# Entangled Fashion: A Psychosocial Contribution to Fashion Ethics in Times of Crisis

By Ana Minozzo

**Abstract**

This critical meditation proposes a dialogue between the fields of fashion studies and of psychosocial studies as a fruitful and generative alliance in relation to the ethics of fashion. I develop the idea of a "crisis of entanglement" as a means of analyzing the structural foundations of fashion's onto-epistemic situatedness. Addressing both the current COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing crises of sustainability, I work with the proposal of "entanglement" as seen in the work of Denise Ferreira da Silva. A crisis of entanglement, as I propose, runs entirely through the global fashion system, and if we are to re-orient the field to a decolonial perspective, reconfiguring and reconstructing it, we — practitioners, theorists, and consumers — need to rethink our positionality in light of both structural visible and invisible ethical troubles perpetuated by the industry. Fashion, as this piece proposes, is witness to a very complex and particular type of alienation, that of fashioning the self. The proposal of entanglement or nonlocality as paradigms for a new imaginary, as defended by Ferreira da Silva (2016, 2019), are helpful in the exercise of moving fashion from crisis to commons, via creativity, as I argue in what follows. Differences, in this model, are multiple, plural, and yet allow for interconnectedness. After elaborating an eco-feminist critique of fashion, I conclude by asking how we could wear fashion differently, where difference comes without separability (Ferreira da Silva, 2007, 2016, 2019).

April 2020. European countries were already deep into the COVID-19 crisis that swiftly took hold, and *Vogue Italia* publishes a blank cover (*Vogue Italia*, April 2020; Figure 1). *Vogue Portugal,* on the other hand, featured a white heterosexual kissing couple wearing masks above the slogan: "Freedom on hold. COVID-19. Fear will not stop us" (*Vogue Portugal,* April 2020; Figure 2). A year later and neither apathy nor denial sound particularly tasteful. Alongside the over two million deaths accumulated over the last year or so, poverty, unemployment, political uncertainty, and general distress mount. The effects of COVID-19 on fashion, society, and subjectivity have been speculated upon, calculated, and written about over the past months — from headlines calling this moment fashion's "existential crisis" on BBC News, to systematic academic discussions of the effects of the pandemic on garment workers (see, for example, McIntosh, 2020; Brydges and Hanlon, 2020; and Chen, 2020). What I am adding to such endeavours of unpacking the crisis is a psychosocial lens, as a scholar and practitioner in this field.



**FIGURE 1** *Vogue Portugal,* April 2020.



**FIGURE 2** *Vogue Italia,* April 2020.

Fashion scholarship can benefit greatly from closer dialogue with psychosocial studies. While fashion has drawn vastly upon sociology and cultural studies, for example, when addressing the notion of taste as a tool of social orientation — a concept well known thanks to Pierre Bourdieu (1996), who is commonly cited in fashion texts — ideology, the body, and the unconscious, for instance, could be approached through theoretical meditations. I explore this interdisciplinary approach by thinking through the current crisis from surface to structure; addressing the current crisis as a crisis of "subjective entanglement" ingrained in the fashion system — by which I mean how the fashion subject has been constructed in the Western (or Anglo-European) fashion industry as a self-actualizing individual with modern roots that imply an ontological, epistemological, and political alienation.

Echoing psychosocial tradition as a field of study and research founded in the UK at Birkbeck, University of London (Frosh, 2003), the aim of this piece is not to find final answers, but rather to explore the tension between subjective experience and hegemonic political reality; to expose "the ways in which subjects are positioned by the theoretical structures used […] to understand them" (Frosh and Baraitser, 2008: 359). As fashion, style, and dress are integral parts of culture and society, they function as privileged sites of enquiry upon modes of subjective production.

# This article therefore unpacks the notion of "crisis" from two initial pillars, namely the current COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing crisis of sustainability.

These foundational debates are weaved together in the proposition of an onto-epistemic ethical "crisis of entanglement," which I place in this text in dialogue with the work of Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007, 2016, 2019) as well as interlocutors from the dynamic fields of the post-humanities and psychosocial studies.

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## CRISES

One possible worst-case scenario for the COVID-19 crisis is that it ends up forgotten, either owing to the might of science in bringing some of us "back to normal," or due to a series of ever-more catastrophic years to come. Meddling with the environment, extracting natural resources, and altering the biosphere we depend upon to live is bound to cause further pandemics in the near future (IPBES, 2020). If we are willing to see through what is behind the current crisis, we may be surprised to find out that an emergency has been sounding its alarms for longer than we, average people in and out of the fashion world, usually dare to remember. A crisis of entanglement, as I wish to propose, runs entirely through the global fashion system and if we are to re-orient the field to an ecological, feminist, and decolonial perspective, reconfiguring and reconstructing it, we — practitioners, theorists, and consumers — need to rethink the language we have been speaking, which is integral to the violence of this seemingly never-ending unprecedented time period.

## With this in mind, I ask: *What does fashion have to do with the current crises — political, environmental, epistemological, and ethical — within which we are entangled? And could we fashion ourselves out of it?*

In order to unpack the structural foundations of the crises made clear in the year of the pandemic, I propose a movement from surface to depth of the organizing pillars of the fashion system and its assumed and reproduced modes of subjectivity.

The meaning of crisis in the fashion industry has been reduced, in several media outlets and expert reports — including, for example, in the Business of Fashion (2020), or the BBC (McIntosh, 2020) — from its complex structural issues to surface-level symptoms. One such reduction is the demands of investors and conglomerates over the creative output of designers, a conflict often played out in the headlines of specialized press running exclusive "Why I left" interviews. Creatives and investors seem to be speaking different languages, and have trouble understanding each other (Sherman, 2019). Another common symptom is the lack of representation and diversity in the fashion industry, from catwalk and campaign casting to senior creative and business positions. That the industry has already started to transform in noticeable ways compared with that of one or two decades ago indicates that change has started to shake the hallowed halls of the fashion establishment; however, there is still a long way to go.

One symptom, nonetheless, that is worsening or becoming more evident in the current climate emergency, is that of the crisis of sustainability, despite the emergence of novel business models, such as the launch of clothing rental services like ThreadUp or YCloset, the rise of second-hand shares (Togoh, 2020), and initiatives such as the 2020 G7 Fashion Pact, chaired by Kering's François-Henri Pinault and promoted by the French President Emmanuel Macron. Amid greenwashing both in luxury and on the high street/fast fashion, decisive social or environmental sustainability still feels at odds with the fashion industry (Fletcher and Tham, 2015). For Anneke Smelik (2022), sustainability is deeply and politically connected to global inequalities since "sustainable fashion not only pertains to the material production of sustainable fibers, textiles and clothes and the disposal of waste, but also to a capitalist industry grounded in social-economic realities in a global context" (Smelik, 2022: 62).

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Preoccupations with inclusivity, accessibility, and ethical labour combined with greener outsourcing, manufacturing, and distribution channels have been shattered, for example, by the scandalous news of the operation of fast-fashion Boohoo, in Leicester, UK. During the Spring 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, the company, which thrives on promoting overconsumption of its cheaply made items, was caught driving a severely precarious production line, illegal according to UK law, having breached labour law in similar manner two years prior (Mooney, 2020). If we problematize the dynamics of fashion consumption at the heart of such socio-ecological challenges, we are, for Smelik, taken right into the matter of subjectivity: "consumerism is at the heart of the fast-fashion system, [and] matters of identity play an important part. The desire for constant change and renewal keeps production and consumption of fashion in an iron grip" (Smelik, 2022: 62). In this sense, by thinking of sustainability and subjectivity critically, a need for "other fashion systems" comes to light (Fletcher, 2015: 15).

## If we laid out such crises and embarked on a critical movement from surface to structure, or from surface to depth, we can see how such layers — namely, sustainability, representation, and ethics — are structurally interconnected.

Brazilian-born and Canada-based scholar Denise Ferreira da Silva (2016), whose work crosses critical race theory, continental philosophy, Black feminism, and art theory, identifies the mechanisms of such structural problems as arising from the logic of difference and separation. According to Ferreira da Silva (2016) knowledge production, discursivity, as well as politics and materiality are scientifically framed by such logic of difference and separation, bearing witness, for her, to the onto-epistemological pillars of colonialism, patriarchy, and human exceptionalism. Let us hold onto this point and invite the field of fashion studies into this conversation. More precisely, can we imagine the act of fashioning oneself differently when being critical of the logic of "difference and separation"?

Ferreira da Silva writes: "Without separability, knowing and thinking can no longer be reduced to determinacy in the Cartesian distinction of mind/body (in which the latter has the power of determination) or the Kantian formal reduction of knowing to a kind of efficient causality" (2016: 65). In the same manner, if the logic of separation is challenged, then a subsequent separation from the subject and their historical time, as well as the unfolding of such transcendental time, or what Ferreira da

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Silva addresses as a Hegelian "'sequentiality' (Hegel's onto-epistemological pillar) can no longer account for the many ways in which humans exist in the world, because self-determination has a very limited region (spacetime) for its operation" (Ferreira da Silva, 2016: 65). As an alternative to the paradigm of difference and separation, she proposes that we think through "nonlocality" instead, implicating *all* (all humans, animals, plants, minerals, etc.) as interdependent, adding to studies in material culture, post-humanities, feminism and decolonial anthropologies (see Latour, 1993; Bennet, 2010; Haraway, 2016; and Braidotti, 2006). Ferreira da Silva writes: "When nonlocality guides our imaging of the universe, difference is not a manifestation of an unresolvable estrangement, but the expression of an elementary entanglement" (2016: 65). To decolonize is, under such prism, to reimagine from an eco-feminist ethical stance that we are all different but we are in "this" (crisis, world, pandemic) together (Braidotti, 2020). The individual and matters of self-expression and self-actualization are, thus, shaken under the proposition of entanglement.

In other words, if we are to address the visible pains and aches of fashion, we need to reach as far back as the modern roots of the Anglo-European fashion system. Self-determination and self-fashioning, as I argue here, are intertwined sociocultural paradigms.

## ENTANGLING

The proposal of entanglement or nonlocality as paradigms for a new imaginary, as defended by Ferreira da Silva (2016, 2019) are helpful in the exercise of moving fashion from crisis to commons via creativity. More specifically, her work and of her interlocutors, such creative communing calls for a subtle yet powerful moving away from a transcendental universal symbolic system that frames the subject as

necessarily separated from nature and/or materiality, thus repositioning the individual and any alliances limited to identity in favour of collective and plural materialist ethics. Differences, in this model, are multiple, plural, and yet, allow for interconnectedness. Eco-feminism and decolonization emerge as antidotes for the modern subject: an individual that fancies themselves to be self-determined, or, at most, to share only sociocultural connections with others, rather than life itself.

The separability over differences that Ferreira da Silva combats with the onto-epistemic turn of Black feminism addresses what Bruno Latour (1993) called the "modern contract," opening the way for an "entangled subject." Theorists of the climate emergency — Donna Haraway (2016), Isabelle Stengers (2015), and Achille Mbembe (2015), for example — suggest that the Anthropocene reverts such modern contract, in which there is an ontological abyss between humanity and nature, one that guarantees the construction of a "rational us" from the differentiation and separation of whatever escapes such fixed abstraction of both human and nature. The "Anthropos" of modernity is the "Transparent I," which Ferreira da Silva (2007) localizes as the precondition to post-Illuminist European thought. It is this modern "Transparent I" that realizes the abstraction a universalist ontological figure that crosses sciences and discourses since the nineteenth century. In this sense, the modern "Transparent I" shapes the chasm between nature and culture, passing through Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and reaching as far as critical theories, cultural studies, and post-structuralist critiques that carve an edge between materiality and language. In the Anthropocene and its climate emergency — so evident in the perils of 2020 under COVID-19 — the ontological paradigm that holds the understanding of nature and culture as different and separated is challenged (Haraway, 2016).

# The foundation of a patriarchal, colonial, and extractivist system is also here challenged, inviting a shift towards entanglement, interdependence, and symbiosis.

Consequently, subjectivity needs re-orientation, as echoed in recent writings of several noticeable thinkers, including Judith Butler (2020), Silvia Federici (2018), and Fred Moten (2013), who invite us to re-orient our ethics of togetherness beyond identity and identifications and through the construction of the common among plural differences. Ferreira da Silva suggests that "at the subatomic level, humans exist entangled with everything else (animate and in-animate) in the universe" (2016: 64). If we are nuanced in our critique to the knowledge production from the nineteenth and twentieth century anthropology and sociology (which posited human differences as its fundamental classificatory systems) as well as the field of physics (in their Newtonian and Einsteinian tradition of separability), then, Ferreira da Silva (2016) argues that "difference and separability" cease to be such necessary ontological markers. In her words, "without separability, difference among human groups and between human and nonhuman entities, has a very limited explanatory purchase and ethical significance" (2016: 65).

Entanglement, in this sense, is the ethico-aesthetic paradigm of the commons. A re-orientation towards entanglement, or a "deep entanglement" in the words of Karen Barad (2007), has the potential to subvert any illusion of human exceptionalism of agency that is anchored on an onto-political aesthetics that posits the human as "in the world," rather than implicated and "of the world" (Ferreira

da Silva, 2019). Lifting the anchors of such deep alienation opens up to a consideration of ethical possibilities that move beyond post-Kantian humanist ethics.

Based on the above, we find that modern humanism, or the European-inherited positing that Man is the arbiter of reason, the centre of the universe, which offered the conditions for the Enlightenment, is the anthropological totality or the assumption that binds such Imaginary-Symbolic knots that frame "human exceptionalism." For Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, "modern anthropocentrism or humanism, therefore, corresponds to the 'us before the world' scheme, a position of transcendental anteriority of the human which is all the more constitutive of this world the more humans, as empirical beings, show themselves to be constituted by it" (2017: 29). Rosi Braidotti, as an important feminist thinker of Post-Humanities, argues that the Post-Structuralist move in the 1960s and 1970s contributed immensely to debunking the post-Kantian reliance on a liberal and humanist notion of the subject as necessity of moral, political and ethical probity, proposing, rather, that "liberalism [at present] hinders the development of new modes of ethical behaviour" (Braidotti, 2006:12). Feminist Poststructuralism, more specifically feminist post-humanism, for her, "implies accountability, situatedness and cartographic accuracy" (Braidotti, 2006: 12) in terms of relationships to others, alterity, and life on Earth. Feminism, especially eco- and Black feminisms, as seen across Ferreira da Silva's oeuvre, has offered several ways for us to think and organize ourselves out of fixities, identities, and extractivist logics by aligning materiality and language in the living body. Through feminist lenses, our human fragility, our creativity, our escape and resourcefulness have been thought, mostly since the 1970s, as collective and not individual. We can only live if we all live with the understanding that life is interdependent.

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The year 2020 erupted with a crisis of life and livelihood, or a crisis of our modern understanding of what life is about. Rather than maintaining the illusion that we are autonomous individuals privatising their property in a Neo-Darwinist survival of the fittest, we are now collectively rethinking community, cooperation, togetherness. If we don't reorient our ethics towards entanglement — of all elements of the biosphere, all species, all genders, all races, all ethnicities, in our pluralities and multiplicities — life will become impossible. The two *Vogue* covers (Figure 1 and Figure 2) are telling of our problem: is it freedom that is on hold, and is the problem fear, as the *Vogue Portugal* April 2020 cover suggests? Or is an entirely different conversation overdue, one that will not be resolved with a disengaged "blank", as the *Vogue Italia* April 2020 issue went for?

## In other words: are fashion subjects caught up with the necessity and possibility of entanglement?

### IDENTITY, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND IDEOLOGY

Much has been written about the effects of the neoliberal freedom to consume on subjectivity and identity. Fashion, naturally, appears as part of the equation of a particular postmodern "identity crisis" (Frosh, 1991; Hollander, 1994; Lipovetsky, 1994). According to this line of thinking, contemporary capitalism thrives on feelings of inadequacy, fostering a sense of incompleteness paired with guilt for not managing to excel at "being who you are with perfection" even when all tools are made available through consumption of some kind (Salecl, 2004, 2010). For Salecl, we are living in a "new age of anxiety" based on the constant challenging to subjective perception of one's position facing culture (Salecl, 2004). Her argument echoes Michel Foucault's (1982) influential work on self-governance, biopolitics, and technologies of the self, in the sense that the apparent abundance of "choice" and "freedom" found in hegemonic mass-media discourses reveals, on the contrary, exponential control. For Salecl, this very notion that "we can supposedly customise our life and make it 'perfect' leads not to more satisfaction but rather to greater anxiety and feelings of inadequacy" (Salecl, 2010: 3).

In the search for being who we truly are, style becomes an interesting point of analysis. Parting from the fashion industry, stylistic codes carry the potential for granting one's image all the success it needs when assembled correctly. You are your own manager, working to improve your value by contemporary standards. Your stylized-to-perfection self-image can open doors and generate revenue. There is, however, a real danger in treating oneself as a business and applying marketing strategies to one's identity: an even deeper fragmentation, a deeper sense of being lost and, with all that, a deeper dose of anxiety. Neoliberal consumption "provides individuals with opportunities for development of their own capacities for representation and construction" (Frosh, 1991: 21) and an identity crisis, characterized by identity-based anxieties, rises when "individuals find means of expressing themselves through the same forces that threaten to engulf them" (Frosh, 1991: 21). When considering fashion-related matters, the tyranny of capitalist ideology becomes evidenced. In the classic fashion studies text *Adorned in Dreams*, Wilson (2003) is categoric: fashion speaks capitalism and "fashion sets the terms of all sartorial behaviour" (Wilson, 2003: 3), making it complicated to even think of any meeting place for aesthetics and clothing outside of capitalism's tentacles.

Beyond the discourse of the fashion industry but hardly outside of the fashion system, there is the realm of everyday fashion, comprised of ordinary choices made daily by the majority of people around the world, in very different manners due to a variety of different sociocultural reasons. Both fashions operate with symbolic narratives constructed around assembling items of clothing and accessories, bringing the subject and their anxieties to the centre of these abstractions. Sartorial guidelines put forward through fashion media outlets and digital media spill into smaller-scale aesthetic and symbolic negotiations, ultimately, spilling also into individual self-perception against the rest of the world.

In addition, there is the instability of what has been understood by several as postmodern times, in which fragmentation is the word of order in a world of instantaneousness and efficiency-seeking communication technologies. Immediacy and the turmoil of abstract financial gambles resulting in political unrest and austerity leave the self in a never secure state. Selfhood is perceived as requiring "unremitting protection and nurture, [...] always in danger of being undermined, of withering away of exploding into nothingness" (Frosh,1991: 187). The symbolic realm, formative of the self, continuously changes, and "objects keep disappearing, to be replaced by new, exciting but equally disposable alternatives" (Frosh,1991: 6), leaving behind an empty, in crisis subject. Avoiding one's own imminent disappearance and replacement, subjects strive for identity-based "reliefs," which, within the ideology of consumption leads to the illusion that "the subject is just a work of art" (Salecl, 2004: 42), in constant amelioration, in constant "re-editing."

Fashion, therefore, is witness to a very complex and particular type of alienation, that of fashioning the self under such neo-liberal mode of separability, where identity is reduced to the fleeting, visible, and individual — rather than common and spear-headed by ethical alliances among people.

## To imagine other ways of fashioning the self, therefore, challenges the historical structure of the fashion system.

We know the basics, or at least what is written all over fashion history and studies handbooks: that the industrialization of Western fashion was a modern phenomenon and "fashion as we understand it today emerged during the latter half of the

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nineteenth century" (Lipovestky, 1994:76). Despite weaving and textiles being registered as early as dating from the Neolithic period and even with "evidence of prehistoric demand for textiles that distinguished between types of fabric based on taste or style" (Ryan, 2014: 19), it was the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution that fuelled the rise of fashion. Alongside production optimization, came the modern mind-set of choice and self-determination, which culminates in the cyclical and ever-changing industry of taste inaugurated by haute couture since the mid-nineteenth century (Lipovestky, 1994). As twentieth century synthetic fibres contributed to the democratization of clothing, offering lower-cost manufacturing and, with the help of advertising, increasing consumerism; social changes fostered the adoption of new styles in the emergence of the prêt-à-porter — including sartorial directions first adopted by youth subcultures and disseminated elsewhere. Consumption, therefore, is marked in fashion's history and in contemporaneity. Both the mass and the luxury markets enjoy power over the discourse of fashion, dictating "the-only-right-way-to- be" (Wilson, 2003) across the globe. Looking at this movement more closely, however, reveals the clear links between fashioning the self and an industry historically and continuously organized around a problematic relation between "centre" (Europe and North America) and "periphery" — where "separability" acquires, thus, another dimension.

Industrial technology augmented excess productivity and profit for the nineteenth-century industrialist, whilst the "century of the self"— to paraphrase Adam Curtis (2002) — had a grand opening with the establishment of *haute couture* (Lipovestky, 1994; Lipovetsky and Roux, 2003). Exclusivity to such a degree would not be so appealing if not in a context that celebrated the individual and its own self-production and riches. Post-war mass production and postmodern self-re-

invention boosted even further the role of fashion as a *dispositif* of self-expression, self-actualization, and the recognition of a hollowed-out notion of identity. In this context, consumption operates as the means by which an ever-transforming self differs and separates from others by means of style (Hebdige, 1979; Polhemus, 1996). Meanwhile, all roads lead to the Global North — the European fashion capitals and New York, to be precise. The historical relationship between centre and periphery is perpetuated, with an after-taste of the colonial implementation of dress. Luxury fashion's obsession with heritage, or even worse, "French-ness," "British-ness," and so on, often conceals traces of the Orientalist historical dichotomy that implies luxury labels can dress the "uncivilized" Other into Occidental "civilization" (Said, 1978). This logic is eternalized in fashion history books that demarcate the difference between "dress" and "fashion" (Wilson, 2003). If the fashion system — or the production and consumption of both garments and of meaning, following Barthes (1992) — relies on and promotes the production of a self-actualizing individual that is particularly "Western" (as defended by Wilson, 2003; and challenged by Gaugele and Titton, 2019 and others), decolonizing fashion acquires a more nuanced dimension. The recent efforts of many British universities, for example, to decolonize the curriculum, actively respond to demands of a new generation of organized students and engages with a wide range of scholarship that has interrogated hegemonic power, gatekeeping, and debates around the centre/periphery or global North and South articulations produced over the last decades (Charles, 2019). Despite such efforts and adding to fashion's issues, the environment seemingly becomes an inconvenient detail when several hundreds of thousands of tonnes of goods are shipped (from rich developed countries to poorer localities), burnt and disposed of over water and land (WRAP, 2017).

## WEARING FASHION DIFFERENTLY

Fashion, as an industry dependent on technology, whose profit is based on extraction, is also a system that produces a universal language of atomised individualities that are deeply intertwined in the modern contract described by Latour (1993). Fashion has been insistently (from universities, press, and forecasters to investors and aspiring creatives) patching up the modern contract. When crises crowd timelines, yet more catwalk shows, wasteful press events, and unethical financial investments blindside any positive disruption of consumption patterns. After the 2008 financial crash, for example, the fashion and luxury sector became increasingly concentrated in conglomerates such as Kering and LVMH. In the last decade, these French billionaires in control of such European conglomerates saw their fortunes soar five-fold (Laurent, 2020). Taste-makers and Anglo-European industry gatekeepers centralize resources, opportunity, and profits, not giving up on the market logic of growth as the key index of the fashion system (see McKinsey, 2020). Similarly, sustainability reports fail to address the symbolic meaning of consumption and subjective production woven into fashion and style (see *Fixing Fashion*, 2019).
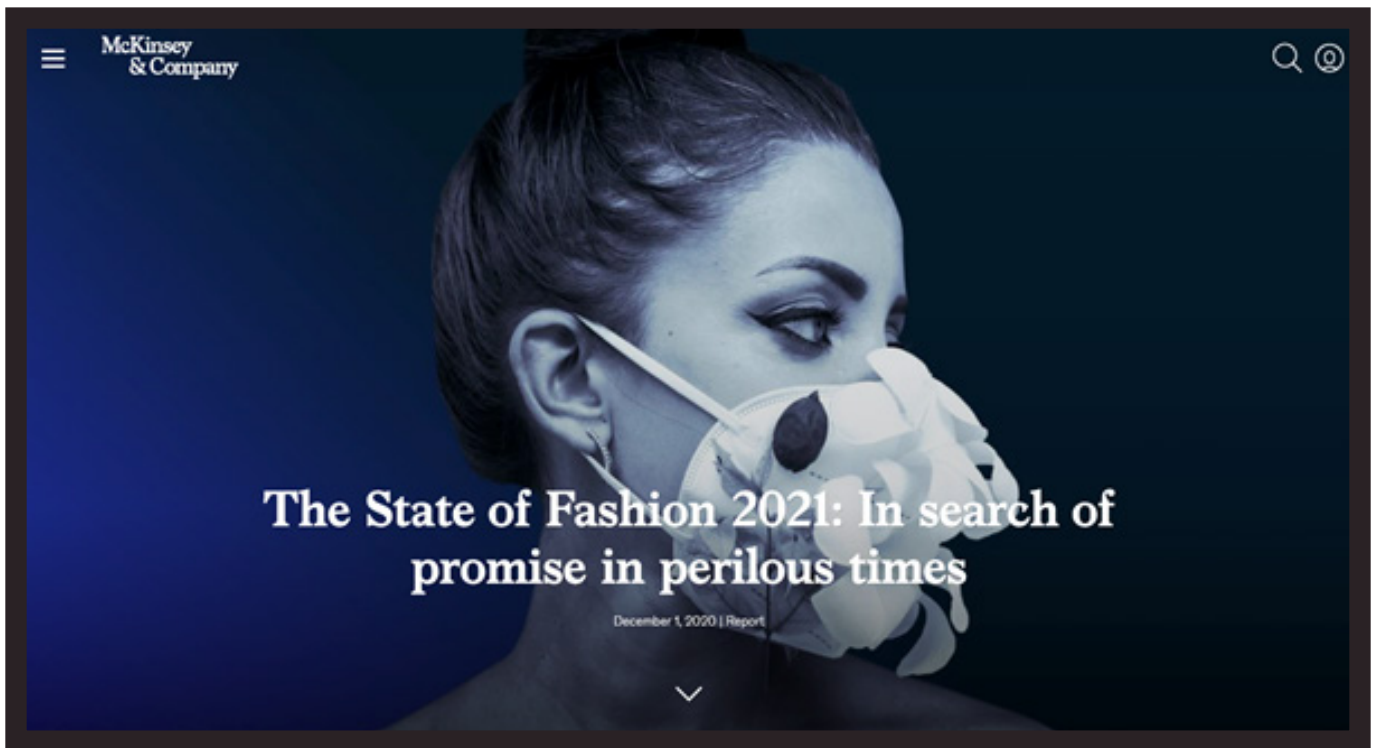


**FIGURE 3** McKinsey & Company, "The State of Fashion 2021: In search of promise in perilous times."

With all this in mind, a psychosocial surface-to-depth dialogue with fashion allows us to contribute to the efforts of navigating the powerful troubles of this industry's crises by addressing the mode of subjective production engendered through the fashion system. Concomitantly, this dialogue — which is yet to gain space along the disciplines of post-humanities, new materialisms, and eco-feminist scholarship within fashion curricula — also opens space for new imaginaries of fashion; wherein materiality and cartographic situatedness are implicated within an ethico-aesthetic paradigm of the common. While the dynamic world of theories and creative propositions for new materialisms and the post-humanities abound — from Latour's (1996) influential Actor-Network Theory; to Hodder's (2012) proposal of entanglement between humans and objects (see, also, for example, Braidotti [2006], Barad [2007], Bennett [2010] and Haraway [2016]) — what many of these contemporary ideas have in common is the call for a possibility of an imaginary that accounts for the multiplicities and interconnectedness of materiality. More specifically, such theoretical approach veers away from the humanities canonical insistency of recurring to the unifying transcendental symbolic mode of separability, as Ferreira da Silva's nuanced philosophical interventions help us to see.

## As such, if we commit to seeing beyond the surface symptoms and to reinventing new ways of living, we would find fashion needs to re-orient its ethics beyond this broken structure.

For as long as fashion operates as a *dispositif* that guarantees an individual self-actualization anchored in extractivist garments, there will be little room for reverting any crisis. Fashioning us out of the chaos rendered visible in 2020 could then be an exercise of imagining a new function for fashion. Can it be the ground for the germination of new worlds? A canvas of the common, a transformative assemblage of the multiplicity of our bodies and becomings? It can be, if we want, our most delicious exercise: how can we wear fashion differently?

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## CONCLUSION

While I have no answer — and suggesting that any universal answer would defeat the very purpose of this interrogation — this article is an invitation for us to add such critical nuances to the current crisis, thinking creatively about the questions of materiality and subjectivity which are so intertwined in dress. Such approaches can add more depth to poignant predictions such as Li Edelkoort's 2014 *Anti-Fashion Manifesto* and create dialogue with powerful voices such as Grace Wales Bonner, Phoebe English, or Milena Silvano, in the case of British fashion alone. Edelkoort, the Dutch trend forecast specialist behind the Parisian studio Trend Union, gathered attention when publishing her manifesto of the ten most urgent points of change for a fashion industry she described to be "at breaking point" (Edelkoort, 2014). Proposing a revision to areas such as education, materialization, and manufacturing, her manifesto's ten years predictions of an anti-fashion "cure" for fashion take us back to an undoing of the system as it has been established (Fairs, 2015). Whilst Edelkoort (2014) sees in *haute-couture*'s artisan *savoir-faire* a possible life-line for a broken, displaced, and severely polluting industry, I wonder if the answers are currently living in more humble apparel across the globe.

To me, entanglement lives in the memory of being gifted a few meters of local fabric, usually cotton or polyester wool-blends, by my aunts and grandmother in Central Brazil as a child in the bleak and unequal 1990s in Latin America. The gifts were taken home in suitcases and later to the fine hands of local seamstresses who — after much pestering from my end and many after-school visits — would craft perfectly-fitting vests and skirts for me to wear in the cold winter of Southern Brazil. Such items could never be disposed of — they, instead, were gifted to other neighbouring children, struggling families, friends, or the community. Their lives were long and belonged to many, not just one. Entanglement also lives in the (albeit badly) hand-knitted scarves I made to ease anxiety, give colour to endless Zoom meetings and classes, and to warm the freezing and lonely days of lockdown in England as we entered 2021.

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**Fashion's functions of protection, adornment, and differentiation acquired, thus, another nuance; one of connectedness, sensation, and creativity.**

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In the search for such creativity, denial and apathy facing the climate emergency, and what I proposed here as a crisis of entanglement, have no place. Returning to the April 2020 covers of *Vogue Italia* (Figure 1) and *Vogue Portugal* (Figure 2), we can now see how such a powerful part of the industry reproduced the attitude of "business as usual" in face of one of the most complex crises of our times. "Freedom on hold" or a no-words, no-image message, as in the case of these two covers, match the economic recuperation and drive to sales reinforced by powerful reports such as the McKinsey 2020 State of Fashion (Figure 3), referenced in this text. 2020 stressed ongoing crises of health, inequality, political hegemony, and sustainability; understanding the past months as a gap, or a break in the surface, does not suffice to move fashion's complicated and — as per Edelkoort (2014) — outdated and unsustainable foundations. Apathy or denial will not take us anywhere different; creativity, instead, the capacity to imagine new worlds and new relations, seems to be our most potent resources for the post-pandemic world.

Situating the body, garments, style, and subjectivity under this creative communing could start, as some scholars and makers have been proposing, not via the surface trend of minimalism, but with more intimate relations with materials, fabrics, and that of which our fashions are made (Fletcher, 2015, 2016; De Castro, 2021; Smelik, 2022). Instead of a dress that answers to a recognizable crystallization of an ever-in-flux identity; we could perhaps think of dress as time, as memory, as material connection. In other words, entanglement may ask for more textiles and less images, re-orienting fashion from the field of vision to that of sensation, of the body. Practically, it may mean less tossing; more mending, fixing, and keeping. Entanglement means living with garments, transforming them with time. Creatively, entanglement is style as play and poetry, rather than as a game.

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