Clothing as Medium of Communication[1]

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ABSTRACT

The article outlines a sociological construction of the object of clothing. Contrary to usual analyses, clothing is not understood in terms of material culture or ostentatious consumption, but rather as communication, i.e. as vestimentary operation. Its symbolical autonomy creates a zone of indifference towards the body and, in particular cases, towards the person. This approach is able to show that vestimentary practices vary with the form of societal differentiation. While dress codes are redundant and functional in respect to the social structure in stratified societies, an autonomous universe of clothing as medium of communication forms itself in the fully developed culture of exterior appearance. It contains a special code, programs, symbiotic mechanisms and a memory of its own. Triggers for such tendencies towards autonomy are a public sphere, forming itself as a correlate of urbanization, a money economy under market conditions and fashion as a theme of reflection for societal self-description.

Clothing is one of those phenomena of everyday life which, whether we like it or not, demand our attention at least once a day, calling for decisions and prompting cultural know-how. Similar to speech, clothing could be a correlate of society as such; at least it is a societal normality in those cultures, which we conventionally call civilized or modern. Nevertheless, clothing seems to be a neglected topic of sociology. It is a notion attributed to Herbert Spencer that the awareness of being perfectly dressed grants a freedom and a security which religion fails to deliver.[2] This may be due to the difference between salvation in this world and the hereafter. The one in the hereafter never leaves the mode of potentiality whereas the one in this world gains situational actuality, if only ephemerally.

The topic of clothing is predominantly classified under "fashion" in sociological literature and dealt with as an ongoing scene of competition and struggle, as ostentatious consumption, which primarily indicates the social status of those buying, owning and dressing in specific garments. Fashion in Sombarts (1902) theory of modern demand creation (Bedarfsgestaltung) is an excellent example of luxurious consumption. Barber and Lobel (1953) give a rehabilitating account of the fashion habits of American middle-class women, calling them quite rational if interpreted as a representation of status and considered in its latent functionality for the reproduction of the American social structure. Finally, for Bourdieu (1975, 1980) the fashion designers and their various brands are symbols of distinction in the magic of the social field of fashion, where, in a manifold struggle, primary positions, the definition of the rules of the game and the legitimate construction of reality are fought out.[3]

I shall not follow those examples. The aspects mentioned are certainly correct, some of them perhaps holding only for a certain historical period, yet they remain insufficient if one attempts to construct the object of clothing sociologically. For competition and struggle are certainly also a part of science, economy, love and politics, and questions of status are of importance here as they are there. Still, none of these phenomena can be adequately described and analyzed in its special quality and societal application through the variables of competition and status, not even the social phenomenon of clothing. I shall distinguish between clothing and fashion, treating clothing as a universal phenomenon and fashion as a temporal phenomenon. The starting point of my considerations shall be those differentiations connecting to the clothed body which are the requirement for a special vestimentary symbolism. Finally, I shall analyze clothing as a phenomenon of communication that has developed a special code, programs and symbiotic symbols. A delineation of dress codes in stratified societies can only suggest tendencies towards autonomy in modern vestimentary communication by contrast. In my view, the related problem lies in the interrelation of clothing and acceptance of the person. A closing remark concerns the temporal phenomenon of fashion, which, as I would like to argue, constitutes the memory of vestimentary communication.

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[2] It is a statement much cited, which I have found, for instance, in Flugel ([1930]1966).

[3] The whole complex of imitation running through fashion literature is based on a model of competition. The concept of imitation serves as explanation of how the inferior in competition draw more even with the superior (cf. König 1985). In the psychoanalytic literature following Lacan, competition with the other (imaginary) woman constitutes a generative principle for female clothing practices: here, in the realm of the imaginary, the other is virtually always superior and hence triggers restless, unceasing, yet futile efforts and struggles (cf. Lemoine-Luccioni 1983). This competition is in no way for the male (even though he may find this unfortunate).

I. DISTINCTIONS

I shall follow the suggestion by Spencer Brown: "Draw a distinction" (1969:3). Clothing constitutes a distinction. The space in which it is drawn is the body. The sides emerging from the distinction are the clothed and the nude body. Nudity is far from being a natural phenomenon. It is a product of civilization itself and is not brought into being until the emergence of clothing. Further distinctions on both sides follow the first one between clothedness and nudity. Sociologically of more relevance are naturally those distinctions that follow clothedness, especially since more distinctions are possible on this side.

The body can thus be seen as the unit of a form, one side of which we shall describe as clothedness. All other distinctions connect to this side. Nudity remains to be a side not further distinguished at first, even though we are able to switch to this side at any time. It can then be shown that the semantics of nudity are also subject to historical variation. While the Christian notion of a "sinful body", predominant in the Middle Ages, associates public nudity with heresy, body and erotism come together in the Renaissance conception so that public nudity is perceived as a sign of erotic indulgence. Finally, with the medical reinterpretation of the body in the 18th and 19th centuries, public nudity is taken for a sign of lunacy. The nude body's legitimate place is increasingly reduced to the private sphere.[4] Transformations in clothing habits naturally correspond to changing conceptions of the body: the veiling of "impure flesh", enticingly erotic clothing, the hygienically proper variant of the external appearance. Furthermore, in switching to the side of the nude body, one could see that naked skin can be smooth or wrinkled, the body short or tall, obese or lean, masculine or feminine, old or young, dark skinned or light skinned etc. Some of these distinctions can be found on the side of the clothed body as well. Here, however, they are specifically remodelled. The symbols now expressing the distinction of masculine and feminine, such as the skirt versus the pants, are part of the social supply of symbols, instances of special semantics. The same holds for age, which is characterized through particular garments or colors. They all depend on the respective symbolism of the societies in which they appear. One example for the color white in Europe is given by Yvonne Deslandres:

> Il y eut peu de vêtements entièrement blancs avant la fin du XVIIIe siècle, où se répandit l'habitude d'habiller les enfants en blanc, d'un entretien facile, sous l'influence des hygiénistes. Le blanc acquit à ce moment pour la première fois une connotation d'innocence, et devint peu à peu un symbole de la virginité (...) Les robes de baptême, de première communion, de mariage deviennent, pour un siècle, blanches. (1990:1035).

As the quotation shows, vestimentary codes are used to express a number of distinctions that, in a stricter sense, have really nothing to do with the respective bodies in clothing: Not just age or gender are distinguished, but also social status (in some respect, even age and gender turn from conditions held as *natural* into strictly distinguished social categories only through clothing) such as professional positions, social ranks etc. It is already discernible at this point

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[4] Cf. Bologne (1986:92ff.). He is able to show that the history of shame, which is closely tied to the problem of nudity and clothedness, proceeds in a linear as well as a circular fashion. Hence, it is not about simple models of replacement, but about further differentiations. An everyday concept of the pre-adamistic innocent body is thus already coexistent with the concept of the frail, sinful body in the Middle Ages. Therefore, nudity in bathhouses is in no way scandalous.

that even such diverse social occasions as baptisms, weddings or First Communion (many more come to mind) can be vestimentarily encoded.

Hence, it is not surprising that authors such as Condorcet, Hegel, Carlyle – and many more – thought clothing a symbol, separating man from beast. The reason lies in the fact that clothing is not merely an individually rational means against coldness or sunrays, but also a meaningfully structured symbolic complex. In the latter respect, clothing constitutes a medium of societal communication as does speech or literacy. Granted, it has a more limited reach than the other two media. There are numerous significates for which corresponding significants exist in speech but not in vestimentary communication. Nevertheless, the realm of texts to which corresponding textile significants exist is a vast one. Not all texts are textiles but all textiles are texts or at least textual components.

The reason for the comparatively far reach of vestimentary means of expression is, as with speech and literacy, closely related to the high inner factual and virtual differentiation of vestimentary symbols. If it were possible to either entirely veil or entirely disclose the body, if moreover but one form of garment were allowed, naturally, the supply of vestimentary symbols and its situational articulation would decline considerably. In any case, societies and groups may be distinguished by the size of their textile repertoire of symbols and by how elaborated or restrictive the codes of its appliance are. It seems feasible to form the general sociological hypothesis that social and vestimentary differentiation correlate extensively. This applies to all three forms of social differentiation, namely stratification, functional and even segmentary differentiation. It can also be easily shown that an increase in societally conditioned individualization goes along with an increase in possibilities – not necessities – of vestimentary expression for persons. Just as a garment can indicate profession, gender, marital status, rank, function, occasion, it can also serve to signify membership of segmentary groups. One need only think of the Scottish kilts, the pattern of which was at least originally a symbol for the respective clans, or of the costumes that not only signified gender, age and marital status but were or are also typical for specific regions and, within this type, left room for individual chic or private extravaganza.[5]

The basis of the principally universal communicative use of clothing mentioned above are the virtually infinite possibilities of diversification in its materiality.[6] It begins with the fabric: From velvet to silk, from linen to cotton, from leather to bast, from wool to the steel of armor, from the more and more popular synthetic fibers, from lace to gold or the gems of jewelry, as even jewelry is part of clothing and its system of significants. The multifarious ways of fabrication correspond to this variety. We have already mentioned colors. Their symbolism is different for every country, for every epoch. Hence, red was an exceptionally precious coloring in pre-modern times, reserved for lords and cardinals or appropriate as a wedding gown at noble weddings in the Middle Ages, in China, however, it was a color of passion. The most important form to be regarded here (in the sense of a strict coupling in the

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[5] Up until a few years ago, clothing was treated as material culture of primarily museum-specific significance in cultural anthropology. Recently, it has become more relevant in the context of cultural and ethnic identity. In a world of changing identities, clothing turns into a marker of identity and boundaries. For contemporary society, Eicher (1995:295ff.) identifies a simultaneity of world-fashions (jeans, trench coats, T-shirts, sneakers, etc.) and ethnic and national clothing styles, partly in opposition, partly cultivated alongside without conflict. The Japanese Kimono coexisting with Western fashion is a typical example for "national-dress".

[6] Materiality in the sense of Gumbrecht and Pfeiffer (1994). Even though there is mention of the body in this volume, of media, of music, of rhythm and dance, of AIDS and the immune system, of speech, printing and literacy, even the typewriter, of many material significants and significates, vestimentary communication and clothing as its medium are entirely left out.

medium of available elements) would be the form of the garment itself, its cut: gown or skirt, jacket, blouson, coat, blouse, shirt or T-shirt, necktie or boa, smoking and bowtie, pants, suit or costume, high heels or ballerinas, hat, cap or hood, plaid or plain front, tight or loose, clinging to the body or not.

Nearly all the above-mentioned garments (and I have limited myself to a selection from our own culture and epoch, otherwise this list would grow infinitely, helmet and chain mail, penitential robe and combat suit, tunica and kimono, etc.), have, besides a connotation of the body part they veil, a relation to the occasion and the identity of the person who wears them, for instance to the gender of the legitimate wearer. Cross-dressing can be rated as a serious violation not only of the dress code but also of law and order as such, calling for substantial sanctions. It is recorded for the 14th century, that the inclination of women to wear pieces of clothing reserved for males is entirely contrary to the moral standards of the time.

In the Speyer clothing decree of 1356, all female citizens are explicitly prohibited from wearing male coats. In the Strasbourg ordinance of 1493, the same are not permitted to own boy coats ("Knabenmäntel", cf. Eisenbart 1962: 92f.). A unisex-fashion was established in France around 1100, which was clearly inspired by the refinement of female clothing (Bologne 1986:64). In any case the gender difference, even before it became a primary difference of vestimentary communication in the 19th century substituting that of strata and estates, has always been subject to semantics of clothing. At present, the taboo of the opposite sex on both sides of the distinction is of different markedness. As Roland Barthes points out:

> There is a social verdict against the effeminization of the man, while, on the other hand, the masculinization of the woman remains nearly unsanctioned – interestingly enough, fashion has established the boy-look. *Feminine* and *masculine* each have a rhetoric of their own; *feminine* can allude to the image of a true woman in the 'emphatic sense'. The *boy-look* on the other hand, if noted, is of a less sexual but more temporal value; it functions as an additional suggestion of an ideal age, becoming more and more prominent in fashion literature: adolescence (*the juniors*). From a structural perspective, *adolescent* presents itself as a complex term of the distinction *masculine/feminine.* It approaches androgyny. What is remarkable about this new term, however, is its property of diminishing gender in favor of age" (1967:263f., my translation).[7]

The symbols of distinction between male and female clothing lie exclusively in the detail. And it is indeed female clothing, which is capable of including male clothing more and more. The distinction *female/male*, however, has in no way become obsolete, which is corroborated by the subcultural practice of cross-dressing. Here, transgression turns into a ritual of inclusion and exclusion (cf. Garber 1992).

A second distinction tied to the garments mentioned refers to the difference of outer apparel and underwear. Since the 19th century, the distinction between clothedness and nudity in European culture is also re-introduced into the sphere of clothedness (in many societies it does not exist). It is the case of a re-entry of a distinction into a distinction. The visibility of clothing not intended for the public eye can then lead to embarrassment or, as an intentional provocation, to alluring confusion. In any case, re-entries in this sphere lead to all sorts of

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[7] A similarly intensive cultivation of the difference *male/female* can only be found in the family system and in the medical programs of the healthcare system. Tenbruck (1965) has already pointed out the predominance of juvenility over gender as well as that of juvenile culture as status-transcending category.

allusions that can be used strategically. This is due to the fact that any veiling always alludes to that which is being covered, thus making us conscious of what is optically inaccessible. In a similar fashion as an envelope is alluding to the enclosed text[8], any garment, presently worn by someone, presents an allusion to the mystery of the covered body. Exactly such revealing covering is the deictic form of vestimentary communication.

With the first distinction that I have drawn, the body itself was divided into two spheres, namely that of nudity and that of clothedness. This distinction already has a synchronous and a diachronous side. Both sides can be seen as conditions logically excluding one another, whose legitimacy can then, for instance, be symbolically assigned to particular situations, such as nudity to night time or sexual, hygienic or medical intimacy (perhaps also some special forms of sport or leisure: sauna, beach), the jersey to the gym, the hiking boots to hiking, the evening robe to the dance or the opera etc, all situations, however, distinguished in time. However, there is also a synchronous dimension in the distinction. Clothedness separates a socially visible zone of the body, in a manner of speaking its materiality perceivable through the garment, from the inner sphere of the body as such, its invisible nudity, discernible only to the owner and merely imaginable to others, yet as an invisible horizon constantly present. The differences in various garments themselves add new ones to this already two-sided difference. This becomes especially obvious if one reminds oneself that the differences in meaning of fabrics, colors, patterns, articles, cuts etc. can be manifoldly combined in a meaningful way and that the possibilities of such combinations are subject to a vestimentary system of rules. Clothes fit or do not fit together, they fit or do not fit the occasion or the person. Only the typifications and a fourfold referential relation referring to the who, what, where and when (one could also speak of the social, factual, local and temporal indexicalization of clothing), underlying this system of rules, can fill the same with socially communicable meaning.

II. VESTIMENTARY OPERATIONS

So far I have treated clothing like a language one can understand, like a readable text based on a differentiated system of symbols, rules of combination, surplus references, and semantics. However, clothing remains sociologically unintelligible without consideration of the fact that one is wearing clothes; after all, we are, in the sense of our distinction from the beginning, on the side of the clothed body.

Roland Barthes (1967:18) distinguishes between real clothing and written clothing and in his analysis focuses entirely on written clothing, as, according to him, the semantic pertinence of clothing reveals itself in its entire essence only through the transposition into another medium.[9] In contrast to Barthes, I assume that worn clothing is self-explanatory, as it always manifests itself as an actualization of potential surplus references. This includes the necessity of selection and creates a present meaning that written clothing is not capable of conveying, even though it and its rhetoric comprise an important component of potentiality, against the horizon of which real clothing is actualized. Clothing in our sense is therefore (since the massive use of literacy, printing and photography) not merely a supply of symbols accessible for everyone, i.e. a supply of familiar patterns and typified meaning, but also a specific communicative operation. It is constituted through concrete realizations of selections,

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[8] For the problem of secrecy, cf. Bohn (1997).
[9] Here, the unsolved problem of structuralism and semiotics shows itself: The discontinuity of language and speech, system of symbols and actualization of symbols (cf. Bohn 1999). Nevertheless, Barthes' text is an excellent analysis of the semantic dimension *clothing*, actually exceeding the possibilities of the applied theory.

changing from one situation to the next. One chooses to wear this piece and not that one. In that respect, clothing as vestimentary operation differs from clothing as ensemble of significants and meaning typified for re-use, just like speaking differs from speech, writing from literacy, paying from money. Since written clothing, depictured clothing, and clothing in the museum each expand the range of possibilities of every vestimentary operation, generating an ever-increasing surplus of references, the strain of selection for each actualization is heightened. If, however, the social relevance of clothing is not limited to its transponible textuality, it should be more than a semantic dimension in the sense of "a highly generalized meaning, disposable relatively independent of situational context" (Luhmann 1980:19, my translation). After all, Luhmann distinguished semantics of a society, its supply of provided rules on how to process meaning (one could also say: its expectations that structure meaning systems) from events of experience and action that actualize meaning.

If we understand clothing as event-based communication, the element reproducing and perpetuating the same is communication through clothing and not communication about clothing. Clothing, according to my thesis, is not just a topic of societal communication, but in itself already societal communication. In the sense of a specific universalism of specialized communication it is specific in that it cannot be replaced in its effect of including persons into society – neither by conversation about clothing nor by other forms of communication[10]. It is universalistic, as the symbolism inherent in the medium of clothing can adapt to principally any theme: The Ché Guevara-icon on the T-shirt has political implications, Frank Zappa, Bob Dylan or a painting by Kandinsky at the same position address art in the medium of clothing, sandals allude to health, sneakers to sports etc. Nevertheless, these are not instances of political, art or medical communication, but rather of vestimentary communication, the specific operation of which is determined by the distinction wear/not wear.

With this operation the wearing of clothing becomes an event-based procedure, constantly changing. Admittedly, this event unit of vestimentary communication is not as ephemeral as a lingual utterance. The duration of an event of a vestimentary operation may in real time be longer than an uttered sentence, yet briefer than the conveyance of the message of a written text or just as condensed as a payment. However, the event-based character of the vestimentary communication remains principally unaltered, especially since worn clothing changes its communicative content along with the situational context: The loosening of the tie may go along with a switch to the informal, taking of the jacket may create an atmosphere of industriousness, leaving the strap of a summer's dress in its slipped position may have the effect of a situational transit to seduction, putting on the hat sends the message that one is no longer willing to delay departure any further, the doctor putting on his overcoat over his white coat is indicating a temporary inadressability in this role. This and other information (other-reference), for instance about the occasion of a get-together or about the gender, status, ethnic background of one's partner in conversation, can be transferred through vestimentary operations (self-reference). They are messages inasmuch as they function as selections against the horizon of clothing alternatives.

In many respects, vestimentary communication can be observed analogously to speech and literacy, which are, however, prerequisites of such communication. For the symbolism of the clothing medium, which is notably limited in comparison with speech and literacy, is first

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[10] Even in fairy tales such attempts fail, as can be seen in Andersens "The Emperor's New Clothes". The fact that clothing, just like speech, writing, art, money bills etc., must be perceived goes without mentioning.

constituted by vestimentary semantics formulated in speech and writing.[11] Furthermore, the reflexivity of vestimentary operations is less flexible than that of lingual communication: clothing styles may comment merely on clothing styles or quote them etc. Thus, in many ways analogous to speech and literacy, clothing as a communicative phenomenon falls short of them in other respects. However, due to its specialized communicative effect, clothing can also go beyond speech and writing as a medium of communication. This quality leads to the hypothesis that vestimentary action and experience in the modern age is structured in the form of a symbolically generalized medium of communication.

As success media they first of all, like the understanding medium, speech, and the distribution medium, literacy, bridge the difference of alter/ego, yet moreover furnish communication with chances of acceptance. In the rhetoric tradition, persuasion was the fitting term: one aimed at the consolidation of adhesion of the addressee on the basis of a normatively fixed canon of rules.[12]

In speech act theory, the term "perlocution" occupies this position, reserved for a specific type of expressions. However, the communicative effect of the clothing medium in the modern age rests neither upon expressions nor can it (as opposed to the pre-modern age) rely on a normative canon. It is moreover based on a specific production of symbols which is generalizeable, i.e. it is transponible and through that quality comes close to a symbolically generalized medium. Success media avoid the contingencies and costs of negotiation and comprehensibility typical for the medium of speech by coupling selections and motivation through their specific production of symbols.[13] The differentiation of symbolically generalized media from communication as a whole must follow a related problem and a constellation of attributions. The problem of the clothing medium, which I see in the communicatively ratified acceptance of the person (I shall elaborate on this later) is certainly tied to the typically modern premise that the choice of clothing becomes visible as a contingent and attributable selection. It becomes relevant whenever ego's further action is contingent upon a vestimentary affirmation of alter's identity or –in case of a rejection of communication- whenever the same is doubted by ego so that other means of identification such as passports, memberships, certificates, biographies are asked for or whenever the offer of communication is entirely rejected; this is certainly in the sense of the ethnomethodological term *passing*. A constellation of attribution can be determined in analogy to the medium of money and art: alter's action is merely experienced by ego (Aa>Ee), ego and alter being, of course, oscillating positions. In the case of the fully developed media (money, truth, love, power) their communicative use was, needless to say, a catalyst for the differentiation of the respective functional systems economy, science, family, politics/law from the rest of society. Whether one may treat clothing analogously as a separately differentiated subsystem shall remain open. It is, however, obvious that we are dealing with a symbolically constituted communicative complex with a history and, as I shall point out, a memory of its own.

[11] If vestimentary communication gains emblematic features, it has including and excluding effects in that it constitutes group memberships. For the emblematic character of clothing, see Soeffner (1989). Clothing functions as a symbol inasmuch as it not only refers to something but also represents something.

[12] For traditional rhetoric, see Barthes (1970); modern semiotic rhetoric, also underlying Barthes' study of fashion, aims at the analysis of the internal functioning of texts whose model is language ("langage").

[13] For the theory of symbolically generalized media of communication, see Luhmann (1982; 1995a:chap.4; 1997:316ff.). For a comparative perspective, see Chernilo (2002). In evolution of communication, symbolically generalized media of communication succeed (as Luhmann has incessantly pointed out) rhetoric as technique of persuasion in societies predominantly relying on oral communication.

Furthermore, it strikes me as obvious that the specific operations (wear/not wear) of the however heuristic medium of communication are based on a binary code. It is part of every operation otherwise the operation could not be assigned to the medium or the possible functional system. While the vestimentary operation is concerned with the generative perpetuation of the specific communication, the binary code solves the problem of closure, i.e. the problem of recognizing the operation's system membership. As I see it, the binary code wearable/not wearable has developed along with the clothing medium, a distinction functioning without an equivalent in its environment.

As binary encoding guarantees the differentiation and specification of a medium from others, it is of informational value only within the respective communicative bounds. Since it is organized as a preferential code, communication usually follows the positive value wearable rather than the value unwearable. The code wearable/unwearable duplicates the blatant evidence that clothes are worn with a negative version: the exclusive function of the value unwearable is that of reflection or a foil symbolizing the contingence of those conditions under which something is wearable. Hence, binary codes are available for the formation of programs, which offer criteria for the applicability of the respective code values. While the code wearable/unwearable is reproduced with the use of the clothing medium and hence invariable, programs are characterized by high variability and openness towards other developments in society.[14] For vestimentary communication, semantics of decorum and propriety along with fashion styles and criteria for elegance have emerged as programs. It is here where the social, temporal, factual and local index mentioned in the beginning is formulated. Semantics for elegance, propriety and fashion styles change epochally and on the horizon of the development of other subsystems such as religion, family, health care, economy, sports or art. They also react to customary distinctions in societal communication such as public/private, male/female, festive/ordinary, profession/leisure, urban/rural or to differentiating conceptions of the body such as religious, erotic, hygienic-medical, athletic etc. by transforming them into a language of forms specific for the medium of clothing, by avoiding them, commenting on them or treating them ironically.[15]

While programs regulate the contact of the clothing medium with its *social* environment, the *symbiotic mechanisms* refer to persons and their corporeality. In the case of vestimentary communication the necessity of considering the bodies of all those involved is as obvious as nowadays only in the healthcare or athletic system. Even though clothing, as I have shown in the beginning, creates a zone of indifference towards the body[16] through its self-produced differentiation – veiling it, touching it up and covering it with social symbolism

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[14] Accepting the operative approach just delineated, it is off-beat to assume that the code wearable/unwearable is programmed politically, juridically etc. From a systems theoretical perspective, one would also never formulate that economic operations were programmed juridically, even though one can apply the code justice/injustice to the code pay/not pay under specific circumstances: naturally, one can distinguish between legal and illegal payments. Yet, as payments they remain economic operations. The same applies to the publication of scientific texts etc.

[15] In this context, Roche speaks of a "changement de sensibilité" (1989:38). Reflections on the symbolic dimension of the external appearance are directed by this change of moral and stilistic standards, which is best described by the term "zeitgeist". Clothing can then also become an arena where possibly conflicting changes of "sensibilité" are anticipated.

[16] A prototype for this autonomy of texture is the "crease going to infinity", which, according to Deleuze, defines the period of baroque: "It is first recognizable on the textile model, as suggested by the clothed material: already, fabric and clothing must free their creases from the usual submission to the finite body. An originally baroque garment would be a wide, somewhat puffed, wrinkled, stuffed clothing, not so much presenting the body, but rather surrounding it with autonomous, multipliable creases" (1988:197, my translation).

– vestimentary communication can be irritated in a highly specialized manner by vital bodily conditions, perhaps even regimented. Just as truth is coupled to corporeality through perception, power through force, love through sexuality, money through needs, the clothing medium is coupled through protection and shame. The biotic embedding of the medium lies in protection against coldness, heat or indecent views - hence shame.[17]

III. INCREASING AUTONOMY OF VESTIMENTARY COMMUNICATION

Medium-specific codes, programs and specialized symbiotic symbols are a structural prerequisite for the formation of self-referential vestimentary communication. An autonomy of the clothing medium would be established as soon as vestimentary processes were no longer derivable from processes of other subsystems (not differentiated in the modern sense, of course) such as religion or politics, as was the typical case for stratified societies.[18]

The antagonism of inclinations of vestimentary communication towards autonomy and attempts of its political-juridical regimentation can be observed in many texts since the middle of the 14th century. The dress codes and expenditure laws (les lois somptuaires) arising in the medieval towns (cities) were certainly directed against precursors of programs formulating criteria for the applicability of wearable/unwearable. They react against an impending radical transformation of clothing habits. It is no longer merely about presenting oneself as the person one is, but also about demonstrating one's familiarity with a social code by acquiring an attire in line with the currently valid criteria for elegance (cf. Blanc 1997). A trigger for this is certainly the public sphere forming itself as a correlate of urbanization and hence the visibility of vestimentary practice deviating from official dress codes. The origin of such repressive dealings with clothing lies in politics and religion: Sermons and city ordinances censure compulsive cleanliness and extravagance and regiment in accordance with "moral sensibility".[19] All in all, a discrepancy between private veiling and public ostentation develops (cf. Moos 1999).[20] Ostentation and representation reserved for nobility is being imitated by the bourgeoisie. Those texts with their thoroughly repressive and conservative content indicate that an order taken for granted is beginning to crumble; in factual respect, through the rise and reappraisal of "novelty" in contrast to a traditional, customary clothing fashion, in social respect, through the increasing use of money. The latter jeopardizes the social order of strata, as the market gives those access to goods who are, according to the ruling of those days, "illegitimate owners". The ordinances mentioned react to such jeopardy on behalf of the preservation of the estate order, for the delimitation of strata is the dominant principle of differentiation in the stratified society, which must be stabilized even counterfactually. Thus, the dress codes and the expenditure laws are the juridical translation

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[17] In anthropological, sociological and psychological literature clothing is predominantly reduced to its protective and decorative functions. As far as I am concerned, the social system reference is entirely disregarded here in favor of the psycho-physical dimension.

[18] Bourdieu (e.g. 1992) also tries to theoretically maintain a social coherence for modern society through the concept of the "habitus" and the "field of power", despite the horizontal differentiation of society into social fields. The former has its place in pre-reflexive orientations, but is nevertheless of enormous socio-structural relevance.

[19] Since the late 14th century, regimentations of German dress codes are repeatedly concerned with coat length in male fashion and cleavages in female fashion; a particular nuisance are pointed shoes and the increasing eroticism especially in male fashion. It is not until the 17th century, that the "strange manners", imported along with the fashions from French Switzerland and France, are criticized and rejected (cf. Eisenbart 1962). Obsession with dressing up and public display are still main arguments even of Rousseau ([1758] 2004) against the setting-up of a theater in Geneva.

[20] For further information on the difference public/private in pre-modern times, see Melville and Moos (1998).

of dominant forms of social closure, which finds its most conspicuous symbolization in the dress code.

Even within the upper class, delicately graded regimentations existed: thus, the first born and heir in the families of the nobility of high office (noblesse de robe) in France during the 18th century were to wear solely black and grey, while the younger siblings were free to "waste" their allowance on colorful and fashionable clothing. The Venetian noblesse of the Italian Renaissance were exclusively clothed in black. Simmel ([1905] 1995) interprets this regulation, the declared purpose of which it was to "intentionally avoid distinction from the lower classes" (p. 16, my translation), as an attempt to conceal the small number of nobles (also cf. König 1985). Even forms, colors and materials were put into a hierarchical order: Thus, at the French auditor-generals office of the late 16th century, the glamor of velvet and silk was reserved to the president, satin to *les gens du roi,* and the clerks of the court dressed in simple taffeta.

Hence, the primary distinction of the dress codes of the stratified societies is that of estates. Clothing serves the symbolic closure and separation between and within the strata. Fashion remains concentrated on the upper class while clothing habits of the commons, the peasants and the craftsmen show some persistence and only sluggish change.[21] Vestimentary knowledge is focussed on the accordance of clothing and social rank. It is formulated and passed on by the education and conversation teachings ("civilité"), which always deal with outer appearance as well.

This turns into a practice of self-control and self-disciplining, in the sense of Foucault, first before God, then before others.[22] In the 18th century, clothing is still an object of the ceremonial sciences and decorum (Milos 1998). However, those partly legally specified conceptions of propriety of outer appearance related to status and occasion which serve the courtly order become more and more disturbed. In addition to the public sphere and the money economy under market conditions, *fashion* itself has been conceptualized as an irritation of the estate order since the 17th century. Even if seemingly it can be socially integrated if reserved to the upper class, it does semantically challenge fundamental principles of the stratified society. Fashion implies a compulsion to deviate from tradition. Although it was not yet certain whether deviance was merely an erroneous reproduction of tradition or a welcome innovation, fashion had already established a realm of its own. In it "deviance refers solely to the previous fashion, not to the essential constants of the world nor to personal identity, which proves itself as soul by surviving death and hence the fashions. In the realm of fashion, compulsory recruitment does dominate, yet only within the bounds of this realm" (Luhmann 1995b:81, my translation).

One pivotal structural change in the late 18th century must not remain unmentioned: the male's renunciation of fashion, not of elegance. The male constitutes somewhat of a black backdrop (the origin of which happens to lie in the Puritan frock coat replacing the colorful

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[21] This also holds for servants, who wore the *livrée* of their respective master and through their number demonstrated his importance. The commons had to wear a regional or national apparel dictated by the authorities, anyway. For instance, slaves on *La Réunion* received exactly two indigo blue colored pants and shirts per year, women a red ribbon in addition. Possibilities for transgression of the vestimentarily encoded soial order were limited to few spheres: e.g., military and theater.

[22] In 1703, it is still pointed out by La Salle: "The negligence of clothing is a sign that one is not showing enough respect towards the presence of God; it is also a sign of disrespect towards the own body, which is, according to Paulus, a temple of the holy spirit" ([1703] 1840:35f., my translation). Also cf. Roche (1989:43). Only a juxtaposition of the double tracked semantics (Christian semantics and fashionable semantics of the court, including their criticism) can complete the picture.

Middle Ages in the 16th century (König 1985)), against which the female can display her glamor, which shall, of course, soon become a burden to her. However, it is not until the 20th century that she can rid herself of this encumbrance: essential stages of this process are the reform dress (Reformkleid) whose fall of the folds gives her more freedom of movement, finally the nouveau look (Dior), giving her legs and hence a mobility of her own.

One could not speak of a differentiated subsystem of clothing until an organized center of the system formed itself. A detailed historical analysis of such a process cannot be delivered here. Therefore, some hypothetical-heuristic comments must suffice. One can admittedly observe a condensation and a growing nexus of profession (fashion designers) and institutions (fashion shows, haute couture, ready-made manufacture, pret-a-porter) and a specialized press.[23] However, an organization comparable to courts of justice, universities and research institutions, central banks, hospitals etc. can certainly not be found. One could at best speak of a "weak" subsystem, similar to that of art, if one were not compelled to leave such a question unsettled in the current state of research.[24] The change in the inclusion order with the transition of the societal structure to functional differentiation is common to the clothing medium and other symbolically generalized communication media, however. While clothing and fashion were a universe of the upper class and largely functional to the maintenance of the social order in stratified societies, an inclusion of the whole population in the code wearable/unwearable can be observed in the 19th century at the latest.[25]

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[23] The *Journal de Mode* of 1770 is regarded as the first illustrated fashion magazine, which at first was aimed at an aristocratic audience and later, by 1830, also at the bourgeoisie. Many more followed. For instance, the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* in the period of 1786-1827. An indication of differentiation from the rest of society is certainly the emergence of the professional model, which replaced prominent upper class figures in the display of clothing fashions in magazines (cf. Grivel 2001). The increasing autonomy does without system-external reputation. In *Magazine Pittoresque* – a popularizing encyclopedia of the period of 1849-1865 – engravings of clothing styles are used for cultural comparison. Haute couture and fashion designers in the sense of the *createur*, demanding authorship, emerge at the end of the 19th century (Worth is regarded as the first one). Admittedly, one can find references to fashion as a new phenomenon as early as 1672 in *Mercure galant*, but still in the unspecialized manner of *honnêteté*-semantics.

[24] Cf. Hahn (2001). He speaks of strong and weak centers. Criterium for the distinction between strong and weak systems would then be the existence or non-existence of an organized center. In this sense, clothing and also art and the mass media would be weak systems in contrast to strong systems such as science, economy, politics, etc. After all, not all subsytems are equally developed. Education and religion, for instance, are lacking a medium.

[25] König (1985:13ff.) also descibes various orders of inclusion into fashion, tied to the structure of society, with permanence or rapidity of change as a second implicit criterium for distinction. He postulates four forms of diffusion, starting in prehistoric times and in the early dynasties of China, and thus shows that fashion changes are in no way tied to capitalism (as Sombart assumes). However, while in stratified societies fashion is reserved for the upper strata and a sign of wealth, modern fashion (since the 19th century) annuls the distinction upper strata/commons and urban/rural. (Mass media such as newspapers, fashion magazines, photography, film, radio, television are pivotal factors in this change). In the 20th century, a radical democratization of fashion –as put by König – finally takes place. Fashion is now also present in the middle class, whose movement is somewhat regarded with hesitation and reservation by the upper classes, and, with some delay, imitated by the lower classes.

IV. CLOTHING AND IDENTITY

We have yet to determine the problem of communication to which the clothing medium relates, the type of communicative success that becomes more probable through clothing. Ever since it gained topical relevance, clothing has been associated with self-presentation before others. It functions, so I assume, as a credibility guarantor for the affirmation of identity and hence promotes the acceptance of the person in communication. This leads to the question of which forms of self-presentation a society allows. After all, in many cases clothing is certainly not attributed to the one wearing it. The genesis of identity could be historically linked with the genesis of vestimentary communication; for a whole series of conditions is necessary for *dressing oneself* to be interpreted as an act of personal identity.[26]

When Erasmus emphasizes in the rhetoric of *civilité* that clothing is a proof of accordance between the interior and exterior of man[27], not interiority in the modern sense of sensibility is meant, but rather the congruence of outer presentation and respectful acceptance of a god-given social rank. In stratified societies, identity stands for one's affiliation. In his essay *De la Mode,* La Bruyère emphasizes from a critically historical perspective that the identity of a person (just like property) consists in passing on inheritance and tradition (la loi des pères):

> Nos pères nous ont transmis avec la connaissance de leurs personnes, celle de leurs habits, de leurs coiffures, de leurs armes, et des autres ornements, qu'ils ont aimés pendant leur vie. Nous ne saurions bien reconnaître cette sorte de bienfait, qu'en traitant de même nos descendants. ([1694] 1965:342).[28]

If the identity of a person is determined by the continuity of tradition in which one stands, fashion obligates individuals to negate themselves as individuals, as fashion standardizes the characters. At the same time, it is formulated from the perspective of the court: "Les personnes sages doivent s'assujettir au caprice de la mode" (Bellegarde 1697). One is to avoid the "air de singularité" at the cost of ridicule, as singularizing individuality is viewed critically from both perspectives. To corroborate his considerations, La Bruyère points out that no one lets himself be portrayed in a fashionable robe, as the portrait ought to depict something essential and permanent. Up to the 19th century, the question of transient fashion, of the merely temporarily valid as hazard to the permanently beautiful, is prominent especially in the reflections on aesthetics. The realm of a serving, ephemeral elegance of the clothing medium must not have distinctly parted and differentiated from the sublime, timeless beauty of the art medium until the beginning of the 19th century. This already completed differentiation is captured by Simmel ([1908] 1986a) through a figure

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[26] There are obvious parallels here to the emerging inclination of attributing sin and deviance to motives, as can be observed since the 12th century. In the Middle Ages, clothing is seen as an equivalent to identity – almost in the sense of today's "cart d'identité". Up until the 16th century, clothing was recorded in the passport, as it was an indication of estate and affiliation of a person (cf. Bohn forthcoming).

[27] "Le vêtement est, en quelque sorte, le corps du corps, et il donne une idée de dispositions de l'esprit" (Erasmus 1977:71). This is a figure also holding for the transposition of mind, speech and literacy up until the 17th century, until a different origin of speech and literacy is postulated in the 18th century, no longer treating them as pure emanations of the mind and hence grasping their genuinely social relevance (cf. Bohn 1999:chap. 3).

[28] For comments on La Bruyère and *De la Mode*, see Schulz-Buschhaus (1989).

belonging to aesthetics: the difference of the general and the unique. If we follow Simmel, even the self-presentation of the modern individual remains committed to a general. However, this no longer refers to a diachronous adherence to tradition, but rather to a synchronous generality. In reference to clothing and jewelry, he points out that individuality and personality fulfil themselves precisely by means of an impersonal feature.

> The genuinely elegant avoids a focalization on unique individuality, it always surrounds man with a sphere of the general, stylized, as it were, abstract, which certainly does not prevent the refinements, through which the general is tied to the personality (…). For elegance is something 'for the others', a social term, which gets its value from general recognition. (Simmel [1908] 1986a:162, my translation).

Hence, the individuality of self-presentation in the context of clothing and jewelry for Simmel lies not in the uniqueness of the garment but in the *style of combination* of in itself generally available robes or jewelry and the concrete persona of those wearing them. Jewelry and clothing receive their individuality through the fact that it is exactly I who is wearing them at the moment. I present myself as unique through the situational choice of a general symbol or sign, hence through an operation.[29]

Since the modern individual is socially produced, yet not socially present as a whole, a double aspect of identity became generally prominent in modern social theories that distinguishes self-referential (relations of the individual to itself) and other-referential (relations to others) forms of identity, always considering that self-reference is not possible without other-reference – and vice versa.[30] For self-referential identity (biographic identity, exclusion individuality, moi profound etc.), the clothing medium in modern society appears to be a contingent option just like other dispositives, media, generators or institutions of self-thematization.[31] The social person, however, is forcedly included into the clothing medium. Clothing creates (so I have argued in the beginning) with its real and virtual forms of differentiation a zone of indifference towards the body, which is always the body of an individual. On the other hand, the socially excluded individual can (also in the shape of the socially included person) signalize indifference towards the clothing medium. The modern individual can utilize unconditional obedience to general norms concerning the exterior as a communicative means for reserving identity concerns to other issues (cf. Simmel [1905] 1995:25).[32] This is a distancing that can only be articulated autologically, hence communicatively within the clothing medium.

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[29] "It is the greatest fallacy to believe that jewelry must be an individual work of art because it is to adorn individuals. On the contrary: as it is to serve the individual, it itself must not be of an individual nature" (Simmel [1908]1986a:163, my translation).

[30] One may describe the unity of the difference of self-referential and other-referential identity as typical for the form of modern identity (cf. Bohn 2003). For a historical-semantic discussion of individuality, see Luhmann (1986). For the social production of modern identity from a network theoretical perspective, cf. White (1992).

[31] In his analysis of modern written clothing, Barthes (1967:269) found the question of identity of a timelessly existing person inconsequential. For self-thematization, see Hahn (1986; 1998). James still construed clothing in a pre-constructivistic fashion as second most important component of the *material Self*, which he distinguished from the *social Self*, *spiritual Self* and the *pure Ego:* "The body is the innermost part of the *material Self* in each of us; and certain parts of the body seem more intimately ours then the rest. The clothes come next" ([1890] 1918:292).

[32] Psychoanalytic and sociological literature balance between metaphors of self-expansion and the mask, granting the socially excluded individual a bastion for the self behind an external façade (cf. Lemoine-Luccioni 1983:45). Goffman (1959) sees clothing as a prop for identity. Luhmann wrote with regard to fashion: "The soul is hence well advised to participate without believing" (1995b:81,

Furthermore, in the case of uniforms, institutional clothing, monk's habit, respectable banker's outfit, professional apparel etc., clothing creates a zone of indifference towards the person.[33] The self presenting itself in such fashion is not the individual, but an organization, the government, church, or a profession. Hence, two forms of acceptance may be distinguished for clothing as a symbolically generalized medium of communication that each specify acceptance or rejection of communication that follows: the generic acceptance of role, position or function and the acceptance of the personal presentation attributed to the individual. We show our ticket to the train conductor constantly dressed in the same blue without asking for further proof of legitimacy; in seeing the sociology professor permanently dressed in the same gray, we understand the message that variations in fashion should be paid as little attention as possible.

V. FASHION

Fashion is a phenomenon not limited to clothing. Weber regarded fashion as a general regulative similar to morals, custom and convention, for Marcel Mauss it is a "phénomèn social total", concerning all societal spheres. And yet it gains particular significance in the clothing system. Perhaps it is here that it found its meaning center, as fashion or trend has become somewhat of a judgmental term; one need only think of the perjorative use in reference to scientific theories. In societal self-description since the 17th century, fashion becomes a theme of reflection that cannot be overseen. The cause for this lies in the semantic reappraisal of novelty, in the newly arisen question whether irritation is to be rejected as deviance or welcomed as innovation (Luhmann 1995b:63). Structural prerequisites for the semantic option to communicatively follow innovation rather than regarding it as an erroneous reproduction of tradition calling for correction are the transition from a stratified to a functionally differentiated society, printing and, as a correlate, altered conceptions of time. It is common to all three factors that heritage, origin and past are no longer decisive when it comes to present validity and the future.

It is a problem for contemporary observers that moral norms disintegrate relentlessly, that they are put into a historical perspective, which was not the case in classical and medieval considerations.

It seems especially threatening that even metaphysical orientations and questions of religion are no longer a matter of principle decisions, but are treated as matters of fashion (cf. La Bruyère [1694]1965). Teachings of interaction and virtue make out a solution in at least preserving great virtues as timeless ones, while leaving small virtues at the disposal of currently valid custom. "The postulated repression or at least disregard of the criterium 'buona usanza', which is replaced by 'moderna usanza', is understandably most prominent in the field of clothing. Here, the rules are imposed solely by time just as they are revoked by time" (Schulz-Buschhaus 1996:86f., my translation) A similar path is taken by the development of society, which had already differentiated partial semantics such as art and science to which evaluation of novelty is assigned. In opposition to the ordering principle of permanence, semantics of fashion had established the ordering potential of variation itself.

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my translation). This strikes me as an excellent definition for the symbolic manifesting itself precisely through the non-intrinsic.

[33] Interestingly enough, the leading manufacture in women's fashion (*Prada*) is precisely inspired by the uniform. Since the manneristic antipode committed to glamor, *Versace*, is becoming more and more insignificant, the uniform apparently comes to be the dominant paradigm. An insight of contemporary Couture into the zone of indifference between clothing and individuality? For *Versace* as mannerist, see Link-Heer (1998).

After all, the sense of fashion lies in "legitimizing, even imposing novelty and this with the stupefying (…) argument that it is transitory. (…) One was able to point out that fashion is transitory and further innovations would correct it. Hence, accuracy or any form of obligation could not be of relevance here" (Luhmann 1995b:81, my translation). The specific (and at the beginning of modernity still surprising) element of fashion is the fact that it gains validity even though in appearing, it already announces its disappearance. This is why fashion is a typical form of coping with contingency: it makes the contingent, arbitrary, and capricious acceptable because it simultaneously denotes its demise and transience.

Simmel, who is, implicitly, referring to modern fashion, has hence characterized it as something that *is* not, but rather *comes to be*. However, social dimension and time dimension are hopelessly intermingled when he writes:

> Any growth of it [i.e. fashion] is a step towards its own demise, as distinctiveness is thus abolished. It has, through this play between the tendency towards general distribution and the annihilation of its meaning caused by that distribution, the true appeal of bounds, the appeal of simultaneous beginning and end, the appeal of novelty and at the same time that of transience. Its question is not to be or not to be, but it is rather a simultaneous being and non-being, it is always on the watershed between past and future and gives us, as long as it is at its peak, a stronger awareness of the present than most other phenomena. ([1905] 1995:16f., my translation).

If, however, the interplay of novelty and transience inherent to fashion is not dependent on its distribution; if, however, fashions are subject to change without ever having achieved the degree of distribution presumed by Simmel and many others? Then it seems more plausible to disentwine social and temporal dimension and treat fashion as a purely temporal phenomenon.[34]

Up till now, I have for one treated fashion styles as programs for the code wearable/unwearable of the clothing medium. Furthermore, I have acknowledged their semantic upheaval against natural regulatory patterns of the stratified society. With regard to the differentiated vestimentary communication, a further aspect of its quality as temporal phenomenon can be made out: As currently valid fashion it constitutes a memory of clothing communication – despite its characteristic transience. This is not be equated with its medial and institutional prerequisites (materiality of garments, written clothing in the sense of Barthes, museums for preservation purposes). Moreover, social memory is a mode of operation that enables meaning processes and meaning systems to establish a relation to themselves. As event-based, meaningful operations always take place in the present, memory functions can only contribute to present operations (cf. Foerster 1985; Luhmann 1996). Their exceptional feature lies in the double function of forgetting and recalling, in the deactivation and reactivation of past events as present events. I. e. recalled events are neither noematically nor noetically identical with the respective past events; however, the priority of memory functions lies (as Luhmann and Nietzsche point out) in forgetting. The function of social memory would hence not be (contrary to common intuition) retrieving past events or making them available once more. For processes of vestimentary communication, such tasks are undertaken by fashion.

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[34] "Brands", long since a major part of world fashion, are certainly an attempt to set permanence against such change and constant disintegration.

First and foremost, all those vestimentary communication are forgotten that have not condensed to a valid fashion. This, of course, holds only for social, not for individual memory. Another task of the memory of the clothing medium consists in recalling past fashions in order to distinguish present fashions, or to refer to past fashions in the form of a quotation. At the same time, through constant participation of the system memory in vestimentary operations, their passing on to oblivion is promoted. Fashions are forgotten, past is made invisible in order to reserve and release the present for new fashions. Luhmann has so far considered this necessity of forgetting in respect to the past; one should consider whether memory must forget prospectively, hence in the horizon of a present future, in order to assure its present operation; in the sense of a future that will not come to be, if it is not forgotten. Functions of forgetting and recalling thus make room for new fashion. However, they also allow references to past fashions through selective reactivation in the present.

Modern fashion operates under conditions of a condensed present experienced as contingent. It is not categorically distinguished from traditional fashion by its more rapid change, as it is often claimed with reference to Benjamin. It is rather about the fact that "fundamentals change due to a present that disappears inevitably and hence cannot guarantee for accuracy and permanence" (Luhmann 1980:265, my translation). Modern fashion has its foundation in a conception of time that has enhanced variety and change as conditions for order. Neither the market (Sombart) nor distinction and imitation (Tarde [1895] 1975; Simmel [1904] 1957; [1895] 1986b; Bourdieu, e.g. 1980), but rather fashion as social memory strikes me as the essential generative principle of vestimentary processes in modern society.

While the clothing medium elevates change as an end in itself to a principle, cultivating and celebrating it, other systems react to the challenge of "novelty" with obscuration. In this respect, science and art are on common grounds. While science (even though long since differentiated from the rest of society for the evaluation of new findings) declares that which appears at a later time as superior under the banner of "progress" in the 19th century, fashion makes no secret of simple replacement. Modern art in the 19th century decisively rejects novelty in the shape of only momentarily valid fashion from its realm. Baudelaire, to whom an unconditional devotion to the only ephemeral is unrightfully attributed, rather objects to the pure variation of modern art, which is so ubiquitous and powerful that beauty in the sense of permanence prevailing over variation is fading. Beauty in art can only be attained doubly as something eternal and transient (Baudelaire [1856]1954). Even if beauty as eternal value is no longer obtainable except through the foil of the ugly, the task of art could only consist in showing the ugly with irony; for the ugly amounts to nothing more than simple variation and utility (Gautier [1835] 1966). In "ordinary life" the realm of the clothing medium had already been established in a developed culture of exterior appearance, claiming superior relevance for its formal language and committing itself to the capricious endeavour of an exclusively transient, historically temporary validity.

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