-impersonating. Then, there are expectations settled and behaviors that breeds behaviors. What makes the world moves, regardless of the objectives pursued, whether they are about economy, environment, sustainability, politics, citizenship, culture, education, health, research, management, justice, ... is the "dressing". Dressing expresses a style, unveils ideology besides the accomplishment of comfort, instrumentality, overcoming status. Clothing with colors, textures, patterns, design or technological treatments ought to be smart, inclusive and sustainable.

Welfare, expertise, usefulness, all over the ages, culture backgrounds, contexts of living, ... satisfy ambitions, promotes development, but could as well overcome deficits. Sensorial messages create channels of relationships and proximity (or not!). Pleasant presence is one of main successful hints for negotiating – whatever, material and immaterial stuff. From a kinesthetic point of view, tissues communicate haptic information such as temperature, bond, balance, ... [8]. The textile material used might be viewed as apparatus for converting visual images into tactile representations useful to person visually impaired and to turn approachable to some vulnerable people (e.g., elderly; children, youth in foster care). Perhaps we can talk about friendly materials, in a mental health and social inclusion sense. So, fashion technology besides feedstock, engineering, innovation, chemistry, marketing, artificial intelligence or creativity has to do with people's human main core: emotional ambience; that interferes with humanity climate.

That's the reason I wonder why a psychological branch named, precisely, psychology of dress has been nominative. Following the thought, there are many contributions, namely a book with such a title, presenting six essays, published for the first edition in 1975. Between the authors, Umberto Eco affirms that "if communication extends to all [those] levels, it is not surprising that there can be a science of fashion as communication and of clothing as articulated language".

This is nothing new, but still insufficiently putted into work, experienced, multiplied, publicized, in order to support minorities and those who can benefit so much from advanced textile technological systems. Just to mention some of the applications, in an humanistic and idiosyncratic perspective (more then atttending to societies or capital goals), I'd like to mention toys production with tissues allowing children and blind or with low vision ability to see by touching [9], advanced printing to make materials suitable for those with some kind of impairment or special needs. Fashion and textile technology could be supportive giving people equal opportunities to participate fully in regular contexts of living. It is urgent to develop products fostering accessibility and come up with the purpose of creating interactive platforms, even in fashion. High tech production of resources advocate equity of rights and duties and make useful products which are both suitable for those with or without impairments, contributing for the integration, socialization and inclusion [10].

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