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The Global 'Wordrobe'. Ethnic Counter-Conquest in the Language of Fashion

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Abstract

The absence of spatial boundaries opens the language of fashion to extraterritoriality and multilingualism. This reflects a marked hybridization, typical of global fashion, which increasingly mixes styles and products and is less and less rooted in a local and identity perspective. Loanwords, toponyms and terms with ethnic connotation are just an example of a linguistic variety reaching out to immense distances. Fashion like language is a way of conveying culture and creativity. It lends itself to being widely investigated both on a linguistic and cultural level as in many cases of Native populations. In these cultures the language, or words of fashion, express themselves in artistic and craft productions, which are also the vehicle of the Native's tradition and worldview. The appropriation of, symbols, styles and terminology by the fashion industry is strictly connected to colonial practices still active to date, and have become part of a globalized heritage. The aim of this contribution is to explore the linguistic influence of English on the lexicon of global fashion and to show language globalization in a positive light, as a breakthrough, both open and inclusive at the same time. Some words belonging to the Native populations of America will be analyzed as part of a globalized heritage of native fashion language, and as a sign of 'counter-conquest' or 'counter-colonization'.

Keywords: global fashion studies; language globalization; native fashion language; counter-colonization.

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Introduction

One of the positive consequences of globalization is that English as *lingua franca*[1] has gifted international communication, and each single language other than English, the chance to start a dialogue and engage in a fluid exchange of new perspectives and meanings. However, in an era of transnational flows of goods and people, national identity, instead of being smoother and embracing, is often entrenched in self-defense. This inevitably reflects on language. The relentless anglicization process in a globalized world can be viewed both as a threat to the identity of national languages, and a 'conquest,' a way to open deeper communication and understanding with new cultures and worldviews.

We are witnessing a phenomenon of cross-fertilization: on the one hand it seems that the West has dictated its model to the world awarding English 'the language of fashion,' but on the other hand, we can ascertain that in the language, as well as in fashion, there is a massive presence of native elements. English has been enriched by languages from all over the world and this contribution more than a mutual influence we dare say is a sign of 'counter-conquest' or 'counter-colonization.' The Empire not only "writes back," it also "speaks and dresses back."[2] The experience of colonialism has favoured varied and mutual exchanges and influences between colonizers and colonized challenging both traditional and Western cultures, and ways of life. Debates about the interrelationships between the colonized and the hegemonic power are the subject of postcolonial studies. They span from socio-political to economic matters, from art to literature and language, and are based on drastic critique of Eurocentric concepts.[3]

Both language and fashion have subversive potentials. Language offers one of the most important tools in which new scenarios are expressed and fashion acts as a sort of magnifying lens showing perceptions and daily life of two powerful and opposing worlds. Language is both a medium to affirm and shape cultural hegemony as well as a way to bring resistance into action and express counter-colonization. Therefore the aim of this contribution is to explore the linguistic influence of English on global fashion lexicon and, to show language globalization in a constructive and positive light, as a breakthrough, both open and inclusive at the same time, contrary to what happened to Native languages in North America, for example, where English was imposed as a colonial determination aiming at erasing indigenous cultures. Some words as part of a globalized heritage of Native fashion language will be also analyzed.

Fashion language as a living being

If we imagine language as a living being, one that to become fully intellectually and spiritually accomplished needs to explore different experiences and meet with different cultures, then it is not surprising to detect its natural bent for knowledge, curiosity and creativity. The same aptitude for expansion and development is revealed in the global language of fashion. The immateriality of language, as well as fashion intended as a phenomenon, allows them to travel beyond boundaries and exchange information and contents to enrich and enlarge one another's knowledge. Global fashion increasingly mixes styles and products and is less and less rooted in a local and identity perspective, as a consequence its language reflects such hybridization, as we will show soon afterwards. Ever increasing interlinguistic contacts help erasing boundaries, originate new lexical units, technically called neologisms, that is, newly coined words or phrases reflecting the need to name, or rename new concepts or objects. When a word (hence neologism too) is borrowed from a foreign language and adopted in the recipient language with little or

1. A communication language between speakers of different languages.

2. "The Empire Writes Back to the Centre" is a phrase originally used by Salman Rushdie. Here the reference is to the British Empire. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002).

3. Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Maspéro Éditions, 1961), trad.it. *I dannati della terra* (Torino: Edizioni Comunità, 2000); Edouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), trad.it. *Poetica del diverso* (Roma: Meltemi, 1998); Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Julia Emberley, *Thresholds of Difference. Feminist Critique, Native Women's Writing, Postcolonial Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Hartmut Lutz, *Approaches, Essays in Native North American Studies and Literatures* (Augsburg: Wißner Verlag, 2002); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993); cf. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*.

no modification it is called loanword. Because of its global reach, the lexicon of fashion is marked by a variety of loanwords.[4]

Loanwords, toponyms, namely, terms from place names, eponyms, that is a word derived from a proper noun, and terms with ethnic connotation are just an example of a linguistic variety resulting from encounters among words that can come from distant geographical origins. In this process English has now superseded French and has become the language of fashion *par excellence*.[5] However, English is not immune to this trend and comprises a rather wide assortment of borrowed words from different parts of the world.

Neologisms (*burkini*, *bumster*), loanwords (*parka*, *kimono*), toponyms (*tulle*, *bikini*) compound words also combining two different languages (*bustier dress*, *kente cloth*, *cashmere wool*, *bullion embroidery*, *stiletto heel*, *denim jacket*, *damask cloth*, *brocade loom*, *ballerina shoes, hippie chic*), prefixes (*pantsuit*, *non-laddering*, *multicoloured*), suffixes (*strapless*, *dressed*), eponyms (*chanel*, *montgomery*), terms with ethnic connotation (*sarong*, *sari*) are words that, while moulding the language in new and creative ways, also add cultural information and a touch of liveliness and novelty.

In our view, the presence of transnational words has the function of expansion, enrichment, exchange of knowledge, not violation, submission or invasion. Incidentally, one of the main characteristics of the language of fashion in general is that it mirrors fashion, is creative, open, free, changeable and unpredictable. Its diversity is manifested internally, that is within its morphosyntactic and lexical borders, as well as externally, in the difference in use of each speaker according to context and communication situations.[6]

The use of English in other languages is definitively strategic and effective in describing fashion as it lends itself to easily create neologisms, as already noted, and it is widely used in so called "luxury loanwords" to give a taste of sophistication and modernity. For example, Italian speakers tend to privilege words like "look," "outfit," "glamour," "fashion victim," or "trendy," instead the of the Italian equivalent.

Fashion is changing more and more rapidly because communication has changed. New technologies, social media, advertising and the iconographic apparatus associated to fashion make it more pervasive and trends can now multiply out of all proportion. As Lopriore and Furiassi formulate it, fashion media can reach wider audiences and diversified categories of people,

> It is definitively polysemous, connotative, emotional and persuasive, almost like the language of advertising. ... Fashion media language is an integral part of the fashion industry, which is in turn characterized by the plurilingual and multicultural codes of influential stylists and designers.[7]

Fashion magazines make massive use of non-verbal codes such as iconography and the symbolic legacy it entails. Social media style photo captions add value and information to the image, functioning as activators of cognitive, creative, descriptive and emotional power. They become the basis to build representation models of clothing and accessories, which spread, multiply, reinvent themselves reaching global recipients, thus becoming a global language and contributing to create new signifying processes.[8] Phrases such as "pink is the new black," "total black / total white," "fashion blogger," "made in Italy,"

4. Isabel Balteiro, *New Approaches to Specialized English Lexicology and Lexicography* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).

5. French dominated the language of fashion for two centuries, since the appearance of the first fashion magazines in the 1780s until the 1980s. Mariella Lorusso, *Dizionario della moda* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 2017), 11.

6. Mariella Lorusso, "Bikini, Burkini, Fatkini: the Size of Fashion Words," in *The Size Effect, A Journey Into Design, Fashion and Media*, eds. Antonella Mascio, Roy Menarini, Simona Segre Reinach and Ines Tolic (Mimesis International, 2018), 122–3.

7. Lucilla Lopriore and Cristiano Furiassi, "The influence of English and French on the Italian language of fashion: Focus on false Anglicisms and false Gallicisms," in *Pseudo-English. Studies on False Anglicisms in Europe*, eds. Cristiano Furiassi and Heinrik Gottlieb (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 199.

8. Roland Barthes, *Système de la Mode* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967).

"photo shooting," "ready-to-wear," "body-con," "cross-dressing," or "boyfriend jeans," are some examples.

Both special and global, the language of fashion has been approached in its semiotic aspect spanning from cultural to social spheres, besides merely linguistic and iconic ones. As Roland Barthes observed in his famous book *Le sistème de la mode* (1967), fashion "signifies," it expresses itself through a system of signs in which each element is meaningless if taken on its own, it becomes significant only when all the parts are linked to a series of collective norms. Any variation involves readjustment of the entire system. Therefore, as Maria Catricalà argues, fashion is not a casual combination of shapes, cloths and colours, but rather a complex code to be deciphered.[9] The lexicon of fashion then, becomes an ever-evolving system of meanings, neologisms and register variations.

The meanings of fashion are manifold and go beyond national boundaries connecting the local and the global. With the advent of Fashion Studies in the 1980s fashion started to be investigated with a marked theoretical and interdisciplinary approach, beyond its aesthetic qualities and documentary evidence on one single object. It was now perceived as a complex phenomenon, an essential component of culture, which involved social, cultural and symbolic matters.[10]

Studies on the language of fashion are not very many and fairly recent, they generally follow in Roland Barthes' footsteps and analyze the language of the most important fashion magazines.[11]

Besides specialized lexicon, another important aspect of this language is its pragmatic conative function. Its purpose is to bewitch, enchant, impress the receiver. In online as well as traditional media, such as blogs or magazines, the choice of vocabulary is not depending on terminological accuracy, but it has mainly phatic and persuading goals, that is how the huge presence of loanwords has to be interpreted, as Stefano Ondelli observes.[12]

Literary accounts on fashion are also valuable sources of language investigation. According to Eugenia Paulicelli in Italy first attempts are made to theorize the dressed body and lifestyles: "As a complex system of codes, as well as a growing manufacturing industry, fashion was textualized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. ... Italy became the central location in which the codification of dress was accomplished in a modern way." As early as in *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) by Baldassarre Castiglione, and in texts of early modernity, literature plays a key role, "Words, and language in general, share with fashion and clothing a world of materiality and practices that are embedded in a network of relationships. These relationships take on material form through the backbone of fashion: namely, image and text."[13]

The West and "the Rest"

Over the past five centuries representations of colonized populations portrayed biased images of the Other that have reproduced and shaped cross-cultural exchanges from the arrival of Europeans till present. From the shakespearean beastlike Caliban to the romantic myth of the *bon sauvage*, the image

9. Barthes, 65; Michele Rak and Maria Catricalà, *Global Fashion: spazi, linguaggi e comunicazione della moda senza luogo* (Milano: Mondadori Education, 2013), 77.

10. Emanuela Scarpellini, "Gli studi sulla moda come settore storiografico emergente," *Memoria e Ricerca*, vol. 50 (settembre–dicembre 2015): 12–3.

11. For a deeper study of literature on the language of fashion see the following texts: Giulia Calligaro, "Il linguaggio dei giornali di moda," *Problemi dell'informazione*, vol. 4 (dicembre 1997): 589–601; Giuseppe Sergio, "Dal marabù al bodysuit: 'Vogue Italia' e la lingua della moda," *Memoria e Ricerca*, vol. 5 (settembre–dicembre 2015): 97–114; Patrizia Calefato, *Mass Moda. Linguaggio e immaginario del corpo vestito* (Milano: Universale Meltemi, 2007); Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (New York: Owl Books, 2000).

12. Stefano Ondelli, "Da chic a glam: gli anglicismi alla conquista della moda italiana," in *Treccani, Lingua italiana*, (2015), http://www.treccani.it/magazine/lingua_italiana/speciali/moda2/Ondelli.html.

13. Eugenia Paulicelli, *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy – from Sprezzatura to Satire* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2014), 3–4.

of the colonized is the result of a false, paternalist ideology ready to defend and praise the Other after having idealized and transformed them in an object of compassion.

Informed by postcolonial studies and Edward Said's ground-breaking book *Orientalism* (1978), the perspective on non-Western fashion has changed. Since the 1990s a significant number of costume historians, anthropologists, ethnologists, and fashion scholars, started decolonizing methodologies and moulding new theories on fashion. The focus is now on the eurocentric attitude in the study of ethnic dress, on how the West has constructed the image of the East through a hegemonic stance, and on the awareness that still today fashion is often perceived as a Western construct.[14]

Among the landmark studies that have contributed to shed light on the conceptualization of fashion as a Western phenomenon Baizerman et al. show how, spanning from written accounts to visual representations, the image of the Other has always been distorted and misleading. Westerners' perceptions were made on the basis of European aesthetic standards and, when native people were portrayed together with non-native, their clothing suggested "Western dominance and implied justification for this dominance."[15]

With the arrival of the first settlers and missionaries Native populations were thought to have no religion, no history, no art or literature, and no clothing, so new rules on dressing were imposed on all colonies around the world, from the Americas to Africa to the Far East and Oceania. As Judy Thompson reports, in the Western Subartic regions traders and missionaries discouraged facial painting, tattooing and elaborate hair dress.[16] According to Eicher and Sumberg, in the nineteenth century in the United States, Christian missionaries "worked equally as diligently to convert the Dakota Indians of Minnesota to wearing European-style clothes as they did to convert them to Christian beliefs."[17]

Based on the evolutionist ideology of the nineteenth century, the adoption of Western dress by Native populations was seen as a tangible sign of civilization and assimilation while reinforcing European power relations. According to Simona Segre Reinach colonial officers often refused to wear local clothing while in the colonies—not wanting to look too 'savage' and lose their identity—but when at home the same clothing were worn and transformed into sophisticated items, thanks to their exotic feel. This is the case of the Indian *banyan*, a large and comfortable dress that in the seventeenth century became a very appreciated dressing gown for European snob gentlemen.[18]

Eurocentric assumptions inherent in certain terminology related to non-Western clothing help nurturing and reinforcing stereotypes. Baizerman et al. regarding qualifying adjectives note that "in addition to *ethnic*, other terms commonly used are *non-Western*, *peasant*, *folk*, *primitive*, *tribal*, *exotic*, *regional*, *national*, *nonindustrial* and *traditional*."[19] All these terms are eloquent of Westerners' opinions and sentiments towards the colonized, implying their inferior status. Such terminology emphasizes difference, "promotes stereotypes that allow us to dehumanize the people described and distance our-

14. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992); Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

15. Suzanne Baizerman, Joanne Eicher and Catherine Cerny, "Eurocentrism in the Study of Ethnic Dress," *Dress, The Journal of the Costume Society of America*, vol. 20 (1993): 123, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1179/036121193805298291.

16. Judy Thompson, "No Little Variety of Ornament, Northern Athapaskan Artistic Traditions," in *The Spirit Sings, Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart – Glenbow Museum, 1987), 158; Joanne Eicher, *Dress and Ethnicity* (Oxford: Berg, 1999–1995), 303; Joanne Eicher, ed., *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion, The United States and Canada*, vol. 3 (London, Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2010), 357–9; Karen Tranberg Hansen, "Colonialism and Imperialism," in *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion – Vol. 1*, ed. Valerie Steele (New York: Scribner, 2004), 277–80; Chloë Colchester, *Clothing the Pacific* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Glenbow Museum, *The Spirit Sings, Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 11.

17. Joanne Eicher and Barbara Sumberg, "World Fashion, Ethnic, and National Dress," in *Dress and Ethnicity*, ed. Joanne Eicher (Oxford: Berg, 1999–1995), 303.

18. Simona Segre Reinach, *Manuale di comunicazione, sociologia e cultura della moda – Vol. IV Orientalismi* (Roma: Meltemi, 2006), 33.

19. Cf. Baizerman et al., "Eurocentrism in the Study of Ethnic Dress," 126.

selves from them."[20] Furthermore, adjectives like *traditional* referred to dress reinforce the idea that it doesn't change, suggest immobility, flatness, uniformity or *ethnic* as opposed to modernity, development, progress, advance, as expressions of European lifestyle and fashion. It is quite weird though, that the same connotation of inferiority in Europe was attributed to fashion itself being considered a feminine pursuit, therefore not fit to be taken into consideration. Edward Said shows the same incongruity in the idea of a "feminized, passive East opposite a masculine, active West."[21]

Views on non-Western fashion

Another important eurocentric issue is the one about the beginning of fashion. Until recently, it was a common belief that fashion originated in the fourteenth century in European courts. Such conceptualization was supported, among others, by the French historian Fernand Braudel's work in the early 1980s. He considered the terms "costume" and "fashion" on the basis of the speed of dress change in time maintaining that fashion began around 1350 as a way for the European elite to distinguish themselves from the lower classes. As Welters and Lillethun highlight, Braudel's eurocentric view poses two questions: "first, the claim that fashion did not exist before 1350, and second, that fashion did not exist outside the Euro-American zone."[22] Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil have a different position, they argue:

> If we wish to understand fashion beyond Europe, we must refrain from thinking that this has suddenly emerged in the last few decades as the result of globalisation and the growth of new middle classes. Recent innovative research underlines how places as disparate as Ming China, Tokugawa and Meiji Japan, Moghul India or Colonial Latin America and Australia, engaged and produced their own fashions both in conjunction, competition, collaboration and independently from Europe.[23]

Many other contemporary fashion theorists are now going in the same direction, supporting a more open, pluralistic view. For example, as regards China and its related stereotypes, Wessie Ling and Simona Segre Reinach write:

> The postcolonial theory of fashion studies ... has demonstrated in various ways that fashion was not separate from costume—that is the weakness of a binary take; costume versus fashion, tradition versus modernity and the transformation of what once went under the label of 'costume' within the logic of global designers from different backgrounds.[24]

...

> Although it is understood that the concept of fashion in China only started in the early 1980s, the history of fashion in China under the Cultural Revolution and before 1949 had a significant impact on the development of contemporary Chinese fashion, as well as that outside the PRC. The imposition of the meaning of fashion as defined by Western scholars confused rather than clarified the formation of Chinese fashion.[25]

There is remarkable evidence that changing dress practices should be interpreted as fashion, as Welters and Lillethun argue, and that that happened all over the world since time immemorial.[26]

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20. Baizerman, 126.

21. Simona Segre Reinach, "Ethnicity," in *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion – Vol. 6*, ed. Alexandra Palmer (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 154.

22. Cf. Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, "Fashion History," 4–5.

23. Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil, *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010), 4.

24. Wessie Ling and Simona Segre Reinach, *Fashion in Multiple Chinas, Chinese Styles in the Transglobal Landscape* (London, New York: Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2018), 2.

25. Ling and Segre Reinach, 4.

26. Cf. Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, "Fashion History"; for further discussion on this subject see Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Sandra Niessen, "Afterword: Re-Orienting Fashion

The word *costume* itself for many years had historical connotations, typical of a given community at a given time, and the phrase *national costume* suggested geographic implication. The word *costume* "in reference to everyday dress was not in general use until the nineteenth century" when it was used among Italian artists to describe a "guise or habit in artistic representation." In early eighteenth century in French and English it turned to "a manner of dressing, wearing the hair, etc."[27] In the nineteenth century the term became synonymous with *dress* and defined contemporary fashion. In the same period, *costume* was also associated with masquerades or special occasions though the Victorians preferred to use the phrase *fancy dress* instead of *costume* for dresses worn at masquerade parties. In the last few decades *costume* is no longer considered a synonym for *fashion* and is commonly used to refer to "dress worn to present an identity other than that projected on a day-to-day basis."[28] Similarly, according to the *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, "costume primarily designates dress practices that conceal or transform the individual's identity when performing in dance, theater, and masquerades across the world, including Halloween and Carnaval. [sic]."[29]

Words "going native"

As we have seen, fashion like language is a way of conveying culture and creativity, it lends itself to being widely analysed both on a linguistic and cultural level. In this part of the essay we would like to focus on contributions of local languages from all over the world, on how some indigenous words have become global linguistic heritage and their symbolic meaning. We will focus, as an example, on three words belonging to the Native American culture: 'anorak,' 'parka,' and 'moccasin.' In the global 'wordrobe' relevant to this study however, words come from local languages in many parts of the world.

The contribution of Native American terminology is to be considered part of a globalized heritage of local fashion language. These words speak of beauty, tradition, relationships. Their echo reverberates throughout the world and is a sign of recognition and appreciation, a universal way to validate indigenous presence and worth. In this perspective they can be regarded as 'arrows of counter-conquest.' Words as a decolonizing force as well as a vehicle to enrich language and worldviews. Likewise, the incorporation of European trade goods into aboriginal clothing and ornament during contact in Canada "enriched rather than altered existing clothing traditions," as Ruth Phillips states.[30] The new materials were imbued with magical meanings, they possessed "the same beauty and power as the gifts of the spirits." For the Naskapi—Woodlands population of the Eastern Subartic region—"the word for fine European cloth translates literally as 'skin of a *manito*,'[31] and the word for glass beads '*manito* berry'."[32] Native people were very selective in their choices and with these goods created new styles, reinforcing the assumption that they were not 'static' at all.

The modern Western world has appropriated many elements of native material culture without the proper acknowledgment to their original creators. In the case of the Inuits, the parka or the traditional boot (*kamik, mukluk*) are clear examples. As Veronica Dewar relates, the *kamik* has become a trademark

Theory," in *Re-Orienting Fashion*, eds. Sandra Niessen, Ann Marie Leshkowich and Carla Jones (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Angela Jansen and Jennifer Craik, *Modern Fashion Traditions* (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2016); José Teunissen, "Global Fashion local Tradition, On the globalisation of fashion," in *Global Fashion Local Tradition, On the Globalisation of Fashion*, eds. Jan Brand and José Teunissen (Arnhem: Uitgeverij Terra Lannoo, 2005); Margaret Maynard, *Dress and Globalisation* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

27. Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, *Fashion History: A Global View* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 19.

28. Welters and Lillethun, 22–3.

29. *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion, Global Perspectives – vol. 10*, ed. Joanne Eicher (London, Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2010), 5.

30. Ruth Phillips, "Art in Woodlands Life: The Early Pioneer Period," in *The Spirit Sings, Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart – Glenbow Museum, 1987), 76.

31. Manito (also manitu, manitou): a supernatural force that according to an Algonquian conception pervades the natural world. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manitu

32. Phillips, 76–7.

brand of a company making outdoor footwear. Despite using Inuit symbols for the logo, the company does not make any reference to the people who created these items.[33]

Traditionally arctic clothing was only made of animal skin such as caribou or seal. In general, this clothing was meant to protect the wearer from harsh weather conditions, but it was also infused with symbolic and spiritual values associated with the respect to be shown to the hunted animal.

Let's now look at some indigenous words that have become part of the global language, and precisely: anorak, parka and moccasin.

The term "anorak" is associated with "windbreaker" or "windcheater." It comes from *anoraq,* a *Kalaallisut* word (a West Greenlandic language, *anorè* = wind[34]), and refers to a beaded garment worn by Greenland women or brides. Nowadays the name has also taken up the sense of "boring person with solitary interests."

The original *anorak* was a heavy, waist-length, water-proof, hooded pullover jacket with elasticated hood, wrists and waist, generally coated in fish oil and had no front opening. Originally the *anorak* and the *parka* were two separate garments but today they have become synonymous as the anorak can also have full-length front opening. The *parka* differs from the *anorak* in that it is hip-length, fur-lined, and stuffed with insulating materials.[35]

The term "parka" is more widespread also due to its adoption for military use in the early 1950s (snorkel and fishtail parkas), and by the mod subculture in the 1960s, whereas "anorak" is more used in the United Kingdom. During the late 1970s to mid-1980s the snorkel parka became very popular as a school jacket, and today also in the fashion of hip-hop subculture.[36]

The word "parka" derives from Aleut from Russian and means "animal skin" in the Nenets language. The traditional *parka* for women and men was made of caribou, seal or sea otter skins. It was generally lined with fur or feathers and had a long back tail used not only as camouflage but also helped the hunter to identify with the animal.[37] As Bernadette Driscoll formulates it,

> By dressing in the fur of the animal he hunted, and by incorporating zoomorphic features in the design of the parka, the Inuit hunter identified himself with the animal world around him. Through the design of his parka, the hunter became both predator and prey.[38]

The women's parka is called *amauti* (plural *amautit*), *amaut* being a baby pouch. It is large, hooded, for carrying babies and infants. Besides its functional aspect of protection against the cold, it develops bonding between the mother and the child. Both the *amaut* (baby pouch) and the *kiniq* (apron)—used as a windbreaker or covering—"were universal elements, symbolic references to procreation."[39] The *parka* could also be made of mammal guts and entrails, the most delicate and prized of which came from the bear. The intestine or gut parka, also called *kamlieka*, a Russian word commonly used in Alaska, were wellknown for being lightweight and waterproof. Other kinds of parkas were bird-skin parkas,

33. Veronica Dewar, "Our Clothing, our Culture, our Identity," in *Arctic Clothing*, eds. J.C.H. King, Birgit Pauksztat and Robert Storrie (London: British Museum Press, 2005), 25.

34. Clements Robert Markham, *A Selection of Papers on Arctic Geography and Ethnology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 229.

35. Annette Lynch and Mitchell Strauss, *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 12–3.

36. Lynch and Strauss, 12–3.

37. Lynch and Strauss, 12–3.

38. Bernadette Driscoll, "Pretending to be Caribou, The Inuit Parka as an Artistic Tradition," in *The Spirit Sings, Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart – Glenbow Museum, 1987), 182–4.

39. Driscoll, 182.

waterproof but also very warm and reversible, and fish-skin parkas which required a more elaborate preparation.[40]

The word "moccasin" derives from the Virginia Algonquian *mockasin*, probably Powatan, meaning "shoe." It dates back to the early seventeenth century and it is also found in other indigenous languages of the Americas.[41] According to Frank Siebert, the Algonquians from Virginia were the first indigenous population to have a long-lasting contact with the English. Their language provided many loanwords to the English language, probably more than any other North-American language, for example, muskrat (a loan blend, *rat musqué*), opossum, raccoon, and moccasin.[42]

> In the British colony of Jamestown, in Virginia, founded in 1607, where native people spoke Powatan, a language belonging to the Algonquian family, first captain John Smith (Pocahontas' lover), and then the colony secretary William Steckley, transcribed some words from Powatan.[43]

One of these words was "moccasin," which describes different kinds of traditional soft leather footwear worn by indigenous peoples of North America. Throughout this immense area there is a huge variety of designs and styles made with traditional techniques, handed down from generation to generation. Deer, bear, buffalo, elk, antelope, caribou, seal and moose hides were generally used (the last three mostly in the North). Some elements are chosen by the individual and may come through visions or dreams. The local and regional environment determined not only the materials for making them, but also the different needs for protection, for example, the different kinds of terrain: in the Arctic and desert areas people wore hard-soled moccasins to protect their feet from cactus thorns and rocks, whereas the soft-soled type were typical of the Subarctic and Plains area. In the Southeast swamp moccasins were used for traveling in particularly thick swamps.

Specific types of moccasins and beadwork were chosen to establish tribal identity. Beyond their aesthetic function, dresses and accessories for Native peoples are more than mere articles of clothing, they are the 'fabrics' for communicating tribal culture, identity, spirituality and, still today an expression of love. As a sign of affection, the American adventurer Camper Whitney reports: "in presentation they are the vehicle of regard from one Indian to another; they carry the first tidings of a more tender sentiment from the maiden to the young hunter" or, if the woman was married, the display of caring for her husband.[44] Moccasin-making was a substantial part of a woman's work, for in the Subartic, for example, an adult wore out fifteen to twenty-five pairs a year.[45] Her virtue and status was also measured on the basis of her ability in manufacturing moccasins.

It is interesting to note that the name of some tribes referred to the kind of shoes they were wearing, as in the case of the Blackfoot. "The origin of their name is not definitely known, but the most common belief is that it was a Cree term that referred to their custom of painting their moccasins black."[46]

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40. Fran Reed, "The Poor Man's Raincoat: Alaskan Fish-Skin Garments," in *Arctic Clothing*, eds. J.C.H. King, Birgit Pauksztat and Robert Storrie (London: British Museum Press, 2005), 48–9; Steven Jacobson, *Yup'ik Eskimo Dictionary* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska, 2012), 324, https://uafanlc.alaska.edu/Online/CY972J2012/Yup'ik_Eskimo_Dictionary_Vol_1-smalller.pdf324.

41. *Oxford Dictionary*, Lexico.com (2019), http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/moccasin; *The American Heritage Dictionary*, https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=moccasin; *Merriam-Webster*, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/moccasin; *Collins*, https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/moccasin; *Online Etymology Dictionary*, https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=moccasin.

42. Frank Siebert, "Resurrecting Virginia Algonquian from the dead: The reconstituted and historical phonology of Powhatan," in *Studies in Southeastern Indian Languages*, ed. James Crawford (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), 290; Marianne Mithun, *The Languages of Native North America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4.

43. Mariella Lorusso, "If I Were in your Moccasins," *ZoneModa Journal*, vol. 1 (July 2009): 90.

44. Whitney Camper, *On Snow-Shoes to the Barren Grounds* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1896), 60; Cecile Clayton-Gouthro, *Pattern in Transition – Moccasin Production and Ornamentation of the Janvier Band Chipewyan* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994), 2.

45. Cf. Ruth Phillips, "Art in Woodlands Life," 76.

46. Josephine Paterek, *Encyclopedia of American Indian Costume* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 96.

With the arrival of the Europeans in the late fifteenth century in the 'New World' new materials such as beads, velvet, silk, and appliqué were introduced and decorations changed greatly. For some groups the relevant period for the introduction of European materials was the sixteenth century; for other the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For embroidery glass beads were greatly embraced and though not entirely, they supplanted porcupine quills. Still today it is possible to distinguish tribal styles through designs, colors and techniques.[47]

For their comfort and beauty moccasins are popular and fashionable all over the world. The role of women has been fundamental for the revitalization of Native cultures in North America and for moccasins to represent an element of continuity. They not only express the relationships between their people and tradition, but have helped to support resistance to colonization by evoking a mythical, cyclic and religious universe. Even the tradition of quillworking has been revived, and the quillwork itself is now embellished with new motifs and symbols.[48]

The Minnetonka brand, established in Minnesota in 1946 and still active today, became a fashion symbol manufacturing moccasin-style shoes 'inspired' to Native Americans. The name Minnetonka comes from the Dakota Sioux word *mni tanka*, which means "great water," and the logo is decorated with Native American design. In addition, contrary to the culture they are referring to, the people in their advertising are mostly white. Such representation is a "complimentary form of racism" and "fosters an ignorant perception of Native Americans."[49]

Conclusions

As far as fashion language is concerned, globalization intended as westernization is only partly true as the spread of words, as well as items, with ethnic connotation demonstrate. The notion of fashion as a uniquely Western system is now 'unfashionable.' What we tried to emphasize here is the comparison between two antithetic views—Western language versus indigenous language—that are actually not conflicting.

In our view appropriation as a Western colonial practice is not applicable to language, it is actually the opposite: indigenous words are a way of 'counter-colonization' or 'counter-appropriation.'

Fashion and its language are universal heritage. As Simona Segre Reinach affirms, "it is necessary to find more appropriate and less stereotyped definitions for terms like tradition, ethnic, folk and national dress"[50]. Actually, the whole concept of fashion needs to be redefined as boundaries between a Western hegemonic and prescriptive elite and a negligible non-Western Other are increasingly blurring. The democratization of fashion that started in the 1960s paved the way to multiple expressions coming from common people, youth culture, the street and traditional cultures. They are all part of a complex mosaic in which each identity and each language add value and significance to a greater, global, multicultural, probably utopistic project of equality.[51]

Paraphrasing Sandra Niessen, the *appearance* of appropriated indigenous design forms by Western fashion does not imply *acceptance* of the *Other*.[52] Eurocentrism and appropriation are two relevant and complex issues connected to globalization. To counter them we must recognize that indigenous cultures

47. Cf. Annette Lynch and Mitchell Strauss, "Ethnic Dress in the United States," 203.

48. Mariella Lorusso, *Contro il terrorismo dal 1492* (Milano: Arcipelago Ed., 2008), 75.

49. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994), 21, Ann Arbor, "Racism Under the Radar in Minnetonka Shoes."

50. Simona Segre Reinach, "Moda e globalizzazione: i nuovi scenari internazionali," *Memoria e Ricerca*, vol. 50 (settembre–dicembre 2015): 65.

51. José Teunissen, "Global Fashion local Tradition, On the globalisation of fashion," in *Global Fashion Local Tradition, On the Globalisation of Fashion*, eds. Jan Brand and José Teunissen (Arnhem: Uitgeverij Terra Lannoo, 2005), 21.

52. Cf. Sandra Niessen, "Afterword: Re-Orenting Fashion Theory," 256.

play an important role in the system of fashion. They are open to change, as they have always been, defying the fixed image in which the whites have confined them, at the same time their messages come from distant origins and have deep roots. We, as Westerners, are unable to understand them thoroughly but that does not allow us to take a judgmental stance.

As Welters and Lillethun write, the work of contemporary scholars "indicates that the field is at a turning point and that the time is right to reconceptualize fashion as a phenomenon that occurred historically around the world. For, as Jennifer Craik states, the fashion impulse is a human impulse."[53] We would like to add that, in order not to fall in the dangerous and reproachable paternalistic attitude, typical of certain conscious or unconscious colonial practice, the redefinition of fashion diversity should not be idealized, it should only be acknowledged and respected.

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53. Cf. Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, *Fashion History*, 194; Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

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