

ANALYSIS OF THE SOMATIC LINK BETWEEN FASHION AND CULTURE, BODY IMAGE AND WORLDVIEW, LANGUAGE

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My purpose in this article is to glean and analyse the physiological and metabolical traits we have always suspected to be in clothing: the somatic undercurrents of fashion, vestimentary fashion in particular. I would like to reflect on the inextricable link between body and culture. My hypothesis is the following: the body offers the unavoidable, underlying base for the body image and vestimentary ; the body is the seat of the soul and has volition, emits sounds which become words (language), narrative and music; the body gestures, dances, enacts its dreams, extrudes new silhouettes, formulates plays, performances, comes out with new discourses and creates alternative social awarenesses. The effort never ends, pushing the ego over the edge from sheer make-believe through camouflage towards reality. In explication of my hypothesis, I offer perhaps a fragmentary but closely enough knit network of arguments, so as to leave the reader with a heightened sensitivity to my *exposé*.

In the following chapters, I shall begin with an analysis of Kasper Tang Vangkilde's insights on fashion(2017) from an anthropological outlook(Chapter1); I go back for relevant insights to Thomas Carlyle's text on the philosophy of clothes(1836), where he illustrates the functions (reveal/conceal/symbolize) that clothes have(Chapter 2); next I consider Julia Kristeva's text on the *object/abject*(1980): I employ Kristeva's arguments to show that clothes can be interpreted as configurations of profitable symbols(Chapter3); last of all I refer to Ian W. King's theories on fashion from a consumerist, metabolic standpoint (2015) and explore its significance (Chapter 4), and offer a tentative conclusion to my *exposé*(Chapter5).

1. FASHION AND TOTEM: MANOEUVRE OF SYMBOLS: UNDERLYING CURRENT OF ANIMISM: ANALYSIS OF KASPER TANG VANGKILDE' S THEORY(2017)

What does it mean to don a certain item, to wear a certain color, prefer certain textiles over others? The point of picking up a trendy iconic item,

and to give one's anima and affinities, self away, is to declare one's mindset: to bid or disclose an appurtenance to a certain social group, be it demographic, or political.

Kasper Tang Vangkilde(2017) shrewdly perceives in fashion design a complicated tangle of animism and totemism, heretofore mainly applied to the study of non-western cultures: he embarked on fieldwork and spent a period of participant observation at a Swiss fashion firm.

Vangkilde equates brand identity with the attribution of totems to clans (groups); talks of the animism of the hunter stalking prey as similar to the mental process of the creator searching for adequate formulation of brand designs. I presume he intended to demonstrate a parallel structure, between the one link, <shaman(hunter)-animism-totem> and the other link, <fashion designer-style-icon>, but did not arrive at a detailed explication. I suggest that the parallelism he tried to set up could not be perfect, because the shaman's main task is that of intermediation through totems, and other mediums, the hunter hunts to catch prey but their mission is not creation, like the fashion designer.

Vangkilde also talks of 'processes of observation' that lead to creation of designs. Though he does seem to suggest an affinity with the process of weaving, it is not clear how the details observed are integrated and synthesized into an item of fashion design, the features of a 'brand personhood'. He leaves us with the keywords totemism and animism, and implies a suggestive interplay, a deep archaic resonance with gut instincts and needs of human behavior. Furthermore, Vangkilde also points out to a fundamental logical puzzle and problem: unfortunately, according to some anthropologists, totemism and animism are concepts which exclude each other.

How the fundamental need for security, protection and images are reflected in vestiary and fashion design, I should like to take on myself to explain in Chapter3 and Chapter 4. How fashion disseminates, circulates is another factor which Vangkilde's extended metaphor could not illustrate over well. As Grant McCracken has pointed out, the fashion system has a great role to play in circulating symbols (Grant McCracken/Kazuko Koike 1968/1990); applying Vangkilde's viewpoints of totemism and animism here, we might infer that the fashion system could easily be an installation of tribalisms.

However, the protagonist in *Le paysan de Paris* (Louis Aragon 1926/1953) culls the boulevards and the malls for novelty and erotic impulse: I suggest

the fashion system thrives on this sort of migration, *flânerie* inclusive the four elements of play that Roger Caillois proposed (Roger Caillois/Meyer Barash1958/2001:37): ALEA(Chance), MIMICRY(Simulation), AGÔN(Competition), ILINX (Vertigo). First of all chance: the chance<ALEA(Chance)> anonymous encounters in the forum, in the marketplace, on the boulevards, of the individuals arrayed in unprompted styling combinations which set off chain reactions and provoke desires of replication<MIMICRY(Simulation)> and emulation <AGÔN(Competition)>. The daring *flâneurs* exult in the ecstasy <ILINX(Vertigo)> of exposing themselves to the admiring and jealous gaze of the largely anonymous crowd of spectators. In turn, the spectacle of newly clad bodies spawns the ever-increasing desires or disparagement in the spectators, setting off cycles of an ever-increasing burgeoning waves or disappearance to oblivion. Nowadays, surfing through Instagram and blogs, online runaways has a similar effect on our senses.

We do have a preconception that traditional totems are static; however, in fashion, the totems are forever changing. Ian W.King proposes, following Hans Jonas' metaphor for fashion, metabolism (Ian W.King 2015); it is certainly more apt in other aspects, as I shall explain below.

Indeed if shamans had the perspicuity to read the *Zeitgeist*, and had the ability to understand animism, why shouldn't shamans become designers? -or precisely: why can't they become artists and designers, or why are they different? -Because as a shaman and hunter you don't have to create artifacts and present worldviews, and put your ideas or artworks in circulation. We owe to Vangkilde an interestingly flawed 'parallel' structure, between the one link <shaman-animism-totem> and the other link <fashion designer-style-icon(brand identity)>, that nevertheless both demonstrate that between people and things (symbols) you can forge a spiritual, identifying link. An icon or image has a "soul", spiritual power, an aura, and transmits the vital power to you by proximity or contagion: your wearing or carrying it, possessing it. Our avid consumption of images and symbols, news underlies the same logic.

2. ANALYSIS OF THOMAS CARLYLE (1836) :SARTOR RESARTUS:THE PHILOSOPHY OF CLOTHES

In the following I shall consider Carlyle's intention in *Sartor Resartus: the Philosophy of Clothes*, always foraging for relevant insights on fashion, and neglecting almost all the other ironical layers that enrich the text. To sum it up, clothes(fashion) are open, unrestricted and vulnerable: the structure

of the very universe resembles that of the humble human invention clothes: reveal/conceal/symbolize.

Carlyle writes 33 chapters divided in 3 books, purportedly to air Professor Teufelsdröckh's views on the philosophy of clothes. It is in a satirical style and loosely (seemingly at least), or perhaps with bravura structured into three parts: it begins with an introduction, continues with the main content and substance, and ends with an epilogue. It purports to be also something biographical, although the biography never becomes limpid, clear-cut, factual. The tale is always distractingly overloaded with seemingly diverting comments, atmospherical details. For instance, the narrator hardly refers (excepting two instances) to the physical characteristics of Teufelsdröckh: as the narrator goes on with his story, we are somehow left with the vague impression that the philosopher donning his frock is always in the achromatic background pursuing his scholarly work, precisely on the philosophy of clothes. We do not get to know in precise detail how the philosopher of clothes arranges his attire; neither, for that matter, do we get a final full glimpse of his philosophy of clothes; excepting a few fascinating details confided to us: that Teufelsdröckh gives to aprons the preference as being one of the origins of clothing as a cultural institution: the other preferences are for pockets and ponchos. However, how this detail would impinge on the whole system of his philosophy of clothes is left to our imagination.

Striking is the repeated reference to clothes as being necessary not only as an emblem; but also as an analogue to a protective and external, more developed structure for a more innate, helpless, formless substance. But Carlyle never explicates the structuring processes that presumably should take place when the naked substance or content takes on clothes, or dons an external form. Moreover what precisely triggers the structuring of the external form is never indicated by Carlyle: except as being similar to the magical mechanics of time, like organic growth or decay, or the interwoven structure of the body, as in tissue, bones, skin; and as in the warp and woof of the loom.

The element of time would seem to imply the organic concept of growth and the accumulated wealth of memory and technical skill: however tailors who cut and sew clothes seem to have a different, conscious and artificed self-aware manner of going about it; belying the natural spontaneous organic way of nature, time and tide, as we imagine it. Thus so on and so forth: arriving at the end of the book we are nonetheless still left wondering as to what precisely a

philosophy of clothes could ever be, and what beneficent structure it would ever bestow on the naked body or substance; - or if the narrator really ever had the intention of letting us know about Teufelsdröckh's theory on the function of clothes, or anything else furthermore. It might be that the narrator's real intention was to tell us that a philosophy of clothes cannot be formulated as a system, that philosophy itself is feigned, a dissemblance of the nothingness which clothes humankind. Be the narrator's conjectured intention on philosophy what it may, at the least the common-sense assumption is that clothes have some practical function. However the narrative presents not so much a systematic discussion about their dissembling functions, as a random, seemingly haphazard list of suggestions. Instead of a system of philosophical thinking, or at least a methodical description or explication of the structure, or function of clothes, we are offered the following appositions by way of explanation: such as, emblems, symbols, decorations and bastions defending the hypocrisies and institutions of society. Finally, we just about conclude that the philosophy of clothes is about that something, that something paraphernalia and apparatus, which seems to be visually, verbally constructed and enwrapped around institutions, structures, relationships, networks, to sum it all up, all that earthly ruffraff artifact and artifice which seem to be invested with meanings, values which never seem to leave us and which we cannot do without. And it seems to be our duty, to continue to cultivate those structures, processes, narratives, lest we starve impoverished without content.

Rather, this book called the *Philosophy of Clothes* is not so much about clothes, as a description of how much the world and the universe itself could possibly resemble in its very essence and artifice, the supposedly humble human invention clothes. Or at least how much the structure of clothes is reflected in our (Teufelsdröckh's) understanding of the universe.

To sum it up, the ephemeral, the metabolic, the emotional acquires symbolic and sublime nature, by receiving a name, an identification; and becomes the defending carapace: this carapace acquires organic structure because it embraces the living nucleus of human volition.

One modern relevance *Sartor Resartus* has today is in its satiric, but not altogether despicable proposition that clothes inevitably reflect in some way the structure of the universe.

3. OBJECT/ABJECT-ANALYSIS OF JULIA KRISTEVA'S SYMBOLS

3.1 OBJECT/ABJECT

I have re-read Kristeva's *L'Abjection: Horreur de Pouvoir*(1980), to glean the text for insights about the irresistible urge for symbolic representation, makeup camouflage of the Self which the human being just reeks daily of. It has become increasingly clear to me that for Kristeva, *l'abjection* is the emphatic response of the Self proclaiming its independence, protecting its separateness from the other by rejection. This motion of expelling unwanted elements from the Self is most clearly expressed in vomiting, evacuation of the bowels, even in giving birth, in short, in our corporeal reactions and rejections of everyday. The analogy is extended to meta-actions; mental operations in the everyday world: distinguishing characteristics, discriminating and evaluating each characteristic, and the resulting operations of acquisition or removal, repudiation and depreciation of these characteristics. I shall analyse her texts for enlightenment on how this perspective is reflected in the fluctuating hierarchy of symbols in fashion.

To illustrate the abject, she explores many *fin-de-siècle* narratives, the likes of Joyce, Proust: but above all goes into a highly extensive analysis of Céline; she regards Céline as an especially typical and apt narrator of the abject sphere: 'Donneuse de vie-arrachéuse de vie: la mère célinienne est un Janus qui conjoint beauté et mort (Kristeva 1980:189)', and again: 'Céline définit l'écriture comme écriture de la mort, d'une part, comme vengeance de l'autre' (Kristeva 1980:189) and yet again: 'resensibiliser la langue qu'elle *palpite* plus qu'elle ne *raisonne* - TEL FUT MON BUT....' (Céline, Lettre a Hindus, le 15 mai 1947, *L'Herne*, p.113; Kristeva 1980:225)

Kristeva believes that in torrents of discourses, the narratives embedded in the conscious and unconscious of mankind disclose themselves; for instance, she does not hesitate to exhibit Céline's rambling brutal prewar narratives of anti-Semitism preceding the holocaust. Kristeva's theoretical position is clear: she agrees that the epitome of the desirable object, the totem should obviously imply and represent the phallus, the flag, *the* sign. The iconic antithesis of the phallus, the expelled *l'abjection* is the *chora*, or receptacle, Kristeva proclaims. However, these two elements are seen to be in a constant flux, so that the Self always feels torn with conflicting tension encountering these elements. Fear and even hate of the abject coexist, persist in spite of

the attraction, love, desire, or even fascination for the Unknown, the Other. The individual recoils from the terrifying, the disgusting, fearing for his/her own safety. A little bewilderingly, perhaps, at the same time they attract, intrigue, arouse her/him.

Chapter by chapter, Kristeva proposes a growing chain of analogues, of objects and abjects, parallel to the structure that she has indicated above. These are collected from the comprehensive areas scaling the divine, sacred, mythical, food, to 'base' phenomena, such as excrement, devil, tabu. It is meant to be an interminable chain of pairs *object/abject*, bridging the whole spectrum of apparently discontinuous pure/impure entities that illustrate the antithesis Self/ Other. The chain shows that the whole scala of entities *object/abject* exist only in relation to each other: that these antithetic pairings result intricately linked to each other. One realizes that these pairs can constitute structured hierarchies of entities at all levels, to be coped with performing all details of the routines of daily life. These categorizations of entities serve to identify for the individual what she or he can recognize as a comparatively safe arena of activity. Finally, although the spheres of divine and evil may sometimes seem to be equivocal, replaceable and open, the ultimate transition between the one and the other constitutes the stereotype *locus tabu*.

Beauty can become either evil, or good, even divine. The realization is that the divine and evil seem to be in an eternal flux, the borders are always being rewritten and are unstable and changing. When one rejects, one disapproves, or declines the elements of anxiety, or insecurity in preference for the lesser sin or evil; with the intention of staving off further chaos: avoid becoming abject by being confounded with the abject. Thus one must bid good riddance to encumbering garbage, but Kristeva points to the same '*horreur de pouvoir*', which exercise obscure but fascinating sources of power. According to Kristeva, the matriarchal, pagan capacities of tolerance towards sin and chaos, repressed by the old testament, have been resuscitated and reorganized by the new narrative in the new testament. Therefore, if I understand Kristeva rightly, she means that the powers divine and evil, although seemingly in extreme opposition, are capable of being sensed in certain instances as mutually sublimely switchable and equivocal, in that they evoke the same '*horreur de pouvoir*', inspiring in turns terror, fascination and awe, disgust and curiosity.

Let us go back to Kristeva's proposition: the antithesis of *totem/chora* as being analogous to the paired *object/abject*. It would seem to serve the dominant male to debase the female and tell her to hide her beauty and source of power. Tell the woman and all the world that childbirth which sets her at risk of death and gives her generative force is also impure: that gods or leaders should be males because males are intrinsically pure, or that on the contrary female sacerdotess are not allowed because they are likewise innately impure.

I only have one explanation for this phenomenon. As the male felt the need to control childbirth, families, and further extend power over social spheres, properties, heritages, and legacies, they systematically duped the female into believing that they were inferior, and only valuable as assets of a male; that their gender was predeterminedly and intrinsically debased through their social and sexual function.

But we can just as well propose the very opposite: men are useless and vile and sterile, because they do not secrete sacred menstrual blood, but spill only semen; because they do not bear and breastfeed children but only engender them. Here we would see a fundamental vulnerability and a reversal of values: an all or a nothing. It should be fairly easy, it could also have a domino effect, only if. Sincerely, but for a number of preconceptions and hard-dying prejudices, there should be no reason whatsoever not to believe the exact contrary: that men are inferior to women because they are predeterminedly impure. One wonders only why this has not yet happened on a global basis.

Kristeva declares that her concept of the *object/abject* is firmly anchored in the Judeo-Christian tradition. She adamantly accepts the circumstance that woman, as the lifebearer, the deliverer, is the being whose womb expels the newborn into the external world, risking her life, then becomes the breastfeeder, the caretaker. As such, in this Judeo-Christian context, woman should be automatically considered an entity of abjection. And as such, woman is automatically feared as being akin to the abject excrement, menstruating blood, afterbirth. The Judeo-Christian background that Kristeva's brand of abjection addresses seems to afford a striking backdrop for Céline's anti-Semitism: however, one regrets pointing out the circumstance that the abject is manoeuvred with high frequency not only in all patriarchal societies, but in any type of society or environment where concepts and properties need to be ordered. Thus we have the defense mechanism exerted by the abject rejecting the more abject, then the rejecter being rejected once again by the rejectee

for being more abject.

3.2 LANGUAGE: A CHAIN OF REPLACEMENTS

Language, for Kristeva, is the result of a chain of replacements through sounds, signs, inscriptions standing in for the raw fact. The raw data of our everyday, be it internal, visceral, or external, is given structure and logic through sound and syntax, inevitably mirroring in all ways corporeal functions and operations, actions. The simple act of replacing something with something is a symbolic action in itself. And this act of replacement, in itself cannot avoid conferring value judgments or allocations in hierarchical structures, contexts. As Naoko Nishikawa points out, this process is poignantly described in Kristeva's analyses on the acquisition and development of linguistic expression in childhood, using her experience in rearing her own child (Naoko Nishikawa 1999:146-148).

3.3 THE FUNCTION OF ANIMISM AND PROXIMITY: SOMATIC ORDER OR HIERARCHY

Following Kristeva's logic, we infer that by manipulating the disposition of *object/abject* pairs of entities, the individual succeeds in creating a safety pocket in its immediate material and spiritual surroundings. Anything that endangers the personal environment should be eliminated, it is justified as the target of wrath. If you have even a whiff of what could become a social problem on your hands, it is always easier to muster up handy sympathy seeking out and pointing to an external cause and enemy; it is painful and problematic to look for internal elements: then the closer to you a component lies, the intenser entangled it becomes with your proximity and soul; the further it is, the less beneficent, and the less affiliated the relationship tends to be. On the other hand, the higher placed a component is in your worldview, the sublimer it is regarded; the lower placed, the ignobler it shall be considered. I suspect this reflects the spatial ordering within our somatic hierarchy: the brain and spinal cord (central nervous system) dominating the centrifugal network of commands, and the centripetal flow of information feedback from the sensory organs back to the hub.

Accordingly, everyday individuals re-select and re-equip, their safety pockets, shells, nests, shelters with propitiatory configuration of symbols, with their own scale of the *object/abject* entities: or cleanse their shelters of unwanted symbols and suggestions: this is my takeaway on Kristeva's

theory. :fashion can be seen as a manipulated depository of desirable symbols.

3.4 LANGUAGE AS A SOMATIC SYMPTOM: VESTIARY AS PERSONA AND IDENTITY

Language represents the *élan vital*, a metaphorical extension and apparatus for the body volition; for the body desires and speaks. The body speaks, because the body through its motions and functions, emissions through various orifices, expresses desire, tolerance or repugnance towards the external environment, or a happening: the visceral reaction is either 'fight or flight', or 'rest and digest'. Laughter of joy or derision, welcoming and cooing sounds, or warning cries, emitted; appetite aroused, saliva secreted, sweat exuded, scurf scraped, bowels working, emptied.

Human beings, as have other living creatures, have cultivated language, a system which began by ordering the rudimentary sounds emitted; discovering and inventing a certain syntax and transmitted through societal education. It would be taken for granted that language somehow mirrors the workings of the body and the soul, which is located certainly somewhere or other in the body. Language is imbued with volition, insofar is it imbued with anima and spirit. Giving something a name, endowing it with a name means recognizing a verifiable essence, and therefore authorizes the existential value of that something.

The subject of a sentence shall correspond to the head. The verbs transitive are the limbs and the mouthes. Like and dislike are the eyes, mouth and genitalia. Ingested is food. Expelled is excrement. The object is the desirable, the phenomena, the exterior world. The complement expresses a certain situation. A complex of sentences can tell us about a certain topic. The verbs intransitive express a process, a becoming. In short, a sentence can consist of a subject, object, complement, verb, adverb; language reconstructs not only the movement of the body, or the flow of energy, but also the transfer of power exercised, and by analogy, carries over into the spiritual, metaphysical level. Metaphors express a recognition of a mutual factor in two different things. Rhetoric can involve analogy, rhyme, rhythm, syntax, persuasion by narrative. Language is the enactment of volition.

On the other hand fashion, or the upkeep and change of vestuary, implies the individual need for change of identity, role, persona. It is a metamorphosis aptly expressed by renewal of skin, costume, which easily visually becomes equated with the change of status.

4. FASHION AND METABOLISM

In this chapter I illustrate how the body, doomed to death, emits sounds, gestures, moves, acts and dances and migrates; in spite of the daily repetition of routine, continually seeks a new persona(fashion) and narrative and in the process creates ritual.

4.1 HAIKU -CAPTURING EPHEMERA

Haiku, the Japanese short poem in 17 syllables represents well the fragmentary ephemeral nature of everyday life, and together yet the poignant human effort addressed to make sense, draw a moral, to parenthesize, to record ephemera to memory. Let us consider a recent *haiku* by Sayoko Kawaguchi (Special selection *NHK Haiku* .televised April 8th 2018: guest Kiyoko Uta, hosted by Satomi Kobayashi.).

Shungyou ya choukan no mada yawarakaku

Haiku does not transfer very well into foreign languages, but I offer my tentative translation:

Spring dawn brings the morning newspaper, soft to the touch

Uta explains: what is exceptional here is the synaesthesia of the soft tactile with newness. The damp, soft touch of the newly retrieved morning newspaper: a messenger of breaking news, novelties, and newborn narratives vitalizes the perception of the recipient; affords the necessary refreshment, clears the obscured sight, and renders our spirits agile and lively, and reinforced, like the delightful soft touch of a newborn baby.

The basic story is the same for everyone: one is born, one matures, one dies. The process is different only in its details. With birth begins the maturation process towards death, in a repetition of slightly muted cycles, repetition, normal living activity, the ‘actuar de cotidiano [actuation of daily life:translation my own]’ (Sañudo Vélez, Luis Guillermov 2013). But we do try to endow meaning to the repetitive cycle through the insertion of ritual, and creation of artifacts and ceation of narratives. Thus is the votive created, and the calendars and memorials, monuments inaugurated to foreground a dull cycle of repetitions.

Clothes(= shell) tend to be static, visual, scenic, present the bearer’s

worldview, mirror the aesthetics of the body, reflect the body image. It is in its plastic essence a static adornment and an encasement for the body and represents in itself the body's morphed identity. A change of clothes also reflects the need for 'ritual' cleansing, refreshing change, grooming, molting. It is an extension of the love and possessive care towards the body epidermis, shell. Therefore clothes are insofar skin-deep two or three-dimensional, synchronic happenings.

Actions are continuously performed by living beings during their daily routine. Sounds (music and word, hiccups, burps, farts) gestures, dancing may accompany the body's movements, daily itineraries and provide commentaries, communication with their companion bodies. Sounds become structured, texted, fabricated, orchestrated and become narratives, plays, rituals. Stories and narratives are dynamic, temporal, encompassing living activity, pervade space; reflect the ebb and flow of the workings of the body internally, in its viscera, as well as through gestures externally, physically exploring territory in its daily itinerary or excursions, diachronic. Further satisfying the need for memory, symbols, history, and political rhetoric and persuasion, narrative transforms into play and ritual.

A play is the representation of a game in ritual involving the persona, the enactment of dreams.

Make-believe and plays are attempts to re-possess time and space, to restore order. Plays are attempts to impinge on the collective unconscious, human memory by circulating new stories and discourses. Thus rituals, performances, plays are a primary effort by the individual using the operation of morphed bodies and actions to awaken social awareness and contribute to meaning, through the diffusion and proliferation of spectacles and narratives.

4.2 FUNCTION OF CLOTHES-METABOLIC AND RITUAL

Clothes function as an enhancement and concealment of the anatomy: an optical deception substituting for the body image. Clothes encase the anatomy and are symbolic statements and replacements, and insofar have symbolic roles, and invite a to-and-fro of value judgments, verbal and non-verbal body communication, in reciprocation. The symbolic make-up of clothes in itself can already involve a narrative, a worldview, an ideology and show it. For example, Harriet Pepin, in *Fundamentals of Apparel Design* defines several areas of the body as emphasizing a certain aspect of the personality: the sexual area, the

emotional area, the mental area, the physical area (Harriet Pepin 1948:64-67). Sometimes the set-up can function as a costume in a play, which will help to highlight the movement of the plot and the delineation of the characters.

From another viewpoint, Ian King emphasizes the metabolic aspects of fashion:

[.....] The significance of this form of consumerism can be amplified through the writings of German philosopher Hans Jonas in his discussion of *metabolism of life* (Jonas 1992). This concept explores the temporal means of replenishing people's desire to resist of decay and death by means of replenishing people's desire to resist decay and death by means other than food, drink, sleep, etc. These claims are situated further in my second section where I introduce aesthetics (King 2015:11).

4.3 INTERCORPORÉITÉ AND METAMORPHOSIS

Ian W. King proposes the theory that fashion is structured by metabolism; that in an extended sense, culture, signs undergo a certain process of metabolism. According to King, fashion itself is a metabolism, as manners and customs are: gestures, “*modus vivendi* Pragmatist aesthetics” inspired by the “desire to resist decay and death”

The potential of clothing and fashion is rarely appreciated in mainstream academic literature; often it is relegated to the margins with labels such as ‘ephemeral’ or ‘frivolous’. Yet, clothing (and fashion in particular) provides one of the most explicit examples of global consumerism. The significance of this form of consumerism can be amplified through the writings of German philosopher Hans Jonas in his discussion of *metabolism of life* (Jonas 1992). This concept explores the temporal means of replenishing people's desire to resist decay and death by means other than food, drink, sleep, etc. These claims are situated further in my second section where I introduce aesthetics. My understanding of aesthetics does not confine itself to traditional understandings, rather I am persuaded by the writings of US pragmatist Mark Johnson (2007) who suggests that the body together with the mind and its interaction with the environment are relational essentials in our meaning-making processes (Ian W. King 2015:117).

King points to Merleau-Ponty's concept coined *chiasm* as helpful in understanding fashion. According to my understanding of King's interpretation,

chiasm is the following: the body as being not only an interface of the internal consciousness and external reality; but also the site where external reality implodes and internal consciousness explodes, as in fashion. King offers us a perception of the phenomena fashion as a process of metabolism, as a replenishment; this is very understandable, as fashion is generally considered to be ephemeral, sensual, fleeting; to renew, refresh, delay decay, aging, depression, to conceal attrition: a constant flow of change, of novelty is required; cleansing, washing away grime, cleanliness of the body.

Extending King's metaphor for clothes/identity = epidermis/body; this site of *chiasm* can also be seen as a site of molting, or metamorphosis, a growth, or transformation of the persona. Molting or metamorphosis is not the analogy that King is offering; he offers an analogy that implies restoration of the senses in the *status quo*, or a simple renewal of the metabolic cycle: my proposal of a metamorphosis or rather, molting as analogy to change of costume would indicate magical transformation of the persona above all.

The desire, the need to renew, for personal cleanliness, for change, in order to shed the scurf, wash off the sweat, scrub off the dirt, is decidedly basic; does not explain all the components of our need to refurbish our appearance. The need to refresh one's outer appearance and persona, to show the due respect towards the world, to be in stride with the world is also great. This daily process and repetition sublimates to a ritual metamorphosis, the eternal renewal of the persona.

To fashion, or to apparel, being a sort of a second skin, can be attributed a metabolic function; this holds also true for other related cultural phenomena, as according to King the philosopher Jonas suggests, for language, or all forms of communication, manners and modes, customs, styles can also be susceptible to the metabolistic analogy, being related to the exchange of matter that the body needs to keep up in order to live. Let us however make one distinction: a persona or fashion(clothes) may be considered in itself a shell-like, plastic, static element, acquiring mobility and dynamism when it is donned and paraded on the runways and streets; while sound and language(words,music) is spatiotemporal and fluid from its very nature.

4.4 METABOLISM AND RITUAL OF THE CYCLE: THE LINK BETWEEN FASHION AND LANGUAGE

At this point: what is the relationship between fashion and language? It is evident that both have the body as the starting point, both are elements

exuding or dispatched from the body. Most arguably fashion can be likened to a second skin, I agree: then clothes would be the most representative part of the apparatus, have a tactile and visual character, it is a plastic exudation, a replica of the body and the façade. Language and music emanates from inside the animate body, cries, sounds can be structured, can depreciate something or someone (albeit metaphorically), or be interspersed with vomit, bowels, excretion; language can also be inscribed and recorded, transferred, transmitted over time; above all language has a spatiotemporal character. The structuring of signs happens over a segment of time and space, just as rituals structure daily life.

For instance the news, as we know it, represents the latest novelties and narratives. In social life, we swap novelties; we bring back souvenirs; we show off selfies. Here it is worthwhile to indicate that fashion, as an evolved morphed shell forming our second skin, assumes many emblems, decorations from other spheres of life and expresses the spheres of life, people the streets with similar shells and groups of personas. Language is voiced, heard, inscribed, read; and music is voiced, played, and sung, heard; intersecting with the polyphony of the chorus or the orchestra; interpolations crisscrossing plays, or rituals, dances, ceremonies: these processes that are realized in space and time; in the hope of renewing time, or life, creating symbolic meaning in life.

Symbols are a replacement, transcription, contagious magic, representation of the origin; vestimentary fashion fulfills the desire of the body for the renewal of symbols.

5. THE DIFFUSION AND PROLIFERATION OF TOTEMS AND DISCOURSE

The body (as thought) presents itself, that which the body acts (and communicates) and realizes are the effectuation and investment of the will to exert power and disseminate seeds of thought (images, artifacts, totems, sounds, mimic, words, gestures, movements, fashion). Thought leaves the body, becoming immediately enmeshed in symbols, migrating in space and time. Thought roams through society, seeking for perches to alight on, searching for resonance by consumption, distribution; becomes recycled or rejected, damned to oblivion. Thought and fashion refurbish symbols to regenerate personas, language sets the music & new narratives discourse and litany for the ritual.

Fashion diffuses silhouettes and images, and therefore becomes the dream-

DNA, brings about metamorphosis and renewal. Language also renews, rewrites, morphs reality and disseminates worldviews. Both originate in the body. Fashion or language, either way, infuse each other, are an eternal ebb and flow of expressions and impressions, between the originator and ultimate recipient, among the more than several billion protagonists in play, the body.

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